



# Historic Resources Board

## Staff Report (ID # 14179)

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**Report Type:** Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 3/24/2022

**Summary Title:** HRB Draft Minutes February 24, 2022

**Title:** Approval of Historic Resources Board Draft Minutes of February 24, 2022

**From:** Jonathan Lait

### Recommendation

Staff recommends the Historic Resources Board (HRB) adopt the attached meeting minutes.

### Background

Attached are minutes for the following meeting(s):

- February 24, 2022

### Attachments:

- Attachment A: HRB Draft Minutes February 24, 2022 (DOCX)



# HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD MEETING

## MINUTES: February 24, 2022

Virtual Teleconference Meeting  
8:30 A.M.

### Call to Order/Roll Call

Present: Chair Caroline Willis, Vice Chair Christian Pease; Board Members, Michael Makinen, Margaret Wimmer, Gogo Heinrich, Alisa Eagleston-Cieslewicz and David Bower

Absent:

### Oral Communications

Chair Willis invited comments from the public on items not included on the agenda. There were none.

### Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

#### City Official Reports

##### 1. Historic Resources Board Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Ms. French announced that, as Omicron is fading, the City plans to go to live, in-person meetings for all Board and Commission meetings in March, so the March 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> HRB meetings will be in person in the Council Chambers. The public can still attend remotely, but Board members are expected to attend in person.

In regard to upcoming items, Ms. French said there is a project involving a commercial building in the downtown, 526 Waverly, which is set for the March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. There are no other projects other than the Board's Work Plan items.

Chair Willis apologized that the Mills Act fell off the current agenda, but she suggested it be addressed at the first meeting in March. She said she and Ms. French have discussed and decided that the best use of staff time is to have the first meeting of the month include committee reports which can be handled on their own, and they would not need to get staff reports for those. At the second meeting, they can refer anything they need information about to staff, as well as act on any items that come through the City. She hoped that committees can give reports and determine in the first meetings of the month the direction they wish to move forward, and action items can be handled at the second meeting of the month.

Board Member Bower advised on three dates that he will not be in town – May 26<sup>th</sup>, July 14<sup>th</sup>, and October 13<sup>th</sup>. There may be more in August, depending upon fires. He will email Ms. French to get those on the record. Chair Willis asked the rest of the Board to notify Ms. French of any dates they may be unavailable.

#### Action Items

2. PUBLIC HEARING – 567 Hale Street [21BLD-02531]: Request for Historic Resources Board Review of a Building Permit Application for Consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The Project Includes Exterior Modifications to a Local Historic Resource Category II. Zone District: R-1 (10,000). Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act per Sections 15268 (Ministerial Projects). For more information contact the Project Planner, Danielle Condit at [danielle.condit@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:danielle.condit@cityofpaloalto.org).

Ms. French said Danielle Condit, Planner, would be presenting the project. Representatives of Page and Turnbull team who are helping with the project were also present for comments and questions.

Board Member Bower pointed out that Council Liaison Greg Tanaka was present at the meeting. Council Member Tanaka said he didn't get a Zoom invitation to join the meeting so he had a little trouble joining, but he looked forward to being the Council representative to the Board this year and appreciated the Board Members' work and service, which is important. He extended an offer that if there is anything he could do to help the Commission to let him know. He added that he would love to have a regular sync-up with the Chair.

Ms. French shared her presentation on 567 Hale, a single-family home, a Category II resource on the City's Local Historic Resources Inventory. She clarified that the review process for a single-family home that is only subject to a building permit and not a discretionary process. It is a ministerial building permit process. However, since it is a Category II, outside of the downtown, a review is conducted. It is subject to the Historic Resources Board review should staff determine that the alterations are not minor and would adversely affect the exterior.

Ms. French said staff has been in a process with the applicant and the applicant's architect. The process has been to engage with review of the proposal, starting off with a Character-Defining Features memo and proceeding to look at concept plans, notations of non-compliance with the standards and work towards compliance with the standards. She said the HRB is enabled by Municipal Code, Chapter 16.49, to review exterior alterations to this Category II resource.

Ms. French shared a list of the scope of the project, which was provided by the project planner, Danielle Condit. She shared elevations from the plans showing before and after images of the project. She said later in the process of reviewing the concepts, they had a proposal for a structural upgrade, and the consultant was able to offer some recommendations about how to execute those, since the structure has a stucco exterior. Ms. French shared the Bulletin, a document that the Historic Resources Board adopted in October of 2016, which provides guidance for staff in handling exterior alterations to residences and resources. The project is a Group A Resource, and the document provides the process for this project.

Ms. Condit introduced Margaret Wimmer as the Applicant. Ms. Wimmer spoke on behalf of the clients, Chelsea Son and Michael Pao, and discussed the alterations planned for 567 Hale Street in Palo Alto, a Category II resource. She stated that with any project of this nature there is a balance between long-term goals for the house in terms of existing infrastructure and sensitivity to the historic nature of the house. In terms of infrastructure, the house is largely original, including the plumbing, electrical, and some of the windows which are still single glazed and in poor condition. There is little to no insulation. They plan to upgrade the HVAC and the thermal quality of the house. There were a number of necessary factors analyzed in taking on such a project, because the clients want the house to last another 100 or 200 years, and it is an opportunity to take measures in order to protect it in that sense. Waterproofing, structural upgrades, anything that will extend the longevity of the house is a primary goal. Also, there is a new owner. She said every owner has a different lifestyle, a different concept of living, a different aesthetic, so they are making some changes in response to the new owner's wishes in terms of making the house a little more contemporary.

Ms. Wimmer listed some of the details of the design methodology applied to the exterior. On the front façade, they retain everything on the front. She pointed to the aperture which is an inset of the original front porch as clearly seen in one of the historic photographs. At one point a prior owner had enclosed the front porch and put in non-historic French doors, basic, single glaze doors, and that is the one change they are making on the front. Sharing a view of the French door from the inside, Ms. Wimmer said it doesn't relate to the outside or the inside in either scale or quality. They want to fill in that space a little more with a very simple, single French entry door with sidelights and transoms above, all glass, to allow as much light as possible coming in. The configuration of the door showed the shaped jam shaft pilasters on the exterior.

On the side, Ms. Wimmer, pointed out openings for the original front porch, including a non-historic leaded glass window, which they will be replacing with a new window. She shared a photo of the rear area of the house and the driveway side and pointed out this side cannot be seen from the street. She said the most significant change was made on the rear. Two second-story non-historic windows that were previously added with a remodel will be removed. Changes will occur at the back entrance, where a 16-foot-wide sliding door is proposed. With that, they will eliminate a single entry door and two smaller flanking windows. Also, windows will be replaced with replica windows. The existing single glaze are in a state of disrepair. Because they are replacing them with exact replicas in shape, size, mullions, as the

originals, they will take out the one center window and offer a door, because there is a kitchen very close to that and the owners want better access to a future dining terrace.

On the southeast, interior side, she pointed out that this was the façade that used to face Hamilton Avenue. They believe the Hamilton Avenue property that is on the corner was the front yard of this house. An entry door going into the living room is still a French door, but has no landing or steps up to it, and no safety measures. They feel the use of the door has already been eliminated with removal of the steps, so they are proposing to keep the same aperture opening, keep the same style and look, but replace it with a window for safety measures to replace the operable door.

Another change proposed is to remove an existing window in the existing dining room, which is not an original window, and introduce new, smaller windows. The new windows will flank a hood and range in the kitchen area.

The house has a basement and an attic, so four floors. A structural engineer has investigated and identified some structural vulnerabilities of the house. In the basement there are two relatively large open spaces. One of the spaces they hope to use as a home theater space. There are two posts in that space, and another post in what they are calling the “exercise space.” These open spaces being supported by two posts on one side of the house and one post on the other side, they feel are a vulnerable point. They have also looked into the foundation and see that the concrete is only about two inches thick, so they have investigated what can be done to ensure that the structural integrity is sound.

A photo of the attic revealed a new staircase that was introduced at some point, as well as dormers. Ms. Wimmer remarked that the engineer was concerned about what is supporting the roof. There is no steel within the structure up there, and there is a very heavy pool table in the middle.

Ms. Wimmer said the vulnerabilities they have noted have prompted them to look into a sheer wall upgrade, to introduce them on the interior wherever possible with the intent to strengthen the house for years to come. She said they want to be very sensitive because it is a historic resource, but it will be impacted with the remodel, because there will be alterations.

Ms. Wimmer said there will be contemporary amenities which will be introduced to the house, primarily on the interior. These features were things the clients felt very strongly about. The original application included everything they wanted, but it was clearly not compliant, so Page and Turnbull reviewed the plan and helped them get back on the right path. The application they have submitted has been reviewed and deemed compliant with the SIOS, and with that, they are confident to move forward as the project is sensitive and careful and includes the safety and structural integrity factors built in as well. She introduced Michael Pao, the homeowner and ultimate applicant.

Mr. Pao shared that he and his family have lived in Palo Alto for the last four years. They have a four-year-old son and a two-year-old daughter. He and his wife hope to raise them in Palo Alto. They love the community and have fallen in love with this home. They love the idea of being stewards for a piece of Palo Alto history. They love the home’s formality and majestic quality. Their goal is to maintain this historic resource for the community. They have tried to maintain the façade, especially the more prominent front and driveway views, but at the same time rehab parts of the home to fit the needs of their family. He thanked everyone who helped them think through the process, including Page and Turnbull. He said the initial feedback was very helpful, and it was interesting for him to work through the process and gain understanding of what it means to own a piece of history. He looked forward to hearing the Commissioners’ comments and to being the best caretakers of the home for the next phase of its history.

Chair Willis invited questions for the consultant or project planner.

Board Member Bower thanked Ms. Wimmer and Mr. Pao for the presentation, stating that he has been inside this house, which former HRB member, Debbie Shepherd owned. It is an exquisite and extraordinary example of a house – one hundred-plus years old, and almost untouched, but maintained and preserved. He had some questions regarding the original character-defining features, which he said have been adequately detailed by Page and Turnbull. He wondered if the structural changes that affect the exterior walls were going to be placed inside or outside.

Ms. Wimmer responded that it is a conversation they are currently having between the contractor, the City and the clients. She pointed out in staff report illustration the areas identified where the structural walls could be placed, adding that some of it is voluntary, including on the front façade. They are working with BKG which is a very comprehensive structural engineer. BKG has said that if the clients want the house

to last forever, withstanding earthquakes, this is what they would do. They are contemplating potential locations for sheer walls, noting that it would be much easier on exterior walls, since it would be uninterrupted. On the inside, the floor itself between levels interrupts the sheer wall, but it could still be done. Their contractor suggested it would be much easier to strip the stucco, do all of the structural work and also wrap the exterior with continuous building paper. They thought this would be a good thing, and is what the client would like to pursue, so they asked the City about this intent. The City's response was that if sheer walls are necessary they can be done, but only in the locations where the sheer walls occur and they would then have to feather them in to match to the existing wall. Ms. Wimmer said they wonder if this is possible. The conversation on this is ongoing, and they are looking for direction in that specific area.

Board Member Bower commented that he is a strong proponent of structural upgrades that preserve buildings, because these buildings were not built with the current understanding of earthquake energy. His understanding from his engineering experience as a contractor, was that sheer walls can be done on the inside, equivalent to the outside. However, because the interior of the existing library in this house is such an exquisite example of marquetry done in the early 1900's, it's a bad choice no matter how it is approached, but the outside has more opportunity, even though the patching of the stucco would present challenges. He thought the challenges could be overcome with a finished product that looks fine, especially if they use elastomeric paint which tends to hide the shrinkage on the stucco.

Board Member Bower suggested the applicants try to preserve as much of the interior of the rooms with the exquisite woodwork as possible. He realized that some of the woodwork will be removed. He thought it looked like the entire dining and room and kitchen were going to be stripped for the new beams, which he thought was sad, but the dining room, which will be the new kitchen, was already painted anyway. He felt that the sensitivity towards those decisions are important from the perspective of preservation of character-defining features. He also could not tell from the drawings whether the new windows would be exactly the same in terms of operation, or just the same in terms of design.

Ms. Wimmer said the new windows would be exact replicas in design, aperture, opening and design functionality. Board Member Bower asked if the plan was to use retrofit double hung, "drop-ins" which use the same frame and reproduce the sash, of which he is a proponent. In the long term, he said, it's a saving of the building and its features. Regarding the entry doors, he said the existing French doors are not a typical configuration, but are custom doors. He wondered when they were put in. Ms. Wimmer said there was a permit history in the packet, but she did not see documentation of when they enclosed the porch. It may have been before they started documenting things.

Board Member Bower said he is familiar with the house because he used to live down the street from it and at one point actually looked to buy it in the 1980s. It was too expensive for them, at \$80,000, when they looked at it. He didn't remember the "non-historic glass window" on the back, the existing northwest elevation, that is planned to be removed. He couldn't remember whether it was there in the 1980s, but in the 70s when the Hamilton property was peeled off of the front yard and became its own independent lot, the window could have been put in at that time, and that would be historic, because if it was done from around 1980, 42 years ago, and 45 years is the time at which they start considering things that were added later.

Board Member Bower said he had other issues in the discussion about the Secretary of the Interior Standards 2, 5, 9, and 10, which they can discuss later, but he wanted to share something he has heard at seminars many times. There is no mitigation for demolition. Once demolition occurs, that's it, so anything that is demolished in this building ought to be thoroughly considered. He understood that they have done a lot of work on this, and he applauded that, but observed that there is a lot of the building that is going away. He wondered if, in totality, the building can retain its character if all of these changes are made, referring to all of the peripheral changes that appear to have a great deal of impact on the building. He appreciated Ms. Wimmer's and staff members hard work on the project.

Chair Willis said also wondered if, after all the work was completed, if the house would still be eligible to be a Category II on the inventory, and how historic it would be after all of the modernization.

Josh Bevan, Page and Turnbull, offered a response. He appreciated the invitation to the discussion. He stated that when they were evaluating the first proposal they saw right away that there would be several factors in how the residence at that time was proposed to be altered relative to its understood significance as a 1904 Classical Revival style building designed by Bliss & Faville. They were considering the features of the property that remain that communicate that significance. Part of it is tied to a style. Part of

it is tied to a period, and that is how they developed their list of character-defining features. Their feedback was that the degree of alteration was not just window replacement but also involved window relocation and altering the somewhat formal balance that could be seen on each façade. He said it is also a property that they have learned has had an interesting history as far as site development and how the public experiences the house from different perspectives. First, there was Hamilton Avenue and Hale Street, plus the façade that is now facing the driveway, so there were three facades that, unlike many residences had several prominent features not limited to entrances, large windows. Even the rear of the house was designed with a sense of formality. There was symmetry. They were taking all of these things into account in terms of how they contribute to the house's architectural character. In 2021, the house is hemmed in on one side by a subdivision. At that point what was an entrance with a portico on Hamilton Avenue was removed except for the actual entrance doors which remain in place. The lot has since been transformed into an "L" shape. Most of the house still retains features from the early design period. They are just experienced in a different way.

Mr. Bevan said that they have seen in this revised design what they believe is an appropriate shift towards retention of most of the original window openings, a request to replace a door that no longer functions as a door with a window for safety purposes, with a very compatible light pattern. They have also seen that the alterations proposed are primarily targeted towards the rear of the property, including the deck. He believed the deck was installed in the 1990s. The largest opening that would be introduced would be the rear sliding doors. Although it is a large opening, they felt that in this case despite its scale, it's impact on other historic features of the house was quite marginal. He said they do believe the revised design supports the house's continued designation as a Category II property.

Chair Willis pointed out that they currently have 15 historic structures in Palo Alto that are Category I, and this house is Category 2. There are only 73 Category II houses in Palo Alto at the moment, so currently this house is one of their 100 most significant properties. She was curious whether they thought it should maintain its place as one of the 100 most significant historic buildings. Mr. Bevan thought it would, because of the method being proposed to replace features such as windows with replication instead of a completely contemporary look, the house's scale, its relationship to the street that currently exists, its overall form. They can't say yet about the stucco and the texture, but the overall sense of the house's grandeur, they believe would be retained. He said sometimes, as Ms. Wimmer said, there is a balance involved in trying to figure out how to carry forward a historic resource in a way that allows for sustainability, efficiency, things that were not necessarily built into the property at its start. He said he feels that it would still be one of the 100 or so most significant houses in Palo Alto and certainly one of the great examples of Bliss and Faville's work in the San Francisco Bay Area, something that Palo Alto would continue to be proud of.

Chair Willis invited further questions from the Board.

Board Member Bower asked who the contractor is that they are currently thinking of using. Ms. Wimmer responded that it is Scott Plemens of Plemens Construction. In regard to the stucco issue, she added that it is hard for them to see a clear path forward, because doing it on the inside has consequences. Doing it on the outside also has consequences. If on the outside which they are allowed to do in those specific areas, they worry that the continuity would be lost when old stucco was put next to new stucco. She reiterated that this is what brings them to hoping they can strip the entire house, which sounds horrible, but they do have a top grade contractor who has access to the best people, so their hope is to be able to strip the entire exterior, do the structural work, do the building wrap, so the thermal quality of the house will be ensured, with no water intrusion. She said this is what they would like to ask for, but there is no perfect solution.

Board Member Bower added some insight from a contractor perspective and what he has learned from seminars. He felt the Board needed to think about the stucco just as they would think about something like cedar shingles on the outside of a building. None of it lasts forever, and the most significant thing is not to try to keep a shingle or a plane of stucco just for its own sake. It is to repair it and put back the same thing that was there in the same finish when it comes to stucco. He thought the finish was fabulous and very unique. Not many buildings in Palo Alto have it and it is what makes this building one of the most significant character-defining features for him. The fact that they take all of the stucco off and then put it back so that it looks the same, is just like taking old shingles that have worn out and replacing them with new shingles. He thought in the end it would look the same. He felt that what they want as a Board is to preserve the look. He wouldn't take the dentil molding off, for example, because it is so unique. He

encouraged the Board members to think of this not as an upgrade, but simply a renovation of the material.

Chair Willis invited questions.

Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz asked Page and Turnbull to comment on the current condition of the exterior stucco and also to comment on the expected aesthetics of a patched stucco repair to accommodate the sheer walls, versus a more extensive replacement of stucco and how it would visually impact the integrated aesthetics of the exterior of the building. Mr. Bevan responded that as far as they can tell without doing intensive inspection beyond surface level, it appears to be in good shape. He said he could not say that from the materials conservation perspective. The memo that they prepared incorporates feedback from their conservation technicians which gets to the idea of approaching patching and what it might look like. His understanding was that when patching stucco it is common for cracks to appear, depending on how the mix of the existing stucco and the composition in terms of aggregate materials blend together. There can be cracking which would need to be repaired. He thought something like the elastomeric paint could be used as a finishing material, not unlike mortar bricks. He noted that when bricks or any sort of stone material it is important to make sure the composition of it is a good match with the historic, to avoid ending up with effervescence or things that leach out leaving white stains.

Chair Willis asked Mr. Pao what drew him to this house. She said it seemed like his vision for the outside and their vision for the inside are very different, and she was curious what drew them to wanting this house. She thought it was obviously not the woodwork. Mr. Pao responded that he probably passed by the house maybe 300 times before it came on the market. They live approximately a five-minute drive away. Although it's shielded by the hedge, their broker referred to it as the Grand Dame of the block. He said it is spectacular and one of the 100 most important historic resources that their city has to offer. Before studying it he said he didn't realize why, but just saw its magnificence, so when it came on the market, they saw it as an opportunity to build their "forever home." Their goal was to preserve it and to steward it for the community for as long as they get to stay there. Regarding the interior, he said there is a lot of wood. He is told it is old growth Redwood, which lasts forever. They have stumbled into some things where there are structural upgrades that need to be made. They thought the foundation was solid, but it turns out there is foundation work to do. It was marketed that the entire building was made of concrete, but it is not. As with any historical home, he said they have learned that there's some work to do to make sure it will last another 100 years, but especially on the façade, they want to maintain the character. They have learned about what that is about and he and his wife have spent long nights talking about some of the earlier proposed changes. On the full kitchen ask, and they feel they have achieved a balance. Their intent was not to have a "party house." They have children. They want to raise them there, and they want the home to last for a very long time.

Chair Willis asked Ms. Wimmer in regard to the structural vulnerability of the house with the basement and the attic. Looking at the plans, her thought was that the amount of demolition on the first floor was adding a huge vulnerability to the building. She wondered if they had explored this with the structural engineer. She wondered if they refrained from all the demolition on the first floor if there would still be the vulnerability. Ms. Wimmer responded that with the demolition that will occur, there is state-of-the-art structural supports that will be in place in the areas where they are taking walls out, they rebalance the loads of the entire house.. She thought the structural plans were in the packet. She acknowledged Chair Willis' point but said whatever structural elements are removed are replaced with steel, post beams, et cetera. She pointed out that to get a permit the engineer has to mathematically prove that the house passes a structural lateral analysis to make sure the house has integrity, and those codes get more challenging every year.

Board Member Makinen said in listening to the comments, he agreed strongly with Board Member Bower's assessment that to enter into a massive structural upgrade is going to impact the integrity of the house to a significant degree. His personal recommendation would be to not do the structural upgrade to the extent that is being proposed as far as affecting the exterior walls. The house has survived the 1906 earthquake. It has pretty good structural capabilities as it stands. He said he lives in a 1903 house on University Avenue that survived the 1906 earthquake without a lot of structural modifications. He felt the wood framing characteristics of these old houses are very resilient to earthquake incursions and he thought when talking about doing massive structural interventions they would destroy a lot of the integrity of the property and buying into a nightmare of problems. He did not see any declaration on the project and it appears it is a rehabilitation, which is by definition bringing a historic property into conditions for modern living. He applauded them for doing this, but did not think the structural upgrades will provide them with the product

they think they're going to get, but that they are buying into a nightmare. He added that his background is in mechanical engineering, so he was not advocating something that he would normally say it's a good idea. From an aesthetics standpoint, from preservation of the historic integrity they would be buying into a nightmare and encouraged them not to do it to the extent being proposed.

Board Member Heinrich disagreed on this point. She felt, as an architect, that the structural should be done. Having worked with buildings with stucco, she felt the full replacement of the stucco would be the right way to go. They don't have the craftsmanship of 100 years ago. There's no one here that can replicate the original stucco, so to try to match it with unskilled labor or craftsmen would be the wrong thing to do. To strip all the stucco and replace it would be the right way to go. There is no right way to do the wrong thing, she said, so she highly recommended that the structural be done and that the stucco be replaced.

Ms. Wimmer interjected and said she was stuck on the issue regarding the stucco. They have a variation of different recommendations, solutions, even between Board Member Makinen and Board Member Heinrich. They are still looking for a clear and sensible path forward. Their primary and first choice would be to strip the entire stucco so they could do the structural upgrades, the building wrap and thermal protection, but in terms of the stucco finish, they just met with the contractor and were observing the finishes. They observed that even in one small area there is a variation of the texture itself, which made them wonder if the area had already been repaired and replaced. She wanted to point out that in the event they do strip the stucco they will do their best to replicate but what's existing is not consistent.

Chair Willis invited comments from the public.

Pria Graves spoke and said she shared the concerns about the magnitude of the changes proposed and felt the house would not retain its fabulous category. She lives in a 1904 house that has never had the upgrades being discussed. It made it through the 1906 earthquake and the 1989 earthquake with minor damages, but other than bolting it to its foundation, nothing has been done to it. She said she feels perfectly safe living in it. She doesn't know that mucking about with a house to this extent allows it to remain historic. She would like to hear the Board discuss that as it concerns her.

Madina advised there was a John Carol Richards [phonetic] as attendees but they have not raised their hand. Chair Willis advised that they also sent in a nice letter. She asked if the Board Members had seen the letter from Mrs. Carol. Most of them had. Chair Willis closed the public comment period and moved to Board Member comments and discussion.

Chair Willis began the discussion stating that her first thought is that the interior plan is incongruent with the exterior. She wondered if the next people to buy the house will relate more to the interior of the house than the exterior and would want to change the exterior to make it compatible with the very modern contemporary interior. She hoped they were aware that by creating the very contemporary interior, it is not classic the way the house is now, but is a very contemporary, of-the-moment interpretation of the interior that is not necessarily going to be in fashion in 20 years. She said they are ripping out historical woodwork by a man who made his money in the lumber industry. She said the house tells a story through its interior woodwork and she felt the combination of structural work necessary because of the interior deconstruction, loss of the story of the original owners through removal of the woodwork and the fact that the interior and exterior suddenly tell very different stories, she felt it puts the whole house at risk, not from the current owners. She said she would be amazed if it remains in the form they are generating for 100 years. The fact that they have to do the enormous sheer walls does not speak to the structure now. It speaks to what they are trying to make it do that it wasn't really built to do. She hoped they would go home and have a moment to realize they don't need to go this far and that the house has value in its present form. There are more moderate changes they could make that would ensure its survival for another 100 years. Her point of view was that the whole project was putting the house at risk. The discussion about the stucco is a huge point, that suddenly they will have a new building. It might have a classic form on the outside, but its historic fabric will be obscure. She thought things that could happen along the way are frightening, with the huge structural project and trying to make the house do something it was not designed to do is putting it at risk.

Board Member Bower offered his thoughts. He shared Board Member Heinrich's feeling about how to deal with the stucco and encouraged the Board again to think of stucco as just the material and the finish, and what Ms. Wimmer pointed out is that there are numerous patches that are not the same. The fact that new stucco would go up there, he saw as the same thing as new shingles where there were shingles. He was not in any way opposed to that. He felt the structural upgrades are very important, because making it through one earthquake is no guarantee that you'll make it through another. Unlike many buildings of that



era, this building has very large interior spaces that do not have any structural support, because they didn't know what support to build in 1907 or 1904. He thought the engineer and the client and Ms. Wimmer could decide how much needs to be done. He said he looked at the exterior elevations and it seemed that the front structural work could probably be done from the inside better, so the front façade would be untouched. On the lefthand side, page 51 in the packet, the rear elevation looks like the entire elevation would be changed if a large door is installed. He said he had a problem with that door as well. But doing that whole façade was probably okay. He said regarding the long side facades, on the northwest elevation, which faces University Avenue, almost every single tall, uninterrupted panel is involved. He suggested they start at the chimney which is close to the rear and move forward and just do the entire side. He said cutting it up is not going to work. He said you find a space where either the plane changes, or there is something that interrupts it, such as a corner. His next comment was about the changing of windows to doors, he had an objection to the front entry, with the large, massive glass wall to be installed. He said it is very uncomplimentary and incompatible with the design of the building. It seemed to him like a sore thumb. When looking at the house, which is kind of a rectangle, he had a lot of trouble with that design element that seems totally incompatible to him.

On the kitchen, the door next to the long glass wall, in looking at the existing and proposed elevations, he did not have a problem with that because that elevation is almost identical with the exception of the door being changed out for a window. It is a very subtle difference, which he felt was compatible. However, on the southeast elevation there are replica windows with a four-foot original door now become a fixed window. He felt that particular elevation is quite different and he didn't see why they couldn't put doors back there and just make them inoperable, with no hardware, so they serve the same function and they replicate what was there exactly, rather than do something that's close. He said the glazing can be changed out, keeping the same look. These are the things he is most concerned about in terms of how the house will look in the end.

Board Member Bower encouraged the owners and Ms. Wimmer to try to save as much of the interior as possible. He felt Chair Willis' comment about what is popular now is on point. He worked almost 50 years in the construction business, building things, and the things he built in the beginning of his career simply do not exist now. They were the best things everyone thought they should put in their houses. So, what's popular now is not likely to be the same. He noted that even the Eichler's are now, after 60 years, considered an architectural style the people like, but they were not particularly popular in the 50s and 60s when they were built, except that they were extraordinarily inexpensive. Everything changes and when he makes decisions he likes to try to think about what, in 50 years, will people say about the decisions we make now? Will they say, "What were they doing?" or "Why did they do this?" or, "This is a fabulous thing. He did not know the answer to that, but it is how he tries to answer the question.

Chair Willis Board Member Makinen felt the comments regarding the rear façade, with the four panels of sliding glass doors is completely out of character with the house and does not harmoniously agree with the original architectural intent. He encouraged the owners to reconsider that and do something that is more contextually in keeping with the original architecture of the house. He did not understand the desire to replace the existing handrail system with something with wires, which is a very contemporary look for the back deck. He felt this was a big mistake. He encouraged them to retain a balustrade system that is more in keeping with the era, the contextual architecture of the house. Going back to the structural proposal, he commented that he was involved with doing a structural reinforcement of some of the buildings at Moffitt Field, which was a little different approach than the one being considered here. It was done from the exterior, and done by increasing the thickness of the walls using a process called shotcrete and adding steel into the exterior of the walls. When finished – and he felt they would end up with something similar – the thickness of the walls was increased, and the windows read differently, with a recessed depth from the surface. He said they should be aware of that if they start tampering with the stucco and exterior structural modifications. They will change the window placement and how it reads from the outside.

Chair Willis added that she thinks salvage is an interesting issue here. Most of the woodwork inside of the house could not even be bought today, so it seems that if it is no longer wanted inside this house, there should be places where it would be in high demand. She wasn't sure how to find such places, but hoped that they could make an effort to get the word out to architects and salvage places that the building is being "demolished" and it would be nice if some of the woodwork could be available to people who would be able to take advantage of it.

Chair Willis thanked the applicants for bringing their plans. She acknowledged it is hard to listen to when people have different opinions, but the Commission appreciates them listening. The building obviously is of value to the Palo Alto community, and they hope that it does stand for another 100 years, as closely as possible to its original construction, the better it is for the town.

Ms. Wimmer asked for clarification on moving forward. Since there is not a motion or a vote on the project, just a presentation with feedback, she wondered where to take the project, whether taking the Commission's comments under consideration and move forward as planned, or if there were other steps they needed to take.

Ms. French responded that up until now they were just having conversations with support from the consultant. There has been a formal building permit application, but it would be nice to solidify the process with a formal Historic Review application and then the comments from the HRB could be included in a document regarding the conversation, the advice and recommendations of the Board as a collective. It is not a discretionary application. There is technically not any approval with conditions, et cetera, required, but she would like to have a formal transmittal capturing the Board's individual comments.

Board Member Bower wondered if she was encouraging some kind of motion or Board review. Ms. French thought it wouldn't be a bad idea to have some kind of straw poll, or just sentiments. She said not everyone has weighed in on the key aspects, although there has been a lot of good feedback for the applicant. She said it is a little tricky because it is not a discretionary application where they need an up or down opinion.

Board Member Bower said he was willing to provide some type of motion or Board opinion, perhaps Board consensus.

#### **MOTION**

Board Member Bower moved that, having considered the project, the Board recommended changes to the project, to include:

1. The rear glass door be reconsidered so that the design is more compatible to the original house.
2. The structural upgrades be tailored as much as possible to preserve as much of the interior and exterior as possible, but still achieve the safety and performance to survive earthquakes.
3. Other smaller issues with windows and openings that might be reconsidered to be more conservative and compatible with existing design.

Board Member Makinen asked if the motion could contain a comment regarding the balustrade and handrail system on the back deck. Board Member Bower said all the things previously discussed could be included, but he was trying to articulate the items he felt were most important. Regarding the deck, his opinion was that the deck was a completely new addition, which could be removed without affecting the building so he saw it as less of an issue, but he was open to it being added. Board Member Makinen thought it had a visual impact on the back of the structure, introducing a contemporary treatment to the deck and impacting the total contextual feel of the house. Board Member Bower agreed it was wildly differentiated and wildly incompatible.

Ms. Wimmer interjected that they are not doing the cable thing. Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz felt that the deck was so easily separable and differentiable from the structure that she felt while not in keeping with the style it is easily separable and not confusing. Board Member Bower agreed but willing to conclude anything.

Chair Willis seconded the motion and said there are numerous things they could put in it. Her biggest issue was the differentiation between the inside and the outside. She reiterated that she is sad for the building.

Board Member Heinrich thought they could move forward with the motion if the back deck was considered along with the windows and stucco.

Board Member Pease did not have anything to add to the motion.

The motion passed (6-0) by roll call vote.

Board Member Wimmer rejoined the meeting as a Board Member.

### 3. Historic Resources Board Discussion of 2021 Work Plan Results and Review of Draft 2022 Work Plan

Ms. French led the Commission through review of the Annual Work Plan as discussed at the January retreat. The Plan is a new requirement started by City Council last year. The Commission submitted a work plan in June. The next one is due in April to Council, who will be receiving all of the work plans of the Boards and Commissions. They are asked to review the results of the current work plan which will conclude next month, including any metrics or comments to include in their report to the Council. Then, there is the new Work Plan going forward to discuss. Also, every year they provide to the State Office of Historic Preservation the annual CLG report. The timeframe on that is October of 2020 to September of 2021. As part of that, they will collect any trainings that Board members have gone through and any activities.

Ms. French listed ongoing items from the current Work Plan ending in March, as well as some yet to be completed. Reconstituting an ad hoc committee on the Mills Act with consideration of an outreach approach is planned for discussion at the next meeting in March. The existing plan also calls for potential activities for Historic Preservation Month in May. In March, they will ask Council for resources to help with the Inventory Update per Comprehensive Plan L7.1.1. There is some activity still needed in Ad Hoc committees regarding mapping and identifying historic resources. The Tailored Mills Act would be discussed per the September 2021 staff report, which is an idea for a presentation next month.

Ms. French presented the proposed Work Plan for April 2022 to March 2023, to which she had added some suggested ideas for tweaking the topics/goals. These included updating the Bulletin adopted by the HRB in October of 2016 to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan adopted at the end of 2017.

The next goal that was revised on the Plan was supporting Comprehensive Plan policies by launching Policy L7.1.1 and updating the inventory, which requires support and resources from Council. The Ad Hoc Committee has begun work on identifying whether some of the "deemed eligible" resources from the 1998 survey are still in existence. The Work Plan looks forward to working on this in the first quarter of the next plan year.

Another add-on to the Plan was made to the outreach goal from the current work plan. This will be discussed next month. There is also opportunity to discuss in a future year the Historic Preservation Ordinance, re-assessing it perhaps reporting on its effectiveness, or lack thereof.

She reiterated that they could continue the discussion next month on finalizing the outreach approach and how it would be brought forward to Council in a formal report.

Ms. French shared some future work plan items which could be discussed by the Commission, working towards a work plan for the 2023-2024 timeframe, including such things as getting a grant application ready for districts evaluation; re-evaluating looking at existing inventory to see if they still exist or need updating; things about the Ordinance which are unclear about how resources are downgraded or removed from the inventory. She advised that the maps from 2016 were provided in the packet, showing Category III and IV properties located outside of downtown and Professorville that are at risk because of the way the ordinance is written. The inventoried properties with the two historic districts are included, but does not include the Eichler historic districts. There is an indexed map provided to the Board through an email of all the Category I through IVs and those deemed eligible from the survey in 1998 and more recently since the Comprehensive Plan adoption. The first map has a lot of resources. The second map has one or two resources. The third has the Eichler area and a couple of other resources, such as College Terrace.

Chair Willis said her understanding is they are to go to Council and talk about how they have progressed through the current work plan. Ms. French said this is to be included in a report to the Council. Chair Willis wondered if she needed from the Commissioners on this. Ms. French said there are a couple things still being worked on and the other items are ongoing. If anyone has comments on the metrics of community involvement/participation, which they have rarely at their meetings, but if anyone has anything to say about that, to let her know and she will include it in the report. They will be talking about the outreach goal next month. Ms. French and Chair Willis will be creating agenda topics for the first meeting in March, which will involve the Ad Hoc Committees presenting on their areas of work as well as discuss this

outreach. The Mills Act discussion and the outreach discussions should happen organically without a staff report on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

Board Member Wimmer asked for a reminder of who was going to be on which Ad Hoc committees. Board Member Bower reminded her that she is on the Mills Act committee. Chair Willis felt they should try to think of as many ideas as possible on community outreach at the first meeting in March and then make decisions at the second meeting about how they will proceed with community outreach. Ms. French added that the focus of the second meeting should be the Historic Preservation Month since it is coming up.

Chair Willis said that the Work Plan will be summarized, and the HRB will see it before taking it Council. Ms. French said yes, she would include it in the next packet with any tweaks to the comments on the last work plan. Chair Willis was happy that they have things that will actually be concluded on the list. Board Member Pease commented that he has been struggling with how interrelated and linked some of their objectives are on the Work Plan, in thinking about how to approach them. He thought they came to a solid consensus at the last meeting that they really need Council support, a plan that they agree to and they need to request financial resources and at least find out if they're going to get them or not. We was unclear about how the rest of the year would unfold in terms of doing that. For example, on page 83, they would receive funds requested March 2022, but he didn't understand how the fund request and the plan gets put together, submitted, reviewed and how each of the items happen in some order so they actually get them done this year. He felt one of their top priorities was upgrading the inventory. Many of the other things, like outreach and even the Mills Act are potential incentives for people who have properties eligible who may be interested in actually getting them listed, but he wondered how it all gets done.

Ms. French responded that staff has concerns about this as well. On March 21<sup>st</sup> they will go to Council with the wishful, hopeful effort to get a commitment to provide resources for the Commission to be able to launch implementation of this item, including outreach to property owners. This is the top priority for this plan year, and it all depends on what Council does. She said what they are doing on March 21<sup>st</sup> is related to the whole SB 9 continued discussion begun back in December, with the Urgency Ordinance that called out "at-risk" eligible properties that have not been put on the inventory, so this is the "big deal." If they get a commitment and funding, they can then proceed. If not, then it will be very difficult with the resources they have to do this. The second half of the program year, end of 2022, if they can review the ordinance and report on the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of it it is something she thought could be manageable. The part about the Mills Act could drop off because if they get funding it will be where their focus and energies are, so it could drop off until the next program year.

Board Member Pease asked if staff would develop the first draft proposals and budget and set of tasks and deliverables. Ms. French said they have already received on the March 21<sup>st</sup> one a proposal, a scope and cost estimate that they are going forward to Council, requesting funding. The other items do not have associated resources figured out. Board Member Pease asked when they would first see some results of it. There is one meeting before the 21<sup>st</sup>, two weeks away, and he wondered where their input to the specifics would occur before it goes to the Council. Ms. French was not sure there was an opportunity for input on the specifics as far as what they are asking of Council specifically related to the March proposal. She said she could share what the cost estimate is, the consultant scope, if that is what he was asking for. Board Member Pease said one thing is upgrading and refreshing the inventory and determining what's out there that is qualified that still exists but is not listed. Also, an outreach program to encourage adoption. There have been discussions about the sensitivity around this and how it unfolds, so whatever she was willing to share, he would like to see. He feared that they might come out on the other side of a Council decision and not be as clear on how that all happened as they would like to be, and make sure if they do have some input that it is at least considered for the presentation to Council for their consideration.

Chair Willis wanted to have the materials that Council will be receiving regarding the request, because it would be helpful for the Commissioners to have in any discussions they have with the community or anyone on Council to know what they're asking and what the framework is. She thought it would be nice to have a clearer sense of how Council will be receiving it. Ms. French said she understood and when the report is written and published, she will send a link to it. Prior to that, she will send the Scope of Work they requested the consultant to prepare to help them think it through. For example, how many meetings with the HRB? How many meetings with the Council? What the outreach could entail and is there support with a person because staff doesn't have the bandwidth to do all of the outreach.

Board Member Pease advocated for devoting the next meeting to going over whatever draft there is and put all of their time into considering it, because it seems to be such a big task and to really do something effective this year, something with real impact, it a big challenge. If other Board members were agreeable, he would like to review anything that is going to the Council. He asked that all of it be available to them to read in advance of the next meeting. He felt it should get at least as much time as the one property got at this meeting, even though it is an incredibly important property. But this is huge in terms of what happens over the next several decades. He said he has trouble getting a handle on it when trying to think about how it might be implemented. He would appreciate any feedback on his ideas in this regard.

Chair Willis thought it sounded doable and that they could frame all of their committee reports within the context of analyzing their work plan and what exactly they are looking for from staff and Council. She thought they could refrain the topic for next month to be work plan and have the committee reports be a subset of that. She thought the result would be the same.

Ms. French said her understanding was, although there was not a published report yet, but the content she has provided to those writing the report, once accepted, she would share the content of that with the Board as far as how it will be phrased. Board Member Bower said as a Board they can have a motion and move it forward so that it come directly from the Board to the Council. He thought the Council would appreciate that they are moving it, not as a staff report, which is important, but really as a Board initiative.

Ms. French said it is not like the HRB has "Colleagues Memos," but this is what this feels like, a type of memo request. Board Member Pease said they would be "speaking up." He agreed with Board Member Pease that they need to focus on this. Also, if the Mills Act may be pushed off to next year, even if they could reach an agreement on what the basis of the proposal on it should be, if there is no staff money to move it forward, then they should push it out. He thinks it is almost and didn't anticipate creating an application form in the subcommittee and didn't know how to begin to do that.

Board Member Pease said the dilemma in his mind is assuming they fix up the inventory, whatever the public outreach is, however direct or indirect it is, what is made public and what is done quietly, however sorted out it seemed to him that they must be able to not only articulate what having a historic status to your property means, but what potential incentives there are in doing so. He said Ms. French ran off some of them at the last meeting. The Mills Act is just one more piece that can be thrown in there. Whether it will make a material difference based on the economics of residential homes in Palo Alto, many people have expressed how embarrassing it is that of all the cities on the Peninsula, they don't have one. It seemed to him that they need to understand how the incentives are going to be put into place in order to have effective messaging when they try to do outreach.

Chair Willis thought they needed to make peace with, with staff and Council, are fees for HRB items. She said she feels they are more a service for the community than for the individual homeowners that their interest in maintaining these properties is for the benefit of the community and to have the homeowners cover additional costs for that doesn't seem like an incentive. She thought the immediate question is whether they are going to actually charge people to review them and put them on the inventory?

Ms. French said this is unclear. The ordinance does not give much guidance on that. If someone came forward now with a request to be placed on the inventory it is cited in the municipal code but it is silent as to what the fees are for such things. There is a fee schedule that sets forth fees. They are not terribly expensive for historic review, but she could bring that forward as information for the Board to look at in the process of looking at incentives. Chair Willis thought this would be good to know. Preservation is a community benefit where people get to live in these beautiful houses, but she feels she is a caretaker for hers. She gets them for a while and hopes they will live beyond her, which is part of the reason why she was so devastated by the Hale property which was tough to look at realize there is a limited amount the community is doing to preserve their resources. She would like to reframe preservation in Palo Alto. Anything that might be looked at as a detriment, she would like to sweep away.

Board Member Pease added he would just like to demystify it and correct the bad information out there, and fear and loathing which needs to be addressed clearly in way that reaches the public.

Board Member Bower said he was totally in support. He departed the meeting, looking forward to seeing the Commissioners in person in March.

Board Member Pease also needed to depart.

No further action was taken on the Work Plan. Ms. French would ask what the timeline one that is. The discussion could be continued until the March 10<sup>th</sup> in-person meeting.

**MOTION**

Chair Willis moved to continue the Work Program discussion to the first March meeting. Seconded by Board Member Wimmer, the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

4. Approval of Historic Resources Board Draft Minutes of October 28, 2021

**MOTION**

Board Member Heinrich moved to approve the October 28, 2021 draft minutes. Seconded by Board Member Wimmer, the motion passed (4-0-2).

5. Approval of Historic Resources Board Draft Minutes of December 9, 2021.

**MOTION**

Board Member Wimmer moved to approved the December 9, 2021 draft minutes. Seconded by Board Member Pease, the motion passed (4-0-2).

**Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements**

**Adjournment**

Board Member Bower moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Board Member Pease, the motion carried unanimously by voice vote.