



CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA
PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION
OF INELIGIBILITY

For the Carmel Historic Resources Inventory

On December 17, 2020, the Department of Community Planning and Building made a preliminary determination that the property identified below does not constitute an historic resource and is therefore ineligible for the Carmel Inventory of Historic Resources.

APN: 010-292-007

Current Owner: Lawson

Block: A5

Lot: 5

Street Location: Scenic 3 NE 13th

Date Constructed: 1950

The basis for this determination is:

- The property lacks sufficient age to be considered historic.
- The property has substantially lost its historic integrity through alterations, additions, deterioration, changes in the surrounding environment or other causes.
- The property does not relate to historic themes or property types established in the Historic Context Statement for Carmel-by-the-Sea.
- The property has no association with important events, people or architecture that are identified in the Historic Context Statement or that represent the historical/cultural evolution of Carmel-by-the-Sea.
- There are other better examples of the builder's work in the city.

This preliminary determination will be circulated for a 10 calendar day public review period beginning on December 17, 2020, and ending at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 28, 2020. If no requests for further review are received during this period, the determination shall become final and shall remain valid for a period of five (5) years.



Evan Kort, Associate Planner

P A S T
CONSULTANTS LLC

Seth A. Bergstein
415.515.6224
seth@pastconsultants.com

December 15, 2020

Evan Kort, Assistant Planner
City of Carmel-by-the-Sea
PO Box CC
Carmel, CA 93921

Re: Historic Assessment for Scenic Rd. 3NE of 13th Ave., Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA
APN. 010-292-007-000; HE 20-327 (Lawson)

Dear Mr. Kort:

This letter states the findings of historic significance, based on our research and conditions assessment of the property located at Scenic Road, 3NE of 13th Avenue, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. Located on Block A5, Lot 55, the property contains a single-family house.

The subject property contains a highly modified, two-story house (circa-1950), constructed in the Mid-Century Modern style. The house features a two-story, cross-gable mass facing Scenic Rd., banded (replaced) windows on the west elevation, a south elevation brick chimney, a new garage (1987) on the San Antonio Ave. (east) elevation, replaced T1-11 wall cladding and modified fenestration on all four elevations (**Figures 1 and 2**).



Figures 1 and 2. Left image shows the west (Scenic Rd.) elevation, with complete fenestration modifications and replaced wall cladding. Right image shows the east (San Antonio Ave.) elevation with 1987 new garage that replaced the original carport.

P.O. Box 721
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
www.pastconsultants.com

The original Thomas S. Elston, Jr. design has been highly altered. A new garage replaced the original east-elevation carport in 1987. Original wall cladding has been replaced with T1-11 siding. All original windows have been replaced and the west elevation's two-story façade highly modified with removal of an original balcony and staircase (1964) the installation of banded windows on the west elevation and replacement of original wall cladding (**Figures 3 and 4**).



Figures 3 and 4. Left image details the south elevation, looking west and taken from the 1987 garage's side-entrance door. Right image details the two-story mass looking west, showing fenestration and wall-cladding modifications.

Building Chronology

The following lists the permits available for the property:

- Permit #2083, 1950. Construct house for Mr. and Mrs. James Lawson. Contractor: Hellier Construction Company, Monterey. Architect: Thomas S. Elston, Jr.
- Permit #4201, 1964. Remove exterior stairs on south elevation and west-elevation balcony. Install deck on Scenic Rd. (west) elevation.
- Permit #87-230, 1987. Remove carport on San Antonio Avenue (east) elevation; replace with garage.
- Permit #88-136, 1988. Remove/replace exterior sheathing at unspecified locations.
- Permit #13-32R, 2013: Replace roofing material with composition shingles.

Historic Integrity Conclusions

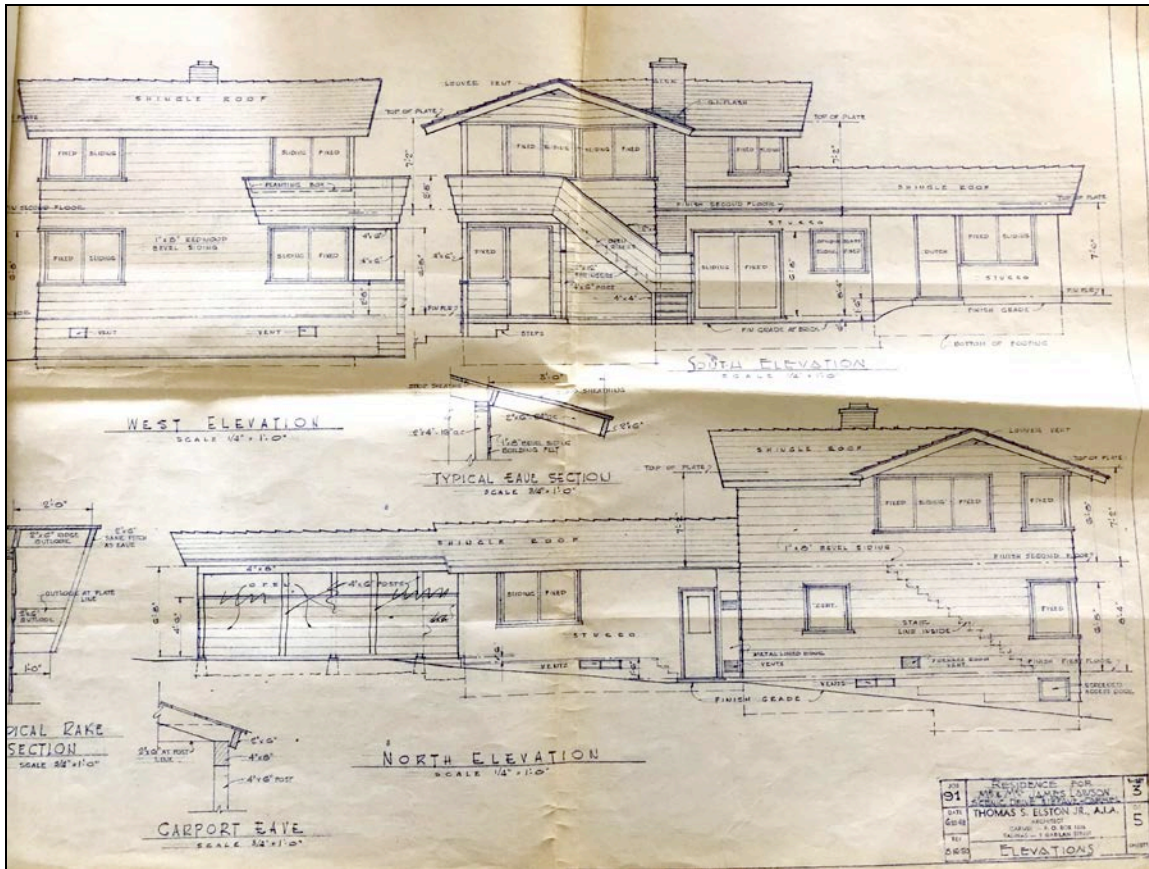


Figure 5. Photograph of original Thomas Elston elevations from the Carmel-by-the-Sea planning department files.

Comparison of the existing elevations with the original Thomas S. Elston, Jr. drawings from the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea planning department file (**Figure 5**) reveals that the original Elston design has been highly altered. Significant alterations include:

1. Replacement of the original east elevation carport with a garage.
2. Replacement of original horizontal bevel siding with T1-11 siding.
3. Alteration of original angled and cantilevered rooflines.
4. Removal of south elevation exterior staircase.
5. Removal of west elevation balcony.
6. Complete fenestration alterations of west elevation.
7. Replacement of original windows on remaining elevations.
8. Enclosure of original sliding glass doors on the south elevation.
9. Installation of greenhouse windows on south elevation.

In its present condition, the subject house has lost nearly all integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association from the original, Thomas S. Elston design.

Summary Property History

The subject property was constructed for James W. Lawson and his spouse in 1950. The couple is listed as living in Palo Alto on the original permit. Genealogical research through available on-line research portals does not show any significant contributions by James W. Lawson to national, California or Carmel history. The couple appeared to have used the house as a vacation residence; they are not listed as significant persons in the *Carmel-by-the-Sea Final Historic Context Statement*.

While Monterey contractor Hellier Construction Company is not listed in the Carmel historic context statement, Thomas S. Elston, Jr. is listed as significant architect (page 45). Born in Berkeley, California in 1912, Thomas Sidney Elston, Jr. received his architectural degree from the University of California, Berkeley in 1935. Following graduation, he worked for Bay Area architectural offices until joining the firm of Monterey-area architect Robert Jones in 1945. By 1948 Elston teamed with architect William L. Cranston to form Elston and Cranston, Architects. The firm designed a number of award-winning buildings, including the Pioneer Savings Building in Monterey, the Carmel River School and various residences in the Monterey region. Thomas Elston was also Chairman of the Monterey County Planning Commission in the 1950s. He was a member of the American Institute of Architects from 1947 until his passing in 1992.¹

Regulatory Framework: National Register, California Register and City of Carmel-by-the-Sea Historic Significance

National Register of Historic Places (National Register)

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to create the National Register of Historic Places. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture are eligible for listing if they meet at least one of four criteria.² Eligible resources are those

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Eligible resources must also retain sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey the relevant historic significance.³ The seven aspects of integrity are described in a separate section below.

¹ R.R. Bowker, 1956 *American Architects Directory* (accessed via AIA Directory of American Architects, <https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20644319/1956+American+Architects+Directory>)

² 16 U.S.C. 470, *et seq.*, as amended. 36 C.F.R. § 60.1(a).

³ 36 C.F.R. § 60.4.

California Register of Historical Resources (California Register)

A resource is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources if it:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.⁴

The California Code of Regulations notes that integrity is the authenticity of a historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. Resources eligible for listing in the California Register must retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historic resources and convey the reasons for their significance.

The same seven aspects of integrity are considered when evaluating resources for listing on the National Register and California Register: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Alterations over time may themselves be significant.

Historic Integrity

National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation defines **historic integrity** as "the ability of a property to convey its significance." Historic properties either retain their integrity or they do not. To retain integrity, a resource should retain most of the seven aspects of integrity:

1. **Location:** the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
2. **Design:** the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
3. **Setting:** the physical environment of a historic property.
4. **Materials:** the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
5. **Workmanship:** the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
6. **Feeling:** a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
7. **Association:** the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

National Register Bulletin 15 notes that evaluating historic integrity may be a subjective analysis, but is always based on understanding the property's physical features and how they relate to the

⁴ California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(c).

property's historic significance. After establishing the property's historic significance, the evaluator assesses integrity using *National Register Bulletin 15*'s four-step approach:

1. Define the essential physical features that must be present for a property to represent its significance.
2. Determine whether the essential physical features are visible enough to convey their significance.
3. Determine whether the property needs to be compared with similar properties. And,
4. Determine, based on the significance and essential physical features, which aspects of integrity are particularly vital to the property being nominated and if they are present.

National Register Bulletin 15 emphasizes that “ultimately, the question of integrity is answered by whether or not the property retains the identity for which it is significant.”⁵

Carmel-by-the-Sea Historic Significance

The City of Carmel-by-the-Sea's historic preservation ordinance is contained in the Municipal Code, *Chapter 17.32 – Historic Preservation*. The criteria for eligibility for listing on the City's Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) are:

- A. Should be representative of at least one theme included in the Historic Context Statement.
- B. Shall retain substantial integrity according to the Federal definition and evaluation methodology for historic integrity as detailed in *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.
- C. Should be a minimum of 50 years of age and shall meet at least one of the four criteria for listing on the California Register at a national or statewide level of significance (primary resource) or at a regional or local level of significance (local resource) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a)(3).
- D. To qualify for the Carmel Inventory, an historic resource eligible under California Register Criterion No. 3 (subsection (C)(3) of this section) only, should:
 1. Have been designed and/or constructed by an architect, designer/builder or contractor whose work has contributed to the unique sense of time and place recognized as significant in the Historic Context Statement; or
 2. Have been designed and/or constructed by a previously unknown architect, designer/builder or contractor if there is substantial, factual evidence that the architect, designer/builder or contractor contributed to one or more of the historic contexts of the City to an extent consistent with other architects, designer/builders or contractors identified within the Historic Context Statement; or
 3. Be a good example of an architectural style or type of construction recognized as significant in the Historic Context Statement; or
 4. Display a rare style or type for which special consideration should be given. Properties that display particularly rare architectural styles and vernacular/utilitarian types shall be given

⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1997).

special consideration due to their particularly unusual qualities. Such rare examples, which contribute to diversity in the community, need not have been designed by known architects, designer/builders or contractors. Rather, rare styles and types that contribute to Carmel's unique sense of time and place shall be deemed significant.

Evaluation of Historic Significance

National and California Register Significance

The National (NR) and California (CR) registers have the same four-part criteria. The criteria break down into Association with a *significant event* (NR - A; CR – 1); Association with a *significant person* (NR - B; CR – 2); Association with *architectural design and/or construction method* (NR - C; CR – 3); and *Information potential* (NR - D; CR – 4).

Given the disturbed nature of the site and development of the area, the subject property does not appear to qualify under the fourth criterion, archaeological/informational potential (NR - D; CR – 4). An archaeological study is out of the scope of work for this report and would be addressed by the City of Carmel, if deemed necessary.

With the substantial alterations to the original Thomas S. Elston, Jr. design, the subject house no longer possesses sufficient historic integrity for listing on the National or California registers. The alterations listed above are substantial and impact all visible elevations of the building. In its present condition, the subject building can no longer communicate its historic significance as an example of Thomas Elston's modernist residential design.

Historic Integrity Analysis

The following lists the seven aspects of historic integrity with a response in italics:

1. **Location.** The house is in its original location and maintains integrity of location.
2. **Design.** The balcony and exterior staircase removals, carport removal, replacement of original wall cladding, roofline modifications and fenestration alterations have removed the integrity of design from the subject property.
3. **Setting.** The house retains integrity of setting among the residential buildings on Scenic Road in Carmel.
4. **Materials.** The substantial alterations in incompatible materials, such as modern windows, greenhouse windows and modern wall cladding have compromised substantially the integrity of materials.
5. **Workmanship.** The numerous alterations have removed integrity of workmanship from the original design.
6. **Feeling.** The house no longer retains integrity of feeling as an Elston-designed building.
7. **Association.** The house no longer retains integrity of association as an example of Thomas Elston's Mid-Century Modern designs.

Carmel-by-the-Sea Historic Significance

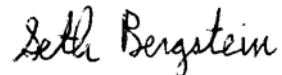
In addition to the integrity issues present, the subject building does not qualify for the Carmel-by-the-Sea Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) under the theme *Architectural Development in Carmel (1888-1965)* because of the substantial alterations that have removed historic integrity from the original Thomas Elston design. The subject property is not eligible for the Carmel-By-the-Sea HRI.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the property located at Scenic Drive NE of 13th Avenue does not qualify as an individual historic resource under National- or State of California-register criteria; nor does it qualify for inclusion on the Carmel-by-the-Sea Historic Resources Inventory. A Determination of Ineligibility is recommended for the subject property.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this evaluation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Seth Bergstein".

Seth A. Bergstein, Principal