



City of Ketchum  
Planning & Building

IN RE: )  
 )  
 Formula Sports/Former Post Office A-Frame ) **KETCHUM HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
 Request Demolish a Historic Structure ) **FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND**  
 ) **DECISION**  
 )  
 Date: December 7, 2021 )  
 )  
 File Number: H21-079 )

PROJECT: Formula Sports/Former Post Office A-Frame Historic Building Demolition  
 FILE NUMBER: H21-079  
 APPLICATION TYPE: Request to Demolish a Historic Structure  
 ARCHITECT: Buffalo Rixon, Ruscitto Latham Blanton Architecture  
 PROPERTY OWNER: Main Street Realty Partners LLC  
 LOCATION: 460 N Main Street (Ketchum Townsite: Block 5: Lots 3 & 4)  
 ZONING: Retail Core Subdistrict of the Community Core (CC-1)

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) first considered this demolition request during their special meeting on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The Commissioners moved to continue their review of the application and the public hearing to their regular meeting on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Commission considered this application and approved the project during their regular meeting on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021.

Public Hearing Notice

The public hearing notice was published in the Idaho Mountain Express on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. A public hearing notice was mailed to adjacent properties within 300 feet of the project site on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. A public hearing notice was posted on the project site and the City’s website on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The public hearing for this application was continued from the Historic Preservation Special Meeting on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

## FINDINGS OF FACT

The Historic Preservation Commission having reviewed the project record, provided notice, and conducted the required public hearing does hereby make and set forth these Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Decision as follows:

### Findings Regarding Project Background

The applicant, Buffalo Rixon of Ruscitto Latham Blanton Architecture on behalf of property owner Main Street Realty Partners LLC, submitted a Request to Demolish the Formula Sports/Former Post Office A-Frame located at 460 N Main Street. The subject property is comprised of two townsite lots at the southeast corner of Main and 5<sup>th</sup> streets within the Retail Core (CC-1 Zone) of downtown. Existing improvements on the property include the Formula Sports building and a surface parking lot. The A-Frame is nonconforming as the structure extends over the property line separating the two lots.

Prior to their adoption of the Interim Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Ketchum City Council adopted Emergency Ordinance No. 1213 on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to prohibit the demolition of historic structures for 182 days. Any development application filed on or after October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 was not subject to the emergency moratorium. At that time, development applications for a new mixed-use building located on the four lots along Main Street between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> streets, including the Formula Sports site, were under review. These applications were submitted prior to October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and the historic A-Frame was slated for demolition. After the Planning & Zoning Commission denied approval of the mixed-use development, the Formula Sports building lost its exemption and became subject to the standards for proposed demolitions or alterations of historic structures specified in Interim Historic Preservation Ordinance No. 1216.

### Findings Regarding Demolitions Versus Alterations

The project is subject to HPC review pursuant to Section 1.C.1 of Interim Historic Preservation Ordinance No. 1216. HPC review is required for all requests for partial or total demolitions, exterior alterations, and additions to all structures on the Historic Building List. Interim Ordinance No. 1216 provides the same criteria to evaluate requests to either demolish or alter a historic building. With exterior alterations, the Commission evaluates whether proposed modifications are appropriate and do not diminish the significance or integrity of the historic building. Unlike exterior alterations, the Commission's role in their assessment of proposed demolitions is not to assess the design of the replacement project, but rather to evaluate if the building merits demolition because it cannot be repaired, restored, or converted to an adaptive reuse.

### Findings Regarding Review Criteria for Request to Demolish a Historic Structure

*Is the structure of historic or architectural value or significance and does it contribute to the historic significance of the property within the Community Core?*

The Post Office for Ketchum has been located in five different buildings in the Community Core. Ketchum's second post office was in the Greenhow & Rumsey Store historic building currently occupied by the Sun Valley Culinary Institute located at the northwest corner of Main and 2<sup>nd</sup> streets. The third location was the A-Frame at the southwest corner of Main and 5<sup>th</sup> streets. The A-Frame was originally constructed in 1962 and is 59 years of age. The A-Frame served as Ketchum's post office from 1963 until 1981. After the post office was relocated to the old Scott USA building at 311 N 1st Avenue, the A-Frame was converted to retail use and became an art and office supply store. Gemini

Art occupied the building from 1982 to 1986. The A-Frame then became home to Formula Sports, an outdoor retailer and sporting goods store, for over 30 years.

According to the building permit application for the original A-Frame, the project construction valuation was \$30,000. The A-Frame building was constructed with a slab on grade concrete foundation, glue laminated timbers connected to concrete piers, and a wood shake shingle roof. Limited alterations have been made to the A-Frame over time. Staff found three building permits in City records—the building permit for the construction of the original A-Frame in 1962, one building permit for an interior remodel (Building Permit Application File No. 81-96), and another permit to convert the building to retail use to accommodate the Gemini Art store (Building Permit Application 86-092). Unfortunately, the building permits found in City records do not provide a detailed description of the scope of work associated with either of the remodel improvements. The Formula Sports awning sign was installed in 1988 (Application File No. 88-011).

According to the Phase 1 Environment Site Assessment prepared by Jane Rosen submitted by the applicant, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from June 1888 and August 1890 show a building labeled as “Chinese Laundry” as well as a log cabin on the subject property. A Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from August 1897 shows that the Chinese Laundry building had been demolished. Both lots appear to be vacant on a Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from July 1955.

The Formula Sports/Former Post Office building was not listed on the 2005 Walsworth Archaeological and Historic Survey Report. The A-Frame was included in the 2006 Historic Preservation Commission Recommended Heritage Sites for its traditional commercial architecture, representation of community tradition and heritage, and its significance as Ketchum’s former post office. The building was included in the 2020 Community Core District Survey Update, which stated:

*The A-Frame became popular in the mid-twentieth century in the United States. Inexpensive, and easy to construct, these buildings were often sold as kits. A steeply pitched roof made this type of building particularly appealing for use as lodges and cabins, especially in areas like Ketchum where snow load was a major concern. The 1969 Post Office building is a good example of this style.*

*Would the loss, alteration of, or addition to, the structure adversely affect the historic integrity of the structure, impact the significance of the structure within the Community Core, impact the architectural or aesthetic relationship to adjacent properties, or conflict with the Comprehensive Plan?*

Historic integrity measures how effectively a building’s materials, design, feeling, location, association, workmanship, and setting convey the property’s historic significance. The Commission commented that the A-Frame has social and cultural value to the community as well as architectural significance downtown. The structure has remained in its same location and retained its original building form and materials. The A-Frame conveys a sense of time and place. The development’s small scale contributes to downtown’s eclectic mix of diverse building types that visually track Ketchum’s incremental growth through time. The A-Frame breaks up the monotony of the larger, box-shaped, flat-roofed buildings that characterize more recent development downtown. The HPC discussed how the A-Frame contributes to Ketchum’s small, mountain-town character and charm.

The Existing Property and Building Condition Statement, Property Inspection Report, Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment Report, and Existing Building Structural Review submitted by the applicant detail the A-Frame's structural deficiencies. These deficiencies include extensive rot found within the A-Frame's timber structural support beams, wall damage, deteriorated stairs, broken windows, warped doors, and concrete deterioration. The rot severely limits the building's snow, wind, and seismic resisting capacity. The A-Frame is structurally unstable and the existing building condition is hazardous. The alterations resulting from the long list of repairs needed to rehabilitate the building will diminish its historic integrity.

*Does the structure retain the requisite integrity to convey its historic and/or architectural significance?*

The A-Frame's structural deficiencies, deterioration, and life-safety hazards limit the applicant's ability to restore the historic structure in a way that will retain the historical integrity of the building. The structural timber beams that form the A-Frame's unique and character-defining triangular building form need to be repaired. The warped doors and broken windows require replacement. The exterior walls, siding, and trim need to be refinished. The A-Frame does not meet current building codes as the rot severely limits the structure's snow, wind, and seismic resisting capacity. The historic building is structurally unsound.

The applicant estimated that the cost to repair and rehabilitate the A-Frame would be \$1,105,526, which is 73% of the current market value of the structure. The extent of the alterations needed to rehabilitate the building would diminish the building's historic integrity.

*Does the proposed demolition or alteration adversely affect the historic significance or architectural distinction of the structure or the Community Core?*

The A-Frame has social and cultural value to the community and architectural significance within downtown Ketchum. A civic building, the A-Frame was Ketchum's post office for 15 years. The building was repurposed for commercial use as an art supply store and then later became an outdoor retailer and sporting goods store. The A-Frame is part of Ketchum's social heritage and is valued by the community as an iconic visual feature on Main Street. The historic building is also architecturally significant as the A-Frame exemplifies alpine design, represents innovation in construction, and the A-frame building form is an established architectural element that enhances the character of our mountain town.

The HPC found the A-Frame's structural deficiencies, deterioration, and life-safety hazards limit the applicant's ability to restore the structure or convert the building to an adaptive reuse. The alterations resulting from the long list of repairs needed to rehabilitate the building will diminish its historic integrity. The Commission concluded that the A-Frame merits demolition because the structure cannot reasonably be repaired, restored, or converted to an adaptive reuse without diminishing the historic integrity of the building.

## CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The City of Ketchum is a municipal corporation established in accordance with Article XII of the Constitution of the State of Idaho and Title 50 Idaho Code and has exercised its authority pursuant to Chapter 46 of Title 67 of Idaho Code to establish a historic preservation program and enact ordinances, special conditions, or restrictions for the protection and preservation of historic properties. The regulations adopted through Interim Historic Preservation Ordinance No. 1216 are identified in the Findings of Fact and are herein restated as Conclusions of Law by reference.
2. The Historic Preservation Commission has the authority to hear the applicant's Request to Demolish a Historic Structure application pursuant to Section 1.C.1 of Interim Historic Preservation Ordinance No. 1216. HPC review is required for all requests for partial or total demolitions, exterior alterations, and additions to all structures on the Historic Building List.
3. The City of Ketchum Planning Department provided notice for the review of this application in accordance with Section 2.B of Interim Historic Preservation Ordinance No. 1216 and Ketchum Municipal Code § 17.96.080.
4. This Request to Demolish a Historic Structure application is governed under the regulations and review criteria specified in Interim Historic Preservation Ordinance No. 1216.

#### DECISION

**THEREFORE**, the Ketchum Historic Preservation Commission **approves** the request to demolish the Formula Sports/Former Post Office Historic A-Frame (Application File No. H21-079) this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of November 2021.

Motion made by Commissioner Reynolds and seconded by Commissioner Galczynski.

Voting Yea: Vice-Chair Holland

Voting Nay: Chair Mead

The motion to approve the demolition request passed 3 to 1.

Findings of Fact **adopted** this 7<sup>th</sup> day of December 2021.

---

Mattie Mead, Chair  
City of Ketchum  
Historic Preservation Commission