



DATE: August 8, 2022

AGENDA ITEM #6

## **AGENDA REPORT**

**TO:** Historical Commission

**FROM:** Sean Gallegos, Senior Planner

**SUBJECT:** H22-0002 – 725 University Avenue

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

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

---

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project is an application for alterations to a 403 square-foot accessory structure on a designated historic resource property at 725 University Avenue. The scope of work includes a 63 square-foot addition to the one-story accessory structure (garage) and exterior alterations to the exterior side and rear of the structure, including demolition of 85 square feet, for an accessory structure with a total area of 403 square feet.

### **BACKGROUND**

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

On April 27, 2020, the Historical Commission approved a Historical Advisory Review for a second-story addition and exterior modifications to the existing two-story historic resource structure. The scope of work includes a 60 square-foot addition at the second story and exterior alterations to the front, interior side, exterior side, and rear of the structure, including demolition of 40 square feet of a 160 square-foot non-historic accessory structure (shed).

The residence at 725 University Avenue, known as the Scheid Residence was constructed in 1911 during Los Altos' early residential development period. This large, rambling two-story Craftsman style house is a good representative example of its style, and retains a good degree of integrity of location, workmanship, feeling, design and materials. The 2011 Department Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms that provides additional information about the structure's historic significance and physical integrity is included as Attachment A.

## DISCUSSION

The historic character of the accessory structure is commensurate with that of a circa 1911 Gates House. The project historian has noted the east wall has already been compromised by the non-historic addition. While the accessory structure (garage) is being slightly enlarged, the proposed addition and exterior modifications continue to maintain the building's character, as a simple ancillary building.

The accessory structure alterations include minor changes to the roof and elevations that alter but maintain the mass and general appearance of the structure. The proposed alterations are only visible from Lee Street and the alley and will not compromise the historic character of the house or overall property. The garage will be clad in painted wood shingles with an asphalt roof shingle matching that of the house. The double hung and casement windows will be painted wood. The new Lee Street garage door while slightly wider, will follow the same design as the existing door.

Historical professional, Charles Duncan with Interactive Resource reviewed the project to ensure consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Structures (SOIS) (Attachment B and C), and the historian's and staff's comments are provided below:

1. *A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*

Response: This application assumes the structure's continued use as a garage. The proposed alterations are required to slightly enlarge the original garage footprint to create a full two car garage. The alterations will not change the defining characteristics of the building nor its site and environment.

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."*

Response: The mass, scale, general geometry, and appearance will remain. The removal of the addition to the east is a part of a non-historic structure.

3. *"Each property shall 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken."*

Response: The limited project scope only includes an enlargement of the garage. It is a very simple, restrained building that does not add conjectural features or elements from other buildings.

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

Response: The garage currently has an addition that is not considered a contributor to the historic character of the property. There are no apparent changes that have acquired historic significance.

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

Response: While the garage is being slightly enlarged, it is an extremely simple ancillary building. The east wall has already been compromised by the non-historic addition. The south wall will be reconstructed only 2'-4" to the south of the original wall using the same framing techniques with the same wood shingle cladding.

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

Response: There are no deteriorated features.

7. *Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.*

Response: Because the work is limited, there will be no physical or chemical treatments that will affect the wood shingle or wood trim.

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

The project scope does not include invasive foundation work or landscaping that would affect the site. Because the ground was disturbed previously in 1911, and subsequently with landscape improvements, it is unlikely that undisturbed archeological resources are present at the site.

9. *“New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and environment.*

Response: The scope of this project is minimal involving moving two walls of a roughly square garage out by a maximum of 2'-4". Rather than differentiating, the new work from the old, it seems more appropriate, because the scale is so small, to rebuild the new walls to match the existing original walls.

10. *“New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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.”*

Response: There would be no impetus with historical meaning to make this work reversible. As a garage, which is a minor ancillary building, the posed work would have no impact on the overall character of the property.

As outlined in the report from the Historical professional, Charles Duncan with Interactive Resource, the proposed demolition, addition, and exterior alterations do not adversely affect the physical integrity or the historic significance of the property and are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Structures.

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

#### *Community Outreach*

The applicant conducted community outreach by mailing a letters with renderings of the accessory structure to neighbors in the immediate neighborhood context. A copy of the letter mailed to neighbors is provided as attachment B. Staff has not received any public comment regarding the proposed project.

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

#### **Attachments**

- A. Secretary of the Interior's Standards Review Report, Interactive Resources
- B. Community Outreach Letter
- C. Project Plans

## **FINDINGS**

H22-0002 – 725 University Avenue

With regard to the Advisory Review, the Historical Commission finds the following in accordance with Section 12.44.140 of the Municipal Code:

1. The project complies with all provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 12.44); and
2. The project does not adversely affect the physical integrity or the historic significance of the subject property.

## **CONDITIONS**

H20-0001 – 725 University Avenue

### **GENERAL**

1. **Expiration**

The Historical Commission Advisory Review approval will expire on August 8, 2024, unless prior to the date of expiration, a building permit is issued, or an extension is granted pursuant to Section 14.76.090 of the Zoning Code.

2. **Approved Plans**

The approval is based on the plans and materials received on July 6, 2022, except as may be modified by these conditions.

3. **Indemnity and Hold Harmless**

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

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

4. **Conditions of Approval**

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