



AGENDA

CITY OF OPELIKA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

July 11, 2024

4:30 p.m.

Meeting Chambers at Opelika Municipal Courtroom
300 MLK Boulevard

Call to Order

Approve June 13, 2024 minutes.

Public Comment/Citizen Communication

Old Business

New Business

1. 500 2nd Ave: Downtown Historic District
COA: Demo
Owner: Madback Tee, LLC

Other Business

2. Enforcement Report
3. Staff Report
4. Next meeting August 8, 2024
5. Adjournment

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

300 Martin Luther King Blvd.

June 13, 2024

TIME: 4:30 PM

1. A CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve May 9, 2024 minutes

Linda Lanz motioned to approve the May 9, 2024 minutes. The motion was seconded by Mark Grantham. All approved.

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. 113 S. 9th St: Downtown Historic District

COA: Replace Awning

Applicant: Matt Poirier

Agenda Item #: 1

Meeting Date: 06/13/24

Action Requested: COA: Replace Awning

Location of Property: 113 S. 9th St; Downtown Historic District

Petitioner: Matt Poirier

Resources:

Casey Furniture: After 1924; one story brick load bearing wall construction; original façade above glass and wood storefront.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Replace the current awning with a black metal awning measuring 5' deep x 42' wide supported by wooden corbels. The building is to be repainted dark gray with subtle trim color.

Guidelines:

AWNINGS - #5.

Awnings should be compatible with the design of the building and the streetscape.

PRESERVATION: Preserve original canopies and awning hardware where feasible.

MATERIALS: Fabric awnings are appropriate. Vinyl coated canvas and acrylic awnings may be acceptable. Metal awnings may be appropriate in a few instances, but rough sawn wood, plastic, or asphalt shingle awnings give an immobile, hard, mansard—like appearance and are not appropriate.

DESIGN: Retractable or fixed standard shed—type canvas awnings are appropriate.

Fake mansard roofs and rustic wood shingle awnings are inappropriate. Carefully coordinate the awning color with other building design features.

LOCATION: The awning should fit the dimensions of the storefront within the masonry opening and should not obscure architectural details. Mount the awning just above or just below the transom. Where feasible, align the awning so that it is the same height as others on the block. Upper story awnings should fit inside the window surround. Arched windows should have awnings shaped like the curvature of the arch, and rectangular windows should have rectangular awnings.

Staff recommendation:

- 1. *Staff recommends approval of black metal awing with wood corbels.*

Discussion:

Staff stated the applicant wishes to replace the awning with a deeper awning.

Rush Denson opened for public comment. There were none.

There were no questions or comments by the commission.

John Marsh made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Mark Grantham. All approved.

- 3. 706 1st Ave: Downtown Historic District
COA: Front Entry Reno and Awing
Applicant: Richard Patton
Agenda Item #: 2
Meeting Date: 06/13/2024
Action Requested: COA: Install glass and steel entryway and awning.

Location of Property: 706 1st Ave; Downtown Historic District
Petitioner: Richard Patton

Resources:

Building: Before 1924; one story brick load bearing wall construction various brick patterns and textures on façade; wood siding infill. New siding and new garage door installed.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

- 1. Add back into the original opening a glass and aluminum entryway. Install two glass and metal doors and metal framed storefront windows. Infill of steal panels will be above glass.
- 2. Install an overlapping steel panel awning above the storefront measuring 18’6” wide x 3-4’ deep concealing the steal paneled infill.

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.

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.

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.

Staff recommendation:

- 1. *Staff recommends approval of glass metal doors.*
- 2. *Staff recommends approval of glass and metal storefront windows.*
- 3. *Staff recommends approval of steel paneled awning with metal supports.*

Discussion:

Staff provided an overview of the proposed façade renovation.

Rush Denson opened for public comment. There was none.

There were no questions or comments.

Mark Grantham motioned to approve based on staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Linda Lanz. All approved.

- 4. 501 N. 8th St: Northside Historic District
COA: Pavilion
Applicant: Jane Fleming
Agenda Item #: 3
Meeting Date: 06/13/2024
Action Requested: RETROACTIVE COA: Add Pavilion to Side Yard
Location of Property: 501 N. 8th St; Northside Historic District

Petitioner: Jane Fleming

Resources:

Circa 1925. One story, wood frame bungalow with hip roof of asphalt shingles, exposed rafters under eaves, trip dormer with window band, off centered double leaf wood and plate glass doors, flanking vertical eight pane window bands with horizontal window band over verticals, short double colonettes on brick bases, closed rail balustrade. Contributing Resource.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Construct a 12' x 17' Summerhouse Pavilion with architectural shingles on side yard. All exterior wood will be painted white. Ceiling beadboard will be installed with two ceiling fans.

Guidelines:

. 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 a pavilion with architectural shingles on the side yard meeting setback requirements.

Discussion:

Staff explained that this is a retroactive request. Photos were provided of the completed pavilion.

Rush Denson opened for public comment. There were none.

There were no questions or comments by the commission.

John Marsh motioned to approve based on staff recommendations. Linda Lanz seconded the motion. All approved.

5. 725 1st Ave: Downtown Historic District

COA: New Construction

Applicant: Richard Patton

Agenda Item #: 4

Meeting Date: 05/09/2024

Action Requested: COA: New Construction

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 three-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 Guideline #22)

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.
2. Staff recognizes that surrounding commercial properties in the Downtown Historic District are primarily brick. Other wood structures are residential properties, some having been adapted for commercial use.
3. There are many features of the proposed new construction that do not compliment characteristics of existing historic buildings including exterior materials, window size(s) and shape(s), and configuration, shape of awning, openings, and walkways. Staff recommends the Commission seriously consider the aesthetics of surrounding properties and how they envision future infill development looking.

Discussion:

Staff provided an overview of the revised renderings. Staff stated that several concerns are addressed in the staff recommendations. Bullets points are provided from the Design Guidelines that outline the conditions which should be met for new construction.

Architect David Hill presented a model of the project. Comments and concerns from the preliminary review were taken into consideration. This new building will be all wood. The most common material downtown is brick. The second most common material is wood. One historic example was provided of a wood building that is no longer present. The proposed project was modeled after this structure in the detailing. There are vertical wood slats, irregular roof lines, and punch wood windows. He stated that wood is a more sustainable material than brick, takes less carbon to create, is a renewable resource, and is produced in the state of Alabama. This building will celebrate the detailing of wood, capacity to resist moisture, bugs, and rot if you detail it properly. Photos of other buildings downtown with distinct wood textures were provided. Most were noncontributing structures. Details include vertical and horizontal slats. There was a request to

distinguish the different floor elevations. This was done with the vertical stratification of the wood. The bottom floor is the wider wood boards, the middle floor is the medium width boards, and the top floor is the smallest to subtly suggest where each elevation is. The other request was to revise the windows to be more like the punched opening you see around instead of continuously running multiple floors. Instead of large square horizontal windows, vertical windows are added to capture the proportions seen downtown. The church across the street has windows that are taller and skinnier. He tried to match the vertical proportions but arrange them in a way that brings light so the building can be maximally used on the interior.

Richard Patton stated that this building is on a small footprint and is limited in square footage. With such a small footprint every bit of space has been thought through in its usage. Limited glass is used because wall space is needed for functionality. There will be four creative businesses in limited square footage. He wants to collaborate with the HPC to build something that is not an ordinary brick bank building that adds no value to the businesses or the street. But have a building that invites you to the street and people want to visit.

John Marsh provided photos of past structures in the downtown district that had unique features such as the Martin Theatre, the Creamery, the Ritz, Montgomery Fair, and an octagonal wood butcher building. Some are wood structures that have been lost. He asked if we should consider historic structures that are no longer there as part of the context and fabric of how we make decisions in the future. The National Preservation Trust Preservation Brief on "*Understanding Old Buildings in the Process of Architectural Investigation*" states "The express goal of historic preservation is to protect and preserve materials and features that convey the significant history of place. Careful architectural investigation and historic research provides the firm foundation for this goal." (This brief references investigating current historic structures.) Our past must inform our future in design, scale, and material. New construction must be informed by the historic district's context. With the absence of information, you want to go with the historical context of uniqueness. It should be collaborative between the physical documents we have and the proof of what existed in the district. We have lost 46 plus historic buildings. We don't have as good a context as we used to. Most structures over 50 years old have been altered. What are we going to protect in the future and not let people change?

Rush Denson asked what are some of the hurdles within the guidelines, like material, height, and width.

John Marsh responded that the challenge is what is built often doesn't look like the drawings. You have to trust the people you are working with. When thinking about scale, the height of Jackie's Cards and Gifts is one and half story above the building next door. It is tall and skinny, 18ft wide x 120ft deep. Our guidelines talk about storefronts as they relate to the street. Consideration should be given to the door on the sides and not an angled storefront which would open to the historic design. How the windows are oriented should be considered. It is hard for people to take different size windows. Consolidation and steps of windows need to be looked at. It may be beneficial to consider connecting the vertical piece of the staircase. Lastly, if the layout on the top floor was placed in the rear instead of the front it would appear shorter with a small parapet in the front and bar in the back.

Richard Patton explained that the windows are positioned in specific places. The doors are positioned to open to both streets. Rush Denson asked if the corner could be squared up and have a door like other buildings downtown with the corner entrance. John Marsh said the offset corner is not typical. Not having a storefront makes it look different. Richard Patton stated one of the front windows is a walk-up service window. Having the bar (on the upper floor) with a short wall on the front makes the height look shorter. The black wood comes in a multitude of colors. Black was chosen because of the white building beside it. John Marsh said wood is an acceptable material for downtown and that finish, and color are not regulated.

Staff commented that the rendering is hard to interpret.

Rush Denson said that more storefront glass would take away all the wood and have more focus on the windows.

David Hall said he thought multiple small blocky windows would be more desirable. He can expand the window openings to be larger.

John Marsh inserted that the Farmers National building has multiple size

windows in multiple locations. If the front façade was tied in, the staircase didn't look like a separate piece, and windows are worked on he would be willing to support the design. Move the bar section to the back. The scale and proportion compared to Jackie's is not an issue.

Linda Lanz stated her concern is the same as last time. It is an interesting and creative design. But are we ready for a funky design in the historic district? The transition between existing buildings and this one and the way it would blend with everything else. Also, if this is approved, are we going to have funky designs proposed in the historic district? This design is a little extreme.

John Marsh says there is no way to measure what is too funky. Look at the photos of what was here. They were no more courageous than this design.

Staff asked at what point do you know where to draw the line, say this is too far out there. It is a matter of opinion. We have the Design Guidelines. It is what we adopted for our historic districts. The guidelines tell you that it must be materials of existing historic structures. Great examples of past structures were provided, but those buildings are no longer here.

John Marsh stated there are wood structures in the downtown area that are commercial property. The context of a 20 plus year developer, an excellent architect, and a board who doesn't have context or licensing must be weighed in.

Richard Patton explains the guidelines are broad, not specific, and says wood is an acceptable material. To be an all brick-and-mortar town does not follow the guidelines. It is understood about not stepping out too far and honoring surrounding buildings. I think we can get to something that will look good. You will not see this from the core of downtown. The corner entryways are to pull people downtown.

Mark Grantham said he has reviewed the report. It states in Standard #3 "Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use." The proposed project meets this criterion. It is not like the old buildings of downtown. In the New Construction guidelines, it states that "New designs which express changing taste and needs tell the ongoing story of downtown's evolution. The proposed project meets this criterion. Further, the guidelines state "new designs are evaluated in terms of how well they relate to neighboring buildings composition, material, size, rhythm of openings, arrangement, setback, landscape, etc. I'm not sure how this project relates here. I never want to say no to a developer or homeowners, I believe in your rights to your property, we want to protect things too. But how does this relate to other properties downtown.

Rush Denson said that the bar could be moved to the back, so it appears to be only two stories as you come down 8th Street. This would resolve the size. We are questioning the material. Maybe having more windows would take away the wood siding doesn't hit you so hard.

John Marsh asked if wood has been denied in the downtown district. Staff answered that this is the first time anyone has presented a wood structure, other than a shed.

Matt Mosley explained that wood is an acceptable material, but the guidelines also state that new construction should be compatible with existing structures in the district. Even if wood was allowed, there are types of wood that would not be allowed, such as T1-11. Material should be compatible in composition and texture. Any decision made should be within this context. There are lots of wood bulkheads downtown. Without a doubt wood is used in the district. In this instance, is using it as the primary material appropriate?

John Marsh said we are balancing the evolution of new construction. What is built today will be protected in the future. The Huskey house is a commercial property in the downtown that is all wood. It's horizontal but has unique styling. And David Hill pointed out that the Brown Agency has vertical wood.

Matt Mosley said it ultimately comes down to the Commissions interpretation of the guidelines. The board determines what is appropriate at this sight and location, if in another location within the district would it be appropriate. Examples shown of wood structures from history were previously in the warehouse district. He asked "is this material appropriate in this location based on how it's used and or applied." You have to decide if it's more important to be compatible with adjacent buildings. If the first floor was all brick and the upper floor wood, could that work? It was mentioned that they could move the height of the building away from the corner. Typically, buildings on corners are the highest parts of our blocks. There is a taller building across the street and the church is on a higher

elevation. The height on the corner may be the most appropriate.

John Marsh asked if we are going to allow or deny plans for things that have been in the district before. If we want to build wood buildings like were there before, are we going to deny those, based on what? We need to give objective not subjective feedback.

John Marsh motioned to approve if the storefront was changed to something more acceptable, the windows as it relates to previous ones, and close the gap in the side staircase. Mark Grantham second. Linda Lanz opposed the motion. The motion passed.

Staff questioned how these changes would be reviewed if not required to return to the commission after passing the design tonight. Richard Patton said they will send in the changes. Staff stated she is not comfortable being responsible for reviewing and approving without the commission’s review and approval.

Matt asked for clarity, the commission is asking for changes to the storefront, John said “to the angle to look like the Sercy building and closing in the staircase”. Staff stated the awning design may need to also change.

Linda Lanz stated that she thinks approving this design without first seeing the changes is a mistake.

Matt Mosley said if staff is not comfortable with approving changes submitted, it would be referred back to the board (for review and approval).

Mark Grantham asked that John Marsh forward a copy of the Preservation Brief #35 referenced to staff to be part of the minutes to record the decision to approve was based on this information.

6. 100 S. 8th St: Downtown Historic District
COA: Front Facade Renovation
Applicant: Race Cannon
- Agenda Item #:** 5
Meeting Date: 06/13/2024
Action Requested: RETROACTIVE COA: Change of Façade Material
Location of Property: 100 S. 8th St; Downtown Historic District
Petitioner: Cannon Real Estate Holdings, LLC

Resources:

Dickson Building: Before 1885; two-story brick load bearing wall construction. West and North sides have new common bond brick veneer. West façade has molded metal gutter; pressed metal dentil and frieze below parapet; small pane windows; pedestrian level has new frame, glass, and cloth awning.

History: Applicant received approval for façade renovations on 12/11/2020. Renderings approved showed two double doors with transom on each side, and glass store front with brick or wood below windows. On 05/03/2024 the plywood covering had been removed and workers were observed tiling the front façade. Also noted was the door configuration had changed. The owner was notified to stop work immediately because changes to plan had not been authorized.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

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1. Install a single ¾ glass mahogany door with separate sidelight windows proportional in sizing to other windows creating horizontal consistency across the façade allowing for transoms above the large front windows.

2. Install elegant ¾” thick Jerusalem stone tile across front façade.

Proposed Guidelines:

STOREFRONT - #2.
Preserve existing historic storefronts. Retain characteristic storefront

features.

DISPLAY WINDOW: Maintain the original dimensions and transparent nature of the display window. Do not add small paned windows or reflective glass.

COLUMNS: Maintain cast iron columns and brick and stone piers which frame the storefront.

TRANSOM: Retain original shape and transparency of the transom. Do not place a sign over the transom, If an interior ceiling has been lowered below the transom, it should be recessed from the storefront. Do not place air conditioning units in the transom.

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.

NEW STOREFRONT #4.

If documentation of the original storefront does not exist, design a new storefront that is compatible with the materials, size, scale, and character -defining features of nearby buildings.

NEW DESIGN: Respect the original design of the building and visual character of the district. Do not add early colonial features, attempt to create a theme, or make a building more ornamental than it originally was. The new design should incorporate characteristic elements of a traditional storefront, including the display window, transom, recessed entrance, and bulkhead using compatible materials. (see Preservation Brief #11)

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommends approval of single mahogany door with sidelights on left and single mahogany door on right.
2. Staff recommends approval of Jerusalem tile front façade on first floor.

Discussion:

Staff explained this is a retroactive COA request. There have been changes made to the façade layout and materials. Examples of downtown buildings with tile on façade were provided.

Rush Denson opened the floor to public comment. There were none.

John Marsh stated in two of the examples provided, the tile was added much later.

John Marsh motioned to approve the changes. The motion was seconded by Mark Grantham. All approved.

7. 511 S. 8th St: Geneva Historic District
COA: Storage Sheds
Applicant: Cody Holly
Agenda Item #: 6
Meeting Date: 06/13/2024
Action Requested: COA: Attached Sheds
Location of Property: 511-513 S. 8th St; Geneva Historic District
Petitioner: Cody Holly

Resources:

Vacant lot located in the Southside development in the Geneva Historic District.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Construction of two wood siding sheds with shared roofline in rear yard. Each shed is 10'x7.5'.

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:
 - a. These guidelines shall apply only to the exteriors of buildings and to areas of lots visible from public right-of-way.
 - b. The public facades, front and street-related elevations, of proposals for new buildings shall be more carefully reviewed than other facades.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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.
 - e. 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.
 - f. 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.
 - g. 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.
 2. 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.
 3. 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.

4. The roofs of new buildings shall be visually compatible, by not contrasting greatly with the roof shape and orientation of surrounding buildings.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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:

- a. 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
- b. 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.
- c. The creation of an addition through enclosure of a front façade porch is inappropriate and should be avoided.

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*)

B. BUILDING SITE:

1. Landscaping in an important part of the historic district and important landscape features such as old plants, trees, fencing, walkways, out-buildings and other elements of historic or artistic merit or that reflect the property’s history and development should be maintained and preserved. Old plants, trees, fencing, walkways, out-buildings and other exterior elements should be maintained until their importance in the property’s history and development has been evaluated. This evaluation should consist of actual knowledge of the past appearance of the property found in photographs, drawings, newspapers, tax records, fire maps, etc. Complete removal of significant and historic plants and trees should be avoided and where necessary, pruning and cutting back should be encouraged instead of complete removal.
2. Plant material which is in very close proximity to a historic structure, and which is causing deterioration of the historic fabric of the structure may be removed or pruned back to eliminate damage to the structure.
3. Drainage around historic structures is important and proper site and roof drainage should be maintained. Water should drain away from building foundations and should not be trapped or allowed to stand adjacent to building foundations. Roof drains and gutters should not be allowed to clog up and cause water to pond on the roof or in interior gutters.

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommendation approval of wood siding storage sheds in rear. Siding should match and/or compliment the main structures.
2. Site plan and setbacks to be approved by the Planning Department.

Discussion:

Staff provided an overview of the request to build two wood sheds with a shared roof on the rear of the lot. The other homes in the neighborhood have garages that provide storage. This new construction plan has no garage or carport. Therefore, storage sheds are needed.

Rush Denson opened the floor to public comment. There was none.

Rush Denson asked if the sheds would be visible from the street. The applicant, Cody Holley, said that technically they may be visible from the street. However, the homes being built are in the center of the development and behind other homes.

Linda Lanz motioned to approve based on staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by John Marsh. All approved.

8. 514 N. 9th St: Northside Historic District
COA: Window Replacements
Applicant: Kathryn James

Staff stated this agenda item was tabled by the applicant and will be brought back to the commission later.

9. 314 3rd Ave: Northside Historic District
COA: Stairs on Pool House
Applicant: J. Manifold Construction
Agenda Item #: 8
Meeting Date: 09/14/2023
Action Requested: RETROACTIVE COA: Stairs on Pool House
Location of Property: 314 3rd Ave; Northside Historic District
Petitioner: J. Manifold Construction

Resources:

Circa 1910. Two story, brick Neoclassical Revival residence with hip roof of asphalt shingles, three bay façade, second floor façade with central wood door with transom, flanking 4/1 double hung sash windows, first floor façade with central wood and glass door, flanking 4/1 double hung sash windows, two story partial width portico with Corinthian columns, second floor balcony, open rail balustrade, side porch. Contributing structure.

History: New construction pool house approved on 09/14/2023. Applicant was to return for approval of stairs prior to installation.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Install wood staircase and landing with composite decking on right side of structure to access second floor. Handrails will be either wooden or aluminum.

Guidelines:

1. Outbuildings:
1. Garages and storage buildings should reflect the character of the existing structure and surrounding buildings and should be compatible in terms of height, scale, roof shape, materials, texture and details.

2. Garages, if visible from the street, should be situated on the lot as historically traditional from the neighborhood.

3. The location and design of outbuildings should not be visually disruptive to the character of the surrounding buildings.
2. 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.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Maintenance repairs to garages and accessory buildings when there is no change in the design and material.

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Garages and accessory structures not larger than 8’ x 12’ in rear yards and not visible from the street (staff approval)
- Garages and accessory structures larger than 8’ x 12’ or that are visible from the street (commission approval)

Staff recommendation:

- 1. Staff recommends approval of wood frame stairs with composite decking and wood or aluminum handrails.

Discussion:

Staff explained this is a retroactive COA request. The applicant received approval on 9/14/23 for the pool house with the contingency that they would return later for approval of the stairs to the second floor. Construction of the wood stairs began before receiving approval.

Rush Denson opened the floor to public comment. There were none.

There were no questions or comments by the commission.

Mark Grantham motioned to approve based on staff recommendations. Linda Lanz seconded the motion. All approved.

10. 904 5th Ave: Northside Historic District
COA: Extend Rear Porch and Enclose
Applicant: Howard C. Harper, III
- Agenda Item #:** 9
Meeting Date: 06/13/2024
Action Requested: RETROACTIVE COA: Extend Rear Porch Enclosure
Location of Property: 904 5th Ave; Northside Historic District
Petitioner: Howard C. Harper III

Resources:

Circa 1940. One story, wood frame bungalow with hip roof of asphalt shingles, interior chimney, weatherboard siding, off centered wood and glass pane door, flanking 8/1 double hung sash windows, partial width porch with gable roof, columns on brick piers. Contributing Resource.

History: On May 30, 2024 it was observed that work was being done on the outside of the house without a building permit or certificate of appropriateness. A stop work order was issued.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

- 1. Extend roof line of rear porch to cover the entire existing porch area. The porch will have a half wall with a screen on top and an interior gas fireplace. The exterior will be Hardi plank to match existing structure. Roof will be metal.

Proposed 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

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommends approval of extending the roof line to cover the entire rear porch.
2. Staff recommends approval of installing knee wall to enclose the porch with open area above the knee wall. Staff approves of installation of gas fireplace in outdoor space. This space is out of the public view.
3. Staff recommends approval of new wood handrail on side porch.

Discussion:

Staff explained this is a retroactive COA request. Construction has begun on extending the roof and enclosing the rear porch with screening and outdoor fireplace.

Rush Denson opened for public comment. There were none.

There were no questions or comments by the commission.

Linda Lanz motioned to approve based on staff recommendations. John Marsh seconded the motion. All approved.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

11. Enforcement Report
Staff reported that multiple maintenance letters had been sent out and responses received. She will follow up on these.
 12. Staff Report
There was no additional staff report.
 13. Next meeting DATE
1. Next Meeting is July 11, 2024

7. ADJOURN

A motion was made by John Marsh to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mark Grantham. All approved.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Rush Denson, Chair

Linda Lanz, Secretary

City of Opelika
Historic Preservation Commission
Staff Report



Agenda Item #: 1
Meeting Date: 07/11/2024
Action Requested: COA: Demolition
Location of Property: 500 2nd Ave; Northside Historic District
Petitioner: Madback Tee, LLC

Resources:

Circa 1970. Opelika Auto Detail. Noncontributing Resource.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Demo and remove existing noncontributing structure. Replace it with a new bank designed in accordance with the Downtown Historic Guidelines.
2. The replacement building will contain distinctive architectural features that are represented in “solid but simple style” characterized in Opelika’s downtown.

Guidelines:

H. DEMOLITION:

1. Definition: The tearing down of a building by active means or by neglect resulting in the structural decay of the original building fabric. Neglect means not maintaining a weatherproof, watertight, secure building, structurally stable and/or maintaining vegetation around the structure or structures on the property.
2. Since the purpose of historic zoning is to protect historic properties, the demolition of a building which contributes historically or architecturally to the character and significance of the district is inappropriate and shall be avoided. This means demolition by active means or by neglect in failure to maintain a property. This also includes any structure that contributes to the architectural character of the historic district, not just the most outstanding architectural structures in the district, but the ordinary period structures as well.
3. Demolition is inappropriate:
 - a. if a building is of such architectural or historical interest and value that its removal would be detrimental to the public interest.
 - b. if a building is listed as contributing to the architectural character of the district.
 - c. if a building is of such old or unusual or uncommon design and materials that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced without great difficulty and expense.
 - d. if its proposed replacement would make a less positive visual contribution to the district, would disrupt the character of the district or would be visually incompatible.

- e. if a building is listed as contributing to the architectural character of the district or qualifies for any of the above a through d and can be feasibly stabilized and no new compatible structure is proposed to be built on the site. An existing structure shall not be demolished for a parking lot or vacant lot. The applicant for demolition must demonstrate financial resources for stabilizing the site after demolition and the construction of a new building or new structure. Stabilization plans as well as Architectural plans and specifications for the new construction along with a schedule for their completion shall be presented to the Opelika Historic Preservation Commission prior to a COA for demolition being issued.

J. COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

1. The district contains buildings with a variety of uses including residential, commercial and institutional.
2. The Downtown Historic District, immediately adjacent, is composed of buildings which were built in the same time period, but primarily ‘zero-lot line’ commercial structures.
3. There may be instances, particularly with the adaptive reuse of a building, or construction of infill structures, when the Downtown Historic District Design Review Guidelines may provide the basis for an appropriate design criteria review.

Photo’s:

Architectural features in Opelika Historic District



Concepts from other existing buildings





Concept renderings:



Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommends approval of demolition of noncontributing structure.
2. Applicant to return with full plans for replacement building including detailed specs, site, parking, and landscape plans.