



DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA DATE: JULY 6, 2016
TO: Chair Fox and Members of the Design Review Committee
THRU: Leslie Aranda Roseberry, Planning Manager
FROM: Marissa Moshier, Associate Planner - Historic Preservation
SUBJECT: DRC No. 4803-15 – Urth Caffè

SUMMARY

The applicant proposes alterations to a previously approved plan to rehabilitate a historic building in the Plaza Historic District for use as a restaurant. These alterations are based on additional information uncovered during construction. The project also includes a request for final approval of a paint color for the alley (south) elevation of the building. As a condition of approval of the project, the DRC requested that the paint color in the alley return to the Committee for final approval, after the paint and plaster had been removed from the north and east elevations of the building.

RECOMMENDED ACTION – FINAL DETERMINATION

Staff requests that the DRC approve the proposed project subject to conditions of approval contained in the staff report and any conditions that the DRC determines appropriate to support the required findings.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicant/Owner: Urth Old Towne Development, LLC
Property Location: 100 W. Chapman Avenue
General Plan Designation: OTMIX-15
Zoning Classification: OTMU-15
Existing Development: 5,808 SF two-story commercial building
Property Size: 7,082 SF
Associated Applications: None
Previous DRC Review: June 17, 2015 and November 4, 2015

PUBLIC NOTICE

No Public Notice was required for this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Categorical Exemption: The proposed project will be categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines 15303 (Class 3 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and 15331 (Class 31 - Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) because the project involves rehabilitation of an existing commercial structure for use as a restaurant. The project restores the exterior of a historic building in conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Secretary's Standards)* and with the Old Towne Design Standards. There is no environmental public review required for a Categorical Exemption.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to rehabilitate a historic commercial building in the Plaza Historic District for use as a restaurant. The major project components include:

- **Storefronts on Chapman Avenue.** For the ground floor portion of the building constructed circa 1908, the DRC previously approved a storefront system that consisted of pairs of single hung windows in each bay. Each window had a tripartite transom above. This pattern for the storefront system was based on the applicant's understanding of the ground floor storefronts and transoms from limited exploratory removal of interior finishes. However, based on more comprehensive removal of non-historic finishes from the interior and exterior, the applicant uncovered additional information that indicates a different pattern of tripartite transoms and storefront bays. In response, the applicant is proposing large operable single-hung windows below the transoms, instead of the previously approved pairs of windows. The size of the individual lights in the transoms has also been revised. This pattern better reflects the common arrangement of storefront glazing in early 20th century commercial buildings, including in this building. The operable single-hung windows also address the applicant's request for interaction between the dining room interior and the sidewalk. Details of the proposed operable windows are provided in Attachment 8.
- **Window and Door Openings facing the Plaza.** The applicant originally proposed to restore four window openings and a single-leaf door on the east elevation at the southeast corner of the building. This pattern reflects the earliest history of the building circa 1888. With the plaster removed, portions of the decorative surrounds and areas where the openings have been infilled are now visible in the brick. The scars on the brick and historic photographs indicate that the northernmost window and door in the section were combined into a single storefront opening prior to 1920. At that time, the two raised brick lintels over those openings were combined into one. The scar of this larger raised brick lintel that spanned the modified opening is visible with the plaster removed.

With this additional information and working with a structural engineer, the applicant team has proposed to replace the previously approved door and window with a combined door and sidelight with a transom in the existing opening. A portion of this opening next to the door under the brick lintel will be infilled with brick. This approach reflects a slightly later period of the building's history and allows the existing opening to be used, while restoring the raised brick lintel around the opening. The new brick infill next to the door will be recessed from the face of the surrounding brick, so that the size and shape of the historic opening is still apparent. The decorative brick lintels will be restored around all of the openings, based on the scars that are visible in the surface of the brick. See Attachment 2 – Site Photographs for detail photographs of the scars that remain from the raised brick lintels.

- **Door and window openings in the south elevation on the alley.** Three arched openings on the alley were previously approved as planter areas. The windows in the openings had been previously removed and filled with plywood. The applicant initially proposed and was approved to fill in the openings with wood. The applicant is requesting to revise the infill material to brick. The brick will be inset from the face of the wall and will be unpainted, so that the original openings are still apparent. A detail of the infill is provided in Attachment 8.
- **Paint color on the south alley elevation.** The DRC requested that the proposal for the paint color on the alley return to the Committee for final approval after the plaster and paint had been removed from the brick. The applicant initially proposed a dark color in the alley. The DRC requested a lighter color to brighten the narrow space. In response, the applicant is proposing Dunn Edwards French White. The applicant has painted the alley elevation with this color. The paint is visible on the upper floor at the southeast corner of the building for the Committee Members to view in person in advance of the meeting.
- **Plaster and paint removal from historic brick.** The applicant has completed paint removal and restoration of the upper floor brick. Work on the ground floor brick, which was covered with plaster, continues. The applicant has provided photographs of a sample repair to be completed on the ground floor brick in Attachment 6.

EXISTING SITE

The existing site is developed with a two-story commercial structure. The building is a contributor to the National Register of Historic Places-listed Plaza Historic District. The building was constructed in two phases. The first portion was a one-story building, consisting of a single storefront bay with angled entrance at the intersection of W. Chapman Avenue and the Plaza roundabout, constructed circa 1888 (See Attachment 3 – Historic Photographs). Circa 1908, the building was expanded with additional storefront bays on Chapman Avenue and a second story. During this period, the building appears to have had an unpainted brick exterior. By 1927, the building appears to have been painted. Since that time, the ground floor has been substantially altered by removing and infilling historic storefronts and windows openings. The upper story remains largely intact from its construction.

EXISTING AREA CONTEXT

The subject property is located in the southwest quadrant of the Plaza and is surrounded by primarily two-story buildings with retail stores and restaurants on the ground floors and offices or apartments on the upper floors. The area is characterized by pedestrian-oriented commercial storefronts, and surrounding properties are zoned Old Towne Mixed Use.

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 ISSUES

Issue 1: Revisions to Building Openings on North, East and South Elevations

The revisions to the proposed elevations reflect additional information that has been uncovered in the course of construction. The Chapman Avenue (north) elevation storefronts are appropriate for an early 20th century commercial building and reflect the pattern of transoms discovered under non-historic finishes. To reflect the building's construction history, the proposed pattern and dimensions of the storefront glazing change from the original 1888 portion of the building to the later 1908 portion. The storefront bulkhead follows a similar pattern based on historic photographs. This configuration continues to allow operable single-hung windows in the storefront bays, while reflecting the historic pattern of the storefront glazing.

On the east elevation, the proposed combination of a door and window into a door with a sidelight reflects a slightly later history of the building. Based on photographs from the 1920s, these openings were combined early in the building's history. In addition, the brick lintels over the openings, which are visible as scars in the brick, will be restored. On the alley elevation, the infill of the arched openings is appropriate for a secondary, utilitarian elevation. The openings are currently infilled with plywood. The new brick infill will be clearly differentiated from the original wall surface and will be reversible.

Staff recommends to the DRC that the proposed revisions to the approved plan are in conformance with the *Secretary's Standards* and the Old Towne Design 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.

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).*

The proposed revisions to the previously approved project conforms with the Old Towne Design Standards for the Plaza Historic District. The revisions retain the existing historic materials and restore missing features using documentary and physical evidence from the building. The revised building openings on the north, east and south elevations reflect additional information uncovered during construction and incorporates newly uncovered historic materials to the greatest extent feasible. Where new materials are required, they will match the historic materials. The proposed color scheme and materials for the exterior of the building are in keeping with the colors customarily used in the Plaza Historic District and are complementary to the architectural style of the building.

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).*

Projects found to be in conformance with the Old Towne Design Standards are generally considered to be in conformance with the *Secretary's Standards*. In conformance with Standard 1, the new restaurant use is being inserted into a historic building with restoration of character-defining features. The additional information uncovered during construction allows additional historic features to be retained and restored. In conformance with Standard 5, the distinctive character of the historic building will be retained, and alterations to the building will not remove or negatively alter any historic materials or features of the building. In conformance with Standard 9, the infill of previously infilled openings on the alley will be clearly differentiated from the historic materials. The proposed project is in conformance with the *Secretary's Standards*.

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).*

The proposed work conforms to the prescriptive standards and design criteria set forth in the Old Towne Design Standards and *Secretary's Standards*, as described above.

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).*

The *City of Orange Infill Residential Design Guidelines* do not apply to commercial projects; this finding does not apply.

CONDITIONS

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

1. This project is approved as a precise plan. All work shall conform in substance and be maintained in general conformance with plans and exhibits labeled as Attachment 8, including modifications required by the conditions of approval, and as recommended for approval by the Design Review Committee. Any changes from the approved plans shall be subject to subsequent review and approval by the Design Review Committee.
2. The applicant agrees to indemnify, hold harmless, and defend the City, its officers, agents and employees from any and all liability or claims that may be brought against the City arising out of its approval of this permit, save and except that caused by the City's active negligence.
3. The signage shall return to the DRC for final review and approval prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
4. Encroachment permits shall be obtained for all work in the public right of way.

5. Construction permits shall be obtained for all future 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 permit.
6. If not utilized, project approval expires twenty-four months from the approval date. Extensions of time may be granted in accordance with OMC Section 17.08.060. The Planning entitlements expire unless Building Permits are pulled within 2 years of the original approval.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Site Photographs
3. Historic Photographs
4. DPR Forms 523 for 100 W. Chapman Avenue
5. DRC Meeting Minutes from June 17, 2015 and November 4, 2015
6. Photographs of brick repair mock-ups
7. Color and Materials (to be provided at DRC meeting)
8. Plans (date stamped June 29, 2016)

cc: Urth Old Towne Development, LLC
Attn: Walter Jones
451 S. Hewitt Street
Los Angeles, CA 90013

SF Jones Architects
Attn: Stephen Jones
4218 Glencoe Avenue, #2
Marina Del Rey, CA 90292