

Agenda Item # 4

REVIEW PROPOSAL FOR REUSE OF HISTORIC FLOORBOARDS AND RETENTION OF HISTORIC WALLS CONSTRUCTION IN THE HISTORIC HIHN APPLE BARN INTERIOR (APPLICATION B-163558)

Introduction:

The Hihn Apple Barn, located at 151 Aptos Way in Aptos Village in Aptos Village, is an important historic resource in Aptos. The Historic Preservation Plan for the Hihn Apple Barn Rehabilitation approved by your Commission in August 2011 and discussed in detail under item 6 of this agenda, identifies the interior side of the single-wall system as a significant character defining feature, and the rustic wood floorboards as a contributing feature of this historic building. Rehabilitating the barn for use as a grocery store necessarily impacts these important historic features. To seismically strengthen the building as required by the California Building Code and provide a wall surface meeting the practical and health code requirements for a grocery store, under the approved Preservation Plan post and girders will be placed adjacent to the historic single walls throughout most of the building interior, and plywood will be attached to the posts and girders providing a new interior wall. (At the exterior, the wall consisting of vertical wood planks, with batts between the boards at some locations, will remain largely as it currently exists and has appeared historically.) Similarly, the raised wood flooring system and post foundation cannot support the load requirements of a modern grocery store. Under the approved Preservation Plan, the current flooring system and foundation is being replaced with a concrete foundation, and flooring materials suitable for a grocery store use and meeting health code requirements will be used in most of the store.

Recognizing that the retention of at least a portion of these historic features is important to maintain the historic integrity and significance of the Apple Barn, but that their exact extent and location depends to a large extent upon the interior layout of the grocery store and health code requirements, the approved Preservation Plan includes the following conditions of approval:

4. Preservation of interior wood flooring: Existing wood floorboards at the building interior, identified as a character-defining feature, shall be used throughout the building to the greatest extent feasible as allowed under state codes and local environmental health regulations relating to the grocery store use. The texture and finish of the existing floorboards shall be retained to the greatest extent feasible as is consistent with relevant state codes and local regulations. Plans for use of flooring shall be submitted to the HRC prior to the issuance of the building permit.
5. Preservation of interior single-wall construction as an historic feature: Existing single-wall construction at the building interior, identified as a character-defining feature, shown to be retained near the main entrance of the building, shall be retained in other areas of the building as allowed under state codes and local environmental health regulations relating to the grocery store use. Plans for retention of single-wall construction shall be submitted to the HRC prior to the issuance of the building permit.

To comply with these conditions of approval, the applicant has submitted Tenant Improvement Plans with plans for the retention and use of the single wall construction and historic floorboards. As required in the Conditions of approval, these plans are being submitted to your Commission for review prior to approval and issuance of the Building Permit for the tenant improvements. The following analysis provides a review of the proposal for compliance with the conditions of approval provided above.

Analysis

The Preservation Plan as approved by your Commission provide an overall approach for the retention of the single wall construction and use of historic flooring (Exhibit D, Agenda item 3). As shown on pg. 5.2, inlaid wood flooring from salvaged floorboards of the existing building is placed near the entrance to the grocery store, covering a total area of approximately 1,240 sq. ft. The area of single wall construction, where the historic walls are to be left as they currently exist as the interior with no plywood covering, are also placed near the entrance for maximum visibility, with a total length of approximately 125 feet. At a minimum, the total area of historic flooring and length of single wall construction should be no less than that shown in the Preservation Plan.

In the proposed tenant improvement plans (Exhibit C-1 of Agenda Item 6), a total of 1,652 sq. ft. of the historic Douglas fir plank flooring is to be inlaid at the entrance near the registers, and an additional 90 sf of flooring is to be used in the wine area, for a total of 1,742 sq. ft. of historic flooring, representing an increase of approximately 40% from that shown in the approved Historic Preservation Plan. Pages A-2 and A-2a show the proposed area of historic flooring in plan view, and pg. A-5 shows the entrance area with historic flooring in perspective. The use of the historic flooring in most other locations is limited by local and state health codes requiring the use of clean impervious flooring such as tile, concrete or epoxy in all wet areas including refrigerated cases and produce areas, and in food preparation areas. Consistent with the conditions of approval, the Tenant Improvement plans specify a matt finish for the historic floorboards to retain the existing texture and appearance of the floorboards to the greatest extent feasible for grocery store use.

In the proposed Tenant Improvement Plans, the historic single wall construction, with the 1x12 vertical barn wood exposed at the interior, runs along the east and west walls at the entrance, for a total of approximately 127 linear feet of exposed single wall construction, meeting the minimum requirement in the approved Preservation Plan (Exhibit C-1, pg. A-2a). The project architect selected the locations for the exposed historic walls to provide maximum impact when entering the store, and in a location where finished and insulated walls such as are required for refrigerated cases are not required by health codes, and where reinforced walls are not required by the California Building Code for seismic safety. Pg. A -2 shows the area of exposed historic walls in plan view, and pg. A-5 shows the entrance area with exposed historic walls in perspective.

Conclusion

After reviewing the proposal and discussions with the architect, staff believes that the proposed area of single wall construction complies with the conditions of approval of the approved Historic Preservation Plan, and the proposed area of historic flooring exceeds the requirements of the Historic Preservation Plan. Although health codes, the California Building Code, and the practical requirements of a modern grocery store limit the use of these historic materials and features throughout the store, the use of these materials at the entrance and near the wine sales area as shown will allow for maximum visibility and appreciation by store visitors, along with interpretive displays near the entry explaining the construction methods of the over 100 year old Hihn Apple

Barn. Upon entering the store, visitors will see the barn interior structure much as it appeared historically, with the original interior single plank walls and wide fir floorboards visible at the entrance, and the impressive exposed barn roof framing visible throughout the building after the removal of the false ceiling.

