



# *DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE*

## AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA DATE: DECEMBER 16, 2015  
TO: Chair McCormack and Members of the Design Review Committee  
THRU: Leslie Aranda Roseberry, Planning Manager  
FROM: Kelly Christensen Ribuffo, Associate Planner  
SUBJECT: **DRC No. 4809-15 – Michaelis Residence**

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### **SUMMARY**

The applicant proposes to reconstruct and add onto an existing rear service porch and construct two new trellises on a contributing property within the Old Towne Historic District.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION – FINAL DETERMINATION**

Staff recommends that the Design Review Committee 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: Chris and Nichole Michaelis  
Architect: Craig B. Wheeler  
Property Location: 288 N. Center Street  
General Plan Designation: Low Density Residential 2-6 du/acre  
Zoning Classification: Single Family Residential R-1-6  
Existing Development: 964 SF one-story single family residence, with a 975 SF one and a half story detached carriage house with accessory second dwelling unit  
Property Size: 6,750 SF  
Associated Applications: None  
Previous DRC Review: N/A  
Previous Entitlements: Variance No. 2070-99; Negative Declaration No 1611-99; Design Review No. 3459-99

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

No Public Notice was required for this project.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

**Categorical Exemption:** The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Section 15301 (Existing Facilities.) The project is limited to an addition to an existing single family residence of less than 50% of the total square footage of the existing structure.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant proposes to undertake the following scope of work to the subject property:

- Dismantle and reconstruct the existing service porch on the rear (west) elevation of the residence
  - A new foundation will be added to stabilize the structure.
  - Original materials will be salvaged where possible for reuse.
  - New materials will complement original materials, but differentiate between old and new finishes.
  - The pitch of the roof will change slightly due to the new foundation and the leveling of the floor.
- Add an additional 35 SF to the reconstructed service porch to accommodate a new bathroom
  - The addition will be differentiated from the original service porch by means of a 2-inch offset between the existing and new exterior walls.
- Construct two new detached trellises in the rear yard between the rear of the residence and the carriage house

The proposed work meets the development standards for the R-1-6 zoning district and the Old Towne Design Guidelines, and no accommodations or variances are being requested as part of this project.

## **EXISTING SITE**

The property is a contributing resource to the National Register-listed Old Towne Historic District. The site is developed with an approximately 964 SF single family residence constructed c1911. The frame bungalow appears to retain a relatively high amount of historic integrity with minor alterations, including application of a brick veneer to the front of the building.

According to the applicant, the existing service porch was originally an open back porch, likely enclosed sometime in the 1920s, with later alterations made in the 1950s. These conclusions are based on physical examination of the structure and its materials.

The existing detached carriage house, with accessory second dwelling unit, was constructed in 2000. The project was reviewed by the Design Review Board (DRB) and approved by the Planning Commission. The project included a variance to decrease the required rear yard setback for a habitable accessory structure from 10 feet to 5 feet.

### **EXISTING AREA CONTEXT**

The subject property is located at the corner of E. Palm Avenue and N. Center Street. The site is bordered to the east, west and south by other properties in the R-1-6 zoning district. The property located to the north across Palm Avenue is within the Chapman University Specific Plan Area. The surrounding area is within the residential area of the Old Town Historic District.

### **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**

Overall, staff has no issues with the proposed addition to the existing service porch, nor with the two proposed trellises for the property. The addition has been designed in such a way as to differentiate it from the historic structure of the building through use of complementary but different materials and by offsetting the plane of the exterior walls. This is consistent with Standards #9 and #10 of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, which required that new construction related to historic resources be compatible in mass, scale and materials with the original structure, but still be differentiated so as to preserve the integrity of the historic character of the property. In addition, the two trellises are completely detached from the house and carriage house, and could be removed without compromising the historic residence.

However, given the substantial nature of the proposed rehabilitation of the original service porch, staff felt that a more in depth discussion on this work item is warranted in order for the Design Review Committee to make a determination of conformance with the required findings for approval of this project.

#### **Issue #1: Dismantling of Service Porch**

As part of the scope of work for this project, the applicant has proposed to completely dismantle the existing service porch in order to reconstruct it on a new, sturdier foundation appropriate for the level of use proposed for the structure. In the response to staff's comments, included as Attachment 3 of this report, the applicant has explained that the overall construction and condition of the service porch makes it unfeasible to undertake the proposed work with the porch structure in place. Additional photographic documentation, included as Attachment 4, further illustrates the condition issues identified in the comment letter.

The addition, or subsequent enclosure, of service porches to residences is a common alteration seen on many contributing historic residences within the Old Towne Historic District. Past practice by staff has been to treat service porches as a characteristic feature of historic structures in Orange. As such, it is important to ensure that any modifications to an existing service porch be well documented and be undertaken in keeping with the best practice standards recommended in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* as well as in the Old Towne Design Standards.

Standard #6 of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* states that:

“Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old

in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.”

It is the opinion of staff that the applicant has sufficiently documented the condition of the existing service porch to support their request to dismantle the structure as part of the proposed project. The condition of the structure is poor, with visible water and termite damage. Attempting to repair or add on to the existing structure in place would not allow for all the structural issues to be fully addressed. This would not only compromise the safety of the structure but its longevity in the future. The applicant has also proposed to salvage and reuse as much original material as possible, and replace what cannot be reused in a like for like manner. Therefore, the proposed treatment for the service porch is compliant with the required historic preservation standards, and may be approved by the Design Review Committee.

### **ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

This project was not required to be reviewed by any advisory boards.

### **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. Below are the four findings that, as applicable, are used to determine whether a project meets the intent of the code related to design review and historic preservation guidelines:

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.G.1).*

The proposed project is in conformance with the Old Towne Design Standards. As discussed in the Analysis section of this staff report, the proposed reconstruction of the original service porch meets the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*. The existing condition and proposed alterations to the structure have been documented, changes will be made in a manner consistent with the original form of the porch, original materials will be reused where possible and materials will be replaced in a like for like manner only where required. The proposed addition also complies with the Standards, as

the proposed addition to the porch will be differentiated from the historic porch through use of different but complementary materials, as well as a 2 inch offset in the plane of the exterior walls.

The proposed trellises are detached from both the historic residence and the carriage house, which can be removed at a later date without compromising the historic character of the property. As such, they will not have a negative physical or visual impact on the property.

2. *In any National Register Historic District, the proposed work complies with the Secretary of the Interior's standards and guidelines (OMC 17.10.070.G.2).*

The project as proposed is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The alterations to the original service porch have been sufficiently documented by the applicant, and materials will be replaced in a like for like manner to retain the original appearance of the porch. Furthermore, the proposed addition to the porch will be differentiated from the historic porch through use of different but complementary materials, as well as a 2 inch offset in the plane of the exterior walls.

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 17.10.070.G.3).*

The proposed work conforms to the prescriptive standards set forth in the Old Towne Design Standards and Orange Municipal Code. The alterations to the service porch, including the addition as proposed, is consistent in massing, scale and materials with the existing residence, and will match aesthetically with the design of the property.

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 17.10.070.G.4).*

The Infill Design Guidelines are not applicable to this project, as the proposed addition is less than 50% of the square footage of the existing residence.

## **RECOMMENDED 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 2 (date stamped November 24, 2015), 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. 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.
4. 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. Proposed Plans (date stamped 11/24/2015)
3. Applicant Response to Comments, dated 11/24/2015
4. Detail Photographs of Existing Service Porch
5. DPR Form for 288 N. Center Street

cc: Chris and Nichole Michaelis  
288 N. Center Street  
Orange, CA 92866  
[namichaelis@aol.com](mailto:namichaelis@aol.com)

Craig B. Wheeler  
58 Plaza Square #G  
Orange, CA 92866  
[craigbwheeler@socal.rr.com](mailto:craigbwheeler@socal.rr.com)