

**CITY OF DANA POINT
PLANNING COMMISSION
AGENDA REPORT**

DATE: JANUARY 12, 2015

TO: DANA POINT PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: URSULA LUNA-REYNOSA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
ERICA H. DEMKOWICZ, AICP, SENIOR PLANNER

SUBJECT: A REQUEST FOR HISTORICAL RESOURCE DESIGNATION (HRA14-0001) AND PARTICIPATION IN THE MILLS ACT PROGRAM AT 34545 SCENIC DRIVE

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution designating a portion of the single-family residence located at 34545 Scenic Drive as a locally significant historical structure and recommend to the City Council that the City enter into an agreement with the property owner for participation in the Mills Act Program.

**APPLICANT/
OWNER:**

Boyd R. & Carol D. Plowman and Benjamin & Michelle Day

REQUEST:

The applicant seeks to have a portion of the single-family residence located at 34545 Scenic Drive designated as a historical structure and placed on the Dana Point Historic Resource Register. The applicant also requests a recommendation to enter into an agreement with the City for participation in the Mills Act Program.

LOCATION:

34545 Scenic Drive (APN 672-591-18)

ENVIRONMENTAL: This project is categorically exempt (Class 31 - Section 15331 – Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it consists of preservation of an existing historical single-family residence.

BACKGROUND:

In March 2001, the City of Dana Point Historic Resource Ordinance was enacted in an effort to preserve the City's rich history and spectacular physical location. The Ordinance established a voluntary program for property owners of qualifying structures to request inclusion on the Dana Point Historical Resource Register. Historical designation of a structure commits the property owner to uphold the historical attributes of their structure in exchange for development standard flexibility and financial incentives.

The Ordinance incorporates the following Program Eligibility Criteria in identifying qualifying structures. The Criteria states that qualifying structures must be 50 years and older and achieve at a minimum two of the following:

- (A) Buildings, structures, or places that are important key focal or pivotal points in the visual quality or character of an area, neighborhood, or survey district.
- (B) Structures that help retain the characteristics of the town that was 50 years ago.
- (C) Structures that contribute to the unique urban quality of a downtown.
- (D) Structures contributing to the architectural continuity of the street.
- (E) Structures that are identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and/or development of the city, state, or nation.
- (F) Structures that represent an architectural type or period and/or represent the design work of known architects, draftsmen, or builders whose efforts have significantly influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation.
- (G) Structures that illustrate the development of California locally and regionally.
- (H) Buildings retaining the original integrity of and/or illustrating a given period.
- (I) Structures unique in design or detail, such as, but not limited to, materials, windows, landscaping, plaster finishes, and architectural innovation.
- (J) Structures that are at least 50 years old or properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years if they are of exceptional importance.

A comprehensive inventory was conducted in 1997 to document structures associated with early development. The 1997 Dana Point Historic Architectural Resources Inventory (Inventory) identified seventy-five (75) structures (60 residential and 15 commercial) as meeting the above criteria that could be considered candidates for historic designation. Each structure was rated as to the level of historical significance. Since that time, 38 structures have been placed on the Historic Resources Register and 29 of those are participating in the Mills Act Program.

For structures that are not included in the Historic Architectural Resources Inventory, as is the case with the subject property, a Historical Resource Application may be submitted requesting inclusion in the Register. In addition to the application, property owners must demonstrate achievement of criteria "J" along with at least two other criteria (listed above).

The owners of the property submitted an application in August 2014 requesting historical designation of the double A-Frame portion of their dwelling and placement on the Dana Point Historic Resource Register. In addition, the property owners seek to enter into an agreement with the City of Dana Point for participation in the Mills Act Program. Attachment 2 includes photos of the subject home.

DISCUSSION:

The subject property consists of approximately 20,000 square feet, is located within the Headlands sub-section of the 1986 Dana Point Specific Plan and has two zoning designations; Headlands High Density Residential (H-D-HDR) and Headlands Conservation (H-C).

The subject structure has been historically referred to as "Cook's Point" given its location on the promontory of the Dana Point Headlands. There are two different sections of the house on the property. The older, subject double A-Frame structure, which has approximately 3,400 square feet of living area was constructed in 1957 and has served as an iconic landmark for sailors since the 1950's due to its prominent location above the Pacific. A more recent, French Normandy style addition is situated inland of the A-frame structure and consists of approximately 3,200 square feet of living area. It was constructed in 1987 and is not being considered part of the historic resource. Because of the different styles of both structures, the property is often referred to as having two houses – the lower house (the double "A" Frame building) and the upper house (the French Normandy building). The lower, double A-Frame structure is the portion of the dwelling that is at least 50 years of age and meets criteria (A) and (G) listed above for designation as a historic resource.

The subject house was designed by TM Engineers & Architects and constructed by Ron Cook in 1957. Ron Cook was a builder and craftsman from Sierra Madre who had a love for art and the sea. The house consists of four (4) levels with a nautical theme design throughout the interior, complete with wooden carvings, paintings, stained glass windows, a ship's maiden, use of portholes for windows and relics from the Queen Elizabeth I ship. Ron and Marion Cook resided in this house from 1957 to mid-1980. An office area within the top-most part of the A-Frame roof with a stained glass dragon in the window connects the lower house with the upper house.

An A-Frame is an architectural style featuring steeply angled sides (roofline) that usually begins at or near the foundation line and meets at the top in the shape of the letter "A". The A-Frame's ceiling is open to the top rafters. Although the triangle shape of the A-Frame has been present throughout history, it surged in popularity around the world in the post-World War II era, from roughly the mid-1950's through the 1970's. A-Frames were strong, easy to build, affordable and seemed appropriate in any setting (i.e. mountainous, lake shore or coastal regions). They were especially popular as vacation homes and became a cultural icon synonymous with leisure living and the good life in the 1960's. Many were built in coastal areas. It was during this time that the A-Frame acquired its most defining characteristics.

Some of the features of an A–Frame house include the following:

- Triangular share
- Steeply sloping roof that extends almost to the ground on two sides (sometimes the roof extends all the way to the ground)
- Front and rear gables
- Deep-set eaves
- 1 ½ or 2 ½ stories
- Many large windows on front and rear facades
- Small or limited living space (interior lofts are common)

The seaward façade (north elevation) of the lower house contains the prominent double A-Frame roof structure with two steeply sloping roof sections along with an expansive exterior deck on the lowest level and a smaller exterior balcony on the upper lower level. The double A–Frame roofline structure houses expansive areas of plain glass windows. The exterior of the structure contains wood lap siding. The south elevation is mostly obscured by the French Normandy addition, but the front door and garage can be seen through the tunnel leading from the upper house to the lower house (Attachment 3). The house is in excellent condition.

As stated previously, the subject property qualifies as a historic resource in that it is at least 50 years of age and it meets Criteria (A) and (G) in accordance with Section 9.07.250 (c) (1) of the Dana Point Zoning Code. Each Criterion as it relates to the existing structure is discussed below:

(A) Buildings, structures, or places that are important key focal or pivotal points in the visual quality or character of an area, neighborhood, or survey district.

The lower house is located on Scenic Drive on top of the Headlands and includes a prominent and iconic double A–Frame structure that is visible for many miles from the north elevation/seaward facade. The structure has served as a key focal point for sailors' navigation and has further defined the Headlands, which is a prominent visual point within the City of Dana Point. Features of the north elevation include wood lap siding, the projecting double A-Frame roofline with expansive glass windows and exterior decks. The visual quality of the double A-Frame structure further enhances this pivotal point within the City of Dana Point.

(G) Structures that illustrate the development of California locally and regionally.

As one of the City's few A–Frame structures, the lower house, built in 1957, serves as an illustrative example of an architectural period when A–Frame structures surged in popularity (mid- 1950's – 1970's). Many A-Frame structures were constructed as vacation homes in mountainous and coastal areas and the "Cook's Point" property represents postwar coastal development in Dana Point. The structure also represents a period in time when coastal development was permitted with limited regulation (i.e. pre – California Coastal Act).

(J) Structures that are at least 50 years old or properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years if they are of exceptional importance.

The double A-Frame house was built in 1957 and is illustrative example of an architectural style during a period of significance to the area.

CONCLUSION:

Satisfaction of the Program Eligibility Criteria indicates that the project located at 34545 Scenic Drive is eligible for inclusion in the Dana Point Historic Resource Register. The historical attributes of the home are supported by the owner. With designation of this structure, a total of thirty-nine (39) structures would be on the Dana Point Historic Resource Register. The property owner also seeks to participate in the State's Mills Act Program which requires the City Council's authorization to enter into an agreement.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt the attached draft resolution designating the double A-Frame portion of the house located at 34545 Scenic Drive as a historic resource, placement of the structure on the Dana Point Historic Resource Register and forward a recommendation to the City Council to authorize an agreement for participation in the Mills Act Program.



Erica H. Demkowicz, AICP
Senior Planner



Ursula Luna-Reynosa,
Director of Community Development

ACTION DOCUMENT:

1. Resolution (No.15-01-12-xx)

ATTACHMENTS:

2. Photos: Interior & Exterior of A-Frame Structure
3. Photo: View of South Elevation of Lower House through Tunnel
4. Photo: Lower House Photo
5. Photo: Upper House Photo
6. OC Register Article dated July 18, 2010

RESOLUTION NO. 15-01-12-xx

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF DANA POINT, CALIFORNIA, DESIGNATING A PORTION OF A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING AS A HISTORIC RESOURCE, PLACING THAT STRUCTURE ON THE DANA POINT HISTORIC RESOURCE REGISTER (HRA14-0001) AND RECOMMENDING THE CITY COUNCIL ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE MILLS ACT PROGRAM FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 34545 SCENIC DRIVE.

Applicant: Boyd R. & Carol D. Plowman and Benjamin & Michelle Day

The Planning Commission for the City of Dana Point does hereby resolve as follows:

WHEREAS, the applicant filed a verified application for certain property, to wit:

34545 Scenic Drive, (A.P.N. 672-591-18)

WHEREAS, the applicant has filed a Historic Resource Application to request designation of a residential building as a historic resource and placement of that structure on the Dana Point Historic Resource Register; and

WHEREAS, the City of Dana Point has adopted a Historic Resource Ordinance (the "Ordinance") which establishes a voluntary program for the preservation of qualifying structures; and

WHEREAS, the subject property is governed under the Dana Point Zoning Code, which contains provisions related to designating historic structures; and

WHEREAS, the subject property satisfies the Program Eligibility Criteria established in the Ordinance for including structures on the Dana Point Historic Resource Register and for participation in the Mills Act Program; and

WHEREAS, the applicant, understands the required commitment to keep the subject property in "good repair" as detailed in the Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, in exchange for preservation of the historic structure, the property owner becomes eligible for incentives described in the Ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Planning Commission of the City of Dana Point as follows:

- A) That the above recitations are true and correct.
- B) That based on the evidence presented at the public meeting, the Commission adopts the following findings and approves Historic Resource Application HRA14-0001.

ATTACHMENT #1

- C) That the Planning Commission recommends that the City Council enter into an agreement with the property owner for the Mills Act Program.

Findings:

1. That the proposed Historical Resource Application complies with all other applicable requirements of State law and local ordinances.
2. That the proposed project is categorically exempt (Class 31 - Section 15331 – Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it consists of preservation a portion of an existing historic structure.
3. That the Historical Resource Application is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan and Zoning Code and the project meets the findings necessary for the approval of the request to include the subject property on the Dana Point Historic Resources Register.
4. That the Dana Point Historic Resource Ordinance identifies Program Eligibility Criteria for designating historic resources. Qualifying properties must be 50 years or older and satisfy a minimum of two Criteria. The subject property satisfies three of the ten Criteria established in the Ordinance, as discussed below:

(A) Buildings, structures, or places that are important key focal or pivotal points in the visual quality or character of an area, neighborhood, or survey district.

The lower house is located on Scenic Drive on top of the Headlands and includes a prominent and iconic double A-Frame structure that is visible for many miles from the north elevation/seaward facade. The structure has served as a key focal point for sailors' navigation and has further defined the Headlands, which is a prominent visual point within the City of Dana Point. Features of the north elevation include wood lap siding, the projecting double A-Frame roofline with expansive glass windows and exterior decks. The visual quality of the double A-Frame structure further enhances this pivotal point within the City of Dana Point.

(G) Structures that illustrate the development of California locally and regionally.

As one of the City's few A-Frame structures, the lower house, built in 1957, serves as an illustrative example of an architectural period when A-Frame structures surged in popularity (mid- 1950's – 1970's). Many A-Frame structures were constructed as vacation homes in mountainous and coastal areas and the "Cook's Point" property represents postwar coastal development in Dana Point.

The structure also represents a period in time when coastal development was permitted with limited regulation (i.e. pre – California Coastal Act).

(J) Structures that are at least 50 years old or properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years if they are of exceptional importance.

The double A-Frame lower house was built in 1957 and is illustrative example of an architectural style during a period of significance to the area.

DRAFT

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Dana Point, California, held on this 12th day of January, 2015, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

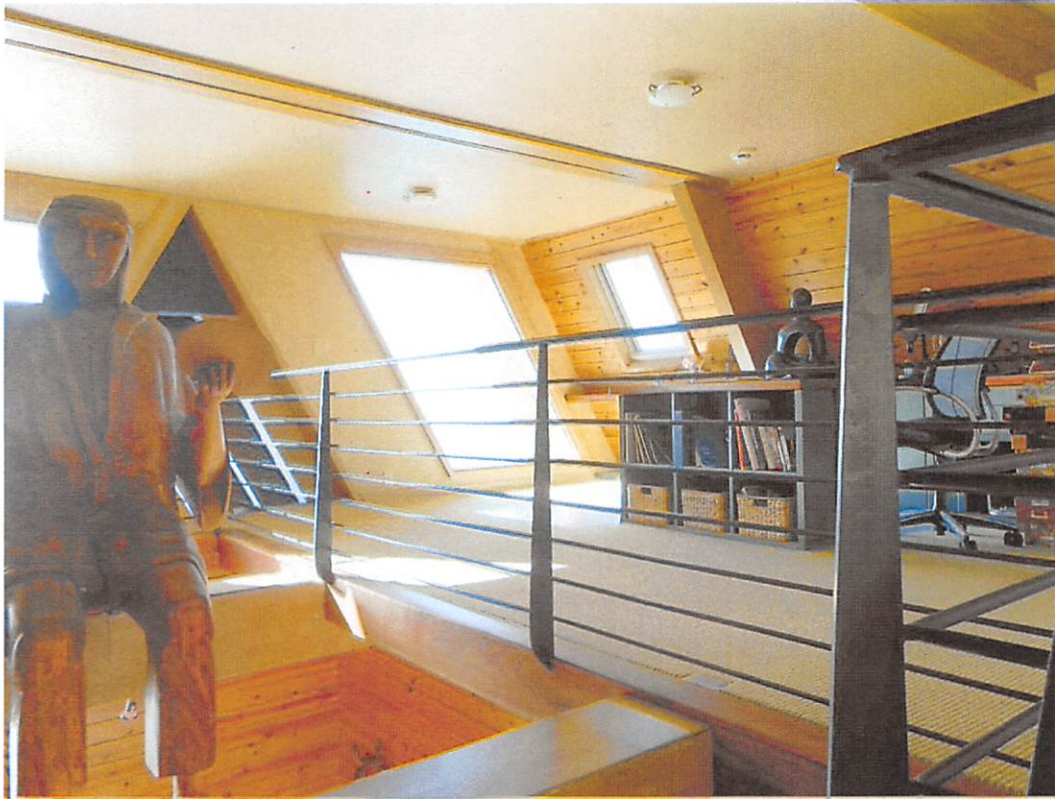
ABSTAIN:

Liz Claus, Chairwoman
Planning Commission

ATTEST:

Ursula Luna-Reynosa, Director
Community Development Department

Attachment #2 – Interior & Exterior Photos



ATTACHMENT #2





















Attachment #3 – View of South Elevation of A-Frame From Tunnel



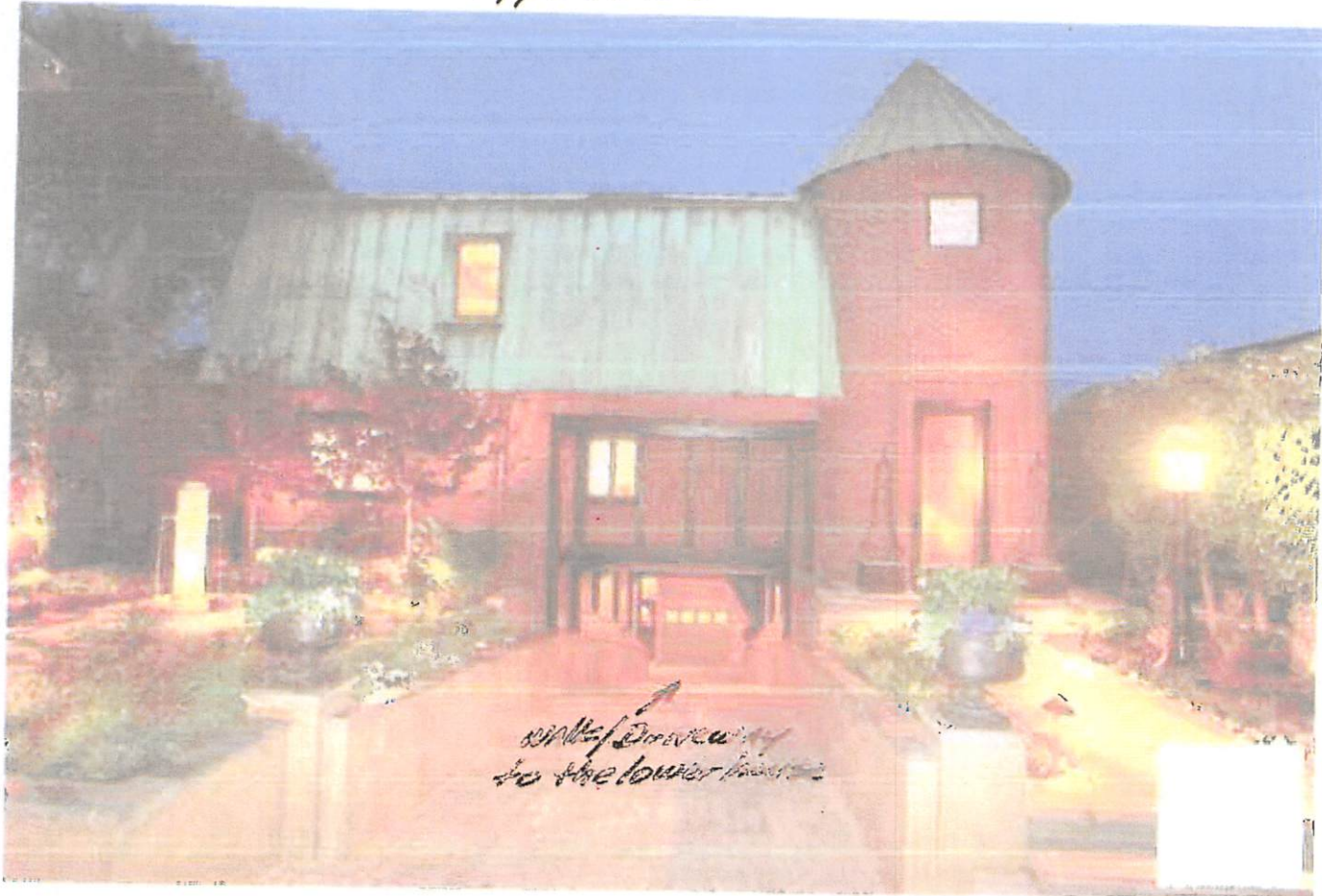
ATTACHMENT #3



The Lower House

ATTACHMENT #4

Upper House



ATTACHMENT #5

Upper House



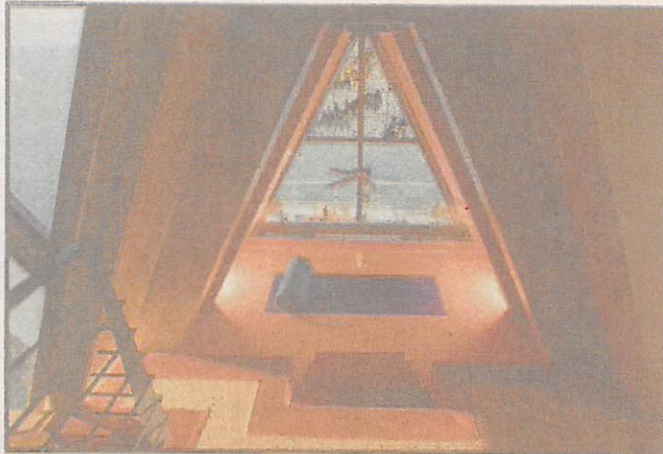
REAL ESTATE

Buying it in ..
Santa Ana
\$392,000 / PAGE 5

LeBron James picks a city with worse housing numbers / PAGE 5

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER Section editor Dave Petro: 714-796-4930 or dpetro@ocregister.com

SUNDAY, JULY 18, 2010



The A-frame roof of this Dana Point house provides a spot for yoga with a view. Built in 1957, the house was once part of the Dana Point historical tour.



The property has three separate residences, a main house and two guest houses with a combined eight bedrooms and six baths.

Some houses, especially the ones with a story to tell, are difficult to merely describe or put into words.

Built decades ago, they symbolized a dream for the original builders and stood proud and unique in their heyday. As years wore on, these homes aged and withered.

And then someone came along to bring their glow back.

Restoration projects and homes with history are attractive to buyers because they have lore — they aren't cookie-cutter, mass-produced structures.

Poised dramatically over the ocean and the Dana Point Harbor sits a property with an asking price

STORIED PROPERTIES

Owners uncover past grandeur in restoring houses along Orange County's south coast.

Story by KELLI HART and photos by LEONARD ORTIZ
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

of \$11.65 million. The compound — which contains an upper A-frame house, a lower house and an apartment totaling 7,350 square feet of living space on a 0.46-acre lot — serves as a landmark sight to sailors on the water.

And the house itself embodies a love for the ocean and nautical flair.

Ron Cook, the original owner and builder, would camp on the oceanfront bluff where the compound now sits and dream of his future home, Prudential California Realty listing agent Shauna Covington said.

SEE RESTORE • PAGE 20



The rooftop patio provides a view of Dana Point Harbor. The structure serves as a landmark sight for sailors on the water.



The man who built the house carved a giant wooden painter working on a two-story painting. Both are located in the lower residence area.

ATTACHMENT #6

RESTORE: Harbor home

FROM PAGE 1

Cook built the home in 1957 and sprinkled relics from the Queen Elizabeth I ship throughout.

Enamored with art and the sea, Cook used his own hands to create a carved wooden painter sitting high in the rafters of the lower home, posed as if he were splashing in paint onto a large painting of a ship.

A ship's maiden juts out from a wall overlooking the lower house's living room, and windows are replaced with original ship's portholes.

There's even an original ship's armory door that gives way to a wine closet.

All of these adornments were in the home before it received a face-lift.

The current owners, who asked not to be identified, took over the property a little more than five years ago and restored it in stages. The aesthetic upgrades took the whole five years to complete.

Fine finishes such as the Koa wood floors in the living room, the quark floors upstairs and the bamboo walls in the foyer match the home's feel and maintain the original integrity.

Marhnelle Hibbard, owner of a Laguna Beach Three Arch Bay house that served as a playground to Hollywood screenwriter Edward H. Griffith in the 1920s, is the visionary behind her own home's restoration.

"It's not fun to just scrape a place," Hibbard said of restoring. "It's the unpeeling of the onion ... take off layers to discover the real beauty."

The owners of the Dana Point house lived in it first before they began updating. Hibbard believes this is a way to get to know the property.

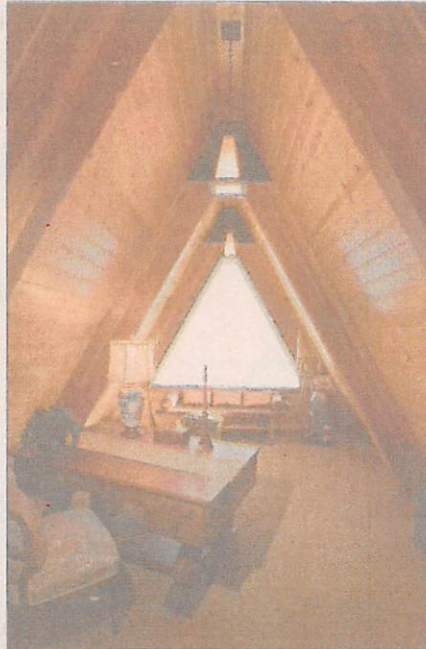
"Spend time with a property; the property has a personality," Hibbard said. "Allow that personality to be discovered. Allow what it is, and what it can be."

Hibbard's ocean-view property, which consists of a main house and a cottage, is on the market for \$13.9 million.

She and her husband are looking for their next restoration project, knowing they'll miss their Hollywood gem. Hibbard has a philosophy about the process: "I left this house better than when I found it."

CONTACT THE WRITER:

khart@ocregister.com or 949-454-7391



The A-roof creates a space for an office with a view. The original owner built the house as a testament to the ocean's grandeur.



A Joan of Arc statue anchors the corner of this A-frame office. Relics from the Queen Elizabeth I ship are sprinkled throughout the property.



The house is on the market for a price of \$11.65 million. It took the current owners a total of five years to restore.



The entrance features a spiral staircase and bamboo-covered walls. Koa wood floors were added to the living room to maintain the building's original feel.

PHOTOS: LEONARD ORTIZ, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER