

December 17, 2019

Mr. Selassie,

Upon a thorough examination of the exterior brick veneer, it has become obvious that the overall performance of the system is compromised and failing.

The brick was installed atop a concrete step footing which runs the perimeter of the home on the North, South and West sides.

The footing alone poses a structural problem in that it is performing differently than the juniper piers beneath the home. As the ground expands and contracts the wood frame and piers are responding in a different fashion than the footing, thus causing the veneer, which is anchored to the original longleaf pine siding beneath the brick, to move and crack in several places.

It is in my professional opinion, as a builder that almost exclusively works in historic structures, that the brick veneer and concrete step footing should both be removed from the home. Repairs would be a Pyrrhic victory, at best, and the overall nature of the home would be better served by reviving the existing siding.

Upon close examination, I have surmised that the original siding appears to be in good shape and once exposed and painted would add a great deal of value to both the home and the overall fabric of the other homes in the block.

Please let me know your thoughts regarding this potential change to the project.

Sincerely,

James Nolan
James Nolan Construction

Bertron, Cara

From: Kefetew Selassie [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2020 7:20 PM
To: Bertron, Cara; James Nolan; Desta Selassie
Subject: Re: 607 Oakland Avenue- Pictures

Hello Cara, thank you for your feedback and it is always very helpful to get your perspective. Also please note that we are making significant effort and investment to restore this house, regardless of the guidelines. We are being deliberate with our approach both inside and outside to represent architecture and finish from the 1920s. We are restoring the ship lap inside, restoring original siding and etc... because we believe that is the right way to do it if we are going to restore the house. We are also truly rallying behind the intent of the historic preservation board requirements and not just following the guideline. Therefore we request for your's and board's consideration of our request based on what is the best way to accomplish the intent of the guidelines.

Refer to clarification to some of your questions below...

1. Foundation: we are lifting the house by 2ft because basement has less than 7ft ceiling height, impact to front elevation is limited since we currently have steps to get to the front patio and door
2. Roof-line: yes, we have made changes to the roof-line, I believe we can still accomplish what we need without changing the roof-line (which is extend the patio)
3. Patio: if I recall right we had gained approval during our last review provided that we extend the patio and rails without changing the roof-line
4. Window: I understand during our last review we did not get approval, however we made an effort to study this from 1920's architecture perspective or what we see in the neighborhood - it looks like adding the second window to the left of the main door does not really break the intent of the guideline (it is very important for us from architecture and usability perspective)

Again looking forward to our review on Monday, 1/27. James and I plan to attend the review and let us know if you need additional information from us before the review. It is very important for us to close on this and move forward.

Thanks,
Kef
+1 512 550 8607

From: Bertron, Cara <Cara.Bertron@austintexas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2020 4:14 PM
To: Kefetew Selassie; James Nolan; Desta Selassie
Subject: RE: 607 Oakland Avenue- Pictures

Hi Kef,

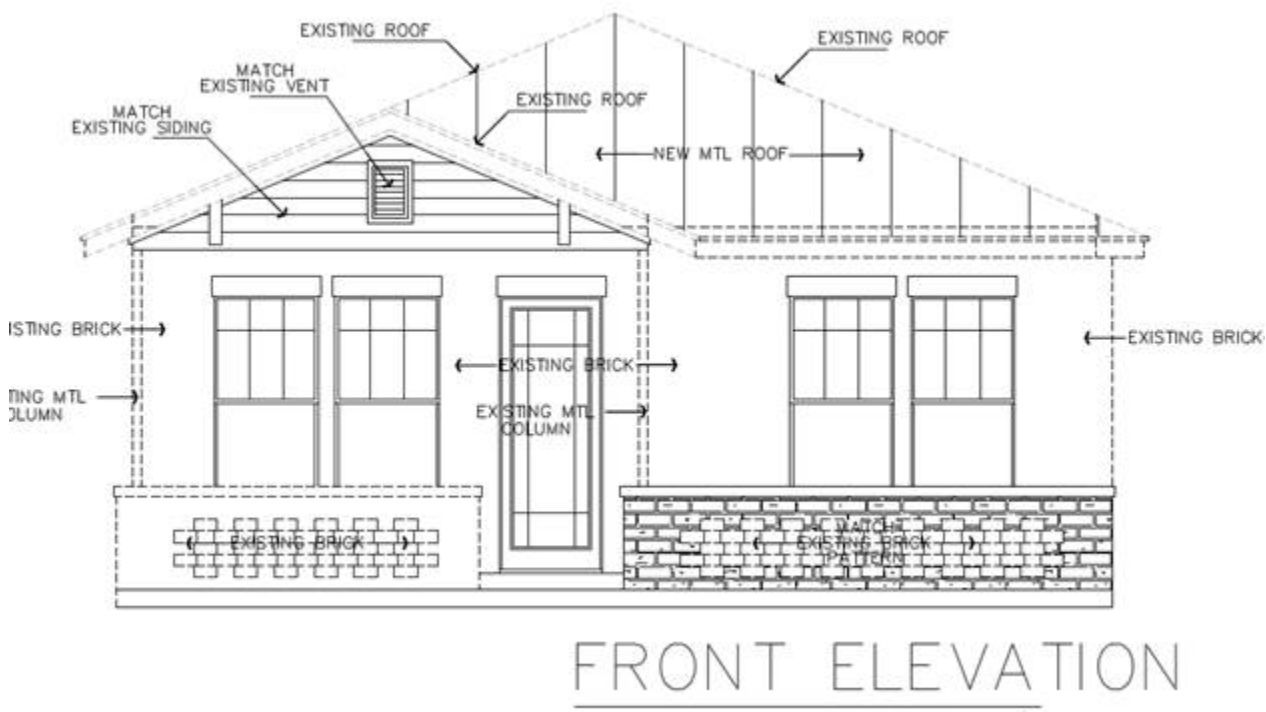
An important revision to #3. I hadn't looked closely at the patio/porch extension, assuming it was the one we'd discussed in early July. Upon closer review, I see that the current proposal extends the porch roof and changes the column and railing types. The column and railing alterations may be possible, especially since with the proposed brick removal—though wood railings would be more appropriate.

However, the porch should stay at its current footprint. Expanding it will add a new feature that wasn't there historically and suggest a false sense of the building's development. If you'd like to extend an uncovered patio across the right side of the front wall, that's an option I can support.

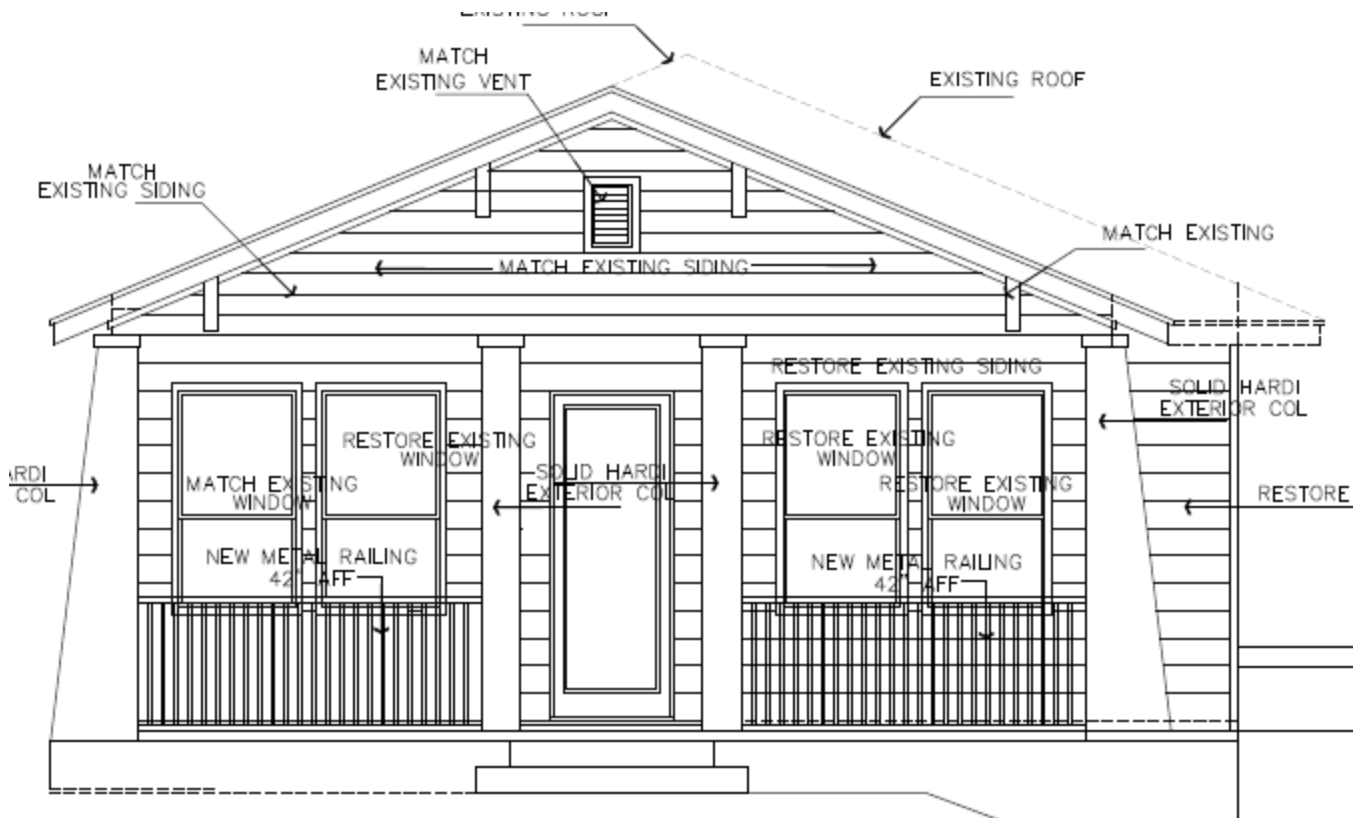
I apologize for the oversight in my earlier email.

Cara

Original (July 2019):



Proposed (Jan. 2020):



Cara Bertron
 Senior Planner / Deputy Historic Preservation Officer
 City of Austin Planning and Zoning Department
 (512) 974-1446 / cara.bertron@austintexas.gov

From: Bertron, Cara
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2020 3:54 PM
To: Kefetew Selassie [REDACTED]; James Nolan <james@jamesnolanconstruction.com>; Desta Selassie [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: 607 Oakland Avenue- Pictures

Hi Kef and all,

Looking forward to seeing you at the HLC meeting this coming Monday. I'm writing with a few notes and questions:

- 1) Is it necessary to raise the house to rebuild the foundation? It would be ideal if it could remain at its current level—2' will be a noticeable change. If the house must be raised, how will the patio and front door be accessed?
- 2) At its July 2019 review, the Certificate of Appropriateness Review Committee strongly discouraged adding a new window opening to the front wall. This will change the character of the house, and staff also cannot support this proposal.
- 3) The attached carport and patio extension were discussed last year, but neither was in the final approved plans—they must have been part of the project that was scaled back. I don't anticipate these being an issue, especially since the Certificate of Appropriateness Review Committee supported the patio extension in July 2019.

Thanks,
 Cara

Cara Bertron

Senior Planner / Deputy Historic Preservation Officer
City of Austin Planning and Zoning Department
(512) 974-1446 / cara.bertron@austintexas.gov

From: Bertron, Cara

Sent: Monday, January 13, 2020 8:35 AM

To: Kefetew Selassie [REDACTED]; Gaudette, Angela <Angela.Gaudette@austintexas.gov>; James Nolan <james@jamesnolanconstruction.com>; Desta Selassie [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: 607 Oakland Avenue- Pictures

Thanks, Kef. Confirming receipt of this email and the previous one with the project/application files. I'll let you know if I have any questions as I write my staff report for the project.

Cara Bertron

Senior Planner / Deputy Historic Preservation Officer
City of Austin Planning and Zoning Department
(512) 974-1446 / cara.bertron@austintexas.gov

From: Kefetew Selassie [REDACTED]

Sent: Saturday, January 11, 2020 12:47 PM

To: Bertron, Cara <Cara.Bertron@austintexas.gov>; Gaudette, Angela <Angela.Gaudette@austintexas.gov>; James Nolan <james@jamesnolanconstruction.com>; Desta Selassie [REDACTED]

Subject: 607 Oakland Avenue- Pictures

*** External Email - Exercise Caution ***

Hello Cara and Angela, attached pictures show the conditions of the brick facade.

- Wrong construction methodology: where the house is sitting on original juniper peer and beam foundation and new brick facade is sitting on newly constructed concrete retaining wall, as you expect two structure are moving independently resulting with series cracks, gaps, wall buckling and etc...
- Cracks following structural stress points
- Brick facade buckling and cracking
- Brick facade moving away/separating from the house showing inconsistent gaps around the windows and doors
- We also have subsurface and surface water draining problem where water is damaging the current peer and beam foundation, also water is coming through the ground floor slab foundation (note that original owner even dug a whole in the basement and installed sump pump to pump the water out) - net all this requires me to rebuild the foundation and new retaining wall as I install subsurface drainage system and restore the original facade.

This are few examples for your reference and happy to provide additional context.









