TO: Board of Adjustment  
FROM: Tommy Scibilia, PP, AICP  
DATE: May 9, 2023  
RE: App. 2819: 108 & 110 Orange Road (Block 1304, Lots 11 and 12)  
STATUS: Complete

This report reviews the following submission items for use variances and site plan approval:

- Application for Development dated 9/16/2022 and revised 4/6/2023
- 6-page architectural plans prepared by Sionas Architecture, P.C., dated 5/3/2023, received 5/5/2023
- 5-page engineering plans prepared by Paul W. Anderson, dated 4/28/2023, received 5/5/2023
- 9-page previous resolutions and applications exhibit, received 9/19/2022

Site Description

The subject property comprises two adjacent tax lots on the west side of Orange Road between Plymouth Street to the north and Union Street to the south. The lot has 260.23 feet of frontage along Orange Road and is 77,972.40 square feet in area, or 1.79 acres. The property is developed with three locally landmarked structures:

- The Israel Crane House (Lot 12), constructed in 1796 and relocated to this site from Glenridge Avenue in 1965, is a two-and-a-half-story rectangular building with a one-story addition on the north side and a two-story caretaker’s residence addition on the west side/rear. This building operates as a museum operated by the Montclair History Center.
- The Nathaniel Crane House (Lot 12), constructed in 1818, is a two-story frame building located to the northwest (rear) of the Israel Crane House. This building contains a gift shop for the museum.
- The Clark House (Lot 11), constructed in 1894, is a two-and-a-half-story structure with full-length front and side porches and a round corner tower. This building contains administrative offices for the Montclair History Center, spaces for classes, a library, and professional offices not affiliated with the Montclair History Center.

Other structures onsite include:

- A one-story brick garage building located to the west/rear of the Israel Crane house containing antiques on display and offering historical demonstrations as part of the museum’s collection.
• A greenhouse used for garden storage and wooden shed to the west of the garage structure.
• A gazebo located near the western edge of the property.
• A small open-face wooden shed and an outhouse used for storage located near the southwest corner of the Israel Crane House.
• A fenced community garden occupying the northwestern portion of the property containing planting plots, chicken coops, and a composting area.

Site features include:
• A narrow driveway from Orange Road on Lot 11 between the Israel Crane and Clark Houses leading to a gravel parking area, which currently provides space for around 12 vehicles to the rear of the two structures. Vehicles observed during staff's site visit included those belonging to Montclair History Center staff and visitors to the community garden, as well as long-term parking for the Montclair Community Farms (MCF) Mobile Farmstand.
• A grass lawn to the south and west of the Nathaniel Crane House.
• A brick paver patio with planting beds to the rear of the Israel Crane House, as well as a ramp and stairs to the rear porch.
• A stone patio at the rear of the Clark House.
• Brick paver walkways at the front of and to the north side of the Israel Crane House.
• A stone walkway and steps from the sidewalk on Orange Road to the front porch of the Clark House.
• Mature landscaping along the north property line.
• Evergreen trees of varying sizes along the west property line.
• Stockade fencing between the subject property and neighboring residential properties to the north and northwest.
• Estate fencing along the south property line adjacent to the Israel Crane House.
• Two mulched areas with irrigation systems in the western portion of the property south of the community garden and in the southwest corner of the property.
Figure 1: Location of subject property on Township tax map.
Background

The following land use decisions have been made regarding the subject property:

- June 7, 1967: Board of Adjustment recommended to the Board of Commissioners that the use of the Israel Crane House as a semi-public museum with a rear addition for a caretaker’s residence be granted, with conditions including provision of not more than four off street parking spaces for use by staff of the History Center and that the south property line be screened from the neighboring residences. The Board of Commissioners granted approval on June 20, 1967.

- September 18, 1974: The Board of Adjustment recommended that the Board of Commissioners grant approval for the relocation of a detached garage building to the rear of the Israel Crane House on land acquired from the adjoining property owner via a subdivision, and the use of the garage for the display of antiques, considered an expansion of a nonconforming use in the R-1 zone district.

- May 30, 1984: The Board of Adjustment denied an application to expand the museum facilities by constructing a multipurpose addition to the rear of the Clark House as well as a new parking lot accommodating 38 cars where 57 cars were required by the Zoning Ordinance at that time. The Board cited reasons of
increased traffic congestion in their denial of the use and parking variance requests.

- November 10, 1997: The Planning Board approved a site plan for a one-story addition on the north side of the Israel Crane House to provide stairway and lift access to the lower-level meeting room.

The applicant submitted copies of the resolutions and applications for each of these filings, which are included with the application materials.

**Project Description**

The applicant proposes the following improvements:

- Reconstruction of the existing asphalt driveway on Lot 11 and construction of a new parallel asphalt driveway on Lot 12 separated by a landscaped planting strip to provide separated vehicular entrance and exit to the parking area.
- Replacement of the existing gravel parking area with a paver parking lot containing 16 parking spaces, including two handicap spaces, one EV parking space with charging equipment, and two brick paver crosswalks. The parking spaces themselves will be constructed of pervious pavers.
- Reconstruction in-kind of brick paver walkways to the northwest of the Israel Crane House.
- Expansion of the brick paver patio on the west/rear side of the Israel Crane House to provide an area for outdoor game tables. This expansion would accommodate existing trees to remain in this area.
- Replacement of the rear porch and patio of the Clark House with a new ADA compliant ramp, accessible from a brick paver landing off the parking lot.
- Reconstruction of the first-floor rear entrance to the Clark House and construction of a 129 SF addition on the west side of the building containing a barrier-free restroom.
- Reconstruction of a new ADA compliant ramp and new stairs to the south side entrance of the Nathaniel Crane House.
- Reconstruction of the front porch and railing of the Nathaniel Crane House.
- Construction of a brick paver walkway from the parking lot to the Community Garden entrance.
- Construction of a loop paver walkway with two bench pads to the south of the Nathaniel Crane House in the grass lawn leading to the gazebo.
- Removal of 3 existing trees in the proposed parking lot area.
- Planting of 14 deciduous trees and a variety of shrubs and perennials between the driveways and around the parking lot.
- Planting of a hedge row of 15 American holly trees along the south property line to the rear of the Israel Crane House.
Note: The area within and around the loop walkway will be planted as a decorative flower garden, although this area is noted to be designed “by others.”

Note: All plantings are to be native to New Jersey.

- Installation of lighting including ten 12-foot-tall pole-mounted fixtures between the two driveways and around the parking area, 1 post-mounted fixture between the ramp and stairs at the rear of the Clark House, and 2 wall-mounted LED sconces on the south elevation of the Nathaniel Crane House.
- Installation of a detention system beneath the parking lot, as well as two storm inlets in the parking lot and two inlets near the sidewalk on the two driveways.

**Review by Board Engineer and Development Review Committee**

In accordance with [Montclair Code §202-10.2](#), this site plan application was reviewed by the Development Review Committee on September 29, 2022. A memo containing their comments and the Board Engineer’s report have been included with application materials. Note that impervious coverage is proposed to increase by 8,065 SF.

**Review by the Historic Preservation Commission**

The subject property is in the First Residential Historic District listed on the National Register and contains three local landmark structures: The Israel Crane House (1796), the Nathaniel Crane House (1818), and the Clark House (1894). In accordance with [Montclair Code §347-142](#), this application was referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for comment on November 17, 2022. The HPC’s memo and HPC preservation consultant’s report have been included with application materials.

![Figure 3: Subject property on the Historic Inventory Viewer.](#)
This project is being funded in part by the New Jersey Historic Trust. The submitted plans have received the Historic Trust’s approval for conformance to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The Historic Trust has advised archaeological dig locations to be conducted prior to excavation work.

**Zoning**

The subject property is in the R-1 One-Family zone district, as are adjacent properties to the north, east, and south. Two properties in the R-O Mountainside zone district adjoin the subject property to the southwest.

The use of the Clark House for commercial offices is not a permitted use in the R-1 zone district. Previous approvals do not account for this use, but rather only for offices associated with the museum. The applicant must be granted a use variance pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70d(1) to allow this use.

Museums are a conditional use in the R-1 zone district. A conditional use variance is required pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70d(3) to allow 17 parking spaces where 296 parking spaces are required by Montclair Code §347-42 and §347-30C(2) (one space required for every 20 SF of net floor area). In accordance with P.L. 2021, c.171, the one EV parking space may count as 2 parking spaces, bringing the physically provided 16 spaces up to a total of 17.

A conditional use variance is also required pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70d(3) to allow a parking area with a non-landscaped setback of approximately 4 feet from the south property line where a setback of 10 feet with evergreen screening is required by Montclair Code §347-30C(3).
Planning Considerations

1. The Planning Department has been made aware that the property was used as a venue for two weddings in 2022. The applicant should speak to this use in testimony.
2. A roofed trash enclosure should be added.
3. The proposed parallel driveways will improve vehicular access to the property and safety for visitors.
4. The table for required parking on sheet SP-3 of the engineering plans shows that 10 parking spaces are proposed where there are actually 17 proposed (this includes the bonus for the EV parking space provided).
5. The applicant should clarify how snow will be removed from the site.
6. Because total disturbance is greater than 5,000 SF, approval from the Hudson Essex Passaic Soil Conservation District is needed prior to permit issuance.
7. The two tax lots should be consolidated.
Photos

Photos taken by Planning staff on September 21 and September 23, 2022.

Figure 5: Front of the subject property viewed from Orange Road

Figure 6: Front of Israel Crane House
Figure 7: South property line adjacent to Israel Crane House viewed from Orange Road
Figure 8: Front of the Clark House

Figure 9: North addition on the Israel Crane House
Figure 10: Rear of Israel Crane House

Figure 11: Rear patio of Israel Crane House
Figure 12: Nathaniel Crane House

Figure 13: Grass lawn adjacent to Nathaniel Crane House
Figure 14: Garage building west of the Israel Crane House (view 1)

Figure 15: Garage building west of the Israel Crane House (view 2)
Figure 16: Small shed and outhouse at southwest corner of Israel Crane House

Figure 17: View toward gravel parking area looking north (view 1)
Figure 18: View toward gravel parking area looking north (view 2)

Figure 19: Rear of Clark House (view 1)
Figure 20: Rear of Clark House (view 2)

Figure 21: North property line
Figure 22: Small garden outside of the community garden, with stockade fences at neighboring properties to the north

Figure 23: East/front of community garden
Figure 24: View toward west property line at mulched and irrigated area

Figure 25: South side of community garden at mulched and irrigated area.
Figure 26: Stockade fencing at neighboring properties to the northwest

Figure 27: View toward south property line from mulched and irrigated area
Figure 28: View down driveway looking east from parking area

Figure 29: View up driveway looking west from Orange Road
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Figure 30: Eastern end of south property line with estate fence in front of the Israel Crane House

Figure 31: South property line adjacent to the Israel Crane House
Figure 32: South property line between the Israel Crane House and the garage building
Figure 33: South property line between the garage building and neighboring structure which appears to be approximately one foot south of the property line
Figure 34: South property line west of the garage building

Figure 35: South property line to the west property line
Figure 36: Mulched and irrigated area in southwest corner of property

Figure 37: West property line alongside mulched and irrigated area south of the community garden