

Andy,

At your request I met you at 1911 Robbins Place on November 8, 2019 to observe the condition of the existing house at that location. This was a visual observation only – not a thorough inspection, and no hidden elements were exposed for observation.

The house is a single-story structure with a crawl space and attic. The exterior skin is predominantly brick with wood windows and trim and an asphalt shingle roof. Two street-facing attic gables are not brick: one is stucco with built-up wood trim, the other is siding with minimal trim, suggesting a previous replacement. The house has a charming appearance from the street- in addition to the two gables already mentioned is a third, brick gable with decorative wood trim over an arch-top front door. However, upon closer inspection the exterior is in poor condition. Significant cracking is apparent in the brick on all sides of the building. In some places the mortar is missing completely and large openings present a significant breach in the exterior envelope. The condition of the assumed wood framing behind the brick was not observed. Some locations show signs of previous repairs but have opened up again.

Wood elements are generally in fair condition. Significant deterioration has occurred at the typical locations such as window sills and fascias. At one location the mortar-capped sill opening has pulled away from the wood window sill leaving a direct path for water into the middle of the wall assembly. The condition of the framing within the wall was not observed.

The interior appears to retain the original wood trim, though is otherwise unremarkable. Walls and ceilings are painted gypsum wallboard with significant cracking present in every room. Tile on the bathroom floor has pulled away from the wall.

The pervasive cracking in both the exterior masonry and the interior finishes is consistent with significant differential movement of the foundation throughout the structure. The exterior has evidence of prior repairs, both at the cracks at the brick and in the smaller attic gable, so this appears to be an ongoing problem. It is not known if the prior repairs included attempts to stabilize the foundation or were limited to the walls. The large voids in the exterior envelope, particularly in the horizontal surface at a window sill, are especially troubling. It is unknown how long the walls have been exposed to water infiltration, but some amount of damage to the wood structure is likely.

Based on these observations, repair of the existing house will require the following:

Repair or replace the entire foundation (movement does not appear to be limited to any portion of the structure).

Remove brick at areas of greatest distress (at a minimum the failing window sill on the south side, two areas on the east side with missing mortar, and the west side window sill that has pulled away from the window).

With those areas open perform any necessary replacement or reinforcement of wood sheathing.

Replace brick at select areas.

Repoint masonry throughout.

Replace stucco crawl space wall throughout, and provide proper crawl space ventilation.

Replace rotten exterior window sills and fascia.

Remove and replace all interior gypsum board. With walls open inspect framing for any needed repairs.

While I am not prepared to estimate the cost involved in the above effort, you will immediately see that a substantial amount of work is required just to stabilize the structure and repair the envelope. Any actual improvements to the house would be above and beyond this effort. I have not done any research into the history of this property – Steve Sadowsky and his team will likely do that. There may be some importance to this house that I am not aware of, but just to look at the qualities of the house as it now stands it is in poor condition and really would require a significant amount of work to preserve.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further.

Best Regards,

**Nathan Quiring, AIA | Partner**

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