



# ***DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE***

## **AGENDA ITEM**

AGENDA DATE:      OCTOBER 21, 2015

TO:                    Chair McCormack and Members of the Design Review Committee

THRU:                Leslie Aranda Roseberry, Planning Manager

FROM:                Marissa Moshier, Associate Planner - Historic Preservation

SUBJECT:            **DRC No. 4820-15 – Brawley Residence**

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### **SUMMARY**

The applicant proposes to demolish a 305 square foot rear addition to a historic single family residence and to construct a new 613 square foot addition in its place. The applicant also proposes to construct a new two car garage at the rear of the property.

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

Staff recommends that the DRC deny the proposed project.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Applicant:            Ester Brawley and John Roehl

Owner:                Ester Brawley and John Roehl

Property Location:   327 S. Cambridge Street

General Plan Designation: Low Density Residential

Zoning Classification: R-1-6

Existing Development: 2,017 SF single family residence

Property Size:        6,027 SF

Associated Applications: None

Previous DRC Review: None

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

No Public Notice was required for this project.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

**Statutory Exemption:** The proposed project is statutorily exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines 15270 (Projects Which

Are Disapproved) because CEQA does not apply to projects that are disapproved. There is no environmental public review required for a Statutory Exemption.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant proposes to demolish a 305 square foot, one-story rear addition to a two-story historic single family residence and to construct a new 613 square foot, one-story rear addition, containing a kitchen, dining room, bedroom, laundry and bathroom. The applicant also proposes to construct a new two-car garage. The major project components include:

- The roof structure and majority of the walls of the existing one-story portion of the house will be removed. A small portion of the north wall may be retained; however, the area of the wall to be retained is a small percentage of the total structure and staff considers the project to consist of demolition of the rear, one-story portion of the building.
- A new 613 square foot, one story addition will be constructed at the rear of the building. The addition will have a gambrel roof matching the design of the historic roof. To accommodate the height of the new gambrel roof, three windows at the second floor rear elevation will be removed and replaced with smaller windows. The addition will have wood lap siding and wood windows to match the historic materials on the building.
- The asbestos shingle siding will be removed to uncover the historic wood lap siding on the two-story portion of the building. The siding will be repaired and replaced as necessary.
- Existing non-historic windows in the two-story portion of the building will be replaced with wood windows to match the historic materials.
- The two-car garage will have a gambrel roof to match the historic house and will have wood lap siding and a wood garage door.

## **EXISTING SITE**

The existing site is developed with a two-story, 2,017 square foot single family residence, constructed circa 1907. The majority of the house consists of a two-story building. A small one-story portion is attached to the rear elevation. The one-story portion has two different rooflines and may have been constructed in two phases. The portion closest to the two story building has a hip roof. The other portion has a shed roof. The property also contains a detached 97 square foot shed in the rear yard.

According to the Orange County Office of the Assessor's records, the building was constructed in 1907. Aerial photographs of the City show that the property at 327 S. Cambridge was a vacant lot in 1938 and 1947. In 1950, a building permit was issued to relocate a residence to the lot at 327 S. Cambridge Street. It appears that the existing building was moved to the subject property in 1950. It is unclear where the house was located prior to its move.

The following building permits are associated with 327 S. Cambridge Street in the City's records.

**Building Permits**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Contractor</b>
7/10/1950	Relocate a residence	J.W. Thomas	Same
8/10/1950	Plumbing-Sewer Permit to install: bath tub, shower, lavatory, kitchen sink, wash tray, water closet, water heater, gas-fuel light, sewer	J.W. Thomas	J.D. Ditchey
8/10/1950	Electrical Permit to install one new meter loop	J.W. Thomas	Roger Oswald
6/7/1954	Asbestos side a residence	E.C. Wingate	Moore Construction Co.
10/5/1993	Reroof house, not including patio or garage	Catherine Wingate	Ross & Barrows

The applicant also provided a copy of the Orange County Assessor’s record of the building dated 11/29/1966 (See Attachment 3). This 1966 assessment record shows a sketch of the building footprint which corresponds roughly to the present-day footprint. The record also calculates a cost for a 108 square foot addition to the building. The 108 square feet corresponds to the 9 foot by 12 foot, rear shed roof addition to the building. Based on this 1966 assessment for an addition, it appears likely that the shed roof portion of the building was constructed considerably after the house was moved to the site and may not be a contributing element of the building. Neither the Assessor’s record nor the building permits indicate a date of construction for the hip roof, one-story portion of the building.

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The subject property was surveyed as being potentially eligible for individual designation at the local level in 1982 and 1991. The survey form identifies the property as a Dutch Colonial Revival house with the following description:

This is a large, two-story house which probably served as a grove house originally. It appears to have undergone some modifications over the years. The L-plan format of the house is complemented by multi-gable roofline with each of the gables in the gambrel [sic] style. There is a corner recessed porch and a large 3-part picture window on the front façade.

The survey form indicates that the property was evaluated for significance under the theme of architecture. A new Department of Parks and Recreation 523 survey form was created for the property in 2010. The new form restates the description from the earlier survey form and does not identify any additional character-defining features of the property.

Based on the evaluation in the City’s Historic Resources Survey, the property was eligible for and received a Mills Act Contract in 2005. No additional analysis was done when the Mills Act

Contract was approved to identify the historic context or character-defining features of the property.

## **PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS**

The subject property is outside of the Old Towne Historic District and would not typically be subject to review under the Old Towne Design Standards. However, the property's Mills Act Contract requires that any modifications to the property be in conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and the Old Towne Design Standards. The Planning Division has implemented a policy that any projects associated with historic properties with Mills Act Contracts outside of the Old Towne Historic District will be reviewed using the project review process outlined in the Old Towne Design Standards. Under the Design Standards, an addition to an existing building requires review by the Design Review Committee. Therefore, the project has been referred to the DRC for review. Staff recommended a preliminary review, because staff does not support the project as currently proposed. Staff also recommended that the applicant consider redesigning the proposed addition to be in conformance with the *Secretary's Standards* and the Old Towne Design Standards. The applicant requested that the current project be reviewed by the DRC for final determination.

## **EXISTING AREA CONTEXT**

The property is located on the east side of S. Cambridge Street and is surrounded by single family residences. An alley is located immediately to the north. The eastern boundary of the local Old Towne Historic District at the 300 block of S. Cambridge Street is the centerline of the street. The subject property is just outside of the Historic District. The property immediately to the south has been identified as a historic resource, individually eligible for designation at the local level. The other surrounding properties contain non-historic buildings.

## **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: Demolition of Rear Portion of Historic Building**

The applicant maintains that the rear, one-story portion of the building is not a contributing feature. The applicant believes that the one-story portion was constructed in the 1950s, after the building was moved to the subject property, and that it may be demolished without negatively impacting the historic building. Absent clear dates of construction from the building permits or County Assessor's records, the applicant provided documentation of the existing construction to support their position to staff (See Attachment 3: Applicant Justification Letter and Supplemental Information).

Staff does not believe that the documentation constitutes compelling evidence to support a finding that the hip roof, rear portion of the building is not a contributing feature. Staff agrees that the one-story portion of the building was likely an addition to the original two-story house; however, staff maintains that the hip roof portion of the building may have been constructed early in the building's history and may have been relocated to the subject property with the two-story portion of the house. Treating an early addition to a historic building as a contributing element of the building is standard practice for historic properties reviewed under the Old Towne Design Standards. Staff routinely considers additions, such as service porches, to be contributing elements of the building, as these additions reflect important patterns of development in the Orange's historic buildings.

Both the two-story and one-story portions of the building are clad in teardrop style milled wood siding under the asbestos siding. The applicant provided photographs that appear to show a difference in the dimensions of the milled lap siding on the two sections of the building. The lap on the one-story portion appears to be slightly larger than on the two-story portion. The siding is also slightly offset between the two sections. The applicant presents this information as evidence that the one-story portion of the building was constructed after 1950. Staff does not agree with this assertion. The size difference may indicate that the one-story building was constructed after the original two-story portion of the house; however, staff does not consider the small difference in the dimensions of the siding to be compelling evidence of a post-1950 date of construction for the one-story addition. The lap siding on both portions of the building is of a size and design that is typical of early 20<sup>th</sup> century residences in Orange. Similarly, the windows in the one-story portion are double-hung wood windows with trim that closely reflects the main portion of the house and seem to indicate an early date of construction.

Staff also does not find the interior photographs of the connections between the two sections of the building to be persuasive. These construction details, including the flooring, wall framing, bottom plate, interior walls and trim, are not unusual for service porches and other small, early additions to historic houses in the Historic District. The applicant indicates that there are newer plumbing connections between the two portions of the building; however, this appears to staff to be consistent with the plumbing permit from 1950 when new plumbing was installed in the house after its relocation. The date of plumbing connections alone cannot be sufficient to determinate a date of construction for the building as a whole.

Absent any additional information, staff recommends to the DRC that the rear one-story portion of the building is a contributing element. Based on the above information, staff considers the proposed project to consist of 1) demolition of a contributing portion of the building and 2) construction of a new addition in its place. The proposed new addition requires removal of historic floor area and character-defining features of the historic building. The addition will not be reversible at a later date and does not adequately preserve the character of the historic house. Staff has provided Ms. Brawley with options for designing the new addition to incorporate the one-story, hip roof portion of the building. The demolition of a contributing area of the historic building is not in conformance with the *Secretary's Standards* or the Old Towne Design Standards, and staff recommends that the DRC deny the project.

### **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 deny the project.

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 project is not in the Old Towne District; this finding does not apply.

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.G.2).*

The project is not within the National Register-listed Old Towne Historic District; this finding does not apply.

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.G.3).*

The applicable design standards for projects involving a historic resource with a Mills Act Contract are the *Secretary's Standards* and the Old Towne Design Standards. The proposed project is not in conformance with the Old Towne Design Standards. The project involves demolition of a contributing portion of the historic building and will cause significant change to the character-defining features of the building. The new construction will not consist of a reversible addition to the historic building. The demolition and new construction of the addition will adversely affect the historic character of the building by removing historical floor area and character-defining features.

The proposed project is not in conformance with the *Secretary's Standards*. Under Standard 2, the alteration of historic features or spaces that characterize a property should be avoided. Under Standard 4, changes that have acquired historic significance over time should be preserved. The proposed project removes the historic one-story, hip roof portion of the building and does not preserve historic features that have gained significance over time. It is not in conformance with Standards 2 and 4. Under Standard 9, new additions should not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. Under Standard 10, new additions should be reversible so that the essential form and integrity of the historic property is unimpaired. The new addition requires removal of historic floor area, roof, walls, windows, siding and trim. The addition will destroy historic, character-defining features of the property and will not be reversible, because it requires demolition of a contributing element of the property. The project is not in conformance with Standards 9 and 10.

This finding cannot be made.

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.G.4).*

This project does not meet the *City of Orange Infill Residential Design Guidelines*. The property is just outside of the boundary of the local Old Towne Historic District and is itself a historic resource. Removal of historic floor area and character-defining features of a historic building will not preserve or enhance neighborhood character, and the loss of these historic features may adversely affect the adjacent Historic District.

This finding cannot be made.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Vicinity Map
2. Site Photographs
3. Applicant's Letter of Justification and Supplemental Information
4. Survey Forms for 327 S. Cambridge Street
5. Plans (date stamped October 5, 2015)

cc: Ester Brawley and John Roehl  
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