

WING LUKE MUSEUM

Landmarks Preservation Board

Special Tax Valuation Application for the Eng Family Homestead

Description of the Rehabilitation:

In Fall 2021, the Wing Luke Museum acquired the 1937 Eng Family Home at 611 8th Avenue S in the Chinatown-International District from its original owners, the Eng family. The intent of the acquisition was to restore and preserve the largely intact house for the purpose of conducting guided immersion tours and exhibits with historical context.

The Homestead, just one block south of the Museum, is one of the last remaining single-family homes in the C-ID, constructed despite the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which disallowed citizenship and therefore property ownership for Chinese immigrants. Housing discrimination in Seattle also restricted residence for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs) in many neighborhoods and disallowed single-family homes in the commercially zoned Chinatown. This home became an ideal setting for the museum to continue our storytelling and preservation work with an expanded footprint.

When acquired, the home's interior was largely intact, and included a garden with original fishpond and loquat trees. The renovation was intended to be as close to the "look and feel" of the original home as much as possible, while still upgrading the electrical and security systems, infrastructure, and ADA access. The original footprint of the home remained in place.

Design work on the project began in Fall of 2023, and construction began in June of 2024, with construction wrapping up in September of 2025.

Over the course of this period, the following changes were made to the Eng Family Homestead:

Structural/Architectural/Systems:

- Substantial seismic upgrades including new roof diaphragm, parapet bracing, and new roof/wall connections.
- Upgraded all of the electrical systems in the home, and installed new underground electrical service.
- Upgraded and repaired the sewer line
- Added new front stairs and renovated historic railings at existing stone retaining wall
- New roofing and rooftop insulation was added to the whole house
- Installed historically appropriate wood windows throughout the old house
- Installed a new storefront entry door at existing garage
- Modern, energy-efficient HVAC equipment installed
- New security system installed
- Repainted exterior of house to original color scheme
- Added new landscaping, including courtyard paving and garden trellis

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- Replacement of historical chimney with seismically upgraded version
- Security gates and fences

Interior:

- Historically accurate finishes throughout based on Eng family input and guidance
- New kitchen cabinets and sink to match existing finishes and based on historical photos provided by the Eng family
- New historically accurate tiling installed at Kitchen
- Interior painting to match Eng family photos
- New data rack installed

A 160 square foot stair/elevator enclosure was added at the house's existing garage to provide space for a lift and a code-compliant stairway to ensure an accessible route up to the main level of the house and down to the basement.