



DATE: April 27, 2020

AGENDA ITEM #1

## AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Historical Commission  
**FROM:** Sean Gallegos, Staff Liaison  
**SUBJECT:** H20-0001 – 725 University Avenue

### RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend approval of an addition and minor exterior alterations to a Historic Resource property subject to the listed findings

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### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is an application for alterations to a designated historic resource property at 725 University Avenue. The scope of work includes a 60-foot square-foot addition at the second story and exterior alterations to the front, interior side, exterior side and rear of the structure, including demolition of 40 square feet of a 160 square-foot non-historic accessory structure (shed).

The alterations to the main house include: replacing an existing door with a new window for bedroom No. 2 along the second story of the exterior (south) side elevation; the 60 square-foot enclosure (addition) of a discontinuous area between the existing office and bedroom No. 2 along the second story of the interior (north) side elevation, the replacement of one four panel window along the first story of the interior (north) side elevation with a French door, the removal of two existing windows along the second story of the interior (north) side elevation, the addition of one medium-sized window for a bathroom along the second story of the interior (north) side elevation, a new dormer with two medium-sized windows along the second story of the front (west) elevation, and the replacement of one non-historic window with a new single-hung window along the first story of the front (west) elevation.

### BACKGROUND

On July 27, 2018, the Historical Commission approved an application for alterations to the historic resource property at 725 University Avenue. The scope of work includes work to the front, side and rear yard areas of the property, including demolition of a non-historic pergola and accessory structure, construction of a new accessory structure along the rear property line, new landscaping, decks, garden tower, outdoor kitchen, fire pit, new spa, and associated hardscape and landscaping improvements.

The residence at 725 University Avenue, known as the Scheid Residence was constructed in 1911 during Los Altos' early residential development period. This large, rambling two-story Craftsman

style house is a good representative example of its style, and retains a good degree of integrity of location, workmanship, feeling, design and materials. The 2011 Department Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms provides additional information about the structure's historic significance and physical integrity, is included as Attachment A.

## DISCUSSION

The historic character of the Craftsman style building is found in its two-story form, two front facing gables, steeply pitched roof, painted wood shingle siding, open eaves with exposed rafters and roof beam ends, shed dormer with tripartite multi-pane window and multi-pane fixed, casement and double-hung windows. Historical professional, Charles Duncan with Interactive Resource reviewed the project to ensure consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Structures (SOIS) (Attachment B and C), and the historian's and staff's comments are provided below:

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.*

The Scheid residence remains a single-family residence.

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

The mass, scale and in general the historic fabric of the Scheid residence was retained and preserved. Changes to the interior were required to accommodate the current lifestyles of a family that would otherwise preserve the character of the house.

The removal of two existing windows along the second story of the interior (north) side elevation, the replacement one four panel window along the first story of the interior (north) side elevation with a French , the addition of one medium-sized window for a bathroom along the second story of the interior (north) side elevation, a new dormer with two medium-sized windows along the second story of the front (west) elevation, and the replacement of one non-historic window with a new single-hung window along the first story of the front (west) elevation do not impact overall character defining features of the site or its historical integrity. The window and door replacements with acceptable wood-frame assemblies is consistent with SOIS No. 2 due to being compatible with the original material, shapes and styles.

3. *"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."*

The limited project scope only includes an additional dormer and a roof extension at the rear of the house and skylights toward the front. The project seeks to maintain the historic integrity of the house with minimally invasive upgrades. Windows will be replaced with acceptable wood-frame assemblies that are compatible with the original shapes and styles. The scheme does not add conjectural features or elements from other buildings.

4. *"Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved."*

The property has experienced additions and alterations to the rear and eastern rear portion of the house. These, for the most part appear to be fairly recent — less than fifty years old. The mass, footprint and major rooflines are largely original, and the property maintains its historic integrity. These elements will not be affected by the project.

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

The distinctive elements and general appearance of the 1911 Craftsman Style house is intact. The limited scope of the project results in the natural preservation of the construction techniques features, finishes and examples of the turn of the twentieth century carpenters craft. All proposed work is additive and occurs only on the roof.

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.”

As stated above, the built fabric of the house is original. It has been well maintained over time and deterioration is not evident based upon visual inspection. If material deterioration is found during construction every effort will be made to repair the element in situ?. If the extent of deterioration requires replacement, it will occur in-kind.

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.

Due to the work being limited to the roof, there will be no physical or chemical treatments that will affect the wood shingle or wood trim.

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

The project scope does include foundation work or landscaping that would affect the site. Because the ground was disturbed previously in 1911, and subsequently with landscape improvements, it is unlikely that undisturbed archeological resources are present at the site.

9. *“New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall 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 environment.”*

The scope of this project does not include additions or related new construction that will destroy historic materials because the work is additive. The massing, size and scale of the building will retain its original 1911 residential character. The new roof dormer to the north west will be similar in size to the existing dormers which are likely also earlier additions. The roof extension to the east will connect with the main north-south roof bringing order to a chaotic series of roof conditions.

The interior (north) side addition extends an existing roof and links previously unconnected spaces to merge the west side with the east side of the main north-south roof. The dormer along the front (west) elevation is a new roofed structure, with two windows, that projects vertically beyond the plane of a pitched roof to increase the ceiling height of existing floor area. The new 60 square-foot addition along the second story of interior (north) side elevation and the new dormer with two medium-sized windows along the second story of the front (west) elevation does not remove historic materials or alter features or spaces that characterize the historic building.

According to the project historian, standard No. 9 also seeks to discourage “false historicism”; however, implicit in this standard is the idea of scale and quantity. The application is commonly understood to address larger additions with additional footprint, or additions that add substantial height.”

The second story additions involve a connected addition along the interior (north) side and a dormer along the front (west) to a simple craftsman house constructed in 1911. According to the project historian, “the application of this standard is rigorous in creating distinctions between the original house and the addition using a diminished footprint, mass, cladding materials and color. The task is to allow the original house to predominate while clearly making a distinction between.” The use of a different cladding material to make a distinction between the new additions and original fabric serves no purpose relative to the intent of Standard No. 9 due to the scale of the exterior modifications. The additions comply with the SOIS Standard No. 9 due to the additions being small in scale in relation to the overall scale of the property.

As outlined in the report from the Historical professional, Charles Duncan with Interactive Resource, the proposed additions and 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 for the Treatment of Historic Structures.

In order to make a positive advisory recommendation, the Commission will need to find that the project is consistent with the provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and does not adversely affect the physical integrity or the historic significance of the property. Once the Commission provides a recommendation, the project will be reviewed by the Design Review Commission.

Cc: D. DiVittorio, Applicant and Architect  
E. and L. Albert, Owners

**Attachments**

- A. Historic Survey Form
- B. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards Review Report, Interactive Resources
- C. Memo- Secretary of the Interior’s Standards Review Report, Interactive Resources,
- D. Existing Site Photos
- E. Materials Board
- F. Project Plans

## FINDINGS

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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.

## CONDITIONS

H20-0001 – 725 University Avenue

### **GENERAL**

**1. Expiration**

The Historical Commission Advisory Review approval will expire on April 27, 2022 unless prior to the date of expiration, a building permit is issued, or an extension is granted pursuant to Section 14.76.090 of the Zoning Code.

**2. Approved Plans**

The approval is based on the plans and materials received on April 13, 2020, except as may be modified by these conditions.

**3. Indemnity and Hold Harmless**

The applicant/owner agrees to indemnify, defend, protect, and hold the City harmless from all costs and expenses, including attorney's fees, incurred by the City or held to be the liability of the City in connection with the City's defense of its actions in any proceedings brought in any State or Federal Court, challenging any of the City's action with respect to the applicant's project.

### **INCLUDED WITH THE BUILDING PERMIT SUBMITTAL**

**4. Conditions of Approval**

Incorporate the conditions of approval into the title page of the plans.

**5. Plan Revisions**

Update the construction drawings to show the replacement windows or doors are compatible with the architectural style and period of the historic resource.