

**CITY OF ORANGE
DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
MINUTES – FINAL**

September 4, 2013

Committee Members Present: Carol Fox
Robert Imboden
Tim McCormack
Craig Wheeler
Joe Woollett

Committee Members Absent: None

Staff in Attendance: David Khorram, Chief Building Official
Anna Pehoushek, Principal Planner
Robert Garcia, Associate Planner
Mark Schwartz, Recording Secretary

Administrative Session – 5:00 P.M.

Chair Fox opened the Administrative Session at 5:08 p.m.

Chair Fox asked if there were any issues on the agenda. Chief Building Official Khorram said there weren't any.

Chair Fox noted that there were no minutes to review.

Committee Member Imboden said it sounded as if The City Council showed some interest in shifting the purview and the types of projects the Design Review Committee reviews. The City Council will discuss these changes with the Design Review Committee in the future. The idea was originally discussed at the last City Council meeting on Tuesday, August 27th. Chief Building Official Khorram said his understanding was that it would be devised to help streamline the process of accepting and approving designs. He also said he would check to see if the minutes from that City Council meeting were available.

Committee Member Woollett made a motion to adjourn the Administrative Session of the Design Review Committee meeting.

SECOND: Robert Imboden
AYES: Carol Fox, Robert Imboden, Tim McCormack, Craig Wheeler, Joe Woollett
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT:

MOTION CARRIED.

Administrative Session adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Regular Session - 5:30 P.M.

Chair Fox called the meeting to order at 5:27.

ROLL CALL:

All Committee Members were present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Opportunity for members of the public to address the Design Review Committee on matters not listed on the Agenda.

There were no speakers.

CONSENT ITEMS:

(1) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

AGENDA ITEMS:

Continued Items:

(2) DRC No. 4643-13 - ORANGE LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

- Final landscape plan approval for the approved expansion to the existing school.
- 2222 N. Santiago Boulevard
- Staff Contact: Robert Garcia, 714-744-7231, rgarcia@cityoforange.org
- Previous DRC Project Approval: December 5, 2012
- DRC Action: Final Determination

Associate Planner, Robert Garcia, presented a project overview consistent with the Staff Report.

Chair Fox asked the applicant if he had anything to add.

Bill Perkins, Architects Orange, address on file, stated the plans include updated landscaping design. He was confident that he had addressed everything that had been mentioned at the last Design Review Committee (DRC meeting).

Public Comment:

None.

Chair Fox opened the discussion up to the Committee Members.

Committee Member McCormack asked to go through what had changed since the previous version of the design. He wanted to know how the issue regarding the amount of trees had been resolved. He was also concerned about the palms underneath the overhang, which are now gone.

Mr. Perkins confirmed that the trees under the overhang were gone, and said if there were to be any landscaping under there, it would be something in large pots rather than in the ground.

Chair Fox asked if the canopy had been opened up.

Mr. Perkins said the revised plan still had skylights rather than openings. He also said there will be new palm trees planted rather than trying to transplant existing trees, which likely wouldn't survive being moved too well.

Committee Member Imboden asked for a synopsis of what has been addressed since the plans were before the DRC previously.

Mr. Perkins stated there were three main issues: (1) the planting underneath the canopy being removed; (2) choosing new palms rather than trying to reuse them; and (3) along the back edge, adding some Italian Cypress trees to dress it up a bit (rather than the shrubs that were originally proposed).

Chair Fox asked if the bioswale hadn't been located back there. She thought that likely restricted what could be planted there.

Mr. Perkins said the bioswale has been moved to a more remote location where it won't impede any plant growth.

Committee Member McCormack confirmed with Mr. Perkins that would mean there would be a pipe going to the new location of the bioswale. He also asked if a pipe going that distance would need to be sloped down, and the end result is that the pipe would be quite low as it ends.

Mr. Perkins said the civil engineers had assured him it would be fine.

Committee Member McCormack said he was only asking because it seems like a lot of water to move to a single place.

Mr. Perkins said the civil engineer wasn't present, but he had said it would be fine.

Committee Member McCormack said some of the plants proposed, including Dianellas, might not be able to take that much water in some areas, and might start to rot if it stays wet, so maybe grass would be better as a suggestion.

Mr. Perkins said those were the three big issues to cover, and all were addressed in revising the plans.

Committee Member McCormack said he had two issues with the new plans. There was only one big tree in the plans, and some of the other trees like the Little Gem (a.k.a. Dwarf Magnolia) seemed like small trees to be in a big area. He would recommend changing it from Little Gem to Majestic Beauty, which is a larger tree. He also recommended metal stakes for the Italian Cypress, since they will be right in line to catch the Santa Ana winds, and may lean a bit without staking.

Other Committee Members felt the revised plan looked much more thought out, and agreed the changes were good.

Committee Member McCormack clarified that all his comments were suggestions rather than conditions.

Committee Member McCormack made a motion to approve DRC No. 4643-13, Orange Lutheran High School, subject to the findings and conditions contained in the Staff Report, and with the following suggestions:

- The use of grass in the bioswale instead of the proposed plants.
- Where appropriate, change the Little Gem Magnolia tree to Majestic Beauty.
- The use of metal stakes for the Italian Cypress.

SECOND: Craig Wheeler
AYES: Carol Fox, Robert Imboden, Tim McCormack, Craig Wheeler, Joe Woollett
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

MOTION CARRIED.

New Agenda Items:

(3) DRC No. 4595-11 – ORANGE PACKING HOUSE

- A preliminary review of the mixed use adaptive reuse of the 1924 packing house for office space, artist studios, self-storage, retail uses, and including the demolition of four non-contributing detached accessory buildings to accommodate new in-fill development for apartments.
- 426 W. Almond Avenue, Old Towne Historic District
- Staff Contact: Anna Pehoushek, 714-744-7228, apehoushek@cityoforange.org
- Previous DRC Preliminary Review: March 21, 2012
- DRC Action: Preliminary Review

Principal Planner, Anna Pehoushek, presented a project overview consistent with the Staff Report. The applicant was asking for a preliminary review of the revised design at this current meeting.

Leason Pomeroy, LP3 Architecture, address on file, provided some information about the history of the property, including the fact that his grandfather was in charge of building this building and managed it for 15 years. He described many of the challenges with the property and this design specifically, including contributing historic buildings, being close to the railroad tracks, contamination in one building, the re-zoning of the Depot District, the need for seismic upgrades, and the Fire Department's difficult access because of the proximity to the railway. He explained that the housing drives the project financially, and is an important part of the final design, but the contamination disqualifies one of the buildings from being used for housing. Instead, that building was to be used for public storage and office/retail. This necessitated trying to convert the basement of the building to parking, but this proved prohibitively expensive. The compromise was that the majority of the building would be used for office/retail, and a consolidated parking plan would be proposed. *[He had a detailed 3D model of the site, and opened up the individual buildings to show what was planned for each building, with all the committee members gathered around]*. He described that the fire access would go directly through the entire property, with security gates added on the ends of the housing portion. There is a pedestrian system that would link the office/retail portion of the plan with the housing portion. He added that he believes this plan preserves the integrity of the older buildings better than previous plans did.

Committee Member Imboden asked if the current configuration would allow for proper exiting of the property.

Mr. Pomeroy said yes, and explained that three new doors were added to the building. He also explained that a big ramp that was added to the property in the 1960's will be filled in as part of the plan so the heights work for entering and exiting the building.

Chair Fox asked about the historic doors.

Mr. Pomeroy said they would be filled in on the interior, but still look like doors on the exterior. He explained that a fire a few months ago destroyed some of a building, and that will be restored as part of the plan.

Chair Fox asked for the strategy in dealing with the other openings.

Mr. Pomeroy explained that they would be filled in as well, but still exist on the exterior.

Committee Member Imboden asked about the height limitation and whether the building meets that.

Ms. Pehoushek explained that the building meets the height limit, but exceeds the 2-story limit.

Chair Fox asked about the ramp that was a way down to the basement.

Mr. Pomeroy explained that it would be taken out.

Chair Fox asked if that wasn't historic.

Mr. Pomeroy explained that the shared open space requirement was a trade-off with the ramp.

Chair Fox suggested they might want to keep the ramp.

Mr. Pomeroy explained that the contamination problem could pose a real challenge to keeping the ramp, as it would have to be cleaned up, and there would be no way to know what that might cost until the project is underway.

Public Comment:

Jeff Frankel, address on file, representing OTPA, said he was happy to have the building being used again, but he had several concerns, specifically about the heights of the buildings. The OTPA has always been opposed to 3-story development. The main concern is whether it meets The Secretary of the Interior's Standards, and whether the character-defining features are preserved. The doors and windows should be kept, even if they are sealed off from the inside and not used, because they are in the public view. The existing openings should be kept as well, rather than blocking them off. The rear ramp is historic, and should be kept as well. Any historic signage that can be preserved should be preserved. The design of the infill seems to be way too contemporary, and doesn't fit with the historic buildings. The infill has an impact on the adjacent historic properties to the east in destroying the historic feel of the area and perhaps causing some privacy issues. Also, there is not enough parking in the housing area of the plan, and there may be overflow into the adjacent streets, especially if Chapman University students live in the properties. He asked what the floor area ration (FAR) was for the project, wondering if it was below 1.0.

Mr. Pomeroy explained that it was way less, and the density was lower than allowed as well, since it allows 30 apartments and there are only 20 in the plan.

Chair Fox opened the discussion up to the Committee Members.

Committee Member Woollett asked about filling in the windows and other openings.

Mr. Pomeroy said the only openings being filled were the basement windows, which are designed for ventilation, and the air can't be allowed into the basement area due to the contamination.

Committee Member Wheeler asked if the signs would be preserved along the south side.

Mr. Pomeroy said they would be.

Committee Member Wheeler said he had two significant problems with the revised plan: (1) not getting rid of the historic material in the back or south of the building (including the step walls), or even keeping some memory of it if it must be removed; and (2) the previous housing design was influenced by the industrial character, and he would have liked to preserve that more. He offered the Depot Walk, a little further up the tracks, as an example of a more industrial look that worked very well.

Committee Member Imboden mentioned the environmental impact and the parking, which were to be reviewed at the Planning Commission (PC) level rather than the DRC. He said the finishes and façade of the new buildings aren't great, but the massing and articulation are fine. He mentioned the color of the historic building, and how that could have been articulated periodically through the newer building. He doesn't want to see a matching relationship, but thought there was an opportunity to use these historic features in a non-historic way. He encouraged the applicants to keep everything that can be kept in terms of historic material (walls, etc.), even if they are covered over. The "quirky" things should be kept, since they are the kinds of things that make this area special. There are minimal new openings being made, which is good. He would also like to leave some acknowledgment on the openings that are closed, perhaps with non-operating doors or something that shows they were openings at one point in the building's history. He acknowledged that this is a very difficult site, and he's not against it looking more contemporary as part of the concessions that will inevitably need to be made. He encouraged the applicants to keep it from looking like a stucco box, which it still leans toward at this point. Also, the gates around the housing should be sliding rather than swinging, since there won't be enough space otherwise.

Committee Member McCormack said he mirrors most of the statements made by other Committee Members. The "site jewelry" could be the key to blending the old and new together, and one example is the lighting, which could be the bridge between the historic and contemporary features. He recommends lighting that looks like it was there from the beginning, rather than an imposed requirement added later. This would help tie things together. He also would recommend a more Mediterranean plant palette to help instill the proper character and be period-sensitive. He also mentioned the brown trunk 15-foot tree, but that 15 feet is measured to the top of the tree, which means there will be palm fronds coming down to 7-8 feet above grade, which is probably not the best choice.

Mr. Pomeroy said he envisioned a tree with fronds extending to 15 feet above grade.

Committee Member McCormack said in that case the plan should include a 20-25 foot tree. These larger trees are actually cheaper as well. He also reminded the applicants to keep plenty of space around the larger trees, both for support and aesthetic reasons. He went on to state that there are two different types of hardscape treatments, and there may be a way to have them look like siblings rather than direct opposites. It should have some simplicity to it. The handrail/retaining wall on the east side could also have some vining on it to green it up and make it look less like a wall and more like landscaping. He said otherwise, it looks like a great project.

Chair Fox said she would like to see the project swing more toward an industrial feel, since the area was an industrial area historically. She suggested more corrugated metal, for example, and roof vents that look like the hats that are on the metal buildings to be torn down. She also stated her concern with the residents in the smaller houses, since they don't have a lot of distance and sunlight access compared to the earlier plan. She also asked if this plan was denser than the earlier one.

The other Committee Members agreed with the preference for more of an industrial look. The residential units, specifically, can be less Mediterranean and more industrial.

Mr. Pomeroy said it was actually less dense.

Chair Fox said she was concerned that there were such small setbacks for the houses.

Mr. Pomeroy showed pictures from a project his firm had done in Sacramento that had an industrial look.

Chair Fox said she thought that project would be a good model for making the project more industrial looking.

Committee Member Wheeler said adding in more corrugated metal, perhaps on the wall facing the train tracks, would help, since more metal is being removed as part of the project.

Committee Member Imboden also said breaking up the 3-story wall would help it make a better overall impression, even though it may result in losing some square footage.

Committee Member Wheeler asked if there had been thought given to how the housing units are heated and cooled.

Mr. Pomeroy said it would be individual units in each room.

Committee Member Wheeler wondered if that meant there would be more vents and things outside.

Mr. Pomeroy said most of the designs he had would have those features internal to the units.

Committee Member Wheeler cautioned that it should be studied first to make sure the listed height wouldn't have to be exceeded by any heating and cooling equipment increasing the height.

Chair Fox said that it would be good to have detail on how openings are going to be filled in when the plans are returned to the DRC.

Committee Member Woollett mentioned that the point of greatest potential conflict is with the western most house on the south side of W. Marietta Place. He recommends that unit's height be articulated to make sure it softens the look from the outside.

Committee Member Imboden mentioned that the upper story setback being discussed doesn't even necessarily have to happen along the whole façade, but might just be in a few places (near the adjacent houses) that break it up enough to give it a better feel.

Chair Fox agreed that the setback doesn't have to occur on the units along the train track side.

Committee Member Wheeler asked if there was agreement on keeping the glass for the historic windows and just filling them in behind.

The other Committee Members indicated there was.

Chair Fox also recommended keeping the vents and working around them.

Committee Member Imboden said he was fine with the additional openings and awnings proposed in the plan.

Committee Member Wheeler stated that putting awnings on the north side isn't necessary.

Chair Fox asked about the loft areas.

Mr. Pomeroy said they were just over the garage area, and are intended to provide additional space.

Chair Fox confirmed with Ms. Pehoushek that the key issues had been addressed.

Committee Member McCormack asked if the questions regarding the public space along Palmyra had been addressed.

Mr. Pomeroy said there were 4-5 feet of planting.

Committee Member McCormack said in some places it is 3 feet.

Mr. Pomeroy said they could pull the sidewalk out of the private property.

Committee Member McCormack said that would be good.

Ms. Pehoushek said the City can put street trees on private property, but it has only been done in limited instances.

Mr. Pomeroy asked about putting the sidewalks on the curb, and planting the trees inside the sidewalk.

Committee Member McCormack said in his experience that doesn't normally work to provide a setup that works well in the long run.

Chair Fox stated the Committee had provided feedback, and Mr. Pomeroy said he was fine with the feedback. No motion was needed since this was just a preliminary review.

(4) DRC No. 4696-13 - MORRIS RESIDENCE

- A proposal to construct a new one-story, single-family residence on a vacant lot.
- 4537 W. Tiller Avenue
- Staff Contact: Robert Garcia, 714-744-7231, rgarcia@cityoforange.org
- DRC Action: Final Determination

Associate Planner, Robert Garcia, presented a project overview consistent with the Staff Report.

Chair Fox asked the applicants if they wanted to add any additional information.

Greg Ocasek, architect, address on file, spoke on behalf of the applicant. Bill Smith, RSI Development, address on file, was also present.

Mr. Ocasek stated that Mr. Morris had lived in a Spanish style home, and he liked it, so he wanted the same look if possible. Drawings of the “prairie look” are also provided for comparison.

Mr. Morris said he has lived in a Spanish style home and he would like to see a Spanish style for his new house. Several other homes in that same area have Spanish style as well.

Public Comment:

None.

Chair Fox opened the discussion up to the Committee Members.

Committee Member Wheeler asked about the rear elevation, which should be switched with the left elevation.

Mr. Smith said it will be switched.

Committee Member Wheeler also said some of the materials aren’t labeled on the drawing, and asked if the window trim was stucco, and if the shutters were wood, and if the garage door was metal, and if the window frames were vinyl.

Mr. Smith said “yes” to all of the items mentioned by Committee Member Wheeler.

Committee Member Wheeler also asked if there was supposed to be artificial turf instead of grass in the front yard.

Mr. Ocasek confirmed yes, that was what Mr. Morris wanted.

Committee Member Wheeler said he didn’t want to require a hip roof, but he did think that the prairie style would be more in keeping with the other houses in the neighborhood. The Spanish style would seem to stick out.

Committee Member Woollett had no comments.

Committee Member McCormack asked if there was an elevation change between the finish floor and the garage. If yes, he also asked where that drop would happen.

Mr. Ocasek said there was about a 4-inch drop and there would be a couple of steps at the driveway.

Committee Member McCormack also asked about the artificial turf, and said it didn't seem to fit in with the other houses in the neighborhood. He asked why the turf was chosen.

Mr. Morris said it was chosen to save water and maintenance.

Committee Member McCormack asked if the front yard shouldn't be un-mown grasses in the backyard turf, since that would save more water and allow the yard to be compatible with the rest of the neighborhood.

Mr. Morris mentioned that the backyard would still need to be grass because he has three dogs. He didn't know enough about turf to know how the dogs would do with artificial turf, but there was grass back there now, and it seemed to work fine. The turf chosen looks so real and always looks well-maintained, so it seems like a good choice.

Committee Member McCormack cautioned that the artificial turf can get really hot if it's in an unshaded area, and that it should be watered periodically as well.

Mr. Smith said he didn't like succulents, and wanted to save water.

Committee Member McCormack conceded that succulents are an acquired taste. He also cautioned on the fruitless olive tree, and recommended an orange tree instead.

Mr. Morris seemed to think he would prefer that as well.

Chair Fox asked for feedback on the "style" from the other Committee Members.

Committee Member McCormack said he thinks the Spanish style is the best choice.

Committee Member Imboden said he was torn with the style. He said the Prairie style seemed to be the most compatible with the surrounding area. However, if the applicant had a strong preference for the Spanish, he didn't have a problem with that.

Chair Fox said that the turf being bordered by shrubbery will make it look fine for the space. She then asked if there were strong feelings to recommend a change from the Spanish choice.

Committee Member Wheeler said he was against the Spanish style because this particular house would be unlike the other houses in the street.

Mr. Morris said he liked all of them, and didn't have a strong preference for any one style.

Committee Member McCormack said in looking at the pictures and the neighborhood in context, he would switch away from the Spanish toward the Prairie.

Committee Member Woollett said that if the owner was open on this, that Committee Member Wheeler’s suggestion was a good one.

Committee Member Wheeler made a motion to approve DRC No. 4696-13, Morris Residence, subject to the findings and conditions contained in the Staff Report, and with the following additional condition:

- The style of the residence shall be changed from Spanish to Prairie (according to the drawings and style choices submitted by the applicant).

SECOND: Joe Woollett
AYES: Carol Fox, Robert Imboden, Tim McCormack, Craig Wheeler, Joe Woollett
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

MOTION CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT:

Committee Member Woollett made a motion to adjourn to the next regular scheduled Design Review Committee meeting on September 18, 2013.

SECOND: Craig Wheeler

AYES: Carol Fox, Robert Imboden, Tim McCormack, Craig Wheeler, Joe Woollett

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.