

For Historic Landmark Commission Hearing
Regarding: 1208 W.22nd St., Austin
October 20, 2020

I am the owner of this property, and also of 1210 and 1216 immediately to the west, which are duplexes.¹

My understanding is that the house at 1208 West 22nd St. was built in about 1927 (the plat is dated 1921). My parents purchased 1208 in about 1936 to 1938, and I lived there from when I was born in 1939. The original house had 2 bedrooms and 1 bathroom. In about 1947 my parents had an addition built in back which has a porch, a bedroom and a bathroom. This addition expanded the floor space by about one-third.

In the mid-1950s, my parents bought the larger house at 1305 W. 22nd St., and my parents lived there until they died in 1998 and 2000. After we moved out of 1208, they retained it as a rental property, which it was until 2019.

Unfortunately, in 2019, when the long-time tenant moved out, it became clear that the house had deteriorated greatly and had been damaged and poorly modified without my permission. Particularly decrepit was the front bathroom, which had a sink (subsequently removed) which was tilting at a strange angle and had no tiling in the wall where the shower controls were located.

Also, it was clear that the addition in back, which had been prone to flooding in recent years, had been poorly constructed and had severe drainage problems.

I wanted to restore the house to sound and rentable condition, so I talked to architect Barnaby Evans, who had previously done extensive work for me in connection with the house at 1216 W.22nd St. Mr. Evans had a contractor (Mr. McBride) provide an estimate. That estimate did not include foundation work needed for the original construction, and a separate bid was obtained for that. (Please see Mr. Evans' letter.)

The current problems with the original construction are, as I understand it, not so much structural as that there are so many instances and areas of deterioration, poor (unauthorized) modification by the tenant, and impracticality from a rental perspective – so that that there is no realistic way to “put the house back together again.” Although some upgrades to original construction were apparently made some decades ago, this is not a structure that is safe in a practical sense. I would not feel comfortable renting out the original house (or living in it) without first having the walls and probably other portions removed to permit detailed assessment and then having new plumbing, heating and electrical systems installed. I have practical experience with renovation of other older properties, and I know that as walls are removed and other work is done, new difficulties are discovered which, as a matter of good judgment, require correction.

¹ Formally, I am the trustee of the trust which is the general partner of the partnership that holds title. This arrangement was made by my father, but at any time, for all these properties, I can change ownership to be (solely) in my own name.

I have sentimental attachment to 1208, and that is why, after the tenant moved out, I was thinking in terms of renovation. However, the house has been so transformed from the way it was in the 1940s and 1950s that I began to realize, as recommended by Mr. Evans and others, that it would be much more realistic and beneficial to demolish the house and build a new structure. I have not yet decided on the form, but it will be reasonable and tasteful in the context of the neighborhood. I want the new structure to continue to be used for rental purposes, as 1208 has been for well over 60 years.

In the meanwhile, a vacant house is often attractive to squatters and others and is more of a fire hazard than an occupied house, so I would like to demolish it without delay. Although I have no technical knowledge of architecture, I do not find anything special about the style of its construction, and it does not seem to me to be a special feature of the neighborhood (in which architectural styles have been gradually diversifying). The merit of the house to me is that, when I was young, it was cozy and pleasant, and it certainly isn't any more.

However, I am very concerned with preserving and protecting trees. I emphasized to the demolition company that I wanted all trees at 1208 to be preserved, and in fact they were equally emphatic that the City requires preservation and that they would be careful to protect all trees.

I am also sensitive to historic preservation concerns. Over ten years ago, I was considering demolition of the structure at 1216 W.22nd St., which was in severe disrepair. My lawyer made inquiry to the city, and Mr. Sadowsky did an investigation.

Mr. Sadowsky and the City regarded the 1216 structure as a neighborhood architectural monument that was also associated with people who had been important in Austin's history. After I learned what Mr. Sadowsky had discovered in his research, I agreed that the structure should be preserved, so I never applied for a demolition permit. Rather, I did a long and expensive renovation, preserving, in particular, the stone construction that made the structure special. (Mr. Evans' did all the architectural work.) I am pleased with how this project turned out. It is a duplex, which I continue to rent to tenants.

I would add that my father, Oliver H. Radkey, was a history professor at the University of Texas. He specialized in the period immediately preceding and following the 1917 Russian revolution. Although he is well-known in the academic Russian history community (there is a short Wikipedia article about him), he did not have any particular role in the historical development of the City. Also, to the extent that he would be associated with any structure, it would not be 1208, but rather 1305, where he lived from the mid-1950s until his death in 2000.

I am still in good health and my intention is (with a new structure at 1208) to continue renting out my three West 22nd St. properties, as well as two other residential rental properties I own in Austin.

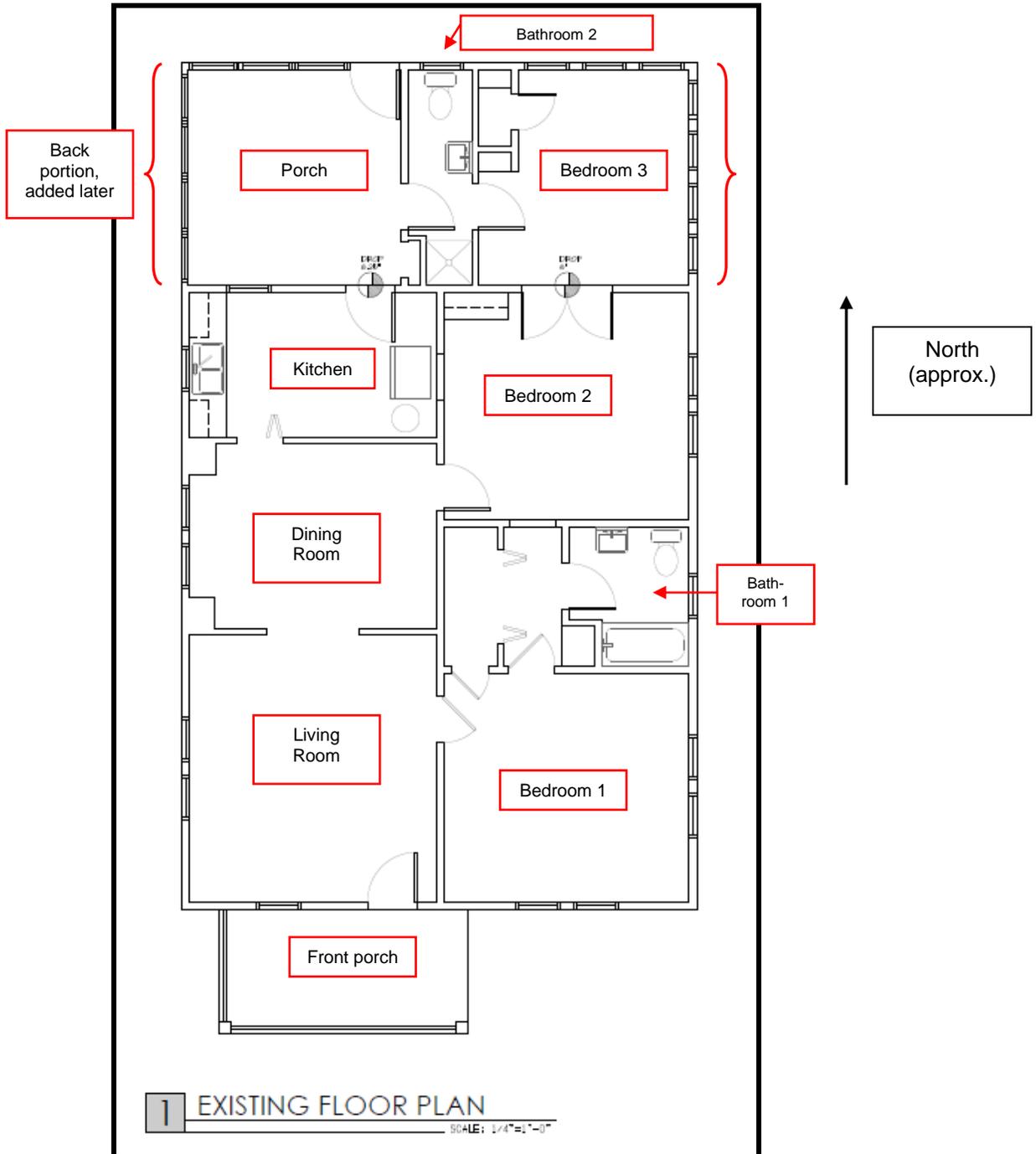
Very Truly Yours,



Ingrid Radkey

Nov. 6, 2020

1208 West 22nd St. Austin



October 19, 2020:

To the City of Austin Historic Landmark Commission:

The owner of this property, Ingrid Radkey, contacted me last year to evaluate the possibilities for remodeling the house. The original one-story house, built in about 1927, had 2 bedrooms, one bathroom, a living room, a dining room and a kitchen. In approximately 1946 – 1948 an addition was constructed in the back. That addition now comprises about a quarter of the entire square footage. The addition has a porch, a bedroom and a bathroom. The addition was built lower than the main house, and too low to the ground to keep water out. The roof tie-in is a simple lean-to arrangement, which is not integrated into the original design at all.

After I toured the exterior and interior of the property, it was clear that it was in very poor condition. There was no portion of the building that did not need major attention (some structural, some not).

I found that the foundation was not level, and the owner informs me that in recent years the addition at the rear was prone to flooding during heavy rain events. The windows did not function properly, the plumbing was in disrepair, the electrical system was outdated, and the package mechanical equipment was installed on the ground outside, with exposed exterior ducting. The interior layout required that one go through a bedroom to get to the bathroom in the front (original structure), and, in the addition, one had to go through the bathroom to get to the bedroom. The kitchen was no longer functional and was very small. Rodents have taken over the home.

In considering a renovation of the house, I prepared some design suggestions to improve the layouts and functionality and had a contractor (Jerry McBride) estimate the costs for that work. That estimate (which is attached), for approximately \$230,000, was higher than we anticipated. Indeed Mr. McBride suggested that we start over, building a new structure. He felt that could probably be done at a cost in the same range as the renovation, since – as a practical matter – the structural and non-structural deficiencies would require that all building systems be replaced, including foundation repair, electrical system, plumbing system, mechanical system, insulation, windows, finishes, cabinets, countertops, fixtures, roofing, etc. (Mr. McBride did not include the cost of foundation repair in his estimate. A bid and diagram for foundation work were provided by the "Level Best" company and are attached. The bid was for \$9,200 (the work has not been done).

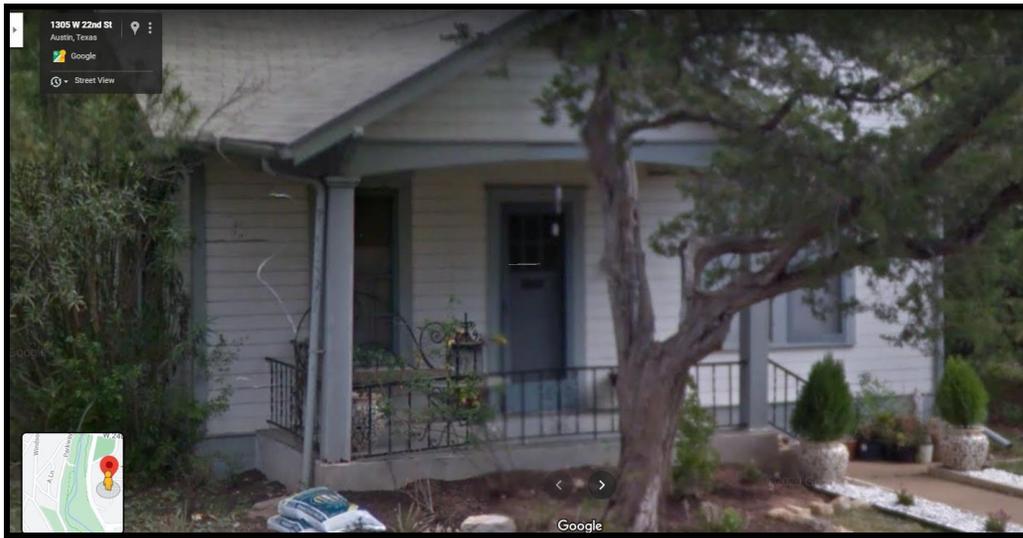
It became clear that renovation would be difficult and financially unrealistic. Subsequently the owner applied for a demolition permit so that, as the first concern, the structure would not continue to deteriorate and be a potential haven for squatters. The owner also does plan to build a new structure.

After the application for the demolition permit was filed, I was surprised to learn that some neighbors had indicated that they thought the structure had significant aesthetic qualities. (One person said that, without having done research, they thought the structure might have historical significance, though there has been no follow-up).

I have been an architect in Austin for over 30 years and have worked on many projects in Austin, including projects to modify structures that had been declared historic landmarks without damaging their historic character. (My resumé is attached.) Although I do not have experience with declaring structures to qualify as historic landmarks, I have a substantial general sense of architectural styles and methods in Austin.

In particular, from having done a great deal of remodeling design work in Austin, I regard this house as a fairly typical one-story frame bungalow for the period (late 1920's), lacking any unique features that couldn't also be found on hundreds of similar houses in Austin.

In 2014, the front of 1208 West 22nd St. appeared as follows:



(photograph from Google - view of 1208 from 1305 W.22nd St.);

The front of the structure is characterized by two columns that are straightforward and not ornate or substantially embellished. Between the two columns is a rather plain curved arch. The door and window trim are rather routine. Neither the rest of the exterior, nor the interior, appears to have any special characteristics.

Based on my experience, it is my opinion:

With regard to the section (i) Architecture criteria:

- A. For the reasons just stated, the house does not appear to “embody the distinguishing characteristics of a recognized architectural style, type, or method of construction”;
- B. I see no indication that it would “exemplify technological innovation in design or construction.”
- C. Again, for the reasons just stated, I see no indication that it would be considered to “display high artistic value in representing ethnic or folk art, architecture, or construction.”
- D. As mentioned above, it seems architecturally similar to many bungalows throughout the area and Austin generally and does not appear to “represent a rare example of an architectural style in the city.”
- E. Although I have not done research into the identity of the persons who were involved in the original construction, I see no indication from the quality of the design and construction that the house could serve as an “outstanding example of the work of an architect, builder, or artisan who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state, or nation.”
- F. Ingrid Radkey’s understanding is that her parents bought the house in approximately 1936 – 1938, which is relatively soon after its construction (she lived in the house for a number of years after she was born in 1939). Therefore, in conjunction with the opinions above, I see no indication that the

house would “possess cultural, historical, or architectural value as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian or vernacular structure”

- G. I see no indication that it would “represent an architectural curiosity or one-of-a-kind building.”

With regard to the section (ii) Historical Associations criteria:

- A. Since the property has been in the Radkey family for the vast majority of the time since it was built, it seems highly unlikely that the property could have “long-standing significant associations with persons, groups, institutions, businesses, or events of historic importance which contributed significantly to the history of the city, state, or nation.”
- B. For the same reason, it seems improbable that the structure would “represent a significant portrayal of the cultural practices or the way of life of a definable group of people in a historic time.”

With regard to the section (iii) Archeology criteria:

Although I have not researched it, there appears no reason to believe that the property would have, or be expected to yield “significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region”;

With regard to the section (iv) Community Value criteria:

The location is central, west of the University of Texas, surrounded by properties of various types, ages, and styles. In light of the straightforward construction referred to above, there is no indication that the property has “a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the city, a neighborhood, or a particular group.”

With regard to the section (v) Landscape Feature criteria:

The property is on a substantially flat lot and is adjacent to similarly flat lots on West 22nd St. to the east and west. There is an alley in back. I do not see any “significant natural or designed landscape or landscape feature with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.”

Regards,



Attachments:

Contractor Estimate, 2019
Resume, Barnaby Evans
“Level Best” bid for foundation work
Diagram by “Level Best”



FATTER & EVANS

ARCHITECTS, INC.



Barnaby H. W. Evans

Principal

Education

University of Texas School of Architecture at Austin 1985
Bachelor of Architecture with High Honors, Salutatorian

Registration

Texas Registered Architect - #12852

Experience Record

Fatter & Evans Architects, Inc. Austin, Texas
Principal & Corporate Officer 1991-Present

Fatter, Wolters & Evans Architects Austin, Texas
Partner 1990-1991

Evans Architects Austin, Texas
Principal/Owner 1989-1990

Holt Architects Inc Austin, Texas
Project Architect 1988-1989

Holt + Fatter, Inc. Austin, Texas
Intern/Project Manager 1985-1988

Gonzales Structures Austin, Texas
Draftsman 1983-1985

Memberships and Affiliations

Southern Building Code Congress International
International Conference of Building Officials

Honors

Henry Adams Silver Certificate for
Excellence in the Study of Architecture
Deans Honor List
College Scholar

LEVEL BEST FOUNDATION REPAIR

9806 Brown Lane Austin, Texas 78754
Phone 512-832-6161 Fax 512-832-6188

PIER & BEAM FOUNDATION REPAIR AGREEMENT

Contract Proposed To MARK DOWNS
Phone (512) 496-8700 Date 9/06/2019
(510) 206-9967
Job Location 1208 W. 22nd St.
City, State and Zip Code AUSTIN TX 78705

Level Best Foundation Repair. (Contractor) to perform the following work on the foundation of the above stated structure.

Contractor to install or replace approximately 66 ft. of 4x6 sill beam below structure for support. Contractor will install 15 spread footing piers with 10" sonotube. New piers to be installed with 2'X2' footing 2' deep, or less if sitting on rock. Contractor will install approximately 0 ft. of 0 joist. After installation, Contractor to raise structure to as near as possible to level to the limits of the structure, unless otherwise stated. Newly installed piers to be shimmed as necessary to retain newly attained height. Existing piers to be shimmed as necessary. All shim material to be steel plates. It is understood and agreed that in order to perform the above mentioned work: it is possible that sheetrock, wallpaper, or other rigid materials may crack. Therefore the below figures do not include any redecorating, painting, repairing, plumbing or electrical work, or replacing any materials not called for in this agreement.

Additional Work To Be Performed: Includes (8) spread footing piers for the front porch. Post engineer report provided after final payment received. City permit included.
Any needed beam replaced @ \$25/L.F.; joists replaced @ \$20/L.F.

Warranty: Upon completion of above said work and payment of contract price, Contractor warrants that the above stated section(s) of structures foundation has been raised to as near as possible to level. Contractor warrants that the above stated section(s) of structures foundation will remain as near as possible to level, subject to the following limitations:

1. This warranty applies only to the section(s) of the foundation where work is performed by Contractor as outlined above. There exists no warranty of any kind or nature, expressed or implied, to any area not pried by Level Best.
2. This warranty will remain in effect for a period of 5 years. Warranty is transferable and shall remain in effect for 5 year period.
3. Should settlement occur during the period of this warranty, Contractor shall adjust and raise said settlement to as near as possible to level. There will be no charge for this service. Materials and labor are included in this warranty. Warranty does not extend to collateral damage caused by lifting.
4. Contractor makes no warranty with respect to the following:
 - a. Settlement caused by acts of others such as fire or vandalism.
 - b. Settlement caused by acts of God such as earthquakes, hurricanes and floods.
 - c. Settlement caused by leaking water or sewer lines that compromise the integrity of the soil under said structure.
 - d. The structure has been damaged, altered or modified.

Contractor to perform contract work for the consideration and price of: \$ 9,200⁰⁰

Customer agrees to pay 50% before starting and 50% on completion. Customer to pay contractor promptly upon completion of the contract work described above.

Contractor: Level Best Foundation Repair by Bret A. Baker

Customer accepts above contract and authorizes Contractor to perform the above specified work and to make payment as stipulated.

Customers Acceptance: Date: _____ Customer Signature: _____

Name: MARK Downs

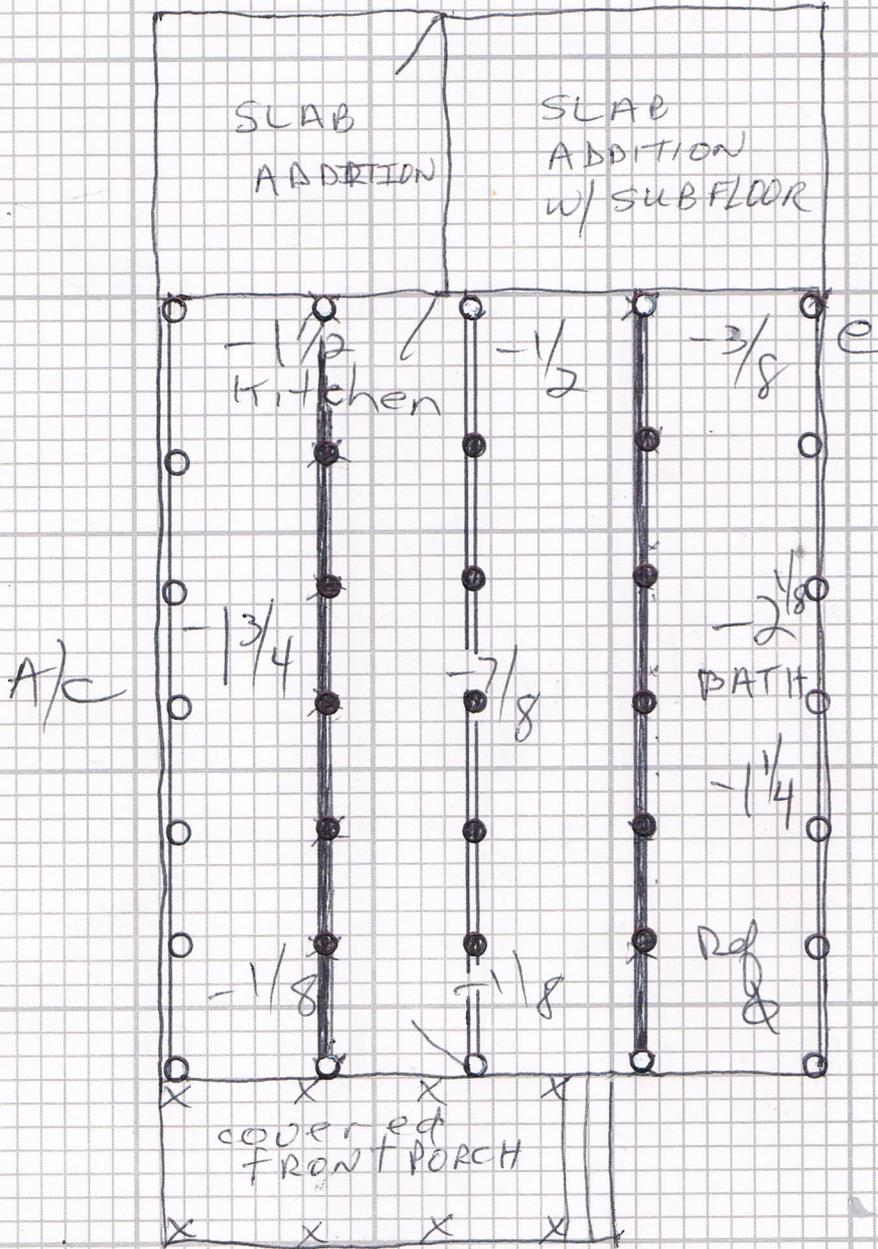
Date: 09/06/2019

Conditions
at time
of Reading

Normal
Dry
Wet

Address: 1208 W. 22nd St. AUSTIN 78705 Phone: (512) 496-8700

LEVEL BEST FOUNDATION REPAIR



October 14, 2020

Ms. Ingrid Radkey
Via email: [REDACTED]

Re: Structural Assessment: 1208 W 22nd Street, Austin, Texas

Dear Ms. Radkey:

On October 9, 2020, Mr. John P. Dupre, PE, with Dupre Consulting Services (DCS) visited the referenced residence to assess the condition of the structure. In the following paragraphs, we present our site observations, analysis and conclusions, and repair recommendations.

General Description and History

For orientation purposes, the front of the single-story, wood-framed structure faces south. A pier and beam foundation system supports the residence. The original residence was constructed in 1927 (estimated). An addition was built along the back of the original residence. This addition includes a bedroom, a half bathroom (water closet and lavatory only) and a “screened-in” porch. Our observations indicate that various repairs and required upgrades have been completed.

Scope of Work

We performed the following activities on site:

- Inspected the condition of the foundation from the crawl space to the extent possible
- Surveyed the elevations of the piers
- Inspected interior walls and measured for tilt
- Inspected the ceiling and roof framing

An inspection of the roof shingles, plumbing lines and electrical wiring is beyond the scope of our work and expertise; however, we document relevant observations in this letter.

Our observations indicate that the wall, ceiling and roof framing of the original residence are structurally sound—no repairs are required. In the remainder of this letter we address the condition of the foundation and of the addition.

Foundation

As stated above, the foundation supporting the residence is a pier and beam system. The access point to the crawl space is at the southeast corner of the crawl space. Limited vertical clearance restricted access to the entire crawl space.

We observed three types of piers: bois d’arc (typically installed at the time the residence was built), stacked concrete blocks and cast-in-place concrete cylinders. Although pier types vary, the spacing is nearly uniform at approximately seven feet on center. Wooden beams span in the north-south direction between the piers, transferring the load of the structure to the ground. These beams are 4” x 6” sections and are located at the perimeter and along the centerline. Two intermediate beams, 4” x 4” wooden sections, have been installed halfway between the larger beams. The perpendicular joists that carry the floor loads to the beams are 2” x 6” wooden members, spaced at approximately sixteen inches on center. Plaster skirting encloses the perimeter of the crawl space.

The first two photographs below document the general condition of the accessible part of the crawl space. The first photograph also includes a concrete block pier.



The photograph at lower left documents typical interior framing above a bois d'arc pier. The photograph at lower right documents exterior framing at a cast-in-place concrete pier.



At least one of the concrete block piers is not in contact with the beam (photograph at lower left). The only water damage to the wooden subfloor framing that we observed in the accessible areas was at the bathtub. Refer to the photograph at lower right.



An isolated void in the perimeter skirting allowed us to insert a camera into the crawl space near the southwest corner of the kitchen. The photograph of the condition of the crawl space is below right.

According to the Soil Survey published by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the native soil at the site is silty clay to an approximate depth of 29 inches. The underlying material is bedrock. Note that the Soil Survey is based on averages for a broad area. The depth of soil layers at the site might vary from this description, but the behavioral properties do not.

Although the surface layer is relatively thin, the soil supporting the foundation is expansive; an expansive soil has the ability to change in volume with variations in moisture content. Unequal volumetric changes in the supporting soil can cause differential movement of the foundation.



To determine the position of the top of the foundation, we began by measuring the relative elevations of the floor at or near existing piers and along the perimeter grade beams. We then adjusted the elevation data to account for changes in the floor covering materials. The adjusted floor elevations are representative of the elevations of the top of the foundation. Note that these measurements are not referenced to an established benchmark, but are intended to only reflect relative change in elevation between data points. A sketch of the elevation data plotted on the floor plan is attached at the end of this letter. The approximate locations of piers and subfloor beams are also indicated on this sketch.

Our crawl space observations and analysis of the elevation data indicate that foundation movement has occurred, we recommend the following repairs to the foundation:

- Remove and replace approximately twenty bois d'arc and concrete block piers with cast-in-place cylindrical concrete piers.
- Adjust piers heights by inserting or removing steel shim plates above the concrete piers. Estimate the same number of adjustments as new piers. Note that this repair is part of new pier installation, not additive.
- Remove and replace one water-damaged 2"x 6" floor joist, approximately seven feet long, and water-damaged decking above. (Access will require removal of the bathtub).
- Remove all debris from crawl space and level surface to provide access.
- Install openings in the skirting to provide one square foot of ventilation for every 150 square feet of crawl space area (approximately seven square feet of opening is required).

A qualified foundation repair contractor can provide an accurate estimate from this information and the sketch provided.

Addition

Clearance from grade to the top of the foundation addition is insufficient to completely observe the subfloor framing. Finish materials cover the floors walls and ceilings. The roof slopes downward from the existing wall top plate (photograph at lower left). The roof framing in the adjoining “screened-in” porch is visible. We observed no visible defects (photograph at lower right).



From the exterior of the addition we were able to observe that an elevated wooden floor framing system bears on a concrete slab. The photograph at lower left documents this framing pattern, as well as the deterioration of the sole plate for the exterior wall. The photograph at lower right is in the same general area, but a broader perspective. This photograph indicates that the water damage (rot) continues up the wall to the siding and presumably to the wall framing.



For this type of wall construction the building code (International Residential Code) requires a minimum of six inches from grade to the top of the foundation to prevent surface water intrusion. This clearance was not provided. The result is extensive deterioration of the exterior wooden framing.

The required repair includes removal and replacement of all water-damaged subfloor and exterior wall framing. In addition, the proper clearance between grade and the top of the foundation must be provided by either elevating the structure or excavation and installation of a sub-surface drainage system along the perimeter of the foundation. Elevation of the structure will reduce the existing roof slope, altering the drainage pattern. We anticipate that the cost of these repairs will exceed the demolition and proper new construction cost; therefore, we conclude that the addition shall be demolished. Although we did not observe indications of current structural distress, continuing deterioration will eventually create a hazardous condition.

Other Observations

The base of the wooden column at the southwest corner of the front porch has rotted. This section shall be removed and replaced (photograph at lower left). Parts of the original bathroom have been demolished. The photograph at lower right documents the vanity, but parts of the bathtub surround have also been removed. This area shall be repaired as part of the subfloor framing replacement.



Basis

We prepared this structural assessment report for the specific benefit of Ms. Ingrid Radkey. The report is intended for her sole use. This report is based on our site observations and elevation survey recorded on October 9, 2020, information provided by Ms. Ingrid Radkey and on soil data provided by others. If any additional information becomes available, we reserve the right to revise our conclusions as required. Property conditions change with time and use; the accuracy of our conclusions diminishes over time. This report shall not be used for any other purpose. The information in this report might be incomplete or outdated for other applications. Release of this report to any third party is the responsibility of Ms. Ingrid Radkey. No warranty of future performance is expressed or implied by this report. This report supersedes all oral representations.

DCS is a structural engineering consulting firm. Cost estimating is beyond the scope of our expertise. In this letter we have provided data to facilitate accurate estimating, but make no representations of actual cost. We have not identified all non-structural costs required to create a habitable structure. We only mentioned those items related to structural repairs. It is possible that repairs will reveal additional damage. Please consult an experienced remodeling contractor or a professional estimator for accurate cost data. We also did not address function or aesthetics, which are within an architect’s scope of service.

Thank you for allowing us to provide this service. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact our office.

Sincerely,

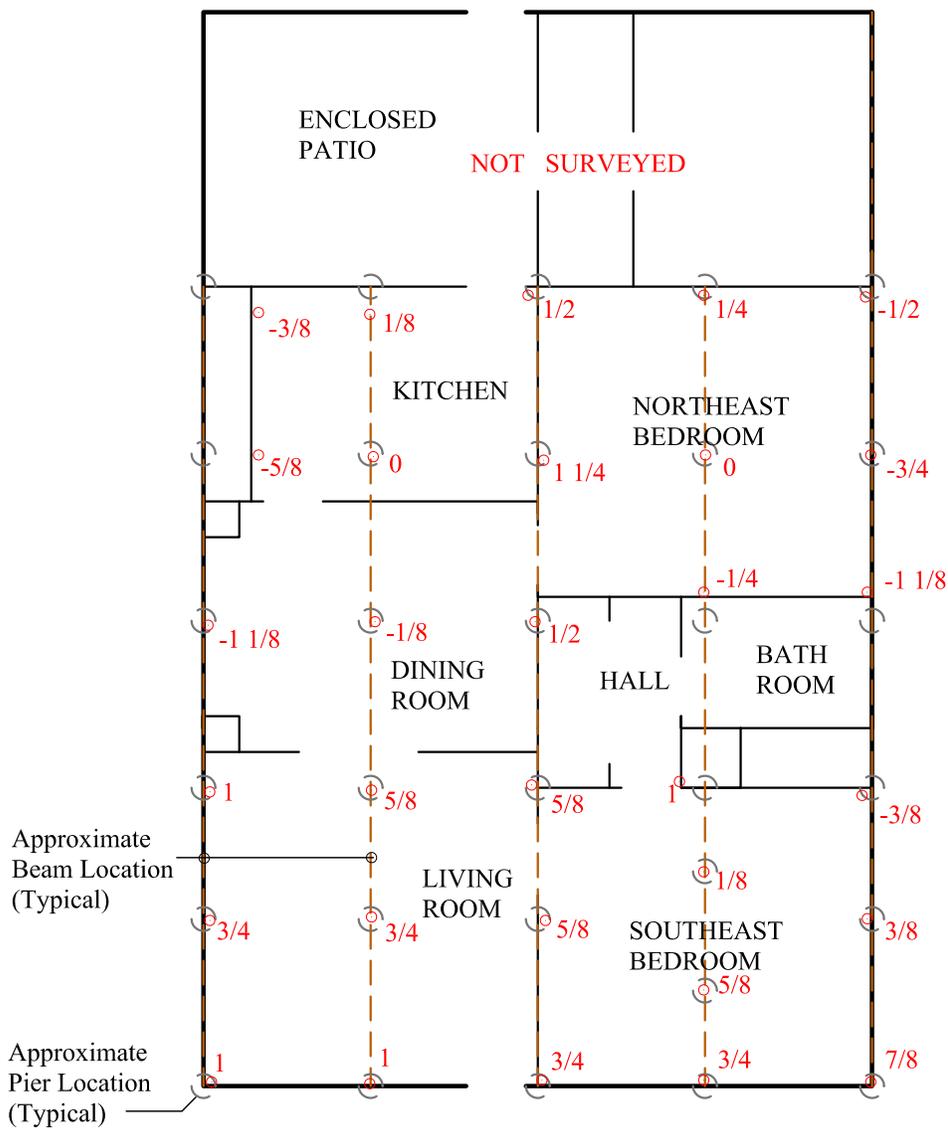
John P. Dupre, PE¹ 10-14-20



¹ Author’s qualifications: B.S. Civil Engineering, M.S. Engineering (Structures), Registered Professional Engineer in Texas (61498) since 1987, twenty years experience in residential structural/foundation assessment.

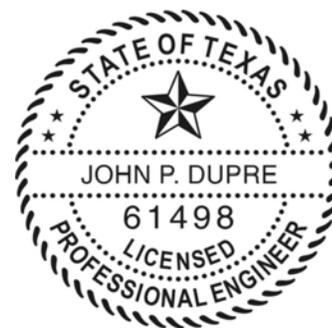
DUPRE CONSULTING SERVICES

TEXAS BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS REGISTRATION F-10519



NOTE: ELEVATIONS ARE RECORDED
IN ONE-EIGHTH INCH INCREMENTS

SCHEMATIC FLOOR PLAN WITH ELEVATION DATA



John P. Dupre

Location: 1208 W 22nd Street, Austin, Texas

Survey Date: 10-9-20

Scale: 1/8" = 1Ft