



**DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE  
STAFF REPORT  
JANUARY 27, 2025**

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**PROJECT SUMMARY**

**Application Number:** 26PLN-0001

**Subject:** Request for the removal of existing terracotta/adobe tiles at the store entrance and replace with a black and gold penny-tile design..

**Location/APN:** 126, Mill St / APN: 008-345-014

**Applicant:** Amber Jo Manuel (Property Owner)

**Zoning/General Plan:** Town Core (TC) – Historic Combining District (H) / Commercial (C)

**Entitlement:** Minor Development Review

**Environmental Status:** Categorical Exemption, Section 15301, Class 1.

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

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That the Development Review Committee approve the replacement of the existing terracotta tile at the entrance and replace with the proposed penny-tile design as presented, or as modified at the public meeting, 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 Application, requesting the replacement of existing terracotta entry tile with period-appropriate penny-tile as presented, or as modified at the public meeting, in accordance with the Conditions of Approval, attached to this Staff Report.

**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 allows for 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.

**BACKGROUND:**

The existing single-story, exposed brick structure was built circa 1860, according to the City of Grass Valley Historical Inventory. Today, the structure is considered to have a Priority 2 Rating in the Grass Valley Historical Inventory. A Priority 2 Rating is defined as a property that, despite some loss of historic fabric, has retained historic integrity and continues to convey period significance, per City of Grass Valley Historic Design Review Guidelines.

**PROJECT PROPOSAL:**

The applicant requests to replace the existing terracotta tile entryway with a “penny-tile” in a black and gold design. The applicant suggests this tile as more period appropriate and has provided an example of its use in the Town Core area.

Regulatory Authority: The request to replace the entry tile is considered a Minor Development Review. Per Section 17.72.030 – Development Review Permits, Table 7-2, Development Review Permit Authority, minor façade changes within the Historic District, may be approved by the Development Review Committee (DRC) with a recommendation by the Historical Commission.

The standards for Storefronts are outlined in the City of Grass Valley Historic Design Guidelines, Section 6.3 – Commercial Storefronts and Public Buildings. There are no specific recommendations for the entryway floor, but the general recommendation for storefronts are as follows

- Recommendation 1: If no evidence exists regarding the design and fabric applied to a particular commercial storefront, adopt a compatible design borrowed from storefronts of a similar age. If a storefront is altered, restoring it to the original design is preferred.
- Recommendation 2: Where an original storefront is missing, and no evidence of its character exists, an alternative design is appropriate. The design, however, should be substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence to avoid creating a misrepresentation of the building. An alternative storefront design should convey the characteristics of typical storefronts, including the transparent character of the display windows, recessed entries, cornices, friezes, dentils, and other architectural details.

The Historic Design Guidelines do refer to a the IOOF Hall’s “ornate tile entry” as being appropriate for the Historic District.



**Existing tile at 126 Mill  
(subject site)**



**Proposed Tile at 126 Mill**



**Existing Tile at 124 Mill  
(neighboring site)**

**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 replacement of the tile entry is considered a repair and/or general maintenance.

**FINDINGS:**

1. The City received a complete application for Plan Revision 26PLN-0001.
2. The Historical Commission reviewed the Minor Development Review Application 26PLN-0001 at their regular meeting on January 13, 2026 and provided a recommendation to approve the application as-is, with no modifications.
3. The Development Review Committee reviewed the Minor Development Review Application 26PLN-0001 at their regular meeting on January 27, 2026 after considering public testimony.
4. This project is consistent with City's General Plan.
5. The project is consistent with the applicable sections and development standards in the Development Code.
6. The project complies with the City of Grass Valley Historic Design Review Guidelines.
7. The proposed use is allowed within the applicable zone and complies with all other applicable provisions of this Development Code and the Municipal Code.
8. The design, location, size, and operating characteristics of the proposed activity are compatible with the existing and future land uses in the vicinity.

9. The site is physically suitable in terms of design, location, shape, size, and operating characteristics. It ensures that the density, intensity, and type of use being proposed would not endanger, jeopardize, or otherwise constitute a hazard to the public convenience, health, interest, safety, or welfare, or be materially injurious to the improvements, persons, property, or uses in the vicinity and zone in which the property is located.

**RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:**

1. The approval date for Development Review Committee review of the proposed application is January 27, 2026, with an effective date of February 12, 2026 pursuant to Section 17.74.020 GVMC. This project is approved for a period of one year and shall expire on February 12, 2027, unless the project has been effectuated or the applicant requests a time extension that is approved by the Development Review Committee pursuant to the Development Code.
2. The final design shall be consistent with the Development Review application, plans provided by the applicant, or as modified at time of hearing. 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.
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.
4. Prior to any work occurring, building permits shall be obtained from the Community Development Department, Building Division.
5. If work will take place within the City Right-of-Way, an encroachment permit will be required for work being done in the City right of way.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Aerial Map
2. Vicinity Map
3. Universal /Development Review Application
4. Section 6.3 – Commercial Storefronts