



City of Ketchum
Planning & Building

IN RE:)
)
431 N Washington Avenue Building) **KETCHUM HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**
Request to Demolish a Historic Structure) **FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND**
) **DECISION**
)
Date: October 19, 2021)
)
File Numbers: P21-051)

PROJECT: 431 N Washington Avenue (Formerly Known as the Batis House) Historic Building Demolition Request

FILE NUMBER: H21-051

APPLICATION TYPE: Request to Demolish a Historic Structure

REPRESENTATIVE: Elizabeth Bunce

PROPERTY OWNER: Elizabeth Bunce, Martha’s Place LLC

REQUEST: Demolish the structure at 431 N Washington Avenue and replace with outdoor garden

LOCATION: 431 N Washington Avenue (Ketchum Townsite: Block 36: Lot 3)

ZONING: Mixed-Use Subdistrict of the Community Core (CC-2)

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

The Historic Preservation Commission held a public hearing and considered the Request to Demolish a Historic Structure for the proposed demolition of the existing home located at 431 N Washington during their meeting on September 28th, 2021. After considering the project plans, staff’s analysis, and the applicant’s presentation and holding the required public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission unanimously approved the request.

Public Hearing Notice

The public hearing notice was published in the Idaho Mountain Express on September 15th, 2021. A public hearing notice was mailed to adjacent properties within 300 feet of the project site on September 15th, 2021. A public hearing notice was posted on the project site and the City’s website on September 21st, 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, property owner Elizabeth Bunce, has submitted a Request to Demolish a Historic Structure located at 431 N Washington Avenue (Ketchum Townsite: Block 36: Lot 3) within the Mixed-Use Subdistrict of the Community Core (CC-2) Zone. The request proposes to demolish the structure formerly known as the Batis House—a residence that was constructed in the 1940s. The applicant originally set out to restore the building currently on the property, but due to the levels of decay and toxicity within the building the property owner has proposed to demolish the structure. The building will be replaced with an outdoor garden intended to be used by the Environmental Resource Center as a classroom and example of drought tolerant native landscape options.

The project is subject to Historic Preservation Commission (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. After their evaluation of the 26 structures listed on the 2020 Community Core District Survey Update, the HPC removed the structure at 431 N Washington Avenue from the Historic Building List on August 3rd, 2021. However, since the revised list has not been formally adopted, demolition of the building is still subject to HPC review and approval.

Staff researched the archived collections at the Community Library's Regional History Department and discovered that Gloria Batis lived at 491 Washington Avenue, not at this location, 431 Washington Avenue (Batis, 1987; Richert, 1973). Ikaunieks' Salon currently occupies the building located at 491 Washington Avenue. The building at 431 Washington Avenue one-story structure built in the 1940's and was listed on the 2005 Walsworth and Associates Windshield Survey as well as the 2006 list of recommended heritage sites for its representation of Ketchum's early settlement area and traditional residential architecture.

Findings Regarding Review Criteria for Requests to Alter or 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 building formerly known as the Batis House was initially listed as one of the 26 structures on the Historic Building List. The structure was originally believed to be the residence of Gloria Batis, a member of the Basque community. After deliberation by the HPC, the structure was recommended for removal from the list due to its architectural features not effectively conveying the Basque presence. However, after staff research at the Community Library, it was found that Gloria Batis resided at 491 Washington Ave not 431 Washington Ave. This discovery diminishes the structures historic/social value of being associated with a notable person. The structure may still meet the social/historic criteria of

exemplifying the cultural, ethnic, and social heritage of the community as a traditional home in a historic Basque neighborhood. Due to this information, the HPC found that the structure is not of architectural value or significance and has minimal historic significance.

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?

The structure was built in the 1940's and has retained many of its original materials and design elements from when it was first constructed. The physical deterioration of the structure could possibly reduce the extent of original design features if the house were to go through a remodel. The levels of asbestos, mold and other decay may also limit the potential to restore the home to a livable condition. The structure does not meet many of the criteria for architectural significance including innovation in construction, materials or design or demonstrating superior craftsmanship or high artistic value. The building does maintain some historic significance as a residence within a Basque neighborhood. Due to the limited architectural and historical significance, there is little associated historical integrity to be adversely affected.

The HPC recommended removal of the residence from the Historic Buildings List citing a lack of architectural significance. As the home is no longer associated with Gloria Batis, the building does not have any historical significance within the Community Core.

The surrounding buildings along Washington Avenue are small structures not extending higher than two stories. The outdoor garden replacement project will maintain the small scale feel that is present along this section of Washington Avenue.

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

Integrity is the property's ability to convey the historical significance associated with the location. While the building does retain some of its original design features, the HPC did not find the architectural details to be significant enough to warrant inclusion on the Historic Building List. After new information was found showing that Gloria Batis did not live in the building, the cultural and social significance of the home is its location within a historic Basque neighborhood. Since there is minimal architectural or historical significance to be conveyed, the building does not retain historic integrity.

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

The existing structure was identified as not having enough architectural distinction to be deemed a historic structure. Commissioners cited the addition of new windows and a lack of architectural significance as reasons for coming to that decision. The proposed demolition would not adversely affect the architectural distinction of the structure as the HPC found there was not enough distinction to consider it historic. After discovering Gloria Batis did not live in this home, the building was found not to have cultural or social significance.

Findings Regarding Commissioner Deliberations

The Commission stated that mold, electrical problems, and other deterioration issues severely limited the feasibility of repairing and restoring the historic home to a habitable condition. The Commission found that since Gloria Batis did not live in the home, the building did not have architectural, social, or cultural significance. The Historic Preservation Commission unanimously approved the request to demolish the existing home located at 431 N Washington Avenue.

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.
5. The demolition of the structure at 431 N Washington Avenue complies with the review criteria specified in Section 3.A of Interim Historic Preservation Ordinance No. 1216 as: (1) the structure lacks significance both historically and architecturally, (2) the proposed demolition of the building at 431 N Washington Avenue does not adversely impact the structure's historic integrity, significance within the Community Core, or architectural and aesthetic relationship to adjacent properties and the project does not conflict with the Comprehensive Plan, (3) the home does not retain the requisite integrity to convey its historic significance, and (4) the proposed demolition does not adversely affect the structure's historic significance.

DECISION

THEREFORE, the Ketchum Historic Preservation Commission **approves** the Request to Demolish a Historic Structure (Application File No. H21-051) at 431 N Washington Avenue.

Findings of Fact **adopted** this 19th day of October 2021.

Mattie Mead, Chair
City of Ketchum
Historic Preservation Commission