



DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA DATE: AUGUST 5, 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. 4475-10 – Yaghi Rehabilitation and Accessory Second Unit**

SUMMARY

The applicant proposes to relocate a historic single family dwelling and garage on the property, remove non-contributing additions and construct a new rear addition to the historic building, and construct a 483 square foot accessory second unit at the rear of the property. The single family dwelling is a contributing building with several non-contributing additions in the National Register of Historic Places-listed Old Towne Historic District.

RECOMMENDED ACTION – PRELIMINARY REVIEW

Staff recommends that the DRC review the proposal and provide comments to the applicant regarding the compatibility of the project design with the Old Towne Historic District to support the required findings of conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and Old Towne Design Standards.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Owner: Shucri Yaghi
Applicant: Craig B. Wheeler, Architect
Property Location: 812 E. Washington Avenue, Old Towne Historic District
General Plan Designation: Low Density Residential 2-6 du/ac
Zoning Classification: R-1-6
Existing Development: 1,223 SF single family dwelling with attached one-car garage
Property Size: 6,413 SF
Associated Applications: None
Previous DRC Review: A previously proposed project to construct an accessory second unit at the front of the property was reviewed by DRC on September 1, 2010; October 6, 2010; December 1, 2010; and June 20, 2012. The

DRC continued the project and requested additional information on the status of the existing building as a contributor to the Old Towne Historic District.

PUBLIC NOTICE

No Public Notice was required for this project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Major project components include:

- **Historic residence.** The applicant proposes to relocate the existing vernacular building to a 20 foot front yard setback. One tree will be removed to accommodate the new location of the building. As part of the relocation, the non-contributing rear addition, consisting of a bedroom and utility room, will be removed. A new addition with a bedroom, bathroom, and attached single car garage will be constructed at the rear of the building. The total square footage of the building will be 1,263 with removal of the non-contributing additions and construction of the new rear addition. This is 40 square feet larger than the existing building.
- **Garage.** The existing attached garage will be separated from the dwelling and relocated to the rear of the property, south of its existing location. The existing driveway will be extended to meet the new location of the garage. A small rear addition, extending the existing roof and walls, will be constructed on the garage to allow it to more easily park a vehicle.
- **New accessory second unit.** The new accessory second unit will be located at the rear of the property, behind the contributing building. The building has a simple design, reflecting the minimal and utilitarian design elements of the historic building. It is clad in wood siding with a 4 inch exposure. The proposed windows are double-hung wood windows clad with aluminum. The small front stoop is covered with a simple gable roof supported by wood posts. The gable end contains a small Craftsman style vent at the front elevation. One uncovered parking space will be provided between the two dwellings to meet the code requirements related to parking for construction of an accessory second unit.

EXISTING SITE AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

The existing site is developed with a 1,223 square foot single family dwelling and attached one car garage, set back from the front property line by approximately 66 feet. The building is a small vernacular house with several different styles of wood siding and wood windows. The roof at the street-facing elevation consists primarily of a simple side gable with exposed rafters. The garage with a front gable roof on the east side of the property is connected to the house through a small hyphen with a shed roof that contains the kitchen.

The building was not evaluated as a historic resource in 1991 when AEGIS completed a survey of the potential Old Towne Historic District. The building was identified as a contributor to the Old Towne Historic District in the 1997 nomination of the district to the National Register of Historic

Places. In the City's 2005 Historic Resources Survey Update, the building was re-evaluated and status code "1D" was confirmed, identifying the building as a contributor to the National Register-listed Historic District.

In 2010, the applicant submitted a proposal to construct a small addition to the existing building and a new accessory second unit at the front of the property. The project was reviewed by the DRC on September 1, 2010; October 6, 2010; December 1, 2010; and June 20, 2012. At these meetings, the DRC requested additional information on the status of the existing building as a contributor to the Historic District. The applicant engaged Cynthia Ward, a historic preservation consultant, to prepare a report on whether the building should be considered a contributing resource to the Old Towne Historic District. Ms. Ward provided a report finding that the building should be re-classified as a non-contributor to the National Register-listed Historic District, due to "inappropriate remodeling, resulting in an irregular plan" (Attachment 5: Historic Resource Assessment – 812 E Washington Avenue). At the time, staff concurred with the report findings and presented the project to the DRC as infill construction on a property containing a non-contributing building. The DRC ultimately continued the project because the Committee found that it was unable to make the required findings related to conformance with the *Secretary's Standards* without additional information on the status of the existing building.

In 2014, the applicant submitted this revised project to relocate the existing residence to the front of the property and construct a new accessory second unit at the rear. When the revised project was submitted, staff reviewed the previous documentation provided by the applicant, visited the property, and reviewed available aerial photographs and Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. Based on this information, staff's recommendation to the DRC is that the existing building was constructed within the Old Towne Historic District's period of significance (1888-1940) and retains sufficient integrity to be considered a contributor to the Historic District. However, the rear portion of the building and the attachment between the house and garage appears to have been constructed after 1940, and staff recommends that the DRC consider these elements to be non-contributing features of the property.

The original dwelling appears to have consisted of the northwest section of the existing building under the side gable roof, now serving as the dining and living rooms, and totaling approximately 320 square feet. The 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows a small dwelling of approximately that size at the rear of the property. A Building Description form from the Orange County Office of the Assessor, created in 1929 and updated in 1936, states that the property contained a one-story cottage, built in 1922 with additions in 1935. The building had wood siding with a composition roof and totaled approximately 664 square feet in 1936. This area appears to correspond roughly to the area of the house today consisting of the living room, dining room, bathroom and a portion of one bedroom, based on the configuration of the roof, siding and windows.

The 1938 aerial of the property is very blurry; however, it appears to show two detached buildings, one of which roughly corresponds to the house described in the Assessor's Building Description form. The second structure appears to be a garage, because there is a driveway and approach leading to it from E. Washington Avenue. This structure appears to correspond to the location of the existing garage. The garage likely dates to before 1940, and staff recommends that the DRC consider it to be a contributing element of the property.

The 1947 aerial photograph of the property shows a single structure with the garage connected to the house through a small shed roof. There also appears to be a rear addition to the garage, and possibly an addition to the rear of the house, which may have functioned as a service porch. The 1950 Sanborn map does not appear to have been updated after the 1922 map; it shows the 1922 outline of the house with none of the changes evident in the aerial photographs. Staff believes that it is likely that the attachment between the house and garage took place between 1938 and 1947 and may be a non-contributing element of the property.

In 1960, the Orange County Assessor created another Building Description form for appraisal of the property. The form indicates that the property contained one 696 square foot residence with four rooms and a 160 square foot garage. The floor plan on this form indicates that the structure consisted of the area that today includes the living room, dining room, kitchen and a portion of bedroom one. The utility room, the extension of bedroom one and bedroom two are not included on this form, which indicates that they were constructed after 1960. The concrete floor of the utility room also slopes away from the building, indicating that it may have initially been constructed as a covered patio, before being enclosed as habitable space. Based on the evidence above, staff recommends to the DRC that the attachment between the garage and the house, and the rear portion of the building, consisting of the utility room, a portion of bedroom one, and bedroom two are non-contributing elements of the property.

EXISTING AREA CONTEXT

Surrounding properties are primarily one-story single family residences. Of the 12 properties on the south side of the 800 block of E. Washington Avenue, nine contain contributing buildings to the Old Towne Historic District, constructed between 1917 and 1928. Of the 10 properties on the north side of the block, one contains a contributing building. On the south side of the block, front yard setbacks range from 15 feet 7 inches to 27 feet 7 inches, measured from the back of sidewalk to the face of the porch.

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: Relocation of Historic Buildings

The proposed project includes separation of the attached house and garage and relocation of the house to a 20 foot front yard setback. The garage will be moved to the rear of the property with a 12 foot 8 inch rear yard setback. Under the *Secretary's Standards*, relocation of a historic building may be found to be appropriate, provided that the relocation does not destroy the historic relationships between buildings and landscape within the Historic District. From evidence available in historic photographs, it appears that the structures on the property have always been located at a front setback of approximately 66 feet with a large, open front yard. Relocation will alter this historic relationship between the buildings and the street. However, the relocation does maintain the visibility of the historic structures from the street, while allowing for additional development in the form of a small rear bedroom addition, additional garage, and accessory second unit.

The orientation of the house and garage in relation to E. Washington Avenue will remain the same, and the existing driveway will be retained and extended to serve the relocated garage. The proposed new location of the house and garage reflects the historic pattern of accessory structures behind residential properties in the Historic District; however, the proposal is an alteration to the historic site plan of this particular property. Staff requests that the DRC provide comments on the compatibility of the relocation with the character of the historic property and the Historic District as a whole, particularly as it relates to the proposed 20 foot front yard setback.

Issue 2: Compatibility of Addition to Historic Building

The applicant is proposing to remove the rear non-contributing additions to the building and construct a new 360 square foot addition containing a bedroom and bathroom and a 215 square foot attached one car garage. The addition will be minimally visible from the street. Construction of the addition includes reconstruction of a rear portion of the historic building to raise the existing roof plane to accommodate code required ceiling heights in one bedroom and bathroom. In keeping with the relatively utilitarian character of the existing house, the addition has simple design details. The proposed addition will be clad with wood siding with a 4 inch exposure, in contrast to the approximately 5 inch exposure of the siding on the existing historic building. The addition also has wood double-hung windows, exposed rafter tails and a new composition shingle roof to match the existing house. Staff is requesting DRC comments on the compatibility of the proposed

addition with the historic building and the reconstruction of the rear portion of the building to raise the ceiling height to accommodate additional living space.

Issue 3: Compatibility of Accessory Second Unit

In general, compatible new construction in the Historic District will be subordinate to the existing historic buildings on the property, in keeping with the mass and scale of buildings in the surrounding streetscape, and will use design elements and materials that are similar to but not exactly matching elements and materials used on historic buildings. The existing building is a minimal vernacular structure with simple design elements, including wood lap siding, wood double-hung windows with wood trim and gable roof forms. The proposed new building references the design and materials of the existing house on the property and similar houses in the Historic District, with the small front porch element, wood siding with 4 inch exposure, and a decorative gable vent. The proposed aluminum clad wood windows are similar in design and operation to wood double hung windows on comparable buildings.

The proposed accessory second unit is placed behind the relocated historic residence. The ridge of the front gable roof is slightly taller than the historic building; however, it is set back approximately 95 feet from the front property line and will be minimally visible from the street. Its location in the southwest corner of the property allows retention of the driveway approach and visibility of the historic one-car garage down the driveway. At 483 square feet in size, the proposed mass and scale of the building is smaller than surrounding historic buildings and smaller than the historic residence at the front of the lot. Staff is requesting that the DRC provide comments on the compatibility of the mass, scale, design and materials of the proposed new accessory second unit.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Site Photographs
3. Survey Evaluations for 812 E. Washington Avenue
 - a. 1997 National Register nomination form
 - b. 2005 Chattel, Inc. survey update
 - c. DPR 523 Form
4. Historic Research
 - a. 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map
 - b. 1936 Orange County Assessor Building Description Form
 - c. 1938 Aerial Photograph
 - d. 1947 Aerial Photograph
 - e. 1950 Sanborn Map
 - f. 1960 OC Assessor Building Description Form
5. Historic Resource Assessment, prepared by Cynthia Ward, September-October 2011
6. DRC Minutes (September 1, 2010; October 6, 2010; December 1, 2010; and June 20, 2012)
7. Plans (dated June 1, 2015)

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