



**HISTORICAL COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
January 14, 2025**

Prepared by: Lucy Rollins, Senior Planner

DATA SUMMARY

Application Number: 24PLN-55
Subject: Minor Development Review for exterior modifications to front and rear of Priority 3 structure
Location/APNs: 130 Mill St / APN 008-345-016
Applicant: Gary Burke, Architect
Zoning/General Plan: Town Core – Historic District (TC-H) / Commercial (C)
Entitlement: Minor Development Review
Environmental Status: Categorical Exemption

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Historical Commission review the proposed exterior modifications and make one of the following recommendations to the Development Review Committee:

1. Recommend approval of the proposed exterior modifications to the front and rear facades of 130 Mill Street, as may be modified at the public meeting, and which includes the following actions:
 - a. Determine the project Categorical Exempt pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1, of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Guidelines, as detailed in the Staff Report;
 - b. Adopt Findings of Fact for approval of the Minor Development Review as presented in the Staff Report; and,
 - c. Approve the Minor Development Review in accordance with the Conditions of Approval, as presented in this Staff Report.
2. Recommend denial of the proposed exterior modifications to the front and rear facades of 130 Mill Street, which includes the following actions:
 - a. Determine the project Categorical Exempt pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1, of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Guidelines, as detailed in the Staff Report;
 - b. Deny the Minor Development Review permit based on inconsistency with Findings of Fact as presented in the Staff Report; and,
 - c. Deny the Minor Development Review permit as presented in this Staff Report.

BACKGROUND:

The existing structure is an approximately 1,440 square foot commercial building built circa 1859, according to the City of Grass Valley Historical Inventory. The Historical Inventory identifies the structure as Priority 3. Priority 3 structures lack historic integrity due to major

alterations or additions but may contribute to historic districts and may be recoverable through restoration.

The assessment for the historical inventory recorded that the property consists of a single-story, exposed brick masonry commercial storefront. Character defining features of the building include a stepped parapet roof with metal flashing on the top, followed by a row of brick dentils and a row of dog-toothed course of bricks, below which is a contemporary metal sheeted veranda supported by steel columns, and below the veranda angled display windows, flanking a central door with a top light, and contemporary marble tile or granite skirt, and a stucco textured wall above the windows. The building is flanked on the right and left by single-story commercial storefronts sharing common walls.

Today, the façade of the building at 130 Mill Street is identical to the front façade image recorded at the time of the historical inventory. The rear façade was not photographed in the inventory.



Existing Front and Rear Facades of 130 Mill Street

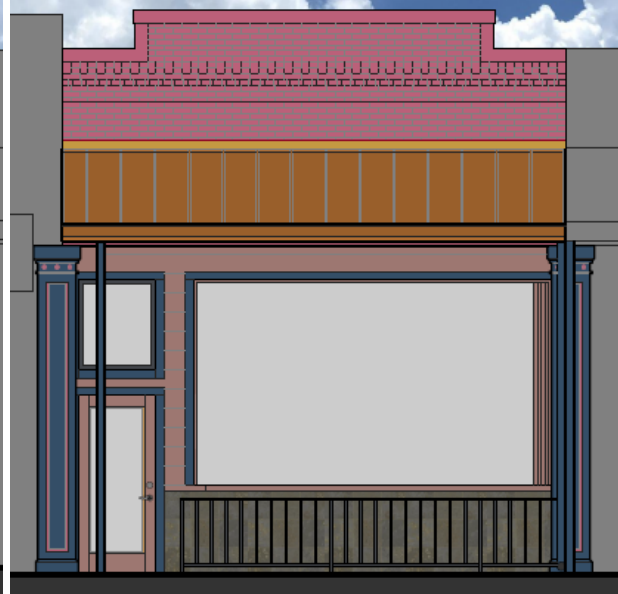
PROJECT PROPOSAL:

Front Façade Exterior Modifications:

The applicant proposes to remove the existing front façade and set the modified façade back approximately 9+/- feet from the sidewalk to create a patio seating area in the recessed entryway. The new façade will relocate the existing central doorway to the southern (left) side. The door will be a full light cedar door with a new transom window above the door. A folding-style window with four vertical panes will be added. The windows can be opened and collapsed to create an open-air eating counter along the windowsill. Horizontal cedar lap siding is proposed on the new façade, with slate tile below the window. A new metal rail system will be installed between the patio area and the adjacent sidewalk. Existing decorative columns framing the recessed entry will remain. No changes are proposed to or above existing canopy.



***Rendering of Proposed Front Façade –
Windows Closed***



***Rendering of Proposed Front Façade –
Windows Open***

Rear Façade Exterior Modifications:

The applicant proposes two options for consideration for the rear of the building (Option A and Option B):

Option A

Under this option, the applicant proposes to maintain the existing corrugated metal and brick façade on the building. The portion of the existing canopy extending over the property line of 130 Mill Street will be removed and replaced with a new tube steel metal roof canopy with corrugated metal roofing to cover the barbeque and wood storage areas. The area will be enclosed by a new painted CMU wall with cedar wood gates.



Rendering of Proposed Rear Façade (Option A)

Option B

As with Option A, under Option B, the applicant proposes to maintain the existing corrugated metal and brick façade on the building. The portion of the existing canopy extending over the property line of 130 Mill Street will be removed and replaced with a new tube steel metal roof canopy with corrugated metal roofing to cover the barbeque and wood storage areas. However, unlike Option A, the enclosure will have a corrugated metal finish to match existing wall siding. The enclosure will still have cedar wood gates.



Rendering of Proposed Rear Façade (Option B)

Regulatory Authority:

Pursuant to Section 17.52.040 of the Grass Valley Municipal Code (GVMC), one of the duties of the Grass Valley Historical Commission is to “provide interested property owners with advice and information on building design and materials that can maintain the historic character of a building.”

Section 17.52.070 of the GVMC establishes that minor projects to historic resources include “exterior modifications or alterations that maintain the historic integrity of the building and that comply with the Guidelines”, while major projects are defined as those that include “exterior modifications that alter the character defining features, such as its shape, elevation, massing, and scale and do not comply with the guidelines.” In this case, the proposed exterior modification is to alter the front façade to remove the display windows, relocate the door, recess the entire façade, and add folding windows above a tile skirt. The rear façade modification is to expand the canopy and add an enclosure adjacent to the building, while maintaining the building façade itself.

The *City of Grass Valley Design Review Guidelines for the 1872 Historic Townsite (“Guidelines”)* establishes guidelines for additions, alterations, repairs, and replacements of historic structures, including in the commercial district. According to the *Guidelines*, the structure at 130 Mill Street represents the Gold Rush era architectural style, made of predominantly brick and/or stone with angled display windows and a recessed entryway. The

structure is located in the Downtown Commercial Character Area, which helps define and direct specific preservation approaches for individual property.

In addition to the site-specific character-defining features recorded in the City of Grass Valley Historic Inventory, described earlier in this Staff Report, the *Guidelines* identify the following character-defining features of the Downtown Commercial neighborhood as a whole:

- Flat parapet roofs
- Masonry facades of brick, stone, and stucco
- Full front verandas or awnings of metal and cloth
- Deeply inset door entries
- Large picture or display windows
- Banks of clerestory or transom windows
- Rows of dentils and simple friezes
- Raised foundations
- Classical Revival/Gold Rush False Front architectural styles
- Use of cast iron in façade decoration

The *Guidelines* establish the design goals for the Downtown Commercial district:

- To emphasize the preservation and restoration of historic buildings and structures
- To preserve individual historic character defining features
- To maintain historical alignment of buildings
- To maintain traditional building mass, scale, and forms along the front facades of commercial buildings
- To locate additions away from the primary building facades
- To continue the use of verandas or awnings using historic designs and heights appropriate to the scale of the historic building
- To retain and preserve original display windows, frames, and recessed entries and other architectural features of historic buildings
- To continue use of traditional building materials
- To enhance the pedestrian experience; to minimize the visual impact of cars
- To improve energy efficiency consider “cool” roof colors, unless the roof is a significant part of the building’s architectural character.

The *Guidelines* also emphasize that adding new decorative elements that did not exist historically is “generally inappropriate,” noting that all historic commercial storefront and public building architectural components should be maintained and preserved if practical. If no evidence exists regarding the design and fabric applied to a particular commercial storefront, the *Guidelines* recommend adopting a compatible design borrowed from storefronts of a similar age. If a storefront is altered, restoring it to the original design is preferred.

Features indicative of commercial storefronts and public buildings in the Downtown Commercial neighborhood include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Angled and recessed entries with divided display windows
- Number of lights or panes into which a window is divided
- Historic subdivision of window lights

- Maintenance of original window and door proportions
- Shape of the windows and the framing of the windows and window dressings
- Scale and symmetry of window arrangements
- Large plate glass display windows, set in wood or metal frames, typically supported on a bulkhead
- Kick plate or skirt below windows

The *Guidelines* state that proposed restoration projects aimed at replacing features should be accompanied by written, physical, or pictorial evidence.

A Priority 3 rating was applied to properties that have lost a substantial amount of integrity, either through remodeling, additions, or other types of alterations. These properties were not considered individually significant, and only in exceptional cases were they deemed to be contributors to the proposed historic district(s). Priority 3 properties, however, may still be recoverable through proper restoration or rehabilitation. For Priority 3 properties, it is recommended that character defining features and historic fabric be preserved. Owners of Priority 3 properties are encouraged to restore their buildings to their historic condition, but there will be greater flexibility in treatment of more recent alterations and in repair of historic materials.

GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING:

General Plan: The Grass Valley 2020 General Plan identifies the site as Commercial (C). The intent of the Commercial General Plan designation includes all types of commercial retail and service establishments on the highway and along major streets.

Zoning: The Town Core (TC) zoning designation is intended to strengthen the mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented nature of the existing downtown. The TC zone permits a full range of retail, restaurant, and housing uses. The Historical combining zone (-H) is intended to identify important cultural resource sites and structures in the city, to ensure that any proposal to alter the state of the site or structure is carefully considered prior to implementation.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:

The site is built-out with a 1,440 square foot, single-story commercial building.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The proposed project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1, of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Guidelines. A Class 1 Categorical Exemption consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alternation of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. The proposed façade modifications will not result in expansion of use of the commercial property.

FINDINGS:

1. The Grass Valley Community Development Department received a complete application for Minor Development Review 24PLN-55.
2. The Grass Valley Historical Commission reviewed Plan Revision application 24PLN-55 at their regular meeting on January 14, 2025.
3. The Grass Valley Development Review Committee reviewed Minor Development Review application 24PLN-55 at their regular meeting on _____.
4. The Development Review Committee reviewed the project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and concluded that the project qualifies for a Class 1, Categorical Exemption in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and CEQA Guidelines.
5. This project is consistent with the City's General Plan and any specific plan.
6. The project, as conditioned and to the extent feasible, maintains the historic integrity of the structure and complies with the City of Grass Valley Community Design Guidelines and the Design Review Guidelines for the 1872 Historic Townsite.

B. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

1. The final design shall be consistent with Minor Development Review application and plans provided by the applicant and approved by the Development Review Committee (24PLN-55). The project is approved subject to plans on file with the Community Development Department. The Community Development Director may approve minor changes as determined appropriate.
2. Prior to any work occurring, a Minor Use Permit must be obtained to enlarge, extend, reconstruct, or relocate the nonconforming canopy in the rear, pursuant to Section 17.90.030.B.1.a of the Grass Valley Municipal Code.
3. Prior to any work occurring, a building permit shall be obtained from the Community Development Department, Building Division. Prior to issuance, the applicant must demonstrate how the barbeque use will comply with Section 17.30.070.J of the Grass Valley Municipal Code, regulating odors and fumes.
4. An approved Encroachment Permit shall be obtained from the Engineering Division prior to any work being done within the City right of way.
5. Exit signs shall be installed at all required exits and where otherwise necessary in order to indicate the direction of egress. Signs are to be illuminated at any time the building is occupied. The exit sign system is to be installed in accordance with the requirements of the 2022 California Electrical Code.
6. Fire extinguishers with a minimum rating of 2-A:10-B:C shall be provided such that no point in the building is further than 75-foot travel distance to an extinguisher. Extinguishers shall be mounted on the wall or in cabinets, such that the top of the extinguisher is no more than 5 feet above the finished floor level.

7. Fire alarm system remodel plans and material data sheets shall be submitted to the Fire Department for review and approval prior to installation (deferred submittal). The plans shall be submitted by a licensed C-10 fire alarm contractor or a California registered engineer and shall conform to NFPA #72, 2022 edition and the City of Grass Valley Municipal Code. The system shall be certified and monitored by a central station for the life of the building.
8. Commercial cooking equipment that produce grease laden vapors shall be provided with a Type I hood. Hood fire suppression system plans and specifications shall be submitted by a California licensed C-16 contractor to the Fire Department for review and approval prior to installation (deferred submittal). The system shall comply with U.L. 300. CFC § 904.13.
9. A Class K fire extinguisher shall be located in the vicinity of the outdoor cooking equipment. CFC 906.1.2
10. The applicant agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City of Grass Valley in any action or proceeding brought against the City of Grass Valley to void or annul this discretionary land use approval.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Vicinity Map / Aerial Map
2. Universal Application / Minor Development Review Application
3. Plan Set
4. Historic Storefront Photos
5. Current Storefront Photos
6. Historic Inventory Record