

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

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MEETING DATE: March 23, 2021

TO: Town of Truckee Historic Preservation Advisory Commission

FROM: Emily McGuire, Planning Technician

PROJECT: Application No. 2021-00000003 (Fraiman Office Exterior Modifications);  
Owner: Daniel Fraiman; Agent: Brendan Riley; 10270 Donner Pass Road  
(APN 019-080-028)

Agenda No.: **6.2**

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### **REQUESTED ACTION**

That the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC) review the proposed exterior modifications to a Category "B" historic building – including a rear terrace and elevated walkway addition establishing new, second-floor access, replacement of the existing rear concrete stairs, changes to the window and door fenestrations on the north and west elevations, window replacements, door replacements, minor mechanical modifications, minor changes to the monument sign, and replacement of existing holiday lighting -- for consistency with the Downtown Specific Plan, including the Historic Design Guidelines, and forward a recommendation to the Community Development Director.



Figure 1 – Project Site – 10270 Donner Pass Road

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant is requesting Historic Design Review approval for exterior modifications to a historic residence (now used as a commercial building) located in the DMU (Downtown Mixed Use) zoning district and the Brickelltown Character Area. The structure, which was originally constructed in c. 1880, is located in the historic downtown area at 10270 Donner Pass Road (APN 019-080-028), roughly 900 feet east of the McIver roundabout.

The applicant is requesting Historic Design Review to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior modifications to an existing Category B “Contributing” historic structure. The building was originally constructed as a residence and appears to have been converted to include commercial uses around 1997, when it was remodeled as an art gallery. Floor plans on record reflect that the rear portion of the building included a residential unit, although it is unclear when this portion of the building was used as a residence. The proposed exterior modifications, along with interior modifications proposed under Building Permit No. 2021-00000242 (currently under review), will facilitate an adaptive reuse of the building under a single, office use.

Proposed exterior modifications include a rear terrace and elevated walkway addition establishing new, second-floor access, replacement of the existing rear concrete stairs, changes to the window and door fenestrations on the north and west elevations, window replacements, door replacements, minor mechanical modifications, minor changes to the monument sign, and replacement of existing holiday lighting.



Figure 2 – Vicinity Map – 10270 Donner Pass Road

### **Background**

The Historic Resources Architectural Inventory (Attachment #2) describes the building as a two-story, Vernacular and Folk Victorian style building with minimal stick detailing, originally constructed as a residence. The building is composed of two gabled masses joined end-to-end, with the roofline of the rear (north) cross-wing slightly elevated above the roofline of the fore (south) mass. A modern, single-story, parapet roof addition meets the northern two-story gabled mass at the rear (north) of the building. The wood-frame building has a plain, coursed wood shingle covering with plain, end corner boards. The steep, gable-front roof has composition shingles and three interior metal vent pipes. The roof has wide, overhanging eaves with enclosed rafters. There are decorative trusses in the gables and fish-scale-patterned wood shingles in the south (front) gable peak.

The primary (south) elevation has a full-width, hipped roof porch that wraps around the full length of the east elevation. The porch is fully enclosed with multiple 15-pane divided light, fixed, replacement windows and a shingled balustrade. There is a small, gabled projection over the slightly off-centered entry steps with a decorative truss and turned spindlework. Stairs to this entry have a turned spindlework balustrade and box posts capped with a ball. The entry door is full-light with plain, wood surround and casing. A twelve-pane divided light, metal slider window is centered on the second level of the south elevation.

The west elevation has asymmetrically positioned windows, including one oriel window to the south (front). The east elevation has two centered, clapboard sided, shed-roof wall dormers with modern, replacement metal sliders flanked by full height side-lights. The east elevation also has the continuation of the enclosed, south (front) porch. The porch is full-length of the east elevation, with two doors offset to the north (rear). The doors are under small, gabled peaks atop a hipped roof porch extension.

On all these elevations, windows are a mix of historic (but not original) and modern replacements, including one-over-one, four-over-four, and nine-over-nine, double-hung, metal sash, a three-part with large, fixed rectangular, modern 15-part divided-light, and two small arched windows inside the porch and offset west of the primary entry. There are two shed roof dormers on the east slope. The yard is enclosed with a low picket fence.

According to the Truckee Historic Resources Inventory (THRI) survey record, the c. 1880 building had a square mass and rear addition that was wider than the primary, front portion. This addition was replaced in 1898 with a rear mass of the same width as the main mass. Additional changes occurred to the rear of the building by 1907, though the survey asserts that none of these rear additions are present today. What does exist today is the original (historic) square mass to the south, joined by a narrow, two-story cross-wing immediately to the northeast/northwest (determined by the applicant to be non-historic), and a modern, single-story, parapet roof addition to the rear (north) of the cross-wing.

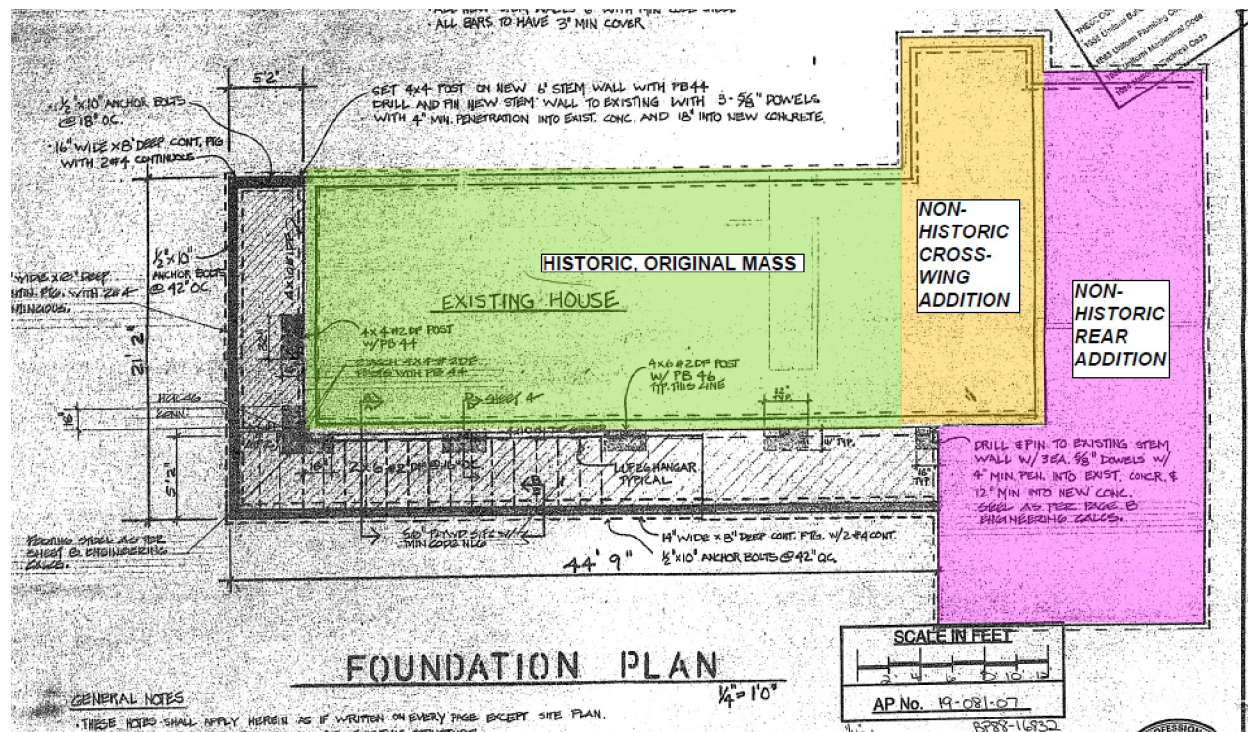


Figure 3 – Historic vs. non-historic portions of building

While the survey record does not describe nor provide a date of construction for the modern additions, the applicant’s structural evaluation of the building’s interior revealed modern framing and construction materials distinctively different from the framing and materials comprising the historic masses (Attachment #3). The modern additions show use of dimensional framing lumber (2x4 and 2x6 lumber), plywood sheathing, modern Simpson-style fasteners, and concrete masonry unit (CMU) foundation. In contrast, the original massing shows use of historic, non-dimensional lumber and no plywood or modern fasteners.

The THRI survey record notes a number of additional modifications to the building’s original form and character. The porch has been enclosed (reflected in Building Permit No. 1988-16832) and the roof altered, the west elevation fenestration has been altered, and the historic rear of the building has been completely removed. The upper story window on the primary elevation was originally an arched, Italianate design which had been a significant identifier of the Brickelltown neighborhood and architectural influences by the Truckee Lumber Company.



Figure 4 – Historic photo of the property (center) c. 1902-1906



Figure 5 – Street view of project site

The property is located in the Brickelltown Character Area, which comprises much of the land between Donner Pass Road and High Street and includes a row of properties along the western portion of Donner Pass Road, as well as a few structures on the southeast side of Interstate 80.

***Project Description***

The applicant is requesting historic design review of the following items:

Rear terrace and elevated access bridge additions

*Rear terrace*

The applicants have proposed a 324 square foot rear terrace addition to be constructed above the existing, non-historic parapet roof addition to provide an outdoor area for the second story of the building. The sleeper-framed deck is proposed to be comprised of driftwood-stained redwood deck boards, fully-contained within the limits of the existing parapet roof, along with a wooden guardrail to extend above the parapet roof, painted solid white to match existing trim and railing at the front of the building. The applicant noted that the deck does not extend fully southward to “fill in” the parapet roof, as this would have required a stepping-up of the deck surface, along with the guard rails, which would result in greater visibility of the deck addition from the right-of-way than what is proposed. Alternatively, the proposed configuration of the deck sets the guardrails further away from the building’s historic core, reducing the visibility of the deck addition from the street.



Figure 6 – Existing rear (north) elevation of project site



Figure 7 – Proposed rear (north) elevation, including rear terrace addition and access bridge

*Elevated access bridge*

To provide access to the second story and rear terrace, the applicants propose an 85 square foot elevated access bridge, connecting the new rear deck to the existing parking area at the rear (north) of the property. This access bridge is constructed of wood joists, stained redwood decking and a wooden guardrail. The guardrail is required by the Building Code and will be painted white to match existing trim and railings. This improvement is proposed to be located to parallel the existing retaining wall along the western side property line.



Figure 8 – Rendered aerial view of proposed rear terrace addition and access bridge

The Historic Design Guidelines provide the following direction for new additions, porches, and site features:

*Chapter 9.2 - New Additions*

*2. When planning an addition, consider the effect it will have on the historic building itself. The new work should be recognized as a product of its own time and yet it should be visually compatible with the original, and the loss of the historic fabric should be minimized as well.*

*2.A. Design an addition such that it will not obscure, alter or destroy the character of the original building.*

*B. An addition should be visually subordinate to the main building. This is especially important for buildings rated "Essential" and "Contributing."*

*1) An addition should respect the proportions, massing and siting of the historic building.*

*2) The form and detailing of an addition should be compatible with the historic building. Simpler details on an addition can help distinguish it from the original structure.*

*3) Set an addition back from the primary facade in order to allow the original proportions, form and overall character of the historic building to remain prominent.*

*C. A substantial addition should be distinguishable from the historic building so it can be understood as a more recent change.*

*1) This can be accomplished with a jog in the wall planes, or by using a cornerboard to define the connection, or a subtle change in material or a subtle differentiation between historic and more current styles.*

*D. The materials of an addition should be compatible with those of the primary structure.*

*1) Matching the historic material is an appropriate approach, although new materials also may be considered.*

*Chapter 6 - Individual Building Components*

*7. Porches*

*B. Maintain the open, transparent character of a porch.*

*C. 1) Use materials similar to the original.*

*Chapter 10 – Site Features*

*14. Accessibility*

*The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that places of public accommodation be accessible to all users.*

*2) Owners of historic properties also should comply to the fullest extent, while also preserving the integrity of the of the character-defining features of a building.*

*3) Special provisions for historic buildings exist in Federal and State accessibility laws that allow for some alternative design solutions.*

Staff requests that the HPAC consider whether an addition of this scale and nature is appropriate. Staff believes that the proposal involves non-historic portions of the building and improves accessibility into the building from the parking lot. Staff believes that the proposed additions incorporate appropriate materials and are comprised of forms which are in keeping with historic forms and scale, while also presenting as products of their own time. Additionally, the proposed addition occurs at the rear of the building, away from the structure's original, historic core. Staff would like the HPAC to consider whether a smaller, less expansive rear deck, less visible from the right-of-way and closer in size to the porch at the front (south) of the building, could be more appropriate.



Figure 9 – Existing front porch

Changes to fenestrations on the rear (north) elevation

*New, second-floor access*

In conjunction with the proposed rear terrace and elevated access bridge additions, the applicant proposes to establish new, second-story access at the rear (north) of the building. The applicant proposes to replace the existing window centered beneath the rear gable of the cross-wing with a double door, which opens out onto the proposed rear deck above the non-historic rear (northern) addition. This will provide direct access from the parking lot to the building by way of the second floor, without requiring use of the rear stairs to access the building at the first floor.



Figure 10 – Existing second-story window fenestration vs. proposed door fenestration at rear (north)

*Changes to fenestrations at the ground floor*

The applicant also proposes to make changes to the fenestrations on the ground floor along the northern façade of the non-historic rear addition. The proposal includes removing two existing double-hung windows and two hinged doors. These elements are proposed to be replaced by a slider door to the east, comprised of two three-over-four divided light glass panels, and a hinged door to the west within the existing door opening. This door is proposed to be a glass, two-over-four divided light hinged door. A horizontal slider window comprised of two two-over-two divided light panels is proposed to be located between the two door openings.



Figure 11 – Existing fenestrations in modern rear (north) addition at ground floor



Figure 12 – Proposed changes to fenestrations in modern rear (north) addition at ground floor

The Historic Design Guidelines provide the following direction for changes to windows and doors:

*Chapter 6 – Building Components*

*5. Windows & Doors*

*C. Maintain original window and door proportions.*

*1) Altering the original size and shape is inappropriate*

*H. A new window or door may be considered on a secondary facade only.*

*1) A new opening should be similar in location, size and type to those seen traditionally.*

Staff supports the proposed changes in fenestrations to the ground-floor of the non-historic rear addition. Because staff believes that this addition is non-historic, the existing fenestrations do not necessarily contribute to the historic character of the overall building and are not a priority to preserve. The applicant contends that the entire two-story, northern cross-wing addition within which this window occurs is also non-historic (see Attachment #2). . Staff would like the HPAC to consider whether this window fenestrations should be preserved, while also considering that preserving this fenestration as a window would render the proposed second-story access, deck/access additions impractical and inappropriate.

Window replacement

The applicant proposes to replace all but one of the existing vinyl windows (a small, circular window along the western elevation is to remain). According to the THRI survey record, the windows present in the building at the time the survey was conducted (1992) were a mix of historic (but not original) metal sash windows and more modern replacement windows. The applicant notes that the current existing windows of vinyl construction, with false divided lights consisting of a vinyl spacer-bar sandwiched between the interior and exterior panels of glass. The applicant states that these windows are in poor condition and proposes to replace all but one of the existing windows with Sierra Pacific Window's aluminum-clad pine wood window product. These windows will have a white interior and exterior with simulated divided lights. The applicant has stated that this product-type has been selected for its durability. All wood trim is proposed to be replaced like-for-like and painted white to match existing.

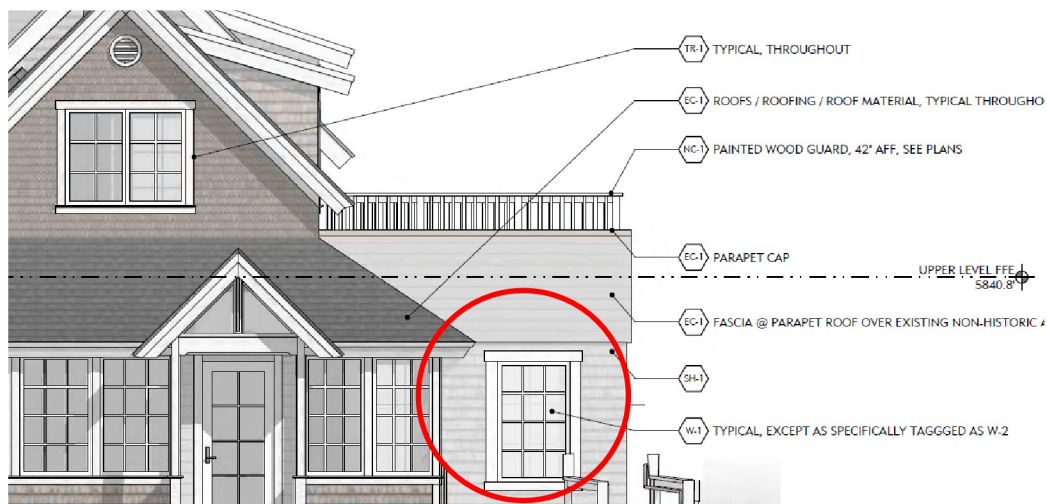


Figure 13 – Example of window proposed for replacement

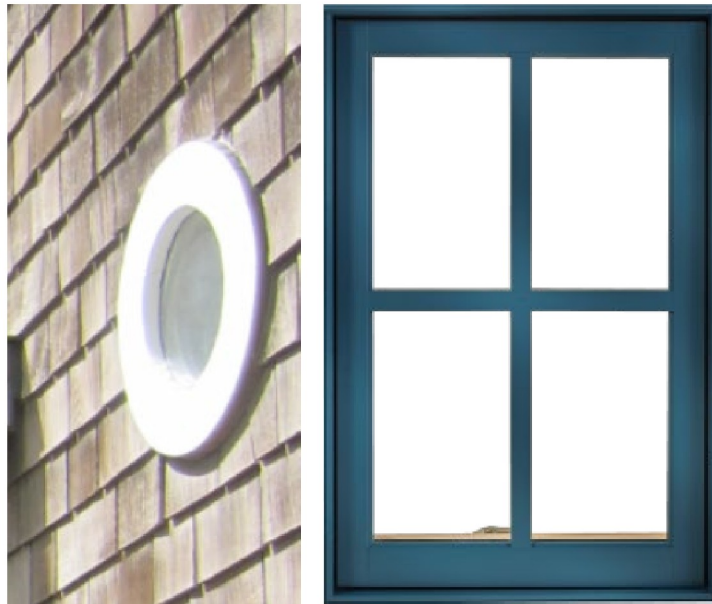


Figure 14 – Single window to remain unchanged (L); example of Sierra Pacific Windows aluminum-clad wood window (R)

The Historic Design Guidelines provide the following direction for window replacement:

*Chapter 6 – Individual Building Components*

*5. Windows & Doors*

*G. When replacing a window or door is necessary on an historic structure, match the original design as closely as possible.*

- 1) Preserve the original casing, and use it with the replacement.*
  - 2) Use the same material (wood) as that used historically.*
  - 3) Vinyl clad and aluminum windows are inappropriate on Essential and Contributing properties. They only may be considered on secondary facades of Supporting properties.*
  - 4) Match the number and size of divided lights and panels.*
- I. Windows and doors should be finished with trim elements similar to those used traditionally.*
- 1) This trim should have a dimension similar to that used historically.*
  - 2) Divided lights should be formed from smaller mullions integral to the window. Pop-in muntins and mullions are inappropriate.*

*Chapter 7 – Historic Materials*

*5. Replacement Building Materials*

*A. Replacement building materials should appear similar to those used historically.*

- 1) The replacement material(s) should match the original material in scale, finish and composition.*
- 4) Materials such as aluminum and vinyl are inappropriate as substitute materials.*

Staff supports the proposed replacement of the failing, existing vinyl windows. However, staff would like the HPAC to consider whether aluminum-clad wood windows are an appropriate window material for a Category “B” (Contributing) building.

Door replacement

The applicant proposes to replace all hinged entry doors with wooden door units. Replacement doors will be single-light and painted/finished white to match the color of the Sierra Pacific windows. While the manufacturer is yet to be determined, the doors are proposed be of high-

quality wood construction (pine or paint-grade poplar). All wood trim is proposed to be replaced like-for-like and painted white to match existing.

The Historic Design Guidelines provide the following direction for door replacement:

*Chapter 6 – Individual Building Components*

*5. Windows & Doors*

*G. When replacing a window or door is necessary on an historic structure, match the original design as closely as possible.*

*1) Preserve the original casing, and use it with the replacement.*

*2) Use the same material (wood) as that used historically.*

*I. Windows and doors should be finished with trim elements similar to those used traditionally.*

*1) This trim should have a dimension similar to that used historically.*

Staff supports the proposal to replace existing hinged entry doors with wooden units. Staff recommends that the HPAC direct the applicant to work with staff in selecting an appropriate door product prior to issuance of building permits for the proposed exterior modifications.

Remove non-historic western window and skylights

*Non-historic window*

The applicant proposes to remove one window which occurs on the second-story, western elevation of the cross-wing addition, centered underneath the west-facing gable. The applicant believes that this window is not historic. Removal of this window, which currently serves the “laundry room,” will facilitate conversion of the space into a bathroom by creating sufficient room for a new sink and shower. Two additional “laundry room” windows on the street (south) side and rear (north) side of this room have been retained. The western window is proposed to be replaced by sheathing and shingles to match existing.

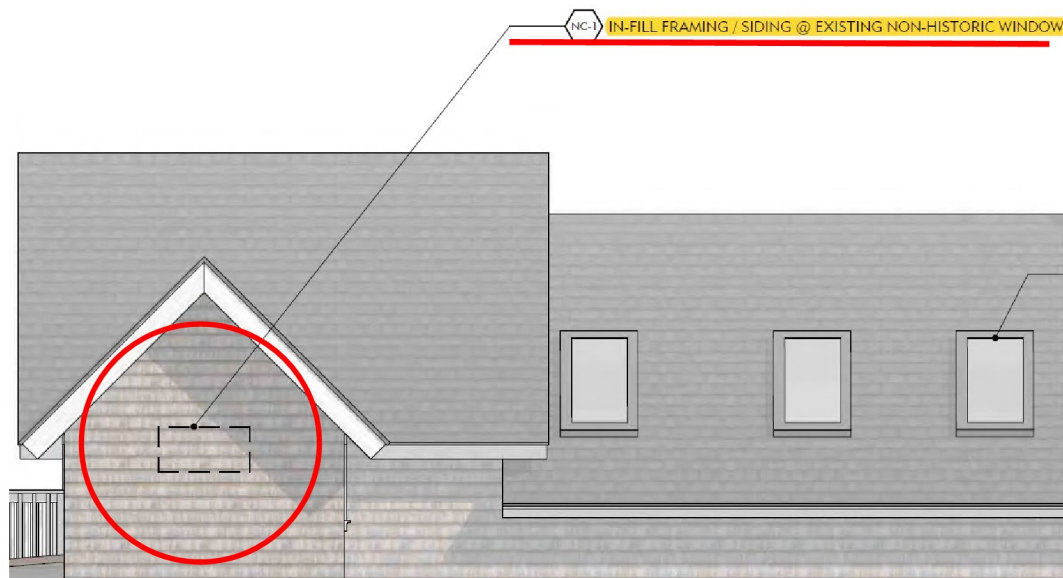


Figure 15 – Location of window on second-story, western façade proposed for removal



Figure 16 – Interior view of window (center) on second-story, western façade proposed for removal

*Non-historic skylights*

Two modern pyramid skylights within the non-historic rear addition to the north of the building are also proposed for removal. The removal of these skylights will accommodate construction of the sleeper-framed rear terrace addition which is proposed above the existing parapet roof.

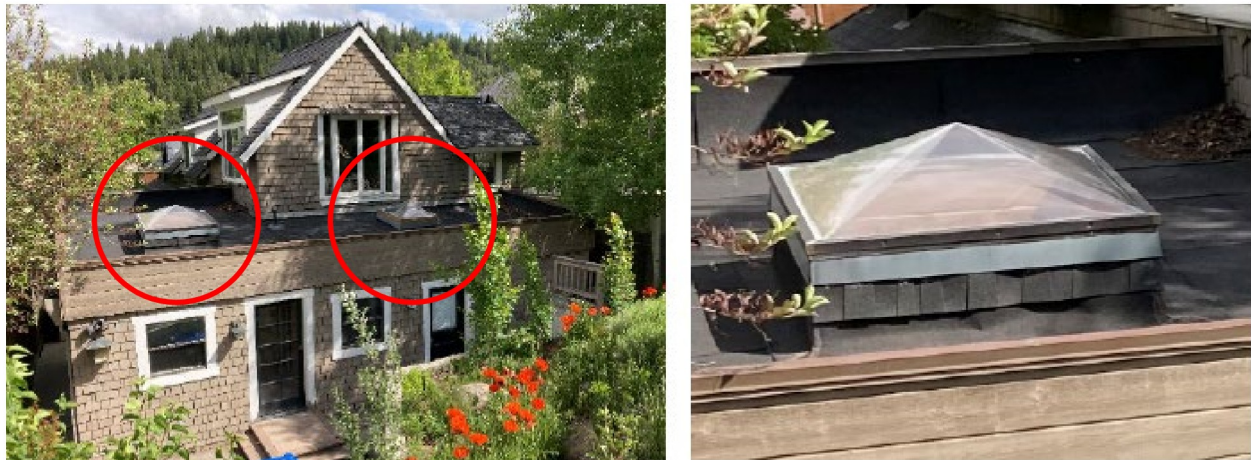


Figure 17 – Non-historic pyramid skylights proposed for removal

The Historic Design Guidelines provide the following direction for restoration of non-historic fenestrations:

*Chapter 6 – Individual Building Components*

*5. Windows & Doors*

*D. Restoring an original opening which has been altered over time is encouraged.*

*Chapter 7 – Historic Materials*

*1. Wood & Siding*

*A. Preserve original siding.*

*3) If portions of wood siding must be replaced, be sure to match the style and lap dimensions of the original.*

*5. Replacement Building Materials*

*A. Replacement building materials should appear similar to those used historically.*

*1) The replacement material(s) should match the original material in scale, finish and composition.*

The applicant contends that the entire two-story, northern cross-wing addition within which this window occurs is non-historic, which would mean that the western “laundry room” window proposed for removal is also non-historic. Staff requests that the HPAC consider whether the Historic Design Guidelines which relate to restoration of historic openings truly apply to this specific proposal, and whether it is ultimately appropriate to remove the western window beneath the cross-wing gable to be replaced with sheathing and shingles to match existing. Staff supports removal of the non-historic pyramid skylights, as they are not of historic significance and detract from the historic character of the building.

Rear concrete stair replacement

To improve access north of the building and meet current stair/accessibility requirements, the existing concrete and wood-framed stairway providing access from the rear parking lot to the ground-level rear entrance is proposed to be replaced. Copper handrail and handrail extensions, as required by the Building Code, will be constructed. The applicant provided an example of worn copper to show how the metal will appear over time.

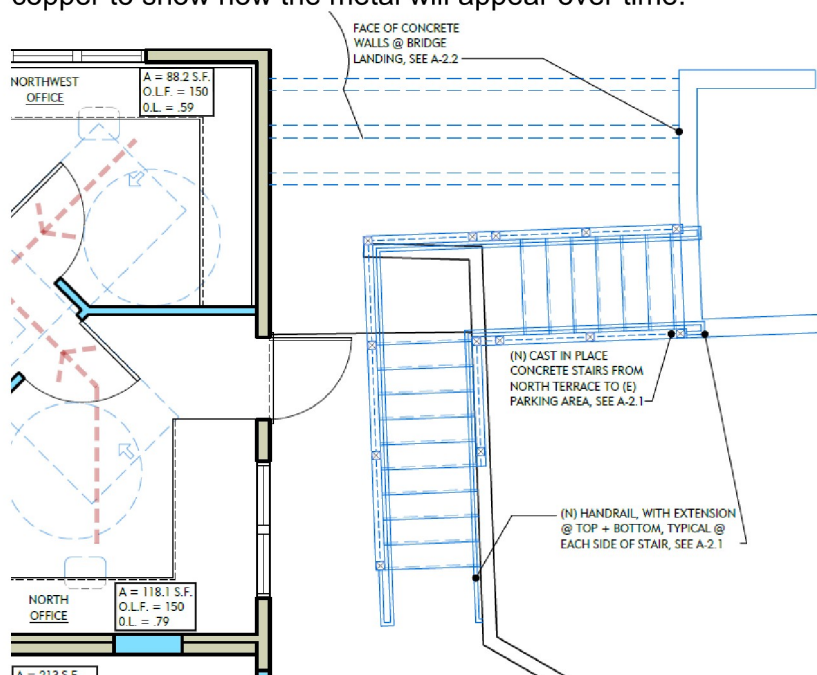


Figure 18 – Rear exterior stairway proposed to be replaced



Figure 19 – Worn copper coins (L); proposed copper railings (C); existing painted metal railing (R)

Staff has no concerns for the stair replacement, although it is apparent that the existing metal railing at the front access ramp (along the eastern side of the building) appears to be painted white.

### ***Other items***

#### Minor mechanical modifications

The applicant proposes minor mechanical modifications and vents as required for proposed interior changes. The applicant notes that such modifications will be installed as discretely as possible and finished to best match adjacent finishes. Staff will review these changes at the building permit level and return to the HPAC if there are any concerns with the building permit proposal.

#### Minor changes to monument sign

The applicant proposes to maintain the existing monument sign, replacing only the tenant portion of the sign. No changes to the size or lighting of the existing monument sign are proposed.

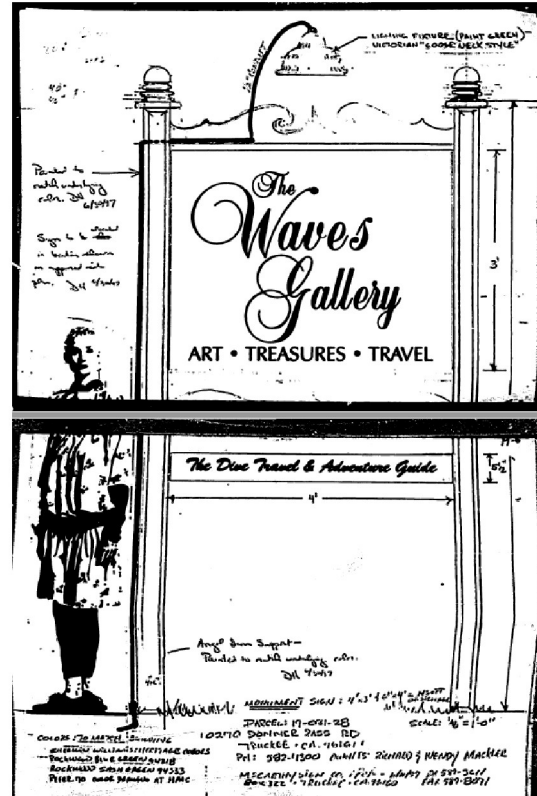


Figure 20 – Existing monument sign with no tenant panel (L); 1997-approved monument sign (R)

So long as the dimensions and material of the proposed signage are consistent with the previously-approved signage documented under Building Permit No. 97-4731 and current sign regulations, staff would be able to review the proposed signage under the Historic Design Review Streamlining Guidelines for signs. Staff recommends that the HPAC direct the applicant to work with staff in reviewing proposed signage prior to issuance of building permits for the proposed exterior modifications.

#### *Replacement of existing holiday lighting*

Existing holiday lighting in the form of wire string lights can be seen strung along trim and handrail elements of the front (south) façade. The applicants propose to replace this existing holiday lighting with dimmable, LED string lighting regulated by an astronomic timer control.



Figure 22 – Existing holiday string lights (highlighted)

The Historic Design Guidelines provide the following direction for site lighting:

*Chapter 10 – Site Features*

*6. Building & Site Lighting*

*A. Exterior building lights should be functional and be in harmony with surrounding buildings.*

*1) Lights should not attract unnecessary attention to any one building.*

*5) Individual building lights should be secondary; whereas, the lighting of buildings should not detract from the primary lighting system which provides street and walkway illumination.*

*6) Lighting chaos and energy waste should be avoided.*

*B. Minimize the visual impacts of site and architectural lighting.*

*2) Unshielded, high intensity light sources and those that direct light upward are inappropriate.*

*4) See also the Truckee Development Code, chapter 18.30.060(D) for exterior lighting shielding requirements.*

The Director has previously determined that holiday lighting is appropriate for seasonal use within the historic downtown.

**HPAC'S ROLE**

HPAC's role is to consider whether the proposed modifications are consistent with the overall intent of the Downtown Specific Plan Historic Design Guidelines. Staff has identified the following key questions:

- Rear terrace and elevated access additions: Is an addition of this scale and nature, proposed in this location, an appropriate modification? Would a smaller, less expansive rear deck, closer in size to the porch at the front (south) of the building, be more appropriate?

- Changes in fenestrations at the north elevation: Should the existing, second-story window fenestration centered beneath the gable on the northern elevation of the cross-wing addition be preserved? Alternatively, does the HPAC support the applicant determination that this window fenestration is non-historic, warranting replacement with a second-story access door?
- Window replacement: Are aluminum-clad wood windows an appropriate window material for a Category "B" (Contributing) building?
- West window removal: Do the Historic Design Guidelines which relate to restoration of historic openings truly apply to the removal of the western window beneath the cross-wing gable? The window, which was determined by the applicant to be non-historic, is proposed to be replaced with sheathing and shingles to match existing. Alternatively, does the HPAC believe it is important to preserve this window?
- Rear stair replacement: Should the copper railing proposed to be installed in conjunction with the reconstruction of the rear concrete and wood-framed stairs be made to match the existing, painted metal railing along the eastern access ramp? Should the existing metal railing be restored to raw metal, or be replaced with copper railing?

As part of the discussion of the key issues, HPAC may wish to identify additional major issues and questions that need to be addressed.

#### **ATTACHMENT**

Attachment 1 – Applicant Submittal

Attachment 2 – Historic Resources Architectural Inventory

Attachment 3 – Applicant Inspection of Non-Historic Additions