



November 7, 2024

(By electronic transmission)
Historical Advisory Board
City of Alameda
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501

Subject: PLN 24-0256-Certificate of Approval to replace gutters and downspouts on the "Big Whites".

Dear Boardmembers:

The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) urges the Historical Advisory Board to affirm its July 18, 2024 condition of approval that the "copper gutters shall be preserved or replaced in kind" and that "measures be incorporated to prevent galvanic corrosion between" copper and possible downspout materials, such as galvanized steel, or aluminum.

The copper gutters, due in large part to their distinctive green patina, are one of the Big Whites' most notable character-defining features and therefore warrant retention and, if deteriorated beyond repair, replacement in kind.

We were surprised that staff was unable to find contractors willing to work with copper gutters due to the "highly corrosive environment at Alameda Point". Our understanding is that copper gutters can last 50-150 years with proper maintenance and are naturally resistant to corrosion. The existing copper gutters are original to the buildings, are therefore about 80 years old and should have many years of remaining useful life.

Based on a cursory inspection of the Big Whites, some of the copper gutters are bent or exhibit other physical damage, but these conditions are mostly limited to the Big Whites' one story wings, and do not appear evident on the main two-story portions. At least some of the gutter damage on the one story wings may have been due to poor maintenance practices and/or careless repairs to the wings' flat roofs, which exhibit signs of leakage.

Staff has told us that there are a total of 47 copper gutters and downspouts that are missing, but has not advised how many of these are gutters vs. downspouts. We did not notice any missing gutters during our inspection.

We did see during our inspection that shingles are missing from some of the slopped roofs on the Big Whites two-story portions, and that tarps have been installed over some of the one story wings, indicating that roof repairs are urgently needed. The draft resolution states that the gutter/downspout project will be coordinated with "other roof repairs, painting, and other maintenance", so we assume that the roof deterioration that we have observed will be addressed as part of these repairs. We agree that "time is of the essence" for performing these repairs, given the upcoming winter rain storms. We have asked staff for the target date for awarding the contract for these repairs and have not yet received a response.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me at (510) 523-0411 or cbuckleyAICP@att.net if you would like to discuss these comments.

Sincerely,

Christopher Buckley, Chair
Preservation Action Committee
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

cc: Allen Tai, Steven Buckley, Brian McGuire, Henry Dong and Annie Cox (by electronic transmission)
AAPS Board and Preservation Action Committee (by electronic transmission)