



Agenda Item

Design Review Committee

Item #: 3.1.

4/16/2025

File #: 25-0159

TO: Chair and Members of the Design Review Committee

THRU: Chad Ortlieb, Principal Planner

FROM: Angelo Huang, Assistant Planner

1. SUBJECT

A request to install a new blade sign in the Old Towne Orange Historic District at 238 W. Chapman Avenue (Design Review No. 5163).

2. SUMMARY

The applicant proposes to install a new non-illuminated pedestrian blade sign on the second floor of an existing non-contributing building in the Old Towne Historic District located at 238 W. Chapman Avenue.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve Design Review No. 5163.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicant: Side Studio - Tobin White

Owner: 234 W. Chapman Avenue LLC - Jay Rutter

Property Location: 238 W. Chapman Avenue

General Plan Designation: Old Towne Mixed Use 24, 6-24 du/ac; 1.0-1.5 FAR (OTMIX24)

Zoning Classification: Old Towne Mixed Use 24; Santa Fe Depot Plan Area (OTMU-24 (SP))

Existing Development: An office building with a restaurant on the first floor and office space above.

Associated Application: None

Previous DRC Project Review: None

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project includes:

- Installation of a 12.6-square-foot non-illuminated aluminum blade sign with vinyl graphic lettering. The sign dimensions are: 5 feet and 10 inches in height and 2 feet and 2 inches in width. The sign shall be secured via bolting in the mortar between the brick facade.

6. EXISTING SITE

The site is developed with two distinct structures. The building indicated as 234 W. Chapman Avenue is a contributing Victorian two-story home constructed circa 1885 and is occupied as a restaurant. The building indicated as 238 W. Chapman Avenue is a two-story brick and mortar office/retail building constructed circa 2011.

7. EXISTING AREA CONTEXT

The building is located on Chapman Avenue between Olive and Lemon Street, outside of the Downtown Plaza Core. The surrounding properties on the block consist of brick-and-mortar buildings except for the Victorian structure that shares the site. The property is part of the Santa Fe Depot Plan Area which encourages pedestrian signage along primary and secondary pedestrian pathways, such as Chapman Avenue.

8. ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT

The non-illuminated pedestrian blade sign consists of aluminum material and vinyl graphic lettering. The size of the sign complies with the zoning standards set forth in the Orange Municipal code. The materials and location on the building comply with the Historic Preservations Design Standards (HPDS) for Old Towne.

Staff supports the design and recommends that the DRC approve the sign proposal.

9. ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION

None.

10. PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice was provided to owners and tenants within 300 feet of the project on or before April 3, 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 adding new signage to an existing commercial property. There is no environmental public review required for a Categorical Exemption.

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 project is in conformance with the HPDS for Old Towne commercial signage. The sign size, placement, and materials meet the requirements set forth in the HPDS and Orange Municipal Code. As such, the new sign shall have no adverse impact on the appearance or character of the Old Towne Historic District.

2. In any National Register Historic District, the proposed work complies with the Secretary of the

Interior's standards and guidelines.

Projects found to be in conformance with the HPDS are generally considered to be in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The proposed sign is compatible with the building in its placement, size, design, and materials and will not negatively impact the streetscape of the Old Towne Historic District.

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.

The proposed sign conforms to the prescriptive standards and design criteria set forth in the HPDS for Old Towne and Orange Municipal Code Section 17.36, as described above. The signage is proposed to be placed in a location appropriate for signage within a historic district and will not detract from the appearance of the property.

13. CONDITIONS

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

1. This project is approved as a precise plan. All work shall conform in substance and be maintained in general conformance with the plans (date stamped approved April 16, 2025, and in the project case file), including modifications required by the conditions of approval, and as recommended for approval by the Design Review Committee. After the 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. If the Community Development Director determines that any proposed change is substantial, he may refer the plans to the Design Review Committee for subsequent review and determination.
2. The applicant agrees, as a condition of City's approval of Design Review No. 5163, to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless, at 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. City shall promptly notify 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. 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. City may, in its sole discretion, participate in the defense of any claim, action or proceeding but such participation

shall not relieve applicant of the obligations of this condition. In the event the applicant is required to defend City in connection with such claim, action or proceeding, 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 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 judgment rendered in the proceeding. Further, applicant agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the City for all costs and expenses incurred in enforcing this provision.

3. The applicant shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, including all City regulations. Violation of any of those laws in connection with the use may be cause for revocation of this permit.
4. The final approved conditions of approval shall be reprinted on the first or second page of the construction documents when submitting to the Building Division for the plan check process.
5. Construction permits shall be obtained for all future construction work, as required by the City of Orange, Building Division. Failure to obtain the required building permits will be cause for revocation of this permit.
6. If not utilized, project approval expires 24 months from the approval date. Extensions of time may be granted in accordance with OMC Section 17.08.060
7. An encroachment permit from Public Works Department is required if any work during the construction of the sign will obstruct the public right-of-way.

14. ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Vicinity Map
- Attachment 2 - DPR Form
- Attachment 3 - Project Plans
- Attachment 4 - Digital Materials Board
- Attachment 5 - Development Standards Table