

P A S T
CONSULTANTS LLC

Seth A. Bergstein
415.515.6224
seth@pastconsultants.com

February 21, 2024

Sean Sesanto, Associate Planner
City of Capitola Planning Department
420 Capitola Ave.
Capitola, CA 95010

Re: 417 Riverview Avenue, Capitola, CA – SOI Standards Design Review Letter
APN. 035-132-06

Dear Mr. Sesanto:

PAST Consultants, LLC (PAST) respectfully submits our Secretary of the Interior’s Standards Compliance Review of the property located at 417 Riverview Avenue, Capitola, California. The subject property contains a circa-1930 house that is a contributing structure to the Old Riverview Avenue National Register Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.

Existing Site Conditions

On December 12, 2023, PAST Consultants, LLC (PAST) visited the subject property to view the existing conditions of the building. The subject property is constructed in the Vernacular Bungalow style, with a gable roof, wood sash windows, and V-groove rustic wood siding (**Figures 1 – 4**).



Figures 1 and 2. Left image shows the east elevation. Right image shows the west (Soquel Creek) elevation.

The site visit revealed extensive deterioration in the foundation, the wood sill plate and the bottoms of the wall studs where they meet the sill plate (**Figure 3**). The rear (Soquel Creek) elevation contains a bank of wood windows, with a replaced door and a new entry porch (**Figure 4**).



Figures 3 and 4. Left image details the south elevation, showing extensive rot to the sill plate. Right image details the west elevation, showing the deteriorated chimney and rear deck, which was replaced previously.

Summary Property History

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988, the Old Riverview Historic District is bounded by Soquel Creek to the west, Riverview Drive to the east, Stockton Avenue to the south, and on the north by the intersection of Riverview Drive and Oak Drive. Features of the district include the Southern Pacific Railroad trestle and the walkway between the historic houses and Soquel Creek. The National Register Registration Form notes that the district includes 66 properties, with 54 buildings (including the subject property) listed as contributing elements. The properties consist primarily of small, wood-framed cottages that were originally summer cottages constructed between 1925 and 1930 in the Bungalow, Craftsman and Vernacular styles. The contributing buildings are compatible in scale, materials and massing, nestled into the riparian corridor of Soquel Creek. Taken as a whole, the district retains its unique setting and layout of an early Twentieth Century vacation community.¹

The National Register District Registration form describes the subject property as a

“One-story, wood-frame bungalow residence with shiplap siding; the building plan is rectangular. Its major architectural features include a medium-pitched gable roof and exposed rafter ends. Its associated features include a parking area and fenced yard on the Avenue. Built c. 1930.

¹ See Charles Rowe, *Old Riverview Historic District, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (listed, 1/22/1988), for a complete inventory, developmental history and significance statement.

The building was photographed in 1986 for the National Register Registration form (**Figure 5**).



Figure 5. View looking north along the residences' west-facing elevations. An arrow indicates the subject property. Note that the rear entrance utilized a series of concrete stairs and no porch rail (*Courtesy: Charles Rowe, Old Riverview Historic District, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (listed, 1988)).

Construction Chronology

Based on the Santa Cruz County Assessor records, historic images and a permit search at the City of Capitola Planning Department, the following is the estimated building chronology:

- Circa-1930. Construct wood-framed bungalow in the Vernacular style.
- Permit No. 758, 1/23/1953. Remove interior partition between bedroom and living room.
- Permit No. 1645, 6/2/1958. Construct interior bulkhead.
- Permit No. R16466, 12/2/1997. Reroof building with composition shingles.
- Circa-1990s. Replace front (east) elevation door. Replace rear (west) elevation door. Replace rear porch stairs and add wood rail.

Remaining Character Defining Features

The remaining character-defining features are:

- Gable roof with exposed rafter ends.
- Banked windows on rear (west) elevation facing Soquel Creek.
- Wood-sash windows on side elevations.
- South elevation chimney.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards

Two publications provide both the standards and guidelines for analyzing new additions to historic buildings for conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*:

- *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*: Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995, 1998, 2017; and
- *Preservation Brief 14, New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns*: Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, August 2010.

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Standards)* provides the framework for evaluating the impacts of additions and alterations to historic buildings. The *Standards* describe four treatment approaches: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction. The *Standards* require that the treatment approach be determined first, as a different set of standards apply to each approach. For the proposed project, the treatment approach is rehabilitation. The *Standards* describe rehabilitation as:

In *Rehabilitation*, historic building materials and character-defining features are protected and maintained as they are in the treatment Preservation; however, an assumption is made prior to work that existing historic fabric has become damaged or deteriorated over time and, as a result, more repair and replacement will be required. Thus, latitude is given in the *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitation* to replace extensively deteriorated, damaged, or missing features using either traditional or substitute materials. Of the four treatments, only Rehabilitation includes an opportunity to make possible an efficient contemporary use through alterations and additions.²

The ten *Standards* for rehabilitation are:

² *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*: Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995, 62.

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Proposed Project

The proposed project will lift the building onto a new foundation and replace the deteriorated wood structural elements, including the sill plate, and will repair or replace the wall studs. All wood siding will be removed to repair the structure. Since the building needs to be lifted from the top plate, the existing fireplace and chimney will need to be removed. Presently, the exterior chimney is in poor condition.

A remodel of interior spaces is also proposed for the house. This interior design does not include the existing fireplace, which will be removed. The chimney will be replaced with a wood framed false chimney using brick panels that match the look of the existing chimney.

The proposed project is presented on drawings by Cade Bell of Bell Built Inc. and dated 2/14/2024. The proposed rehabilitation design includes:

- Lift building approximately 12 inches to install a new perimeter foundation. Repair and/or replace all deteriorated wood structural elements. Apply replacement wood siding to the building that matches the original siding in appearance.
- Install new, gable-roofed front porch onto east elevation. Replace front door.
- Install new rear porch stairs and rails onto west elevation. Replace rear door.
- Relocate north elevation kitchen window approximately 18 inches to the west to accommodate the interior remodeling plan.
- Remove south elevation chimney. Replace with false-brick paneled chimney that will match the original chimney's dimensions, color and brick profile.
- Retain and repair the remaining character defining features of the building.

Evaluation of Proposed Alterations

For the proposed alterations to the subject building, the following lists the ten *Standards* for rehabilitation, with an evaluation given below each standard.

1. *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*

The proposed building alterations will allow the property to retain its residential building use, in keeping with this *Standard*.

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

The proposed rehabilitation design replaces entry doors that are not original to the building. The proposed design also removes the south elevation chimney, which is deteriorated and will no longer be supported by the interior fireplace. The chimney will be replaced with a false chimney that will match the original chimney in appearance. For these reasons, the proposed project meets this *Standard*.

3. *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*

The proposed rehabilitation design does not add conjectural features or elements from other historic properties that would confuse the remaining character-defining features of the historic house, in keeping with this *Standard*.

4. *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*

This *Standard* does not apply as no changes have acquired historic significance.

5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

The proposed rehabilitation design will replace the original chimney with a false chimney that will match the original chimney's appearance, in keeping with this *Standard*.

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

Deteriorated historic wood window surrounds and wood details will be repaired using established restoration techniques that will match the original substrate according to the *Standards*.

Exterior Siding Alternatives

The exterior wood siding will need to be removed to repair the underlying wood structural elements properly. The builder/designer has not been able to locate replacement V-groove siding that matches the original dimensions of the existing wood siding. Two alternatives are proposed.

- Custom mill new wood siding that will match the existing siding dimensions; or
- Replace the existing wood siding with TruExterior composite siding that will match the existing siding boards in appearance and depth of V-groove.

Recommendation: The TruExterior siding is recommended in this case because of its enhanced durability. The subject building is in a riparian corridor that is subjected to enhanced deterioration due to its riverside setting and coastal environment. The TruExterior siding will be more durable and weather resistant, yet match the original siding's appearance, in keeping with this *Standard*.

- 7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*

Physical treatments to repair the existing wood details will be minimal and not damage the respective substrates, according to this *Standard*.

- 8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*

This *Standard* does not apply, as archaeological features are not identified on the site, based on an archaeological consultant's report under separate contract.

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

The proposed rehabilitation design will not add any massing additions or square footage to the building, with exception of the proposed front porch. The following analyzes the proposed building modifications according to elevation:

East (Riverview Ave.) Elevation

The proposed new front porch will consist of several concrete stairs and a landing up to the new raised floor level. The porch will be a gable-roofed design with simplified wood columns and wood details that are in keeping with the Vernacular Bungalow style of the existing building and the simplified wood front porches found throughout the National Register District.

Front Door Recommendation: While fully glazed doors are being considered, this report recommends a front entry door that is consistent with entry doors found on other contributing buildings within the National Register District. This type of door will be wood and contain a single light placed in the upper one-half to one-third of the door.

North Elevation

The proposed window relocation is necessary to accommodate the remodeling plan. The existing window will be removed and replaced in its proposed location, with sill and casework details that match the existing. This is an appropriate treatment according to the *Standards*.

West (Soquel Creek) Elevation

The character-defining feature of the banked rear windows will be repaired and retained. The proposed brick stairs and metal rail replace a non-historic rear porch and are in keeping with the building's scale and design.

Rear Door Recommendation: A wood rear door with a toplight that is aligned with the horizontal mullions of the banked windows is recommended, to maintain the horizontal line created by the banked windows.

South Elevation

The existing deteriorated brick chimney will no longer have its support with the removal of the interior fireplace. While the proposed design removes this character defining feature, the original look will be achieved with a false chimney with brick panels, to replace the chimney.

Chimney Panel Recommendations:

1. Prior to removal, photograph the chimney from at least two sides to match color, bond pattern and dimensions of the existing brick.
2. Measure brick dimensions for accurate replication. Measure raised "corbel" detail at upper part of chimney, so this detail can be replicated.
3. Choose replacement panels for appropriate color match, bond pattern match, corbel detail and brick connections at the corners.

The proposed alterations will meet this *Standard* with the above recommendations.

10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

The proposed alterations to the historic bungalow are designed to correct significant structural repairs and will not be reversible. However, the proposed rehabilitation design will maintain and increase the lifespan of this contributing building substantially.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed design alterations to the Vernacular Bungalow-styled house at 417 Riverview Avenue meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. The proposed design does not impact the remaining character-defining features or overall historic integrity of the subject property. Because the proposed alterations to the building meet the *Standards*, the alterations are considered as mitigated to a level of less than a significant impact on the historic resource and do not constitute a substantial adverse change to the historic resource, thus conforming to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Please contact me with any questions regarding this design review letter.

Sincerely,



Seth A. Bergstein
Principal

Cc.: Cade Bell, Bell Built Inc.