



# ***DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE***

## **AGENDA ITEM**

AGENDA DATE: JUNE 21, 2017

TO: Chair Imboden and Members of the Design Review Committee

THRU: Anna Pehoushek, Assistant Community Development Director

FROM: Marissa Moshier, Historic Preservation Planner

SUBJECT: Draft Update to Historic Preservation Design Standards for Old Towne

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### **SUMMARY**

A study session to review and discuss the draft update to the Historic Preservation Design Standards for Old Towne. This is the first of multiple meetings with the Design Review Committee to review the draft update. The study session covers the first half of the document from the introduction through the Standards for Historic Building Features, pages 1-26. The remainder of the document will be reviewed during a separate study session.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION – NO ACTION**

Staff requests the Design Review Committee (DRC) provide comments on the draft update to the Historic Preservation Design Standards for Old Towne.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

No Public Notice is required for this study session. However, a direct mailing to property owners within the boundaries of the Old Towne Historic District was sent on June 15 to request their input on the draft update.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN STANDARDS BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY**

The Historic Preservation Design Standards for Old Towne (Design Standards) were adopted by City Council on July 11, 1995 and last updated on December 14, 1999. The current Design Standards are divided into three parts, along with four appendices. Part I provides an introduction to the Design Standards and an overview of the significance of the Old Towne Historic District. Part II covers the processing requirements and review criteria for projects in the Historic District. Part III consists of the design standards organized by different geographic areas in the Historic District: the Plaza, Downtown Core, Spoke Street Corridors, and Residential Quadrants. The appendices include a list of definitions, standards for use of appropriate materials, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, and a list of supplemental documents.

The Design Standards have been effective at guiding rehabilitation of historic buildings and new construction to help preserve the character of Old Towne. However, staff has heard and gathered feedback from community members, the Design Review Committee, Planning Commission, and

City Council that updates were necessary to make the Design Standards more complete and easier to understand. In response, staff prepared a draft update to the Design Standards. The revised Design Standards include photographs and graphics illustrating common preservation concepts and the types of projects that frequently occur in the Historic District. It provides updates to make the document more user-friendly for property owners and residents and more effective for staff and members of the Design Review Committee who use it to review projects.

### **Document Organization**

The first section of the draft update introduces the importance and benefits of historic preservation in Orange; describes the Design Standards' consistency with the federal standards for historic preservation, the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*; outlines the historic character of the Plaza and Old Towne; and explains the process for design review in the Historic District. Design review is streamlined by clarifying the types of projects that are delegated to staff for administrative review and eliminating the requirement for Planning Commission review for some types of projects.

The next section of the document provides standards for historic building features, such as windows or roofs; historic residential buildings; historic commercial buildings; new construction, including additions, new infill buildings, and appropriate Floor Area Ratios for new projects; and non-contributing (non-historic) buildings. The updated standards are founded on the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*, so that they are consistent with professional historic preservation practice and technical recommendations from the National Park Service. The standards are intended to be flexible enough to apply to many different properties and types of projects, while providing clear direction to property owners on how to design projects that are compatible with the Historic District. These sections address the common types of projects that are proposed in the Historic District and provide standards for preserving those historic features that make Old Towne unique. This approach to organizing the Design Standards is intended to help property owners and design professionals more easily navigate the document and quickly find the sections that are applicable to their specific projects.

### **Peer Review**

The draft update to the Design Standards was reviewed by a qualified historic preservation consultant, engaged by the Community Development Department for a peer review. The peer review found that the document is consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* and achieves the Department's goals of clarifying the review process for projects in the Historic District and making the Design Standards more user-friendly for residents, property owners, business owners, and architects and design professionals in Old Towne.

### **Public Outreach**

The update is linked on the Historic Preservation page of the City website. Property owners were also provided notification of the draft update and asked for comments through a direct mailing sent on June 15. Staff is planning public workshops on the update for July and August.

The update will be reviewed by the Design Review Committee and Planning Commission. Both bodies will make a recommendation on the update to the City Council. The City Council has final determination on adoption of the update.

## **DISCUSSION TOPICS**

Staff is requesting comments on the following sections in the first half of the draft update:

- Purpose of the Design Standards
- Why Historic Preservation?
- Related Guidance
- Do the HPDS Apply to My Project?
- Design Review
- How to Plan for a Successful Project Using the HPDS
- Historic Character
- Standards for Historic Building Features

These sections are summarized below.

### **Section 1 – Purpose of the Design Standards**

This section lays out the history of community-led preservation in Old Towne, including the development of local advocacy groups and survey efforts. The introduction describes the purpose of the Design Standards in preserving the character of Old Towne while allowing new construction that relates respectfully to the historic buildings and streetscapes.

### **Section 2 – Why Historic Preservation?**

This section provides a brief description of the benefits of historic preservation for the local economy, tourism, and neighborhood livability.

### **Section 3 – Related Guidance**

This section introduces the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of the Historic Properties* as the foundation for the Design Standards. It describes both the ten Standards for Rehabilitation, which are most commonly used for projects in the Historic District, and the *Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, which offer technical guidance on applying the Standards to specific properties. This section clarifies that the Design Standards and Secretary's Standards are consistent with each other and that projects that are in conformance with the Design Standards will also be in conformance with the *Secretary's Standards*.

In addition, this section lays out a sequence of appropriate treatments for historic buildings based on the Secretary's Standards:

1. Maintain historic features that are in good condition. Regular maintenance is critical to long-term preservation of historic buildings.
2. Repair features that are deteriorated to the original condition. In most cases, repair is better than replacement because it preserves the historic materials on the building.

3. Replace only the features that cannot be repaired Replacement should be in kind, matching the materials, details, and finish of the historic feature
4. Reconstruct missing features. The reconstruction should be based on documentary or physical evidence on the building.
5. Design new features or additions to be compatible with the historic building and minimize the impact to original features.

Finally, this section describes the use of the California Historical Building Code for qualified historic properties.

#### **Section 4 – Do the HPDS Apply to My Project?**

This section describes the three overlapping historic districts that make up Old Towne. It also defines contributing and non-contributing structures and how the different sections of the Design Standards apply to each type of property. It clarifies that some properties may be non-contributors to the Historic District but may be separately eligible as historic resources under state or federal criteria for designation. For properties that are more than 40 years of age, property owners should contact staff early to determine whether additional review of the property may be required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), separate from the requirements of the Design Standards.

#### **Section 5 – Design Review**

This section describes the approval process for changes to properties in Old Towne. It clarifies the types of projects that are delegated to staff for review or that require determination by the Design Review Committee at a public meeting. A summary of project types and their required review process is provided on page 9.

#### **Planning Commission Review of Second Story Additions and New Units**

The update to the Design Standards eliminates the requirement for a Conditional Use Permit, reviewed by the Planning Commission, for new two-story construction in the Historic District. It also eliminates the requirement for Planning Commission review of additional units on lots zoned for such purposes. Staff recommends eliminating the Planning Commission review of these project types because the primary issues associated with these projects are related to mass, scale, design, aesthetics, and impacts on historic resources and the historic streetscape. These issues are the purview of the Design Review Committee, and these projects do not typically include land use issues that are the purview of the Planning Commission.

Issues related to neighborhood compatibility with these projects are worked out at the DRC level, and staff has not seen that these projects benefit from additional Planning Commission review, either from the standpoint of vetting land use issues or neighborhood participation in the public meeting process. As such, staff has removed the additional Planning Commission review, as it appears to increase the applicant's time and costs for processing projects without providing benefits to the community. However, larger projects that require entitlements such as Variances or Major Site Plans or environmental review documents under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will still need final determinations by the Planning Commission or City Council as outlined in the Orange Municipal Code and Local CEQA Guidelines.

### *Minor Design Review*

The section also creates an application process for staff review, called Minor Design Review. Under the existing Design Standards, certain types of minor projects are delegated to staff for review; however, there is no formal application for this type of project. The update to the Design Standards creates an application type called Minor Design Review (MDR) for these projects. The Minor Design Review (MDR) application will be filled out at the Planning Division counter and is currently proposed as no fee application. Typically, the application will be processed in one visit to the Planning Division Counter. This formal application will allow Planning Division staff to track the number and location of MDR projects throughout the Historic District. It will also allow the Code Enforcement Division to confirm whether projects have been approved by Planning staff when they receive complaints about work being done in the Historic District.

### *Section 6 – How to Plan for a Successful Project Using the HPDS*

This section describes the typical sequence for preparing and processing a project using the Design Standards in the Historic District. It makes recommendations to consult staff early in the process and to engage qualified design professionals to ensure that the project can be processed efficiently.

### *Section 7 – Historic Character*

This section describes the character of Old Towne and provides a list of character-defining features of the Plaza Historic District and the larger Old Towne historic district (both local and National Register-designated). These lists are intended to provide property owners and design professionals with reference points for important historic features that should be considered when planning for projects in the historic districts.

### *Cypress Street Barrio*

This section also includes a description of the Cypress Street Barrio. Although the Barrio is not a separate historic district, it is identified as a potential Neighborhood Character Area, along with the Railroad/Packing House Corridor, in the City's 2010 General Plan. Staff included this description to highlight the important history of this neighborhood within the context of Old Towne.

### *Style Sheets*

Finally, the section references architectural style sheets for common types of residential architectural styles in Old Towne. The style sheets provide additional information on character-defining features of specific architectural styles. These style sheets have been updated and are attached to this staff report.

### *Section 8 – Standards for Historic Building Features*

This section covers appropriate treatments for roofs; windows and doors; architectural details and building materials; and mechanical systems on historic buildings. The update emphasizes preservation and repair of existing historic features, rather than replacement. It describes the appropriate treatment of historic materials and the circumstances when limited replacement may be necessary.

The standards for Architectural Details and Building Materials (page 22) address the appropriateness of replacement materials on historic buildings. As discussed with the DRC during a study session, these standards allow consideration of alternate materials in limited circumstances, based on the guidance provided in NPS Preservation Brief 16: The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors.

The standards for Mechanical Systems include requirements for solar panels. The permitted locations for solar panels have not changed from the existing Design Standards. However, in some cases, solar panels in permitted locations may be visible from the street. Staff has added language that allows additional review and modification of installations that are visible from the street to maximum allowed under the Solar Rights Act. Generally, staff can require modification to installations that do not decrease the efficiency of the system by more than ten percent or increase the cost of the system by more the \$1,000. Staff has also added requirements for panels to be parallel to the roof plane, attached using non-destructive means, and installed without gaps between the panels. Staff recommends that these additional standards will improve the outcomes of solar panel installation in the Historic District, while complying with state law regarding solar panels.

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff is seeking comments from the DRC on each of the sections of the updated Design Standards. Staff is particularly looking for the DRC's feedback on use of the document for reviewing the types of projects that typically come before the Committee; the compatibility of the update with the goals of preserving the character of Old Towne and helping property owners and design professionals plan for projects in the historic districts; and the changes to the design review process and organization of the Design Standards to focus on historic features and property types, rather than geographic areas of the historic districts.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft Update of Historic Preservation Design Standards
2. Architectural Style Sheets
3. Minor Design Review (MDR) Application Form