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March 11, 2019

Gabrielle Mattingly  
City of Naperville - Historic Preservation Commission  
400 S. Eagle Street  
Naperville, Illinois 60540

Re: Demolition of Existing Home  
26 N. Sleight Street, Naperville, IL

Dear Ms Mattingly:

We were retained to make an assessment to the structural integrity of the existing house located in the Naperville Historic District at the address noted above. I personally visited the site on January 23, 2019 and did a walk through and around the entire building with Dan Kittilsen of DJK custom homes to observe the existing conditions.

The existing home is a 2-story wood framed home on Stone foundation (see image 1) with about a 6'6" deep basement under the original home. From our observations, it appears 2 additions were added to the main house. The first addition (see image 2) is added to the rear (east side) of the home and is a 1-story wood framed addition (see image 3) on stone foundation with a shallow above grade crawl with dirt floor. The second addition is added to the left side (north) of the home and is a 1-story wood framed addition on a concrete foundation. I could not access crawl, so could not observe crawl conditions. We understand from information obtained from the City of Naperville web site that the original home was built around 1875, but we are unsure when additions were added.

It is our understanding that the home's previous owner was a hoarder and while most of the homes contents were already cleared out when I was there, there was still a significant amount of contents with signs of filth everywhere and mold in several locations, including the kitchen and bath on first floor (see image 4), and the bath (see image 5), the back bedroom (see image 6 & 7) and hall on the second floor. The walls in many locations showed signs of stress or settling cracks and many of the walls were no longer plumb. There were several walls, both interior and exterior, that were significantly leaning and out of plumb. One interior wall in the front room with a door to the foyer (see image 8) was noticeably not square in the jamb any longer due to settling and leaning of walls. The south exterior wall we used a level and estimate the top of the wall was leaning out and out of plumb about 4" to 5". This alone was very concerning to us and is a potential hazard to neighbor's house if this were to fail as it would most likely land on the neighboring house to the south. This was only one of many walls that were of concern.

The floors did show signs of settling towards the outside, with the north side addition having a very noticeable drop to the north of about 3 or 4 inches in 10 feet. When observed from the exterior, this is the area where the addition is on a concrete foundation and it appears the foundation has settled more than the stone foundation (see image 9) and has cracked with significant separation of the foundation in at least one location (see image 10). A bay bump out on the south side off the dining room has signs of significantly dropped from the inside (see image 11) and when observed from the exterior, the stone foundation has failed and is pulling away from the home (see image 12). Another concern to us and potential hazard to surround area.

Plumbing in the house is the cast iron sewer and the water service does appear to be the lead pipes (see image 13). Many of the exposed hvac pipes in the basement did have corrosion (image 14), thus they may have been exposed to some type of moisture. While some of the electrical appears to have been upgraded to conduit, there were still signs of the old rope wiring (see image 15). From our observation, all the Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing should be replaced entirely to the street.

In the basement, upon observation from the inside, there are signs of cracking and failing foundation and it can be seen that the stone has been patched with mortar as some point in time, but many joints with a little rubbing of your finger, the mortar just scraps away (see image 16). There are many locations of cracked stone and areas near the bottom of the wall that appear to be location of water seepage where all the mortar has washed away (see image 13, 17 & 18). From the outside, the stone foundation is cracked with some showing signs of patching in many locations as you walk around (see image 19 & 21). The foundation at the exterior basement access and dining room bay bump out on the south, is pulled away and failing and is tipping out from the rest of the foundation (see image 12 & 22), which explains why floor and walls are dropped in that location. As mentioned before, the concrete foundation at the north is dropped lower than the stone foundation and has several cracks in that foundation, with one showing significant separation. The rear crawl stone wall has many cracks, with most appearing to have been recently patched to help hide the cracking and separation (see image 20).

Back in the basement, there were some areas of rotting wood and the 3 round wood columns supporting the middle beam are rotting at the base and appear to be bearing on the concrete floor (see image 23). It is unknown if there is a proper footing under these columns. However, due to the column rot, they need replacement. The wood beam, by today's structural standards is undersized for the loads imposed on it and should be replaced. I could not get under crawl to properly observe

As for the exterior façade, you can see location of siding rotting (see image 24) and in one location on the south side, there appears to be plant material that was cut down that is in the wall and behind the siding and wall sheathing (see image 25), but unclear how far up wall it extends. There are signs of the plant still climbing up the foundation and wall. The front stoop appears to be settling and railings do not meet the current codes, and both should be replaced. Both the front door and rear door were difficult to open due to sticking in the jamb from uneven walls. The entire rear porch showed signs of rot and failing and should be replaced. All windows should be replaced. While roof was covered in snow at our time of observation, it was seen in the second floor south rear bedroom that roof was leaking significantly and plaster has fallen and mold has developed in that area (see image 6 & 7), so it is anticipated that some or all of the roof would need repair and new roofing at a minimum.

When it comes to estimated cost to repair the current home, we breakdown the needed repairs as follows. We estimate the hydraulic jacking of the existing home to level the floor, the repair of the damage stone foundation, the replacing of the center beam and other miscellaneous shoring needed to level the floor structure and the waterproofing of the basement to be approximately \$75,000 to \$125,000. The removal and replacing of the entire systems for the Mechanical (including new furnace, a/c unit, all ductwork, etc.), Electrical (including new service to city connections, new panel, new rough, etc.), and Plumbing (including new sewer and water to city connections, new water and sewer lines inside house, etc) to be approximately \$40,000 to \$50,000. The removal of all siding, drywall, roofing and replacing with new as well as straightening and making walls plumb we estimate to be approximately \$90,000 to \$130,000. The removal and rebuilding exterior porch at rear door we estimate to be approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000. The removal and replacement of all the trim, doors, windows, cabinets, plumbing fixtures, lights, and any other finishes we estimate to be approximately another \$180,000 to \$200,000. This does not include any unforeseen items like damaged structure due to neglect and water damage, which could be significant. Therefore, to bring this home back to a livable state, we have conservatively estimated of the repairs to amount to \$410,000 to \$535,000.

While we understand that tearing down a building in the historic district is strongly discouraged, there comes a point where outside of unsafe conditions, trying to repair and bring back to a livable state is financially unreasonable. The home is currently under contract for \$410,000 as is. This land alone without the home structure is valued at \$400,000. To support this finding, we found a similar property, but outside the more favorable historic district, at 356 S Loomis St on the market for \$408,000 and the building has already been demolished. Using this as our basis, we put a value of \$10,000 to \$20,000 on the building structure alone and the property alone value at \$390,000 to \$400,000. Therefore. it is our reasoning to bring this home back to a safe and livable state, at a minimum, would amount to over 2000% the current value of \$20,000 for the building structure. Having to invest 2000% into this property would be financially unreasonable and the investment would never see a proper return.



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I hope the Historic Preservation Commission can find our reasoning valid and vote in favor of this home to be demolished to make way for a new home. If you should have any questions for me, please contact me at [mike.buhr@craftstonearchitects.com](mailto:mike.buhr@craftstonearchitects.com) or at 815.609.1997.

Sincerely,

**Craftstone Architects, Inc.**

Michael A. Buhr, AIA, ALA  
*President*

*Cc: File*



*Image 1 – Existing house from southwest corner*



*Image 2 – North addition from northwest corner*



Image 3 – East addition from northeast corner



Image 4 – First floor bathroom with filth and signs of mold around toilet.



Image 5 – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bathroom with signs of mold



Image 6 – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor southeast bedroom with ceiling falling in and showing signs of mold due to water damage



Image 7 - 2<sup>nd</sup> floor southeast bedroom with ceiling falling in and showing signs of mold due to water damage

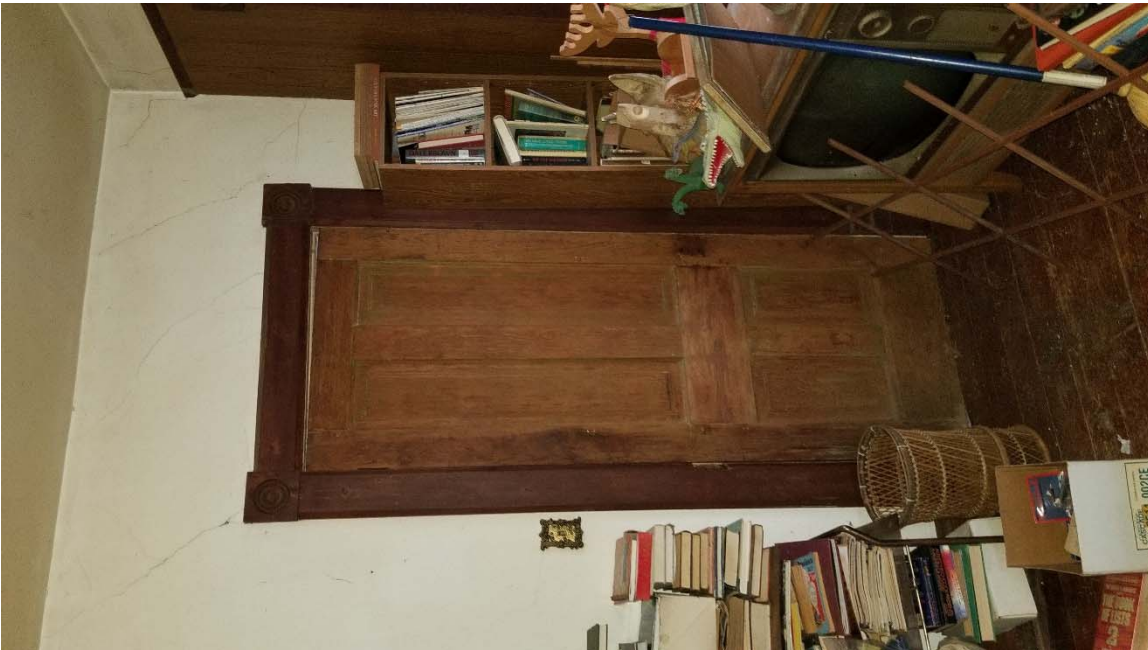


Image 8 – Door to foyer from front living room that is no longer square in jamb and stuck closed



*Image 9 – Concrete foundation dropped or settling at stone foundation. Stone foundation has signs of cracking also.*



*Image 10 – Concrete foundation with significant crack with separation in foundation.*





*Image 11 – Bay bump out at dining room from inside with floor, walls and ceiling dropping at outside wall.*



*Image 12 – Bay bump out at dining room with dropped floor, walls & ceiling. Foundation cracked and pulled away from main foundation.*



*Image 13 – water meeting with copper connections to lead water piping. Also, bottom of wall where bricks and stones located have holes where water and debris is filtering into basement.*



*Image 14 – Ductwork is corroding and stone foundation has signs of patching large cracks with plastic bags shoved in cracks and towards bottom one of the cracks appears to be filled with silicone caulk.*



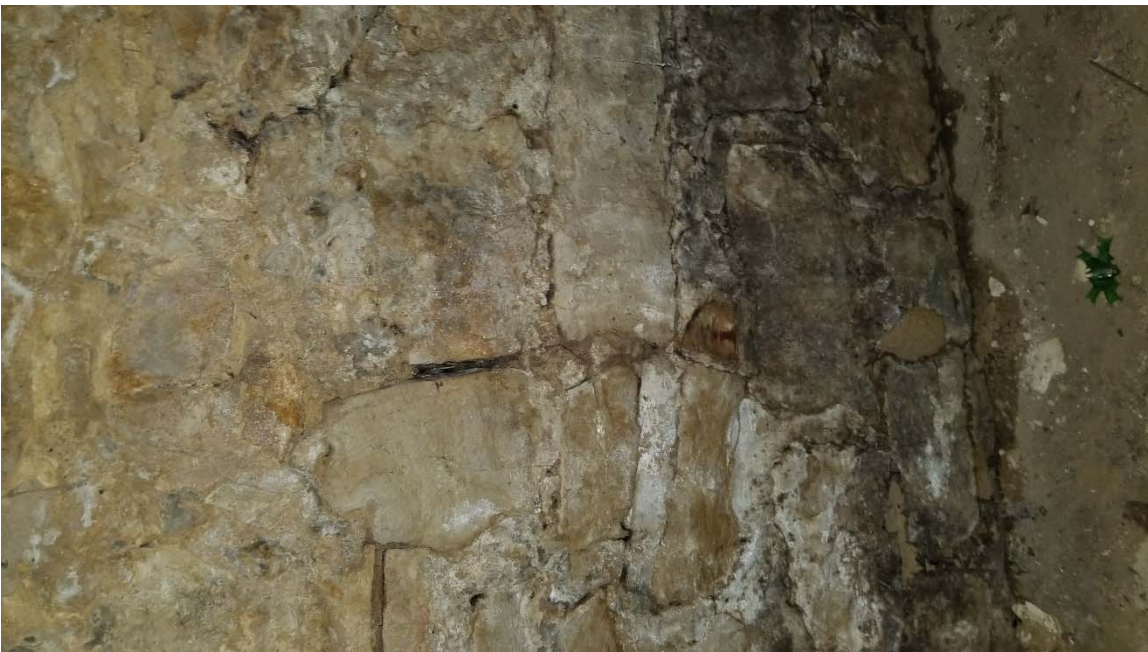
*Image 15 – Undersized basement wood beam with lights hanging from ceiling with rope cord*



*Image 16 – Stone foundation joints patched and if rubbed with finger, is rubs off as can be seen with sand sitting on wood ledge.*



*Image 17 – Stone foundation wall plugged with stone and brick with signs of water and sediment entering basement from outside.*



*Image 18 – Stone foundation cracks with signs of seepage.*



*Image 19 – Stone foundation with signs of patching*



*Image 20 - Stone foundation with signs of patching*



*Image 21 - Stone foundation with signs of patching*



*Image 22 – Stone foundation at exterior basement access pulling away and failing.*



*Image 23 – Rotting wood post in basement supporting middle beam*



*Image 24 – Rotting siding*



*Image 25 – Plant material found under siding and in wall on south side exterior wall*