

**Staff Report  
Community Development Department**

**DATE:** November 7, 2007

**APPLICATION NO.:** Site Plan Review 07-08, Historic District

**REQUEST:** (Appeal) Historic District Review for a request to make exterior alterations to an existing single family residence.

**APPLICANT:** Brian Gutierrez

**LOCATION:** 2912 Norman Street

**ZONING:** R2 (Multi-Family Residential)

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** High Density Residential

**ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO.:** 002:122:26

**ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT:** Categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15301(a), Exterior and Interior Modifications to an Existing Facility, of the California Quality Act Guidelines.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Deny the Appeal and uphold the recommendation of the Planning Commission with the Findings and Conditions of Approval as stated herein; and, further, staff recommends that gabled dormer Option 1 be the preferred alternative.

**BACKGROUND**

Alterations to buildings within a Historic District which are visible from the street require Planning Commission approval. The procedure is set forth in Section 10-4-10 of the Zoning Ordinance, which was codified in the early 1980's and received only minor changes when the Zoning Ordinance was rewritten consistent with the General Plan and adopted in 1990. On October 16, 2007, the Planning Commission considered a request for a Historic District Review for property located at 2912 Norman Street. The

Planning Commission conditionally approved the Historic District Review with the following conditions:

- Redesign of the dormer and the design of the front porch shall be returned to the Planning Commission for review and approval.
- The street address for each unit shall be visible from Norman Street.

Subsequent to the Commission's approval, an Appeal has been filed by Ms. Sharlene McCaslin of 2902 Norman Street. A copy of this Appeal and conditions upon which it is based is attached hereto as Appendix A.

When an Appeal such as this is filed, the application for the review begins anew. In other words, the Council has full discretion at reviewing any and all components of the proposals, including approval, conditional approval and denial.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

A request to alter the exterior appearance of an existing single family residence's west elevation (Norman Street) for a project located within the Bedford Avenue – Clay Street Residential Historic District. Requested west elevation alterations involve the following:

- Creating a new cross gable by raising the roof of the residence to accommodate the floor height necessary for second level unconditioned storage;
- Existing shed dormer to be altered to become the new gabled dormer;
- New dormer is requested with either two double-hung windows with 6 lights on top, or two double hung windows with ½ circle window above;
- Hardi plank halfround decorative siding is proposed above the new dormer windows and under the roof eave, with Hardi plank lap siding with 7.5 inch reveal proposed for the remainder of the new dormer;
- White, asphalt shingles are proposed for new dormer and the new gable roof;
- Existing 4" x 4" front porch supports will be replaced with similar or upgraded to 6" x 6" posts, and
- Existing carriage style garage doors to be replaced with a metal carriage style roll up door with half circle lights.

## PROJECT SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The site contains an existing single family residence (2912 Norman) that faces Norman Street along with a second structure containing two units (2908 and 2910 Norman). The second structure is located southeast of the single family residence. Off street parking for both uses is located to the rear of with parcel, along the property's east property line.

Additional improvements and alterations to the residence are planned by the applicant. These additional improvements and alterations involve changes to the single family residence's north, east and south elevations. However these improvements and alterations are not readily visible from Norman Street and therefore were not subject to Planning Commission review under City Code Sections 10-4-9 and 10-4-10 or the Council on appeal. This additional applicant exterior work is provided to show the Council the overall scope of the alterations to the home.

## SURROUNDING PROPERTIES

The site is located within the Bedford Avenue-Clay Street Residential Historic District. See Figure 1. The site is in a neighborhood that contains single and multi-family residences and uses. Recently the Planning Commission reviewed Site Plan Reviews 2007-04, 2007-05, 2007-06 that all involved exterior alterations to residences within this residential historic district.

**Figure 1.**



Source: City of Placerville Residential Historic District

## GENERAL PLAN / ZONING

The site has a General Plan Land Use designation of High Density Residential. It is zoned R2 (Multi-Family Residential). Both the land use designation and the zoning allow for single and multi-family residential uses. Additionally, per City Code Section 10-4-10, all construction, repairs or exterior alterations to new or existing buildings that are visible from the street must receive approval from the Planning Commission before a construction permit is issued.

## ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

The project was reviewed by Staff for potential exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It was determined to be categorically exempt from CEQA per Section 15301(a) of the California Quality Act Guidelines, in that it proposes an exterior alteration to an existing single-family residence. Additionally the existing home is not listed with the State Office of Historic Preservation or the City's Historic Resources Inventory.

## ANALYSIS

The Historic District Review is generally limited to those components/elevations that are visible from Norman Street. While the northern elevation is slightly visible from the street, it does not appear to be significant in terms of this review. The proposed changes to the front (Norman Street) elevation, described above, appear to contribute to the dwelling appearance and surrounding neighborhood character with context-appropriate treatment and materials.

In the spirit of the Planning Commission's conditional approval of the project, the applicant has submitted alternatives to the front second story dormer as requested. Enclosed in the applicant's submittals are options for the west (front) elevation. These are referred to as Option 2, 3, & 4. After review of these alternatives, it is the opinion of staff that Option 1 remains the most appropriate in contributing to the character of the existing residence and neighborhood. Options 2, 3, & 4 offer articulation changes that appear excessive or busy and, therefore, staff is of the opinion that Option 1 is the most appropriate alternative for the community.

The appellant's Appeal is based upon the claim that the Planning Commission failed to follow applicable State, Federal and local laws and guidelines, including California Office of Historic Preservation, Dept. of Parks and Recreation Technical Bulletin #10, California State Law and Historic Preservation, Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, El Dorado County General Plan "Preservation of Cultural Resources" and Placerville City Code Section 10-4-10 "Historical Buildings in the City".

## AGENDA

November 13, 2007

With respect to historical criteria mentioned above, Section 10-4-10(B) of the Zoning Ordinance states the following:

“Historical Criteria: The California State criteria as developed by the California Historical Advisory Committee "Statement of Policy" and this statement shall be used as the historical criteria for the purpose of this Section.”

In researching the criteria matter, staff was unable to locate the “Statement of Policy” referenced in Section 10-4-10(B) above. Consequently, staff contacted the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer and he offered the following with respect to criteria issues:

1. The State “historical advisory committee” almost certainly refers to the State Historical Resources Commission, even though the Commission took on its current name in the late 1970’s.
2. The “Statement of Policy” for historical criteria would refer to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, which the Commission has used as criteria for historical work on many occasions. (No one can recall an actual “Statement of Policy”.)
3. The easiest thing for the City to do is to rewrite Section (B) to delete discussion of the committee and the Statement of Policy, and simply use the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards as the historical criteria. This would be clearer, more accurate, and would bring the work into conformance with the CEQA Guidelines for impact to historical resources, which holds that work in conformance with the Standards does not have a significant impact to the environment.

In addition to the aforementioned, Section 10-4-10(I) states that the Planning Commission Secretary shall notify the Historical Advisory Committee of any application which is related to Historic District Review. The difficulty with this notification is that the Historical Advisory Committee (once an appointed committee of the City Council) disbanded in the late 1980’s. In lieu of advice from the Historical Advisory Committee, staff has been seeking advice on Historic District Review from the Placerville Heritage Association. The Placerville Heritage Association commented on this request and their letter is attached hereto. City Council should also be aware that criteria and/or guidelines is available and is used in reviewing Historic District projects. These are the same guidelines that staff proposed for adoption in the late 1980’s, however the matter was tabled for reasons staff can no longer recall.

With all of the above said, the decision makers have full discretion in their review of matters such as this, absent guidelines or the “Statement of Policy” referenced in Section 10-4-10(B) of the Zoning Ordinance. It appears that a possible solution with

respect to Historic District Review criteria is to “dust off” or resurrect the previous guidelines and policy shelved by the City Council in the late 1980’s.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is staff’s opinion that Option 1 contributes most to the character of the existing residence and surrounding neighborhood. Staff recommends that the City Council take the following action:

1. Adopt the Staff Report as part of the public record.
2. Make the following findings:
  - A. The project site is located within the City of Placerville, Bedford-Clay Street Residential Historic District.
  - B. The requested exterior alterations are categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15301(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, in that it proposes an exterior alteration to an existing single-family residence.
  - C. The exterior alteration of the existing single-family residence request is consistent with Policy 2 of Goal C of the Community Design Element of the General Plan, in that the style elements are compatible with the variable residential designs of residences within the residential historic district in the vicinity of the project site.
  - D. The request is consistent with Policy 1 of Goal I of the Community Design Element of the General Plan, in that the alterations proposed contribute positively to the City’s environment through its use of compatible architectural style, scale and materials found on site and within the Residential Historic District.
  - E. The request was reviewed and is consistent with the purpose and intent of the City Code §10-4-10 that is intended to protect the integrity of the Residential Historic District and individual structures located therein.
3. Deny the Appeal and uphold the recommendation of the Planning Commission with the Findings and Conditions of Approval as stated herein.

**Conditions of Approval**

1. Any proposed future change to the site or modification to the application beyond what is authorized under this permit shall be submitted to the Community Development Department for a determination of appropriate procedures.
2. Applicant shall submit plans for all work to the Building Division for review and permit issuance.
3. Approve gabled dormer Option 1 on the west elevation as shown on Sheet A-2 of the applicant's submittal.

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

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Steve Calfee  
Community Development Director

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John Driscoll  
City Manager/City Attorney