



Community Development Department – Planning Division

DATE: January 24, 2023

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Renee Nickenig, Assistant Planner, Architectural Historian (Secretary of the Interior Professional Qualification Standards)

SUBJECT: **Certificate of Appropriateness for an Alteration to an Historical Landmark Site (905 Irwin Street)/ Historic Landmark District (French Quarter)**
[PLAN22-164, CA22-001]

An application has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness pursuant to San Rafael Municipal Code (SRMC) [Section 2.18.060](#), for an exterior alteration in a Historic Landmark District visible from the public street. Pursuant to SRMC [Section 2.18.062](#), a Certificate of Appropriateness is a determination that the proposal would not have a significant impact upon, or is not potentially detrimental to, the landmark site or historic district.

The project site at 905 Irwin Street is designated as an individual Historical Landmark Site (Resolution No. 5536) and is included in the French Quarter Historic Landmark District (Resolution No. 5537).

The site was initially surveyed in 1976 as an example of a Queen Anne style residence. The significant features noted include the gable roof, gabled bay, and shingled skirt between floors and bay. The building has undergone many changes over time, including significant alterations after the Landmark designation. The style of the windows would suggest that they are not original to the ca. 1895 construction, and much of the exterior detail appears to have been altered.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposes to remove the existing window at the north elevation and enlarge the window opening to accommodate an ADA-accessible pick-up window for a new Boba Tea Shop.

EVALUATION

The enlargement of the window opening will not have a significant impact on the overall spatial relationships of the building, and the material loss of the surrounding siding will be minimal. The replacement window will reflect the double-hung style and will have a similar profile to other existing windows at the site. The project complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Standards for Rehabilitation) as described below.



Standards for Rehabilitation

- 1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.**

The property is currently being used for commercial purposes. The addition of an ADA-accessible pick-up window will result in minor material loss but will not alter the window opening pattern at the site.

- 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.**

The existing window does not appear to be an original or distinctive feature, and the alteration to the opening will not have a negative impact on the overall existing historic character of the site.

- 3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.**

The new window will reflect the double-hung window style characteristic of a Queen Anne residence but will not act as a replica of an original window and so will not create a false sense of historical development.

- 4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.**

No change that has acquired historical significance will be removed or altered.

- 5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.**

The alteration to the window size will result in minimal removal of the shiplap siding but will not have an overall impact on the exterior finish.

- 6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.**

There are no deteriorated features to be addressed as part of this scope of work.



- 7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.**

No chemical or physical treatments are proposed.

- 8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.**

The project scope does not include intrusion into the ground, and so no archeological resources will be disturbed.

- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.**

The new window design will be compatible with the existing windows at the site and with the double-hung window style typical of Queen Anne construction. Enlarging the opening will distinguish this alteration while maintaining the integrity of the spatial relationship of openings at the site.

- 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.**

While there will be some material loss of shiplap siding, should the window opening be returned to its assumed original size in the future the siding could be replaced in-kind.

CONCLUSION

The proposal to enlarge and replace a window at the north elevation of the building will not have a significant impact on or be detrimental to 905 Irwin Street as an Historical Landmark Site or the French Quarter Historic Landmark District.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission accept staff's issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness

Exhibits:

1. Project Plans
2. Project Photos