



DATE: November 24, 2014

AGENDA ITEM # 2

TO: Historical Commission
FROM: Zachary Dahl, Senior Planner
SUBJECT: 14-H-07 – 1448 Fowler Lane

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a Historic Alteration Permit to allow minor alterations to the exterior of a designated Historic Landmark property, subject to the findings

BACKGROUND

This property contains a residence that was constructed in Los Altos' early period of development (circa 1898) and is a rare example of a Dutch Colonial Revival style farmhouse in the City. Though the residence has diminished integrity of setting and feeling as an early farmhouse due to the surrounding newer development, it retains a high degree of integrity in its materials, design, location and workmanship. On June 25, 2013, following the Historical Commission recommendation, the City Council designated the property as a Historic Landmark. Following the landmark designation, the owner entered into a historic preservation agreement with the City and made the property subject to the Mills Act.

DISCUSSION

The proposed project, a minor exterior alteration to the main house, includes rebuilding the existing first story veranda and railings located along the left side of the house and construction of a new deck (veranda) at the rear. The front porch will also be rebuilt to replace rotting and deteriorating materials. A letter from the owner (Attachment A) includes additional information about the project.

The project was reviewed by historical professional Bonnie Bamburg with Urban Programmers to ensure that it was consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Structures. As outlined in the attached letter, the proposed exterior alterations do not adversely affect the physical integrity or the historic significance of the property and are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Therefore, staff recommends approval of this project.

Cc: John Geleynse, Applicant and Owner
Chris Grasso, Architect

Attachments:

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

FINDINGS

14-H-07 – 1448 Fowler Lane

With regard to the Historic Alteration Permit for the project at 1448 Fowler Lane, the Historical Commission finds the following in accordance with Section 12.44.150 of the Municipal Code:

1. The project complies with all provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 12.44);
2. The project does not adversely affect the physical integrity or the historic significance of the subject property; and
3. The project is in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

FROM THE GELEYNSE'S
1448 FOWLER LANE

November 10, 2014

Los Altos Historical Commission
c/o Zachary Dahl, Senior Planner
City of Los Altos

Dear Commissioners,

A little more than a year ago, you approved having our home added to the Los Altos Historical Resource list (#20) and designated as a California Historic Landmark. Since then we've invested in upgrades and rehabilitation, and our recent inclusion in the California Mills Act only encourages us to do more.

This letter seeks your approval to rebuild and restore the front porch and south side veranda. These structures both exhibit extensive dry rot and disrepair due to weather exposure and lack of maintenance by previous owners. See photos below.

We'd like to rebuild and repair the current structures, while maintaining their current appearance which we believe to be original. We'd replace rotted wooden railings and floor with matching materials. We'd remove tar and tin patching, and a coating of fluid-applied waterproofing over an added layer of plywood, which we believe was installed by a previous owner to repair and prevent further weather damage, and replace it with tongue and groove decking consistent with the front porch. We'd remove a white metal fence segment which doesn't match anything or the style of the home.

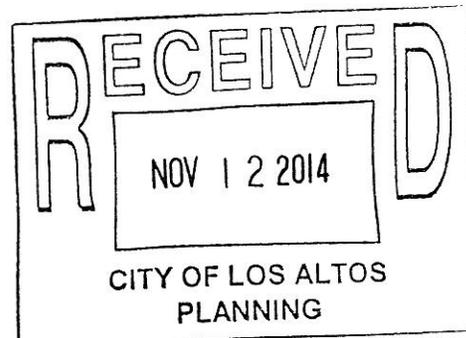
In combination with the restoration work, we'd also like to enhance the usability of the veranda by adding a small extension at the rear of the home (invisible from the street or driveway) to provide quick access to the kitchen and reduce foot traffic through the original historic dining room. Kitchen access would require replacing a weather-worn exterior window with a door matching other exterior doors and trim.

Thank you for considering our request for approval to continue restoring our historic home.

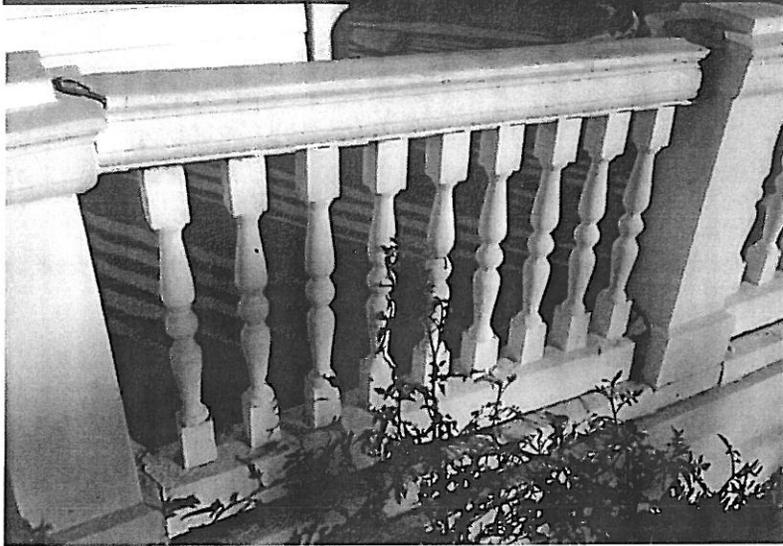
Sincerely,



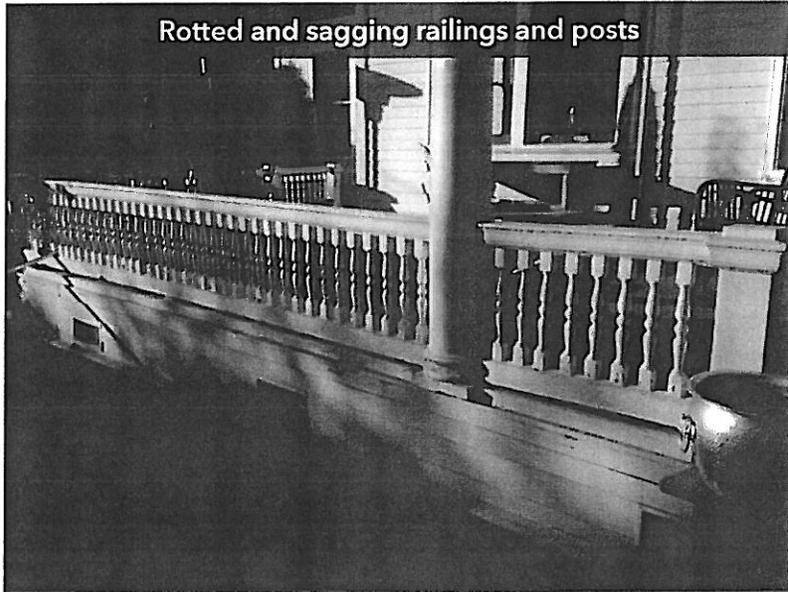
John (and Melanie) GeleyNSE



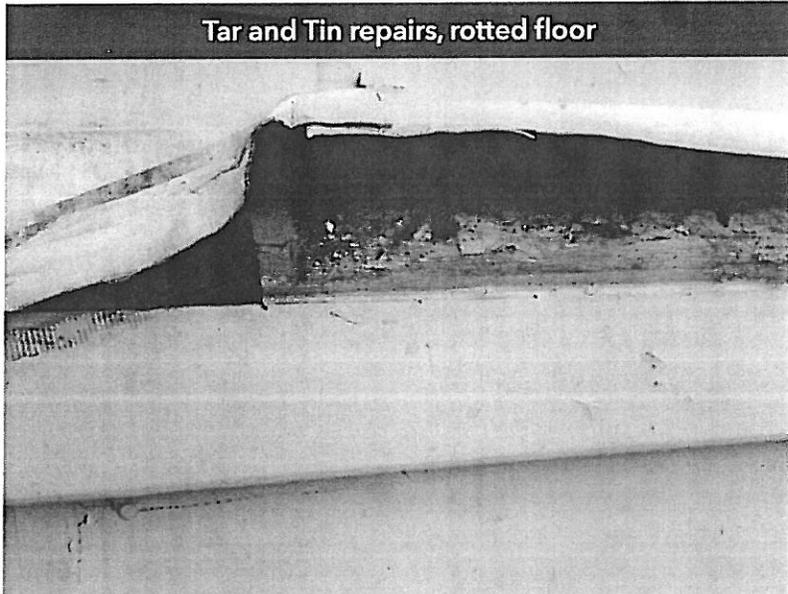
Rotted railings, peeling paint



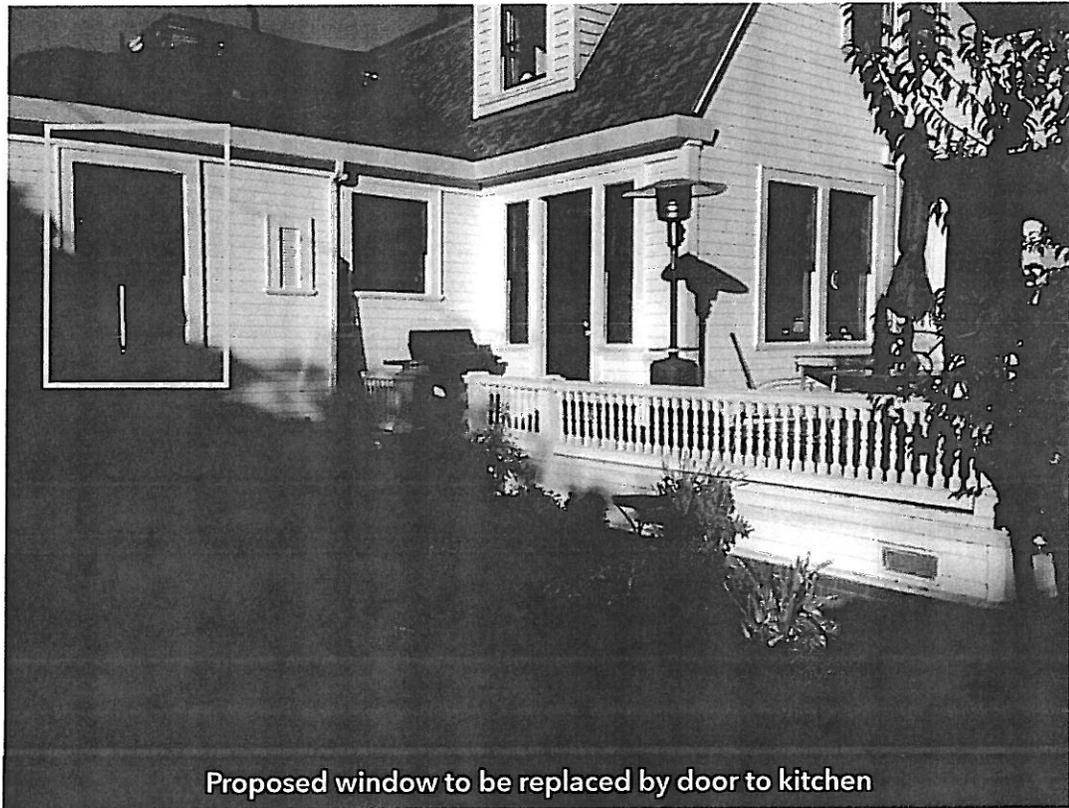
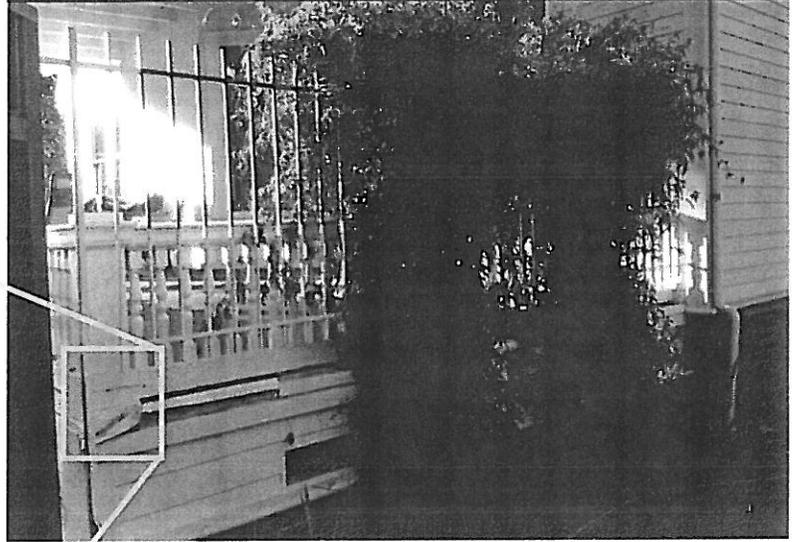
Rotted and sagging railings and posts



Tar and Tin repairs, rotted floor



Unmatched metal bar fence



Proposed window to be replaced by door to kitchen

URBAN PROGRAMMERS

September 25, 2014

John Geleynse
1448 Fowler Lane
Los Altos CA

Subject: Veranda reconstruction at 1448 Fowler Lane

Dear Mr. Geleynse,

At your request Urban Programmers has reviewed the plans submitted to us, prepared by Christopher Grasso, Architect, dated September 9, 2014. The purpose of our review was to consider the proposed work in comparison to the Secretary of The Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. The 10 standards and accompanying guidelines are considered the appropriate guidance for buildings that are historic landmarks in Los Altos. For this review we included Marvin Bamberg AIA, who is listed with the NWIC in historic architecture.

The Standards for Rehabilitation(codified in 36 CFR 67 for use in the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program) address the most prevalent treatment. "Rehabilitation" is defined as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values."

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided
3. Each property shall 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 buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.



Bonnie Bamberg, owner
10710 Ridgeview Avenue
San Jose California
95127
USA

Phone: 408-254-7171
Fax: 408-254-0969
E-mail: bbamberg@USA.net

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

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

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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.

The proposed work retains the historic use of the building as a family residence, Standard 1, and does not involve significant archeological resources, Standard 8.

The proposed work is divided into two categories;

1. Repair and reconstruction in place, using materials that are the same or very similar to the original materials. The existing porch and veranda of the building are proposed to be constructed in wood of approximate dimensions and style to the existing historic porch/veranda. The exception is the steps leading to the swimming pool which were added in a style that is not compatible with the historic architecture.

The proposed work appears in conformance with the Standards 2, 3, 4,5,6,7,9 and 10.

Standard 2 the historic character of the building is preserved by the repair and reconstruction of the historic feature.

Standard 3 The stairs that were added to the veranda well after it was constructed are not considered significant architectural features added to the historic building. Replacing the stairs with new stairs that better fit the original style of the building is not adding conjecture or elements from another period or building.

Standard 4. The stairs to be replaced are not significant architectural features added to the historic building, and have not achieved significance in their own right

Standard 5. The porch is structurally unsound and is in need of repair/replacement. The work will remove some elements of materials and craftsmanship from the time the house was constructed, however to repair and replace in kind preserves the overall design of the building and retains the construction and craftsmanship of the main building.

Standard 6. The proposed work to repair and if necessary replace the porch materials is in keeping with the original design and materials. The work follows the historic features of the building.

Standard 7. No harsh chemicals or sandblasting are proposed for this project.

Standard 9. While not intended specifically for additions as minor as the stairs proposed for this house, the guidance is met by the introduction of stairs more in keeping with the original design of the building. To differentiate this work from the historic front stairs it is suggested that the paint be a different shade.

Standard 10. The porch/veranda repair/ replacement is not considered new construction because it does not alter the design of the historic building. The new stairs, should they ever be removed would not impact the structure of the house or porch.

After reviewing the proposed repair/reconstruction in place, it is our opinion that the work conforms to the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation.

2. The second category of proposed work is to remove non-historic metal railings, add a redesigned rear porch, doorm and stairs. The proposed work appears in conformance with the Standards 2, 3, 4,5,6,7,9 and 10.

The metal railing (fence) is an addition and was not part of the historic building or setting. It appears that the purpose of this fence was related to the use of the swimming pool. Removing the railing is in keeping with the standards to retain the historic character of the building.

The rear porch is also an addition as are the stairs. Located on the rear façade and not visible from the front of the house, this porch area is a utilitarian aspect of the house. To enlarge the existing porch area in a mode compatible with the historic design of the building appears to meet the standards. Adding a new door into this facade appears to meet the standards.

Standard 2. The historic character of the building is not diminished by this proposed work.

Standard 3. The proposed porch and stairs are compatible with the historic architecture but have a contemporary feel in the stairs and are thus not creating a false sense of history. As with the stairs on the side, it is recommended that this new section be differentiated in color tone.

Standard 4. The proposed redesign of the rear porch does not remove architectural features that have achieved historic significance.

Standard 5. Adding the new porch configuration does not destroy character defining elements of materials or craftsmanship.

Standard 6. The addition of porch and stairs is not a significant historic feature of the building.

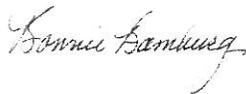
Standard 7. No harsh or abrasive treatments are proposed.

Standards 9 & 10. The porch, should it ever be removed, is an exterior and free standing structure so that its removal would not in impact the structure of the historic house.

Considering the plans cited at the beginning of this letter we find the proposed repair/replacement of the porch structure and the enlargement of the rear porch to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

We are available to answer any questions regarding this assessment.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bonnie Bamberg".

Bonnie Bamberg