



Date: March 11, 2021

To: Interested Parties and the General Public

From: Terry Zeller, Director of Community Services

Subject: Historic City Hall Shoring and Bracing Project

There have been many discussions lately in the public space focused on the Historic City Hall (Confidence Building) at 487 Main Street and the intentions and efforts that have been put into action by the City of Placerville. This memo hopes to clear up any misinformation and provide a clear outline of what has been done, is currently underway, and the expected next steps for the building.

Initially a request for proposals was sought for leasing both 489 and 487 Main Street (the ketchup and mustard buildings) so as to set a course for their future care and use. The successful proposer was Arts & Culture El Dorado, and the proposal included using both buildings for art and performance spaces, with apartments on the 2nd floor for artists-in-residence, their rent contributing to the cost of upkeep of the buildings, thus establishing a designated maintenance funding source for the buildings.

A current roof replacement project was underway during the RFP process for the buildings, and this was stopped before work commenced when it became apparent that a roofing project may cause failure to the west wall in its current condition. A Registered Structural Engineer specializing in shoring up buildings was sought, and the City hired D.H. Glabe and Associates (Sacramento/Wheat Ridge, CO) to do an evaluation of the building and propose a solution.

It was determined by the Structural Engineer that the west brick wall (un-reinforced masonry) had been, over the past 100 years or so, developing an outward bow to its central upper section that was slowly pulling away from the roof trusses and 2nd floor beams. A laser survey of the wall later determined the bow to be 7.5 inches out of vertical at its greatest deflection point.

D.H. Glabe prepared a plan to place *temporary* vertical shoring within the interior of 487 Main to take the weight of the roof off the compromised west wall, and a horizontal bracing design for the exterior of the west wall to keep it from failing outward and endangering the public. The emergency temporary project was designed and sent out for public bid, and the successful bidder was NyeCon, Incorporated, a shoring contractor from Gold River, CA. As part of the bidding process, bidders were required to submit a list of qualifications for historical projects. NyeCon provided a list of past projects including Napa Historic Courthouse, The Sugar Mill, Historic Amador Sawmill, and the Hall Luhrs Building to name a few. The contractor started work in late November and the work has now been completed.

Before the contractor was mobilized, a tuck-pointing option was investigated by the City at the request of local interested parties for exploring this as a solution. A local brick mason with vast historic brick reconstruction experience (including work in Placerville) was invited to provide an option to rebuild the west wall, similar to the proposed URM option from the [City's 2015 report prepared by Burne Engineering](#) that evaluated the structural integrity of the buildings. This proposal turned out to be very close to the bid price of the shoring contractor when the costs of

Public Works wages, laws, codes and specifications were factored in and would also require shoring and bracing to execute as a safeguard to masons. This information reinforced the current contracted solution to be the best route to secure the building's structural integrity as soon as possible.

The temporary shoring and bracing is necessary to structurally reinforce the building from collapsing due to its compromised west wall. A benefit of the project was the ivy removal from the west wall, preventing any continued mortar damage from the ivy rooting.

With the shoring and bracing project done, the City will have greatly reduced the safety hazard and possibility of the west wall failing, which could have brought a large portion of the building down with it. This work will also make it possible for the planning and execution of a roof project, and the work planned by Arts & Culture El Dorado which will conform to California's historic renovation codes, the [Secretary of the Interior](#) Guidelines, seismic retrofit codes, and CEQA process.

Given that the building is on the National Register, additional questions have arisen from the current work as to the reason for the structural work, if it has been consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Properties, if there are seismic retrofits, and some interior details that are shown on the engineering plans. The detailed reasons for the shoring and bracing project are thoroughly covered in the information above. The project is considered an emergency solution and temporary in nature to reduce the danger and hazard to the public while preserving the integrity of the building until a permanent structural and seismic renovation and retrofit is designed and completed by Arts & Culture El Dorado, as outlined in the successful RFP awarded to them in 2019.

There is one specific detail that seems to have generated a lot of concern, and that is a design for a dry walled wood stud interior partition wall that was put into the plans but not awarded as an alternate to the shoring contractor. The wall was intended to provide a flat vertical plane to restore some use to the first floor space as an art gallery, which was its use prior to the shoring and bracing project. It was an element of the temporary shoring and bracing, to be removed when the formal renovation project was initiated, and as such is not an attempt to alter the building and skirt any codes or historic processes.

My hope is that this memo can serve as a factual reference for all the current and future questions that may be generated by the public concerning 487 Main Street. The City is and always has had a vision of continuing to support the existence and positive use of this historic building.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Zeller", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Terry Zeller
Community Services Director