



**HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT  
MARCH 2, 2026**

---

**Prepared by:** Amy Wolfson, City Planner

**DATA SUMMARY**

**Application Number:** 26PLN-0006  
**Subject:** Plan Revision to replace windows on a Priority 2 structure  
**Location/APNs:** 439 Neal St / APN 008-334-006  
**Applicant:** Jaya Green, property owner  
**Zoning/General Plan:** Neighborhood General (NG-2)/Urban Low Density (ULD)  
**Entitlement:** Plan Revision – DRC Review  
**Environmental Status:** Categorical Exemption

---

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That the Historical Commission recommend that the Development Review Committee approve the proposed exterior modification for window replacement as may be modified at the public meeting, and which includes the following actions:
  - a. Determine the project Categorically 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 Window Replacement Plan Revision as presented in the Staff Report; and,
  - c. Approve the Window Replacement in accordance with the Conditions of Approval, as presented in this Staff Report.

**BACKGROUND:**

The existing structure is a 1,795 square feet residence and was built in 1880, according to the Nevada County Assessor's Office records, and is a Priority 2 structure in the city's historical inventory. Priority 2 structures are significant in contributing to the historic character of the area and have retained good integrity. The City has recognized five independent units on the residential parcel since at least January 1986 according to building records. Density standards for the NG-2 zone allow for four primary dwelling units per acre so the existing density is considered a legal, non-conforming use of the site.

The assessment for the historical inventory recorded that the property "*consists of a two-story, wood-frame Queen Anne style residence. Character defining features of the residence*

*include asymmetric design, gable and hip roof, horizontal shiplap exterior siding, **1 over 1 light sash windows in singles and pairs**, a diamond shaped fixed window on the lower floor adjacent to the porch and the bay, a hipped roof wrap-around porch with turned columns and brackets, balustrades and railing, a vertical board foundation skirt, a front entry Victorian wood paneled and lighted front entry door leading to the staircase facing Neal Street and a separate side (under porch) paneled entrance door. The front yard is landscaped with mature conifers and deciduous trees, shrubs, a lawn, and planting beds. A driveway along the left side of the residence leads to a garage or carport in the rear of the parcel.”*

Today, the façade of the building at 439 Street is nearly identical to the image recorded at the time of the historical inventory. The applicant began remodel work without benefit of a building permit in winter 25/26. The building official issued a violation notice to the property owner in January 2026. A building permit was issued on February 2, 2026, including for window replacement based on a work description indicating a like-for-like replacement. However, after receiving a citizen complaint, staff verified that the existing wood windows had been replaced with vinyl windows.



*Image from historical inventory*



*2024 Google Maps image capture (lower level windows)*



*Image of replaced windows from applicant (lower level windows)*



*2024 Google Maps image capture (upper level windows)*



*Image of replaced windows from applicant (upper level windows)*

## **PROJECT PROPOSAL:**

The applicant previously replaced all existing single-hung, wood, windows with vinyl single-hung windows. All new windows are white. The applicant provided photographs of the street-facing windows after replacement had occurred.

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 all the wood windows with vinyl windows, though the single hung function, as well as the light organization are intact.

Historic Design Guidelines: Section 6.4.2 of the Grass Valley Historic Design Review Guidelines provides guidance for alterations of windows and doors on historic homes, noting that these features “give scale to a home and provide visual interest to the composition of the individual facades.” This section of the guidelines go on to make the following recommendation with respect to windows and the proposed window replacement:

- (8) Use the same material (wood) as that used historically. Vinyl clad and aluminum windows are generally inappropriate.

The design guidelines do not override municipal regulations but are intended to provide guidance to decision-makers in making decisions regarding additions, alterations, infill, and other similar types of changes to historically significant residential homes and business within the Grass Valley Historic Townsite.

## **HISTORICAL COMMISSION:**

The Historical Commission reviewed the project at their regular meeting held March 10, 2026. They recommended..

## **GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING:**

**General Plan:** The Grass Valley 2020 General Plan identifies the site as Urban Low Density (ULD). ULD is intended primarily for single family detached houses, although higher density single family patio homes or Town houses could be accommodated, if offset with sufficient open space to maintain the gross density within the indicated range. ULD is most compatible with the following Zoning districts: Single Family Residential (R-1) and Two-Family Residence (R-2) districts.

**Zoning:** The intent of the Neighborhood General-2 (NG-2) zoning designation is intended to strengthen the character of existing historic neighborhoods within Grass Valley. It seeks to

protect and enhance the unique character of existing neighborhoods, particularly in locations where this character may be most susceptible to change.

### **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 window replacement will not result in expansion of use of the residential property.

### **FINDINGS:**

1. The Grass Valley Community Development Department received a complete application for Plan Revision 25BLD-0233.
2. The Grass Valley Historical Commission reviewed Plan Revision application 25BLD-0233 at their regular meeting on May 13, 2025.
3. The Grass Valley Development Review Committee reviewed Plan Revision application 26PLN-0006 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 Plan Revision application and plans provided by the applicant and approved by the Development Review Committee (25BLD-233). 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 building permit shall be obtained from the Community Development Department, Building Division.

3. 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
2. Aerial Map
3. Photo of existing street-facing windows
4. Applicant Statement
5. PlyGem Windows Brochure
6. Sears Roebuck Catalog