



# *DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE*

## AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2016

TO: Chair Fox and Members of the Design Review Committee

THRU: Anna Pehoushek, Assistant Community Development Director

FROM: Kelly Christensen Ribuffo, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: **MNSP No. 0857-16 – Chapman University Villa Park Orchards Association  
Packing House and West Residential Village**

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### **SUMMARY**

A proposal for rehabilitation of the Villa Park Orchards Association (VPOA) Packing House, relocation of existing historic era accessory structures, and construction of a new multi-story, multi-family student residential building (West Residential Village.) The property is within the boundaries of the Old Towne National Historic District.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION – PRELIMINARY REVIEW**

Staff is requesting preliminary comments from the Design Review Committee concerning the proposed project. The project will be brought back at a later date for final recommendation when formal application for review is made.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Applicant/Owner: Chapman University/Kris Olsen

Property Location: 350 N. Cypress Street and 400 W. Sycamore Avenue

General Plan Designation: Public Facilities (PFI)

Zoning Classification: Public Institution (P-I (SP) - Chapman University Specific Plan);  
Academic Area 2 (A-2)

Existing Development: 87,679 SF packing house, 5,200 SF (former fertilizer building) and  
3,150 SF (former auto building) storage buildings

Property Size: 178,596 SF (~4.1 acres)

Associated Applications: N/A, preliminary review only

Previous DRC Review: None

Previous Entitlements: None

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

No Public Notice was required for this project review.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

No determination regarding the level of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review required for this project has been made at this time. The applicant is still in the process of preparing technical studies and an initial study for review by City staff.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant, Chapman University, has proposed a three phase project for rehabilitation and redevelopment of the VPOA Packing House site and the Cypress Street Parking Lot. All three phases may be construction simultaneously or separately. A detailed description of the scope of work for the project has been provided in Attachments 3 and 4 of this report.

- *Phase I:* Demolish the existing non-historic carport on the south portion of the project area, as well as other non-historic packing house additions and features, and relocate two historic accessory buildings to the north end of the site.
- *Phase II:* Construct of a new five story, ~126,000 SF West Residential Village building at the south end of the site. The building will provide up to 420 beds for student multi-family housing. One floor will be below grade and face a central sunken courtyard.
- *Phase III:* Rehabilitate the Packing House to provide student services, such as food service, for the new West Residential Village; provide an expanded space for the Hilbert Museum of California Art; and retain portions of the building for storage.

Due to the scope and scale of the new project, staff is bringing the proposed project before the Committee for preliminary review.

## **EXISTING SITE**

The project site consists of two parcels, both of which will be redeveloped as part of the proposed project.

*Villa Park Orchards Association (VPOA) Packing House (350 N. Cypress Street)*

The Packing House lot is located at the northwest corner of N. Cypress Street and W. Palm Avenue. The property consists of the packing house, two accessory buildings, and a freestanding carport. Detailed development history of the site has been provided in the historic resources technical report prepared by Historic Resources Group (HRG), included as Attachment 5 of this report. In summary:

- Packing House – Constructed in 1918, with major additions in 1929 and 1939 (87,679 SF in size).
- Fertilizer Storage Building – Constructed in 1920, with minor recent additions to the north elevation (5,200 SF in size).
- Auto/Truck Storage and Repair Building – Constructed in 1920 (3,150 SF in size).
- Carport – Constructed in 1977, with an addition made in 1981.

The lot is located within the boundaries of the Old Towne National Historic Districts. The VPOA Packing House is a contributing historic resource to the existing historic district. HRG has also identified the site (inclusive of the lot and including the packing house, fertilizer building, and auto building) as being potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic site under Criterion A. The period of significance for the site would be from 1918, which the original portion of the packing house was constructed by the Santiago Orange Growers Association, and ends in 1967 when the Association sold the packing house site to the Villa Park Orchards Association. The property retains a high degree of historic integrity.

*Cypress Street Parking Lot (400 W. Sycamore Avenue)*

Also known as the “Idaho Lot”, this existing paved parking lot is located to the north of the VPOA Packing House and is used for parking for Chapman University. This lot is outside of the boundary of the Old Towne National Historic District, but is within the boundary of the Local Historic District.

## **EXISTING AREA CONTEXT**

The subject property is bounded by a diverse mix of properties and uses, with overlapping historic district and specific plan boundaries. A summary of these boundaries is provided below. Please reference Attachments 1 and 2 for additional information on zoning, overlays, and historic status of adjacent properties.

North: Directly abutting the Cypress Street Parking Lot are properties zoned for mixed use commercial (OMTU-15 zone) and multi-family residential homes (R-2-6 zone). These properties are within the Old Towne Local Historic District boundary, the Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan area, and are associated with the Cypress Street Barrio neighborhood.

East: The project site is bounded to the east by a mix of residential (R-3 and P-I zone) and commercial industrial (M-1 zone) properties. Some of these properties are owned by Chapman University and used as employee housing or administrative offices. Other properties are private residences and businesses. All of these properties are within the boundaries of the Old Towne National Historic District, with some also within the Chapman University Specific Plan area.

South: Properties directly adjacent to the south are within the Chapman University Specific Plan area (P-I (SP) zone) and include the Marion Knott Studios, Erin J. Lastinger Tennis Center (under construction), and Digital Media Arts Center (DMAC). All of these properties are within the Specific Plan area and the Old Towne National Historic District.

West: The Topeka & Santa Fe (AT & SF) Railroad directly abuts the west property line of the project site. On the opposite side of the railroad right-of-way are additional Chapman University academic and administrative facilities including Crean Hall, Entertainment Tech Center, and Institutional Event Management offices. These properties are not within the Chapman University Specific Plan area, but are within the boundaries of the Old Towne Local Historic District and the Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan area (P-I (SP) zone).

The project site is also located in the heart of an area identified in the City of Orange General Plan as a potential neighborhood character area (NCA) called the Cypress Street Barrio. The packing house was a major employer to residents in the Barrio, and the history of the community is strongly tied to the site and the citrus industry in Orange in general. The recognition of the potential Cypress Street Barrio NCA in the General Plan acknowledges that some of the properties may have diminished historic integrity, but are important as a collection because of their connection to the cultural heritage of early Latino residents of the neighborhood. Information from the General Plan Cultural Resources Element regarding the Cypress Street Barrio and NCAs has been included as Attachment 7 of this report.

## **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).

## **DISCUSSION**

Chapman University is proposing a project that not only involves rehabilitation and reuse of the historic VPOA Packing House, but also modifications to the existing site layout and construction of a five story infill residential building. Given the scope, scale, and complexity of the proposed plan, Staff is requesting preliminary feedback from the DRC in order guide refinement of the project and site improvements as it continues to move through the review process.

To guide future project review, Staff requests that the Committee provide comments on the following, along with any other related issues identified by the DRC:

- Changes to the site, including demolition of non-historic features and relocation of two accessory buildings.
- Alterations to the packing house, including removal of non-historic additions, cutting of a new opening into the south façade of the building for a new entrance, and modifications to partition the inside of the building for new uses.
- Site plan and building orientation, including the distance of the new buildings from the historic packing house and open space, as well as placement of relocated buildings.
- Mass and scale of the new building, including the interface with the historic building and with the surrounding neighborhood residential, industrial, and institutional properties.
- Architectural features and materials, in relation to the design and materials of the historic buildings.

Staff is requesting the DRC provide comments on the site plan, mass, scale, design and materials of the proposed project and on the project's conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. A copy of the standards is provided as Attachment 6 of this report for reference.

## **ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

Staff from interested departments (SMART Team) reviewed this application on April 27, 2016 and August 31, 2016 and has provided comments to the applicant regarding the project. No recommendation has been provided at this time, as the project is currently a preliminary review only.

## **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).*
- 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).*
- 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).*
- 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).*

At this time staff has no recommendation regarding the proposed project, and is only looking for preliminary feedback regarding the application.

## **RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

Since this project is before the DRC as a preliminary review, staff has no recommended conditions at this time.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Vicinity Map
2. Except from City of Orange Zoning Map
3. Entitlement Booklet
4. Architectural Plans
5. Historic Resources Technical Report (distributed on 11/3/2016)
6. *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*
7. Excerpts from the 2010 General Plan Cultural Resources Element regarding Neighborhood Character Areas (NCAs)

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