



Agenda Item

Design Review Committee

Item #: 4.1.

5/20/2026

File #: 26-0254

TO: Chair and Members of the Design Review Committee

THRU: Hayden Beckman, Planning Manager

FROM: Anna Eichelberger, Planning Technician

1. SUBJECT

A request to install a new neon wall sign and re-face an existing blade sign on a building located in the Old Towne Historic District at 116 E. Chapman Avenue. (Design Review No. 25-0014).

2. SUMMARY

The applicant proposes to install a new neon wall-mounted sign and re-face an existing blade sign for The Kickin' Crab located at 116 E. Chapman Avenue. This property is located in the Old Towne Historic District and is designated as a contributing property.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve Design Review No. 25-0014.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicant/Owner: Khoa Tran

Owner: Chapman and Orange LLC

Property Location: 116 E. Chapman Avenue

General Plan Designation: Old Towne Mixed Use-15, 6-15 du/ac (OTMIX15)

Zoning Classification: Old Towne Mixed Use-15 (OTMU-15)

Existing Development: Commercial building constructed in 1900

Associated Application: None

Previous DRC Project Review: None

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project includes:

- Installation of a new 40-square-foot neon wall sign. The dimensions will be 2 feet tall and 20 feet long. The neon wall sign is composed of aluminum backing and 15 mm neon illumination. The sign will be attached on a stucco and wood wall.
- Reface of a non-illuminated blade sign with and aluminum face. The blade sign dimensions

are 15 inches tall, 60 inches long, and 6.5 square feet.

6. EXISTING SITE

The subject site is currently developed as a two-story commercial building, originally constructed in 1900. The building materials are masonry, wood, and stucco. There are currently no existing wall signs and one existing blade sign.

7. EXISTING AREA CONTEXT

The building is located at the southwest corner of the intersection at South Orange Street and East Chapman Avenue. The property is within the Old Towne Plaza District, and the surrounding zoning is Old Towne Mixed Use - 15.

8. ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT

Item 1 - Signage Font Style:

The proposed signage font style is not a typical style found in the Old Towne Historic District. However, the style is consistent with the existing business franchise standard corporate logo. The Historic Preservation Design Standards for Old Towne also do not have recommended or required lettering styles for signage.

The proposed wall sign and re-faced blade sign meet all City code requirements for signage and staff recommends approval.

9. ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION

None.

10. PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice was provided to owners and tenants within 300 feet of the project on or before May 7, 2026, 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 one new neon wall sign and refacing an existing blade sign 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).

- 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).

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

- 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 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.

- 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).

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, utilizes appropriate lighting treatments, 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, 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. 25-0014, 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. 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.
7. 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.

14. ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 Vicinity Map
- Attachment 2 DPR Form
- Attachment 3 Project Plans