



AGENDA

CITY OF OPELIKA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

October 9, 2025

4:30 p.m.

Meeting Chambers at Opelika Municipal Courtroom
300 MLK Boulevard

Call to Order

Approve September 11, 2025 minutes.

Public Comment/Citizen Communication

Old Business

New Business

1. 315 N. 10th St: Northside Historic District
COA: Replace Siding and Windows
Applicant: Charlie Brewer
2. 107 N. 9th St: Downtown Historic District
COA: Façade Renovations and Signage
Applicant: Stone Martin Builders
3. 706 Geneva St: Geneva Historic District
COA: New Construction Commercial & Residential
Applicant: Hartbrook Development, LLC

Other Business

4. Enforcement Report
5. Staff Report
6. Next meeting November 13, 2025
7. Adjournment

The City of Opelika complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and will make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to meetings. If you need special assistance, please call the City's ADA Coordinator 72 hours prior to the meeting at (334)705-5130.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

300 Martin Luther King Blvd.

September 11, 2025

TIME: 4:30 PM

1. A CALL TO ORDER

Rush Denson called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve August 14, 2025 minutes

A motion was made by Mike Buckalew to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Aaron Bushey. All approved.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

(Limit comments to 3 minutes or less)

Rush Denson opened the floor for public comments. There were none.

4. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

5. NEW BUSINESS

2. 815 6th Ave: Northside Historic District

COA: Replace Windows

Applicant: Patricia Quinn

Agenda Item #: 1

Meeting Date: 9/11/2025

Action Requested: COA: Install Windows

Location of Property: 815 6th Ave; Northside Historic District

Petitioner: Patricia Quinn

Resources:

Circa 1980. Ranch residence. Non-contributing structure.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Replace all windows with same style; Beveled triple slider, white metal frames.

Guidelines:

Windows:

- a. Retain and repair existing windows including window sash, glass, lintels, sills, architraves, shutters, pediments, hoods and hardware. If new sashes are used, duplicate the original material, design, size and hardware of the original window. Do not change window size, sash size or windowpane size.
- b. Do not introduce or create new window openings into the front principal elevation of the structure and do not enlarge or reduce original window openings to fit new stock window sizes.
- c. The original number and arrangement of panes should be maintained.
- d. Storm windows should be visually unobtrusive and should not damage existing window frames. Storm windows should be designed so that they can be removed in the future without damage to the original fabric of the structure. Storm windows should be compatible in color and design with the original windows. For example, mill finished aluminum storm windows should not be used with painted window sash.

- e. Plastic, canvas or metal strip awnings or fake shutters that are not compatible with the architectural style of the structure should not be used.
- f. Where existing shutters are replaced or reinstalled when missing, the new shutters shall be sized to fit the window opening, in height and width, whether the shutters are fixed or operable. Composite materials are allowable for shutters so long as they duplicate the original in shape and texture.
- g. New window openings should not be introduced unless they match the existing window configuration and their placement harmonized with the existing rhythm of openings.
- h. Original windows should not be filled in.

Staff recommendation:

- 1. Staff recommends approval of installation of new metal framed triple slide windows to match existing windows on this non-contributing structure.

Discussion:

Staff provided a description of the proposed window replacement and specs on this noncontributing residence.

There was no discussion.

A motion was made by Aaron Bushey to approve. The motion was seconded by Mike Buckelew. All approved.

- 3. 704 Ave D: Geneva Historic District
COA: Install Concrete Ramp and Drive
Applicant: CJCF, LLC
This item was tabled at the request of the applicant.
- 4. 500 Geneva St: Geneva Historic District
COA: Concrete Ramp and Parking Area
Applicant: CJCF, LLC
This item was tabled at the request of the applicant.
- 5. 121 S. 9th St: Downtown Historic District
COA: Enclose Display Area & Remove Door
Applicant: Randy Brown

Agenda Item #: 4
Meeting Date: 09/11/2025
Action Requested: COA: Enclose Display Area & Remove Door
Location of Property: 121 S. 9th St; Downtown Historic District
Petitioner: Randy Brown

Resources:

Museum of East Alabama: Circa 1970; one-story concrete block building with brick veneer façade; aluminum and glass storefront. Conditionally Contributing.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

- 1. Enclose the display area (vacant lot) with wood-framed storefront windows and a single wood door. Install a ribbed steel garage door in the rear to allow for displays to be moved in/out.
- 2. Remove an unused single door in the middle of the building; pull the storefront forward to align with other windows.

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 the 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, postcards 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)

REPLACEMENT: Replacement windows are only recommended when historic windows cannot be rehabilitated. When replacement windows are installed, they should match the historic window in size, style, and materials and have the same number of panes. Interior storm windows are preferable to exterior ones. Wood windows are recommended, but painted metal windows may be acceptable. (see Preservation Brief #3)

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 recommend approval of a new wood-framed storefront with transom, full glass windows, and steel garage door in the rear.
2. Staff recommend approval of a single wood door.
3. Staff recommend approval of removing the center building door and pulling the storefront forward for continuity.

Discussion:

Staff provided an overview of the proposed changes to the open display area and storefront. The museum desires to have a controlled environment for displays. There was no further discussion.

A motion was made by Linda Lanz to approve. The motion was seconded by Aaron Bushey. All approved.

6. 913 S. Railroad Ave: Downtown Historic District
COA: Rehabilitation of Storefront
Applicant: Paul Gibson-Studio BGP Architects
Agenda Item #: 5
Meeting Date: 09/11/2025
Action Requested: COA: Façade Renovation
Location of Property: 913 S. Railroad Ave; Downtown Historic District
Petitioner: Paul Gibson-Studio BGP Architects

Resources:

913 (915) Venable’s Find Foods: after 1924; one story brick load bearing wall construction; pilaster and corbelled parapet has recessed panels; some original woodwork. Glass and metal frames at pedestrian level date from a later period. Contributing Resource.

913 ½ Carol’s Attic: after 1924; one story brick load bearing wall construction; pilaster and corbelled parapet has recessed panels; some original woodwork. Glass and metal frames at pedestrian level date from a later period. Contributing Resource.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

- 1. Exterior brick repairs, grout re-pointing and masonry cleaning. Buildings have been painted in the past and will be repainted to a similar hue.
- 2. Replace existing storefront with historically appropriate wood trim, paneling and entrance doors. New window framing to be aluminum storefront with SDL transoms.
- 3. New canvas awnings on 1” tubular aluminum frames are to be installed.
- 4. Interior repairs will include gutting of existing partitions and ceilings, repair of compromised floor and roof structures, and new plumbing, electrical, and mechanical systems, resulting in a vanilla box ready for office, mercantile or restaurant use.

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 the 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, postcards of the 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)

UPPER STORY WINDOWS- #7.

Preserve the size, shape, details, and transparency of upper story windows.

PRESERVATION: The glass, sash, hardware, and window surrounds, including the lintel or decorative window hoods, should be preserved and maintained. Add shutters to the exterior only if they originally existed. Shutters should be operable or should at least appear to be operable; when closed over an opening, they should fit the size of the opening. (see Preservation Brief #9, 10)

RE-ESTABLISHMENT: Consider reopening closed or blocked windows. In some cases, closed exterior shutters may be used to define the original window dimensions. Instead of boarding up windows when the second story is not in use, hang curtains or interior shutters to give the building an occupied appearance. Reflective and dark, tinted glass is not appropriate.

REPLACEMENT: Replacement windows are only recommended when historic windows cannot be rehabilitated. When replacement windows are installed, they should match the historic window in size, style, and materials and have the same number of panes. Interior storm windows are preferable to exterior ones. Wood windows are recommended but painted metal windows may be acceptable. (see Preservation Brief #3)

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 the 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.

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.

CANOPIES AND COLOR

In the 1970s a continuous wood shingled canopy was attached to Opelika’s downtown buildings. This inappropriate canopy, which visually bisected the buildings and altered the character of downtown, was recently removed. Color is an inexpensive practical way to breathe new life into downtown buildings. Do not paint a brick building which is unpainted because it turns a low-maintenance material into a high-maintenance one. Although design review boards generally do not dictate color, the use of color can have a dramatic positive or negative impact on the district. Therefore, a few guidelines have been included. Merchants can receive color specifics through the Alabama Main Street office at the Alabama Historical Commission.

Staff recommendation:

1. According to Preservation Brief #11, new storefront designs should not draw attention away from the historic building with its detailing but should respect the existing historic character of the overall building. Where an architecturally or historically significant storefront no longer exists or is too deteriorated to save, a new front should be designed which is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the building.
2. Replacing historic wood-framed storefronts with metal framing is generally not recommended. The original wood framing is integral to the historic character of the storefront and the overall building. Metal framing can alter the architectural features that make a building historic, potentially destroying its distinguishing characteristics. Instead, it is advisable to repair and retain the historic features using recommended treatments. This approach respects the building’s historical significance and preserves its unique character.
3. Staff does not recommend pulling the recessed entry forward flush with adjacent buildings because this is a distinguishing characteristic of this building.
4. Applicant shall return with detailed specs for all doors, windows, lighting, materials, and signage for approval prior to installation.

Discussion:

This item was for preliminary review only and discussion included buildings 913, 917, 921, and 923.

Rush Denson recused himself from discussion on the renovation and new build for agenda items 5-8.

Staff explained that the next four items is one project to renovate the Searcy properties. Due to the size and scope of the project, staff has separated it into four projects for each ground level building. The last agenda item addresses the second and third floors of new construction.

Paul Gibson with Studio BGP Architects and owner, Carson Cummings, provided a 3-D model of the project and gave a detailed description of renovations and additions. Building A is a contributing structure on the NR. Building B and C show brick work that does not align with the work on surrounding buildings. They propose demolishing these two buildings and coming back with a brick and cast stone façade that would align with existing parapets. The first floors would be retail and the second and third floors, which is set back from the parapet about 10ft to maintain the scale of the street, would be loft apartments. There will be about 20 small studio and two bedroom apartments. Thirty parking spaces are planned in the back with security fencing. From the rear you can see ground level and the next two levels residential units. Building D on the corner will remain with possibly a second floor restaurant and terrace type bar. The restaurant space is conceptual, no tenant has been secured. The desire is to revitalize and energize that corner intersection. The small brick

noncontributing addition on the rear of Building D, would be demolished and a small courtyard installed.

Aaron Kovak asked what basis the developer is asking to demo the two buildings. Mr. Gibson explained it is due to the condition and the punched openings don't align with rest of the streetscape. Also, it is not conducive when trying to get a multi-level in the way it's currently proportioned. A steel structure will probably be needed with a brick veneer façade on the front going up the first two levels. The third level would be stepped back with a metal panel glass system. The street level will have a more continuous parapet line.

Aaron Kovak asked if the brick for the new construction would be historic/reclaimed brick or new brick. Mr. Gibson said it would be a modular brick, it would not be a utility brick, which is a 12"x 4" size. The main purpose today was to get an opinion of the demolition of the two structures. A lot of the details are still being worked through.

Carson Cummings stated that as they visited other property and business owners, there was a need for loft apartments. Long term, residential units are a good fit for this property. Construction could start within the next six months and be completed within eighteen months.

Staff explained the current plans show both metal and canvas awnings, possibly painted brick on the second level, and repainting of currently painted buildings. Wood bulkheads and aluminum framed windows will be used on storefronts. Cast stone will also be used. The rendering shows metal panels on the second level bar area.

Linda Lanz stated that she likes the concept. However, care needs to be taken that the renovations and new construction have the character and feel of what is valued in our historic town.

Matt Mosley said what is important to the developer and the Planning Commission is how the Historic Preservation Commission feels about the demolition of the two buildings and the proposed height for residential. The Planning Commission will review request for approval of the apartment use in the downtown zone. The number of units is tied to the height that is being proposed. You have the 10th Street bridge adjacent and an elevation change going up to the museum property and courthouse. Where the museum is now, it used to be the Clemment Hotel, which was one of the taller buildings in town. Further conversation will be needed regarding the proposed metal. It is being used in some other downtown but is potentially a new material being introduced into the South side of downtown.

Aaron Bushy asked if an adjoining building can only be one story taller than the building next to it. Mr. Mosley explained that scale relative to what is next door is important. A four-five story building next to a one-story building would be out of scale. The same thing with having a building set 20ft back from other properties. How the project is compatible to the downtown, what is around it, the change in scale, and how it fits proportionally into the area. The developer is setting back the third story of the primary building so when standing as a pedestrian on the ground floor, when you look up you are not likely to see the third story.

Mike Buckalew expressed that the third story is very modern. He would like to see something with a little older look. Maybe a more ornate metal or railing. The top has a more industrial look. Mr. Gibson said they could look at options.

Staff explained that the two buildings requested to be demolished are conditionally contributing in our survey. However, the National Park Service no longer used this category on new surveys. A building is either contributing or noncontributing. Alterations were made at the time of our

survey and the buildings did not qualify as contributing. Mr. Mosley stated one of the two buildings to be demolished has a more modern style and proportion. The Niffer’s building has the height of other buildings and windows are a bit more proportionally correct compared to others, it does not have the transoms of building further down the street. There is evidence that the front façade has been rebuilt.

Staff again reviewed a general scope of work to be done. Attention was brought to the metal/aluminum storefront framing. The Commission has generally required wood framed windows on the south side. New materials will be introduced in the new guidelines. A site plan has been provided for parking and courtyard. A plan to screen parking will be required.

Mr. Cummings explained that they are now in the position that in order to move forward a decision needs to be made on the request to demo Building B and C and the materials that can be used so that the architect can finalize renderings and plans.

Aaron Kovak stated that he understands for the project to move forward the two buildings will need to be removed. They are making the effort to keep what is historic. The set back (third floor) architecturally helps. The project is a win for the city. It is important to sit down with the commission and carefully go over materials.

Aaron Bushey said the commission needs to recognize the unique example of someone who has four buildings in a row and the commission is giving them a dispensation to take these down (a building) where we might not do that the next time. If there is a contributing (or noncontributing) structure that is approved to be taken down that doesn’t bleed into permission given across the board.

Mr. Mosley recognized that the demolition request is on buildings that are conditionally contributing. You would want to give much more review on these than you would a noncontributing structure. At the time of the survey, the surveyor felt that they were not fully contributing structures. You have a little bit more flexibility in this case because of that than you would if someone requested demolition of a listed contributing structure. This would require a much more thorough review of the structure.

The applicant will return with final renderings, materials, specs, parking and landscaping for approval. Any approval for demolition would be contingent on Planning Department approval of residential units, with the basic size, scope, and scale of the buildings to be placed back.

7. 917 S. Railroad Ave: Downtown Historic District
COA: Demolition and New Construction
Applicant: Paul Gibson-Studio BGP Architects
Agenda Item #: 6
Meeting Date: 09/11/2025
Action Requested: COA: Demolition and New Construction
Location of Property: 917 S. Railroad Ave; Downtown Historic District
Petitioner: Paul Gibson-Studio BGP Architects

Resources:

Salvation Army: circa 1880's; one story brick load bearing wall construction; new brick façade; most of pedestrian level woodwork is original. Brand new store sign, awnings, and pendent lights. Conditionally Contributing.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Demolition of the existing building and construction of a two-story brick masonry façade in keeping with eight, proportions and masonry detailing of the adjoining (913) building. Construction of a permanent metal canopy to extend 5ft over the right of way.
2. Construction of a 3rd story set back ~10ft from the façade to maintain the street-level massing of the adjoining (913) building. The 3rd floor will be primarily metal panel and glass construction.
3. The first floor will consist of three (3) retail spaces fronting S. Railroad Ave, a street entrance to the apartment units, and five (5) ground floor apartments facing the rear, southeast, and courtyard, southwest.
4. The southwest elevation is to be a combination of brick and metal panels to match the façade. The southwest elevation will be primarily metal panel.

Proposed Guidelines:

DEMOLITION - #32.

Historic buildings should not be demolished.

NEGLECT: Property owners should not allow their buildings to deteriorate by failing to provide ordinary maintenance. This is considered to be demolition by neglect. When failure to maintain a property creates a public safety hazard, the city may condemn the property. Depending on local law, the city may stabilize the building at the owner's expense.

ECONOMIC HARDSHIP: If a request for demolition based on economic hardship is documented in a financial report detailing the costs of rehabilitation and evidencing that the existing building is incapable of producing a reasonable economic return on the investment, then the demolition may be approved.

STRUCTURAL INSTABILITY: If a request for demolition is based on structural instability or deterioration, a technical report, prepared by an architect or professional engineer, should be submitted. This should detail the nature and extent of the specific problems and provide cost estimates for their correction.

CONSTRUCTION PLANS: An application for demolition should be accompanied by a complete plan for the new development proposed for the site, a timetable, a budget for both the demolition and new construction, and evidence that adequate financing is available.

DOCUMENTATION: Prior to demolition, the building should be documented by measured drawings and photographs of the building's elevation and architectural features. Parts and materials should be salvaged and recycled if possible.

PUBLIC SAFETY: When in the interest of public safety, the removal of part of a building or complex may be required.

NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: Demolition may be appropriate when a building has lost its integrity of design or is not a contributing building within the historic district, and its removal would result in a more positive effect on the district. In such cases, new construction should relate better to the historic district than the existing building. The requirements listed above should be satisfied, if applicable.

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 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. This Conditionally Contributing building appears to have been updated and possibly refaced with brick at some point. According to the State Historic Preservation office, the category of Conditionally Contributing no longer exists. Structures are now designated as either Contributing or Non-Contributing.
2. 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.
3. Applicant shall return with detailed specs for all doors, windows, lighting, materials, and signage for approval prior to installation.

Discussion:

See discussion for agenda item #5

A motion was made by Aaron Kovak to approve the demolition request with staff recommendation on this conditionally contributing structure with plans for new retail and residential construction.

8. 921 S. Railroad Ave: Downtown Historic District
COA: Demolition and New Construction
Applicant: Paul Gibson-Studio BGP Architects
Agenda Item #: 7
Meeting Date: 09/11/2025
Action Requested: COA: Demolition and New Construction
Location of Property: 921 S. Railroad Ave; Downtown Historic District
Petitioner: Paul Gibson-Studio BGP Architects

Resources:

Circa 1950's; one story building with brick load bearing wall construction with solid brick parapet; pedestrian level glass and metal storefront. Conditionally Contributing.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Demolition of the existing building and construction of a two-story brick masonry façade in keeping with eight, proportions and masonry detailing of the adjoining (913) building. Construction of a permanent metal canopy to extend 5ft over the right of way.
2. Construction of a 3rd story set back ~10ft from the façade to maintain the street-level massing of the adjoining (913) building. The 3rd floor will be primarily metal panel and glass construction.
3. The first floor will consist of three (3) retail spaces fronting S. Railroad Ave, a street entrance to the apartment units, and five (5) ground floor apartments facing the rear, southeast, and courtyard, southwest.
4. The southwest elevation is to be a combination of brick and metal panels to match façade. The southwest elevation will be primarily metal panel.

Proposed Guidelines:

DEMOLITION - #32.

Historic buildings should not be demolished.

NEGLECT: Property owners should not allow their buildings to deteriorate by failing to provide ordinary maintenance. This is considered to be demolition by neglect. When failure to maintain a property creates a public safety hazard, the city may condemn the property. Depending on local law, the city may stabilize the building at the owner's expense.

ECONOMIC HARDSHIP: If a request for demolition based on economic hardship is documented in a financial report detailing the costs of rehabilitation and evidencing that the existing building is incapable of producing a reasonable economic return on the investment, then the demolition may be approved.

STRUCTURAL INSTABILITY: If a request for demolition is based on structural instability or deterioration, a technical report, prepared by an architect or professional engineer, should be submitted. This should detail the nature and extent of the specific problems and provide cost estimates for their correction.

CONSTRUCTION PLANS: An application for demolition should be accompanied by a complete plan for the new development proposed for the site, a timetable, a budget for both the demolition and new construction, and evidence that adequate financing is available.

DOCUMENTATION: Prior to demolition, the building should be documented by measured drawings and photographs of the building's elevation and architectural features. Parts and materials should be salvaged and recycled if possible.

PUBLIC SAFETY: When in the interest of public safety, the removal of part of a building or complex may be required.

NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS: Demolition may be appropriate when a building has lost its integrity of design or is not a contributing building within the historic district, and its removal would result in a more positive effect on the district. In such cases, new construction should relate better to the historic district than the existing building. The requirements listed above should be satisfied, if applicable.

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 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. According to the State Historic Preservation office, the category of Conditionally Contributing no longer exists. Structures are now designated as either Contributing or Non-Contributing.
2. 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 walls 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.
3. Applicant shall return with detailed specs for all doors, windows, lighting, materials, and signage for approval prior to installation.

Discussion:

See discussion for agenda item #5

A motion was made by Aaron Kovak to approve the demolition request with staff recommendation on this conditionally contributing structure with plans for new retail and residential construction.

9. 923 S. Railroad Ave: Downtown Historic District
COA: Facade Renovation, Demolition, and New Construction
Applicant: Paul Gibson-Studio BGP Architects

Resources:

Ronald Bagen’s Studio: circa 1885; one story brick load bearing wall construction with solid brick parapet; new brick façade; glass and metal frame store front. Conditionally Contributing.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Exterior brick repairs, grout re-pointing and masonry cleaning. Building has been painted in the past and will be repainted.
2. Replacement of existing storefront with historically appropriate wood trim, paneling and entrance doors. New window framing to be aluminum storefront with SDL transoms.
3. New canvas awnings on 1" tubular aluminum frames to be installed.
4. Addition of a second story to include dining/bar facilities and a large, partially covered rooftop terrace. As with 917 & 921, the additional story will be set back from S. Railroad Avenue to maintain the historic street level parapet relationship.
5. Interior repairs will include gutting of existing partitions and ceilings, and replacement of the existing wood floor and root structure with concrete slab on grade and steel roof framing.
6. Addition of two stairs and an elevator.
7. Installation of three (3) new openings on the southwest elevation facing S. 10th Street.
8. Demolition of 1,042 SF brick addition on the southeast corner that is facing S. 10th Street.

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 the 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, postcards of the 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)

UPPER STORY WINDOWS- #7.

Preserve the size, shape, details, and transparency of upper story windows.

PRESERVATION: The glass, sash, hardware, and window surrounds, including the lintel or decorative window hoods, should be preserved and maintained. Add shutters to the exterior only if they originally existed. Shutters should be operable or should at least appear to be operable; when closed over an opening, they should fit the size of the opening. (see Preservation Brief #9, 10)

RE-ESTABLISHMENT: Consider reopening closed or blocked windows. In some cases, closed exterior shutters may be used to define the original window dimensions. Instead of boarding up windows when the second story is not in use, hang curtains or interior shutters to give the building an occupied appearance. Reflective and dark, tinted glass is not appropriate.

REPLACEMENT: Replacement windows are only recommended when historic windows cannot be rehabilitated. When replacement windows are installed, they should match the historic window in size, style, and materials and have the same number of panes. Interior storm windows are preferable to exterior ones. Wood windows are recommended but painted metal windows may be acceptable. (see Preservation Brief #3)

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 the 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.

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.

CANOPIES AND COLOR

In the 1970s a continuous wood shingled canopy was attached to Opelika’s downtown buildings. This inappropriate canopy, which visually bisected the buildings and altered the character of downtown, was recently removed. Color is an inexpensive practical way to breathe new life into downtown buildings. Do not paint a brick building which is unpainted because it turns a low-maintenance material into a high-maintenance one. Although design review boards generally do not dictate color, the use of color can have a dramatic positive or negative impact on the district. Therefore, a few guidelines have been included. Merchants can receive color specifics through the Alabama Main Street office at the

Staff recommendation:

1. According to Preservation Brief #11, New storefront designs should not draw attention away from the historic building with its detailing but should respect the existing historic character of the overall building. Where an architecturally or historically significant storefront no longer exists or is too deteriorated to save, a new front should be designed which is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the building.
2. Replacing historic wood-framed storefronts with metal framing is generally not recommended. The original wood framing is integral to the historic character of the storefront and the overall building. Metal framing can alter the architectural features that make a building historic, potentially destroying its distinguishing characteristics. Instead, it is advisable to repair and retain the historic features using recommended treatments. This approach respects the building’s historical significance and preserves its unique character.
3. Staff recommends approval of canvas awnings.
4. Staff recommends approval of demolition of the rear addition which is not original to the building and has no significance.
5. Staff recommends approval of new storefront windows facing S. 10th Street.
6. The applicant shall return with a landscape plan to block the view of rear parking.
7. Applicant shall return with detailed specs for all doors, windows, lighting, materials, and signage for approval prior to installation.
8. All approvals are contingent on Planning Department review.

Discussion:

This item was for preliminary review only and discussion included buildings 913, 917, 921, and 923. The applicant will return with revised renderings and plans based on discussion.
See item #5 discussion.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

10. Enforcement Report
11. Staff Report
12. Next meeting DATE
1. Next meeting October 9, 2025

7. ADJOURN

City of Opelika
Historic Preservation Commission
Staff Report



Agenda Item #: 1
Meeting Date: 10/09/2025
Action Requested: COA: Replace Siding and Windows
Location of Property: 315 N. 10th St; Northside Historic District
Petitioner: Charlie Brewer

Resources:

Circa 1925. One story, wood frame bungalow with side gable roof of asphalt shingles, shed roof dormer with three lights composed of five lites, exposed rafters under eaves, weatherboard siding, off windows, wooden porch supports. Contributing Resource.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Remove and replace place all wood siding with Hardie Plank (Select Cedar Mill design) to match rear addition.
2. Repair rotted wood columns on the front porch.
3. Replace right three windows on front with white aluminum clad, 7/8" SDL exterior and interior bars, no interior grids, natural pine interior.

Proposed Guidelines:

2. Wood:

- a. **Significant architectural features should be retained and preserved. Deteriorated material should be repaired or replaced with material that duplicates in size, shape and texture the old material as closely as possible. Composite and other materials may be used so long as these materials duplicate the original in size, shape and texture and do not cover any existing wood materials.**
- b. Do not remove architectural features such as siding, cornices, brackets, window architraves, doorway pediments, trim, shutters, etc. These are an essential part of a building's character and appearance and illustrate the history of the building.
- c. Do not resurface frame buildings with new material that is inappropriate or is incongruous with the architectural style or materials of the asphalt shingles or siding. Aluminum or vinyl siding overlaid over wood siding, wood soffit or wood fascia is not allowed on contributing structures in historic districts (see <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief08.htm>). It may be allowed on non-contributing structures in historic districts, subject to the guidelines above and on a case-by-case basis. In no event shall vinyl or aluminum material be permitted to cover existing wood detailed trim such as door and window casings, wood cornice and frieze boards, brackets, window architraves, doorway pediments and wood columns.

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

5. Windows:

- a. Retain and repair existing windows including window sash, glass, lintels, sills, architraves, shutters, pediments, hoods and hardware. If new sashes are used, duplicate the original material, design, size and hardware of the original window. Do not change window size, sash size or windowpane size.**
- b. Do not introduce or create new window openings into the front principal elevation of the structure and do not enlarge or reduce original window openings to fit new stock window sizes.
- c. The original number and arrangement of panes should be maintained.**
- d. Storm windows should be visually unobtrusive and should not damage existing window frames. Storm windows should be designed so that they can be removed in the future without damage to the original fabric of the structure. Storm windows should be compatible in color and design with the original windows. For example, mill finished aluminum storm windows should not be used with painted window sash.
- e. Plastic, canvas or metal strip awnings or fake shutters that are not compatible with the architectural style of the structure should not be used.
- f. Where existing shutters are replaced or reinstalled when missing, the new shutters shall be sized to fit the window opening, in height and width, whether the shutters are fixed or operable. Composite materials are allowable for shutters so long as they duplicate the original in shape and texture.
- g. New window openings should not be introduced unless they match the existing window configuration and their placement harmonized with the existing rhythm of openings.
- h. Original windows should not be filled in.

Photo's:



Damaged wood siding



Damaged wood siding



Hardie siding on rear addition

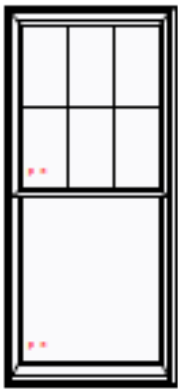


Damaged wood columns



Front windows to be replaced

Damaged window/grids



R.O. 34-1/2" x 78-1/2"
 U.D. 34" x 78"
 M.O. 34-1/4" x 78-1/4"
 O.A. Box Size 34x78"

- DBLH-1; White Alum Clad
 AAMA.2605; LoE-366
 Box Size: 34x78
 LoE-366/Neat
 Custom Width
 Custom Height
 1 Full White Screen(s) Applied
 BetterVue Mesh
 Preserve Glass (Top)
 Silver Spacer
 7/8" SDL (Top) (3W2H)
 - Profiled Exterior SDL Bars
 - Profiled Interior SDL Bars
 - With No Internal Grids
 Preserve Glass (Bottom)
 Silver Spacer
 4-9/16" Jamb
 White Hardware
 White Jambliners
 Natural Pine Interior
 Wide Rail Double Hung (Glass
 Size:28-5/8x34-3/4)
 Clear Opening: 30-5/8x34-1/2
 Square Ft. Of Clear Opening: 7.

New window specs

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommends approval of replacing all wood siding with Hardie Plank (Select Cedar Mill design) to match rear addition. New Hardie siding should have the same profile and reveal as the current wood siding.
2. Staff recommends approval of repair to wood columns on the front porch.
3. Staff recommends approval of replacing the right three windows on front with white aluminum clad, 7/8" SDL exterior and interior bars, no interior grids, natural pine interior.

City of Opelika
Historic Preservation Commission
Staff Report



Agenda Item #: 2
Meeting Date: 10/09/2025
Action Requested: Façade Renovation
Location of Property: 107 N. 9th St; Downtown Historic District
Petitioner: Stone Martin Builders

Resources:

*This property is in the Downtown Historic District but is not on the National Registry.
Noncontributing structure.*

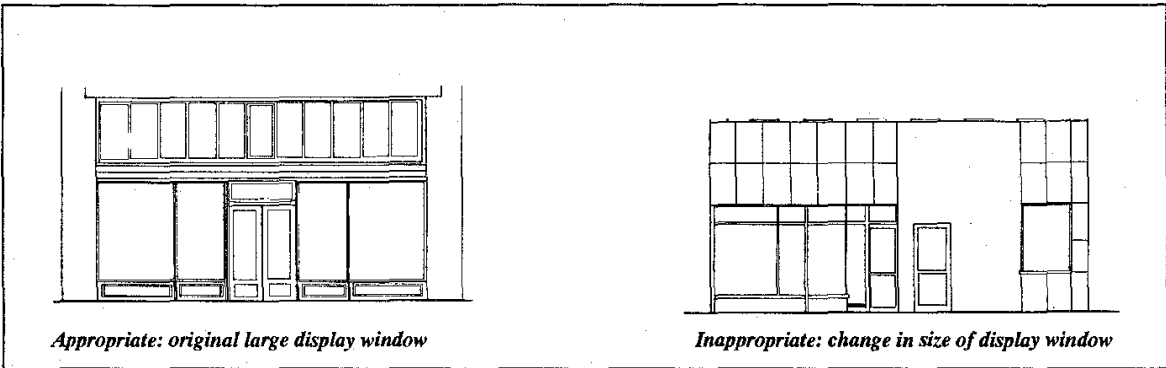
Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. A new concrete walkway will be added to the northeast end of Stone Martin’s existing parking lot to enhance wayfinding and access to the new Design Center. The size and location are shown on the drawings.
2. The existing sign facing N. 9th Street that reads “Stone Martin Commercial” will be altered to read “Stone Martin Property Office”. The style, size, and color of the lettering will not change.
3. A new sign is to be painted facing 1st Ave. which will read “Stone Martin Design Center”. The style and color will match the existing painted signs, but overall size will be smaller.
4. A metal canopy will be added to shelter the new entrance to the Design Center matching the metal canopy over the existing “commercial” entrance.
5. An existing side door will be replaced with a full-lite storefront door, matching the finishing and construction of the two main front doors.
6. A 10’x10’ metal roll-up door will be replaced with a storefront window matching the finishes of the existing storefront doors.
7. A new sconce light will be added over the entrance to the Deign Center, and new sconces will be added to light the new Design Center sign.
8. An accent color is to be painted at the Design Center entrance.

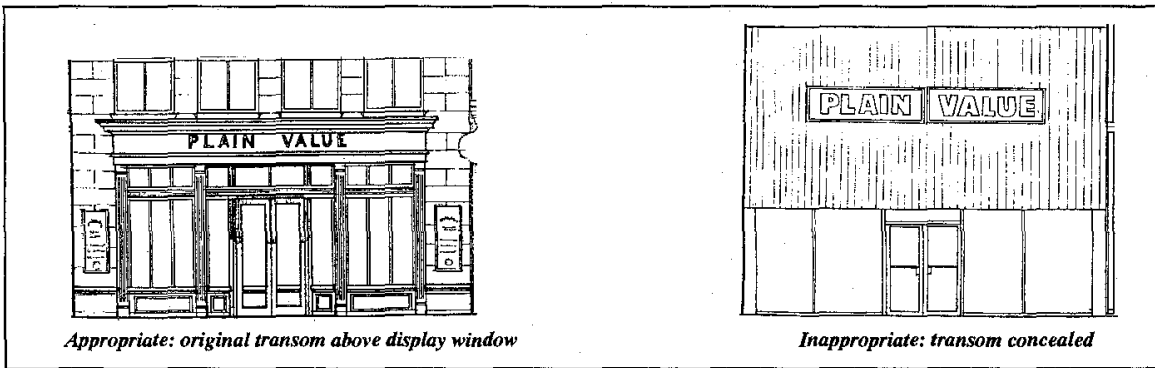
Proposed Guidelines:

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.



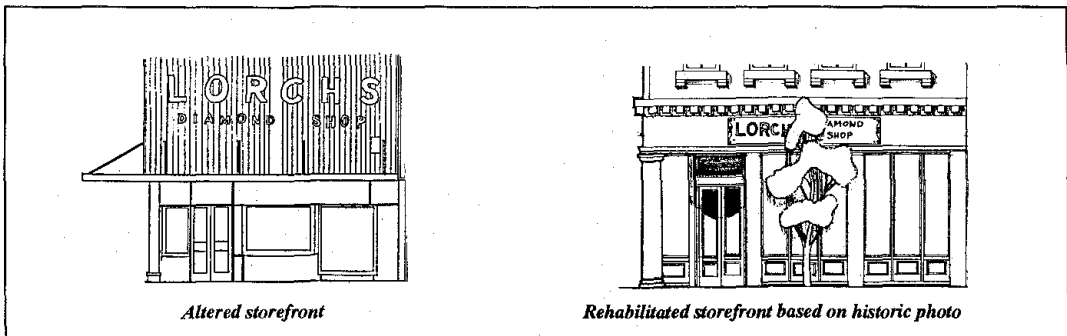
COLUMNS: Maintain cast iron columns and brick and stone piers which frame the storefront.
TRANSOM: Retain original shape and transparency of the transom. Do not place a sign over the transom, If an interior ceiling has been lowered below the transom, it should be recessed from the storefront. Do not 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)

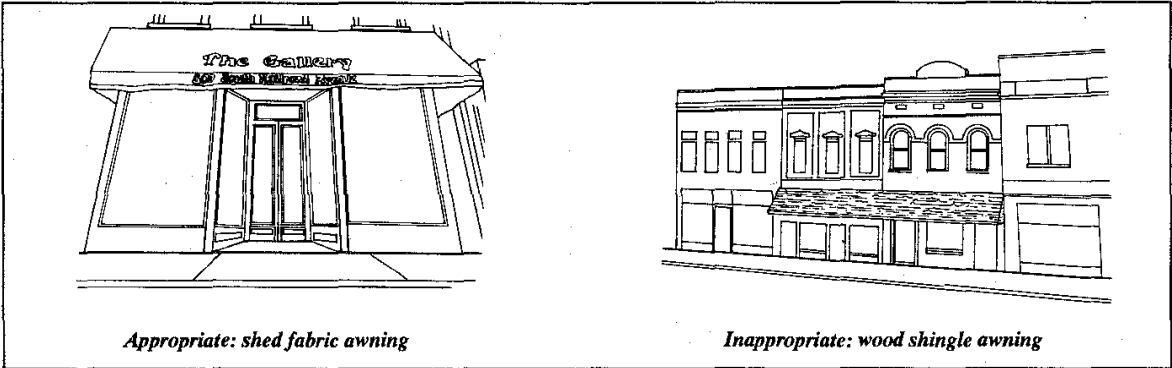
AWNINGS - #5.

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

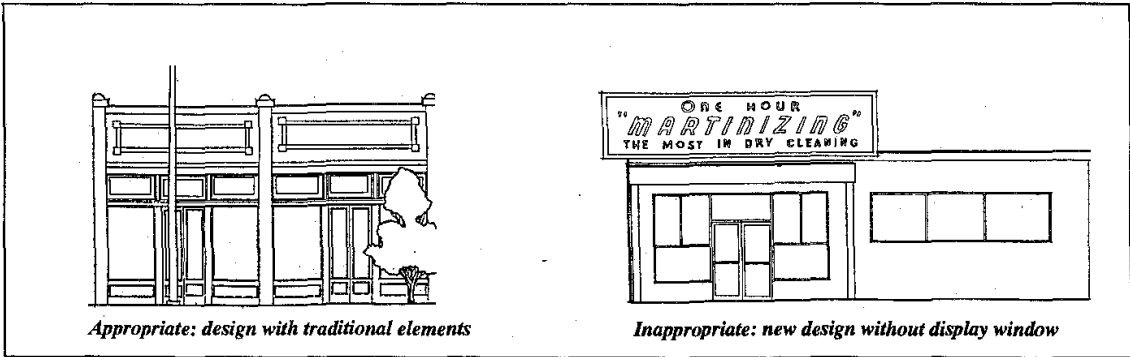
PRESERVATION: Preserve original canopies and awning hardware where feasible.

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.

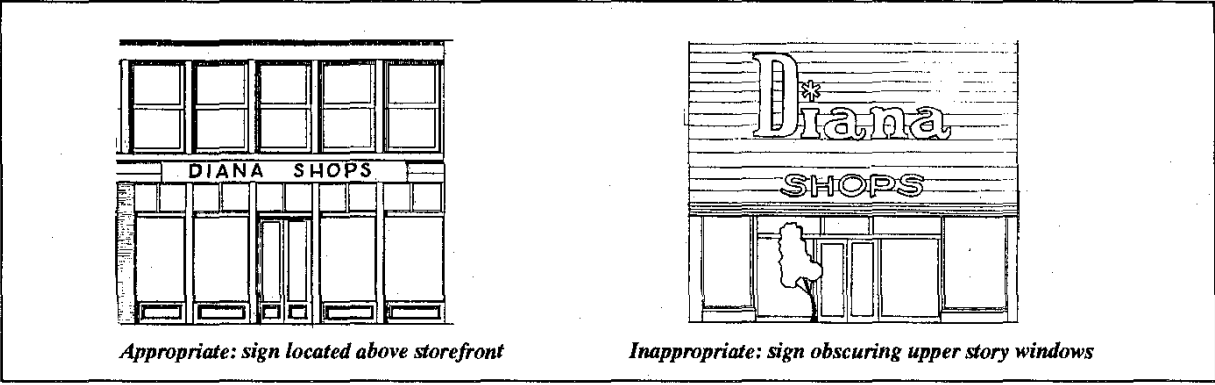


SIGNS #6.

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

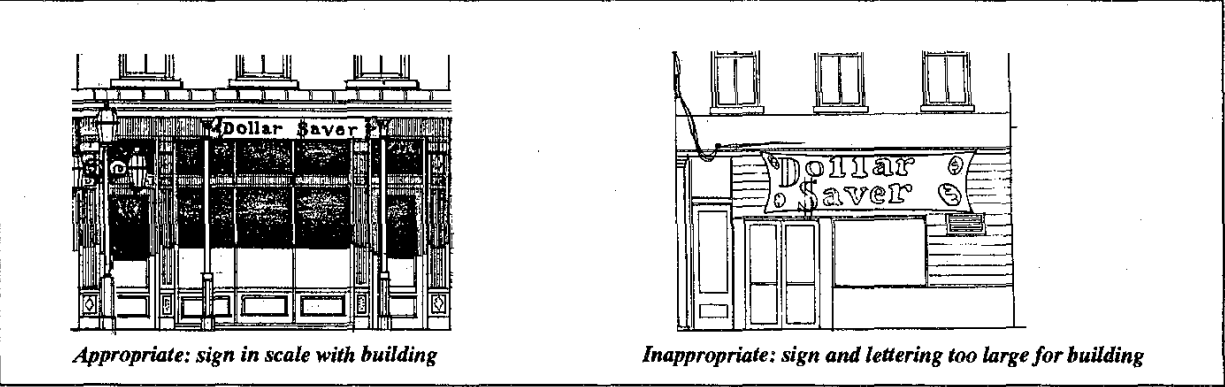
These design guidelines apply to the exterior signs within the Northside and Geneva Street Historic Preservation Districts. All signs in a historic preservation district must meet the provisions of the Opelika Zoning Ordinance as well as receive a Certificate of Appropriateness. A Certificate of Appropriateness 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)



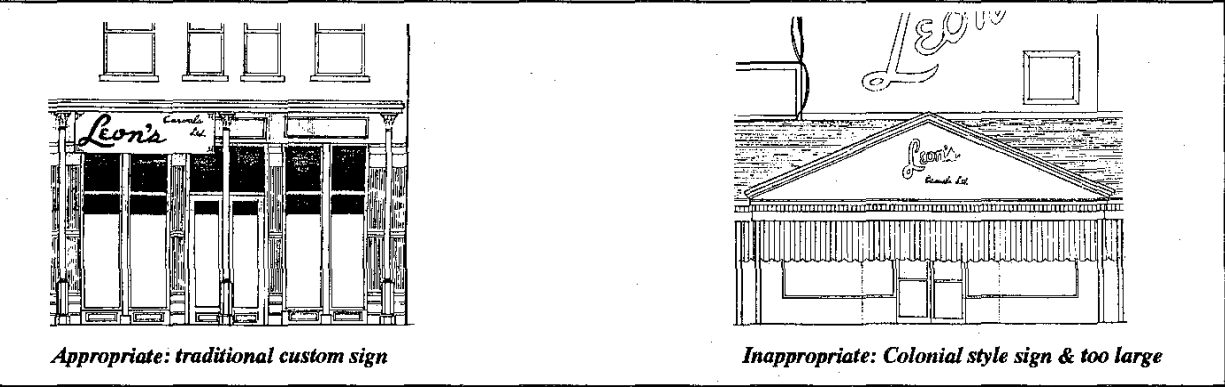
TYPES: A variety of signs may adorn a building. Awning signs and small facade sign panels can attract the attention of passing motorists or pedestrians across the street. Signs painted on storefront windows and doors attract the attention of pedestrians. Hanging signs should be attached so that they 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.



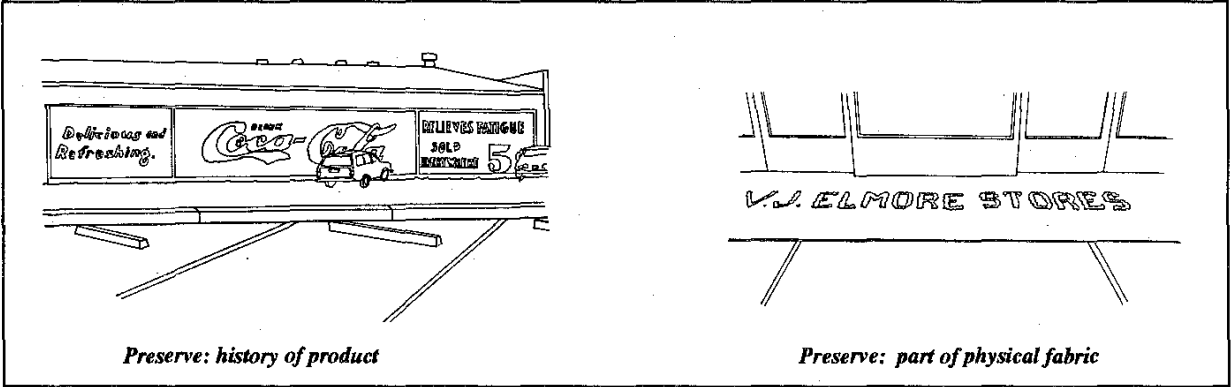
MATERIALS: Sign materials should be compatible with those of the historic building. Traditional signs were often painted on finished wood or metal panels. Signs painted onto fabric awnings are effective. Unfinished plywood and plastic signs may not be appropriate in the downtown.

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.



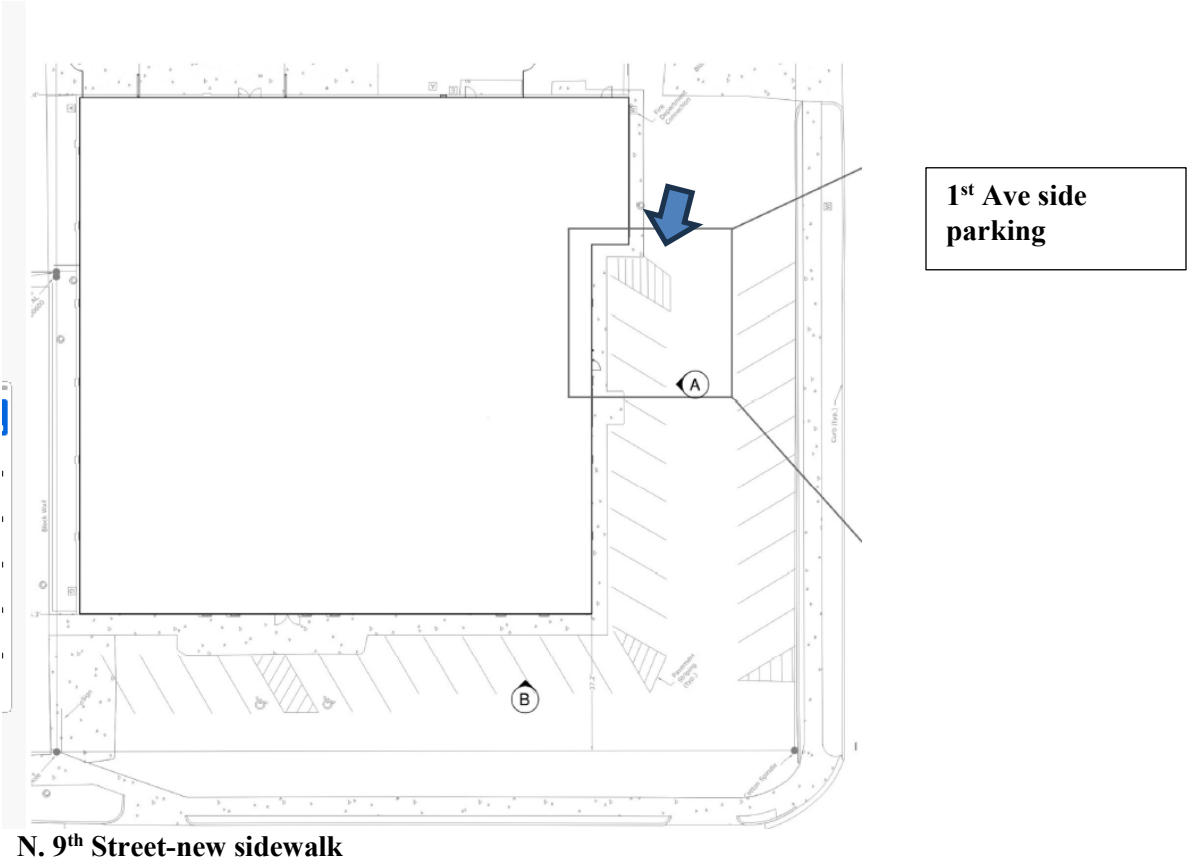
LIGHTING: The sign should be illuminated to fit the design of the building. The color and intensity of illumination are central to achieving a complimentary balance of the building and signs. Light intensity should not overpower the building or street edge. Sign lighting should be subdued or indirect. 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).*

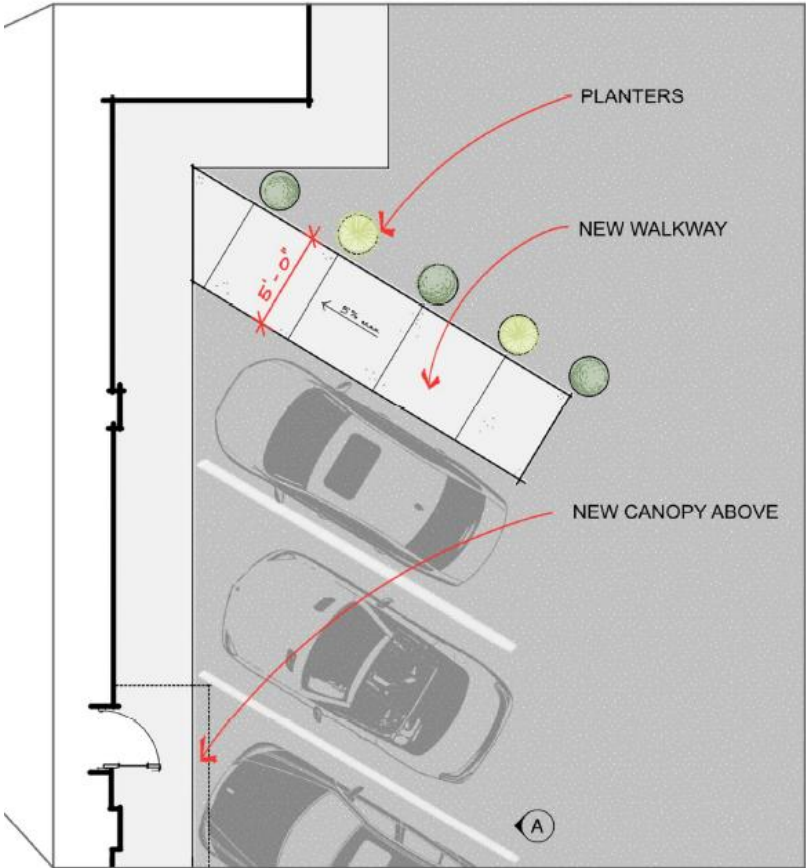


Photo's:

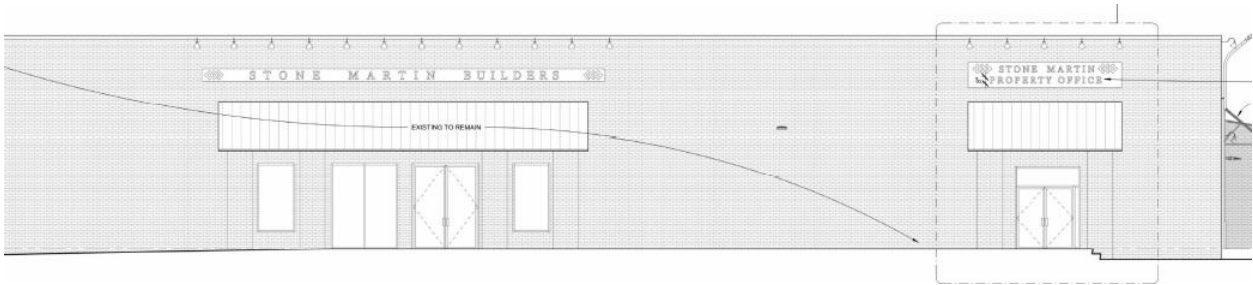
Current front facade



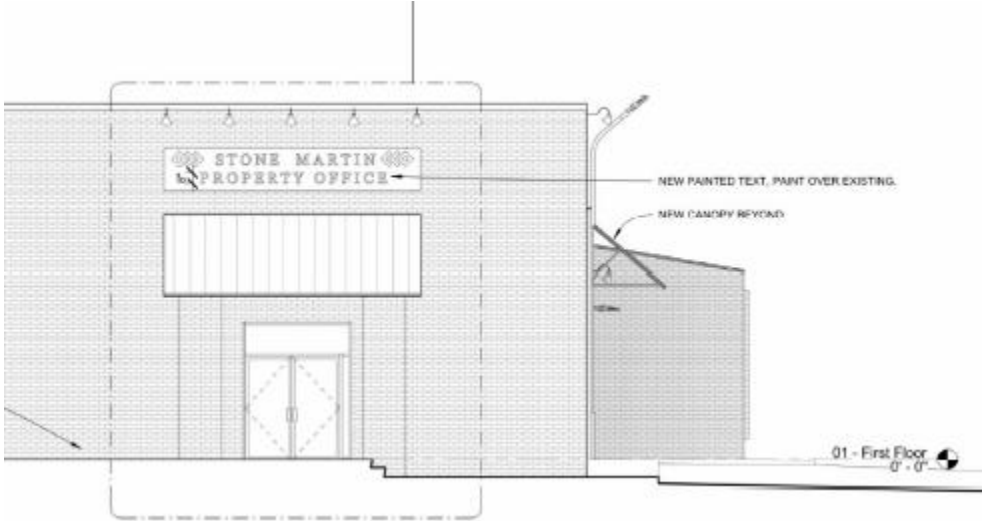
WALKWAY MATERIAL TO BE CONCRETE
WITH TOOLED CONTROL JOINTS



Addition of sidewalk at side parking area



Front view from N. 9th Street



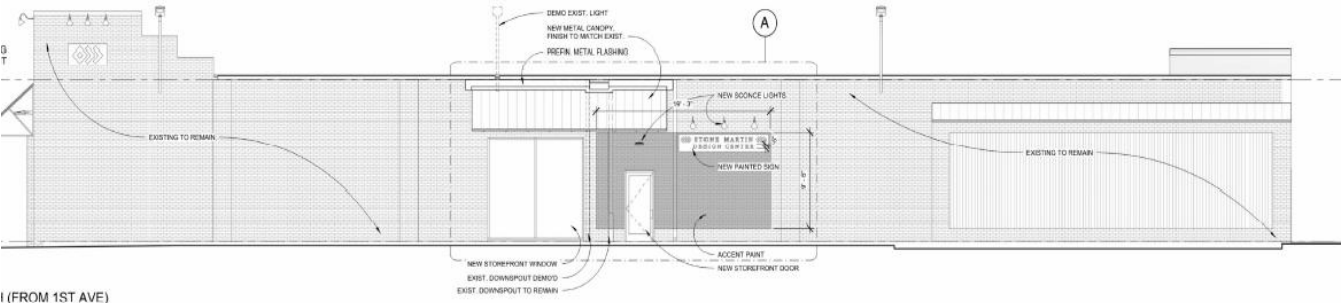
Change signage above right entrance



New signage on N. 9th Street right entrance



Current view from 1st Ave



(FROM 1ST AVE)
Facing 1st Avenue- Remove rollup door and install new storefront window and full glass door. Install metal awning, gooseneck lights, and painted signage.



Proposed changes to 1st Ave side

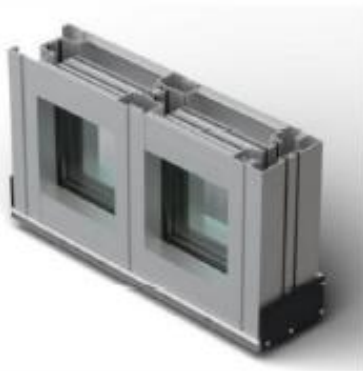
Specs:



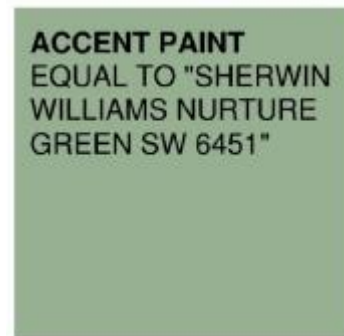
NEW DECORATIVE ENTRY SCONCE
EQUAL TO "THE ORIGINAL WAREHOUSE
GOOSENECK LIGHT - 24"



NEW SIGN LIGHTS TO MATCH CURRENT
MATCH EXISTING, EQUAL TO
"MILLENNIUM R-SERIES GOOSENECK
SCONCE"



STOREFRONT
EQUAL TO KAWNEER
451T, BLACK
ANNODIZED



ACCENT PAINT
EQUAL TO "SHERWIN
WILLIAMS NURTURE
GREEN SW 6451"

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommends approval of new concrete walkway at parking area on 1st Ave side for Design Center.
2. Staff recommends approval of revised painted signage matching the style, size, and color of the existing sign meeting sign regulations.
3. Staff recommends approval of new painted sign facing 1st Ave. matching the style and color of existing signs meeting sign regulations.
4. Staff recommends approval of metal canopy above new entrance to the Design Center matching existing metal canopy.
5. Staff recommends approval of new full-lite storefront door matching the two main front doors.
6. Staff recommends approval of replacing roll up door with anodized framed storefront windows. This is a nonprimary side to a noncontributing structure.
7. Staff recommends approval of new sconce lighting matching existing.
8. Staff recommends approval of painting an accent color on already painted brick. Color selections are not regulated.
9. All staff approval recommendations are based on this being a noncontributing structure in the Downtown Historic District.

City of Opelika
Historic Preservation Commission
Staff Report



Agenda Item #: 3
Meeting Date: 10/09/2025
Action Requested: COA: New Construction Commercial and Condos
Location of Property: 706 Geneva St; Geneva Historic District
Petitioner: Hartbrook Development, LLC

Resources:

This is currently a vacant lot inside the Geneva Historic District.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Construction of two-story professional office building with 24” raised foundation fronting Geneva Street. Structure will be 55’wide x 43’ deep. The horizontal lap Hardie siding, with brick veneer skirt, exposed rafter tails, and asphalt shingle roof. Metal standing seam will be used above rear doors and porches. Windows will be double-hung aluminum. Exterior doors will be ¼ glass stainable fiberglass. Nineteen parking spaces will be on the rear.
2. Construction of eight four-unit two-story condo units on 24” raised foundation at the rear of the site. The horizontal lap Hardie siding, with brick veneer skirt, exposed rafter tails, and asphalt shingle roof. Columns will be 6” x 6” treated wood posts with corbels. Metal standing seam will be used above rear doors and porches. Windows will be double-hung aluminum. Exterior doors will be ¼ glass stainable fiberglass. A 20ft paved private rear alley provides access to carports with gravel drives. The carports consist of shed roof, treated wood columns with base caps, exposed rafter tails, corbels, and asphalt shingle to match homes. A 4ft concrete sidewalk provides access to front doors.
3. A double row of staggered six (6ft) foot evergreens will run along the property lines.

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 relate 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 surrounding 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 expressions 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.

Photos:

Properties on same side of street:



802 Geneva St (2188SF) Property to left



704 Geneva St (2136SF) Property to right



702 Geneva St (3054SF)

Properties Across Street:



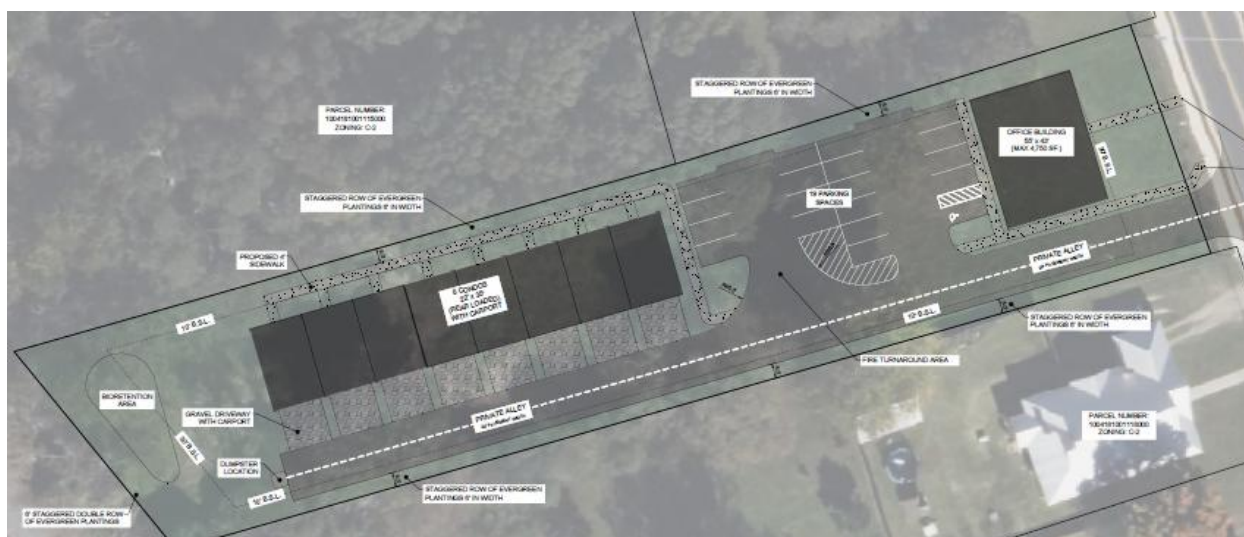
805 Geneva St (2660SF)



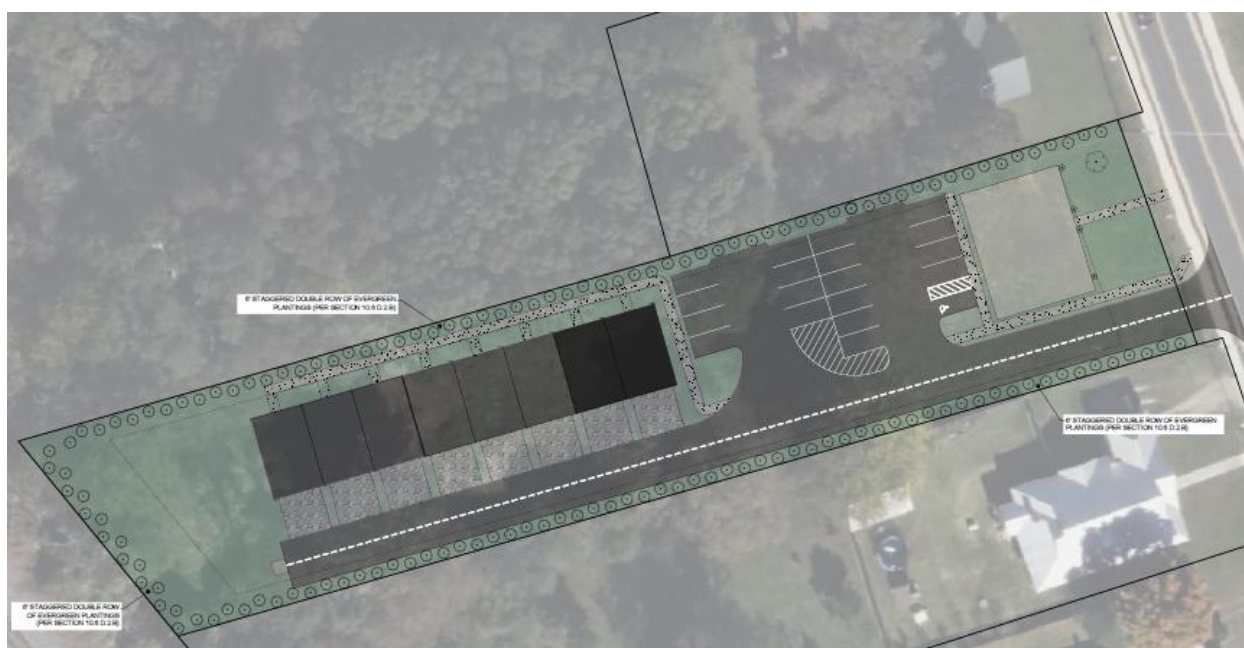
801 Geneva St (3032SF)



707 Geneva St (4860SF)



Site Plan



Landscape plan showing staggered double row of evergreens



Front view office building



Side view showing rear parking-note 2nd story balcony on commercial property



Front elevation of condos



Left side condo elevation



Rear condo elevation

SPECS:

ROOF: Asphalt shingles (IKO WEATHERWOOD)



Carport with wood columns and shed roof

WINDOWS: Sun Patriot double-hung windows with grids and 1x4" casing



Exterior Doors: Stainable fiberglass

3'0"-8'0":



Exterior Lighting



Exposed rafter tails with tongue & groove soffit



Shed roofs: Standing seam metal



BRICK SKIRT: Painted brick veneer skirt

SIDING: Hardie cement board lap siding all around



Staff recommendation:

1. New construction should be compatible with other architectural styles in the district but reflect the era of its own construction.
2. Staff recommends approval of new two-story construction office building and condo units. Staff recommends all visible doors be wood (stained or painted) and windows have SDL exterior 7/8" to 1 1/4" grids. The rhythm and sizing of windows shall be consistent with surrounding properties.
3. Staff recommends both new construction commercial and residential have a raised foundation of approximately 24 inches.
4. Staff recommends that porches be more defined from the main structure.
5. Approval of COA is contingent on Planning Department approval of site plan and zoning.