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November 17, 2017

VIA E-MAIL

Ms. Diana Wood
Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34284, Southwest Gulf Railroad Company

Dear Diana:

I am writing to update you on the mitigation measures for the stone German-Alsatian dwelling (HDR-AR-06) on the McGehee property (Parcel R8287), north of FM 2676. As you will recall, HDR-AR-06 is located within the boundary of the UQRHD, and the building has been determined eligible as a contributing resource to the UQRHD. SHPO concurred that the Project will have an adverse effect on HDR-AR-06. The Resolution Plan provides that in addition to the UQRHD exhibition and educational materials, mitigation strategies for HDR-AR-06 include HABS-like Level II documentation for the Alsatian structure and vibration monitoring. In addition, because of the poor condition of the Alsatian building, the Resolution Plan called for a structural assessment and preservation plan for the dwelling. HDR performed an initial assessment and determined that it is not safe to enter the building given its current condition. Please see the attached HRR field report, which documents the dead tree on the roof and other structural problems with the building. Given the condition of the dwelling, HDR found that significant stabilization work would be required before it would be safe for anyone to enter the building. There is also risk that attempting to perform stabilization work would itself lead to collapse or further damage to the structure.

Moreover, although SGR currently owns the property on which the dwelling sits, SGR intends to sell the property within 30 days. While the Resolution Plan contemplates the development of a preservation plan for the dwelling, the future preservation of the building will not be in SGR's control once title passes. Therefore, SGR intends to move forward with preparing the HABS documentation of the Alsatian structure as soon as possible, working from the exterior of the building only, to ensure that the HABS documentation can be completed before title passes and before the new property owner makes any changes that impact the dwelling. The HABS documentation will include all of the elements listed in the Resolution Plan, but will be done from the exterior only. Given the open nature of the

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structure, interior views can be obtained from the exterior, as can be seen in the attached photographs. We will update you once the HABS documentation for this dwelling has been completed.

In the meantime, please let us know any questions regarding resource HDR-AR-06 on the McGehee property.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cyn L Taub".

Cynthia L. Taub
Attorney for Southwest Gulf Railroad Company

Attachment

cc: Bill Martin, THC
Casey Hanson, THC
Sara Luduena, THC

Field Report

Date: Wednesday, November 01, 2017

Project: SGRR Medina County

To: Ann Keen

From: Chad Zimmerman

Subject: Existing Structure Site Observation – HDR-AR-06

Description

Site Visit report in Medina County for an old farmhouse estimated to be built around 1870 (Photo 1). Weather at time of visit on Thursday, October 19, 2017, was approximately 78 degrees and partly cloudy. The purpose of the site visit was to do a visual inspection of the structural stability to determine if it is safe to go inside the structure to do Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation due to the fact that a tree has fallen on top of the structure.

Observations

The roof system appeared to be traditional wood rafters with the purlins being made of dimensional lumber on the east end and sawn tree pieces on the west end. There appeared to be an old standing metal roof that wood shingles had been placed on top of. The trunk of a dead tree had fallen onto the roof of the structure and broken into two pieces. Both pieces were sitting on the west end of the roof on each side. It appeared that when the tree fell, it hit the chimney before hitting the roof (Photo 2). The roof was damaged as a result and is experiencing large deflections and distress from the weight of the tree (Photo 3). There was a localized puncture in the roof due to the tree striking the roof. (Photo 4). The west wall support at the header beams were not in stable condition at the time of the visit. On the north-west end the support of the header beam was not present (Photo 5) and it appeared that a column that was added was supporting the header along with the rafter beam. On the south end, the header was still somewhat supported by the stone wall (Photos 6 and 7). The support was not in stable condition and could give way at any point with movement of the building or vibration of the surrounding area. It appeared that sometime in the past, the building was modified to remove the north and south walls on the west end. During this removal, it appeared that they removed the tie beams (Photo 8), which provide stability for the roof system. The tie beams were still present on the north and south east side walls (Photo 9). These walls were in better condition and mostly intact. As a result of the tree and modifications to the existing structure, the roof ridge rafter connection was starting to open up at the west end (Photo 10). The first two rafters had separated and at the third, a gap was present. It is assumed that since the tie beams were removed, the ridge rafter connection is taking most of the load and connecting both side of the roof together.

Recommendations

The building condition at the time of the site visit is considered unstable and not recommended that anyone go in the building or conduct survey of the members due to the risk of localized collapse of the east wall and/or east roof of the building. It is not recommended that any jacking or removal of the trees should be done. It is thought that this would cause collapse. Although any modifications at this point could cause collapse, it is recommended that any modifications that could be done at this point would be to minimize the risk of collapse and keep the structure from moving any further than it already has to this point. It is recommended that the following items are performed in the order presented below in order to better stabilize the structure. It is recommended that steel straps be added to the first 4 rafters from the west end to prevent any future opening up of the ridge. It is also recommended that two 8X8 wood posts be added about 2 to 4 feet from the end of the west wall to support the north and south header beams. The posts should be embedded about 4 feet into the ground with concrete and connected with the header beam. Due to risk of vibration and the sensitive state of the structure, all connections should be made with screws and no nails shall be used. After the posts are installed, it is recommended that a tie beam be placed between the two columns to connect them together. See Figures 1 and 2 for recommended stabilization measures. Considering all recommendations have been followed, it is then acceptable for the HABS documentation to be completed.



PHOTO 1: OVERALL SITE

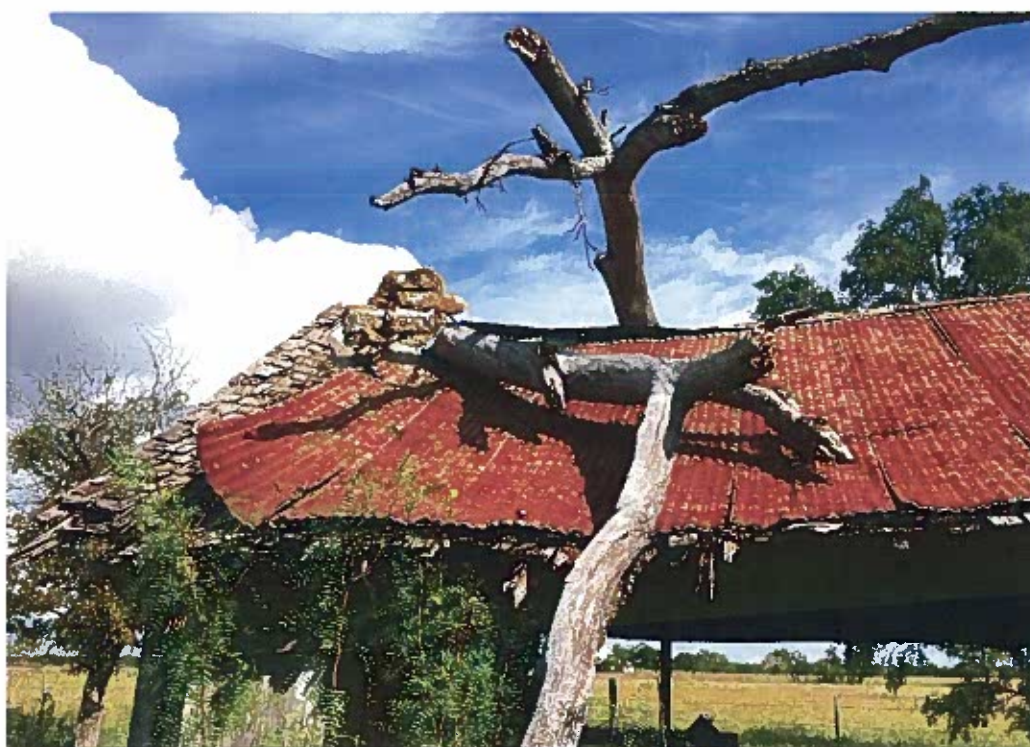


PHOTO 2: TREE TRUNK AND BRANCH ON TOP OF ROOF



PHOTO 3: TREE ON ROOF AND EXCESSIVE DEFLECTIONS AND DISTRESS



PHOTO 4: LOCALIZED PUNCTURE IN ROOF AT CENTER OF PICTURE



PHOTO 5: VIEW AT NORTH WEST END OF HEADER BEAM



PHOTO 6: VIEW OF SOUTH WEST END OF HEADER BEAM



PHOTO 7: VIEW OF OUTSIDE OF SOUTH WEST HEADER BEAM SITTING ON STONE



PHOTO 8: VIEW SHOWING REMOVED TIE BEAMS FOR RAFTER ON WEST SIDE



PHOTO 9: VIEW SHOWING TIE BEAM FOR RAFTER ON EAST SIDE



PHOTO 10: RAFTER BEAM STARTING TO OPENING UP AT THE ROOF RIDGE ON WEST END.

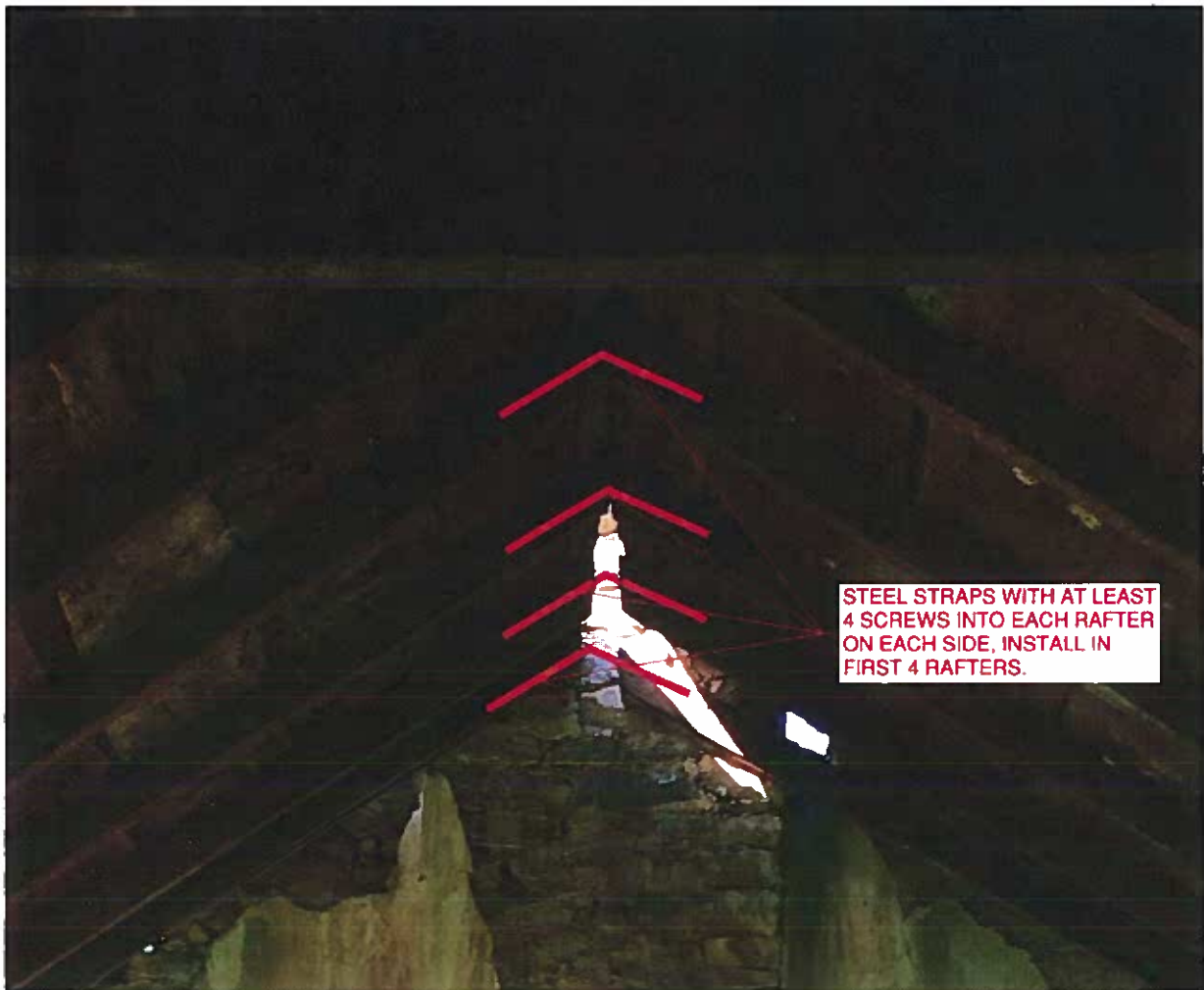


Figure 1: Rafter ridge modifications



Figure 2: Posts and tie beam modifications