

Halsey House

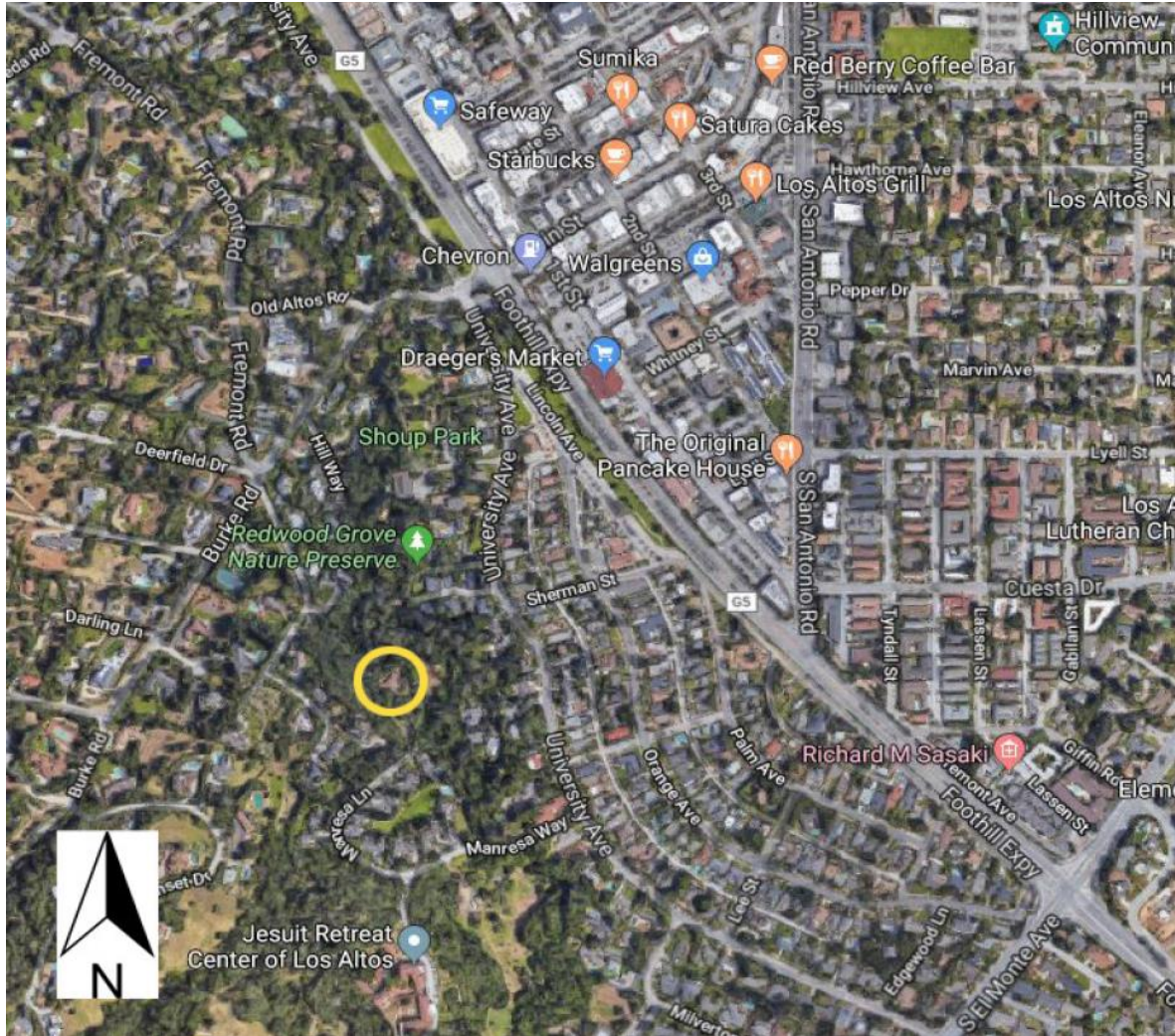


Parks and Recreation Commission

June 17, 2020



Halsey House



Halsey House

- The Halsey House, constructed in 1923.
- It is a Spanish Revival style residence was constructed for Theodore Vail Halsey and Emma Wright Halsey, early residents of LosAltos.
- Emma Wright Halsey planted dozens of redwood trees from the Santa Cruz Mountains on the property, creating what is today known as Redwood Grove.
- Set in the 6.12-acre city-owned Redwood Grove Nature Preserve, the building is one of a small number of local landmarks owned by the City.



Los Altos property, 1915 (Los Altos Hist

Site History

- Purchased by the City in 1974
- Landmarked in 1981
 - 12.44.210 - Duty to keep in good repair.
 - A. The owner, occupant or the person in actual charge of a historic resource, a historic landmark or property located within a historic district shall keep and maintain in good condition and repair all exterior portions of the improvement or structure, and all interior portions thereof whose maintenance is necessary to prevent deterioration and decay of any exterior architectural feature or natural feature.
- Closed in 2008 due to public health and safety concerns
- In 2013 a CIP project was developed to better understand the feasibility
 - and costs associated with two alternatives – renovation for adaptive reuse, and demolition and new construction
- M. Sandoval Architects was selected in 2015 to perform a feasibility study to review 2 design alternatives (renovation vs. new construction)



M. Sandoval Feasibility Study

- **Alternative A – Preservation and Adaptive Reuse**

- Preserves the historic Halsey House.
- CEQA – By following the Secretary of the Interior’s standards, the project would likely qualify as being categorically exempt.
- Provides 4,000 SF of programmable space for Recreation and Community Services.
- Overall project cost - \$3.2M

- **Alternative B – Demolition and Re-build purpose built facility**

- Greater flexibility for potential use. Size of facility can be selected to fit the best needs of the community
- Would likely require EIR to address loss of historical significance.
- Requires vehicular access up to the building (new bridge)
- Greater overall cost - \$4.4M
- Not deemed a viable alternative at December 8, 2015 City Council Meeting

Historical Commission

- On January 23, 2018, Council directed the Historical Commission to work with community members and staff to develop an application for the 2018 Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Grant.
- In April 2018, the Los Altos Historical Commission Subcommittee for the Halsey House, the Los Altos History Museum, City staff and community members prepared an application for a Certified Local Government Grant for the Office of Historic Preservation to fund a historic structure report (HSR) for the Halsey House.
- On May 1, 2018, the City of Los Altos submitted an application to the Office of Historic Preservation for a Certified Local Grant for the preparation of HSR for the Halsey House.
- On November 27, 2018, the City was awarded \$34,100 for a Historic Preservation Fund Grant for the completion of an RFP

Historic Structures Report (HSR)

- In November 2014, the City of Los Altos issued a Request for Proposals to develop an HSR for the Halsey House. The City of Los Altos Community Development Department selected Architectural Resources Group (ARG) to prepare the HSR.
- In September 2019, the historical consultant completed the draft HSR and Structural Assessment report.
 - The HSR report was prepared in accordance with the National Parks Service publication, Preservation Brief #43 (Attachment C) and the California Office of Historic Preservation HSR format instructions where applicable.
- In December 2019, the Planning Division received the Final HSR from the historical consultant.



Findings in the HSR

- The Halsey House is in fair to poor condition, with many deteriorated materials and systems beyond their useful lifespans. The major issues for the building include:
 - The sloping site and grading are trapping moisture along the west side of the building.
 - The existing roof has failed and water intrusion has caused extensive damage at interior finishes.
 - Vandalism has damaged windows and doors that would otherwise be in good to fair condition. Due to both vandalism and general deterioration, the building is no longer weather tight and both water intrusion and pest infestation have occurred.
 - There is no accessible path of travel to, around, or within the building.
 - Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems are at the end of their useful service life and generally not safe to use in their existing condition.

HSR Recommendations

- The recommendation for treatment and use include:
 - A new landscape and civil site design for the Halsey House, including improved drainage and an accessible path of travel.
 - Roof replacement
 - Repairs to exterior stucco walls
 - Repairs to exterior doors and windows
 - Repairs to interior finishes and minor interior renovations to create an accessible path of travel and accessible restrooms.
 - Installation of a fire protection system.
 - Installation of new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems throughout the building.

* All work shall comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.

What is a Historic Structures Report (HSR)

- An HSR provides documentary, graphic, and physical information about a property's history and existing condition.
- It is broadly recognized as an effective part of preservation planning, a Historic Structure Report establishes goals for the use or re-use of the property.
- HSR conveys information about the design and construction of the Halsey House in two main sections:
 - 1) Developmental History - The History section includes a historical background and context, a chronology of development and use, a physical description, a list of character-defining features and materials, and a discussion of significance.
 - 2) Treatment and Use - The Treatment and Use section provides a comprehensive set of treatment and use recommendations for the building. The proposed treatment was developed in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Properties* (The Standards)..

Next Steps

- Planning Division:
 - While the Planning Division stepped in to manage the project when the previous Engineering Services Manager departed the City on January 4, 2019. Its future role will be limited to supporting the Historical Commission in reviewing alterations to the Halsey House.
- Engineering Services Department:
 - Engineering resumes the administration of any future grant options or capital improvement alternatives.
- Historical Commission
 - An alteration to a historic landmark requires a historical alteration permit, the historical commission will review and issue a decision that finds that:
 - 1) The project complies with all provisions of this chapter; and
 - 2) The project does not adversely affect the physical integrity or the historic significance of the subject property.
 - 3) The project is in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.