

**CITY OF SONOMA  
DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
April 16, 2013  
Community Meeting Room, 177 First Street West**

**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**ROLL CALL: Present:** Comms. Anderson, Barnett, McDonald, Randolph,  
Tippell, Comm. Baptista (Alternate)  
**Absent:** None  
**Others Present:** Associate Planner Atkins

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** None.

**COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSION:**

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Two pieces for Item #1, one piece for Item #3.

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**ITEM #1 – DESIGN REVIEW:** Continued consideration of design review, a lighting plan, and a landscape plan for two commercial properties (Three Sticks Wine) located at 143 West Spain Street and 138 Church Street. Applicant: Three Sticks Wine.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

**Chair Anderson opened the public hearing.**

Bill Price, property owner, was present to discuss the application. The historical survey confirmed that these are not historically significant structures. The survey also highlighted that the siding on the back of the kitchen is older than thought, so it will be reapplied (after covering the aluminum conduits) to maintain historical integrity. He continues to be delighted with the project and looks forward to moving ahead.

Arthur Dawson, principal consultant at Baseline Consulting, noted that the historical analysis covered the requirements for CEQA. There is more context for the younger structures (the garage and cottage from the late 40's), but he would probably not change their conclusions.

Johanna Patri, was co-chair of the Sonoma League for Historic Preservation when the League conducted a countywide survey in 1979. Her name is on the survey form attached to the resource evaluation. She would like to address what she believes is a lack of evaluation of the original landscape design. The original landscape design at the time of restoration was by Helen Van Pelt, the first recognized woman landscape architect in the country. The evaluation says nothing about the garden, other than it is believed to not be one of her gardens of note. She asked the Commission how they

can evaluate the new landscaping being proposed tonight, including plant materials and hardscape, as they relate in historic context to the historic adobe. She feels it would have been useful to the Commission if the historic design had been brought to their attention earlier in the process so the applicant would have had a chance to do restoration as it has to do with the historic garden. In addition, there were no references to how the author came to his conclusions and no way of analyzing the proposed landscape in accordance with the historic context of this valuable historic landscape. She questioned whether the landscape setting and the hardscape and furnishings are consistent with the adobe as a historic resource and are consistent with what was permitted in the use permit. The use permit limits guests to eight people. If you count seating, there's seating for 28-40 people, depending on how it's counted. How is staff going to monitor that this will really only be used by eight people?

Kara Brunzell, architectural historian for BCR Consulting, researched Helen Van Pelt and the historical significance of the garden. It does appear Van Pelt was a well-known landscape architect, best known for a commission in Pasadena that was a Frank Lloyd Wright house. The more significant fact about the garden is that it does not appear to retain any integrity from the Helen Van Pelt design. Ms. Brunzell did not include it in the report, but there is a drawing available on line of the Helen Van Pelt design. Ms. Brunzell did two site visits and took extensive photos of garden in its current condition. There are not many photos showing the garden from 1948. There are a few photos from the 1980s, as well as the drawings, but it does not appear that anything of the original Helen Van Pelt garden survived. In its current state, the garden does not retain a high degree of integrity from the original design.

Robert Demler, former owner of property and Vice President of the Sonoma League for Historic Preservation, stated that when he purchased the property in 1997, the Helen Van Pelt garden was nowhere in sight. The garden was a total jungle. With each passing winter, plants died and were replaced. Once cleared, that what remained of the original Helen Van Pelt garden was minimal. When he purchased the property, he was never told by anyone at the League about Helen Van Pelt. He gave copy of the Helen Van Pelt drawing of the garden to the League, and that's when the League became aware of the original plan. Mr. Demler noted that the Helen Van Pelt garden was a product of 1948 and the house was originally constructed in 1843. He has a picture from the 1860's that shows the back of the house from south side of Plaza, and there is nothing back there except one tree. The garden from 1948 was more English garden than adobe, and what is being proposed is wonderful.

Penney Magrane, landscape architect, is in possession of the Helen Van Pelt drawing of the garden, as well as the site plan of existing Demler garden. She is very excited about this project. She feels that all historical factors that have been stated are very important and she strived to create a timeless, subtle garden to be a backdrop to the historic adobe. She will use elements of the Helen Van Pelt garden and will utilize all existing plant materials. Two water features will be incorporated to help with street noise.

Mary Martinez, citizen, suggested the use of downlights for the trees instead of uplights in order to reduce the penetration of light being emitted into the environment.

Barbara Weber, president in Sonoma League for Historic Preservation, is in favor of this project. The League's Board members have visited and previewed the proposed

changes and she can safely say no one had a problem with the changes to the garden or structures. She reiterated that the League is in favor of this project.

Prema Behan, COO of Three Sticks Wine, reminded everyone that the primary use of this property is for offices. There are six or seven full-time employees, and they will also have their board meetings here. The conditions of approval from the City are very strict, limiting tastings to two per day, with a maximum of eight people. Their goal is for a private, quiet, special, very VIP tasting experience.

Loyce Haran, citizen, asked about certified local government (CLG) requirements and when the City will become a CLG. Becoming a CLG will standardize how evaluations are made and received, making the process move much faster and be fairer to everyone.

**Chair Anderson closed the public hearing.**

Comm. McDonald commented that the landscape lighting should comply with the Building Department's requirements. Ms. Magrane noted that the lighting design was specifically done with safety in mind, although she does not foresee the facility being used very often in the evening. The landscape lighting will provide soft, filtered shadows and not interrupt the sky. Hopefully the lighting will help deter trespassers. The path lights will not be on except when the garden is actually being used. There is no new lighting proposed for the handicap parking on the other side of the wall. Comm. McDonald verified that no exterior lights are proposed for the adobe.

Comm. Barnett finds this to be a very exciting application. He commended the applicants in the great care to maintain the historical integrity of the site and thinks the landscape plan is great. He would approve as submitted.

Comm. Tippell complimented the applicants on the well prepared and thought out proposal with an excellent use of materials. She would approve as submitted.

Comm. Randolph thanked the applicants for doing such an amazing job. It was apparent that a lot of care and passion in thinking and design went into the application, and she also appreciated the comments from the audience. The historic report was very helpful. She believes this will be an amazing addition to the City, but wishes there could be occasional public access to the space. She would approve as submitted.

Comm. McDonald echoed the comments from his fellow Commissioners and thanked the applicant, owner, and landscape architect for the thoughtful design. The modifications to the garage and cottage, including the fence, are an improvement and will be a wonderful asset. He applauded the applicants for keeping the existing siding for the kitchen walls. He likes the plant materials and layout of the landscape plan. The plants aren't really changing the historical adobe itself. He would like to suggest as a condition of approval making some sort of amendment for photo documenting and documenting historic transitions of the property, and then provide it to the League for their files to supplement the historic review. He would support the project.

Comm. McDonald made a motion to approve the project as proposed, with the condition of supplementing the historic review to provide historic documentation of the original landscape drawings from 1948 and including a brief discussion of the changes

to be made and incorporation of the design and site plan details into the new garden. In addition, provide a photo document of the entire property to the Sonoma League for Historic Preservation. Comm. Barnett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Comm. McDonald made a motion to approve the project as submitted, with the following conditions:

1. An addendum to the Historic Resource Survey and Evaluation for 143 West Spain Street and 138 Church Street (dated April 9, 2013) shall be completed and submitted to the City of Sonoma, and shall include the following: 1) documentation of the original landscape drawings for the Helen Dupuy Van Pelt garden; and 2) a brief description of the proposed changes to the garden (including a site plan and design details).
2. Both of the properties shall be photo documented (including the vacant lot, the inside of the Vallejo-Castenada Adobe, and the existing garden).
3. Photo documentation of both of the properties shall be submitted to the Sonoma League for Historic Preservation and the City of Sonoma.

Comm. Barnett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Comm. Alternate Baptista left the meeting.

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**ITEM #2 – SIGN REVIEW:** Consideration of a portable freestanding sign for an automotive repair service business (Sonoma Truck and Auto Service) located at 899 Broadway. Applicant: Sonoma Truck and Auto Service.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

The applicant was not present.

**Chair Anderson opened and closed the public hearing with none received.**

Chair Anderson confirmed that the application is for one sign with different copy on each side. He noted that a sign such as this has traditionally been used at this location.

Comm. Barnett confirmed that this application is before the Design Review Commission due to code enforcement. Associate Planner Atkins verified that this type of sign could not be reviewed administratively due the plastic material used and the fact that it is an A-board.

Comm. McDonald noted that he is inclined to consider A-board signs when appropriate and designed correctly. The materials and design of the sign would not meet City standards for an A-board sign. He would be inclined to not approve, as he does not feel the sign is necessary for this type of business.

Comm. Randolph stated that while the sign is not a pedestrian hazard, it is not very attractive.

Comm. Tippell noted that while the sign is unattractive, the business probably does need it to advertise. She does not have an issue with the sign.

Chair Anderson has no issue with the sign. He would suggest to the applicant that an alternative frame material, such as wood, be utilized instead of plastic.

Chair Anderson made a motion to continue this item to a future meeting. Comm. Randolph seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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**ITEM #3 – DESIGN REVIEW:** Consideration of design review for a hotel annex (Inn at Sonoma) located at 640 Broadway. Applicant: Daniel Parks.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

**Chair Anderson opened the public hearing.**

Victor Conforti, project architect, was present to discuss the application.

Comm. Barnett asked if the proposed color scheme matches the existing hotel. Mr. Conforti stated that the colors are highly related, but the body color is lighter. The trim and accent colors are slightly different. There was a conscious effort to separate these eight rooms from the rest of the hotel. These eight rooms are larger than those in the existing hotel.

Comm. McDonald noted that in the tenant improvement for this space, gas fireplaces are proposed. He questioned whether the fenestrations will affect the fascia of the building. Mr. Conforti noted that the gas fireplaces proposed have a flue the size of a water heater. There will be no penetrations on the front or sides of the building, only in the back, and they will have little impact.

Comm. Tippell confirmed that the purple color (Funky Friday) will be used on the gable trim. Mr. Conforti confirmed that the posts, doors, and windows will be painted white. The trim around the windows will be black. Comm. Tippell suggested a more current fan deck of colors be obtained, as the proposed colors are from old fan decks.

Comm. Randolph confirmed that the black roofing material will remain.

**Chair Anderson closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Tippell has no issues with the application. She would suggest that the doors, windows, and French doors be painted black and the window trim in white, as this will better set off the purple color (Funky Friday).

Comms. McDonald, Randolph, and Barnett have no issues with the application.

Chair Anderson commented that the French doors are an improvement over the arch and more in keeping with the overall design. He appreciated Comm. Tippell's observations about separating the deep value colors. He confirmed that the flues will be painted to match the roof color.

Comm. McDonald made a motion to approve the application as submitted, with the suggestion that the doors and windows be painted Sherwin Williams Black Tie (SW1007) and the window trim be painted Sherwin Williams White Semi-Gloss (SW7757). Comm. Randolph seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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**ITEM #4 – DISCUSSION ITEM:** Review of the Architectural (Design) Review Application Handout.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

**Chair Anderson opened the public hearing.**

Chair Anderson suggested the use of a "human scale" next to proposed signs, and suggested language and an illustration in the handout to applicants stating that "all plans shall provide scale drawings, site elevations, and landscape plans include something like this" (show an example). The human scale is a term of art. It would give the Commission an idea of the scope and scale of a project.

Victor Conforti, architect, had several comments on the draft handout. He noted that human scale would be appropriate for elevations or renderings of things that have height. As a general comment, he noted that some of the level of detail the Commission is requesting is almost premature for a typical project and not normally decided until construction. With regard to the requirement for large brush-outs of proposed colors, at the early stage of a project the architect/clients have not yet decided. The requirement for ten copies of actual paint samples is tedious. He believes the Commission is not here to be a color consultant, and this should be left to the architect or color consultant to work out with the owner.

Chair Anderson asked Mr. Conforti if he was suggesting that the architect come back after the project is further along. Mr. Conforti is suggesting that the submittal procedure be amended and a color board be brought to the meeting or delivered to City Hall for viewing prior to the meeting. Comm. Barnett commented that photocopies of color samples might be acceptable for some projects, but he would like to see actual color chips for buildings around the Plaza.

Comm. Tippell noted that color chips are very important and helpful. Mr. Conforti feels that it is up to the architect or color consultant on a project to make the final choice of color to be used, not the Design Review Commission. Mr. Conforti noted that the wording was confusing with regard to the size of the brush-out. He suggested eliminating the size specifics.

Comm. Barnett would strongly encourage color samples for projects in the historic overlay. Comm. McDonald suggested a higher standard of detail be used when historic structures are being modified or added to.

Comm. Randolph offered to edit the proposed handout based on tonight's discussion. The handout will simplify the process for the applicant and the Commission. The goal is to make clear to the applicant what is needed so the Commission understands what is being requested. Associate Planner Atkins will return to the Commission with an edited version. Comm. Barnett confirmed that the changes to the handout need to be heard at a public hearing.

**Chair Anderson closed the public hearing.**

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**ITEM #5 – DISCUSSION ITEM:** Update on the Maysonnave Cottage.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

**Chair Anderson opened and closed the public hearing with none received.**

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**ISSUES UPDATE:** None.

**COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSION:** None.

**COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:** None.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m. to the regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 21, 2013.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Design Review Commission on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of May 2013.

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Robin Evans, Administrative Assistant