



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

300 Martin Luther King Blvd.

May 9, 2024

TIME: 4:30 PM

1. A CALL TO ORDER

Rush Denson called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mark Grantham motioned to approve the April 11, 2024 minutes. The motion was seconded by Linda Lanz. All approved.

1. Approve April 11, 2024 minutes

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

(Limit comments to 3 minutes or less)

There were no comments.

4. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

5. NEW BUSINESS

2. 1 N. 8th St: Downtown Historic District

COA: New Construction

Owner: Stone Martin Builders

Agenda Item #: 1

Meeting Date: 05/09/2024

Action Requested: COA: New Construction

Location of Property: 1 N. 8th St; Downtown Historic District

Petitioner: Stone Martin Builders

Resources:

Vacant lot located in the Downtown Historic District. Former site of the Opera House.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. New construction two-story, wood-framed office building with covered, wrap around balcony and brick masonry veneer. The new office space will connect atmospherically to the existing office

building on the first floor only. Specs include wood exterior doors painted; pre-finished aluminum clad wood windows at main entry with black finish; windows elsewhere to be storefront black; exterior lighting at balcony and ground floor to be cooper; sconces at parapet to be black; downspouts and gutter boxes to be pre-finished aluminum in black; exposed wood structure to be stained cedar; brick to be Sherman bluff heritage with ivory mortar; cementitious boards and cedar trim at main entry will be painted; steel pipe columns and structural beams and welded decorative elements to be painted black; cast stone equal to RockCast “Riesling”; cornice at main entry to be EDON fiberglass profile CR283, painted to match cast stone.

2. A sign to be painted directly on to the brick veneer, with colors to match existing office painted signage.

Guidelines: **STANDARD # 9:** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Opelika has several vacancies located within a block of commercial buildings. This configuration has been described as looking like a missing tooth. Open space that adjoins the street should be developed in scale, use, and character with the neighborhood. New designs, which express changing tastes and needs, tell the on—going story of a downtown’s evolution. New designs should not attempt to create a false “historic” appearance. New designs are evaluated in terms of how well they relate to neighboring buildings’ composition, materials, size/scale, rhythm of openings, orientation/alignment, setback/site, style, and landscape.

CANOPIES - #17.

Maintain original canopies and balconies.

PRESERVATION: Although canopies, porches, and balconies are not commonly found on commercial buildings, when they exist, they are distinctive features. Original materials, details, shape, outline, and roof height should be retained. Enclosing canopies and balconies is not appropriate if it destroys the visual openness of the porch appearance. Concrete canopies or covered walkways are not appropriate.

LIGHTING - #21.

Use light fixtures to unify the streetscape and accent the buildings at night.

STYLE: Period Street lighting, such as free—standing lamp posts, is presently available in several styles and forms. Traditional or modern designs are appropriate and ornate designs may be appropriate if they are based on documentation. Fake looking “colonial” lamp posts are not appropriate for most historic commercial areas.

TYPE: Incandescent, gas lighting, and vapor lighting are appropriate. Harsh cold fluorescent lighting should be avoided.

SIGNS #6.

Signs should complement, rather than compete with, the character of the building and downtown.

These design guidelines apply to the exterior signs within the Northside and Geneva Street Historic Preservation Districts. All signs in a historic preservation district must meet the provisions of the Opelika Zoning Ordinance as well as receive a Certificate of Appropriateness. A Certificate of Appropriateness review will determine whether a sign proposal meets the context of these guidelines. Whenever there is a conflict between the regulations of the zoning ordinance and these guidelines, the more stringent regulations will take precedence. *(Updated 08/12/13)*

LOCATION: Signs should be designed with the historic character of the building and district in mind. The design should be compatible with the architectural features of a building or neighboring buildings and should not obscure architectural details of the building. Locate signs on flat unadorned parts of the facade or paint directly onto the glass storefront. Hanging signs should not project more than 40 inches beyond adjoining buildings or obscure the view of the streetscape. A hanging sign should be at least 8 feet off the ground. Signs should not be located on the roof. They should be aligned with others in the area in order to create a more uniform appearance. *(Updated 08/12/14)*

TYPES: A variety of signs may adorn a building. Awning signs and small facade sign panels can attract the attention of passing motorists or pedestrians across the street. Signs painted on storefront windows and doors attract the attention of pedestrians. Hanging signs should be attached so that they do not damage the wall surface. Attach signs through joints in the masonry rather than to the brick itself. Moveable or portable signs are not appropriate. Sandwich Boards measuring up to 24” wide by 36” tall may be approved by staff and must be of an A-frame design. The use of painted wood signs is encouraged and the use of metal and plastic signs are discouraged. One sandwich sign per building is permitted, though buildings housing multiple businesses may share a slightly larger, 24” wide by 48” sign. *(Updated 08/12/14)*

SIZE: Size should be determined by the scale of the building, not whether the

sign is meant to be viewed by a passing motorist or pedestrian. Generally, lettering should not exceed 18 inches high. The maximum area of any sign in a historic commercial district shall be limited to twenty-four (24) square feet, and in the Gateway Corridor (Geneva St, 10th St, Torbert Ave, 2nd Ave) shall be limited to forty-eight (48) square feet, unless acceptable documentation proves that original signage from the date of construction of the building or the most significant architectural renovation of the building was larger.

MATERIALS: Sign materials should be compatible with those of the historic building. Traditional signs were often painted on finished wood or metal panels. Signs painted onto fabric awnings are effective. Unfinished plywood and plastic signs may not be appropriate in the downtown.

DESIGN: New signs should not attempt to look older than the building. Colonial designs are not appropriate on Victorian buildings. Custom signs are preferable to mass-produced standardized signs. Simple designs which are subordinate to the building are appropriate. Where several businesses occupy a building, it is best to coordinate the signs. The use of symbolic, three-dimensional signs, such as the red and white barbers' pole, is encouraged.

LIGHTING: The sign should be illuminated to fit the design of the building. The color and intensity of illumination are central to achieving a complimentary balance of the building and signs. Light intensity should not overpower the building or street edge. Sign lighting should be subdued or indirect. Internally lit (*including digital*) plastic signs are not appropriate, although, in some cases, neon signs may be appropriate. Neon lighting should be used in limited volume to ensure that it does not become visually obtrusive and dominate the street frontage. Incandescent lights are preferable to the harsh, cold appearance of fluorescent lights. Flashing lights are not appropriate. (*updated 08/12/14*)

HISTORIC SIGNS: Retain historic signs whenever possible. (See Preservation Brief #25.) Preserve signs that: reflect the history of a building or district; are characteristic of a particular historic period or style; are associated with events, people, or places; are evidence of the history of a product or business; display excellent craftsmanship, use of materials, or design; are incorporated into the buildings design or physical fabric. *Photo evidence of previous sign design and/or style is encouraged. (Updated 08/12/14).*

Staff recommendation:

1. *Staff recommends approval of proposed design for new commercial property. New construction should be compatible with other architectural styles in the district but reflect the era of its own construction. It should be compatible in massing, size, and scale.*
2. *Staff recommends approval of painted sign facing N. Railroad Ave to match existing sign facing S. 8th Street.*
3. *Construction of the balcony will require city council approval prior to construction.*

Discussion:

Staff gave an overview of the proposed new construction building and staff recommendations.

Lee Bryant with Barrett Architecture Studio stated that the design reflects architecture motifs of downtown Opelika with a corner entrance like the building previously on this lot. Changes were made after receiving staff comments. The balcony and ceiling height of first floor. The parapet height is approximately 1.5ft higher. Columns will be prefab cast iron. The brick is brown to give a richer texture with ivory mortar. Cementous board and wood trim will all be painted. Windows on the front will be aluminum clad wood to give a more traditional profile. All others provide a black storefront. The lighting of sconces and pendants are all the same style of copper lantern look and gooseneck lighting on the top. Signage will be painted directly on the brick. An additional cast stone sign will be on the top front with Stone Martin and logo. The building is an expansion of the Stone Martin office.

Rush Denson asked what the intention is on brick and grout to match the historical effect of surrounding properties. Mr. Bryant responded that the brick has an old weather texture with off white mortar.

John March stated it is difficult to make new brick not be apparent. If the brick is laid like it normally is in today's market, the building could look out of place. The mortar joints will look new. Sensitivity to the way the brick is laid, and mortar used will make a significant difference.

Debbie Pubes said this is a lot of brick and the building will be a focal point downtown. Can there be more interest and detail given to the design. Mr. Bryant stated there will be brick pilasters at the corners, and a few places down the façade. Debbie said having a pattern in the brick will better tie the building in.

Rush Denson asked what material would be under the windows. Mr. Bryant said Cementous and wood paneling would be used.

Aaron said there is a lot of brick for a standard building. If you run a 100ft wall without any character it will stand out from the rest of the buildings. Is there anyway the brick can be feathered so it doesn't look so new.

John Marsh is important how the mortar joints are striked. Mr. Bryant said the photo does not show the details of the brick. There will be soldier course work.

Planning Director Matt Mosley said while reviewing the plans, staff tried to determine which side would be the primary façade. Most corner buildings downtown with a short side/long side, the short side is the primary façade with the long side being unadorned.

Rush Denson stated that because this building will be substantial, the details are important.

John Marsh made a motion to approve and asked that the builder be sensitive to the brickwork. The motion was seconded by Mark Grantham. All approved.

3. 712 N. Railroad Ave: Downtown Historic District
COA: Facade Renovation
Owner: Richard Patton
Agenda Item #: 2
Meeting Date: 05/09/2024
Action Requested: COA: Replace garage doors, Install roll up doors and new entry
Doors, Clean and repoint brick.
Location of Property: 712 N. Railroad Ave; Downtown Historic District
Petitioner: Richard Patton

Resources:

Building Early 20th century; one story brick load bearing wall construction; sheet metal gutter. New sheet metal garage.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Replace the left garage door with roll-up glass and black framed aluminum glazed door.
2. Replace the right garage door with recessed black framed aluminum storefront and side entry door.
3. Replace two single doors with wood doors.
4. Install individual painted aluminum lettering measuring 14"x 192" (~32SF) on front facade.

Proposed Guidelines:

STOREFRONTS

Through time, many of the historic commercial buildings in Opelika have been altered to create a more up-to-date look in keeping with changing trends and fashions. For example, one trend, which swept through Main Street cities across the country in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, was concealing the ornamental details and materials of the historic facade behind a plain front in order to make the building appear modern and streamlined. In Opelika, change occurred more often on the storefront than on the upper level of the facade. The first approach, in rehabilitation, is to uncover the original facade, and storefront whenever possible. When the original facade no longer exists, either leave it as it is or recreate the facade and storefront based on historical or physical evidence. If documentation

does not exist about the appearance of the original facade one option is to create a new design composed of traditional features which are compatible with nearby buildings. A few storefronts have evolved over the years and have acquired their own sense of identity. For example, a glass art Deco storefront, added to a Victorian building, may have achieved importance and should be preserved. For more detailed information on Storefront Rehabilitation, refer to Technical Brief #11, which is included in this notebook.

RECONSTRUCTED STOREFRONT -#3

Reconstruction of a historic storefront should be based on physical evidence and historical documentation such as photographs.

RE-CONSTRUCTION: Obtain historic photographs, post cards of downtown, and historical background about the building by contacting the historical society, library, and/or state archives.

DOORS - #9.

Preserve the original front doors and opening.

PRESERVATION: The original size and shape of door openings should be maintained, not in-filled. Original doors and door hardware should be repaired and maintained. Replacement doors, when necessary, should be compatible with the original doors in terms of style, size, material, and glass panel configuration.

NEW OPENINGS: When the creation of new openings is necessary in order to meet fire codes, they should be located on sides or to the rear of buildings, rather than on the front. New openings, when permitted, should be compatible in scale, size, proportion, and placement to historic openings.

CLOSING AN OPENING: If the blocking of an opening is allowed, infill materials should be compatible with the building and should be placed 2" to 6" back from the building face. Use of fixed reflective glass is not recommended.

MASONRY - #15.

Original masonry including brick, stone, terra cotta, and stucco walls and details should be preserved and maintained.

CLEANING: Cleaning of masonry should be done by the gentlest means possible. Never sandblast a masonry building. Do a test patch prior to undertaking any cleaning method. Do not paint unpainted masonry. Once painted, it is often better to repaint rather than remove paint. Carefully investigate the condition of masonry before removing stucco. (See Preservation Brief #1, 6, 7)

REPAIRING: Waterproofing sealants should not be used on masonry, unless they are vapor permeable. Repairs should match the historic masonry in size, shape, texture, and color. Repointing of existing masonry should incorporate the same mortar mix, tooling, and color as the historic masonry pointing. (See Preservation Brief #2)

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(Updated 08/12/14)

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Staff recommendation:

1. *Staff recommends approval of roll-up aluminum and glass garage door on right.*
2. *Staff recommends approval of recessed entry, retaining original opening, and side entry door.*
3. *Staff recommends approval of wood single doors.*
4. *Staff recommends approval of individual painted aluminum lettering for signage mounted on front facade.*

Discussion:

Staff provided the details of the façade renovation in the Cotton District with staff recommendations.

Richard Patton stated that the signage preference is for it to be on the parapet wall. He isn't sure if the parapet is considered the roof top. It works well with the design sitting between the two parapets. If it cannot be on the parapet, they will bring it down to the brick wall.

John Marsh said in the past the parapet and roof have been viewed as separate.

Matt Mosley stated the sign on the parapet will require a variance by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Debbie Purves motioned to approve as presented contingent on receiving variance from ZBA. John Marsh seconded. All approved.

4. 709 1st Ave: Downtown Historic District
COA: Facade Renovation
Owner: Richard Patton

Agenda Item #: 3

Meeting Date: 05/09/2024

Action Requested: COA: Façade Renovation

Location of Property: 709 1st Ave; Downtown Historic District
Petitioner: Richard Patton

Resources:

Montgomery Company-Old Renfro Brothers Cotton Warehouse: 1878, enlarged in 1909-1924; one story brick load bearing wall construction round and flat arched openings; corbelled brick cornice. Part of this section of the building that dates from 1909-1924 has been removed. However, the alterations have maintained the vernacular with retention of original round arched openings for doors.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. This façade is from 1st Ave and N. Railroad Ave leading into The Railyard. This outdoor space is next to John Emerald Distillery.
2. The brick will be repointed and a new 12ft wood fence with sliding gate will be installed. Fence to be stained or painted.
3. Install wood doors on all arched garage openings and wood doors on utility closets. Doors to be stained or painted.

Proposed Guidelines:

STANDARD #5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be retained and preserved.

MASONRY - #15.

Original masonry including brick, stone, terra cotta, and stucco walls and details should be preserved and maintained.

CLEANING: Cleaning of masonry should be done by the gentlest means possible. Never sandblast a masonry building. Do a test patch prior to undertaking any cleaning method. Once painted, it is often better to repaint rather than remove paint. Carefully investigate the condition of masonry before removing stucco. (See Preservation Brief #1, 6, 7) In almost all cases, unpainted masonry should not be painted. The painting of unpainted brick should only be considered under the following circumstances:

1. The masonry is not historic, nor is likely to become contributing in the future.
2. The brick is soft brick or porous historic brick that was intended to be sealed. Most known brick in Opelika's historic districts have more modern bricks.
3. A majority of the existing structure's masonry is already painted.
4. Masonry at ground level or below needs to be waterproofed to exclude ground water.

5. The structure has been extensively damaged by fire, natural disaster, or pre-existing alterations that the masonry no longer conveys the buildings historic character. This should not include major additions or changes that show the historic evolution of a building. (rev. 01/19/2022)

REPAIRING: Waterproofing sealants should not be used on masonry, unless they are vapor permeable. Repairs should match the historic masonry in size, shape, texture, and color. Repointing of existing masonry should incorporate the same mortar mix, tooling, and color as the historic masonry pointing. (See Preservation Brief #2)

DOORS - #9.

Preserve the original front doors and opening.

PRESERVATION: The original size and shape of door openings should be maintained, not in-filled. Original doors and door hardware should be repaired and maintained. Replacement doors, when necessary, should be compatible with the original doors in terms of style, size, material, and glass panel configuration.

NEW OPENINGS: When the creation of new openings is necessary in order to meet fire codes, they should be located on sides or to the rear of buildings, rather than on the front. New openings, when permitted, should be compatible in scale, size, proportion, and placement to historic openings.

CLOSING AN OPENING: If the blocking of an opening is allowed, infill materials should be compatible with the building and should be placed 2” to 6” back from the building face. Use of fixed reflective glass is not recommended.

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommends approval of repointing brick. Mortar should incorporate the same mortar mix, tooling, and color as the historic masonry pointing.
2. Staff recommends approval of wood doors for garage openings and wood doors on utility/storage rooms. All doors should be stained or painted.
3. Staff recommends approval of 12ft privacy fence with sliding gate to allow for private events. However, fencing above 7ft in height requires engineering designs and must be approved by the Inspections Department prior to installation. Fence should be stained or painted.

Discussion:

Staff gave descriptions of the proposed project with staff recommendations.

There was no further discussion.

Debbie Purves motioned to approve. The motion was seconded by Aaron Kovak. All approved

5. 725 1st Ave: Downtown Historic District
COA: New Construction
Owner: Richard Patton
Agenda Item #: 4
Meeting Date: 05/09/2024
Action Requested: COA: New Construction-Preliminary Review only
Location of Property: 725 1st Ave; Downtown Historic District
Petitioner: Richard Patton

Resources:

Vacant lot at the corner of 1st Avenue (Griff Goods) and S. 8th Street (Stone Martin).

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. New construction commercial two-story building. The exterior will be Shou Sugi Ban. This wood is preserved by charring the wood making it fire retardant as well as resistant to rot, insects, and decay.
2. Windows will all be black metal framing. No additional specs provided.

Proposed Guidelines:

STANDARD #3: Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

Guidelines which address issues concerning New Construction, Relocation, Additions, and Demolition are extremely important. The intent of historic district zoning is not to freeze an area in time, but rather to encourage new, complementary buildings on vacant sites on the Main Street.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Opelika has several vacancies located within a block of commercial buildings. This configuration has been described as looking like a missing tooth. Open space that adjoins the street should be developed in scale, use, and character with the neighborhood. New designs, which express changing tastes and needs, tell the on-going story of a downtown's evolution. New designs should not attempt to create a false "historic" appearance. New designs are evaluated in terms of how well they relate to neighboring buildings' composition, materials, size/scale, rhythm of openings, orientation/alignment, setback/site, style, and landscape.

NEW CONSTRUCTION - #29.

New construction should be compatible with neighboring buildings.

COMPOSITION: New buildings should define the three basic divisions of a commercial facade: a top which is typically a flat roof with a parapet and decorative cornice; a middle area defined by the upper story windows which are vertical and regularly placed; and a bottom which is transparent and has the elements of a storefront, including a bulkhead, a display window, and a transom.

MATERIALS: New materials should relate to the historic materials in terms of texture, scale, color, and composition. New buildings should utilize the same materials as those on existing historic structures. Masonry, particularly brick, is an appropriate material. Inappropriate materials are plywood, composition panel, plastic, imitation brick or stone, vinyl or synthetic siding, sheet metal, and stone veneer. Neither stucco nor concrete block impart the same scale or texture as brick.

SIZE / SCALE: New buildings should be in scale with existing buildings. This means that they should not be appreciably taller, shorter, wider, or narrower than the buildings adjacent to them. Multi—story buildings should have a vertical emphasis, meaning that they should be taller than they are wide. The scale of key elements and details should refer to nearby buildings.

RHYTHM OF OPENINGS: The design, scale, and placement of openings in buildings, which provide a visual rhythm along the street, should be continued. Walls should be divided into bays by windows. New construction should avoid creating long unrelieved expanses of wall along the street. Window openings should be vertically proportioned and placed symmetrically on the facade. They should be slightly recessed back from the surface. Windows should be defined by sills, lintels, or decorative surrounds.

ORIENTATION / ALIGNMENT: Orientation of new construction should match that of existing adjacent buildings. Facades should face the same direction as those of neighboring buildings. The similar heights of buildings are emphasized by the alignment of cornices and/or horizontal bands of second story windows. New construction should continue the visual continuity of horizontal elements.

SETBACK / SPACING: New buildings should conform with adjacent or surrounding buildings in terms of their setback and the spacing between buildings. Historically, blocks of commercial buildings directly fronting the sidewalk are attached to each other, sharing a party wall. New buildings should create a continuously walled complex that holds the lines of the streets. Generally, avoid buildings designed as free-standing objects.

STYLE: The design of new buildings should complement existing historical architecture rather than attempt to imitate it. The new construction should be distinguishable from the old so that the evolution of the Main Street district can be visually read. New designs should creatively draw on the important characteristics of existing buildings.

LANDSCAPE: Site planning should respect the precedents set by other buildings in the block. In areas where many trees form a bower across the streets, new plantings should be planned to achieve a similar effect. For walls, fences, and paving, use materials consistently found in the district. (refer to Design

Staff recommendation:

1. The Commission should consider the following guidelines during preliminary review:
 - New materials should relate to historic materials in terms of texture, scale, composition and utilize the same materials as those on existing historic structures.
 - New buildings should define the three basic divisions of a commercial façade: a top which is typically a flat roof with a parapet and decorative cornice; a middle area defined by the upper story windows which are vertical and regularly placed; and a bottom which is transparent and has the elements of a storefront, including bulkhead, a display window, and a transom.
 - New designs should creatively draw on the important characteristics of existing buildings.
 - New buildings should be in scale with existing buildings. They should not be appreciably taller, shorter, wider, or narrower than the buildings adjacent to them. The scale of key elements and details should refer to nearby buildings.
 - The design, scale, and placement of openings, which provide a visual rhythm along the street, should be continued. Walls should be divided into bays by windows. New construction should avoid creating long unrelieved expanses of wall along the street. Window openings should be vertically proportioned and placed symmetrically on the façade. Windows should be defined by sills, lintels, or decorative surrounds.

Discussion:

Staff explained the design of this new construction project. The applicant is here for preliminary review only seeking thoughts and comments on the design.

Richard Patton stated that they realize the odd design and shape, but there is purpose in it. The architect, David Hill, provided a model for everyone to look at. He said architecture is about any program heeded and built within its time. We want to celebrate the wood industry. A CLT (Cross Laminated Timber) plant has recently been built in Dothan, AL. The interior will be light and airy like a Danish interior. The exterior will celebrate various stains and finishes available for wood in our region. They have tried to not copy or emulate surrounding historic structures but put up a building that speaks to today's time and age. This is a three-story building with a mezzanine on the first floor. The form of the building takes in the outdoor courtyard for Sneak and Dawdle. The first floor will have a

bakery and small hamburger restaurant, the second floor an art gallery, and the third floor a roof top bar.

Linda Lanz asked if there are building height restrictions for downtown. Matt Mosley responded that most commercial zones have a 75ft restriction. There is an area around the airport where this is modified due to the flight pattern. In short, the guidelines say buildings should be in context and similarly scaled to the buildings around it; no more than one story.

Rush Denson asked if it helps that some buildings, like the church, are at a higher elevation. Does this help taller buildings to blend in better. Matt Mosley stated there is a two-story building across the street, Stone Martin is a one story with mezzanine built in, and Griff Goods which is a true one story. The design is thought out and creative. However, there is no defined break line for the first or second floor. The typical downtown building looks somewhat stacked on top. This building is much more vertical. The height is definitely taller than surrounding buildings, but the height isn't the most concerning. Richard Patton provided there is purpose in the height beyond the design. Being a skinnier building, the height gives them more space, and all the glass helps it feel more spacious.

Rush Denson asked if the rooftop bar is on top of the second floor creating a third floor. Richard said that there is an indoor space on the rooftop that is very small. Then there is outdoor covered and uncovered garden areas. The indoor space has maybe four seats.

Matt Mosley said there are items identified as concerns and need to be looked at more. As you come down 1st Avenue you have a very regular kind of façade wall. This design has a turn or angle as possible a design feature for light. This is different from any other buildings downtown. There needs to be some sort of storefront that complements the warehouse district or the more traditional storefronts on 8th Street where there are some larger windows and garage doors. As you move up from the first floor to the second and third story, the window pattern is definitely more a contemporary design. We talk a lot about having a regular window pattern on those residential or upper stories. This design is more grouped and vertical.

David Hill explained the angle at the corner was borrowed from downtown the 45-degree angle that opens the front to the intersection instead of facing one street or the other. This form allows us to go all the way to the second and third floor as well to open views up both streets. There is no manipulation between the first and second floor. We are most interested in getting feedback on the material, wood, on the exterior of the building and how we could manipulate that wood to delineate each floor. The Shou Sugi Ban material is simply charcoaling /burning the wood and oiling it to preserve the wood much longer than stain or paint. It's much more sustainable. Richard Patton said this application is more fire and termite resistant. The window patterning can be addressed. They are trying to make the language about the CLT panels and not about masonry. The traditional window pattern may require chasing loads through a column or pier. With the CLT system, we are free from a lot of that structural chasing. This allows it to be the architecture of this time and building technology instead of emulating a superficial version of masonry.

Rush Denson stated that from our current guidelines, how does the wood fit? John Marsh said wood is an acceptable material. Matt Mosley explained that wood is an acceptable material but there are not any buildings downtown where

wood is the primary material. It is used more as an accent feature. The guidelines say new materials should relate to historic materials in terms of texture, scale, composition and utilize the same materials on existing historic structures. The side elevation shows a very vertical panel. When thinking of downtown, you think of horizontal brick rows. In some places there are some smooth facades. This design doesn't convey the same texture or pattern. Approving a building of this style, you are going out on a limb with it being of its own style and current material standards. How does that relate and tie back to the context of downtown.

Linda Lanz said she thinks it is an innovative and beautiful design. The concern is how does it fit in? This would start to change the look and feel of the downtown historic district. Are we setting a precedent for contemporary architecture? Rush Denson asked if the concern was the style and appearance more than the material? Linda Lanz responded yes, it seems disconnected.

Debbie Purves agreed that it is a great design. But there is nothing that brings historic downtown in this building.

David Hall said they are trying to match the scale of the pattern or horizontal appropriateness, but in the scale that this is not a 4x8 sheet of plywood but a piece of wood that has been cut and finished then applied in scale of the surface is an aggregation of the scale of the material that has been applied. We are trying to take what we have learned of the historic fabric Opelika has and translate it. Maybe we have translated it too much and made it too abstract. We don't want to superficially apply historic patterning on a new building. We want to learn the essence of architecture from history and translate it into modern day architecture and reapply it in an effective and caring way. Richard Patton said 1st Ave is its own little block, rough and tumble, and the clients coming into the building are unique businesses. We want the building to pull people into the spot.

Rush Denson asked if the applicant could overcome the CLT material concern and use brick. There are also some design issues.

John Marsh said he loves the courageous nature of what they are trying to do. Does this belong? Has there been wood structures downtown that are minimalistic in appearance that have this similar scale and we don't have them anymore? Aaron asked if the Art Houz is inside the historic district. The answer was no. John Marsh found two photos of structures that were once downtown that would not be allowed today. One is a wood structure the other is the old theatre.

John Marsh said some details that could be added such as framed out windows to break up the wood, define lines and top of the parapet, and not have notches. There have been full wood structures downtown that look in this manner. This design could be the next thing protected in the next 50-100 years if it is done well. We don't legislate the finish on materials. You just went so far. If you could come back in a little.

The applicant will return with revised drawings.

No motions were made.

6. Presentation: The Walker Collaborative
Opelika Historic Design Review Guidelines

Phil Walker and Keith Covington of Walker Collaborative provided an overview of the revised Design Guidelines. Questions were answered as the draft document was explained. Staff will now take any comments received into consideration and provide an edited copy for the consultant team to finalize the new document.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

7. Enforcement Report

8. Staff Report

9. Next meeting DATE

1. Next meeting June 13, 2024

7. ADJOURN