

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA DATE: JUNE 6, 2012

To: Chair Woollett and Members of the Design Review Committee

THRU: Leslie Aranda Roseberry, Planning Manager

FROM: Daniel Ryan, Historic Preservation Planner

SUBJECT: DRC No. 4541-11 – NORRED – FENCING AND LANDSCAPING

SUMMARY

The applicant is proposing to install new landscaping including contemporary gate and fencing on a recent rehabilitation and second story expansion of a non-conforming single–family residence and accessory unit within the Old Towne Orange Historic District.

RECOMMENDED ACTION- FINAL DETERMINATION

Staff recommends the Design Review Committee approve the project as conditioned.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicant/Owner: Matt Norred

Property Location: 623-627 E. Almond Avenue, Old Towne Orange Historic District

General Plan Designation: LDR (Low Density Residential 2-6 Du/Ac)

Zoning Classification: R 2-6 (Duplex residential District)

Existing Development: Non-contributing one-story 1950' Stucco Duplex

Property Size: .15 Acre (6,600 sq. ft.)

Associated Applications: None

Previous DRC Review: July 6, 2011- Second-story construction

PUBLIC NOTICE

No Public Notice was required for this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Categorical Exemption: The proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review Guideline Sections 15301. Existing Facilities - Class 1 - consists minor alteration of existing private structures, or topographical features, including fences.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant has converted a non-contributing single-story duplex to a larger two-story single-family residence at the rear portion of the lot and converted the front unit into a one-story accessory second unit. The project was approved by the Design Review Committee (DRC) and the Planning Commission on July 6, 2011, for second story construction within the historic district. The previous DRC submission did not have a landscape plan. Based on a code complaint for paving the front yard, a landscape proposal was requested from the owner. The applicant is proposing to install a new gate and fencing as well as new landscaping on the property. The applicant is proposing a rolling wood and metal gate and fencing of a contemporary design. The applicant has constructed a sample of the wood/metal gate and has prepared a landscape plan for review by the City's Design Review Committee.

A portion of the existing property has a masonry block wall surrounding the rear portion of the lot, which will remain in place. A new stacked gray stone column is installed at the east property line to support the return of the new wood/metal gate. Stacked gray stone surrounds the raised concrete porch and the raised planter on the west side of the front yard. Square pieces of the same stone are laid out in staggered and randomly placed rows across the front yard and extend to the east property line and bi-sect a portion of the existing concrete driveway.

With the gray stone flat work, the proposed installation of the wood and painted black metal fencing and gate gives an overall dark appearance to the site. According to the applicant, the landscape of grass and plantings does not exceed 60% of the required front yard setback of 1,154 square feet. The landscape and fences proposal was not part of the original Design Committee and/or Planning Commission review. A landscape plan was not submitted with the original proposal for the second-story addition that was reviewed by the DRC on July 6, 2011. The Design Review Committee is being asked to review the new landscape proposal and make a final determination.

EXISTING SITE

The proposed construction of the expanded 2,731 square foot single-family residence and rehabilitation of the front accessory unit is now completed and encompasses 2,731 square feet of living space. The site provides 1,130 sq. ft. of useable open space. Existing landscape material has been removed and some stacked stone, hardscape and flat work has been installed, pending a formal landscape submission by the applicant.

EXISTING AREA CONTEXT

According to the City's Historic Building Survey, the 500-600 block of East Almond Avenue contains nine parcels including the St. John's parcel at 515 E. Almond. The remaining eight residential parcels contain four contributing and four non-contributing contemporary structures with construction dates from 1913 to 1961. The four contributors are all one-story Craftsman Bungalows. The lot sizes range from 6,100 to 6,620 sq. ft. There are 2 two-story residences and 6 one-story residences on the north side of the block. The Floor Area Ratios (FAR) for the block range from .14 to .21 FAR, with an average FAR of .21. The subject property has a total building area of 1,901 square feet on a 6,600 sq. ft. lot yielding a .29 FAR.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Orange Municipal Code (OMC) Section 17.10.070 establishes the general criteria the DRC should use when reviewing the project. This section states the following:

The project shall have an internally consistent integrated design theme, which is reflected in the following elements:

1. **Architectural Features.**

- a. The architectural features shall reflect a similar design style or period.
- b. Creative building elements and identifying features should be used to create a high quality project with visual interest and an architectural style.

2. Landscape.

- a. The type, size and location of landscape materials shall support the project's overall design concept.
- b. Landscaping shall not obstruct visibility of required addressing, nor shall it obstruct the vision of motorists or pedestrians in proximity to the site.
- c. Landscape areas shall be provided in and around parking lots to break up the appearance of large expanses of hardscape.
- 3. **Signage**. All signage shall be compatible with the building(s) design, scale, colors, materials and lighting.
- 4. **Secondary Functional and Accessory Features**. Trash receptacles, storage and loading areas, transformers and mechanical equipment shall be screened in a manner which is architecturally compatible with the principal building(s).

ANALYSIS/STATEMENT OF THE E ISSUES

<u>Issue 1 – Gate and Fence Materials:</u>

The proposed design and materials (wood and metal) of the proposed gate and fence are contemporary in form. Although it may not directly relate to the original 1957 period of construction, the overall design is complementary to the refurbished building finishes and exterior stone treatment.

<u>Issue 2 – Hardscape and Landscape Design and Materials:</u>

Although the amount of flat hardscape does not exceed 60% of the required front landscape area, the landscape proposal seems sparse when compared to the amount of actual ground cover (lawn) rather than foundation planting and shrubs that are proposed. The choice of material in black metal fencing, dark gray stone both in the stacked stone on the porch and raised planter, driveway column, and the flat work of stone is dark and overpowering to the site.

Square pieces of the same stone are laid out in staggered and randomly placed rows across the front yard, one section of stone extends to the east property line which bi-sects a portion of the existing concrete driveway. Removing this section of stone and replacing it with concrete and the

installation of a mow strip would provide more continuity of design and materials. The juxtaposition and layout of the new stone work within the front setback deviates from the normal pattern for approaches and walkways established for residential properties in Old Towne. Typically, one would have concrete walkways centered in the front yard leading directly to a porch or a walkway off the side of a porch connecting to the driveway.

Hardscape materials used during the time of the original construction were concrete and if stone was used it was often flag stone. Most flag stone was tan, pink, or red in color, and laid out in the same manner as concrete walkways in a grid pattern, and/or used on porches and raised planters. Providing more lawn area and relocating the stone work in the front yard in a pattern that reflected a traditional walkway and approach would improve the appearance and compatibility of the landscape proposal.

The overall appearance is more contemporary than the period of original 1957 period of construction for the non-contributing residence. The new rehabilitation and construction is designed to reflect the 1960's architectural style and materials including sliding windows and stucco exterior. The applicant's choice of gray stone in reflects a modern material as does its random placement. Staff would recommend additional lawn areas and foundation plantings, removal of the stone work in the existing concrete driveway, installation of a mow strip, and realignment of the existing random placed stone in a more traditional pattern.

ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION

None.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND REQUIRED FINDINGS

The courts define a "Finding" as a conclusion which describes the method of analysis decision makers utilize to make the final decision. A decision making body "makes a Finding," or draws a conclusion, through identifying evidence in the record (i.e., testimony, reports, environmental documents, etc.) and should not contain unsupported statements. The statements which support the Findings bridge the gap between the raw data and the ultimate decision, thereby showing the rational decision making process that took place. The "Findings" are, in essence, the ultimate conclusions which must be reached in order to approve (or recommend approval of) a project. The same holds true if denying a project; the decision making body must detail why it cannot make the Findings.

The Findings are applied as appropriate to each project. Based on the following Findings and statements in support of such Findings, staff recommends the DRC approve the project with recommended conditions.

1. In the Old Towne Historic District, the proposed work conforms to the prescriptive standards and design criteria referenced and/or recommended by the DRC or other reviewing body for the project (OMC 17.10.070.F.1).

Landscaping:

The overall appearance is more contemporary than the period of original 1957 period of construction for the non-contributing residence. The new rehabilitation and construction is designed to reflect the 1960's architectural style and materials including sliding windows and stucco exterior. With the recommended conditions, the proposal would be complementary and consistent with the existing architectural design of the residence.

- 2. In any National Register Historic District, the proposed work complies with the Secretary of the Interior's standards and guidelines (OMC 17.10.07.F.2).
 - With the recommended changes to the layout and design of the proposed hardscape and landscape features the applicant's project will reflect a more traditional design that is both compatible and complementary with the existing architectural design of the residence.
- 3. The project design upholds community aesthetics through the use of an internally consistent, integrated design theme and is consistent with all adopted specific plans, applicable design standards, and their required findings (OMC 17.10.07.F.3).
 - As the project is located within the Old Town Historic District, the proposed work conforms to the prescriptive standards and design criteria referenced and/or recommended by the Design Review Committee. The proposal as conditioned is based upon sound principles of land use, in that it complies with the Old Towne Design Standards and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- 4. For infill residential development, as specified in the City of Orange Infill Residential Design Guidelines, the new structure(s) or addition are compatible with the scale, massing, orientation, and articulation of the surrounding development and will preserve or enhance existing neighborhood character (OMC 17.10.07.F.4).

As the City of Orange Infill Residential Design Guidelines do not apply to projects located within the Old Towne Orange Historic District, this finding does not apply.

CONDITIONS

The approval of this project is subject to the following conditions:

- 1. All construction shall conform in substance and be maintained in general conformance with plans labeled Attachment No. 3 (dated May 21, 2012) and as recommended for approval by the Design Review Committee.
- 2. Remove the section of stone work installed within the existing driveway and replace it with concrete.
- 3. Install a mow strip that extends from the front of the driveway to the front of the new gate (grass area should be have a sprinklers installed).
- 4. Provide additional lawn areas and foundation plantings to balance out the amount of hardscape and reflect a period landscape design.
- 5. Realign the existing random placed stone in a more traditional pattern.
- 6. The applicant shall comply with all previously stated conditions as noted in Planning Commissions Resolution No. 12 -13, adopted on May 7, 2012.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Vicinity Map
- 2. Site Photographs
- 3. Small scale site, landscape, and fence plans dated May 21, 2012.

CC:

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