



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

300 Martin Luther King Blvd.

January 12, 2023

TIME: 4:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Rush Denson called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mark Grantham to approve the December 8, 2022 minutes. The motion was seconded by Linda Lanz. All approved.

1. Approve December 8, 2022 minutes

3. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS

(Limit comments to five minutes or less)

There were no citizen comments.

4. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

5. NEW BUSINESS

2. 501 S. 8th St: Geneva Historic District
COA: Replace Front Steps and Extend Walkway
Owner: Benjamin Fagan

Agenda Item #: 1

Meeting Date: 1/12/23

Action Requested: COA: Replace Steps and Extend Walkway

Location of Property: **501 S. 8th St; Geneva Historic District**

Petitioner: Benjamin Fagan

Resources:

New construction home in the Geneva Historic District in Southside development.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Replace existing brick steps covered in mortar with reclaimed brick. Existing mortar is cracked, and bricks are severely damaged. New

steps will follow the shape of the original steps, and be of the same material as the original, retaining the historic character. The current steps are difficult to manage.

2. Extend walkway from steps to sidewalk to match existing walkway.

Guidelines:

7. Entrances, Porches and Steps:

- a. Porches and steps that are appropriate to the building and its development should be retained. Porches or additions that reflect later architectural styles are often important to the building's historical integrity and wherever possible, should be retained.
- b. Original material and architectural features, such as handrails, balusters, columns, brackets and roof decoration shall be preserved. Where necessary to replace deteriorated pieces, the new material should match the original in texture, shape, size and color.
- c. Original details and shape, outline, roof height and roof pitch should be retained.
- d. Enclosing of front porches is inappropriate if done in a manner that destroys their intended appearance.
- e. The enclosing of side and rear porches may be considered appropriate if the visual openness and character of the original porch is maintained.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Minor repairs to materials and features when repaired to match the original
- Porch flooring and ceilings, trim boards, railings, brackets, etc.

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Removal or addition of porches
- Screening of side porches according to guidelines (staff approval)
- Screening of front porches according to guidelines (commission approval)

- Enclosure of porches

10. Appurtenances:

Appurtenances related to a building (fences, walls, outdoor lighting, steps, paving, sidewalks and signs) should be visually compatible with the environment to which they are related.

1. Appurtenances: Appurtenances related to new buildings, including driveways, sidewalks, lighting, fences, and walls, shall be visually compatible with the environment of the existing buildings and sites to which they relate.

Staff recommendation:

1. *Staff recommends approval of replacing steps with reclaimed brick.*
2. *Staff recommends approval of walkway to sidewalk.*

Discussion:

Staff explained the scope of work to be completed. The lower grassy area is where the extended walkway will be installed. Rush Denson opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

There was no further discussion.

A motion was made by Mark Gatlin to approve. The motion was seconded by Mark Grantham. All approved.

3. 807 Torbert Blvd: Geneva Historic District
COA: Remove Trees
Owner: BC Stone

Agenda Item #:	2
Meeting Date:	01/12/2023
Action Requested:	COA: Tree Removal
Location of Property:	807 Torbert Blvd; Geneva Historic District
Petitioner:	BC Stone Homes

Resources:

Vacant lot located in the Geneva Historic District with construction of new townhomes.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Removal of one (1) tree that is touching new building.

Guidelines:

A. THE ENVIRONMENT:

1. The environment consists of all exterior features in the designated historic districts which are visible to the public and includes structures, outbuildings, landscaping, streets, appurtenances, trees, mass and spacing between structures, scale, mass, color and materials of buildings that give a neighborhood its distinguishing character and contributes to its historic district designation.
2. Significant landscape features such as public parks and gardens, street lighting, signs, street benches, sidewalks, streets, alleys and building setbacks that have traditionally been maintained in the historic district and that contribute to its historic character should be retained. Existing streets should not be widened. paving material should not be changed to a different texture and color. Inappropriate new streets or parking lots incompatible with the neighborhood should not be constructed. (*updated 08/12/14*)
3. New plant materials, fencing, walkways, housing and other outdoor lights, signs, benches, etc. should be compatible with the character of the neighborhood in size, scale, material and color.
4. Plant material should be maintained so as not to become a hazard to the public, public property or shall not be allowed to cause deterioration to structures.
5. Existing street trees should not be removed without supporting documentation and a plan for replacement. Trees located in the city right of way cannot be removed without city approval (*updated 09/09/22*)

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Back yard Tree house, swing sets and trampolines
- Benches and other outdoor furniture and accessories
- Sculpture and another outdoor artwork

- Pools and patios
- Tree pruning, clearing of overgrown bushes, vines, saplings, etc.
- Tree removal (less than 4" diameter at breast height or diseased).
- Planting new trees, shrubs, ground cover, etc.
- Landscape edging
- Flower, vegetable and rock gardens
- Flowerpots, planters, window boxes, birdbaths, bird houses, etc.
- Adding gravel to existing driveways
- Patching deteriorated concrete or asphalt pavement, walks, steps, etc.

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Changes to stone walls and other historic site features
- New or expanded parking areas/lots
- New and expanded driveways and walkways
- Staff approval for change of materials (i.e. gravel to concrete)
- Staff approval for tree removal with supporting documentation from a Certified Arborist that the tree is either dead, in severe decline, and/or possess a high risk of failure. Trees to be reviewed by the City Arborist. A tree replacement plan must be provided. (*Updated 09/09/22*)

Inspection by Arborist, George Barker:

"I am in agreement with removing this tree; from our observations it is not on the right of way. In addition to the tree hitting the building, from the pictures it looks as if it has gotten a lot of root damage and it does not appear that any attempts were made by the builder to protect the tree during the construction process.

I would recommend an Overcup oak or a Scarlett oak. There are existing oaks on both sides of this road segment, and this would keep it consistent. Both of these oaks have smaller crowns and grow a little slower than some of the other oaks. A 1 ½-2" caliber tree will be plenty big enough"

Staff recommendation:

1. *Staff recommends approval of tree removal and replanting recommendation based on inspection report of arborists.*

Discussion:

Staff explained that one tree is touching the building. The city arborist was called to look at the site and has provided a report. His recommendation is to remove the tree and plant in its place either an Overcup or Scarlett oak. Rush Denson opened the floor for public comment. The applicant, Bryan Stone, spoke

stating that they would plant two 3-4" caliber trees to provide symmetry in place of this one. The landscaping will be completed at the end of the project. There was no further discussion.

A motion was made by Mark Gatlin to approve. The motion was seconded by Linda Lanz. All approved.

4. 510 Geneva St: Geneva Historic District

COA: New Construction

Owner: Hara, LLC

Agenda Item #: 3

Meeting Date: 01/12/2023

Action Requested: COA: New Construction

Location of Property: **510 Geneva St; Geneva Historic District**

Petitioner: Hara, LLC

Resources:

Vacant lot located in the Geneva Historic District.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. New construction five-unit commercial building totaling approximately 4,240 sf. The exteriors will be brick with Hardi soffit and fascia, architectural shingle roof, vinyl SDL (1 1/8") windows (2/2) with transom. The front doors will be Fir raised panel wood and rear doors will be steel. Columns are fiberglass permacast. Wall mount lights above front doors are white or bronze.
2. Paved parking will be on the front between 10th Street and Geneva Street. Two handicap spaces will be provided.

Guidelines:

G. NEW CONSTRUCTION:

1. Definition: The construction of any free-standing structure on any lot or addition to an existing structure.

2. General Principles:

1. These guidelines shall apply only to the exteriors of buildings and to areas of lots visible from public right-of-way.

2. The public facades, front and street-related elevations, of proposals for new buildings shall be more carefully reviewed than other facades.
3. New buildings should be compatible with other architectural styles in the historic district but are not required to imitate the past architectural styles of the historic district. They should reflect the era of their own construction.
4. Since construction in a historic district has usually taken place continuously from the nineteenth century to the present, a variety of building types and styles result which demonstrate the changes in building tastes and technology over the years. The special architectural character of the majority of the buildings in the historic district is responsible for this designation and new buildings should complement and be compatible with the prevailing architectural styles of other buildings in the historic district.
5. Reconstruction may be appropriate when it reproduces facades of a building which no longer exists and which was located in the historic district if; the building would have contributed to the historical and architectural character of the area, and if it will be compatible in terms of style, height, scale, massing, and materials with the buildings immediately surrounding the lot on which the reproduction will be built, and if it is accurately based on pictorial documentation.
6. New buildings should related to an established pattern and rhythm of existing contributing buildings, both on the same and opposite sides of a street, the dominance of that pattern and rhythm must be respected and not disrupted.
7. New construction should be consistent with existing contributing buildings along a street in terms of height, scale, setback, and rhythm; relationship of materials, texture, details and color; roof shape; orientation and proportion and rhythm of openings.
1. Height: New buildings should be compatible in height with the height of adjacent buildings. This shall not mean that new construction must be the same height as adjacent structures, but that new construction should

be of similar heights as adjacent structures. New construction may not be over one story higher than adjacent structures or more than one story lower than adjacent structures.

1. Scale: The size of a new building; its mass in relation to open spaces; its windows, doors, openings and porches should be visually compatible with the surround buildings.

1. The relationship and use of materials, texture, details and material color of a new building's public facades shall be visually compatible with and similar to those of adjacent buildings or shall not contrast conspicuously.

1. The roofs of new buildings shall be visually compatible, by not contrasting greatly with the roof shape and orientation of surrounding buildings.

1. The setback from front and side yard property lines established by adjacent buildings must be maintained. When a definite rhythm along a street is established by uniform lot and building width, infill new buildings should maintain the rhythm.

1. Orientation: The site orientation of new buildings shall be consistent with that of adjacent buildings and shall be visually compatible. Directional expression shall be compatible with surrounding buildings, whether that expression is vertical, horizontal or non-directional.

1. The relationship of width to height of windows and doors, and the rhythm of solids to voids in new buildings shall be visually compatible with the surrounding buildings.

3. Additions to Existing Buildings:

1. Additions to existing buildings should be kept to a minimum and should be compatible in scale, materials, and texture. Additions should not be visually jarring or contrasting

2. Additions should not be made to the public facades of existing buildings. Additions should be located to the rear or sides of existing buildings in ways which do not disturb the main public facades.
3. The creation of an addition through enclosure of a front façade porch is inappropriate and should be avoided.

Staff recommendation:

1. *New construction should be compatible with other architectural styles in the district but reflect the era of its own construction. This plan meets the new construction guidelines for height, scale, materials, orientation, and setback.*
2. *Staff recommends approval of exterior materials of brick and Hardi, architectural shingle roof, fiberglass permacast columns, wood front doors, and steel rear doors.*
3. *Staff recommends windows be wood, wood with aluminum clad, or composite as approved on previous plans.*
4. *Staff recommends lighting be more appropriate in style for the historic district.*
5. *Applicant has removed multiple trees preconstruction. Staff recommends a full tree replacement/ landscaping plan to include screening of all parking from both Geneva Street and 10th Street.*
6. *Staff recommends approval of paved parking, as this fronts a major intersection and is adjacent to other paved lots and will be screened with landscaping.*

Discussion:

Staff presented the proposed new construction specs and site plan. Rush Denson opened the floor for public comment.

Open for public comments. Mark Gatlin commented this location is a key entryway and we should look at the overall picture to determine if this structure is compatible with the historic district, not just with adjacent structures that are noncontributing, but with contributing structures within the district. Another we must determine is if it is in harmony and character with existing structures. I am not in agreement with this proposed project. It is noncompatible, noncomplimentary, and not in harmony with existing contributing structures in the district.

Linda Lanz asked the purpose of the building. Rush Denson answered office/retail.

Mark Gatlin asked for the proposed signage. Staff responded that the applicant

would be required to return to the commission for signage approval when construction is completed and prior to installation.

Mark Grantham asked if the library is a contributing structure? Staff answered “no”, it is new construction. Mr. Grantham asked if all contributing structures old houses (previous residential units)?

Mark Gatlin said he has completed a survey and there are approximately 54 contributing structures that are residential, one school, no commercial units. The commercial units along Geneva are not only noncompatible but also noncontributing. The standard for Geneva Street needs to be higher. He recommends staffs hires someone professional, not just the commission, to evaluate new construction. This design could go elsewhere with no problem.

Linda Lanz asked if there has been any input from surrounding property owners. Are residential property owners concerned with this commercial project? Staff has received no inquiries.

Matt Mosley explained most commercial business along Geneva and 10th Street were built as residential and have been converted into commercial spaces. Zoning regulations allow for commercial usage and determine what businesses are allowed in each zone. Historic Preservation and Zoning work together for usage, design, parking, etc.

Manish stated that he has owns and has built many properties in Opelika and always works with staff to make sure everything is done correctly and taken care of. There is a sign on the property giving notice of commercial building with office space coming soon. He consulted and worked with staff providing several revisions before submitting this final design.

Mr. Mosley explain that Mr. Munn has worked with ADEM to get permission to remove monitoring wells for mediation of gas tank removal years ago. The city vacated a right of way and Mr. Munn removed the fencing and monitoring wells. The commission should not be evaluating this project as commercial or residential but as if the design is appropriate for the district. Is it compatible with the rest of the district?

Mark Gatlin reiterated that it should be compatible, complimentary, in harmony, and in keeping in character with the historic structures in the historic district. Properties that are built slab on grade are not compatible and are noncontributing. They do not strengthen the character of the district. To meet ADA compliance, grading and ramps can be used.

Staff explained that Mr. Munn has tried mimicking the roof pitch on front of properties such as East Street and Geneva Street. Could he possibly use all wood clapboard or Hardi to soften the look and maybe increase the size of the columns to be more compatible?

Mark Grantham stated that compatible and complementary is subjective and we have our own opinions on that. Things that are measurable that the applicant has spent time with staff on is Staff Recommendation #1 for height, scale, materials, orientation, and setback, #2 for exterior materials, #3 windows, #4 city recommends different lighting, #5 & #6 parking and landscaping. In my opinion, we shouldn't require a commercial building to construct a Victorian house for an office. I think he has met the requirements of the guidelines. I do not see a problem with the design of the commercial building of this era.

Mark Gatlin said there are principles that we very clearly should evaluate.

Matt Mosley stated that on item #3 the applicant has proposed the use of vinyl

windows, we typically do not allow those and ask for composite windows. It comes back to if the commission feels the building meets mass, scale, platform, and orientation issues.

Mark Gatlin made a motion to deny the application due to elevation, platform, non-compatibility, and mix of materials. Elaine Burton seconded the motion. The motion was opposed by Mark Grantham and Rush Denson. Motion did not carry.

Linda Lanz made a motion to table, with applicants' permission. The motion was seconded by Elaine Burton. Opposed by Mark Grantham. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Mark Grantham to form a subcommittee to work with applicant on revisions to meet guideline requirements. The motion was seconded by Linda Lanz. All approved.

The subcommittee will consist of staff members Matt Mosley and Lisa Thrift, and commission members Mark Gatlin and Rush Denson.

5. 121 S. 9th St: Downtown Historic District
COA: Extend Covered Pavilion, Add Rear Covered Deck and Sidewalk
Owner: Museum of East Alabama

Agenda Item #: 4
Meeting Date: 01/12/23
Action Requested: COA: Expand Covered Pavilion, Add Rear Covered Deck and Sidewalk
Location of Property: 121 S. 9th St; Downtown Historic District
Petitioner: Museum of East Alabama

Resources:

Location is vacant lot between museum and James Brothers bike shop and rear vacant lot.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Expand open pavilion to rear of building to facilitate additional displays measuring approximately 24' x 50'. Materials to be wood and metal roof construction like the cover present.
2. Install 24' x 24' deck connected to back of museum made of wood construction with metal roof. Rear entrance is already in place. Poured concrete walkway to connect deck to street sidewalk.

Proposed Guidelines:

A. THE ENVIRONMENT:

1. The environment consists of all exterior features in the designated historic districts which are visible to the public and includes structures, outbuildings, landscaping, streets, appurtenances, trees, mass and spacing between structures, scale, mass, color and materials of buildings that give a neighborhood its distinguishing character and contributes to its historic district designation.

2. Significant landscape features such as public parks and gardens, street lighting, signs, street benches, sidewalks, streets, alleys and building setbacks that have traditionally been maintained in the historic district and that contribute to its historic character should be retained. Existing streets should not be widened. paving material should not be changed to a different texture and color. Inappropriate new streets or parking lots incompatible with the neighborhood should not be constructed. (*updated 08/12/14*)

3. New plant materials, fencing, walkways, housing and other outdoor lights, signs, benches, etc. should be compatible with the character of the neighborhood in size, scale, material and color.

4. Plant material should be maintained so as not to become a hazard to the public, public property or shall not be allowed to cause deterioration to structures.

5. Existing street trees should not be removed without supporting documentation and a plan for replacement. Trees located in the city right of way cannot be removed without city approval (*updated 09/09/22*)

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Back yard Tree house, swing sets and trampolines
- Benches and other outdoor furniture and accessories
- Sculpture and another outdoor artwork
- Pools and patios
- Tree pruning, clearing of overgrown bushes, vines, saplings, etc.
- Tree removal (less than 4” diameter at breast height or diseased).
- Planting new trees, shrubs, ground cover, etc.
- Landscape edging
- Flower, vegetable and rock gardens
- Flowerpots, planters, window boxes, birdbaths, bird houses, etc.

- Adding gravel to existing driveways
- Patching deteriorated concrete or asphalt pavement, walks, steps, etc.

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Changes to stone walls and other historic site features
- New or expanded parking areas/lots
- New and expanded driveways and walkways
- Staff approval for change of materials (i.e. gravel to concrete)
- Staff approval for tree removal with supporting documentation from a Certified Arborist that the tree is either dead, in severe decline, and/or possess a high risk of failure. Trees to be reviewed by the City Arborist. A tree replacement plan must be provided. (*Updated 09/09/22*)

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommends approval of extending pavilion to match existing structure.
2. Staff recommends approval of rear wood deck with metal roof. Staff recommends approval of poured walkway.

Discussion:

Staff provided an overview of the proposed plan to expand the pavilion and add a deck to the rear of the building with a concrete walkway to the sidewalk. Rush Denson opened the floor for public comment. Mark Gatlin asked if the Side Area Viewing was included or just what is indicated in green. Mr. Brown responded only what is in green. Lighting for the mural will be added later on the side area.

There was no further discussion.

A motion was made by Linda Lanz to approve. The motion was seconded by Mark Grantham. All approved.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6. Enforcement Report
Staff provided the commission members with a report of enforcement cases and brief overview.
7. Staff Report
There was no staff report given.
8. Next meeting DATE

1. Next Meeting is February 9, 2023

7. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Elaine Burton to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mark Grantham. All approved.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.