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STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
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September 23, 2026

Hanna Steinbach
227 Stanley Ave.
Pacifica, CA 94044

Re: 6275 Portola Road
Structural Assessment

Dear Hanna:

We have reviewed the uneven floors at the house at 6275 Portola Road. The existing house is a two-story wood-framed structure with a partial lower-level basement. The original portion of the house was constructed in 1918. At the back of the structure there appears to be more recent construction. This is either a main-floor level addition supported on the exterior basement wall at one side, and a row of wood-framed pilasters at the other, or else an original exterior deck was enclosed with walls, and converted into living space. In either case, the construction appears to have been done in the late 1900's.

ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION

Noticeable differential settlement has occurred throughout the structure. The perimeter wall foundations appear to have settled fairly evenly, while the central fireplace foundation appears to have not moved, creating a floor that crowns at the center of the house. Though the settlement is noticeable, it is common in a structure of this age, and is not indicative of a dangerous condition or of any structural concern. There is no evidence of recent settlement, other than that due to the native expansive soils (see below), and it is likely that the foundation settlement has occurred slowly over the past 100-plus years.

As noted above, the soils in this region are considered expansive, meaning that the native clayey soils swell with seasonal moisture and contract during the dry season. This constant soil movement causes the foundation to move, and over time leads to differential settlement. Though not a structural concern, it does commonly cause the cosmetic cracking to brittle finishes within the house, such as wall stucco, drywall, and floor tiles.

A permanent repair for the differential settlement would be to lift the house, remove the existing foundation, condition the soils, and construct a new foundation. Another solution would be to stabilize the perimeter with deep foundation anchors (push pins, helical piers, etc.), then jack up the floor as needed. However, each of these methods are a significant expense and neither increases the safety of the occupants. The process of leveling the uneven floors will also damage interior and exterior finishes, leading to additional expenses. Because

of the high expense of this type of work, and the fact that it does little to increase safety, foundation leveling is not often justified, nor is it always recommended.

ADDITION

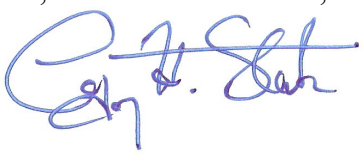
We did come across one area of concern that we feel should be addressed. The east end of the addition off the back of the house [Figure 1] appears to have settled noticeably more than the end supported by the exterior basement wall. The cracking at the concrete slab [Figure 3] shows evidence that the wood-framed pilasters supporting the wall above have settled more than the house. This is concerning because this settlement has occurred over a shorter period of time. There are two likely causes for this settlement. The first is that the footings are undersized for the load that they are supporting. Secondly, the downspout at the front northwest corner of the house [Figure 4], and the roofs in the back northeast corner of the house [Figure 5], drain onto the sloped concrete walkway, which then empties into the soil near the northeast pilaster [Figure 6]. This pilaster appears to have settled the most out of the four, and additional cracking in the concrete slab can be seen here [Figure 2].

The repair for this area would be to remove the cracked concrete slab-on-grade in order to determine the extent of footings below the pilasters. At that point, either new larger pad footings could be constructed, or the existing foundation underpinned, in order to prevent additional settlement. We are also concerned with the construction of the pilasters, and their ability to resist seismic loads from the wall above. It is recommended that the finishes be removed from one of the pilasters to verify the presence of plywood sheathing. If there is plywood sheathing, it is recommended to remove a portion of the sheathing to verify adequate foundation anchorage. Any deficiencies would need to be corrected in all four pilasters.

If there are any questions or concerns with this report, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Stork, Wolfe and Associates, Inc.





By: Gregory H. Stork, SE
Principal



Figure 1 – Addition at the back side of the house.



Figure 2 – Settlement crack in slab at northeast pilaster.



Figure 3 – Crack in slab due to pilaster settlement.

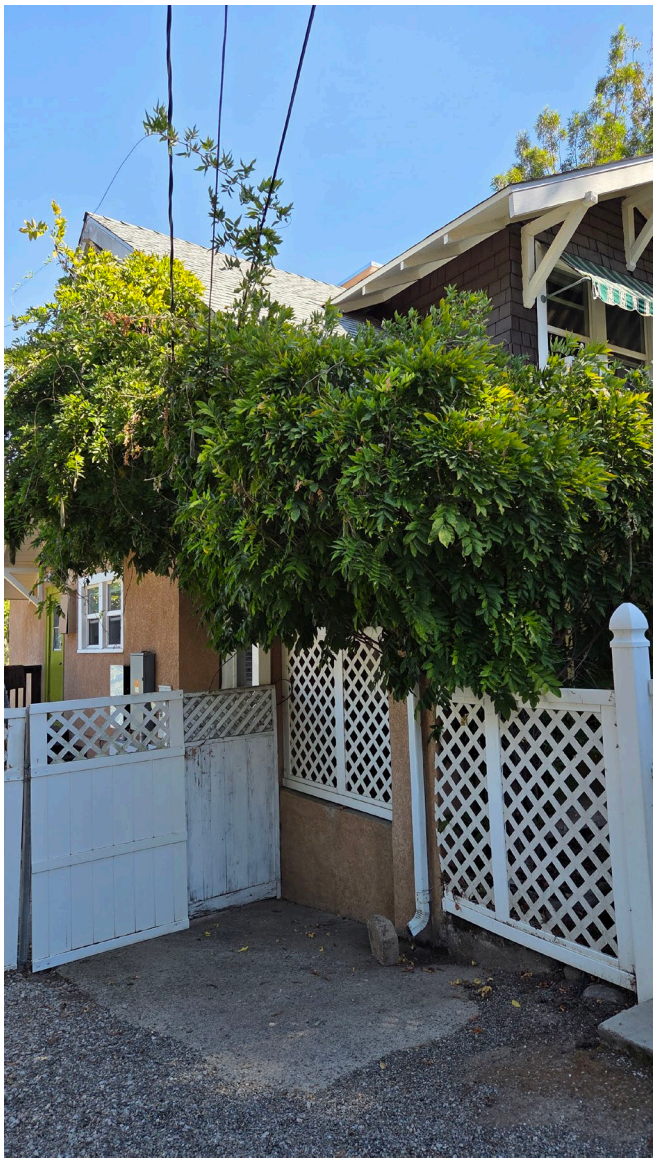


Figure 4 – Downspout draining onto sloped concrete walkway.



Figure 5 – Roofs draining onto sloped concrete walkway..



Figure 6 – Damp soil at end of sloped concrete walkway and base of northeast pilaster.