

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA DATE: OCTOBER 17, 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. 4644-12 – NV PROPERTIES- COURTYARD & LANDSCAPING

SUMMARY

The applicant is proposing to upgrade existing front and rear landscaping, reconstruct a front entry courtyard, install a water feature, and provide new walkways for a contributing commercial building within the Old Towne Orange Historic District. At its October 3^{rd,} meeting, the Design Review Committee recommended changes to the layout, materials and alignment of walkways and continued the project with the applicant's concurrence.

RECOMMENDED ACTION-FINAL DETERMINATION

Staff recommends the Design Review Committee approve the proposed landscape plan as submitted.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicant/Owner: Mr. Nick Vertucci – NV Properties

Property Location: 1015 E. Chapman Avenue

General Plan Designation: NOP (Neighborhood Office Professional District – Max 0.5 FAR)

Zoning Classification: OP (Office Professional District)

Existing Development: Contributing one-story 1924 Spanish Colonial Revival building

Property Size: .19 Acre (8,258 sq. ft.)

Associated Applications: Continued from DRC Meeting of October 3, 2012

PUBLIC NOTICE

No Public Notice was required for this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1 Existing Facilities) that consists of the repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public or

private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, involving negligible or no expansion. There is no public review required.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The existing one-story Spanish Colonial Revival building has an existing 25' x 13' patio courtyard located at the front entrance of the building. The applicant is proposing to demolish the 325 square feet courtyard and construct a new 588 square foot courtyard with a decorative gate, water feature and sitting area. Project revisions include a change in the landscape layout and alignment of the front walkway. This change will reflect the historic pattern of the original walkway using scored concrete walkways in all areas except the interior area of the courtyard where cut stone is permitted. Other changes include the finish cap and stucco treatment of the wall of the courtyard and minor changes in plant and tree materials. Three existing trees will be removed and replaced, along with new foundation planting and lawn area. Parking lot landscaping will be upgraded including an irrigation and landscape lighting plan. No change is proposed for the existing freestanding sign at the front of the property.

EXISTING SITE

The existing parcel contains a 2,000 square foot, one-story, 1924 Spanish Colonial Revival residence that has been converted to office use. The building is classified in the City's Historic Building Survey as a contributing resource to the National Registered Historic District. Other than upgrading existing landscape and new features such as gate, trellises and finishes to the existing courtyard, no changes are proposed for the exterior of the building.

EXISTING AREA CONTEXT

The existing spoke street area has residential, office professional and larger medical/offices uses with traditional residential type of landscaping including lawns, foundation shrubs and tree plantings.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Orange Municipal Code (OMC) Section 17.10.070 establishes the general criteria the Design Review Committee 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.
- 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 ISSUES

<u>Issue 1 – Compatibility of Design Features and Existing Architectural Style:</u>

The existing elements of the courtyard at the front entry of the building are simple in form and design. A review of aerial maps shows that the courtyard was installed between 1938 and 1947 and, therefore, not original to the period of significance. The Design Review Committee recommended that the area of the courtyard be increased from the proposed 27' x 21' to 28' X 21', and that the wall of the courtyard be set in from the east wall plane of the residence.

The revised landscape proposal includes several changes that will reflect the layout and original "OG" curved alignment of the front walkway and proposed landscape design elements that are compatible with the Spanish Colonial Revival design of the house. The treatment and finishes on the courtyard walls and new concrete walkways have been modified to match the landscape elements of the period. Revisions include a stucco finish and cap treatment on the courtyard walls and scored concrete for all walkways. The Design Review Committee maintained that the use of cut stone only within the courtyard area was OK, as it was not visible to the public view.

The existing and proposed courtyards are both located outside the required front setback. The new proposal includes a new 28' x 21', 588 square foot, 42-inch high courtyard wall with a centered double wood gates aligned with the front entry porch. A sitting area and a water feature are proposed for the interior of the open courtyard. The planting area in the front yard consists of two curved turf areas on each side of the center walkway and a mix of foundation shrubs. Three existing trees, two in the front yard and one at the northwest corner of the parking lot, will be removed. New 24" box trees of three different species will be installed according to the attached plan reflecting the feedback provided by the Design Review Committee on October 3rd.

Overall, the upgrade of the existing trees and new landscaping and foundation planting is supported as it brings new interest and visibility to the site. The curved layout of turf and planting now reflects the historic landscape layout as noted on the 1947 aerial photographs of the property.

The removal and replacement of the courtyard is expanding on an existing site feature. The larger area provides an area for relaxation and, for the most part, does not block visibility of the existing building. No changes are proposed to the existing building including the porch landing and steps. The percentages of landscape, hardscape and landscaped parking areas meet current standards.

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.

Old Towne Historic District – Applies to all projects within the district.

- 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 and OTDS).
 - Traditional materials which interrelate to the existing landscape shall be used including the proposed cut stone and concrete paving materials as proposed.
- 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).

The general landscape criteria under Treatment of Cultural Landscapes:

- a. The installation of new shrubs around the enclosure and new shrubs at the rear of the lot will provide screening of areas viewed by the public.
- b. The overall theme of updating the courtyard and new landscaping will support the overall design concept and harmonizes with the character of the historic structure and the surrounding neighborhood.
- 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 landscape work conforms to the prescriptive standards and design criteria referenced and/or recommended by the Design Review Committee. The proposed arrangement of walkways and planting material follows the historic pattern and alignment of the original setting. The type and placement of new landscape materials including shrubs and replacement trees support the project's overall design concept to balance the landscaping treatment in relationship to the building its setting and visual appearance within the historic district.

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 Exhibit A (dated April 10, 2012 and as revised on September 10, 2012) and as recommended or modified for approval by the Design Review Committee.
- 2. Prior to issuance of building permits, the applicant shall pay all applicable development fees, including but not limited to: City sewer connection, Orange County Sanitation District Connection Fee, Transportation System Improvement Program, Fire Facility, Police Facility, Park Acquisition, Sanitation District, and School District, as required.
- 3. Building permits shall be obtained for all construction work, as required by the City of Orange, Community Development Department's Building Division. Failure to obtain the required building permits will be cause for revocation of this design review permit.
- 4. All structures shall comply with the requirements of Municipal Code Chapter 15.52 (Building Security Standards), which relates to required exterior lighting.
- 5. These conditions shall be reprinted on the first page of the construction documents when submitting to the Building Department for the plan check process.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Vicinity Map
- 2. Design Review Committee Staff report dated, October 3, 2012
- 3. Design Review Committee Draft Meeting Minutes, dated October 3, 2012
- 4. Small Scale Site, and Landscape Plans dated October 9, 2012

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