



Agenda Item

Design Review Committee

Item #: 3.1.

8/20/2025

File #: 25-0483

TO: Chair and Members of the Design Review Committee

THRU: Hayden Beckman, Planning Manager

FROM: Arlen Beck, Associate Planner

1. SUBJECT

Approval of a master sign program for the First Presbyterian Church of Orange administration building located at 191 N. Orange Street.

2. SUMMARY

A proposal to establish a master sign program for a newly renovated, non-contributing, multi-tenant building in the Old Towne Historic District. The Planning Commission approved a project to remodel the building on April 4, 2022. (ENT 25-0029).

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approval by the Design Review Committee.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicant/Owner: 191 Orange, LLC, Adam Chez
Property Location: 191 N. Orange Street
General Plan Designation: Old Towne Mixed Use 15 (OTMIX-15)
Zoning Classification: Old Towne Mixed Use-15 (OTMU-15)
Existing Development: Two-story commercial building
Associated Application: None
Previous DRC Project Review: None

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is requesting approval of a master sign program for the two-story commercial building at 191 N. Orange Street. The building contains multiple tenant suites and two building elevations (north and west) adjacent to the public right-of-way. Sign area allowances are based on the lineal feet of the building's street frontage. The sign locations are placed to provide visibility on ground views and building views on N. Orange Street and E. Maple Avenue.

The proposed sign program establishes criteria for the retail/restaurant tenant wall signs as well as for office tenant signage, including locations on exterior building walls, maximum area per elevation, sign construction, and illumination. The sign program also allows for illuminated halo lit channel

letters, and externally illuminated signs for any future tenant signage.

The proposed sign program does not identify any ground-mounted freestanding monument signs, and all directional signs and window signs will be subject to the standard requirements as outlined in the Municipal Code. The sign program plans (Attachment 3) illustrate conceptual sign designs and locations. Future tenant signs that comply with the sign program will be approved by staff without additional review by the DRC.

6. EXISTING SITE

The site is developed with a two-story church administration building, constructed circa 1929 for the First Presbyterian Church of Orange. The building was extensively remodeled and added on to in 1964, when the adjacent connected church sanctuary was constructed. It is a non-contributor to the Old Towne Historic District due to the extensive changes outside of the historic district's period of significance (1888-1940). The construction of an addition and remodel approved by the Planning Commission in 2022 is nearing the completion of its construction and tenant improvements are near completion for some tenant spaces.

7. EXISTING AREA CONTEXT

The administration building is part of the First Presbyterian Church of Orange campus on Maple Avenue between N. Orange Street and N. Grand Street. The building is attached to the church sanctuary to the east and abutted to the south by the church hall, and the chapel.

To the north and east are single-family residences, the majority of which are contributors to the Old Towne Historic District. Adjacent zoning includes Old Towne Mixed Use 15 to the south and west and Single-Family Residential (R-1-6) to the north and east.

8. PROJECT ANALYSIS

The applicant is proposing a sign program that meets the requirements for signage in the City's Municipal Code and the Historic Preservation Design Standards for Old Towne (Design Standards). Under the sign program, first floor tenants are allowed to have one wall sign per street fronting elevation of tenant space and second floor tenants may choose either one wall sign or one blade sign per street fronting building elevation of tenant space, as permitted by the Design Standards. The permitted wall sign types are illuminated face lit channel letters with neon, fastened to the exterior building walls or awnings/canopy, illuminated halo lit channel letters, and externally illuminated signs. A blade sign may have a maximum sign area of 15 square feet per sign face and may include exposed neon and creative sign shapes and designs.

The sign materials are consistent with the recommendations in the Design Standards and are compatible with the building and the character of the Historic District.

9. ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION

None.

10. PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice was provided to owners and tenants within 300 feet of the project on or before August 7, 2025, and the site was posted with a notice on or before that date.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines 15301 (Class 1 - Existing Facilities) because the

project consists of establishing a new sign program for an existing two-story commercial building.

12. STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND REQUIRED FINDINGS

Based on the following Findings and statements in support of such Findings, staff recommends the DRC make a final determination on the proposed project with recommended conditions (Orange Municipal Code 17.10.070.G).

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.

The proposed sign program is in conformance with the Historic Preservation Design Standards for Old Towne, which are the prescriptive design criteria for projects within the Old Towne Historic District. The signs permitted by the master sign program are compatible in scale, design, materials, and character with the non-contributing building and surrounding historic commercial buildings in the Historic District. The sign locations and types reflect the historic pattern of signage on commercial buildings in the Old Towne Historic District and will enhance the pedestrian experience around the building. The sign program is consistent with the context of the Historic District and does not adversely affect the Historic District.

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).

Projects found to be in conformance with the Historic Preservation Design Standards for Old Towne are generally considered to be in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (SOI Standards). The building is a non-contributor to the Old Towne Historic District, and the proposed project is consistent with Standard 10 of the SOI Standards in that the project is contained to the non-contributing building and will not impair the form, materials, or integrity of the adjacent historic buildings or the Historic District as a whole. The proposed project is in conformance with the SOI Standards.

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).

Projects located within the Old Towne Historic District must comply with the Historic Preservation Design Standards for Old Towne and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (SOI Standards). As described above, the proposed work conforms with these design standards.

13. CONDITIONS

The approval of this project is subject to the following conditions:

1. All construction shall conform in substance and be maintained in general conformance with the plans labeled as "Attachment 3 - Sign Program Plans" in the staff report (date stamped approved on August 6, 2025), including modifications required by the conditions of approval, and as approved by the Design Review Committee.

2. Following the DRC meeting(s), and prior to issuance of building permits (for signage), the applicant shall provide the City with two physical copies and a digital copy of the final sign program which incorporates any comments from the DRC.
3. After any application has been approved, if changes are proposed regarding the location or alteration of any use or structure, a changed plan may be submitted to the Community Development Director for approval. If the Community Development Director determines that the proposed change complies with the provisions and the spirit and intent of the approval action, and that the action would have been the same for the changed plan as for the approved plan, the Community Development Director may approve the changed plan without requiring a new public meeting.
4. The final (signed) conditions of approval shall be reprinted on a dedicated sheet (or sheets) of the construction documents submitted to the Building Department for the plan check process.
5. The applicant agrees, as a condition of the City's approval for ENT25-0029, to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless, at the applicant's expense, the City, its officers, agents, and employees (City) from and against any claim, action, or proceeding brought against the City, including, but not limited to, any claim, action, or proceeding commenced within the time period provided in Government Code Section 66499.37 to attack, review, set aside, void, or annul the City's approval, to challenge the determination made by the City under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or to challenge the reasonableness, legality, or validity of any condition attached hereto. The City shall promptly notify the applicant of any such claim, action, or proceeding to which the City receives notice and to cooperate fully with the applicant in the defense thereof. The applicant shall reimburse the City for any and all costs and expenses, including, but not limited to, court costs and attorney's fees that the City may be required to pay, including any expenses ordered by a court or expenses incurred through the Office of the City Attorney in connection with said claim, action, or proceeding but such participation shall not relieve the applicant of the obligations of this condition. In the event the applicant is required to defend the City in connection with such claim, action, or proceeding, the City shall have the right to approve counsel to so defend the City, approve all significant decisions concerning the manner in which the defense is conducted and approve any and all settlements, which approval(s) shall not be unreasonably withheld. The obligations set forth herein remain in full force and effect throughout all stages of litigation including any and all appeals of any lower court judgement rendered in the proceeding. Further, the applicant agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the City for all costs and expenses incurred in enforcing this provision.
6. Building permits shall be obtained for all construction work, as required by the City of Orange, Community Development Department's Building Division. Failure to obtain the required building permits may be cause for revocation of this Design Review permit.
7. When signs are removed, the building(s) will be repaired so that the patchwork is not visible. The materials used to patch the holes shall be the same material, color, and texture as the building. If glue is used, excess glue shall be removed, and the building restored to its original condition. New paint or treatment will be required to remove any residual discoloration of the building caused by the previously installed signage.

8. If not utilized, the project approval expires twenty-four months (two years) 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 twenty-four months (two years) of the original approval.

14. ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 Vicinity Map
- Attachment 2 Applicant's Project Narrative Letter
- Attachment 3 Sign Program Plans