

These minutes were approved at the DRSC meeting of February 12, 2014

**CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
DESIGN REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE  
JANUARY 15, 2014**

Subcommittee Members Present: Michael Kaupp, Julia Darden and Bart Crandell

Staff Present: Cliff Jones, Adam Atamian, Amber Gregg and John Ciampa

**1. MINUTES**

Minutes approved: December 11, 2013

**2. ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS**

**A. Minor Architectural Permit 13-475, Stewart Surfboards Tree Carving  
(Atamian)**

A request to consider an artistic carving of a palm tree on private property, located at 2102 S. El Camino Real in the Neighborhood Commercial zoning district (NC3).

Assistant Planner Adam Atamian summarized the report.

During Mr. Atamian's presentation, Subcommittee Member Darden stated that she had difficulty locating all of the required trees on the property, and asked if the applicant would consider adding another tree to the portion of the property fronting South El Camino Real. Mr. Atamian stated that the landscaping standards that apply to this site require at least six 15-gallon trees or equivalent. He went on to explain that this site includes a grove of 15-gallon or larger palm trees on the side of the property facing East Avenida Cornelio and in conjunction with the other trees on the site, this requirement is amply met. Mr. Atamian stated that he does not know whether the applicant would be willing to include the addition of a new 15-gallon tree in the application, but stated that he will discuss it with the applicant.

Subcommittee Member Kaupp had some questions for staff. First, he asked whether the applicant would be allowed to simply cut the tree down, and if design review would be required to do so. Mr. Atamian stated that they could cut down the tree without going through the design review process. Second, Mr. Kaupp asked if there was any requirement that the applicant demonstrate that the tree was diseased prior to carving it. Mr. Atamian answered in the negative. Third, Mr. Kaupp asked how this carved tree, and the mural on the building, are not considered signage

when other art pieces, such as the previous application for the Apple Market mural, are considered signage because they illustrate a product or service sold on the premises. Mr. Atamian stated that the mural on the side of the building is ocean-themed, and not directly surf-related. As for the tree carving, Mr. Atamian stated that staff determination is based on the Centennial General Plan's designation of this area as the South El Camino Real Focus Area which promotes the City's surfing heritage. Staff finds that the tree carving is reflective of this designation and promotes the area's surf heritage, and therefore can be defined as art rather than signage.

City Planner Jim Pechous stated that he agreed with Mr. Atamian's assessment of the tree carvings description, and discussed the need to address art in the Design Guidelines. Furthermore, he stated that a budget proposal currently in the development stages involves a collaboration project with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo students to help further define the South El Camino Real Focus Area's design guidelines and streetscape design goals.

Subcommittee Member Kaupp stated that he doesn't necessarily have any issues with this application, but he thinks that in order to provide credible design review, better tools are needed for reviewing these types of projects.

Subcommittee Member Darden stated that she believes that the City has approved a surfing-themed mural on a surf shop building previously, and that the lines between art and signage are somewhat blurred. She stated that she sees this tree carving as art, but would like to see the applicant include the planting of a new tree in the application.

Mr. Atamian added that in discussions with the applicant since the time of the completion of the staff report, the applicant, Bill Stewart, has made it clear that the carving is not complete and that further refinement of the human figure will be done pending approval of the application. Mr. Atamian introduced the applicant's representative, Leah Evans. Ms. Evans stated that the applicant would take additional landscaping into consideration, and probably would have no objections to it.

Subcommittee Member Crandell asked if someone cut a tree down to a stump, whether the City would have any authority to require the stumps removal. Mr. Atamian stated that any site modifications to a non-residential property require some type of design review.

Subcommittee Member Crandell displayed some pictures of tree carvings from a public park in Oregon where the city invited artists to carve trees into public art. Mr. Crandell stated that the design of the tree carving is an

iconic surfing image and that most cities that have public art in private development requirements allow depictions of the services provided on-site as long as there is no branding.

Ms. Evans stated that the tree carving is meant to be art and not specifically an advertisement for the business. She passed out some artistic renderings of how the carving will look when finished. She stated that the applicant decided to leave the base uncarved to help maintain the structural rigidity of the piece. Additionally, the applicant intends to seal the carving with a clear sealant, to maintain the unstained look of the piece.

The Subcommittee suggested the project move forward for Zoning Administrator for review.

**B. Cultural Heritage Permit 13-215, Casa Ammirato (Ciampa)**

A request to consider an addition to a historic house and hardscape improvements to the property. The project is located at 418 Cazador Lane in the Medium Density Residential zoning district and Architectural Overlay of the Pier Bowl Specific Plan (PBSP/RM-A).

Associate Planner John Ciampa summarized the report.

Subcommittee Member Darden asked staff to clarify the background in the report because there seemed to be some discrepancy with the direction provided by the Planning Commission on the December 4, 2013 meeting.

Mr. Ciampa explained that staff researched the historic photos of the property and the applicant's inspection and photos of the enclosed balcony and it was determined that the enclosed balcony was either original to the construction of the house or added shortly after the house was constructed. Either way the enclosed balcony would be considered historic and should remain.

The applicant, James Glover, discussed the changes to the project throughout the process and how the applicants met with the City and the San Clemente Historic Society and all presumed the enclosed balcony was not original and were in favor of its removal. He stated that the revised design is to increase the size of the original windows for the enclosed balcony from 12 to 20 inches in width to improve the ocean view and still be in proportion with the elevation. He stated that the new property owners have had issues with a fire in their home and are requesting the exterior stairs for an alternative exit. The applicants have a concern with moving the north facing window away from the decorative post because it would impact the spacing to allow for a bed in the master

bedroom. The applicant and owners requested to get clear direction and resolution on the project because they have been in the process for almost a year and would like to move forward and get their project approved.

Subcommittee Members Kaupp and Darden stated that it may be appropriate to have the enclosed balcony analyzed by a historic preservation architect to determine if the element is historic and should remain or if the enclosed portion of the balcony could be eliminated and still comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Subcommittee Member Crandell stated that in his opinion the enclosed balcony is a detriment to the building. He believed it was likely a later addition and is still in favor of eliminating the enclosed balcony. He was not in favor of the exterior stairs because they are attached to the house and because they would not look like they were originally intended for the house.

President of the Historic Society, Larry Culbertson, stated that a historic preservation historian or architect should review all projects that have a potential to impact a historic resource. He stated the importance of the review for this project because it is a Historic Landmark and the area has the potential to be a historic district. He stated the City should not approve any projects that have the potential to have a negative impact on a historic resource. He also expressed his concern of how much a historic structure can be altered and still qualify for the Mills Act.

Neighbor to the project, Kim Miles and her husband Michael Schmit, stated that they do not dispute that the enclosed balcony does not look original but it is shown in photographs from 1927. They stated that the property is a Historic Landmark and the project should comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. His concern for the project was when changes are made to a historic property it will never be able to be put back. He noted that the Sea Cliff property has a similar balcony as the subject property.

The applicant stated that they want the project to move forward and want the path of least resistance.

Neighbor of the property, Dorothy Prohaska, stated that the property is operating as three units and it is creating a serious parking issue in the neighborhood.

The applicant and owner stated that when the property was purchased it was three separate units and they are planning on converting the property back to a single family residence as part of the project.

Subcommittee Member Crandell explained to the members of the public that the DRSC does not design the project they only give recommendations for the applicants consideration.

The Subcommittee stated that if the applicants wanted to hire a historic preservation architect or historian to determine if the balcony is a critical and character defining feature of the historic house, they would support eliminating the enclosed portion of the balcony.

The Subcommittee supported enlarging the enclosed balcony windows, modifying the first floor window to French doors, preferred the Juliet balcony design over the exterior stairs for the north elevation, and felt the new window on the north elevation should be pulled away from the wood post to be consistent with Spanish Colonial Revival design.

Subcommittee Member Darden stated that the City should take an internal look at the overall process for these types of projects and also the roll of the San Clemente Historic Society in giving applicants advice early on in developing a project. The City should try and take steps to make the process easier to navigate.

The Subcommittee suggested the project move forward for Planning Commission review.

**C. Surfer's Row Preliminary Review (Gregg)**

A request to consider ten duplexes to be built on ten separate, but contiguous, lots for a total of 20 units. A minor exception permit is requested to consider reduced side yard setbacks on the corner lot, and for walls exceeding 42 inches in the front yard setback up to five feet. The project is proposed from 2721-2739 South El Camino Real and is within the Mixed Use (MU5) zoning district.

Associate Planner, Amber Gregg summarized the staff report and noted that this was a preliminary review of the project.

Michael Luna, architect, gave a recap of the project and some background of the project site. He noted that there will be no HOA's or subdivisions as part of this project. The MEP requested is not unique to the area and there are five nearby duplexes that needed MEP's because of the small and narrow lots; only 4,000 square feet each.

Staff went over the architecture and noted that there were some questions regarding the covered stairways to the roof, or "dog houses", and whether they were considered three-stories or not. Staff went over the definition of three-stories. Subcommittee Member Darden stated she believes that the

structures do qualify as a third story and that they need to be removed or modified. Subcommittee Member Kaupp stated that whether they are considered three-stories or not, they exude a bad architectural feeling that makes you believe it's a three-story structure.

Subcommittee Member Crandell agrees that the "dog house" is a third-story based on the definition staff provided. He likes the architectural style of the proposed project, but the horizontal openings on the Tortola need to be modified. He also has concerns about the stone treatment of the five-foot wall along El Camino Real and the lack of landscaping between the wall and the sidewalk.

Subcommittee Member Darden concurred that she did not believe that the veneer was an appropriate material on the wall but believes it should have some sort of veneer or treatment and there should be landscaping in front of the wall.

Subcommittee Member Kaupp concurred with the other Subcommittee Members concerns about the wall and indicated landscaping is needed. Subcommittee Member Kaupp noted whatever architectural style is used needs to be true to style and not a mixed design. He went on to state that the proposed project is clearly a huge improvement over what is existing.

City Planner, Jim Pechous, stated that the trademark design of the proposed architectural style is the balconies. The plans don't really reflect that.

Mr. Luna stated that true Polynesian style can not hold up in our environment here and requires use of stucco. He also noted that they have a lot of constraints on building design because of the noise from the adjacent freeway.

Subcommittee Member Darden noted the project needs more architectural details. She also noted the tongue and groove is only used on the Tortola plan and not on the Antigua, but should be used on both.

Subcommittee Member Crandell believes that removing the tower element will help the design of the building. Subcommittee Members Kaupp and Darden agreed that the tower element should be removed. Subcommittee Member Crandell would like to see a fourth color scheme option that provides more color so the teal design didn't stand out so much. Subcommittee Members Kaupp and Darden agreed they would like to see more color.

Mr. Pechous brought up the possibility of a zero lot line configuration if the applicant would be interested and suggested it could help the design. Mr.

Luna thanked Mr. Pechous for the suggestion but indicated a zero lot line configuration would require a complete redesign.

The Subcommittee Members asked for picture of buildings in the surrounding area that are driving this trend to be provided at the next review of the project. Mr. Luna noted that he will bring a street scene of Comercio as well for their review.

Subcommittee Member Kaupp opened the meeting to public comment.

Resident, Larry Culbertson, stated that as a lay person the "dog houses" should go. He was concerned about the new property owners changing the colors of the building after they move in. Staff noted that a condition of approval can be added noting that the colors can not be changed without City approval.

The Subcommittee suggested the revised plans return to the DRSC for review.

**D. Amendment to Cultural Heritage Permit 09-452, Pier Bowl Mixed Use Windows (Jones)**

A request to consider non-wood windows on a non-historic Spanish Colonial Revival style building under construction at 614 Avenida Victoria located within the Pier Bowl Core - Mixed Use land use designation of the Pier Bowl Specific Plan and the Architectural Overlay (MU 4.1 P-A).

Associate Planner Cliff Jones summarized the report.

The Subcommittee agreed with staff's recommendation that the proposed aluminum wood clad window by Sierra Pacific Windows was consistent with the Window Material Policy for the Architectural Overlay. The Subcommittee also agreed: 1) a dark brown finish should be chosen; 2) the 7/8" colonial simulite was preferred; and 3) wood doors and windows should be used only within the covered courtyard facing Avenida Victoria because the courtyard frontage is in a highly visible pedestrian oriented area and the building is Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style.

The Subcommittee suggested the project move forward for Zoning Administrator for review.

**E. Minor Cultural Heritage Permit 13-472, North Real Building (Jones)**

A request to consider a new non-wood storefront on an existing commercial building located at 115 North El Camino Real. The project is located within the Mixed Use Zoning District, and within the Architectural and Central Business Overlays (MU3-CB-A).

Subcommittee Member Michael Kaupp recused himself stating he owns property within 500 feet of the subject application.

Associate Planner Cliff Jones summarized the report.

Dave Lyon, representing Olen Properties, indicated that they are unable to do a transom with the seven foot opening as suggested within the staff report but could consider recessing the entries further.

Subcommittee Member Darden indicated that previous precedence has been to not allow modern aluminum storefronts.

Subcommittee Member Darden opened the meeting to public comment. Larry Culbertson, Historical Society President, indicated he was conflicted because he thought that the City was trying to embrace Mid-Century Modern buildings but understood the desire to improve the architectural quality of the building per the Design Guidelines.

Subcommittee Member Darden indicated that the City is trying to preserve good examples of Mid-Century Modern and suggested the subject building was not a good example of Mid-Century Modern design.

Jim Pechous, City Planner added that quality Mid-Century Modern buildings have thin window profiles and that the proposed storefront system appears a bit cheap because the profile is a simple thick two inch square aluminum piece.

Mr. Lyon indicated that he felt the bronze aluminum looked nice and riding by it you wouldn't notice that it is not wood.

Subcommittee Member Crandell indicated that the Arcadia system proposed has harsh edges and it would be nice if the Design Guidelines allowed modern buildings to have modern aluminum storefronts but they do not. They suggest traditional looking storefronts.

Mr. Lyon indicated that he already ordered the proposed system and he owns them.

The Subcommittee indicated that puts them in a tough position.



The Subcommittee recommended the project move forward with an aluminum storefront that appears high quality and reflects the Village feel. The Subcommittee suggested staff continue working with the applicant to give the proposed storefront a traditional look by incorporating recessed entries, traditional profiles that step back to the glazing of the glass, a wainscot or kick plate, and break up the glass with lites.

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

None

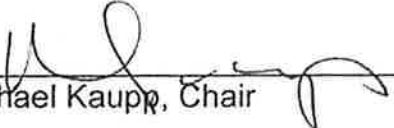
**4. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourn to the Regular Meeting of the Design Review Subcommittee to be held January 29, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. in Conference Room A, Community Development Department, 910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100, San Clemente, CA 92673.

**Respectfully submitted,**

  
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Michael Kaupp, Chair

Attest:

  
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Cliff Jones, Associate Planner



