



November 16, 2022

RE: Comments on CUP for PROJ-2022-00119

Dear Jim Morrissey via email jim.morrissey@lus.sbcounty.gov -

Morongo Basin Historical Society's (MBHS) mission is to collect, conserve and exhibit artifacts; to collect, display, interpret and publish memorabilia relating to the history of the Morongo Basin; to locate identify, and preserve historic sites; to promote the research and study of local history and to share the rich heritage of the Morongo Basin with all the communities within and surrounding it.

The Reche Homestead was established when Charlie Reche dug the first wells in the area to process his mining rocks more than 100 years ago. The Integratron and Reche's Homestead have some of the oldest wells in the Basin. The Rock House (partially fallen and extremely fragile) was his home. The large wash (a tributary of Pipes Wash) runs directly through the Reche property and heads toward the Giant Rock lake bed. There are very old water resources on the homestead property that are described in a YouTube video by Marina West at the Big Horn Water District: <https://youtu.be/EsOhg5tGXIU?t=1932>.

Also, a story written by George VanTassel about the Reche property can be found here: <https://www.integratron.com/a-brief-history-of-giant-rock-covering-the-last-90-years-1887-1977>

You can begin to appreciate the historic importance of the Reche Well, Reche Homestead, and the fact that The Integratron is amazingly still utilizing the Reche Well to date.

We also understand there is a section of the California Environmental Quality Act that addresses developments near historical resources:

CEQA § 15064.5. Determining the Significance of Impacts to Archaeological and Historical Resources.

We'd like to point out the following as areas of concern:

(1) A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code § 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq.).



Page 1 of 2

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(2) A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, shall be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.

(3) Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be a historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code, § 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852).

It's our position that this development which is located in a wash and very near historical resources that it would detrimentally impact said resources. Like many other construction projects and especially in desert areas, the early stages would see the builders moving a significant amount of earth. At the same time, the increased long-term road and foot traffic would undoubtedly impact the flow of water through the wash, increasing the potential of water backing up towards the historical landmarks. The Reche Homestead is already very close to an active flood/wash area and any increase in water flow through/next to the homestead will have a damaging impact.

MBHS trusts you will take further discovery steps to research the historical and fragile ecosystem that makes this unique land a delicate area of concern and come to the conclusion that this site is not suitable for a "Campground." In summary, we respectfully advise against any development within proximity to these two historical points for the reasons mentioned above and for the purpose of historic preservation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Morongo Basin Historical Society Board of Directors

