



## Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2025, 5:00 PM

Town Hall – Administrative Center | 10183 Truckee Airport Road, Truckee, CA

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**1. Call to Order** 5:00 PM

**2. Roll Call**- Chair Cavanagh, Vice Chair Taylor, Commissioner Clarin, Commissioner Toups, Commissioner Kaufman - all present

**Staff Present:** Denyelle Nishimori, Community Development Director; Jenna Gatto, Town Planner; Chelsea Crager, Senior Planner; Kayley Metroka, Administrative Technician.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Public Comment**

None.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

**5.1 May 20, 2025 Minutes**

**Commissioner Clarin made a motion that was seconded by Vice Chair Taylor to adopt the May 20, 2025 Minutes as submitted. The motion passed and carried the following vote:**

**Ayes:** Chair Cavanagh, Vice Chair Taylor, Commissioner Clarin, Commissioner Toups, Commissioner Kaufman

**Noes:** None

**Absent:** None

**Abstain:** None

**The motion passed 5-0**

**6. Public Hearings (Minor Review)**

**7. Public Hearings (Major Review)**

**7.1 Application 2024-00000088/HDR (Vangorder Residence Historic Design Review); Applicant/Owner: John R. and Jennifer Vangorder; 10098 South East River Street; APN 019-152-041-000**

**Recommended Action:** That the Planning Commission adopt Resolution 2025-10, denying the Zoning Clearance, Historic Design Review, and Certificate of Appropriateness and determining the project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15270 (Projects Which Are Disapproved) of the CEQA Guidelines.

**Applicant presentation given by applicants, Jennifer Vangorder, property owner, and architect, Ben Garberson**

**Commissioner Clarin Disclosure:** Talked with HPAC Commissioners Brendan Riley and Chaun Mortier and lives on South River Street.

**Commissioner Toups Disclosure:** Spent time looking at the site and met with the applicant team this morning.

**Clarifying Questions for Staff:**

- Which guidelines were discussed and focused on during the HPAC meetings? Did they only focus on the guidelines that were noted in the staff report, or did they focus on other guidelines?
  - There were two HPAC hearings for this project and the second is where the commission discussed guidelines that were not specifically noted in the staff report. The December meeting had different commission members than the March meeting, so we do not have a consistent set of voices.
- There is a staff note stating HPAC was making some of their decisions based on the wrong criteria, using all buildings in the area, when the criteria are really about the historic buildings; how did they get to that point to make that interpretation?
  - Some of the early discussions we were looking at the house in the context of SE River Street which includes some non-historic residences.
  - They had similar discussions with South River Street because there are few remaining historic homes on that street. They often defaulted to talking about the river character area in those discussions.
- Which design are we looking at as the current proposed?
  - The project that is included in this presentation is the second iteration; this is the revised design before you.
- As presently designed, what is the FAR (floor area ratio)?
  - The guidelines don't speak to FAR; the guidelines speak to overall size.
  - Applicant: The lot size is 12,344 square feet. That is the challenge, this is the largest lot on the street.
  - Staff: The FAR is approximately .39.
  - Commission: So that is within what I see as the average there. I am just trying to understand coverage.
  - Staff: Coverage and FAR are different metrics.

**Clarifying Questions for Applicant:**

- When do you recall being advised that the removal of the basement would get you through the approval?
  - In our last correspondence, about a month and a half ago. It should have been brought up well in advance.
  - My father-in-law had a discussion with Denyelle Nishimori and that is when we realized we could put in a walk-out basement.
  - This would be a very clean, unobtrusive way to have storage. We didn't realize how that would be a benefit, removing the basement.
  - I had a conversation with the neighbor and he showed me he also has a walk-out basement as well, and you cannot see it from across the street. There are also trees and other growth back there.
  - Staff: I did have a conversation with Mr. McGinity before this was submitted but we only talked about the setback and how to calculate it, because there are two different calculations in the Development Code if you are in the Downtown Specific Plan or out of it. We walked through that quite a bit. We did not have any conversation regarding any home design; it was just to help them figure out what their setbacks would be to make sure they're compliant with the river setback. Also, there were discussions regarding mass and scale in the HPAC staff reports

and discussions between planning staff regarding the number of stories and mass and scale- this was not something that was just brought up in the last three months. The suggestions that came out of the discussions, including staff and the applicant team, were at the request of the applicant team when having that conversation. Typically, we do not make recommendations; we typically talk about where we find inconsistencies. But we were specifically asked to provide recommendations of what would it take for this to be approved at the director level. These were not requirements; they were options to satisfy consistency with the guidelines.

**Public Comment:**

**Valerie Lofrano:** We have about 15 feet from the property line. We are concerned that the home will come so close to the property line and there are aspens and a large blue spruce there. Are the roof overhangs to close? When we built our home, we were required to design a home to fit in with the historic district.

**Staff response:** The roof overhangs are consistent with the development code; three feet from the property line.

**Joe McGinity:** On Southeast River Street there are three historic homes: The Shotgun House, the old herb shop, and our old house which is next door to this proposed house. Everything else on that street is brand new and “disneyfied”. There are homes on that street that are three stories and have walk-out basements.

**Graeme Ware:** My view is going to be totally obstructed. My main worry is more about the snow. Where is the snow from that massive house going to go? We already have issues with where to put the snow. There will be no snow easement at all. Every one of the trees is going to come down to meet the fire regulations. Feel it should be slightly smaller.

**Tony Lofrano:** It is not a home that fits the river and the historic district. It is a beautiful design, but it belongs in NorthStar, not in Truckee’s historic district.

**Deliberation:**

- Feel the project has improved from the first design. I still find that it is inconsistent with the historic district.
- The house across the street is board and batten. That was a type of construction. I don’t think comparing the existing siding is comparable to how it was constructed.
- Personally, I would rather see the siding be horizontal, which is historically correct.
- The proposed house is beautiful, but it is too contemporary and modern.
- A horizontal lap with a wood grain would be more consistent.
- Roofs were wood historically. Metal roofs were corrugated metal and normally on a shed not a house.
- How much do we look at strictly the historic homes?
- The Shotgun House, The Herb Shop, and what was previously the McGinity’s house, are the three historic homes.
- The stone veneer is not historic, and it is too modern, maybe something more in the river rock category or more appropriate to the time.
- The light fixtures don’t have a historic look. The front door, the ladder, garage doors, the deck rails, nothing has a historic feel.
- Have turmoil about this project – have concerns with the design, materials, architectural style. I generally agree with the staff report. My main concern is that it fails the primary test, which is to create a design that speaks to the historic character of the district- which is the purpose of the guidelines. I also have empathy for the applicant; this is a very

challenging process and the timeline. The applicant letter made me feel the experience of the moving goal posts. This might be more of a process problem.

- In Development Code Principles: “The most successful approach is usually a contemporary interpretation of those styles seen historically.” It lists the following styles: Victorian, Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, Vernacular, Pioneer Vernacular and Craftsman. The challenge I have with the design is that it speaks to what is often called “Mountain Modern”.
- I agree with all said above regarding the materials.
- Regarding the snow storage- my house has a metal roof and the snow slides right off. This house is pointing at another structure; I don’t think the snow storage is well designed on this house. This is an unfair thing to do to a neighbor or the existing trees.
- In Chapter 13 it does say metal can be appropriate but should be in an earth tone and matte, and that is not this.
- It is very clear in the guidelines that the boards need to be horizontal.
- I do not think this type of stone veneer is consistent with any of the historic homes in Truckee.
- It does make sense for a larger lot to have a larger house on it. Look at RMU, the old CB White House, that is a huge structure.
- I do not see the point in removing the basement unless you’re lowering the house.
- It is large but it is a large lot.
- The number of windows makes it look larger. Maybe scale the windows down and get rid of some of that glass, that might help.
- It does seem consistent with the other properties when you take the FAR into consideration.
- I have no problem with the size of it. This is their single-family lot. I think there should be consideration with the property line and the snow storage.
- I think we need to focus less on the size but focus on the massing. What we are visually perceiving the property to be- which is different than the square footage or lot coverage of the building.
- That was a great suggestion – breaking up the windows to change how modern and contemporary it looks. Possibly using one that is referential to a window we’d see in the past would add more variation to the back. The windows in the front also look too modern and contemporary. None of the windows refer to anything historic.
- I am okay with the square footage, I agree we should judge it based on how we visually see it. I think vegetation will screen most of the back basement.
- The guidelines basically suggest you go to very narrow setbacks to mimic how homes were built historically.
- Leave the roof, change to horizontal siding, (hardy plank with a wood grain), remove the wood accent in the gable ends, keep windows at half the width of the height. The stone veneer is too modern and too much. The light fixtures need to be more historic appearing, deck rails and front door doesn’t work at all and are way too contemporary-modern and the garage door is probably okay. I think those changes would make it less “loud” being surrounded by Victorian design homes.
- I’d rather not say “fix it this way”, I would like to provide feedback regarding what is inconsistent.
- Are you willing to make changes?
  - Applicant: Yes. However, we have been running around in circles, and it has taken a lot of time, resources, and a lot of money. We can’t continue to do that. My kids will have to continue to share a room. Every time I talk to Ben, it costs me a lot of money. If you could be clear and concise so I can take it back to my team, I am okay with that. We are building our family home, that is why I said okay to increasing the budget. I can make the house pink with green trim so it goes with the other Disneyland houses on the street.

- Allow board-form concrete or match the siding in the front and back but not the whole first story, (more of a wainscoting.)
- There will be landscaping to help screen the board form concrete.
- Staff: The town's landscaping standards state no landscaping within 5ft of any building wall, and the Truckee Fire District has become more aggressive, so it is hard for us to know what could get installed.
- Is concrete wainscoting seen in any historic buildings?
  - Staff: It is primarily used for retrofitting for foundations. Typically, they'll bring the siding down to cover it and leave it raw. Historically they didn't have foundations.
- I would prefer the siding to just come down lower to stay more consistent with the historic designs.
  - Applicant: We can do that to give it a simpler look.
- Regarding windows: I agree window proportions need to change to half height, that is rooted in the design guidelines.
- Will it be an issue to re-draw the windows to the half-height?
  - Applicant: The front elevation is close, so that won't be an issue. The issue will be with the back elevations because there are the sliding door systems.
  - Staff: We weren't clear if they are true divided light windows or not.
  - Applicant: It is grids between two panes of glass.
- Where does the height of windows come from?
  - Staff: Chapter 6 of the Historic Design Guidelines regarding changes to historic buildings. This has been used as an indirect guideline.
- Sliding doors are not historical and they do not fit the height calculation.
- The main level fenestration is the most challenging to me visually.
- Is there a way to make the three doors consistent? That might help not having all different types of doors.
  - Applicant: We added some divided lights based on a recommendation to give it more texture.
- The sidelines are coming all the way to the ground, which is not historic. Do we even allow sliding glass doors being they are not consistent?
  - Applicant: They are accordion doors, so they will stack.
- Sliding doors are one thing, stackable is going overboard again.
- Going back to the code- contemporary update to a historic design. If this was on the front façade, I would have an issue, but this is the back façade.
  - Staff: Regarding what has been approved in this district; sliding glass doors have been a discussion point with HPAC because of their newness. If you are going to group sliding glass doors or stacking doors in the same category, I cannot think of any that have been approved by HPAC.
- I would say no sliders then.
- I agree.
- It would also cut the glazing down.
- Three of four commissioners agree to not allow sliding doors.
  - Applicant: But they do the same thing. I guess I don't understand.
  - If they do the same thing, then what's the difference?
- This allows us to meet the window height calculation in the guidelines by removing the sliding doors.
- The front door is a very contemporary style with the horizontal ladder pattern.
  - Applicant: It is a solid wood door that is painted graphite.
- What size is that door?
  - Applicant: 3'6 x 8'.
  - That is larger than a standard door.
  - Applicant: I have a very tall husband and family so I wanted a taller door.
  - As long as it looks proportionate and with the window change.
- Garage door- it has to match the front door.

- Light fixtures- that is tough because we have the night sky compliance now.
  - Staff: You can get any fixture that is compliant in any style.
  - I would like to see something more historic, traditional, or less contemporary.
- Deck rails? I am not sure what a good example would be?
  - Staff: This is similar to the door conversation; we don't have a lot of precedent for sliding doors or railings similar to this. HPAC has been concerned with full glass railings especially with the river facing properties.
- To re-clarify: we are okay with contemporary updates but **“to historic design styles.”** I.e.: a contemporary update to a Craftsman, Victorian, etc. The problem we are having is these are contemporary updates to a mountain modern style, which is not one of the historic designs.
  - Applicant: We can add more detail to the deck rail to give it more texture.
  - Applicant: I want to be able to see the river outside and when sitting inside be able to look through the windows and see the river. Growing up and being with my in-laws snow is a concern so we went with a thinner deck railing.
- Regarding colors- what are the guidelines for color in the historic district?
  - Staff: Since we have implemented the streamlining options, the historic palette allows for that. If it is outside of that, they will have to go to HPAC for approval.
  - Staff: That is something you could request to come back if they are using the Hardiebacker Hardie Plank material.
- Are you implying this color is not found in the historic palette?
- Shades of gray are in the historic palette.
  - Staff: Every line of paint has a historic color palette.
- I do not love the gray; it reads very contemporary for me.
  - Staff: We had a darker color, but we were told it was too flashy.
- Darker would not be better. The color is up to you, but we are recommending staying within that historic palette.
  - Applicant: Do we have to stick to the historic area where the house is? There is dark charcoal, stained vertical wood across the street, yellow.
  - Those are not historic buildings, those are other new construction.
  - Applicant: That got approved to be those colors, got it.
  - Something as close as possible with a historic color. We are looking for intent here. There is a large area to pull from.
  - Applicant: There probably are houses on the river that were painted a color without being approved, but we are being asked to find an approved color.
  - Staff: Just because someone might have done that without approval, we are here to avoid that.
- **The Planning Commission requested for the item to be continued and created the below list of recommended changes for the applicant to consider before the next hearing:**

### **Final Planning Commission Recommendations**

- **Continue and come back to Planning Commission**
- **Leave the roof (matte) color ok, material and style of metal ok**
- **Horizontal siding with wood texture, remove the wood accents, metal siding at basement should be removed, concrete ok (where necessary, minimize use) or siding all the way down. Stone veneer: remove**
- **Windows/glass: proportions ½ width to height, consistency in the window/door design across main level at rear elevation. No sliding glass doors/stackable glass doors.**
- **Front door: Painted wood ok. No horizontal ladder pattern. Proportionate to windows.**

- **Maintain front porch.**
- **Garage door ok (match front door)**
- **Light fixtures: Less contemporary, more traditional**
- **Deck rails: Less contemporary**
- **Supportive of contemporary interpretation of a historic style**
- **Color: choose color as similar to historic palette as possible (if pre-colored board), choose from historic palette (if painted). Provide justification for color choice by matching to River Character historic building.**
- **New renderings with resubmittal**

Commissioner Clarin made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Kaufman to continue application 7.1 **Vangorder Residence Historic Design Review to a date and time uncertain with the above Final Planning Commission Recommendations to be considered. The motion passed and carried the following vote:**

**Ayes:** Vice Chair Taylor, Commissioner Clarin, Commissioner Toups, Commissioner Kaufman

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** Chair Cavanagh

**Absent:** None

**The motion passed 4-0**

#### **8. Staff Reports**

- There is an additional Planning Commission meeting this month for the Edmunds Lofts housing project to be heard on July 29<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM.
- The Vangorder item will now be coming back.

#### **9. Information Items**

#### **10. Commission Member Reports**

None.

**11. Adjournment.** 7:20 PM To the next meeting of the Planning Commission, July 29, 2025 5:00 PM at 10183 Truckee Airport Road, Truckee, CA 96161.

Kayley Metroka