



CITY OF KETCHUM

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**STAFF REPORT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING OF JANUARY 6, 2025**

PROJECT: Pioneer Saloon Façade Historic Structure Alteration

FILE NUMBER: P25-049

APPLICATION: Historic Structure Alteration

PROPERTY OWNER: Pioneer Saloon, Inc.

ARCHITECT: Thomas Howland, Howland Architecture Studio, Inc.

LOCATION: 320 North Main Street

ZONING: Community Core Subdistrict 1 – Retail Core (CC-1)

OVERLAY: None ; Listed on City of Ketchum Historic Building/Site List

REVIEWER: Allison Kennedy, Senior Planner

NOTICE: Published in the Idaho Mountain Express on December 17, 2025; Sent to adjoining 300' property owners on December 17, 2025; Posted on Site on December 30, 2025; and Posted on the City of Ketchum of Website on December 17, 2025

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment I. Application to Alter a Historic Structure 10.29.25
Attachment II. Photographs and Narrative
Attachment III. Drawing Package
Attachment IV: Title

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An application for an Administrative Design review and a Historic Structure Alteration was received on October 29, 2025, and deemed complete on November 12, 2025.

The applicant is proposing to remove the existing faux barn wood siding on the top of the sign and replacing this with reclaimed barnwood. In addition, the applicant requests to remove the north and south paneling from a 2002 renovation that frames either side of the structure and replaces it with the same reclaimed barnwood. To make a more uniform color, the applicant is proposing to stain the existing faux barn material around the windows to match the new reclaimed barnwood on the top of the sign and on the sides. The stucco “Pioneer Saloon” sign will remain as existing, and the exterior lighting will become dark sky compliant.

Attachment III includes the full drawing package with existing conditions and all proposed changes including changes in materials and other details. Figure 1 below shows the existing street view and proposed changes.

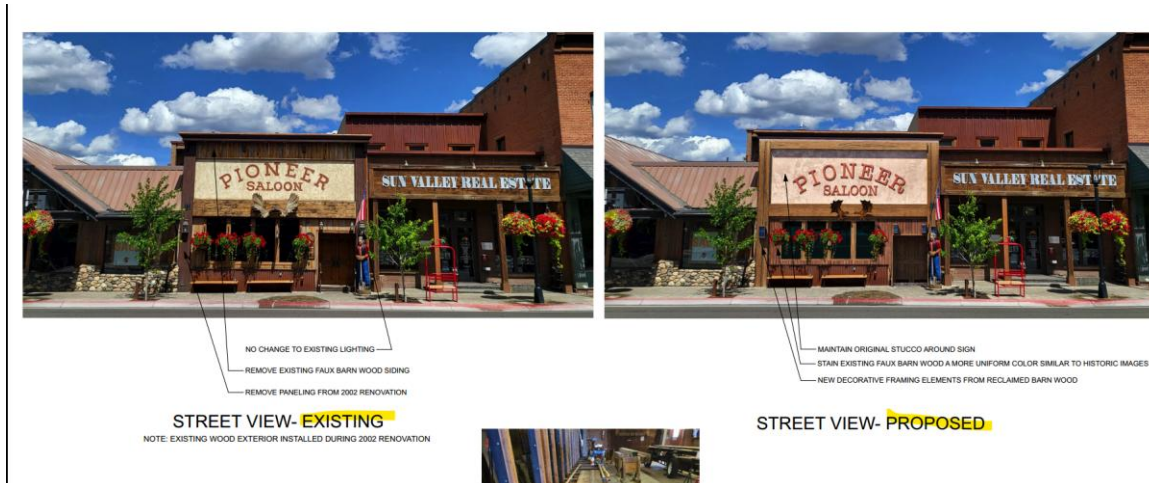


Figure 1 Attachment III: Application Drawing Package p.2

BACKGROUND:

The application materials include a narrative describing the history of the Pioneer Saloon (Attachment II). As an overview, the building was originally built in 1945 and underwent a variety of façade changes from donning a stripped awning and mural to painted entirely green. The variations of colors and materials are shown in Attachment II which includes historic photos of the Pioneer Saloon over the years. The wooden exterior we see today was a result of the last 2002 façade renovation. Prior to this 2002 renovation the front of the structure was stucco in the same iteration since 1972.

The Pioneer Saloon has been long regarded as significant to Ketchum's history and character. The Pioneer Saloon was surveyed during the 2005 Ketchum Reconnaissance Survey. Although the building was deemed ineligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, it was recommended as a Ketchum Heritage Site in 2006 by the Historic Preservation Commission. No formal designations of the property occurred following the 2006 recommendation.

In 2021, the City of Ketchum reconstituted the Historic Preservation Commission and created criteria for the identification and listing of historic properties within the city. The city, through an extensive evaluation and ranking process, formally listed 26 properties in the city's downtown, including The Pioneer Saloon.

ANALYSIS

Per Ketchum Municipal Code (KMC) 17.20.30 - *Demolition or alteration request process*, an applicant seeking to make alterations to a structure on the historic building/site list must file an application with the city and follow the same review process as design review applications. The Historic Preservation Commission, per the KMC, shall review the alteration request for compliance with each of the four criteria below. Staff have reviewed the application for conformance with the four criteria and provided an analysis of the application against the criteria below.

Criteria 1. 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.

- **Staff Analysis:** The Pioneer Saloon is on the City's Historic Structure List created in 2021. Properties were listed due to a high combined ranking on the following criteria: historic building (50 years or older), integrity of structure, architectural criteria, social criteria, and geographic and natural features. The Pioneer Saloon is an example of a historic structure that scored lower on architectural integrity however ranked extremely high on historic social importance. The establishment has been a casino,

American Legion Hall, dry good store, saloon with pool tables, and a poplar main street restaurant and bar since 1972. The Pioneer Saloon complies with Criteria 1 having historic value and significance to the commercial core as an integral component of the city of Ketchum's social fabric on Main Street.

In addition to the historic social significance, the Pioneer Saloon has kept the size, scale, height, and



Figure 2 1970's Pioneer Saloon Façade (ketchumbnr.com/pioneer-saloon)

streetscape along Main Street.

interplay with Mainstreet's streetscape relatively similar throughout the decades. See the photograph below as an example of the same height and similar scale in the 1970's as we see today. This architectural scale of the structure is significant in keeping the historic building profile of Main Street's commercial buildings alive for residents today.

The proposed alteration requests modest changes to the façade, but does not change the reasons why the building was listed in 2021. The establishment still operates as a bar and restaurant and the façade changes do not change the size, scale, height, or interplay with the

Criteria 2. 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.

- **Staff Analysis:** The staff does not find any adverse impact to the significance of the structure, interplay with adjacent properties, or the Comprehensive Plan by the proposed alteration application.

The application stated that the last renovation of the façade was done in 2002. This renovation is what is in existence today. The height, stucco, windows, and entrance are proposed to remain unchanged. The barnwood is proposed to become a more uniform color and material framing the building façade. (See Attachments II & III). As discussed in Criteria 1 the historic significance of this structure is primarily social as well as the preservation of the historic streetscape's building profile. The requested renovation to the façade is not proposing to alter the height or massing of the commercial building and would keep intact the small stucco portion that is a nod to the older 1970's signage. In addition, the shape of the building would remain relatively narrow in width, flat and square as the structure has been consistent in design since the 1940's.

Staff does not identify a conflict with the 2025 Comprehensive Plan by this application request. The alteration request further supports the city's historic preservation goals by investing and maintaining the property in a way that allows the Pioneer Saloon to continue its legacy within the community. The Pioneer Saloon is an example of Goal BNE-4: *Increase awareness of and appreciation for Ketchum's History*. In particular, Policy 4.3 *Heritage Tourism* and Policy 4.4 *Legacy Businesses*.

Heritage Tourism: The modification of the façade supports this policy statement 4.3, in particular *...showcases Ketchum's history and culture while also contributing to the economic vitality of the community and region*. The façade improvements include retention of the iconic "Pioneer Saloon" signage which is the most well-known and recognizable element of the façade historically throughout the community and the region. As residents and visitors drive Main Street, the signage is what draws people's attention to the building.

In addition, the alteration does not propose any changes to the interior of the building. The Pioneer Saloon showcases history within the interior of the commercial space with several local historical artifacts to celebrate the cities culture and history.

Legacy Businesses: Recognize and help promote the significance of businesses that have continuously operated in Ketchum for an extended period of time and contributed to the community history and/or identity of a particular neighborhood. The change to the barnwood framing of the facade does not change the identity of this portion of Main Street as the height and colors are similar to what is seen today. In addition, the upkeep and maintenance of materials will help this building maintain its structural integrity and support the operation of the business for years to come.

Criteria 3. Does the structure retain the requisite integrity to convey its historic and/or architectural significance.

- **Staff Analysis:** The application is requesting a minor modification to the façade as it was renovated in 2002 and listed in 2021. Size , scale, and materials are similar which in staffs’ analysis is in keeping with the structures historic significance as it relates to the pedestrian and vehicular scale of Main Street. The upkeep and maintenance of materials will help to retain the integrity of the structure. The architectural significance of the building is retained, specifically the 25’ width streetscape frontage, no increase to height, the 1970 font will remain within the signage, and the shape of the windows and framing will remain intact.

Criteria 4. Does the proposed demolition or alteration adversely affect the historic significance or architectural distinction of the structure or the community core.

- **Staff Analysis:** The proposed alteration does not change the architectural distinction of the structure as it relates to the community core or the historic significance primarily due to the unchanged height, similar materials and color to the last existing renovation of the façade which occurred 24 years ago. The social historic significance and architectural use of barnwood keeps with the existing theme of the restaurant. In addition, the adjacent store fronts both utilize a dark to mid-level toned reclaimed style wood in their facades. (See photograph within report below taken 12.31.2025) Staff believe there to be no adverse impact as proposed to the site’s integral historic significance to local social culture, scale and sitting. In addition, the application will have no adverse impacts to the architectural distinction of the structure or as it relates to the community core.



Figure 3 Photograph of Pioneer Saloon and adjacent businesses. December 31, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

After reviewing each standard with the requested application, the Commission has the following options:

- Approve
- Approve with conditions
- Deny the request
- Continue to a date certain or uncertain with a request for additional information

Staff Recommendation: "I move to approve the alteration application by Pioneer Saloon, Inc. for a minor façade alteration, subject to conditions, and direct staff to return with findings of fact."

Conditions of Approval:

1. This Historic Alteration approval is based on the plans dated October 29, 2025 and the information presented and approved at the January 6, 2026 Historic Preservation Commission included as Attachments II and III.
2. The term of this approval shall be twelve (12) months from the date that the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Decision are adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission or upon appeal, the date the approval is granted by the Council. Extensions may be granted per KMC 17.96.090.B.
3. Any modifications to the approved plans shall be submitted to the Planning & Zoning Department for review and approval prior to construction. Changes may be subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission at the discretion of the Planning and Zoning Administrator.
4. A building permit shall be submitted and approved by the City of Ketchum Planning & Building Department prior to construction. The building permit plans must conform to the approved Design Review plans unless otherwise approved in writing by the Historic Preservation Commission or Administrator.