



## **CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMITTEE AGENDA REPORT**

**SUBJECT:** REVIEW OF THE REPAIR AND RENOVATION OF THE ALLEN HOUSE (MASTER LIST HISTORIC RESOURCE), INCLUDING REPLACEMENT OF WINDOWS; INSTALLATION OF SKYLIGHTS WITHIN THE BUILDING ROOF; AND REMOVAL OF A ROOF CANOPY AT THE REAR OF THE BUILDING, AND ITS REPLACEMENT WITH

**PROJECT ADDRESS:** 1700 Osos St.

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**FILE NUMBER:** ARCH-0145-2021

**FROM:** Brian Leveille, Senior Planner

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Recommend that the Community Development Director find the proposed work to be consistent with the City's Historical Preservation Ordinance, with incorporation of suggested conditions of approval and any other conditions of approval necessary to ensure such consistency.

### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

The applicant proposes to rehabilitate the dwelling at 1700 Osos Street, the Allen House, a Master List Resource in the City's Inventory of Historic Resources, as described in the applicant's Project Description (Attachment A).



**Figure 1: Subject Property**

### **2.0 DISCUSSION**

The subject site is a residential property at the southeast corner of Leff and Santa Barbara Streets (see Figure 1) at the southern edge of the Old Town Historic District. It is within in a Medium High Density Residential (R-3-H) Zone characterized by a mix of commercial buildings, multi-family dwellings, and single-family dwellings, including many larger homes of considerable historical character within both the Old Town and Railroad Historic Districts.

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The property is developed with a two-story dwelling, estimated to have been built around 1900, of an architectural style described in the City's Architectural Worksheet for the property (Attachment B)<sup>1</sup> as "Railroad Vernacular with Neo-Classical influence" or "California Renaissance." Among the building elements described are its medium-sloped belled hip roof, boxed soffit, continuous smooth frieze band, centered dormer with four 20-pane windows (visible only on rear elevation, of which three are extant), center recessed porch with straight-top arch (remnant of a larger corner porch subsequently enclosed, see Figure 2), rows of large double-hung windows on each floor, with wide flat trim and bracketed lug sills, and clapboard siding and stone base.



Figure 2: 1700 Osos (1904)

At times called "The Foundation House," the property was included as a Master List Resource in the City's Inventory of Historic Resources in 1983<sup>2</sup> as the Allen House, presumably named for Nelson D. Allen, a fireman for the Southern Pacific Railroad, who lived here with his wife, Montez, in 1914 (see Attachment B). It has seen use as a boarding house, rooming house, and fraternity, experiencing cycles of dilapidation and renovation throughout its history, including fire damage in the recent past. Permitting history for the property, however, shows no record of addition or significant external modifications to the structure, apart from "Remodel Porch," "Repair Porch," and "Repair Fire Damage, Add Fire Escape" in the 1970s.

### 3.0 FOCUS OF REVIEW

New construction, additions, or alterations on historically listed properties are subject to review by the Cultural Heritage Committee,<sup>3</sup> who will make a recommendation to the Community Development Director as to the consistency of the proposed work with applicable historical preservation policies and standards and may recommend related conditions of project approval. This evaluation is focused on the proposed external changes and modifications to the existing building, and the consistency of the work with applicable historical preservation standards.

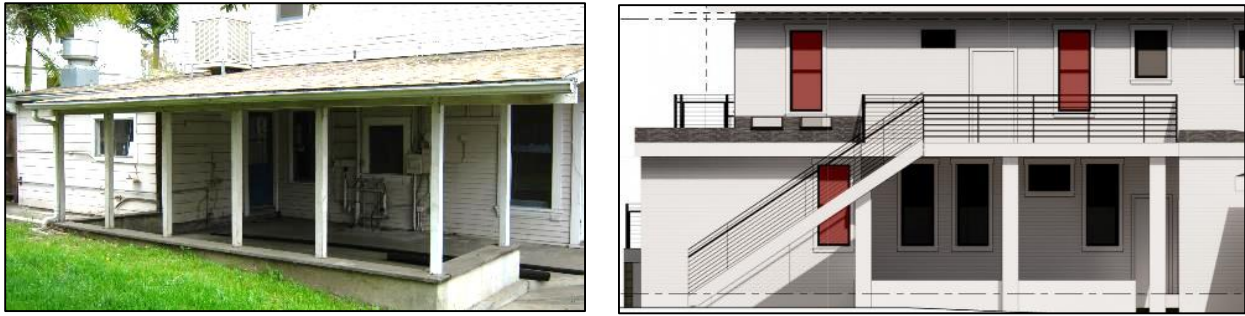
### 4.0 PROPOSED WORK

Windows. Floor plans and building elevation drawings in project plans (Attachment C) depict replacement of most of the existing double-hung wood windows "to be replaced for like, window frames to be solid wood with aluminum clad exterior." New windows will be black in color, and windows that are not replaced will be painted to match the new window color.

<sup>1</sup> Community Development Department historic property record ("yellow file") for 1700 Osos.

<sup>2</sup> Council Resolution 5197, adopted August 16, 1983

<sup>3</sup> Historic Preservation Ordinance § 14.01.030 (C)



**Figure 3: Patio cover to be demolished (left); replacement deck (right)**

A Window Schedule has been provided with plans, describing existing and replacement windows (see Attachment C, Sheet A5.1). Of note is the retention of the surviving distinctive “20-pane” windows on the rear dormer (Windows 304 A, B, C). The dimension of window openings and the existing decorative trim are depicted and described as unaltered, apart from painting of the trim in an “Alabaster” color.

Patio Cover and Deck. At the rear elevation, a patio covering is proposed to be removed, to be replaced by a new second-level concrete deck structure with metal guardrails that will also provide a ground-level covered patio area (see Figure 3).

Stairways and Fire Escape. The front porch and stairway are maintained in their current configuration. At the rear of the building, the existing fire escape, from the attic level, will be retained but repaired and refurbished to meet current safety codes to serve as emergency egress (see Sheet A3.3 of Plans, Attachment C).

A small stairway on the north elevation (Leff Street, see Figure 4) will be replaced by a small rebuilt stairway with landing. On the other side of the building, on the south elevation, the second-floor stairway, largely out of view from the public right-of-way, will be rebuilt in an improved configuration. The new stairway has a less steep pitch and provides additional egress at a landing in front of a first-floor window (see Detail 54 on Sheet A3.3 in Project Plans, Attachment C).



**Figure 4: Leff St. Stairs**

Roof and Skylights. Drawings depict three existing skylights in the roof of the building, to be removed and replaced with three new skylights large enough to serve as emergency egress (see Sheets A2.04 and A2.20 of Plans, Attachment C). A more detailed depiction of the skylights on Sheet A4.1 of plans show low-profile openings centered over attic spaces which have been proposed to be converted into bedrooms. They are described as “Velux” material, dark grey in color to harmonize with the windows. A more detailed explanation provided by the applicant about the selection and design of skylights to minimize impact to the character of the building is provided in Attachment D.

Other Work. In addition to the above-described work, the applicant intends to repair and renovate the interior of the building, which has been subjected to significant wear and tear. The floor plan will remain largely unaltered, apart from the creation of an Accessory Dwelling Unit within a portion of the first floor and potential conversion of two attic spaces into bedrooms (see Sheets A2.11, .12, & .13 in Plans, Attachment C). Plumbing, electrical, and other utility repairs and upgrades will be made, which are not expected to impact the exterior appearance of the building, except where it may be improved by removal of external piping and conduit from building walls. A small (16 sq. ft.) “pop-out” will be added to the south elevation to accommodate fire riser equipment. And finally, the dilapidated small garage at the north side of the property will be refurbished with new fiber-cement board siding and trim, and new composition shingle roofing. The wood siding and trim of the Allen House, however, will not be altered, but will be given a fresh coat of paint, “Alabaster” in color.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION ITEMS

Guidance is provided mainly in the City’s Historic Preservation Program Guidelines, which support the Historic Preservation Ordinance (SLOMC Ch. 14.01) in implementing General Plan policies for the protection of historical resources, and in the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.<sup>4</sup> Selected applicable guidelines, standards, and recommendations from these documents are outlined below.

### 5.1 Historic Preservation Program Guidelines

<b>Alterations to Historic Resources</b>	
§ 3.4.1 (f) Consistency required	Alterations to listed historic resources shall be approved only upon finding that the proposed work is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, [...] General Plan policies, the Historic Preservation Ordinance, and these Guidelines.
§ 3.4.3 Retention of character-defining features	Alterations of historically-listed buildings shall retain character defining features. New features [...] should be completed in a manner that preserves the original architectural character, form, scale, and appearance of the building.
§ 3.4.4 Exterior building changes	Exterior changes to historically-listed buildings or resources should not introduce new or conflicting architectural elements and should be architecturally compatible with the original and/or prevailing architectural character of the building [...]. Additions to historic buildings shall comply with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards to complement and be consistent with the original style of the structure. Building materials used to replicate character-defining features shall be consistent with the original materials in terms of size, shape, quality and appearance. However, original materials are not required.

<sup>4</sup> Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service; Technical Preservation Services, 2017

**Discussion:** The proposed deck, rebuilt stairways, and “fire riser pop-out” are sited and designed in a manner intended to preserve the integrity and historical character of the building. The deck is placed at the rear elevation and is limited to a single story in height, with deck and guardrail above, in replacement of an existing patio cover. The concrete deck and stairway materials and metal guardrails are compatible in appearance with the building’s wood siding and trim materials, and the deck and stairways are well-integrated into the building form. The new “pop-out” is on the least visible elevation of the building.

**Windows and Porch:** As depicted and described in the Window Schedule supplied by the applicant, existing windows in deteriorated condition are to be replaced “for like” with windows composed of wood frames and durable aluminum clad exterior material, double-hung in form and operation, without altering the window trim or the size of window openings. The three surviving “20-pane” windows in the rear dormer are shown to be retained. The front porch configuration and characteristic arch, a surviving remnant of a more extensive original corner porch design, is left unaltered.

**Siding:** The horizontal wood siding of the building is unaltered, apart from a new opening on the rear elevation to provide access to the new rear deck. Staff notes that while the siding does not appear to exhibit obvious deterioration beyond repair, closer evaluation of the condition of wood features, including the siding, could uncover the need for repair or replacement of damaged or deteriorating wood features. The treatment of the wood elements, with a suggested condition of approval to ensure proposed work is carried out consistent with relevant guidelines, is discussed in more detail in section 5.2 of this report below, regarding consistency with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

## 5.2 Secretary of the Interior’s Standards (Rehabilitation)

<b>Standards for Rehabilitation</b>
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.
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.
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 will 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.

**Discussion:** The Secretary of Interior's Standards provide guidance on rehabilitation<sup>5</sup> of historic buildings, including approaches to work treatments and techniques that are either consistent ("Recommended") or inconsistent ("Not Recommended") with the Standards, specific to various features of historic buildings and sites.

<b><i>New Exterior Additions</i></b>	
Recommended	Not Recommended
Constructing a new addition on a secondary or non-character-defining elevation and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic building.	Constructing a new addition on or adjacent to a primary elevation which negatively impacts the building's historic character.

As discussed earlier in this report, the proposed new deck is on the lower level of the rear building elevation, integrated with the building form and composed of compatible materials, so as to avoid negative impacts to the building's historic character.

<b><i>Wood</i></b>	
Recommended	Not Recommended
Identifying, retaining and preserving wood features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building (such as siding, cornices, brackets, window and door surrounds, and steps) and their paints, finishes, and colors.	Removing or substantially changing wood features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.
Evaluating the overall condition of the wood to determine whether more than protection and maintenance, such as repairs to wood features, will be necessary.	Failing to undertake adequate measures to ensure the protection of wood features.

Also mentioned earlier in this report, plans indicate that existing siding will be unaltered, and replacement of siding on the small accessory garage does not impair the historical character of the primary dwelling or the property as a whole. In order to avoid changes to wood features that are important to the primary building's character, the Committee should consider recommending a condition of architectural review approval to require that any changes to final plans which propose repair or replacement of the primary building's wood features as being necessary be justified by sufficient evidence of deterioration or damage warranting such work, to the satisfaction of the Director or Cultural Heritage Committee, as appropriate.

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<sup>5</sup> Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. The Rehabilitation Standards acknowledge the need to alter or add to a historic building to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the building's historic character. (SOI Standards, pg. 3)

<b>Windows</b>	
Recommended	Not Recommended
Identifying, retaining, and preserving windows and their functional and decorative features that are important to the overall character of the building. The window material and how the window operates [...] are significant, as are its components [...] and related features, such as shutters.	<p>Removing or substantially changing windows or window features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.</p> <p>Changing the appearance of windows that contribute to the historic character of the building by replacing materials, finishes or colors which noticeably change the sash, depth of the reveal, and muntin configurations, the reflectivity and color of the glazing; or the appearance of the frame.</p>
Replacing in kind an entire window that is too deteriorated to repair [...] If using the same kind of material is not feasible, then a compatible substitute material may be considered.	Using substitute material for the replacement that does not convey the same appearance of the surviving components of the window or that is physically incompatible."

Standards allow flexibility for window replacements where deterioration precludes repair of existing windows, and plans indicate many existing windows "to be replaced for like." The Window Schedule in plans describes the condition of existing windows (good, fair, poor), indicating replacement of windows that are not in good condition. Replacements are largely with "clad" windows of wood materials in the interior but more durable aluminum material on the exterior. While manufacturer information suggests that the intended replacement windows are generally of a suitably high quality, the aluminum exterior material represents a substitute material and design which may have characteristics that affect the finish, profile, dimension and details in a manner leading to subtle mismatch in appearance with original windows. The Commission should consider whether the clad aluminum window design is a suitable substitute, or whether a wood material matching original materials is desirable for replacement windows, to achieve closer consistency with these Guidelines.

In order to ensure appropriate replacement window forms and materials the Committee should also consider recommending a condition of approval requiring that, in addition to the window schedule, sufficient documentation of the condition of windows to be replaced and of proposed window replacements accompany final plans. Such documentation should include clear photographs of existing windows, of sufficient quality to depict the range of conditions of the windows, and representative drawings of existing and replacement windows describing the form, method of operation, materials, and appearance of replacement windows (including muntins, mullions, other window components).

<b><i>Entrances and Porches</i></b>	
Recommended	Not Recommended
Identifying, retaining, and preserving entrances and porches and their functional and decorative features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. The materials themselves (including masonry, wood, and metal) are significant, as are their features, such as doors, transoms, pilasters, columns, balustrades, stairs, roofs, and projecting canopies.	"Removing or substantially changing entrances and porches which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Plans also depict retention of the front porch in its current configuration, including retention of the surviving flat arch element above the entry. In order to ensure the retention and preservation of distinctive entry and porch elements, the Committee should consider recommending a condition of approval requiring that these remaining features be preserved. Any proposed replacement of the building's front porch features would have to be justified by sufficient evidence of deterioration or damage warranting such work, to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director or Cultural Heritage Committee, as appropriate.

<b><i>Code-Required Work (Stairways, Fire Escapes)</i></b>	
Recommended	Not Recommended
Adding a new stairway or elevator to meet life-safety code requirements in a manner that preserves adjacent character-defining features and spaces.	Altering, damaging, or destroying character-defining spaces, features, or finishes when adding a new code-required stairway or elevator.
Using existing openings on secondary or less-visible elevations or, if necessary, creating new openings on secondary or less-visible elevations to accommodate second egress requirements.	Using a primary or other highly-visible elevation to accommodate second egress requirements without investigating other options or locations.

Work proposed in plans includes modification of an existing stairway on the south elevation, provision of a new second-floor exit from the new rear deck, and refurbishment of the existing attic fire escape to improve emergency egress provisions from the building, necessary features given the unusually high bedroom count and potential occupancy of the building. These are minor alterations to existing features, except for the new deck stairway, which is limited to a secondary (rear) elevation and does not damage or destroy any character defining feature of the building.

## 6.0 SUMMARY

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The applicant has placed the proposed new deck at the rear elevation of the building, which reduces its visibility and impact, and has limited remaining exterior modifications to minor alterations of an existing stairway, refurbishment of an existing fire escape, and replacement of windows “for like” with purposely selected wood clad replacement windows. The characteristic



**Figure 5: Rendering, front (Santa Barbara St.) elevation**

wood siding and trim of the building and its surviving porch features are preserved unaltered, with remaining work limited to interior renovations.

Based on the evaluation provided in this report, staff suggests that the Committee specifically consider the suitability of the window replacements and of the new deck, as described above in this report, following the guidelines supporting the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and provide appropriate conditions for final action on the architectural review application to ensure that the character-defining features of the historic building are retained and preserved and, where repair or replacement may be deemed necessary, that such work is based on sufficient justification and evidence, and carried out consistent with those Standards and guidelines.

## **7.0 ACTION ALTERNATIVES**

- Continue review to another date with direction to staff and applicant.
- Recommend that the Community Development Director find that the proposed work is not consistent with the City’s Historical Preservation Ordinance, providing specific findings regarding inconsistency with the City’s Historical Preservation Ordinance, Historic Preservation Program Guidelines, or Secretary of Interior’s Standards.

## **8.0 ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Applicant’s Project Description (1700 Osos)
- B. Architectural Worksheet (1700 Osos; Allen House)
- C. Project Plans (ARCH-0145-2021)
- D. Skylight Details