



Historic Resources Board

Staff Report

Agenda Date: April 23, 2015

To: Historic Resources Board

From: Matthew Weintraub
Planner

Department: Planning and
Community Environment

Subject: 757 College Avenue [15PLN-00082] – Request by Robert L. McCormick on behalf of Lucille W. Mellish for Historic Resources Board review and recommendation regarding a proposal to remove the existing designation of the subject property as a Category 3 Historic Site/Structure in the Palo Alto Historical and Architectural Resources Report and Inventory.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff recommends that the Historic Resources Board recommend that the City Council deny the application.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

757 College Avenue is designated as a Category 3 Historic Site/Structure in the Palo Alto Historical and Architectural Resources Report and Inventory ("Historic Inventory"). The subject parcel is a rectangular 4,313 square foot lot, located on the east side of College Avenue between Williams Street and Wellesley Street. The property is located in the R-1 Single-Family Residential District. It contains one existing residential structure. (See Attachment A, Parcel Report.)

The existing dwelling at 757 College Avenue is a 696 square foot, one-story vernacular cottage with a rectangular plan and a cross-gable roof. It is set back to the rear of the lot. The Historic Inventory Form (Attachment B) describes the subject building as "a simple one-story cottage with elaborate bargeboard decoration" and as "a modest building enriched by vernacular ornamentation". It was constructed in approximately 1906. It appears to be in poor physical condition. Further description of the subject building is found in Attachment B and Attachment C (Historic Resource Evaluation, submitted by the applicant).

REVIEW PROCEDURE

The Municipal Code does not specify a procedure for removal of an existing designation of a historic structure/site. However, the Municipal Code provides the procedure for designation of historic structures/sites and districts to the Historic Inventory. According to Section 16.49.040(a), any individual or group may propose designation as a historic structure/site or district. Such proposals shall be

reviewed by the Board, which will make its recommendation to the City Council. Designation of a historic structure/site or district must be approved by the Council. The Board shall recommend to the Council approval, disapproval or modification of an application for designation. The Council may approve, disapprove or modify a recommendation for designation.

In the case of an application that proposes to remove an existing designation, it is logical to apply the same review procedure that is required for designation. The Municipal Code does not authorize any other bodies to act on behalf of the Board or the Council in matters related to the designation (or removal thereof) of historic structure/sites and districts. Furthermore, existing designations were previously recommended by the Board and approved by the Council.

CRITERIA FOR REVIEW

Municipal Code Section 16.49.040 (b) provides the criteria for designation of historic structures/sites and districts. The following criteria, along with the definitions of historic categories and districts in Section 16.49.020, shall be used as criteria for designating additional historic structures/sites or districts to the historic inventory:

- (1) The structure or site is identified with the lives of historic people or with important events in the city, state or nation;
- (2) The structure or site is particularly representative of an architectural style or way of life important to the city, state or nation;
- (3) The structure or site is an example of a type of building which was once common, but is now rare;
- (4) The structure or site is connected with a business or use which was once common, but is now rare;
- (5) The architect or building was important;
- (6) The structure or site contains elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship.

Section 16.49.020 provides the following definition of Category 3 or 4 (which relates to the existing Category 3 designation at 757 College Avenue):

Category 3 or 4: "Contributing building" means any building or group of buildings which are good local examples of architectural styles and which relate to the character of a neighborhood grouping in scale, materials, proportion or other factors. A contributing building may have had extensive or permanent changes made to the original design, such as inappropriate additions, extensive removal of architectural details, or wooden facades resurfaced in asbestos or stucco.

ANALYSIS

In order for the Board to recommend the removal of an existing designation of a historic structure/site, staff recommends that it would be necessary to determine that none of the criteria for designation are

met and/or that the definition of a specific historic category is not met.

Regarding the criteria for designation, two criteria appear to be applicable to the property at 757 College Avenue. One criterion that applies is:

- (2) The structure or site is particularly representative of an architectural style or way of life important to the city, state or nation.

Although the existing vernacular cottage does not convey a particular architectural style, it represents a way of living during a period of time in Palo Alto's early history. Specifically, it is associated with the development of the College Terrace Addition, historically part of the town of Mayfield, and the construction of working class dwellings (or "workingmen's cottages") like the subject building in the rural, sparsely populated area. In 1908, at about the same time that the subject building served as the Hironaka residence, only 34 houses existed in College Terrace. It is a prototypical, turn-of-the-century vernacular cottage, with characteristic features such as the long narrow plan, gable roofs, traditional fenestration pattern, and decorative bargeboard. Historic additions, which are compatible with the character of the cottage, are indicated by the cross gable and rear volumes, which were likely added to increase living area to the original compact structure.

The subject property's history as a working class dwelling is evident by the occupations of its early occupants from the turn of the century up to World War II, which included at separate times: the Hironaka family, who may have been involved in the area's early agricultural economy; a retired teacher and librarian; a lather and contractor; and a sewer treatment plant superintendent. While none of these persons is known to be individually important in the history of Palo Alto, the State, or the nation, they are characteristic of the "way of life" in Mayfield (now Palo Alto) that is represented by the subject property.

Another criterion that applies to the existing cottage at 757 College Avenue is:

- (3) The structure or site is an example of a type of building which was once common, but is now rare.

As previously stated, the building is a prototypical "workingman's cottage" that is characteristic of the turn of the century period in Palo Alto. Historically, small modest dwellings such as this were typically constructed during the earliest phases of development in many California communities, including Palo Alto. Although not numerous due to sparse population densities, they were common. Over time, many working class dwellings were altered with additions, as apparently occurred with the subject building. In many other cases, the original cottages were subsumed within the additions and alterations, or replaced entirely with newer houses. Consequently, early working class dwellings are increasingly rare in Palo Alto and California.

Regarding the definition of a Category 3 (or 4) Historic Structure/Site, it appears to be met by the subject property. In order to qualify as a Category 3 property, a building should be a "good local example" of architectural style. As previously noted, in meeting the criteria for designation, while the subject building does not convey an architectural style, it is a good example of a vernacular working class cottage. Also, a Category 3 property must relate to the character of the neighborhood. Although the College Terrace neighborhood has developed around the older cottage, resulting in newer residences that are larger in scale and different in style, the area remains the kind of lower density

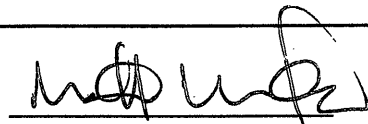
residential neighborhood that was envisioned when College Terrace was first platted and developed. In that respect, the cottage relates to the character of the neighborhood, which possesses a wide range of house types and styles. A Category 3 building may also demonstrate “extensive or permanent changes made to the original design, such as inappropriate additions, extensive removal of architectural details, or wooden facades resurfaced in asbestos or stucco.” While some of the apparent changes to the subject building appear to be characteristic, such as the bargeboard decoration and the cross gable addition, others changed the original design, such as adding the stucco cement base.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the previous analysis, which finds that the subject property meets at least two of the criteria for designation, as well as the definition of a Category 3 Historic Structure/Site, staff recommends that the Historic Resources Board recommend that the City Council deny the application.

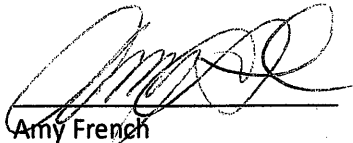
Also, staff recommends that the Board recommend that the applicant consider applying for existing preservation development incentives that are available under the Municipal Code. Staff has contacted the applicant to initiate a conversation regarding potential development scenarios that make use of the available preservation development incentives.

PREPARED BY:



Matthew Weintraub
Planner

REVIEWED BY:



Amy French
Chief Planning Official

ATTACHMENTS

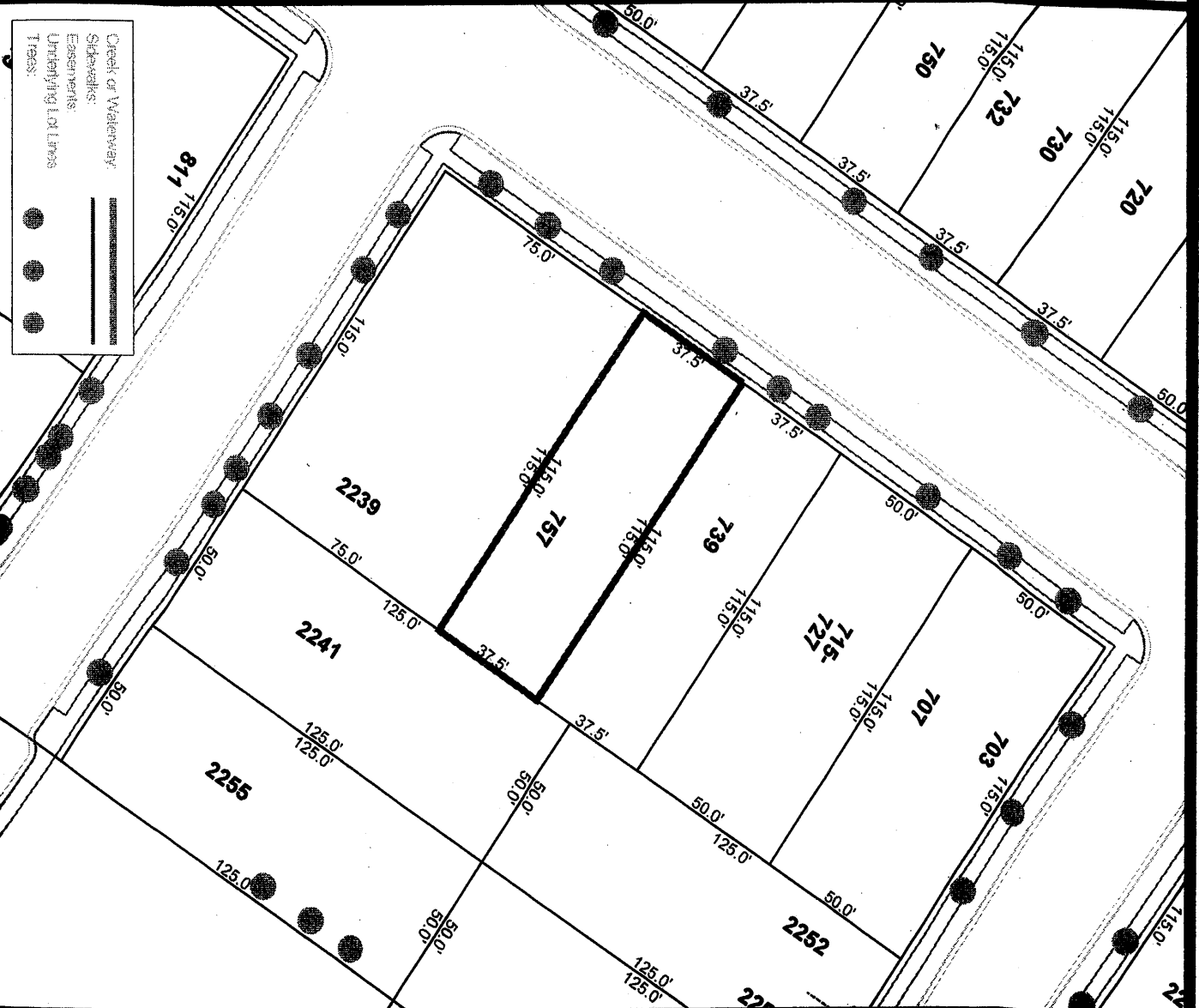
- A. Parcel Report
- B. Historic Inventory Form
- C. Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) dated September 30, 2014, and HRE Addendum dated March 31, 2015

c: Robert L. McCormick
Lucille W. Mellich

Parcel Report for APN: 137-02-009

Attachment A

Net Lot Size:	4,313 sf
Zone:	R-1
Zone %:	100
Land Use Designation:	SF
Land Use Designation %:	100
Pool Zone:	X
CLMA:	no
Linking District:	none
Support Influence Area:	no
Historic Status:	Category 3
Home/Emerson Corridor Frontage:	no
Easements:	no
Underlying Lot Lines:	Yes, see Public Works for possible requirements.
Near Creek Feature:	no
Distance between sidewalk and pt. (as measured on map):	
Substandard:	Yes, see zoning code for possible requirements.
Flag Lot:	no
Cottage:	Not eligible, lot size too small.
Max Floor Area:	1,941 sf
Max Lot Coverage:	If single story, 1,941 sf If two story, 1,608 sf
Max Height to Ridge:	May be 17' due to substandard size or flag configuration.
Special Setbacks:	none
Minimum Setbacks:	If no special setback, 20' or, if avg. contextual setback > 30', the avg. contextual setback.
Front:	20'
Rear:	20'
Interior Side(s):	6'
Street Side:	If no special setback, 16'



757 College Ave

The City of
Palo Alto



This map is a product
of the
City of Palo Alto GIS



50'

City of Palo Alto

Historic Resources Inventory Detail

Date: 25-Jan-95



Historic Building Inventory ID: 115

location

Historic name:

Common or current name:

Number & street: 757 College Avenue

City: Palo Alto

ZIP:

County: Santa Clara

Alternate Address:

Past Address: 425 College Avenue

status

Category: 3

☐ National Registry

Historical District:

☐ State Registry

ownership

Owner: William J. and Lucille Mellish

☐ public ☒ private

Address: 2241 Wellesley Street

City: Palo Alto, CA

ZIP: 94306

use

Present: Residential

Original: Residential

Past:

description

This is a simple one-story cottage with elaborate bargeboard decoration.

Photo Date: 1978



Property Size frontage: 37.5

depth: 115

acreage:

Condition: fair

Alteration: Unknown

Surroundings:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scattered Buildings | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Densely Built | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial |

Other:

Threats:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None Known | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Works |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private Development | |

Other:

description
(cont.)

Architect:

Exterior Material: wood

Builder: Frank A. Cuning?

Other Material:

Date: 1906

Original Site:

☒ factual ☐ estimated

Theme: architecture

Notes:

Features:

☐ Barn☐ Formal Garden☐ Outhouse☐ Watertower☐ Carriage House☐ Windmill☐ Shed☒ None

OtherFeatures:

significance

A modest building enriched by vernacular ornamentation. The site passed through several hands from 1894, when it was purchased by Harlan C. Smith, of Portland, from the College Terrace developer, Alexander Gordon, to 1901 (Lulu McCray), to 1903 (Homer and Lulu McCray Martin), to Frank A. and Mary C. Cuning in 1903. They deeded it next year to A.M. and Ruby R. Cuning. It is uncertain whether the Cunnings occupied the house briefly or merely rented (Mayfield directories for 1905-09 are unavailable). In 1910 (if not before) and 1911 it was occupied by early Japanese residents of Mayfield, the Hironaka family. Then followed, 1913-22, Emma J. Hutchinson, a retired teacher and librarian. Again it was shuffled among various owners in the mid-1920s, including F.M. Freed, Wilfred A. and Lillian V. Edlin, Richard and Marie Coombs, and Clarence W. and Ida B. Manning. Manning was a lather and contractor. The Mannings occupied the house in the early 1930s, then rented it. Ludwig Huebner, occupant from 1936-1943, was a city employee for 30 years--superintendent of the sewage treatment plant. From 1944-1963, the owner was William H. Reincke. The present owners acquired the property in 1968.

sources

P.A. City Directories; 6/16/1906, 8/2/71; Santa Clara Co. Assesor's Books; Book 184 (Deeds), p. 113-4, 8/20/1894; Book 245 (Deeds), p. 264, 5/27/1901; Book 262 (Deeds), p. 404, 3/11/03; Book 283 (Deeds), p. 298-9, 10/19-20/04; Book 427 (Deeds) p. 48, 4/16/13; Book 550 (Deeds), p. 429-30, 4/11/22; Book 21 (Off. Rec.), p. 505, 7/5/23; Book 237 (Off. Rec.), p. 542, 5/12/26; Book 239 (Off. Rec.), p. 506-7, 5/10/26; Book 567 (Off. Rec.), p. 167, 4/3/31 (Santa Clara Co. Recorder); U.S. Census 1910, ED 75; interview 1978, Lucille Mellish.

preparation

Organization:

By: Wendell B. Birkhofer; Historic Resources Board;

Date: 1978, 1986

DB Record Date: 6/23/94

Address: 250 Hamilton Avenue

City: Palo Alto

State: CA

ZIP: 94301

Phone:

Historic Resource Evaluation

**757 College Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94306**



Conducted for:

Lucille Mellish
2241 Wellesley Street
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Prepared by:

Richard Brandi
Architectural Historian
125 Dorchester Way
San Francisco, CA 94127

September 30, 2014

Introduction

This Historic Resource Evaluation was conducted to assess the eligibility of the house at 757 College Avenue for continued listing on the Palo Alto Historic Inventory. The house was added to the inventory in 1978 as a Category 3 Contributing Building.

This review was conducted by Richard Brandi who holds an M.A. in Historic Preservation from Goucher College, Maryland and a B.A. from U.C. Berkeley. He is listed as a qualified historian by the San Francisco Planning Department and the California Historical Resources Information System. In addition to researching and writing historic context statements, Mr. Brandi conducts historic resource evaluations; architectural surveys; CEQA, NEPA and Section 106 reviews; HABS/HAER documentation; National Register nominations; and project reviews using the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Richard has completed two nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, two HABS/HAER documentations, and dozens of HREs. He has also evaluated hundreds of buildings and surveyed thousands of buildings and structures. He has conducted design review using the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties in San Francisco, Chico, Pacific Grove, Pebble Beach, and Riverside. With more than 10 years of professional experience in architectural history and historic preservation, Mr. Brandi meets the requirements of a Qualified Professional as set forth by the Secretary of the Interior.

Methodology

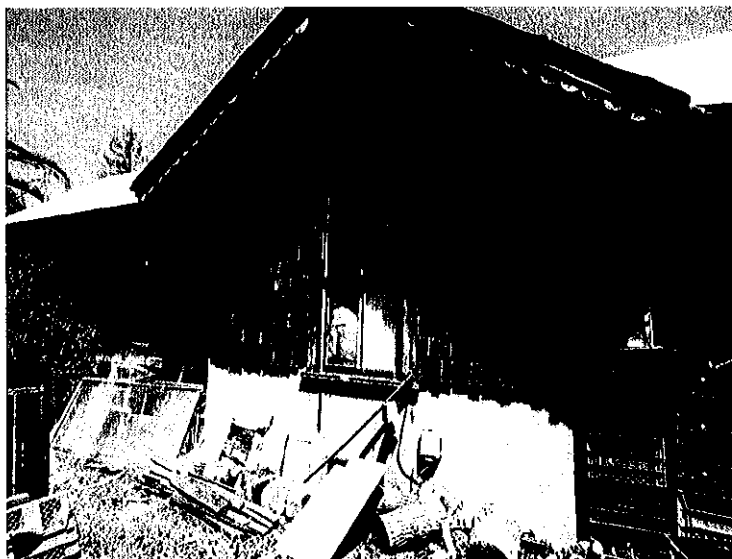
Research was conducted at the Palo Alto Historical Society, Palo Alto Public Library College Terrace Branch, City of Palo Alto Development Center, and on the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) online research databases, Online Archive of California, and the California Digital Newspaper Collection. Archival research did not uncover original drawings, building permits, or other information about the subject property. Two sites visits were conducted and photographs were taken of the exterior.

Property Description

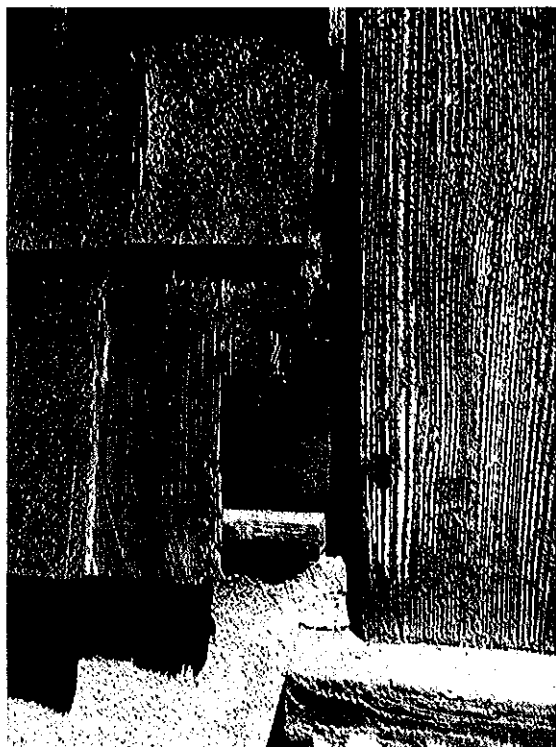
Physical appearance

The building is a one-story, wood framed house, rectangular in plan with a cross-gable roof. The building is clad in wood shingles and there is a 3' 10" high cement or stucco base around the entire building. Rafter tails extend around all the edges of the roof. The roof is clad with asphaltic roll roofing. The main façade has a front gable roof with bargeboard a wood, a double-hung, two-over-two window and a wood, glazed entrance door with a shed roof. The west façade has three wood sash, double-hung two-over-two windows and a small window. The rear façade has a shed addition. The east façade has three wood sash, double-hung two-over-two windows and a small window. A brick chimney protrudes from the east wall through the roof near the front of the building. A similar chimney protrudes from the west wall through the roof near the rear of the building.

A crudely made bargeboard of semicircular design was nailed behind the facial board on all four sides of the house. Several pieces of the bargeboard are missing. See appendix for photos. The wood shingles were nailed on top of horizontal wood siding at an unknown date. It is not clear if the cement or stucco base was applied over previously existing horizontal shingles or some other material. The building is vacant and in poor condition.



West façade



Close up of west façade showing horizontal wood siding underneath the wood shingles.



East façade. If the house had a water table — i.e., a wood trim element capped with a drip edge or other device to direct water away from the foundation — the addition of the stucco base has obliterated all traces.

Physical Condition

In 2005 the house was examined by an architect who concluded that the house was of substandard construction, similar to that of a chicken coop. The architect found serious structural deficiencies and safety hazards including the following:

- The floors have excessive deflection with 2"-x-6" floor joists at 24" to 30" spacing that are unsupported across the entire width of the house. The joists have extensive dry rot and termite infestation.
- The house rests on wood pier blocks that have rotten and sunk into the ground. There is no concrete, masonry, or other foundation. The framing members have warped, and the house has settled differentially. The framing members are permanently warped.
- The wall framing has no floor sills, fire blocking, double plates, or lateral bracing.
- Extensive rodent infestation exists throughout the house.
- There are numerous plumbing, sewer, and gas line hazards.
- The crawl space has moisture and is subject to flooding.

The architect's report concluded that it is infeasible to repair the building due to the permanent warping of the floor framing, differential settling, dry rot, and termite damage to the wall and roof framing (which are undersized), and the lack of a foundation. The report is attached.

Neighborhood Description

The College Terrace neighborhood is a fully built-out residential area with a mix of one- and two-story single family houses and multiple family buildings constructed over various time periods during the 20th century. The architectural styles vary widely and there is no consistent pattern.



The immediate area of 757 College Avenue showing library, multiple family buildings, and large single family houses (too numerous to highlight). Source: Google Earth

Historic Context

Mayfield

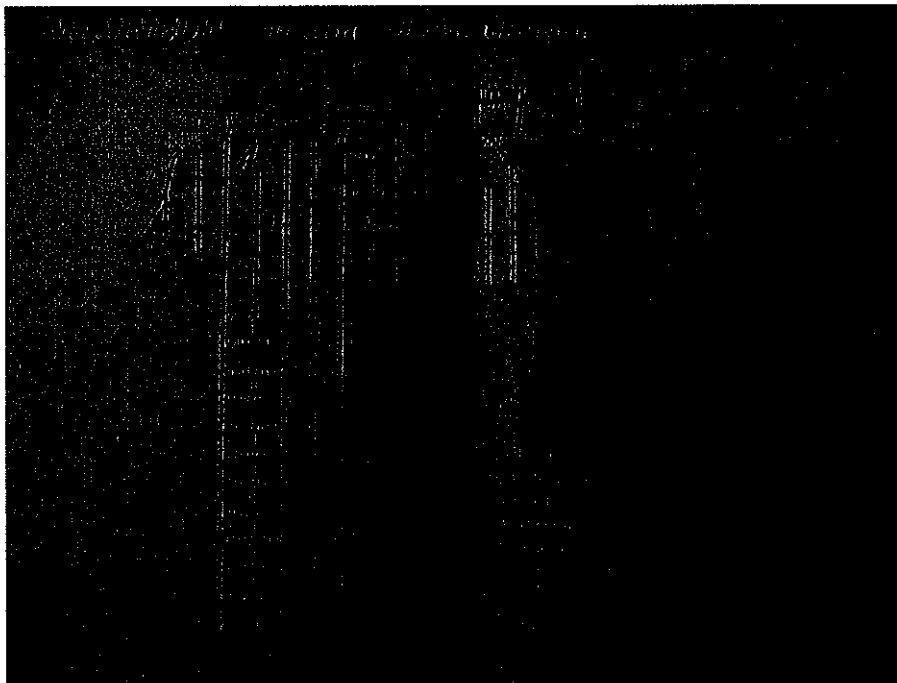
The subject house is located in the College Terrace Addition in what was then the town of Mayfield. Mayfield was platted and filed with Santa Clara County in 1867, although a village had existed since 1855 with the establishment of "Uncle Jim's cabin," a combination inn, saloon, and stage stop thought to be located near the present corner of El Camino Real and California Avenue. The name Mayfield was taken from a nearby farm. During the 1860s, newcomers took up farming and the village grew. In 1865, Mayfield became a stop on the San Jose and San Francisco Railroad. During the 1870s, Mayfield prospered as a shipping center for lumber and products of the surrounding grain fields. In 1870, two German immigrants, Frederick William

Weisshaar and Peter Spacher, bought 120 acres covering what is now College Terrace, and began farming.

In 1876, Leland Stanford bought more than 7,000 acres northeast of Mayfield for raising horses and named it Palo Alto Farm for the El Palo Alto tree near San Francisquito Creek. Stanford's farm adjoined the Weisshaar and Spacher tract. In 1884 Stanford decided to use the farm for the site of a college in honor of his deceased son. Stanford bought additional land for a new town when Mayfield refused to close its saloons, the scene of public drunkenness, brawls, and shootings. Stanford's new town was platted by 1887 and lots were put on auction in 1890 as "University Park."

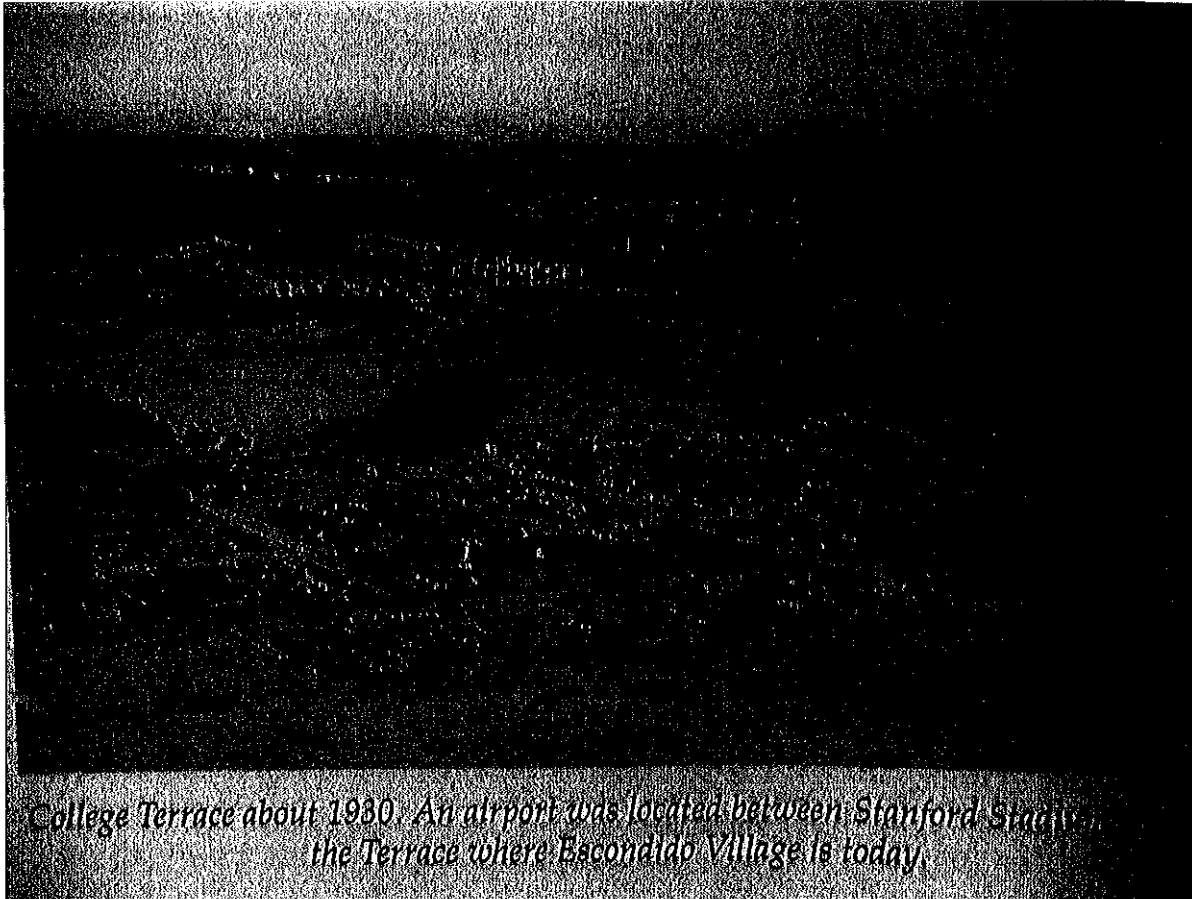
Stanford offered to buy the Weisshaar and Spacher tract, but they refused. Instead, they sold the land in 1887 to Alexander Gordon, a wealthy San Mateo County farmer, who subdivided the tract a year later and named it "Palo Alto." The name was changed to "College Terrace" after a suit was settled with Stanford who wished to use the name.

College Terrace became part of Mayfield in 1891. It was one of a number of additions made to the town between 1867 and 1915. The town was incorporated in 1905. College Terrace runs from El Camino 12 blocks southwest to Amherst, and the streets were named after colleges. Today only three streets (Stanford, College, and California) run the length of the tract; originally, Cambridge and Oxford also cut through the tract. Mayfield was annexed to Palo Alto in 1925.



Source: Palo Alto Historical Association, *The Story of Mayfield, A Lost Town That is Now Part of South Palo Alto*, Tall Tree Publications, Vol. IV, No. 1, 1976, 15.

College Terrace was rural for many years. In the 1890s, College Avenue had a gravel surface while the rest of the streets were dirt roads at a time when there were perhaps 6 houses and 20 cows grazing over the area. College Terrace grew slowly and had approximately 34 houses by 1908, according to the Sanborn map. It was still a rural place as late as 1930, when there was considerable open space in College Terrace.



College Terrace circa 1930, looking northeast. Source: Palo Alto Historical Association, *Streets of Palo Alto*, Tall Tree Publications, Vol. IV, No. 2 1970, 19.

The 1925 Sanborn map shows four oval parks at the intersection of Oxford and Wellesley (Berkeley Park now Cameron Park); Cambridge and Wellesley (Hollywood Park now Mayfield Park); Oxford and Dartmouth (Eton Park now Werry Park); and Cambridge and Dartmouth (Hampton Park now Weisshaar Park). The College Terrace branch library was built at Mayfield Park in 1936.

Property History

The history of the property, its owners and occupants, and its justification for Category 3 listing is provided by the City of Palo Alto "Historic Resources Inventory Detail" sheet for 757 College

Avenue, dated January 25, 1995. The date of construction is given as 1906. A copy of the form is attached. The 1904 and 1908 Sanborn maps do not show the 700 block of College Avenue (then called Palo Alto Avenue). No historic building permits or plans were found at the City of Palo Alto Development Center. Based on the Historic Resources Inventory Detail sheet, the date of construction is estimated to be 1906.

It is not known when the rear shed was added or when the wood shingles and stucco/cement base were added. According to the current owner, the house had these features when she and her husband purchased it in 1968.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

PALO ALTO HISTORIC INVENTORY

The City of Palo Alto's Historic Inventory lists noteworthy examples of the work of important individual designers and architectural eras and traditions, as well as structures whose background is associated with important events or trends in the history of the city, state, or nation. The City has adopted specific definitions for the categorization of properties on the Inventory. These are used to classify buildings that are found to be significant at the local level. The Inventory is organized under the following four Categories:

Category 1 (Exceptional Building): "Exceptional building" means any building or group of buildings of preeminent national or state importance, meritorious work of the best architects, or an outstanding example of the stylistic development of architecture in the United States. An exceptional building has had either no exterior modifications or such minor ones that the overall appearance of the building is in its original character.

Category 2 (Major Building): "Major building" means any building or group of buildings of major regional importance, meritorious works of the best architects, or an outstanding example of an architectural style or the stylistic development of architecture in the state or region. A major building may have some exterior modifications, but the original character is retained.

Category 3 or 4 (Contributing Building): "Contributing building" means any building or group of buildings which are good local examples of architectural styles and which relate to the character of a neighborhood grouping in scale, materials, proportion, or other factors. A contributing building may have had extensive or permanent changes made to the original design, such as inappropriate additions, extensive removal of architectural details, or wooden façades resurfaced in asbestos or stucco.

In addition to the classification categories listed above, the City has specific criteria for designation of historic structures/sites or districts to the historic inventory:

- (1) The structure or site is identified with the lives of historic people or with important events in the city, state or nation;
- (2) The structure or site is particularly representative of an architectural style or way of life important to the city, state, or nation;

- (3) The structure or site is an example of a type of building, which was once common, but is now rare;
- (4) The structure or site is connected with a business or use, which was once common, but is now rare;
- (5) The architect or building was important;
- (6) The structure or site contains elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship. (Ord. 3721 § 1 (part), 1986).

None of the City of Palo Alto six criteria are referenced in the inventory form for 757 College Avenue .

The evaluation of historic significance is a two-step process. First, the historic significance of the property must be established. If the property appears to possess historic significance, then a determination of its physical integrity is conducted; that is, its authenticity as evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. In this case the period of significance is the state of construction, 1906.

757 College Historic Designation

The house at 757 College Avenue is rated a category 3.

Category 3 or 4 (Contributing Building): "Contributing building" means any building or group of buildings which are good local examples of architectural styles and which relate to the character of a neighborhood grouping in scale, materials, proportion or other factors. A contributing building may have had extensive or permanent changes made to the original design, such as inappropriate additions, extensive removal of architectural details, or wooden facades resurfaced in asbestos or stucco.

Although Category 3 buildings may have a lower level of historic integrity than usually considered acceptable, there must still be enough integrity to qualify for listing; otherwise, it would make a mockery of historic preservation.

The National Register is the nation's authoritative guide to be used by Federal, State, and local governments; private groups; and citizens to identify the nation's cultural resources. The National Register defines integrity as "the ability of a property to convey its significance."¹ The California Register of Historical Resources has a similar principle. Historic integrity has seven aspects (added emphasis in bold):

Location

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed.

Design

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. It results from conscious decisions made during the original conception and planning of a property (or its significant alteration) and applies to activities as diverse as community planning, engineering, architecture, and landscape architecture. Design includes such elements as organization of space, proportion, scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials. A property's design reflects historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. It includes such considerations as the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; **textures and colors of surface materials**; type, amount, and style of ornamental detailing; and arrangement and type of plantings in a designed landscape.

Setting

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. Whereas location refers to the specific place where a property was built or an event occurred, **setting refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historical role.** It involves *how*, not just *where*, the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space.

Materials

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. **The choice and combination of materials reveal the preferences of those who created the property and indicate the availability of particular types of materials and technologies.** Indigenous materials are often the focus of regional building traditions and thereby help define an area's sense of time and place. **A property must retain the key exterior materials dating from the period of its historic significance.**

Workmanship

Workmanship is the **physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.** It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a building, structure, object, or site. Workmanship can apply to the property as a whole or to its individual components. It can be expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes or in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing

Feeling

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

Association

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.²

Significance of 757 College Avenue

The historical significance of 757 College Avenue lies with its appearance as a 1906 Folk Victorian house, that is, for its architecture. It is not significant for being associated with historic events or persons according to the Historic Resources Inventory Detail sheet. A resource need not have all seven aspects of integrity, but it should retain those aspects that are most important for conveying the significance of the resource. In cases illustrating a particular architectural style, like 757 College Avenue, the aspects of design, materials, and workmanship are most important.

According to the National Register (*Emphasis added*):

A property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or construction technique must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique. A property that has lost some historic materials or details can be eligible *if it* retains the majority of the features that illustrate its style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation. **The property is not eligible, however, if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style.**

This house is a simple cottage with a cross gable roof and crude bargeboard. There are no other features or attributes except the crude bargeboard. It has none of the distinctions of other Victorian designs such as the Italianate or Queen Anne. In a simple house design like this one, the historic fabric is important since it makes up so much of what is seen.

Folk Victorians were usually clad in wood horizontal siding, as was this house. Wood shingles are more commonly found on the Shingle and Queen Anne style houses. Folk Victorians did not have stucco or cement claddings. The present roof is covered in asphaltic roll roofing. The original roofing material is not known, but the house was probably clad in either composition shingles or wood shingles. In any case, it did not have a flat appearance like the present one.

The addition of wood shingles and stucco to the exterior walls and the stripping of the roof have resulted in the loss of 100% of the historic exterior fabric. Without its original cladding, with the stucco/cement base and the flat cladding on the roof, the house looks like a nondescript shack, not a representative of a simple Folk Victorian of 1906 vintage.

Specifically, the integrity of Design, Materials, and Workmanship has been degraded by the changes to the original cladding and the addition of the stucco/cement base. It is not enough that the form of the house has remained for it to retain its integrity. It must also retain the majority of features that characterized its style, in this case its wall cladding.

Additionally, the integrity of Setting has eroded. While the area remains residential, the insertion of multiple-family-unit buildings, the branch library around the corner on what was open space, the construction of large houses, and the lack of open space have changed the character of a rural place into a dense, 20th-century suburban setting.

Conclusion

The house at 757 College Avenue has lost its integrity of Design, Materials, and Workmanship, and is therefore is not a "good local example of architectural styles." It also does not relate to "the character of a neighborhood grouping in scale, materials, proportion or other factors" due to the loss of Setting. For these reasons, the house does not meet the requirements for listing under Category 3 and should no longer be listed on the City of Palo Alto Historic Inventory.

Notes

¹ National Park Service, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/.

² National Park Service, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/.

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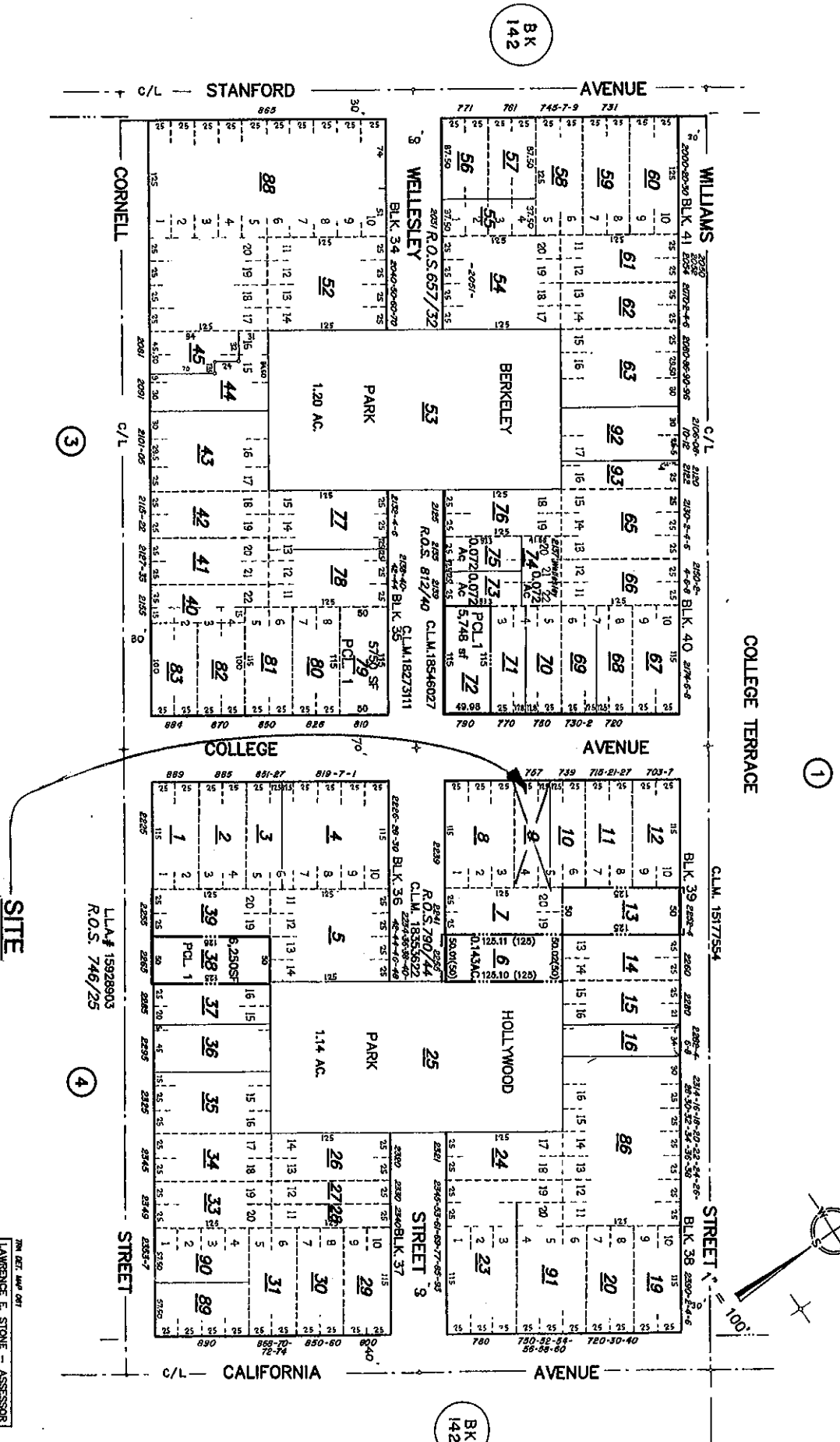
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THE DEPT. MAP DIV.
LAWRENCE E. STONE - ASSESSOR
Detailed map for assessment purposes only.
Compiled under R. & T. Code, Sec. 207.
Effective Roll Year 2013-2014.



COLLEGE TERRACE

CL.M. 15177554

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142

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LLA# 15928903
R.O.S. 746/25

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AVENUE

COLLEGE AVENUE

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CALIFORNIA AVENUE

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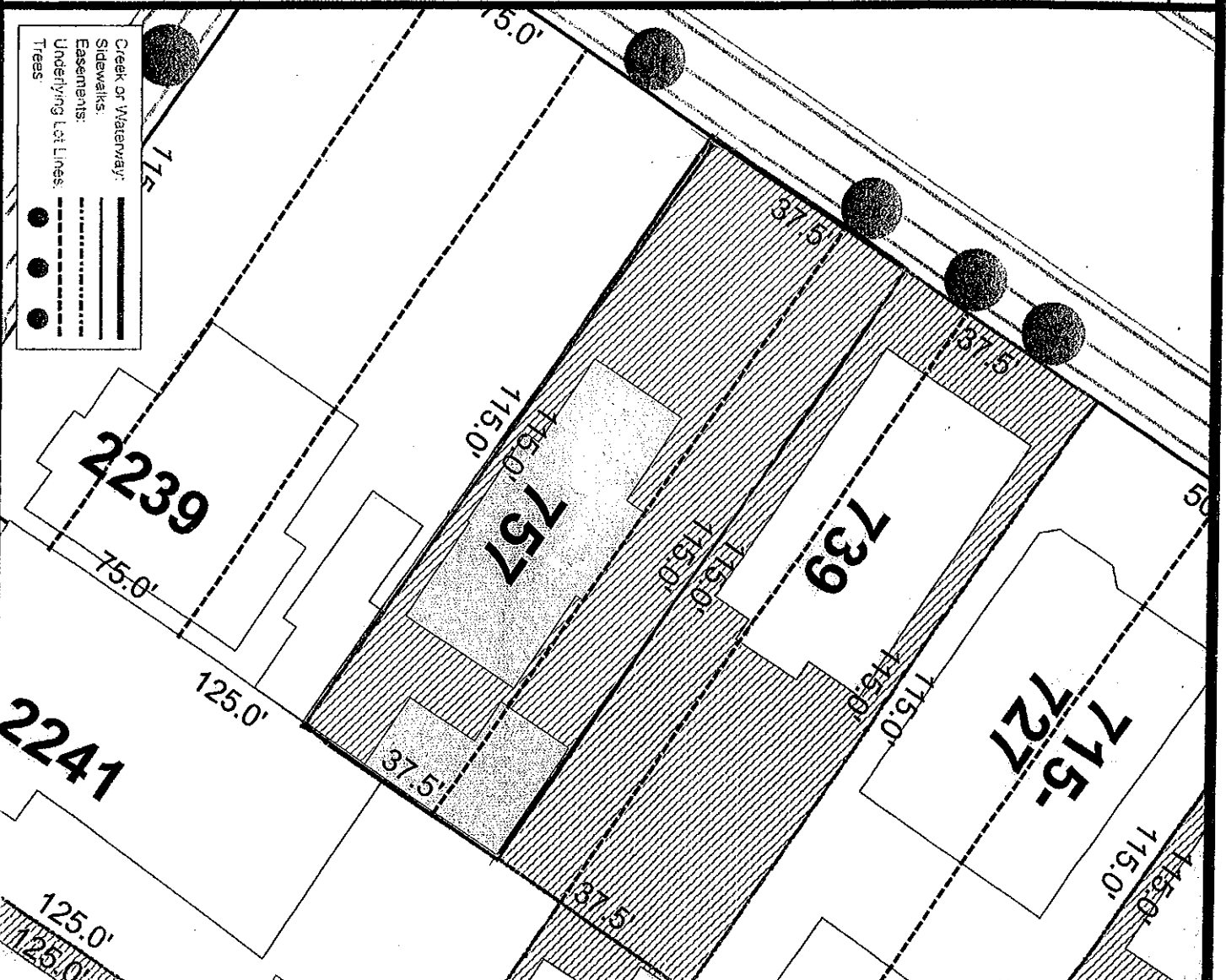
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Parcel Report for APN: 137-02-009

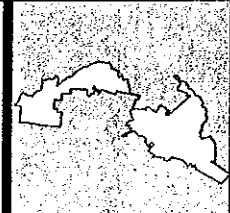
Net Lot Size:	4,313 sf
Zone:	R-1
Zone %:	100
Land Use Designation:	SF
Land Use Designation %:	100
Flood Zone:	X
LOMA:	no
Parking District:	none
Airport Influence Area:	no
Historic Status:	Category 3
Homer/Emerson Corridor Frontage:	no
Easements:	no
Underlying Lot Lines:	Yes, see Public Works for possible requirements.
Near Creek Feature:	no
Distance between sidewalk and pt. (as measured on map):	
Substandard:	Yes, see zoning code for possible requirements.
Flag Lot:	no
Collage:	Not eligible, lot size too small.
Max Floor Area:	1,941 sf
Max Lot Coverage:	If single story, 1,941 sf If two story, 1,509 sf
Max Height to Ridge:	May be 17' due to substandard size or flag configuration.
Special Setbacks:	none
Minimum Setbacks:	If no special setback, 20' or, if avg. contextual setback > 30', the avg. contextual setback.
Front:	20'
Rear:	20'
Interior Side(s):	6'
Street Side:	If no special setback, 16'



757 College Ave



The City of Palo Alto



This map is a product of the City of Palo Alto GIS



0' 20'

Robert L. McCormick, Architect
P.O. Box 180
Templeton, CA 93465
(805) 434-5603

June 20, 2005

Lucille Mellish
2241 Wellesley St.
Palo Alto, CA 94306

PROJECT: 757 College Avenue feasibility for reconstruction and retrofit.

Dear Mrs. Mellish:

At your request I have examined the subject cottage to give you a report on scope work required to retrofit this cottage to current UBC standards or even to habitable conditions. I observed the following:

Structural Items

- The floor has excessive deflection. When two people walk next to each other the floor drops noticeably. Upon examination I found the 2 X 6 floor joists to be spanning the entire width of the cottage without intermediate support and their spacing varies 24" to 30" on center and that they are infested with termites and dry rot throughout. The floors are wood boards that have rotted out in the bathroom and kitchen area currently covered by vinyl flooring.
- The cottage lacks concrete foundation. The cottage was built on wooden pier blocks that have rotted out and sunken into the mud. Since its construction (pre WWI) it has settled differentially. I would estimate this happened almost immediately. This is evident by the fact that painted cabinets have pulled apart in the kitchen so their doors no longer close. The doors in several locations are trimmed at angles to accommodate sloping floors. Only the exterior doors close at this time. Re-leveling the floors would not be feasible because the framing has taken on permanent warp, so lifting would just lift the permanently warped areas.
- The crawl space under the cottage was still flooded from winters rains plus foul smells indicate presence of hard pan at shallow depths common in the Cottage Terrace prevent drainage of sunken areas. I also observed evidence that rodents have burrowed under the exterior walls. One would have to lift that cottage high enough above grade to permit excavation by hand for foundation and crawl space.

•

Energy Items

- I examined the attic and observed that rodents have well established burrows. The cottage was constructed with interior wall cavities that extend uninterrupted by floor sills, fire blocking or top double plates. This condition is similar to "balloon framing" which is illegal for residential construction, invites passage of fire as well as an avenue for rodents. Access to block or brace these wall cavities is limited due to roof clearances.
- The walls have no insulation. The attic insulation (minimal) has been compromised by rodent urine and needs to be removed.
- The cottage lacks lateral bracing and horizontal cracks are widening in the walls. For this reason this poses great danger in event of a strong earthquake. The interior and exterior walls are composed of 1 inch thick boards placed horizontally to which shingles have been nailed without building paper. One would have to remove all the shingles,

termite damaged studs 30" O.C., add intermediate studs then nail shear plywood and building wrap.

Plumbing & Heating Items

- The sewer plumbing under the house and on the exterior is rusted out or missing. Natural gas piping under the cottage may be rusted and buried- very dangerous condition. A natural gas pipe runs around the exterior to the back of the cottage. These pipes are rusty and unbraced.
- The natural gas space heater vents into an unbraced brick chimney. I do not recommend that the heater be used, as it appears to emit carbon monoxide into the interior.

Roofing Item

- The roof was originally built without adequate ventilation. Rodents have chewed openings between the top of the walls and the bottom of roof boards. The roof has multiple layers of decayed roofing that needs to be replaced.

In conclusion it would be not be feasible to repair / retrofit this structure. From the beginning it was built without integrity in a way one would a chicken coop. The reconstruction would far exceed its value. To replace the entire floor framing would be prohibitively expensive and daunting.

Truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan McLean". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the "Truly yours," text.

Photos



Front yard and entrance



Close up of entrance and eaves





East façade



Rear.

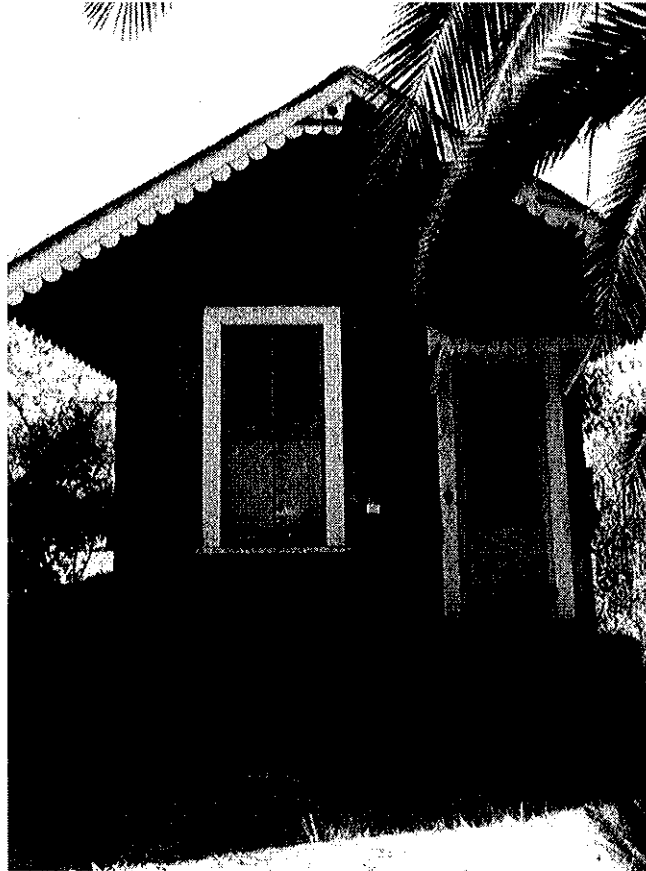


West façade.

Historic Resource Evaluation

Addendum

757 College Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94306



Conducted for:

Lucille Mellish
2241 Wellesley Street
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Prepared by:

Richard Brandi
Architectural Historian
125 Dorchester Way
San Francisco, CA 94127

March 31, 2015

Introduction

An historic resource evaluation (HRE) dated September 30, 2014 assessed the eligibility of the house at 757 College Avenue for continued listing on the Palo Alto Historic Inventory. The house was added to the inventory in 1978 as a Category 3 Contributing Building. The HRE found that the house had lost its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, and therefore is not a "good local example of architectural styles." It also does not relate to "the character of a neighborhood grouping in scale, materials, proportion or other factors" due to the loss of setting. For these reasons, the HRE concluded that the house does not meet the requirements for listing under Category 3 and should no longer be listed on the City of Palo Alto Historic Inventory.

This addendum addresses the issue as to whether the house meets the criteria for listing under the National Register of Historic Resources or the California Register of Historical Resources.

The HRE and the addendum were conducted by Richard Brandi who holds an M.A. in Historic Preservation from Goucher College, Maryland and a B.A. from U.C. Berkeley. He is listed as a qualified historian by the San Francisco Planning Department and the California Historical Resources Information System. In addition to researching and writing historic context statements, Mr. Brandi conducts historic resource evaluations; architectural surveys; CEQA, NEPA and Section 106 reviews; HABS/HAER documentation; National Register nominations; and project reviews using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Richard has completed two nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, two HABS/HAER documentations, and dozens of HREs. He has also evaluated hundreds of buildings and surveyed thousands of buildings and structures. He has conducted design reviews using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties in San Francisco, Chico, Pacific Grove, Pebble Beach, and Riverside. With more than 10 years of professional experience in architectural history and historic preservation, Mr. Brandi meets the requirements of a Qualified Professional as set forth by the Secretary of the Interior.

HISTORIC EVALUATION

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES (NRHP)

The *National Register of Historic Places* (NRHP) is the official federal list of historic resources that have architectural, historic, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level. To be eligible for listing on the NRHP a property must be historically significant under at least one of the four "Criteria for Evaluation":

Criterion A (Event): Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Criterion B (Person): Properties that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Criterion C (Design/Construction): Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Criterion D (Information Potential): Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

If a building has historic significance according to the criteria, then an evaluation is made to determine its physical integrity, that is, the ability to convey its historic significance. Integrity consists of seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

To be potentially eligible for individual listing on the NRHP, a structure must usually be more than 50 years old, must have historic significance, and must retain its physical integrity

Criterion A (Event)

The house was estimated to be built in 1906 in College Terrace. College Terrace became part of Mayfield in 1891, one of a number of additions made to the town between 1867 and 1915. The town was incorporated in 1905. College Terrace ran from El Camino Real 12 blocks southwest to Amherst, and the streets were named after colleges. Today, only three streets run the length of the tract (Stanford, College, and California); originally, Cambridge and Oxford also cut through the tract. College Terrace was rural for many years. In the 1890s, there were perhaps six houses and 20 cows grazing over the area, and only College Avenue was improved by using gravel for the road surface. College Terrace grew slowly and had approximately 34 houses by 1908, according to the Sanborn map. It was still a rural place and even as late as 1930, there was considerable open space in College Terrace. Mayfield was annexed to Palo Alto in 1925. The house at 757 College Avenue was one of the early houses in Mayfield. According to the Palo Alto Historic Resources Inventory form, an early address for the house was 425 College Avenue.

As one of the first 34 houses in College Terrace, the house is associated with the early development of Mayfield. As such, it could have been eligible under NRHP Criteria A on the local level of significance, except for its lack of historic integrity as explained in the HRE.

Criterion B (Person)

Criterion B applies to properties associated with individuals whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented. Persons "significant in our past" refers to individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context. The persons associated with the property must be individually significant within a historic context. It must be shown that the person gained importance within his or her profession or group.

The Palo Alto Historic Resources Inventory form traces the people and families who are thought to have owned or lived in the house from about 1910 through 1963. These persons appear to be laborers or workers, and there is no historical evidence indicating that these persons reached local or statewide importance. Thus, the house is not eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion B.

Criterion C (Design/Construction/Work of a master)

The historical significance of 757 College Avenue lies with its appearance as a 1906 Folk Victorian house. The architecture of this house is that of a simple cottage with a cross gable roof and crude bargeboard. There are no other features or attributes except the crude bargeboard. It has none of the distinctions of other Victorian designs such as the Italianate or Queen Anne. The designer is not known.

Therefore, the house does not represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

However, as the house could embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, namely a Folk Victorian, had it retained its historic integrity as explained in the HRE. For this reason, the house is not eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion C.

Criterion D (Information Potential)

Finally, archival research provided no indication that the building has the potential to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Historic District or Historic Landscape

The site does not qualify as a historic district. A historic district is:

A district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.¹

The College Terrace area has a collection of houses and apartments buildings from different eras and styles.

CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

The *California Register of Historical Resources* (CRHR) evaluates a resource's historic significance based on the following four criteria that are very similar to the National Register:

Criterion 1 (Event): Resources associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Criterion 2 (Person): Resources associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.

Criterion 3 (Design/Construction): Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.

Criterion 4 (Information Potential): Resources that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

For the reasons outlined above under the discussion for the National Register, the house is not eligible for listing under the California Register of Historical Resources under Criteria 1 and 3 due to a lack of historic integrity.

¹ National Register Bulletin 15, www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_4.htm