



DATE: April 28, 2014

AGENDA ITEM # 3

**TO:** Historical Commission  
**FROM:** Zachary Dahl, Staff Liaison  
**SUBJECT:** 13-H-03 – 10 Yerba Buena Avenue

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Recommend approval the architectural details and specifications for the tank house and barn

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**BACKGROUND**

On October 28, 2013, the Historical Commission reviewed a project on a Historic Resource property that included an addition and remodel to the main house, conversion of the water tower into a second living unit and conversion of the barn (aka carriage house) into a two-car garage. The Commission recommended approval of the project with following condition:

1. Prior to issuance of the building permit, the applicant shall provide architectural details and specifications for the proposed exterior modifications to the main house and accessory buildings for review by the Historical Commission.

Following the Commission's recommendation, the project was reviewed and approved by the Design Review Commission on November 20, 2013 with the above referenced condition.

**DISCUSSION**

The project on this property is being split up into two phases, with the first phase including the remodel and rehabilitation of the water tower and barn. The second phase will include the reorientation, addition/remodel and rehabilitation of the main house. The plans and materials included with this report cover the first phase of the project. Architectural details and specifications for the main house will be provided to the Commission for review prior to the issuance of the building permit for the second phase of the project.

As outlined in the attached letters from the project architect and historic architect, the project has been designed to comply with Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. As a designated Historic Resource, the property is required to comply with the standards outlined in the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, but not the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which require higher thresholds for rehabilitation, restoration and preservation. This higher threshold is only required for designated Historic Landmark properties, so the project is exceeding the City's requirements for historic preservation and restoration of a Historic Resource property. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission approve architectural details and specifications for the water tower and barn accessory structures.

Cc: Greg Evard, Applicant and Architect  
Duco and Laurie Pasmooij, Owners

Attachments:

- A. Project Plans
- B. Applicant Letter
- C. Secretary of the Interior's Standards Review Letter

## FINDINGS

13-H-03 – 10 Yerba Buena Avenue

With regard to the Advisory Review, the Historical Commission finds the following in accordance with Section 12.44.140 of the Municipal Code:

1. The project complies with all provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 12.44);  
and
2. The project does not adversely affect the physical integrity or the historic significance of the subject property.



April 21, 2014

Mr. Zach Dahl, Planner  
Los Altos Planning Department  
1 North San Antonio Road  
Los Altos, CA 94022

Dear Zach,

I am writing this letter to request a Historical Commission review of the architectural details and specifications for the proposed exterior modifications to the accessory structures located at 10 Yerba Buena Avenue in Los Altos. Both the Historical Commission and the DRC requested this review as a condition of approval when they previously approved this project. We have been working closely with Archives and Architecture, our historic preservation consultant, and are please to present these detailed drawings for your review. Archives and Architecture has reviewed the plans for compliance with the *Secretary of the Interiors's Standards for Rehabilitation*, exceeding the requirements of review for this local historic resource. We appreciate the strong support we have received for the project and look forward to starting construction and bringing these structures back to life.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gregory P. Evard', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Gregory P. Evard, AIA



**SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS REVIEW**

**PROPOSED REHABILITATION PROJECT**

**of the**

**WATER TOWER AND GARAGE AT THE HISTORIC WIDEMAN HOUSE**

Duco and Laurie Pasmooij Residence

10 Yerba Buena Avenue  
(Parcel Number 167-29-059)  
Los Altos, Santa Clara County  
California

For:

Duco and Laurie Pasmooij  
10 Yerba Buena Avenue  
(Parcel Number 167-29-059)  
Los Altos, CA 94022

Prepared by:

**ARCHIVES & ARCHITECTURE LLC**  
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Leslie A. G. Dill, Partner and Historic Architect

April 21, 2014

## INTRODUCTION

### Summary

This proposed barn and water tower project phase of work meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties – Rehabilitation Standards* (Standards).

### Report Intent

Archives & Architecture, LLC was retained by Duco and Laurie Pasmooij to conduct a Secretary of the Interior's Standards Review of the proposed reorientation, rehabilitation and addition project proposed for a historic house at 10 Yerba Buena Avenue, Los Altos, California. The project will be divided into two phases of work; first, the accessory structures, the barn and water tower, will be rehabilitated; then the main house will be rehabilitated. For this report, Archives & Architecture was asked to review the plans, exterior elevations, and site plan of the first phase to determine if the work is compatible with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* (Standards). The Standards are understood to be a common set of guidelines for the review of historic buildings and are used by many communities during the environmental review process to determine the potential impact of a project on an identified resource. In a previous report, dated September 6, 2013, A&A reviewed a conceptual set of drawing with regard to the overall form of the proposed massing and spatial relationships of all three buildings on the site, as well as a proposed reorientation of the house. This phase of work was represented generally in that approved review.

### Qualifications

Leslie A. G. Dill, Partner of the firm Archives & Architecture, has a Master of Architecture with a certificate in Historic Preservation from the University of Virginia. She is licensed in California as an architect. Ms. Dill is listed with the California Office of Historic Preservation as meeting the requirements to perform identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment activities within the professions of Historic Architect and Architectural Historian in compliance with state and federal environmental laws. The Northwest Information Center utilizes the criteria of the National Park Service as outlined in 36 CFR Part 61.

### Review Methodology

For this report, Leslie Dill viewed the exterior of the residence in its current configuration, the accessory buildings in their current configuration and condition, and reviewed the *Department of parks* and the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Form 523 (DPR523 Form), written by Archives & Architecture, LLC, San José, California, dated May 7, 2013. The architect, Gregory P. Evard, Architect, AIA, and the owner, Duco Pasmooij, discussed the property, its significance, the character-defining features of the resources, and the proposed design. Then Ms. Dill evaluated, according to the Standards, the reorientation and massing of the proposed design that was electronically forwarded as progress prints from the architect, dated August 26, 2013. Note that the overall project was presented as an early stage of design, and was not reviewed for full compatibility with the Standards, and it was determined by the City of Los Altos to be compatible with the Standards with regard to massing and spatial relationships of the buildings. This phase represents the rehabilitation of the detached water tower and garage/barn. Ms. Dill evaluated, according to the Standards, the proposed design that was electronically forwarded as submittal prints from the architect, dated April 17, 2014.

### Disclaimers

This report addresses the project plans in terms of historically compatible design of the exterior of the reoriented residence. The consultant has not undertaken and will not undertake an evaluation or report on the structural conditions or other related safety hazards that might or might not exist at the site and

building, and will not review the proposed project for structural soundness or other safety concerns. The Consultant has not undertaken analysis of the site to evaluate the potential for subsurface resources.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

### **Character of the Existing Resource**

Archives & Architecture, LLC (A&A) evaluated the architectural significance of the historic house at 10 Yerba Buena Avenue, in the DPR 523, dated May 7, 2013. A&A described the house as

*...presently listed on the City's Inventory as a Historic Resource under Municipal Code Section 12.44.060. It was identified in the City's first survey in the 1980s by Patricia Leach, and later recorded by Glory Anne Laffey in 1997, and reviewed by the Historical Commission placed the property on the Inventory on September 28, 1997.*

*Leach had first noted the special qualities of the site due to the extant tankhouse, and Sheila McElroy, as a part of a 2010-2011 Inventory Update for the City of Los Altos indicated that the property had local significance for its distinctive architecture, giving the property a California Historical Resource Status Code of 5S1.*

*The listing was reviewed as a part of this investigation and evaluation, and it was found that the property continues to meet the criteria for designation as a Historic Resource according the Municipal Code Section 12.44.040:*

- A. Age: the house on the subject property is over 101 years old and meets the age criteria.*
- B. Integrity: the property, as noted on the previous page, retains most, but not all of its, historical integrity over time as per the National Register's seven aspects of integrity; particularly, the setting has changed a great deal over time. However, the majority of the original character-defining materials and the workmanship of this house have been preserved, and the property reflects the original design and feeling from its period of significance, which is 1911.*
- C. Significance: the property is clearly significant for its architecture/design, as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Arts and Crafts era in its Craftsman design. None of the associated persons, as explained in the two previous pages, are important to history, and no events or patterns are associated with the property that can be said to have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of local or regional history, or cultural heritage of California or the United States. The property also is unlikely to yield important information about prehistory or history that is unknown at this time.*

*The property therefore appears eligible for the California Register under Criterion (3), as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of Craftsman design related to the Craftsman era in residential architecture of about 1905–1925.*

### **Summary of the Proposed Project**

The proposed project, as presented in the set of architectural drawings noted above, is described in the project drawings as follows:

*Remodel and restore two historic accessory structures as approved by the design review commission on November 20, 2013. The existing water tower is to be remodeled into a guest house with a new foundation and all new building systems including electrical, mechanical and*

*plumbing. Structural and seismic improvements will also bring the structure up to code. New interior finishes, windows, doors and exterior finishes will be included. The existing barn is to be remodeled into a garage with a new foundation, new electrical and a new laundry closet. Structural and seismic improvements will also bring the structure up to code. Some new interior finishes will be included along with new windows, doors and exterior finishes.*

#### **SECRETARY'S STANDARD'S REVIEW:**

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* (Standards), originally published in 1977 and revised in 1990, include ten standards that present a recommended approach to repair, while preserving those portions or features that convey a resource's historical, cultural, or architectural values. Accordingly, Standards states that, "Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values". Following is a summary of the review with a list of the Standards and associated analysis for this project:

1. **"A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships."**

Analysis: There is no change of current use proposed for this residential property. The residential living space within the water tower and the residential-garage use of the historic barn building preserve the character-defining features and spatial relationships of the historic design, as well as preserve the residential feelings, scale, setting, and associations of the property; therefore, the uses are compatible.

2. **"The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided."**

Analysis: No massing is proposed for removal in this phase of work; the forms and footprints of the historic buildings will be preserved. Specifically, the water tower will retain its significant tapered three-story form and minimal ornamentation, and the barn will be preserved in its existing location, with its gabled roof, knee braces, and gabled accent dormer.

3. **"Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken."**

Analysis: There are no proposed changes are that might be mistaken for original features. All new elements have adequate differentiation. See also Standard 9.

4. **"Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved."**

Analysis: It is understood that no existing changes to the building have acquired historic significance in their own right.

5. **“Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.”**

Analysis: The features and finishes that characterize these two buildings are proposed to be preserved in this project. Specifically, water tower will continue to have a shingled, tapered exterior with minimal fenestration at the main tower, and the deeply overhanging tank deck is preserved. The existing one-story addition does not conceal or conflict with any significant character-defining features. The barn’s character-defining features will also be preserved, including the deep eaves and knee braces, three square accent windows, a larger multi-lite window, the apex louvers and hayloft elements, and the flush dormer. The sharply cut wall shingles, now only covered some of the building, will be removed and replaced in-kind (see Standard 6, below).

6. **“Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.”**

Analysis: In general, the historic features are shown as preserved in the project drawings.

One significant feature identified in this project for replacement-in-kind is the wood-shingle wall siding. It is appropriate to replace this material in this project for a variety of reasons. The primary justification of replacement is that the vast majority of the siding has already been removed and replaced with an inferior shingle. Essentially all of the siding has already been removed at the water tower (only a small patch of historic shingles remains, concealed within the attic of the current addition), and about 2/3 to 3/4 of the shingles at the barn have previously been replaced. The replacement of the shingles allows the buildings to be safely seismically upgraded with new plywood sheathing, stabilizing the buildings for the future. This particular style of wood shingles—tightly installed with a very smooth texture—lends itself to being replaced (rather than expected to project patina). The style of shingles is documented and can be replicated. Of concern was that the original window trim might be altered by the installation of the sheathing thickness, but all the historic windows will be appropriately relocated in this project (see Standard 9) and the trim reveal can be reproduced in the new placements.

7. **“Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.”**

Analysis: No chemical treatments are shown as proposed in this proposed phase of work. The project is proposed for painting, and the trim is noted to be sanded and primed; this is an appropriately gentle treatment for paint preparation for wood.

8. **“Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.”**

Analysis: Archeological resources are not evaluated in this report.

9. **“New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.”**

Analysis: Other than an enlargement of a utility-room bump-out at the rear of the water tower building, there are no new additions proposed for these accessory structures. The proposed exterior alterations are compatible in scale, size, material, and spatial relationships that characterize the historic property.

At the water tower building, specifically, the new windows at the tower have a pattern of lites that is compatible in scale and size with the main house and barn historic windows, while the double-pane construction and vertical shape of the casement openings is differentiated from the historic Craftsman-era style of the house. The top deck is not altered; the north elevation remains unfenestrated, representing what was the original design of the tower. The existing one-story wing has new windows, skylights, and doors of a size and scale that is slightly more differentiated. The panes of glass are somewhat larger (and, thus, somewhat more modern in this property’s context), an appropriate design approach for a non-historic portion of the structure. The scale of the proposed openings and lites, however, does not overwhelm the scale of the historic elements or detract visually from the original design. The eave brackets on the south gable of the one-story wing are differentiated from the knee braces of the garage and from the outlookers of the main house. Although the siding will be new, it does not represent an alteration (see Standard 6, above).

At the garage building, the character-defining windows are preserved in new locations that will function appropriately for the new use of the building. The new windows include muntin patterns that are compatible in scale with the historic windows, but are differentiated in style from all the original elements. The locations of the new windows create an appropriate proportion of siding segments and fenestration that is compatible with the original window placement. The two proposed garage doors are clearly modern in their construction, but are designed to suggest the style and materials of the original barn door that remains on the property but removed from the structure. The two smaller doors have some traditional detailing, but will be differentiated by their materials and placement. The new handrail at the hayloft door is made of a material that is compatible with the agricultural/residential roots of the property, and the simplicity of the pattern is appropriate with regard to the historic function of the building.

10. **“New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.”**

Analysis: The essential form and integrity of the historic property would be maintained in this phase of the project. The alterations would appear to be appropriately reversible through the removal of fenestration and the replacement of matching siding.

## Conclusion

The currently proposed water tower and barn project meets the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*.