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December 28, 2023

Ms. Cynthia Lovely, Principal Planner  
City of Sedona  
102 Roadrunner Drive  
Sedona, AZ 86336

Re: Determination of Eligibility for City of Sedona Landmark program, Kiva House, 56 Lynx Drive, Sedona, Coconino County, Arizona.

The City of Sedona Historic Preservation Ordinance Sec. 8.7, Procedures, defines “contributing” as a “classification applied to any historic resource signifying that it contributes to the defining characteristics and integrity of the landmark”. Further, in reviewing the City of Sedona historic preservation ordinances, I do not see a specific requirement that a historic resource be of a certain age to be eligible for the Landmark program.

The National Register Bulletin #15 defines seven aspects of historic integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

This assessment of the eligibility of the Kiva House for the Landmark program will take these criteria into consideration.

According to the applicant’s documentation, the Kiva House was completed in 1978, approximately 45 years ago.

The *location* of the Kiva house was chosen for the site which would allow the building to take advantage of the views and integrate the building into the site. The location has not changed; the parcel has not been altered (.3 acres).

The *design* of the Kiva House was apparently somewhat controversial at the time. The inspiration for the design as described by L. David Grooms, the designer/builder, was the ancient architecture of the Puebloan culture. Grooms used innovative (at the time) design elements to take advantage of the location and to build an energy efficient house, including a

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“round tower-like structure in the front of the house.” The design of the Kiva House is unchanged. There have been no additional structures.

The *setting* was chosen to orient the house into the site and to mitigate disruption to existing vegetation, optimize views and reflect the owners desire to “provide lifestyle off the street.” The house was designed to with the preservation of foliage and natural landscape features to every extent possible (Grooms). There apparently have been no significant changes to the immediate setting. This area of Sedona has grown exceptionally, particularly in the last 25 years, so the viewsheds of the Kiva House may have been altered by significant development in the area.

To evoke the inspiration for the Pueblo Culture design of the house, Grooms used modern *materials*: wood for the framing; stucco over insulated board for the exterior; redwood paneling for much of the interior, which is also structural; wood-framed double glazed casement windows for views and ventilation; vigas and a low pitch for the roof.

Based on the documentation included with the application for designation as a landmark, Grooms’ narrative clearly sets forth the care and concern he took in choosing the materials and designing the Kiva House to best utilize those materials, particularly regarding the interior ceiling system over the mostly-round Kiva room. Grooms’ narrative describes the *workmanship* required to construct the Kiva House. Other than a repair to the north exterior of the Kiva House due to termite damage, the materials have performed well and lasted for approximately 45 years without any significant issues or other repairs, which have no effect on the workmanship.

The integrity of “*feeling*” can be elusive in evaluating a property that the evaluator has not actually seen. Grooms’ detailed description of the Kiva House and his inspiration in designing it to reflect the Puebloan Culture while at the same time building a modern “Solar Age Pueblo” in the beautiful landscape of Sedona reflects a feeling of warmth, comfort and a beautiful setting. All of these elements contribute to the “*feeling*” of the building and its location, design, setting, materials and workmanship.

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The *association* of the Kiva House with the traditional building materials and designs of Sedona residential housing was probably not present in 1978. But today, stucco and many elements of design features from other parts of Arizona, the United States, the World and other cultures are numerous and interpreted in many ways, making the Kiva House “fit in” to the eclectic Sedona design aesthetic today.

In my opinion, based on the criteria set forth in the Sedona ordinances regarding Historic Preservation and the National Register criteria for Historic Integrity, the elements of the Kiva House “contribute(s) to the defining characteristics and integrity of the landmark” and is well qualified to be designated as a City of Sedona Landmark.

Sincerely,

Nancy Burgess

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