



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: November 18, 2025

To: Town of Truckee Planning Commission

From: Chelsea Crager, Senior Planner

RE: 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 (Continued from July 15, 2025 Planning Commission hearing)

Approved by: Denyelle Nishimori, Community Development Director

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.

If the Planning Commission decides to approve the project, the Planning Commission should make new findings in support of the project and continue the meeting. Staff would then notice the project with a different environmental determination and prepare the revised resolution with the Planning Commission's findings for review and adoption at the next normally scheduled Planning Commission meeting.

Project Summary:

The applicant is requesting Zoning Clearance approval, Historic Design Review and a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a new single-family dwelling within the River Character Area of the Historic Preservation Overlay. The proposed project is a new, 4,795-square-foot three-story single-family residence, including 4,115 square feet of conditioned space and a 680-square-foot garage.

Major Discussion Topics:

Staff has identified the following major discussion topics to help guide the Planning Commission's discussion:

- Is the proposed residence appropriate for the River Character Area, and consistent with the Downtown Truckee Plan Historic Design Guidelines?
- Does the Planning Commission support use of the proposed materials for the roofing, siding, foundation, lighting, windows and doors?
- Does the proposed residence appear similar in mass and scale to historic structures found in the River Character Area?
- Has the applicant sufficiently responded to the Planning Commission's comments from the July 15, 2025 meeting?

Planning Commission’s Role:

The Planning Commission’s role is to review the site layout, project size, and design of the development to ensure the project is consistent with the General Plan, Development Code, and Historic Design Guidelines, and to take action in-lieu of Community Development Director action.

Location/Setting:

The project site is located on the northern side of South East River Street, east of Brockway Road and south of the Truckee River, in the River Character Area of the Historic Preservation Overlay at 10098 South East River Street (APN 019-152-041-000). Adjacent uses include the Truckee River to the north with single-family residential within the River Character Area across the river, single-family residential within the River Character Area and the Chinatown Subdivision across South East River Street to the south, and a single-family residence constructed in 2000 to the east. The adjacent property to the west, 10084 South East River Street, was originally constructed circa 1890 and is listed as a Category B (Contributory) historic resource. A more detailed description of the River Character Area is located in the Discussion/Analysis section of the July 15, 2025 Planning Commission staff report, included as Attachment No. 3 to this report.

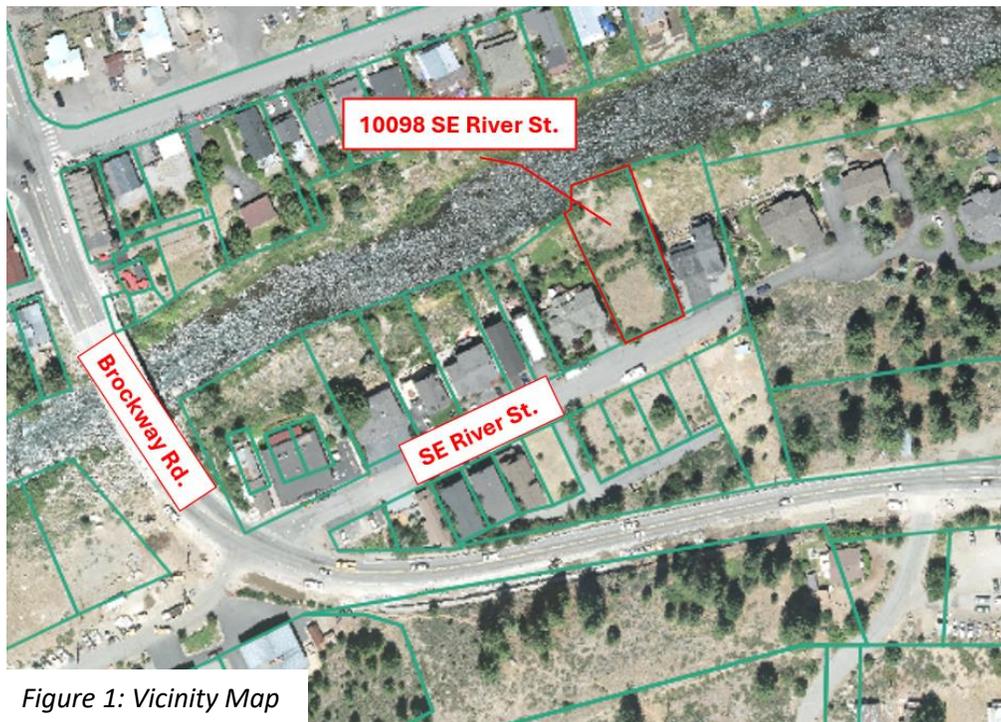


Figure 1: Vicinity Map

Project Site Information:

General Plan Designation:	Low Density Residential
Zoning District:	Downtown Single Family Residential (DRS-10)
Project Area:	0.28 acres (12,197 square feet)
Utilities:	Public sewer and water

Discussion/Analysis:

Project Background

The Vangorder Residence project was submitted to the Planning Division on June 24, 2024. The project was reviewed by the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC) on December 11, 2024 and March 12, 2025. The project was reviewed by the Planning Commission on July 15, 2025. For a complete history of this project and those meetings leading to the July 15, 2025 Planning Commission meeting, HPAC staff reports and minutes are attached to this staff report for reference as Attachment Nos. 3-8.

The project was reviewed by the Planning Commission on July 15, 2025, with all five members of the Commission present. The staff report and minutes from this meeting are provided as Attachment Nos. 3 and 4 to this report. At the conclusion of this meeting, the Planning Commission unanimously voted to continue the project to allow the Applicant to make changes to the design. Specifically, the following feedback was provided:

- Continue and come back to Planning Commission.
- Leave the roof materials as-is, no necessary changes to the color or materials.
- Horizontal siding with wood texture, remove the wood accents, metal siding at basement should be removed, concrete is acceptable (where necessary, minimize use) or siding all the way down. Remove stone veneer.
- Windows/glass: Proportions should be ½ width to height with consistency in the window/door design across main level at rear elevation. No sliding glass doors/stackable glass doors.
- Front door: Painted wood is acceptable. No horizontal ladder pattern. Door should be proportionate to the windows.
- Maintain the front porch.
- Garage door design is acceptable; it should match the front door.
- The design of light fixtures should be less contemporary and more traditional.
- The design of deck rails should be revised to be less contemporary.
- The Planning Commission is generally supportive of a contemporary interpretation of a historic architectural style.
- The color should be as similar to the historic palette as possible (if pre-colored board), or from the historic palette (if painted). The application should provide justification for color choice by matching to a River Character historic building.
- Provide new renderings with resubmittal.

In addition to these written comments that the Planning Commission authored at the meeting, the Planning Commission also discussed what it would mean for a project to be a “contemporary interpretation of a historic style,” noting that appropriate historic architectural styles are found in Chapter 3 of the Historic Design Guidelines.

In response to the above comments, the applicant implemented changes to the project and submitted the revised materials on August 22, 2025 in anticipation of the September 16, 2025 Planning Commission meeting. The September meeting was canceled due to lack of quorum, and the project was scheduled to the next meeting that the Applicant was able to attend on November 18, 2025.

Project Description

The project proposes a new 4,795-square-foot, three-story, single-family residence. The residence includes three bedrooms, three bathrooms, and a laundry room on the upper level. A two-car garage with storage, living room, dining room, kitchen, butler pantry, office, and one and a half bathrooms are located on the primary level. Storage space, mechanical space, and a powder room are located on the daylighting

basement level. The residence also includes a river-facing balcony on the upper level, a river-facing covered outdoor dining area and street-facing front porch on the primary level, and a river-facing basement terrace on the lower level.

The residence proposes metal roofs with some 12:12 pitches and some lower-sloping 1:12 pitches. Proposed siding is horizontal gray fiber cement board.

Changes to Project Design

Although the size and style of windows and glass doors has been reduced slightly from the project's July 2025 design, the design still includes large windows and glass doors dominating the front elevation and especially the rear elevation, facing the river. The applicant notes in their response letter dated August 27, 2025 (included in Attachment No. 2) that the window designs have been revised to proportions ½ width to height for a more traditional feel. The response letter also notes that breaks and divided lights were added to the glass living room doors. Windows remain a dominant feature of the proposed residence's architecture.

In addition to the changes to the window designs, the Applicant notes in the response letter that the siding has been revised to be horizontal. Some wood accents and metal siding at the basement have been removed from the design, as well as the stone veneer seen in the previous design. The design of the deck railing remains horizontal metal with a wood top cap. The design of the front door was revised, and the garage door revised to match. The size of the front porch was increased. Please refer to the elevations, materials and color list contained in Attachment No. 10 for a detailed description and color samples of the proposed building materials. The proposed materials are as follows:

Feature	Material
Roofing	Graphite standing seam metal
Siding	Horizontal fiber cement board with wood grain, Stonington gray and black
Fascia	Upper: Matte black metal. Lower: Western red cedar
Windows	Tempered glass with black aluminum clad wood frames
Entry Door	Ebony painted/stained wood
Deck Railings	Steel posts with wood top cap
Light Fixtures	Goose neck down light, color unspecified



Figure 2: Previous Design, Rear Elevation, Facing Truckee River



Figure 3: Current Design, Rear Elevation, Facing Truckee River



Figure 4: Previous Design, Front Elevation, Facing SE River Street



Figure 5: Current Design, Front Elevation, Facing SE River Street

Applicant-Provided Project Information and Staff Responses

On August 27th, the applicant provided a response to the Planning Commission's comments from the July 2025 meeting. This response letter is included in Attachment No. 2. In their comments, the applicant provided a summary of their proposed changes in response to the Planning Commission's comments:

1. **Applicant Team:** Roof was left as is.

Staff Response: The Planning Commission did not propose or suggest any specific changes to the roof; however, the proposed design combines three separate types of roof forms in a single residence. This is not typical of historic construction and does not maintain the desired tradition of building. In this case, there is not a dominant roof element, but rather a mix of varying gable forms, two shed forms on the front façade and a long, cross gable ridgeline. In staff's opinion, the design of the roof remains inconsistent with the historic design guidelines, as noted in the Matrix of Historic Design Guidelines included in this report.

- Applicant Team:** We changed all the siding to be horizontal. We removed the wood accents as well as the metal siding at the basement. The material at the basement will be horizontal siding to match the rest of the house but painted Historical Color HC190 Black. We removed the stone veneer and are just using concrete where it is necessary to retain dirt.

Staff Response: The revision of vertical siding to horizontal and removal of the full-story height stone veneer is more consistent with the historic design guidelines. Horizontal siding is a more typical design seen in historic residences in the River Character Area. Although the specific colors noted in the Applicant's response letter are not from the Sherwin Williams historic palette, the colors are not out of character for a new residence in the area, and are similar to colors found in the Sherwin Williams historic palette.

- Applicant Team:** We revised all the windows to have a true ½ width to height giving the whole house a more traditional and cohesive feel. We removed the sliding door system in the dining room and replaced them with the true ½ width to height windows. We added divided lights and breaks in the living room doors, so they read as windows when closed, giving the rear elevation more of a consistent language. We removed or reduced windows in the following areas: kitchen, dining, both upper bedrooms, primary bedroom and bath, mud room, garage, and basement.

Staff Response: Although some glazing has been reduced, the overall change in window size and quantity is minimal. Large windows continue to dominate the front and rear elevations, which continues to contribute to an overall mountain modern construction style typically seen throughout the non-historic parts of Truckee. Although the Planning Commission specifically requested that the design be revised to remove sliding glass or stackable glass doors on the rear elevation facing the river, the current design includes large glass doors at the living room, dining room, basement, and primary bedroom balcony.

- Applicant Team:** [For the front door] Painted/stained wood (ebony full body stain) is what is proposed with more of a traditional pattern.

Staff Response: Revising the front door from powder-coated metal to painted wood is more appropriate within the Historic District.

- Applicant Team:** We maintained the porch and added more depth in front of the office with a post beam support to give it a more traditional layout.

Staff Response: The front porch remains a portion of the proposed design that is consistent with the Historic Design Guidelines and particularly is common on historic structures within the River Character Area.

- Applicant Team:** [For the garage door] Painted/stained wood (ebony full body stain) to match front door is what is proposed with more of a traditional pattern.

Staff Response: The Planning Commission did not specifically note that the garage door design should be revised; however, the incorporation of painted wood to match the new design of the front door is an appropriate use of materials for the River Character Area.

- Applicant Team:** [For the light fixtures] See revised to a traditional exterior sconce goose neck down light only.



Figure 6: Proposed exterior light fixtures

Staff Response: A goose neck down light is typically appropriate for the historic downtown and is likely consistent with the Town’s Dark Sky Ordinance; however, the Applicant has not specified the exact light fixture or color proposed.

- 8. **Applicant Team:** [For the deck rails] We added more detail to the metal railing to give it more of a crafted traditional feel.



Figure 7: Proposed deck railing design

Staff Response: The proposed deck railing is black steel posts with a horizontal design and a wood top cap. The previous design was noted as the same: black steel posts with a wood top cap. Figure 7, above, from the Applicant’s response letter shows the new proposed design, and Figure 8, below, is the previous design for the railing as reviewed at the July 2025 Planning Commission meeting. The currently proposed deck railing design is essentially unchanged from the previously proposed deck railing design. At the July Planning Commission meeting, the Planning Commission specifically noted the design of the handrails should be revised to be more traditional. In staff’s opinion, the new design does not respond to the Planning Commission’s comment.



Figure 8: Previous deck railing design

9. **Applicant Team:** We feel that with the simplicity of the traditional form and all horizontal siding this home is a contemporary interpretation of a historical style. See A-3.0 [of attached project plans] for contextual neighborhood photos.

Staff Response: The Historic Design Guidelines note that new interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged, with new design that draws upon the fundamental similarities among historic buildings in the community. The guidelines also note that often, a contemporary interpretation of those architectural styles seen historically will work best. Chapter 3 of the Historic Design Guidelines identifies eight specific historic architectural styles: Folk/Vernacular, Folk Victorian, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Craftsman, Queen Anne, Commercial Vernacular, and Railroad/Industrial. The Applicant notes that the proposed residence is simply and traditional in form, however does not identify any specific historic architectural style that the proposed residence is intended to interpret in a modern context. Instead, the bulk and mass, large roof form, and extensive glazing is more typical of a mountain modern architectural style typically seen in throughout Truckee in non-historic neighborhoods. In staff's opinion, the design does not interpret any historic architectural style and remains inconsistent with the Historic Design Guidelines.

10. **Applicant Team:** See A-3.0 [of attached project plans] for color choices as well as contextual images from the River Character district.

Staff Response: Although the Applicant did not utilize the Sherwin Williams historic palette for paint color choices, the proposed color scheme is similar to the historic palette and is not out of place within the Historic Preservation Overlay.

General Plan Consistency

The project site is located within the Low Density Residential General Plan land use designation. This land use designation allows single-family detached units. Some relevant General Policies related to Community Character are highlighted below.

Goal CC-2 (Night Sky). *Protect views of the night sky as an important natural and scenic resource in Truckee and minimize the effects of light pollution.* The proposed project includes large windows and

glass doors on the front and rear elevations. Large amounts of glazing introduce the possibility of light pollution with interior lighting when windows are not covered.

Goal CC-4 (Historic and Cultural Resources). *Protect and restore historic, tribal cultural, archeological, and paleontological resources that enrich a sense of history and respect for our environment.* This goal is applicable due to the subject property’s location within the Town of Truckee’s Historic District. The proposed project is inconsistent with the Historic Design Guidelines as described below. The mass and scale of the proposed residence is substantially larger than typical historic homes in the River Character Area. The larger home will dominate the view of the neighborhood from Bridge Street and from vantages across the river on East River Street and is inconsistent with River Character Area Design Guidelines and Guidelines for New Buildings, described later in this report, as a result. Additionally, the rooflines and large windows create a more complex modern design that is atypical for and inconsistent with the River Character Area. The modern, complex architecture of the structure will detract from the historic character of the neighborhood.

Downtown Truckee Plan Consistency

The project site is located within Truckee’s Downtown, and the Downtown Truckee Plan is applicable. Some relevant vision and guiding principals applicable to the project are highlighted below:

Downtown Plan Vision 1.1.1	Mountain Town Character. Downtown Truckee will continue to remain: 1. A mountain town rooted in western history. 2. The social, cultural, and economic heart of the community. 3. Uniquely eclectic.	Inconsistent
Downtown Plan Vision 1.1.1 Principle 1	Protect the significant features that distinguish Downtown Truckee. Downtown Truckee’s historic districts and neighborhoods, scenic river, and mountain views. Ensure new development is compatible with Truckee’s historic character and well-integrated with the area’s natural setting.	Inconsistent

The project as designed is inconsistent with the vision and principle noted above. Specifically, the large modern design is not reflective of the western history of Truckee, nor is it compatible with the area’s historic character. A design that interprets an architectural style historically found in the historic downtown could be consistent with this vision and principle.

Development Code Consistency

The project site is located in the Downtown Single Family (DRS-10) zoning district. The project is also located in the Historic Preservation Overlay (-HP) zone and subject to approval of a Zoning Clearance and Certificate of Appropriateness. Staff did not identify any issues related to consistency with the DRS-10 development standards and no further analysis is provided in this staff report.

Development Code Section 18.26 (Historic Preservation Design Guidelines) references the Historic Preservation Overlay District Design Guidelines provided in Volume III of the Downtown Specific Plan, which are intended to guide property owners and project designers in understanding the Town’s goals for attaining high-quality development that is sensitive to and compatible with the historic character of the downtown area.

The Historic Design Guidelines contain specific direction regarding the River Character Area and General Guidelines for New Buildings. Relevant standards are detailed in the Applicable Guidelines Section below.

Applicable Historic Design Guidelines

The following is a list of historic design guidelines that should be considered by the Planning Commission for the proposed single-family residence. Please note that this list does not contain all policies, standards and guidelines applicable to this project. Please refer to attachments to the July 2025 Planning Commission staff report (Attachment No. 3 to this report) for Chapter 13 (General Guidelines for New Buildings) and Chapter 17 (Design Guidelines for the River Character Area) of the Historic Design Guidelines.

<p>River Character Area Design Guideline 1A</p>	<p>Positive Open Space: Open spaces should be developed to enhance yards and view corridors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open spaces should not simply be “left over” space. 2. Develop outdoor areas that promote pedestrian activity. 	<p>Consistent</p>
<p>River Character Area Design Guideline 2A</p>	<p>Views: Preserve views to significant features such as the Truckee River</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respecting established side yard setbacks will help maintain views to the river. 2. Alternative positioning of buildings on the site may be considered when doing so would maintain significant view corridors. 3. Landscaping is encouraged, and in some situations, may be required in order to mitigate other visual impacts. Such landscaping, when mature, should maintain existing views and solar access corridors. 	<p>Partially consistent</p>
<p>River Character Area Design Guideline 2B</p>	<p>Views: Building forms that respect existing views are encouraged</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For example, rectangular forms oriented with the long side perpendicular to the street will often provide views through the property. 2. Reduced building footprints that increase side yard view corridors are also encouraged. 	<p>Inconsistent</p>
<p>River Character Area Design Guideline 3A</p>	<p>Building Setbacks: Maintain the alignment of building fronts along the street</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setbacks should fall within the established range of setbacks for the block. 2. For additions to existing buildings, set them back from the front of the 	<p>Consistent</p>

	structure such that they do not alter the perceived character of the front.	
River Character Area Design Guideline 4A	Building Orientation: Orient a new building parallel to its lot lines, similar to that of historic buildings	Consistent
River Character Area Design Guideline 5A	Plant Materials: Incorporate existing stands of native vegetation in landscape plans	Consistent
River Character Area Design Guideline 5B	Plant Materials: For properties adjacent to the Truckee River, maintain the natural character of the river edge	Consistent
River Character Area Design Guideline 5C	Plant Materials: Preserve and enhance wildlife habitats along the river edge	Consistent
River Character Area Design Guideline 6A	Mass and Scale: New construction should appear similar in mass and scale to historic structures found in the River Character Area. 1. Break up the massing of larger buildings into components that reflect this traditional size.	Inconsistent
River Character Area Design Guideline 7A	Building and Roof Form: Use building forms similar to those used traditionally in the River Character Area.	Inconsistent
River Character Area Design Guideline 7B	Building and Roof Form: The simple forms of gable, hip and shed roofs are appropriate. 1. Dormers should be simple and subordinate to the overall roof form. 2. Alternative roof element shapes may be considered in instances where views and solar access are to be protected and preserved.	Inconsistent
River Character Area Design Guideline 7C	Building and Roof Form: Roofs should be similar in size to those used historically on comparable buildings.	Inconsistent
River Character Area Design Guideline 7D	Building and Roof Form: Buildings adjacent to the Truckee River should step down in height toward the river edge of the property.	Inconsistent
River Character Area Design Guideline 8A	Porches: The use of a porch is strongly encouraged and it should appear similar to those seen traditionally. 1. The porch floor and roof height shall appear similar to those seen traditionally on the block. 2. Use similar building design elements and materials as those seen traditionally. 3. The front porch shall be "functional," in	Consistent

	that it is used as a means of access to the entry.	
Guidelines for New Buildings 1A	<p>Building Setbacks: Maintain the pattern of alignment for building fronts in the Character Area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In a residential context, where similar front setbacks are characteristic, maintain the alignment of uniformly setback facades. 2. In a residential context, where variety in building setbacks is a part of the historic context, locating a new building within the traditional range of setbacks is appropriate. 3. In some cases, site constraints may prevent aligning a new building with the historic context. In these situations, using landscaping elements such as fencing and walls to define these lines should be considered. 	Consistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 2A	<p>Building Orientation: Orient a new building parallel to its lot lines in a manner similar to that of historic building orientations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This orientation also should be compatible with any distinctive lot patterns in the relevant Character Area (Exceptions may apply in the Hilltop and Railroad Character Areas). 2. This applies to both primary and accessory structures. 	Consistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 2B	<p>Building Orientation: Orient the primary entrance of a building toward the street.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buildings should have a clearly defined primary entrance. For example, provide a recessed entryway on a commercial building, or provide a porch on a residential structure, to define its entry. 2. The gable end of a structure should also face the street. 3. Entrances on the rear or sides of buildings should clearly be secondary to those on the front. 4. Exceptions apply in the Hilltop and Railroad Character Areas, where buildings may orient to a shared open space. 	Partially Consistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 2C	<p>Building Orientation: In some cases two dwellings appear on the same lot. In situations where the historic building is set to the back of</p>	Not applicable

	<p>the lot it may be appropriate for a new building to be in front of the existing historic building.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. 2. New construction should be historically compatible with the existing structure on the lot. 3. This option would be appropriate in a case where the historic building does not have a strong orientation to the street that would be altered by construction of a new building on the site. 	
Guidelines for New Buildings 3A	<p>Mass and Scale: New construction should appear similar in size to historic structures found in the Character Area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Break up the massing of larger buildings into components that reflect this traditional size. 2. An exception may be a new civic or institutional building that is intended to be a dominant feature in the Character Area. 	Inconsistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 3B	<p>Mass and Scale: A façade should appear similar in dimension to those seen historically in the town.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Typically, a residential building front ranges from 20 to 25 feet in width, with larger residences ranging from 30 to 35 feet in width. Additional widths were accomplished with a setback or change in building plane. 2. Commercial buildings typically had building fronts ranging from 15 to 30 feet in width. 3. Civic and institutional buildings may vary from the typical façade dimensions. 	Inconsistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 4A	<p>Building Form: In a new building use forms that are similar to those found traditionally in the Character Area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The overall building form should be similar to historic buildings found in the specific Character Area. 2. Maintain the traditional proportions (height to width to depth) in the Character Area. 	Inconsistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 4B	<p>Building Form: Use traditional roof forms.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sloping roof forms, such as gable and shed, should be the dominant roof 	Inconsistent

	<p>shapes in residential contexts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Non-traditional roof forms are inappropriate. 3. Flat roof lines are appropriate on commercial structures on Commercial Row. 	
Guidelines for New Buildings 4C	<p>Building Form: The number and size of dormers should be limited on a roof, such that the primary roof form remains prominent.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dormers should be used with restraint, in keeping with the simply character of buildings in Truckee. 	Inconsistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 4D	<p>Building Form: Roofs should be similar in size to those used historically on comparable buildings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The length of a roof ridge should not exceed those seen historically on comparable buildings. Historically, in residential contexts, the maximum ridge length was 35 to 40 feet. 	Inconsistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 5A	<p>Building Materials: Maintain the existing range of exterior wall materials found throughout the Character Area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appropriate materials for primary structures include horizontal lap siding, board-and-batten, shingles (in limited applications), brick and stone. 2. Stucco, where it is tinted earth tones in color and detailed to express visual interest and convey a sense of human scale will be considered on a base-by-case basis. For example, use reveals or scoring lines to create panels to establish a rhythm and texture along a wall, or provide moldings and frame openings that establish shadow lines and visual relief. Stucco shall not be the primary building material and may only be approved for use as a secondary material on a case-by-case basis. 3. Reflective materials, such as mirrored glass or polished metals, are inappropriate. 4. Rustic shakes are inappropriate. 5. Corrugated metal may be considered on accessory structures and as additive forms on commercial buildings. 	Partially consistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 5B	<p>Building Materials: Exterior wood finishes should appear similar to those used historically.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain protective coatings of paint or 	Consistent

	<p>stain on exterior wood siding.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The lap dimensions of siding should be similar to that found traditionally (i.e., four to five inches of lap exposure). 	
Guidelines for New Buildings 5C	<p>Building Materials: Masonry should appear similar to that used historically.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Masonry unit sizes should be similar to those found traditionally. 2. The texture and color of the brick also should be similar. 	Consistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 5D	<p>Building Materials: Newer, synthetic materials may be considered, if they appear similar in character and detailing to traditional building materials.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New materials must have a demonstrated durability in this climate and have the ability to be repaired under reasonable conditions. 2. Details of synthetic siding should match that of traditional wood siding. The lap dimensions of synthetic siding should be similar to that of historic wood-lap siding, which are typically four to five inches of exposure. 3. Physical samples of any synthetic materials may be required, and their use will be approved on a case-by-case basis. 	Consistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 5E	<p>Building Materials: For larger buildings and projects on large parcels, consider a combination of appropriate materials as a means to reduce the apparent size of the project.</p>	Partially consistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 5F	<p>Building Materials: Materials should be applied in a manner similar to that used historically.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For example, brick veneer should not have "float" above a wood clapboard wall. 	Consistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 6A	<p>Roof Materials: Roof materials on new buildings should appear similar to those used historically.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Composite shingles in muted colors are appropriate. 2. Sawn wood shingles are appropriate for most building types. Rustic wood shakes are inappropriate. 3. Metal roofs may be considered. 	Consistent

Guidelines for New Buildings 6B	<p>Roof Materials: If they are to be used, metal roofs should be applied and detailed in a manner that does not distract from the historic appearance of the building.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Metal roof materials should be earth tones and have a matte, non-reflective finish. 2. Seams should be of a thin, low profile. 3. Many modern metal roofing materials do not have proportions that are appropriate to the historic character of the town and are inappropriate. 	Consistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 7A	<p>Design Character: respect the sense of time and place in all projects.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In all new construction, one should be able to perceive the character of the downtown as it was historically. Do not, however, attempt to create an exact perception of a point of time in the past. 	Inconsistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 7B	<p>Design Character: Avoid stylistic ornamentation that confuses the history of Truckee.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use ornamental details with constraint, and do not use historic details in a way that would confuse the history of the area. 	Inconsistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 7C	<p>Design Character: New interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A new design that draws upon the fundamental similarities among historic buildings in the community (without copying them) is preferred. This will allow new structures to be seen as products of their own time yet compatible with their historic neighbors. 2. The exact copying or replication of historic styles is discouraged. 	Inconsistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 8A	<p>Building Foundations: When designing a building foundation wall, design it to be compatible with similar historic buildings in the character area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The form, materials, and detailing of a foundation wall should be similar to that of nearby historic structures. 	Consistent
Guidelines for New Buildings 8B	<p>Building Foundations: On any sloped site the building foundation and form should step with the natural topography of the site.</p>	Inconsistent

Basic Principles for New Construction 1	Respect the design character of the nearby historic properties. Don't try to make a new building look older than it is. The copying or exact duplication of architectural styles or specific historic buildings is also inappropriate. Often, a contemporary interpretation of those architectural styles seen historically will work best.	Inconsistent
Basic Principles for New Construction 2	Maintain the setbacks and alignments of buildings in the surrounding context. A new building should be set back a similar distance from the street as those nearby historic buildings and incorporate a landscaped area that is in keeping with the neighborhood. Other alignments, such as those seen from similar eave heights, porch heights and the relative alignment of window and door moldings, are also important.	Consistent
Basic Principles for New Construction 3	Relate to the scale of nearby historic buildings. A new building should relate to the general size, shape and proportion of those buildings seen historically. It is equally important for a new building to use similar primary building materials, at least in appearance.	Inconsistent
Basic Principles for New Construction 4	In residential areas, relate to the size of lot patterns. A new building should be in proportion with the overall size of its lot. Generally, smaller homes are built on smaller lots and larger homes are reserved for larger lots. Although many of the lots and the traditional scale of single-family houses in the Character Areas are smaller than current tastes support, a new building should, to the greatest extent possible, maintain the established scale.	Inconsistent

Inconsistencies with Historic Design Guidelines

Mass and Scale

As noted above and described in the July 2025 Planning Commission staff report, the Historic Design Guidelines include a number of principles and/or guidelines underscoring the importance of maintaining an appropriate scale of new construction in relation to other historic structures. The gross floor area (including storage areas and garage) of the proposed residence is 4,795 square feet. If approved as designed, the residence would be the largest on the street and larger than all but three nonresidential historic structures in the River Character Area, including hotels. Historic residences in the River Character Area are typically 1,000 to 2,500 square feet in size and two stories in height.

Based on the proposed building size, the project results in a structure that is out of scale for the River Character Area and surrounding neighborhood. River Character Area Design Guideline 6.A.1 specifically

notes that new construction should appear similar in mass and scale to historic structures found in the River Character Area.

There were no changes to the design that addressed inconsistencies related to mass and scale. The project remains the same floor area and massing. As a result, it is staff's opinion that the required findings to approve the project with the current mass and scale cannot be made. The proposed size should be reduced to be similar in mass and scale with the Character Area's historic structures, the historic development patterns, and the policy framework of the General Plan, Downtown Truckee Plan and Historic Design Guidelines.

Number of Stories

As noted in the Guidelines, residences in the Character Area range from one to two stories but are typically one and one-half stories. Therefore, the tradition of one to two-story street facades should be continued. As proposed, this residence would be one of only a few three-story structures in the entire Character Area, including non-residential structures. Staff's concern is that three-story residences are not part of the traditional River Character Area building pattern and that the height of the north elevation of the structure would become a focus of the view from Bridge Street and could dominate the existing historic residences within the Character Area. There have been no changes from the previous design that would revise the number of stories from either the street or from the river side, and staff's opinion is that the project remains inconsistent with the Historic Design Guidelines.

Windows

Historic window patterns for Truckee typically included utilitarian, smaller-scale windows with limited openings within the building facades. The proposed design the project maintains large, numerous windows and glass doors that dominate the front and rear elevations of the residence. This is typical of a modern design not historically seen in the surrounding area. It is staff's opinion that the scale of fenestration will detract from the historic character of the neighborhood and is inconsistent with the Historic Design Guidelines. The reduction in window size and quantity from the July 2025 project design was minimal and does not address the overall concern with the size and quantity of glazing in the design. The revised design retains stacking glass doors on the rear elevation, despite Planning Commission's recommendation to remove them from the design.

Findings

Because the Community Development Director elevated the project to the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission is the decision maker on the Historic Design Review and requested permits. Staff does not believe that the findings necessary to approve the project can be made, and the attached Resolution 2025-10 (Attachment 1) includes findings for denial of the project. Should the Commission find the project is consistent with the Historic Design Guidelines, the Commission may continue the meeting and direct Town staff to prepare a revised resolution based on new Planning Commission findings and return at a future Commission meeting with the modified documents, including an updated environmental determination.

The findings necessary for issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness (Development Code Section 18.77 – Historic Design Review) are listed here and within Exhibit A of Draft Resolution 2025-10:

1. The project, including its character, scale and quality of design, are consistent with the purpose of this Chapter and all applicable development standards and historic design guidelines;
2. With regard to a designated historic resource, the proposed work will neither adversely affect the significant architectural features of the designated historic resource nor adversely affect

- the character of historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value of the designated resource and its site;
3. With regard to any property located within the District, the proposed work conforms to the historic design guidelines for the district and does not adversely affect the character of the district;
 4. In case of construction of a new improvement, addition, building, or structure upon a designated historic resource site, the exterior of such improvements will not adversely affect and will be compatible with the use and exterior of existing designated historic resources, improvements, buildings, natural features and structures on said site.
 5. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan, the Downtown Specific Plan and any applicable master plan.

Environmental Review:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission find that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) does not apply to projects which a public agency rejects or disapproves pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15270 (Projects Which Are Disapproved).

If the Planning Commission decides to approve the project, the Planning Commission should make new findings in support of the appeal and continue the meeting. Staff would then notice the project with a different environmental determination and prepare the revised resolution with the Planning Commission's findings for review and adoption at a future Planning Commission meeting. At this time, staff has yet to make an environmental determination for approval of the project.

Public Communication:

The public hearing notice was published in the *Sierra Sun* on November 7, 2025 and mailed on November 6, 2025 to all property owners within 500 feet of the project site, as shown on the latest current tax roll of Nevada County. Public comments received on this project as of the publishing of this report are included as Attachment 9 to this staff report.

Staff Summary and Recommendation:

The historic downtown is central to the Town's identity, vibrancy, and success as an authentic, historic mountain town. Protection of historic resources and the overall historic district that enrich a sense of history and respect for our environment is an identified goal in the Community Character Element of the 2040 General Plan. As noted throughout the Historic Design Guidelines, traditionally, buildings in Truckee were simple in character. This is a fundamental characteristic that is vital to the preservation of the historic integrity of the Downtown. New buildings should be distinguished as more recent additions to the community, albeit in a subtle way such that the overall historic character is conveyed. Regardless of stylistic treatment, a new building should appear simple in form and detail, in keeping with the tradition of Truckee. Buildings should also be visually compatible with the older structures in the Character Areas without being direct copies of them.

In order to achieve these objectives, staff believes there are several changes that could be made to the proposal which would bring it into better alignment with the Guidelines and that with these changes, a recommendation to approve the project could be forwarded to the Commission. The following is a summary of and rationale behind those changes:

Reduction of Mass and Scale

In order to bring the project into better alignment with the Guidelines' direction for 1 to 1.5 story homes and homes which are in scale with the District's historic structures, staff recommended the elimination of the basement level to create a smaller, two-story structure. Elimination of the basement level also reduces the floor area to approximately 4,140 square feet. While more appropriate for the River Character Area, this building size would remain approximately 1,947 square feet larger than the average size of historic structures in the River Character Area.

Reduction of and Change to Window Glazing

The quantity of and styling of glazing on the proposed residence should be reduced and modified to create an architectural design that appears less modern, and more consistent with building designs historically seen within the River Character Area.

Considering these suggested changes to the project design for consistency with the Historic Design Guidelines, staff believes a project could be approved in the future. However, without these modifications, staff recommends that the Planning Commission deny the Vangorder Residence Historic Design Review based on the findings in Exhibit A of Resolution 2025-10.

Alternative Actions:

1. Find that the proposed project is consistent with the Historic Design Guidelines, River Character Area and surrounding historic development patterns. Findings and a CEQA determination will need to be made to support this decision. If the Commission wishes to use this action, staff requests that the Commission provide direction on the approval findings.
2. Continue the public hearing to a date and time certain. The Planning Commission may request additional information from the appellant and/or staff. (If new information is presented at the next meeting, the public portion of the hearing must be reopened on the new information submitted.)
3. Direct the applicant to continue working with staff on a design that can be approved by the Community Development Director. If the Commission wishes to use this action, staff requests that the Commission provide direction on requested design changes.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Resolution 2025-10

Attachment 2 – Applicant Response Letter

Attachment 3 – July 15, 2025 Planning Commission Staff Report Link:

<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=59855604&repo=r-6a91ddbc>

Attachment 4 – July 15, 2025 Planning Commission Minutes Link:

<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=59891599&repo=r-6a91ddbc>

Attachment 5 – March 12, 2025 HPAC Staff Report Link:

<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=59805445&repo=r-6a91ddbc>

Attachment 6 – March 12, 2025 HPAC Minutes Link:

<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=59896860&repo=r-6a91ddbc>

Attachment 7 – December 11, 2024 HPAC Staff Report Link:

<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=59764159&repo=r-6a91ddbc>

Attachment 8 – December 11, 2024 HPAC Minutes Link:

<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=59799149&repo=r-6a91ddbc>

Attachment 9 – Public Comments

Attachment 10 – Project Plans