

# Capitola Planning Commission

## Agenda Report

**Meeting:** February 2, 2023

**From:** Community Development Department

**Address:** 203 Esplanade



---

**Permit Number:** 23-0046

**APN:** 035-211-04

Guidance on Emergency Coastal Development Permit and future Historic Alteration Permit for window replacement at Zelda's Restaurant

Environmental Determination: N/A

Property Owner: Jill Ealy, Zelda's Restaurant

Representative: Jill Ealy, Zelda's Restaurant

**Applicant Proposal:** Request for guidance on window replacement for the historic structure located at 203 Esplanade (Zelda's Restaurant) due to storm damage. The current proposal is to install a sliding window system within each of the three window sections on the sea facing facade. The sliding windows would look similar to the previous windows with the same ribbon design and the same number of window openings in each section.

**Background:** Zelda's Restaurant, located at 203 Esplanade, was severely damaged during the recent atmospheric river storms. The rear wall must be replaced due to the impacts of waves and debris on the structure. On January 25, 2023, Building Official Robin Woodman issued a demolition permit to remove portions of the existing rear wall for further investigative work by a structural engineer regarding stability of the building. The applicant is seeking an emergency coastal development permit to building the wall back and is seeking direction on an alteration to the window design of the historic structure.

**Discussion:** The structure at 203 Esplanade is included in Capitola's Historic Context Statement and included in the 2005 Historic Structures List; therefore, all modifications to an existing structure require approval of a historic alteration permit by the Planning Commission. The Community Development Director has the authority to sign off on Emergency CDPs but is requesting guidance on the proposed window replacement as the application will have to come back before Planning Commission for approval of a historic alteration permit.

The rear façade of Zelda's Restaurants previously had three sections of ribbon windows set side by side in groups of three and four windows creating a horizontal band. The window sections were separated by large ornate curved architectural supports, a character defining feature of the building.

The previously existing windows had been altered over time with varying dimensions and the removal of transom windows on the eastern end of the rear elevation. Capitola's Historic Context Statement does not include separate descriptions of each structure but describes the entire block of buildings from 199 Esplanade (Tacos Morenos) to 231 Esplanade (Margaritaville) as follows:

*"1999 – 231 Esplanade. Eclectic Capitola Esplanade. The Esplanade has evolved since the 1920's to its present configuration. This restaurant row is in a continual state of remodeling from changing ownerships and periodic storm damage. The Bandstand is the oldest continuing operation."*

During the recent storm, all windows except the two smaller windows at the west end of the elevation were destroyed. The proposed sliding window system will not be an in-kind replication and will introduce new materials but would look similar when viewed from a distance with the same number of windows in the same openings. The proposal includes several differences in window detail as follows:

- The windows to be four inches higher to align the lower sill with the table heights.
- The proposed windows would fill the area of the existing fixed windows plus the area of the previous transom windows above to create a single, larger window that occupies the same wall space.
- The wood framing of the previous windows were four inches wide between each window and now the proposed sliding windows have two- and 1/16-inch-wide aluminum mullions between window panels.

Staff contacted Architectural Historian Seth Bergstein of Past Consultants for preliminary feedback on the applicant's request. After reviewing a 1950s photo and a recent photo of the structure, Mr. Bergstein found that the windows have been altered over time. He also noted that the request is not for the primary façade but the secondary façade on the rear of the building, which allows more flexibility related to the Secretary of Interior Standards review. Mr. Bergstein suggested that alteration could be supported as long as the overall window spacing stayed consistent, which it does.

At the time of writing this report, the applicant was inquiring if a custom mullion could be produced to keep the consistency of the four-inch spacing between windows, which would address bullet #3 above. Staff is now requesting guidance from the Planning Commission on the proposal in preparation of issuing the emergency permit. Specifically, staff would like the Planning Commission to provide feedback on the following:

1. Can the lower sill height be raised?
2. Should a future application replicate the existing fixed windows with transoms above or incorporate the new sliding window system?
3. If there is support for a new window system, could the two- and 1/16-inch-wide aluminum mullions between window panels be utilized or should the application maintain a four inch separation either through a custom mullion or faux solid exterior finish?

**Recommendation:** Provide guidance on window replacement for historic structure located at 203 Esplanade.

**Attachments:**

1. Photo Comparison
2. Sliding Window Proposal
3. Sliding Window Details