

Planning Commission Staff Report

April 25, 2012
Item 6.a.

SUBJECT: P11-0977

**APPLICANT/
APPELLANT:** Lana Harris / Salon Esencia

PROPERTY OWNER: Carl and Donna Graffenstatte

PURPOSE: Appeal of the Zoning Administrator's decision requiring the proposed (existing) green body color of the building located at 335 St. Mary Street to be repainted to a muted earthtone color.

GENERAL PLAN: Retail/Highway/Service Commercial/Business and Professional Offices

SPECIFIC PLAN: Downtown Specific Plan – Downtown Commercial

ZONING: C-C (Central – Commercial), Downtown Revitalization, and Core Overlay District.

EXHIBITS:

- A. Approval Letter with Conditions of Approval dated "February 10, 2012"
- B. Photograph and Color Swatches dated "Received December 15, 2011"
- C. Letter of Appeal dated "Received February 24, 2012"
- D. Public Correspondence
- E. Location and Noticing Maps
- F. E-mail from the Pleasanton Downtown Association dated "January 5, 2012"

BACKGROUND

On December 7, 2012, the City's Code Enforcement Officer received an inquiry on whether Salon Esencia received City approval to repaint the building. Planning approval was not received and the appellant, Lana Harris, was informed that an application for Design Review was required. Ms. Harris submitted an application on December 15, 2012, requesting to retain the existing building colors.

Design Review applications for color changes are reviewed at staff level. Prior to staff taking action on the application, Ms. Harris was informed that the green color needed to be changed because it was not consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines. Staff noted that the

“Sahara Sun” color of the steps and porch area could be supported as an accent color provided that the wall color was changed to a muted earthtone color.

Ms. Harris considered staff’s comments; however, felt that the green color was within the color palette of a muted earthtone color and, furthermore, compliments the building style. On February 10, 2012, staff approved the Design Review application with the condition that the building color be changed to a muted earthtone color (please refer to Exhibit A for staff’s approval letter). Ms. Harris filed an appeal of the Zoning Administrator’s action and, therefore, the appeal is now before the Planning Commission for review and action. Staff has included the letter of appeal in Exhibit C for the Commission’s consideration.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is located Downtown on the north side of St. Mary Street (Figure 1 below). The site is zoned Central-Commercial (C-C) and is also located in the Downtown Revitalization and Core Area Overlay District. The subject site is approximately 3,200 square-feet in area and consists of an approximately 898 square-foot building built around 1930. The site is adjacent to commercial properties to the north, east, and west, with restaurants, personal services, and an apartment unit on the opposite side of St. Mary Street.

Figure 1: Aerial View of Subject Site



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

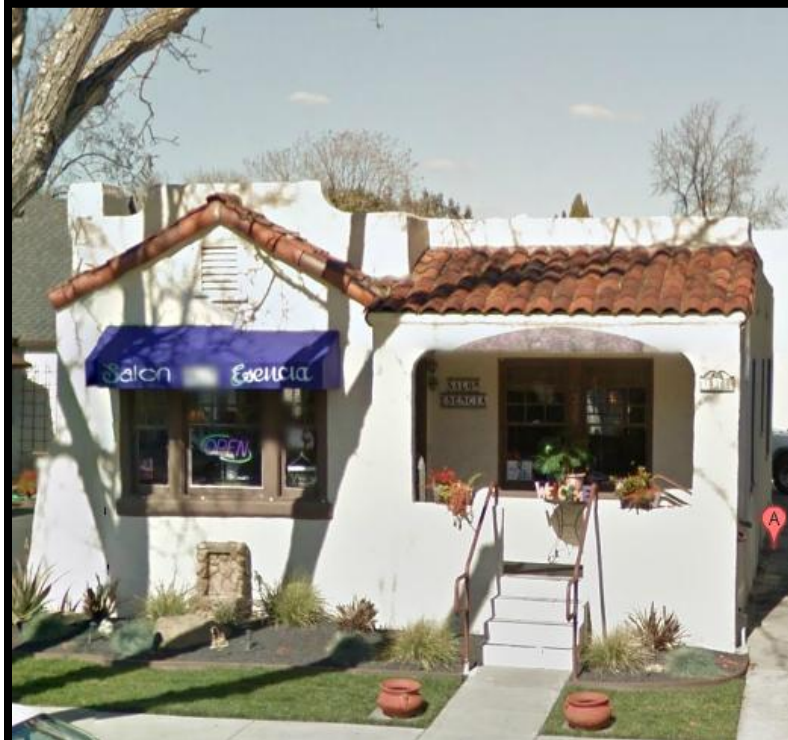
The applicant is proposing to retain the repainted building’s green body color and orange steps and porch area color (shown in Figure 2 on page 3). Staff notes that the purple awning, brown trim, and terra cotta roof tiles remain the same.

Figure 2: Current/Proposed Building Color



The previous building and porch color, shown in Figure 3 below, was a white/off-white color.

Figure 3: Google Image Street View (previous color)



ANALYSIS

The property is located in the Downtown Revitalization District and Downtown Specific Plan Area and is subject to the Downtown Design Guidelines. New construction and modifications to existing buildings in the Downtown must be sensitive to the character of the historic downtown and, to accomplish this goal, should conform to the specialized design policies contained in the Downtown Design Guidelines. With respect to building color, the Downtown Design Guidelines contains several guidelines:

- Select colors appropriate to the architectural style of the building.
- Most buildings should have a base wall color, a contrasting trim color, and an accent color for architectural details.
- Buildings with ample architectural detail, (like Victorian style buildings), are encouraged to be painted with several accent colors.
- Mission Revival or Mediterranean style buildings should have earth-tone wall color with complementing trim colors and roof tiles.
- Use paint colors that complement the colors of existing materials on the façade, such as brick or ceramic tile.
- Trim colors can either be lighter or shades darker than the base wall color.
- Accent colors for architectural details may be brighter or a contrasting color to the base wall color.

The architectural style of the subject building is generally Spanish Colonial. Two examples of this type of architecture style and colors are 707 Main Street and 301 Main Street (Google images below).

707 Main Street (Coast Gasoline Station)



301 Main Street (Veterans Memorial Building)



The subject building is of the same architectural style as the gas station and Veterans Memorial Building on Main Street.

Staff is of the opinion that the green wall color is not consistent with the guidelines because it is not an earthtone color and it is not appropriate for the architectural style of the building. Staff believes that the green wall color should be changed to a muted earthtone color. Furthermore, the orange accent color of the porch area and steps does not complement the green color; however, staff is supportive of the orange color as an accent color if a muted earthtone wall color is utilized for the building.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15301, Existing Facilities, Class 1. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this application was sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. At the time this report was published, staff had received two emails from residents of support and two phone calls from separate downtown business owners of non-support. The business owners felt that the existing colors are not appropriate for the downtown area and should be “toned down.” Staff has included the two emails as Exhibit D and the location and noticing maps as Exhibit E for the Commission’s reference.

Pleasanton Downtown Association (PDA)

Commercial projects located in the downtown are referred to the Design Committee of the Pleasanton Downtown Association (PDA) for their review and advisory comments to the City. The PDA Design Committee reviewed the proposal in early January and concluded that the colors were not consistent with the Downtown Design Guidelines. Furthermore, the Design Committee noted that they did not want to set a precedent that “businesses should act first and

ask for permission later.” Staff has included the e-mail from the PDA as Exhibit F for the Commission’s reference.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission deny the appeal, thereby upholding the Zoning Administrator’s action.

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