



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

DATE: May 9, 2013
TO: Historic Preservation Commission
FROM: Timothy Frye, Preservation Coordinator, (415) 575-6822
RE: Landmark No. 250 – Shipwright’s Cottage at 900 Innes Avenue

Christopher Yerke has provided an assessment of the property’s condition in the attached report based on our May 9, 2013 site visit. At the May 15, 2013 hearing, the Planning Department (Department) will brief the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on the assessment and any other progress to date.

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RESTORATION WORKSHOP



Historic Restoration and Preservation ~ Fine Finish Carpentry
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Bayview Historical Society
C/O Dan Dodt

RE: 900 Innes, assessment of conditions

Hello Dan,

Pursuant to my inspection of the house at 900 Innes on 4/09/13, I offer the following thoughts on the best way to proceed with preservation of the property. Replacing the roof is obviously of major concern for the long term preservation of the property. However, as we are now past the bulk of the rainy season, and experiencing an unusually dry year, I feel that there are some safety concerns that should be thoroughly assessed before undertaking roof work.

The building shows a number of structural deficiencies. Some of them are due to age, but many of them are inherent in the original manner of construction, and the building is in need of an engineering assessment to determine the extent of remedial work necessary to make the structure sound enough to place work crews and materials safely on the roof. Here is a brief list of deficiencies noted:

- The concrete foundation, which appears to be a later addition, is severely cracked and collapsing inward at the front right corner of the house. Furthermore, the normal relationship of sill plate to foundation is non-existent. This foundation was poured underneath the existing framing, and all the framing is sub-standard. In some places, the concrete does not reach the framing at all. It was not professionally done.
- The method of framing the main floor needs to be explored. The walls are thinner than they should be, and in the few places where the structure is visible, there seems to be little more than lap siding run horizontally over vertical sub sheathing planks, without the benefit of any framing. Obviously there must be some wall framing present in the form of periodic posts to support the roof framing, but these were not obvious. I saw very little that would provide credible shear strength, and the whole building is listing notably. This is my biggest cause for concern about putting a roofing crew on the structure.
- The brick, kitchen chimney is supported by a steel plate over substandard framing above the basement
- The roof framing seemed substantial enough, but is covered by compromised wooden shingles over the original skip sheathing. The lack of a reliable shear plane in either the

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roof or the walls makes collapse a distinct possibility if overloaded. I was unable to inspect the soundness of the roof framing. It would appear that the roof has been in a failed state for a long time, so the possibility of rot in the framing members seems reasonable.

Access throughout the building is hampered by debris and junk scattered throughout the interior. I feel that the best way to proceed to assess the property, in order, is as follows:

1. Hire a licensed, insured demolition and hauling company to clean out the interior of the building and remove any hazards to access, and perform selective demolition necessary to reveal critical portions of the structure for further inspection. This process should be directed by a licensed contractor experienced with historic buildings.
2. Tarp the roof to temporarily seal out the elements.
3. Bring in a structural engineer to review the building's deficiencies and report upon necessary upgrades, as well as any temporary shoring measures required to make the building safe for roofing work.
4. Make a thorough, initial cost assessment of the work required to restore the building with a view to probable resources that can be brought to bear (financially, politically, etc.). Obviously it is desirable to save the building, but the larger question is whether it is feasible to do so.
5. Form a rehabilitation plan which determines a critical path through the restoration process. At this point, it might be desirable to bring in a preservation architect to balance the issues of historic fidelity with the necessity of structural upgrades and any possible adaptive reuse of the site. Alternatively, the structure could be shored up, sealed and reroofed to halt further deterioration until such time as a thorough restoration can be undertaken.

At the very least the building needs a new foundation, structural retrofitting, a new roof, complete plumbing and electrical upgrades, as well as thorough pest and (probably) mold remediation. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Christopher Yerke