



"Placerville, a Unique Historical Past Forging into a Golden Future"

Planning Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: October 6, 2020

Prepared By: Pierre Rivas, Development Services Director

Subject: 3095 Cedar Ravine Road - Site Plan Review (SPR) 20-02 – To allow the demolition of a single-family residence and attached garage located within the Cedar Ravine Residential Historic District

Applicant / Owner: Michael McDermott

Site Data:

Location: 3095 Cedar Ravine Rd, at the southeast corner of Cedar Ravine Road and Victor Lane (Figure 1)

APN: 004-011-054

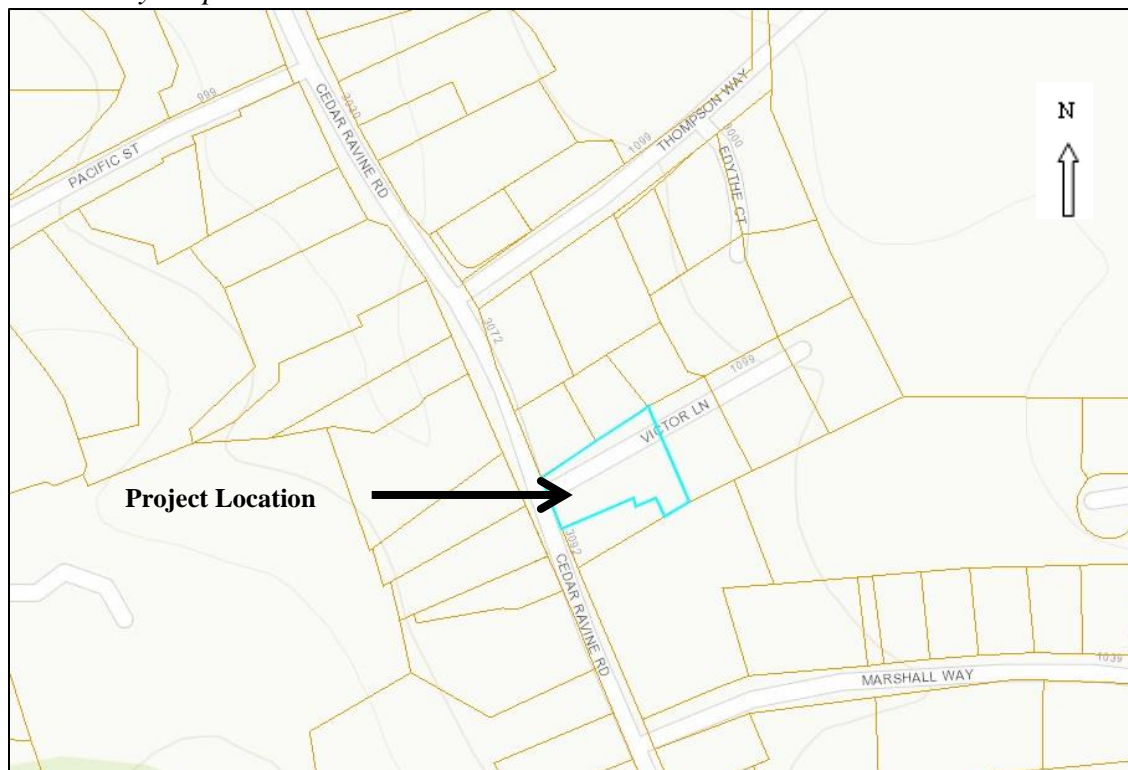
Lot Size: 0.33 acres

Zoning: R-3-H (Medium Density Multi-Family Residential Zone – Historic District)

General Plan

Land Use: High Density Residential (HD)

Vicinity Map





**3095 Cedar Ravine Road
(front)**

Overview: The applicant is seeking the demolition of this structure in order to redevelop the property. The applicant first sought approval to demolish the building in 2019, submitting a site plan review application (SPR 19-05) on October 21, 2019. The Planning Commission approved the request on February 7, 2020. An appeal of the Commissions decision was filed on January 16, 2020 by Jennifer Chapman. The City Council was scheduled to hear the appeal on February 25, 2020. Subsequent to the appeal hearing, the applicant withdrew his site plan review application on February 14, 2020. At the February 25th Council hearing, the Council vacated the January 7th approval by the Planning Commission and directed a refund of the appellants appeal fee. The subject application is identical to the original request with the exception that a historical resources evaluation (Attachment D) was performed and submitted with the new application.

Authority For Request: City Code regulations regarding buildings and structure demolition and discretionary review regulations involving the demolition of buildings and structures within the City. Demolition regulations are located in Title 4, Chapter 11. *Demolition of Buildings and Structures of the Placerville City Code* and Title 10, Chapter 4. Historical Buildings in the City, as follows:

- City Code Section 4-11-2(B)1, Demolition of Buildings and Structures;
(B) 1. Indicate if the building or structure is within a Historic District or is identified as a historic building or structure. If the building or structure falls into this category, an application for a site plan review is required by Section 10-4-10 of this Code and must be filed and fees paid.
- City Code Section 10-4-10, Historical Buildings in the City.

(D) *Existing Historical Buildings Preserved:* No presently existing building of special historical or aesthetic value or of the historic-type of architecture situated within

that portion of an historical district described in subsection (C) of this Section, shall be torn down, demolished or otherwise destroyed without conforming to this Section.

(E) *Building Removal; Permit Required:* In the event that any building of historical value or interest is damaged by fire, act of God, or in any other manner, or becomes unsafe as defined in the adopted City building codes, or in such state of disrepair or dilapidation as to be untenable by reason of any cause that it cannot with reasonable diligence be repaired and restored, the same may be removed upon issuance of a permit for removal as hereinafter provided.

(G) *Removal or Permit Issuance:* No permit for demolition or removal of any building of historical architecture or special historical or aesthetic interest situated within the area set forth in subsection (C) hereof shall be issued without the approval of the Planning Commission.

Existing Conditions:

Lot Description

The 1/3-acre parcel contains one approximately 1,100 square-foot single-family residence with attached single-car garage. The residence sits within the center of the lot, setback approximately 80 feet from Cedar Ravine Road and approximately 5 feet from Victor Lane. Curb, gutter and sidewalk exist along the portion of the site's Cedar Ravine Road frontage between Victor Ln and the neighboring parcel location at 3097 Cedar Ravine Road. Victor Lane is a 20-foot wide road and utility easement that crosses the northerly portion of the subject site parcel providing access to neighboring multi-family residential uses with addresses of 990, 996 and 1004 Victor Lane. Portions of the rear yard contain wood fencing.

Building Description

El Dorado County Assessor's records estimate the home, or a portion of it, was constructed in 1900. The home has a double gabled architecture sheathed in composition shingles. Staff believes the home was likely added to over time that resulted in its two north-south oriented gables. The west elevation (Cedar Ravine Road) gable is shorter in length than its companion east elevation (rear yard) gable. A covered entry porch extends along the west elevation and wraps around a portion of the home's south elevation. The covered porch is supported by square vertical structural supports and has an open railing. On the facade there is horizontal lap siding. Most windows have wood frames, sashes, sills and trim. The two front windows that flank the main door entry and three of the windows along the east elevation show evidence of storm window framing. Stairs provide access to the porch and the front door from the front yard. City permit records for the site begin in 1966 for an aluminum patio cover. There is no evidence of a patio cover structure on the site. Staff photos taken during site visit on December 13 and 16, 2019 are provided as **Attachment A**.

The previous property owner had been under code enforcement for unsafe conditions at the subject site since 2011, culminating on July 6, 2016 when the home was posted by the City Building Official as unsafe to occupy due to dilapidated interior and exterior conditions after a site inspection by Development Services Department and Police Department staff. Due to the lack of cooperation by the previous property owner to correct the unsafe conditions, and placing a tenant

within the building posted as unsafe to occupy, the City went to the El Dorado County Superior Court on August 20, 2018 to put the home and property into receivership. Court action placed possession of the property into the control of a receiver. During 2018 the receiver put to property up for sale. On June 13, 2019 the property was sold to Michael McDermott. Mr. McDermott is the applicant for this request.

Cedar Ravine Residential Historic District

The project site is located within the Cedar Ravine Residential Historic District. The City Council established Residential Historical Districts in 1981 upon the adoption of Ordinance 1280. The non-contiguous historical districts include four areas within the City:

Spring Street - Coloma Street
 Bedford Avenue - Clay Street
 Cedar Ravine
 Sacramento Street - Chamberlain Street

During 1984 and 1985 a survey inventory of existing historic resources within the City was prepared under the direction of Laarveld House, a City hired consultant, and community volunteers. This work was funded by a grant administered by the California Department of Parks and Recreation of Federal Grant funds under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, along with matching City funding. A historic survey is a process of systematically identifying, researching, and documenting properties that reflect important themes in the city's growth and development such as architecture, city planning, social history, ethnic heritage, politics, industry, transportation, commerce, entertainment and others.

Property addresses on Cedar Ravine Road surveyed in 1984 and 1985 included:

- 3048 Cedar Ravine Road (John Blair House - now 980 Pacific St. – constructed 1886);
- 3059 Cedar Ravine Road (Combella-Blair House – constructed 1895);
- 3062 Cedar Ravine Road (Blair – Thompson Home – constructed circa 1851);
- 3116 Cedar Ravine Road (Sheppard House – constructed 1898), and
- 3139 Cedar Ravine Road.

These buildings were described in the survey as appearing “to be eligible for the National Registry on an individual basis.” However, the subject property at 3095 Cedar Ravine Road was not surveyed.

General Plan and Zoning

The project site is designated on the land use map of the Placerville General Plan as “High Density Residential” and zoned R-3-H (Medium Density Multi-Family Residential – Historic District Zone).

Within the General Plan are the following goals and policies pertaining to historic resources:

Section V. Natural, Cultural, and Scenic Resources

- Goal G: To preserve and enhance Placerville’s historical heritage.
 - Policy 1. The City shall set as a high priority the protection and enhancement of Placerville’s historically and architecturally significant buildings and sites.

- Policy 2. The City shall encourage all public and private efforts to preserve and promote Placerville's historical heritage for economic benefits associated with increasing tourist trade.
- Policy 6. The City shall support the efforts of property owners to preserve and renovate historic and architecturally significant structures. Where buildings cannot be preserved intact, the City shall seek to preserve the building facades.

Although the above goals and policies seek the protection and preservation of historic and architecturally significant structures within the City, it appears that as analyzed, the residence at 3095 Cedar Ravine Road does not meet the criteria of a historical resource.

Application Submittal Package: **Attachment B** contains Mr. McDermott's submittal package. This package contains photos of the home's interior current condition; a parcel survey document; the applicant's request narrative; information regarding historic value; an exhibit "Exhibit B" from the City's Notice and Order that was recorded by the City against the property that summarizes the conditions and violations that constituted a public nuisance and unsafe to occupy condition prior to the El Dorado County Superior Court putting the home and property into receivership during August 2018; and, a 2019 inspection disclosure of the home.

Attachment C contains recorded property documents (chain of property title) submitted by the property receiver.

Attachment D contains an archeological survey of the property and historical resources evaluation (Report) of the house prepared by Mary L. Maniery, PAR Environmental Services, Inc. on the subject property. The report was prepared utilizing the California Department of Parks and Recreation's Form DPR 523A.

Analysis: The applicant presented staff with his intent to demolish the existing residential building located at located at 3095 Cedar Ravine Road to make way for redevelopment of the site involving the construction of a duplex. Given the home is located within a City designated Historic District, the request for Site Plan Review to demolish is required and is the subject of this application review.

A component of this review is to determine if the subject property meets the definition of a "historical resource" as defined in Section 15064.5(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

Staff utilized recorded property documents (chain of property title) contained in **Attachment C** submitted by the property receiver, online research and site investigation of the property during its analysis, and the historical resources evaluation prepared by PAR. The determination of eligibility was based on an evaluation of the integrity and significance of the property in light of the eligibility criteria for listing in the California Register and criteria for designation as a historic resource.

An archeological survey of the property and historical resources evaluation (Report) of the house was prepared by Mary L. Maniery, PAR Environmental Services, Inc. on the subject property (**Attachment D**). The report was prepared utilizing the California Department of Parks and Recreation's Form DPR 523A. The Report concluded that "the property does not meet Criteria 4

for its scientific value. Given the lack of importance under any criteria and compromised integrity, this property does not qualify for inclusion in the California Register of Historic Resources as an individual property and is not considered a resource for the purposes of CEQA. Since 1985 the City of Placerville identified four districts within the City as potential National Register districts, including Cedar Ravine Historic District.” Due to the number of homes removed, new infill development, and modifications made to existing buildings; “It is unlikely that the Cedar Ravine Historic District qualifies today for the California Register...” If a district was present, however, the Turney home at 3095 Cedar Ravine Road would not be considered a contributing feature because of the many modifications and changes that have occurred to the home since 1940.”

Eligibility Criteria

State of California Section 5024.1(c), Title 14 CCR, Section 4852 of the California Public Resources Code defines the criteria to be considered eligible for listing in the California Register:

A resource may be listed as an historical resource in the California Register if it meets any of the following [National Register] criteria:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
 2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
 3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
 4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history with any known significant people or events.
- The property was owned between 1874 and 1901 by Janet Turney (Blair), daughter of John and Agnes Blair and brother of James, Matthew and Robert Blair, and wife of James Turney. The property was then owned by Francis Turney, daughter of Janet Turney, between 1901 and 1944. The Blair family is associated with the lumber industry of Placerville and the greater El Dorado County area.
 - No evidence was found that the home or site is associated with events that contribute to California history and cultural heritage.
 - The residence is in poor condition as evidenced in this public record; it does not possess the integrity to contribute to the historic district, nor does it embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values of an architectural style.
 - No evidence yielded or may be likely to yield information of prehistory of the site or history of the Turney or other family histories. The Blair family history is well documented due to property and businesses owned and operated, as mentioned, in and around Placerville.

Environmental Determination

The project has been reviewed under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations. On December 16, 2019, the

application was deemed complete and determined by staff to be categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 Class 1 (l)(1) because the proposed project consists of the demolition and removal of an existing dilapidated residence.

It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activities in question may have an effect on the environment, as defined by CEQA.

Conclusion: In summary, the residential structure proposed to be demolished by the applicant is neither identified with historically significant events, or exemplifies an important period of local history, reflects the architecture of a period of significance. Further, the building does not meet state, or local criteria to deem the buildings historically significant based on staff analysis and information in the public record. Therefore, the subject buildings do not qualify as a “historical resource” as defined by CEQA and the demolition of the subject structures would have no impact in causing a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Recommendation: Staff recommends the Planning Commission make the following findings and then conditionally approve the demolition of the home and attached garage located at 3095 Cedar Ravine Road by taking the following action:

I. Based on consideration of the whole record before it, including but not limited to, the staff report, public testimony received at the public hearing on this matter, and evidence made part of the public record, the Planning Commission hereby finds that the subject structure does not meet any of the following criteria and therefore is not a historic resource:

1. *Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;*

Title research indicates that the residential structure was occupied by a series of individuals beginning in 1874. There is no evidence to suggest that the home or site is associated with events that contribute to California history and cultural heritage.

2. *Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;*

There is no evidence to suggest that the owners or tenants of the residential structure made significant contributions to local, state or national history that would distinguish them from other residents in the City of Placerville.

3. *Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or*

No evidence was found indicating that the residential structure is the work of a notable architect or builder. It is a modest residential structure of standard construction for its time. It does not appear to employ any distinctive architectural characteristics, innovations, or possess high artistic value.

4. *Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history with any known significant people or events.*

No evidence yielded or may be likely to yield information of prehistory of the site or history of the Turney or other family histories. The Blair family history is well documented due to property and businesses owned and operated, as mentioned, in and around Placerville.

- II. The request is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 Class 1 (I)(1) because the proposed project consists of the demolition and removal of an existing dilapidated residence.
- III. Conditionally approve SPR 20-02 to allow the demolition of a single-family residence and detached garage located at 3095 Cedar Ravine Road, subject to the following condition:
 - 1. Before demolition of the home may commence, a Demolition Permit shall be obtained from the Building Division, subject to the permit, safety and bonding requirements under City Code Title 4, Chapter 11: Demolition of Buildings and Structures.

Attachment A

Staff Site Visit Photos – December 13 and 16, 2019



Cedar Ravine Elevation (front)



12/13/2019 09:15

Front Door



12/16/2019 09:28

Garage



**South Elevation 1
(side)**



South Elevation 2



East Elevation (rear)





North Elevations (Victor Lane)

Attachment B

Applicant Submittal Package

Attachment C

Chain of Title

Attachment D

California Department of Parks and Recreation
Form 523A (Archeological and Historical Evaluation)
Prepared by Mary L. Maniery, PAR Environmental Services, Inc.

Public Comment

Email from Denise Wessels - 3095 Cedar Ravine Road