



## PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 2, 2021

**TO:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**FROM:** DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT:** CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS – DOOR AND WINDOW ALTERATIONS AND EXTERIOR SIDING REPLACEMENT AT 620 PRESCOTT STREET (CRAFTSMAN HEIGHTS LANDMARK DISTRICT)

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#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Find that the proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15303, Class 1, pertaining to existing facilities such as the existing structure and there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances.
2. Find that no protected native, specimen, or landmark trees under the tree protection ordinance (Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Ch.8.52), will be removed.
3. Find that the project complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings and the Design Guidelines for Historic Districts; and
4. Approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions, which shall be subject to staff review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit:

#### **Conditions:**

1. The design of the new sidelights shall be revised to be consistent with the larger glazing proportions found in traditional designs.
2. The proposed door shall be painted, stained, or covered with a clear protective coating to protect it against the elements to maximize its longevity.

3. The original exterior siding on the north and east elevations shall be retained and repaired unless it is damaged beyond repair. Documentation shall be submitted for staff review to determine whether its condition warrants replacement. In addition, any original wood siding that is removed to accommodate the new door and windows shall be repurposed to the greatest extent possible.
4. The project shall be subject to final site inspection and sign-off by staff of the Design & Historic Preservation section to ensure that the work plan undertaken, as described above, is as indicated and specified in the decision letter and that all work is performed consistent with the approved plans and the Guidelines for Historic Districts.

### **BACKGROUND:**

This one-story, single-family, Colonial Revival style cottage was constructed in 1901 and is a contributing structure to the Craftsman Heights Landmark District. Character-defining features of this Colonial Revival house include a symmetrical volumetric street presentation consisting of a side-facing gable roof with exposed rafters, a main entry door and cross-gable porch cover centered on the façade and supported by a series of Classical columns. Other character-defining features include horizontal lap siding with corner boards on the exterior walls and a wooden open trellis supported by Classical columns and attached to the westerly side of the front porch cover and primary façade of the house.

The home was previously altered. A rear one-story two-bedroom addition and porch cover were constructed in 1939 and a fireplace was added to the house in 1960. In 1961, a screened porch was added to the westerly (side) elevation of the house. The roof was replaced in 2012 and approximately half of the living area was converted into an accessory dwelling unit in 2018. In addition, all of the publicly visible windows were inappropriately altered, including the diamond-pane window located on the front elevation of the house. In 2019, the property owner entered a (Mills Act) historic property agreement with the City of Pasadena in order to rehabilitate the property.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

In order to maintain the historic property agreement in good standing and continue to receive incentives, the property owner is required to rehabilitate the property following an approved work program (list of rehabilitation items) within a 10-year timeframe. The applicant proposes to restore the original main entry door and all publicly visible window openings, which are noted in the approved work program.

#### Restoration of the original main entry door opening:

The applicant proposes to remove and replace the existing non-original main entry door facing Prescott Street with a new door and sidelights that would match the original entry configuration and dimensions. The proposed new wooden door design consists of a solid bottom panel and a top portion with a three-over-three true-divided lite configuration. The new sidelights flanking the entry door are proposed to have solid bottom panels with a single-light on the top portion to maintain a design similar to the new door.

Window restoration, alterations, and siding replacement:

The applicant also proposes alterations to six window openings on the north and east elevations of the house to restore them to their original dimensions because the existing window materials, operation types, and proportions are not period appropriate. In addition, two new fixed window openings are proposed at the interior side-facing westerly elevation, flanking each side of the existing fireplace. The replacement wood-sash windows are proposed in varying configurations that would consist of double-hung and fixed operations with true-divided lights, a sill profile design, depth, and the wood trim detailing similar to window designs found on other Colonial Revival Cottage-style houses in Pasadena. As part of the improvements, the applicant also proposes an in-kind replacement of the wood lap siding on the entire wall sections where the window alterations are being proposed.

**ANALYSIS:**

Pursuant to PMC Section 17.62.090, the proposed door and window alterations are considered a “major project” and require a Certificate of Appropriateness, with the Historic Preservation Commission serving as the review authority at a noticed public hearing. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required when exterior alterations to a contributing property within a landmark district are publicly visible.

According to PMC Section 17.62.090 E.3.b, approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be based on the following finding:

*If a project is an alteration or new construction, the project complies with the Secretary's Standards or adopted guidelines based on the Secretary's Standards.*

The project was reviewed using the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and the Design Guidelines for Historic Districts, which are based on the Secretary’s Standards. The applicable standards and guidelines include:

**Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation:**

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Standard 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not 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 its environment.

**Design Guidelines for Historic Districts:**

- 5.11: “When reconstruction of a feature is impossible, developing a compatible new design that is a simplified interpretation of the original is appropriate.”
- 5.12: “Avoid adding ornamentation or other decorative element, unless thorough research indicates that the building once had them.”
- 6.1: “Maintain existing wall materials and textures.”
- 6.4: “Repair deteriorated, primary building materials by patching, piecing-in, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing them.”
- Policy: “A new or replacement window or door should match the appearance of the original design as closely as possible.”
- 7.10: “When window or door replacement is necessary, match the replacement to the original design as closely as possible.”
- 7.11: “Maintain the historic window arrangement on a primary facade.”
- 7.13: “Windows and doors should be finished with trim elements similar to those used traditionally.”
- 7.16: “Match the profile of the sash and its components, as closely as possible to that of the original window.”

All the existing windows and door proposed to be replaced were altered in the past with inappropriate material types, configurations, and proportions. As conditioned, the design, dimensions, and configuration of the proposed door and windows would not detrimentally affect any of the significant character defining features of the property and the alteration would be compatible with the architectural style of the house.

There are no photographs or other documentary records showing the exterior appearance of the original front entry door and windows on the north and easterly elevations. Conjectural alteration or restoration is a strongly discouraged practice that is inconsistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. However, photographs were provided by the applicant as part of this request that clearly depict the existing exposed wall framing. These photographs show clear evidence of the original rough openings for the windows and show that the main entry configuration was originally designed with a sidelight. As a result, the proposed alterations and replacement windows and door will match their original dimensions. Although no evidence exists to show the original design of the windows and door, the proposed double-hung and fixed windows with true divided lights are consistent with other examples of traditional Colonial Revival Cottage-style houses seen throughout

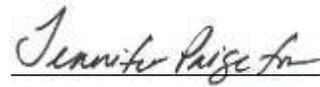
Pasadena and are consistent with the above referenced guidelines.

In order to ensure greater consistency with the applicable guidelines and Standards, staff recommends a condition of approval to revise the design of the sidelight to have larger glazing proportions that more closely reflect traditional designs. The proposed wooden door will have a simple design, which consists of a solid bottom recessed panel and divided lights along the top portion. A condition of approval would require that the new door be painted, stained, or coated for protection against the elements. Staff also recommends a condition of approval to ensure the original exterior siding on the north and east elevations is retained and repaired and that any of the wood lap siding around the window and door openings to be altered is removed and repurposed to the greatest extent possible.

**CONCLUSION:**

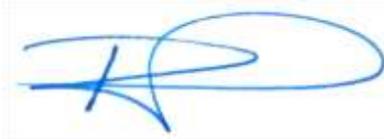
Upon implementation of the conditions of approval, the proposed door and window alterations would be consistent with the applicable design guidelines and be an appropriate design for the house. Specifically, conditions of approval would ensure that the proposed door and window configurations are an optimal design for the house and consistent with other Colonial Revival Cottage houses in Pasadena.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Attachments:

- A. Plans
- B. Photographs