DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA DATE:	MARCH 21, 2012
TO:	Chair Woollett and Members of the Design Review Committee
THRU:	Leslie Aranda Roseberry, Planning Manager
FROM:	Daniel Ryan, Historic Preservation Planner
SUBJECT:	MAJOR SITE PLAN (MJSP No. 0670-11), CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP No. 2853-11) AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC No. 4595-11) FOR ADAPTIVE MIXED USE PROJECT CONSISTING OF 16 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AND MINI-STORAGE WITHIN THE ORANGE PACKING HOUSE, 1,200 SQ. FT. OF DETACHED RETAIL AND 14 NEW UNITS OF DETACHED IN-FILL RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS.

SUMMARY

The applicant is proposing an adaptive mixed use project for an existing 1925 industrial building for 16 loft apartment units, and 19,864 square feet of mini-storage facility in building "B" and "C" (former Orange Mutual Packing House). The proposal includes the demolition of four non-contributing, detached accessory buildings (D, E, F, and G), and the new in-fill development of 14 units consisting of three bedroom units in three buildings on the south end of the parcel. The project includes the conversion of an existing contributing 1,200 sq. ft. office building to retail use that fronts on Almond Avenue. The project amenities include parking, pool and outdoor recreational areas for the proposed 91,400 sq. ft mixed use development. The 1.96-acre site located east of the ATSF Railway Tracks from Almond to Palmyra Avenues.

PRELIMINARY REVIEW

The project went before the Staff Review Committee on October 26, 2011 for preliminary comments. The applicant is currently preparing the environmental documents for submission and has requested a preliminary review of the proposed concept with the City's Design Review Committee. No findings are stated. This is only a preliminary review.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicant:	Leason Pomeroy III
Owner:	Lyle G. Shelton
Property Location:	426 W. Almond Avenue, east of ATSF Railway Tracks from Almond to Palmyra Avenues, (Old Towne Orange Historic District)
General Plan Designation:	OTMU 6-15 du/ac .5 to 1.0 FAR (Old Towne Mixed Use)
Zoning Classification:	OTMU (Old Towne Mixed Use)

Existing Development:	94,100 sq. ft. of Vacant Industrial - Orange Mutual Packing House including basement and accessory buildings.
Property Size:	1.96 acre site
Associated Applications:	MJSP 0670-11, ENV 1829-11, CUP 2853-11 & DRC No. 4595
Previous DRC Review:	None

PUBLIC NOTICE

No Public Notice was required for this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Mitigated Negative Declaration (ENV. No. 1829-11) is being prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the project in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15070 and in conformance with Local CEQA Guidelines.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A proposal for an adaptive mixed use project for an existing 1925 industrial building for 16 loft apartment units, and 19,864 sq. ft. of mini-storage facility in building B and C (former Orange Mutual Packing House). The proposal includes the demolition of four non-contributing, detached accessory buildings (D, E, F, and G), and the new in-fill development of 14 units consisting of three bedroom units in three buildings on the south end of the parcel. The project includes the conversion of an existing contributing 1,200 sq. ft. office building to retail use that fronts on Almond Avenue. The project amenities include parking, pool and outdoor recreational areas for the proposed 91,400 sq. ft mixed use development. The 1.96-acre site located east of the ATSF Railway Tracks from Almond to Palmyra Avenues.

The proposal includes the conversion of 19,864 sq. ft. existing storage areas located on the first floor and basement areas to mini storage use, with a 24 hour manager. Demolition of 12,365 sq. ft. of four detached non-contributing accessory buildings located at the south end of the parcel will permit the construction of new in-fill apartments that take access off of Palmyra Avenue. The two-story apartment buildings are grouped in three building one facing Palmyra, and the other two apartments facing each other adjacent to the railroad.

The project includes filling in of the existing loading ramp to the existing basement and raising the grade along the east side of the packing house. This will permit first floor access for the new lofts including the installation of eight enclosed garages for residential parking. The required parking for all uses on the site is 62 parking spaces consisting of eight enclosed spaces 22 covered spaces and 24 open parking spaces. The site will provide a surplus of three spaces. The change in grade will permit a new two-way driveway along the east property line with access from Almond through to Palmyra Avenues. A non-historic 400 sq. ft. framed stucco addition (the south end of the original brick building “B”) will be demolished to provide a new outdoor pool, patio and recreational area. The project will provide approximately 7,200 square feet of common

recreational open space. Enhanced landscaping of trees, shrubs and foundation planting will be provided for the project.

EXISTING SITE AND AREA CONTEXT

The site is currently developed with seven buildings, two of which are historic and the remaining buildings are non-contributing accessory buildings on the 1.9 acre site which covers the 134 foot wide parcel that runs from Almond to Palmyra Avenues east of the ATSF Railway Tracks. The seven buildings have a gross building area of 72,702 square feet. The building recently served the Second Harvest Food Distribution Center and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul until 2007. The site has been vacant for approximately five years. The applicant is currently negotiating a lease agreement with Orange County Transportation Authority who owns the former rail spur on the west side of the property (a current ALTA survey indicates that the packing house encroaches into the railroad right-of-way).

The main brick buildings are addressed as 422 (Building "A") and 426 West Almond Avenue (Building "B") were constructed in 1924 in the Mediterranean Revival architectural style and are contributing historic resources on the City's Historic Building Inventory. The smaller 1,200 sq. ft. building at the east edge of the property along Almond contained offices for Orange Mutual Citrus Association and the larger building at 426 was the packing house which served the citrus industry in Orange. Both buildings are constructed of exposed red brick with a plaster finish on the front facades, a typical Mediterranean Revival styled treatment for industrial building of this period. Both buildings have approximately eight-feet of landscape setbacks along Almond Avenue.
The square building "A" has a raised foundation with a center entrance, flanked with sloping pilasters supporting the sides of concrete entrance steps. The plastered facade of the office building has several defining Mediterranean features. With symmetrically placed six-over-six windows on each side of the recessed entrance set within a reveal, a raised parapet with crenellated raised corners, tile cap and raised mission arch aligned over the main entrance.

The larger packing house building "B" has similar exterior treatments as the Citrus Office building as to the parapet, crenellated corners, center mission arch at the parapet. The main entrance is on the east corner of the facade. It has an arched entrance with a raised quoined stone surround. The windows are rectangular double-hung except for the four filled in arches over the windows on the center of the façade. The raised street elevation has a series of basement windows with a center entrance to the basement. One unique feature of the packing house is the angled "saw tooth" glass clearstory windows located on the roof which provides sunlight to the interior of the building. This feature will be incorporated into the design of the new loft residences.

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.
   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 ISSUES

Issue 1: Adaptive Reuse and Mixed Use:

The reuse of the packing house to a mix of residential and private storage addresses the new use of the building with limited modifications while retaining its architectural significance as a packing house. The removal of accessory buildings and a non-contributing addition serves the expansion of residential uses and fits with the neighborhood setting along Palmyra Avenue. The improved access and circulation through the property, incorporating enclosed parking for the loft apartments and required on-site parking, serves to improve both residential and mini-storage mixed uses on the site. The conversion of the office building on Almond to retail can serve both the neighborhood and the tenants of the project.

Issue 2: Building Architecture:

The Mutual Citrus Association's packing house is one of the last remaining industrial buildings from the citrus boom in Orange. The complex project encompasses several restraints that the project addresses; reuse of the approximately 15,064 sq. ft. of cold storage area, noise and vibration of the adjacent railway tracks, egress and access as a mixed use project with both residential and mini-storage uses. Site changes include filling in of the loading ramp to the basement including a change in grade on the east side of the building to provide first floor access to the entrances of the new lofts including new one-car enclosed garages. Several new door openings will be required on the east side of the building to accommodate the new garages. The project, as proposed, maintains its integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling and association to convey its period of significance. Overall the project maintains and restores the defining features of the packing house and follows both the Old Towne and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

The new in-fill apartments at the south end of the site will take their architectural style from the existing Mediterranean Revival Office building on Almond. The new grouping of three apartment buildings will have flat roofs, similar parapet design, stucco finishes, and architectural treatments in the Mediterranean Revival style.

Issue 3: Landscaping:

The site provides landscaping in excess of the requirements of the Orange Municipal Code and the City's Landscape Standards and Specifications. The plans indicate landscaping of different tree and shrub sizes around the project perimeter, buildings, and in the parking lot.

ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The project went before the Staff Review Committee on October 26, 2011 for preliminary comments.

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. When the DRC reviews the project with the intent of making a final determination, staff will prepare the following findings for the DRC.

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).*

Old Towne Historic District – National Register Historic District -- additional finding applies to sites within the National Register Historic District.

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).*
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).*
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

Staff is recommending that the Design Review Committee provide comments and design direction only on the proposed project. No findings are stated. This is only a preliminary review.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Aerial and Site Photographs
3. Site, Elevation, Floor , Roof , Lighting and Landscape Plans, dated October 10, 2011

Cc:

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