

Beckstrom Architecture+ Interiors

PO Box 1317, Los Gatos, CA 94030

650 847-8351

Eric@BeckstromArchitecture.com

August 9, 2021

Zach Tusinger, JD AICP

Planning & Building Director

City of Calistoga

Planning and Building Dept.

122 Washington Street

Calistoga, CA 94515

RE: 1890 Mora Avenue PG&E Utility Shed Variance Application

118 sf, 11'4" H. ridge, 9'-6" to midpoint of roof

Project Description

The owners have a property which has been in the family for +70 years. Previously the existing primary power line went approx. 200' to an existing Outbuilding which has now been rebuilt. The Outbuilding had a side shed which was the location for the Agriculture Irrigation Pump Station for the vineyard.

The owners requested that PG&E remove a high voltage, primary service power line and pole in the middle of the vineyard. PG&E determined that they could not bury primary the primary service due to Electric rules and the 'plowed fields'. Therefore PG&E determined the location of the new service and panels which is at the edge of the vineyard/plowed fields near the front fence in the corner. This service requires a mounting wall and 2 braces walls at the minimum. This footprint is the size of the 118 sf Utility Shed constructed. PG&E will not allow another location.

The owners consolidated the PG&E equipment and the Agriculture Irrigation Pump Station to the new Utility Shed which they will clad with stone and which incorporated a cross dormer and 2 windows with the goal that the building will look like an agricultural outbuilding from 100 years ago which are common in Napa Valley. Mora Avenue has several other 'Utility Sheds' whose location also appears to be dictated by PG&E. Some of the other 'sheds' are much larger and closer to the street. The 118 sf size of the shed and the 9'-6" height (11'-4" to ridge) are below the threshold for which a permit is needed. This building falls into a gray zone in terms of Planning and Building permits as PG&E has its own legal requirements regarding 'plowed agricultural land'. If this property did not have an active agricultural field then the PG&E shed could have been pushed behind the 20' front setback for a typical house/yard situation. However this is a property with a farmhouse and a vineyard out front by the street which is really a core feature of Napa Valley.

Sincerely,



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Architect

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1. Conditions apply to the property that do not apply generally to other properties in the same zone or vicinity, which conditions are a result of lot size or shape, topography, or other circumstances over which the applicant has no control.

Response: 1890 Mora Avenue is .95 acres/41,349 sf is zoned RR, Rural Residential. The property has been in the same extended family ownership for over 70 years. The lot has its own water well so the minimum lot size is 40,000 sf. Many of the properties on Mora Avenue have agricultural/vineyards. However, Many newly constructed new houses on smaller lots do not have agricultural activity.

The 1890 Mora Main House and Outbuilding/ADU are at the back of the property, approximately 225' from street. Many newer neighboring houses are much closer as they do not have vineyards. Next door, 1912 Mora Avenue, has an ADU/Garage approximately 24.75' from the street.

Previously high voltage primary service crossed the front vineyard with a power pole in the middle of the property next to the driveway which terminated at a power panel on the Outbuilding approx. 200' from the street. The agricultural Irrigation pump station system was also located at this location.

When the owner chose to remove the power pole and bury the primary high voltage PG&E service to the rebuilt Outbuilding, PG&E gave preliminary approval to have the panel on the side of the rebuilt Outbuilding. However, when the PG&E Engineering crew visited the site, PG&E indicated that the proposed underground service would not be allowed due to the restrictions in Electrical Rules No. 16, which does not allow buried service under '**plowed land**' as well as the number of 90 degree turns needed and the impediment of the root system of the existing Oak next to the Outbuilding. Therefore, it was impossible for PG&E to install the system through the plowed fields which the applicant over which the applicant has no control. Therefore PG&E decided where the new system would be installed at the front of the property, which is in front of the '**plowed land**' of the existing vineyard next to the front fence.

2. The variance is necessary for the preservation of a property right of the applicant substantially the same as is possessed by owners of other property in the same zone or vicinity.

Response: The location of the PG&E utility shed has been determined by PG&E and the agricultural pump equipment for the vineyard is required for the ongoing agricultural vineyard and for the Outbuilding/ADU and House on the property. If the PG&E connection is not finalized then the Outbuilding/ADU and House will not be habitable as the water well requires power and there will be no electricity for the buildings.

On Mora Avenue, there are other PG&E utility sheds close to the street, some of which are closer to the street than the 1890 PG&E Utility Shed. It is obvious these are located here due to PG&E rules, some

are located right on property lines. It appears the zoning code might need some updating to deal with the needs of large parcels with active agriculture. As one drives through Napa Valley there are countless utility sheds located on the road/street side of fields - which is also close to PG&E primary, high voltage lines. The agricultural utility sheds are archetypes in Napa Valley.

3. The authorization of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the purposes of this title, be injurious to property in the zone or vicinity in which the property is located, or otherwise conflict with the objectives of City development plans for policies.

Response: The authorization of the variance will be beneficial to the title on this property and appropriate given the precedent along Mora Avenue and all throughout Napa Valley agricultural properties. This property has had vineyards for this family for +70 years. The Rural Residential zone straddles 2 worlds - single family residential and agricultural activities. Calistoga is centered on agriculture and tourism. The proposed 118 sf PG&E utility shed as constructed is a small, authentic, agricultural shed. It will be clad in stone with windows and handsome, simple design. It will look as though it has been there for 120 years. The location is on the side of the field and is nearly completely blocked visually from several trees on the 1912 Mora Ave. property. The 11'-4", 118 sf shed is under the required minimum size for a building permit. The shed is diminutive in scale at compared to the 2-story Garage/ADU next door at 1912 Mora Avenue. The owners of 1890 Mora intend to renovate and add onto the existing house to make it into an authentic farmhouse with wrap around porch along with a pool near the house beyond the vineyard.

4. The variance requested is the minimum variance that will alleviate the hardship.

Response: The 118 sf shed is the minimum size needed to safely support the PG&E primary service equipment and the agricultural irrigation pumps and systems. The owners are emphatic that it be a handsome, discreet structure. It should be the type of handsome shed that a tourist would take a picture of it sitting next to the vineyard.

Sincerely,



Eric A. Beckstrom
Architect