



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

300 Martin Luther King Blvd.

November 13, 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

A motion was made by Mark Grantham to approve the October 9, 2025 minutes. The motion was seconded by Aaron Bushey. All approved.

1. Approve October 9, 2025 minutes

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. 704 Ave D: Geneva Historic District
Retroactive COA: Install Ramp and Concrete Drive
Applicant: CJCF, LLC

Agenda Item #: 1

Meeting Date: 11/13/2025

Action Requested: Retroactive COA: Install concrete ramp with iron rails and pour concrete drive

Location of Property: 704 Ave D; Geneva Historic District

Petitioner: CJCF, LLC

Resources:

McCall House. Circa 1915. One-story, frame, pyramidal roof with front offset porch, brick columns, triple window. Contributing structure.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Installed concrete handicap ramp on front of historic structure with iron railing with handicap parking spot in front. Large crepe myrtle was removed to allow for ramp and parking pad.
2. New concrete drive installed, removing ribbon drive entrance.

Proposed Guidelines:

A. THE ENVIRONMENT:

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

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.
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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)

F. ADDITIONS:

1. Additions are areas that increase the living or working space of a structure. This does not include the addition of architectural elements.
2. Additions should be compatible with the architectural style of the structure and should not obscure, remove, conceal or replace significant architectural features of the existing structure. Additions should be compatible in scale, mass, proportion, materials, texture and color to the existing structure.
3. Additions should follow the guidelines for new construction.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Installation of temporary/emergency wheelchair ramps when they are not attached to the building

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Installation of temporary wheelchair ramps (staff approval)

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

PRESERVATION BRIEF #32 ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility modifications should be in scale with the historic property, visually compatible, and whenever possible, reversible. Reversible means that if the new feature were removed at a later date, the essential form and integrity of the property would be unimpaired. The design of new features should also be differentiated from the design of the historic property so that the evolution of the property is evident.

Ramps can be faced with a variety of materials, including wood, brick, and stone. Often the type and quality of the materials determines how compatible a ramp design will be with a historic property. Unpainted pressure-treated wood should not be used to construct ramps because it usually appears temporary and is not visually compatible with most historic properties. Railings should be simple in design, distinguishable from other historic features, and should extend on foot beyond the sloped area.

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff does not recommend the approval of a permanent concrete ramp on the front of the structure. Ramps should be temporary and easy to remove

- without doing damage to the historic structure. Ramps should also be screened from view with shrubs or other plantings. Poured accessible parking and sidewalk to allow for accessibility is acceptable.
2. Poured concrete aprons at the entry of driveways are acceptable. Parking, other than a handicap pad, should be in the rear of the building only.

Discussion:

Staff explained that the concrete ramp with iron railing and poured concrete drive and parking pad was installed prior to receiving HPC approval. The original ribbon driveway is now a solid driveway and the ramp is unscreened and at the front of the structure.

The applicant, Curt Hilyer, stated that in conversations with Planning & Engineering he thought that the ramp was approved. He also thought the ramp and drive were part of the COA that had been approved for the rear parking area.

Staff asked if the ramp is attached to the foundation of the house or did they leave a gap between the two. Curt said it is attached. Staff expressed concern that if they were required to remove the concrete ramp, it could possibly damage the foundation and structure. Maybe alternatives could be applied to soften the hardscape so it blends better with the historic structure, such as, brick at the front to match the brick foundation and placing planters along the front.

Mike Buckalew asked if they could replace the tubular iron railing with maybe a wood railing or more decorative iron railing.

Rush suggested cutting out 3-4ft of the concrete pad to add landscaping.

Curt mentioned that the Renfro House in the Northside Historic District has a concrete ramp. However, the commission stated that it is on the rear.

Mark Grantham suggested finding a solution that allowed the ramp to be camouflaged and required minimum work. Removing the concrete slab would not be beneficial.

The applicant requested to table the review. He will work with staff on alternatives and return later.

The applicant asked that this item be tabled. He will bring design options to the commission for consideration at a future meeting.

A motion was made by Aaron Bushey to accept tabling this agenda item. The motion was seconded by Linda Lanz. All approved.

3. 500 Geneva St: Geneva Historic District
COA: Ramp and Parking
Applicant: CJCF, LLC

Agenda Item #: 2
Meeting Date: 11/13/2025

Action Requested: COA: Install concrete ramp with iron rails
Location of Property: 500 Geneva St; Geneva Historic District
Petitioner: CJCF, LLC

Resources:

Floyd-Carrington House, Circa 1900. One-story, frame cottage, combination hip and gable roof with tin and Eastlake chimneys, several gables with turned and scroll-sawn ornament wraparound porch with Ionic columns in pairs, and bracketed cornice, central door with oval light and transom.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Install removable concrete block ramp on right side of structure with metal railing.
2. Drive and rear parking to remain natural with parking at rear.

Proposed Guidelines:

A. THE ENVIRONMENT:

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

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Backyard 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
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- Adding gravel to existing driveways
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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)

F. ADDITIONS:

1. Additions are areas that increase the living or working space of a structure. This does not include the addition of architectural elements.
2. Additions should be compatible with the architectural style of the structure and should not obscure, remove, conceal or replace significant architectural features of the existing structure. Additions should be compatible in scale, mass, proportion, materials, texture and color to the existing structure.
3. Additions should follow the guidelines for new construction.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Installation of temporary/emergency wheelchair ramps when they are not attached to the building

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Installation of temporary wheelchair ramps (staff approval)

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

PRESERVATION BRIEF #32 ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility modifications should be in scale with the historic property, visually compatible, and whenever possible, reversible. Reversible means that if the new feature were removed at a later date, the essential form and integrity of the property would be unimpaired. The design of new features should also be differentiated from the design of the historic property so that the evolution of the property is evident.

Ramps can be faced with a variety of materials, including wood, brick, and stone. Often, the type and quality of the materials determines how compatible a ramp design will be with a historic property. Unpainted pressure-treated wood should not be used to construct ramps because it usually appears temporary and is not visually compatible with most historic properties. Railings should be simple in design, distinguishable from other historic features, and should extend on foot beyond the sloped area.

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommend approval of a wood or Trex ramp and railing to match the existing historic structure. The ramp shall be screened from view with shrubs or other plantings.
2. Staff recommend approval of a poured accessible parking pad to allow accessibility.
3. Staff recommend approval of a natural or gravel drive and rear parking screened from public view.
4. The parking plan is contingent on approval of the Planning Department.

Discussion:

Staff provided an overview of the request for a concrete ramp with iron railing on the side of the structure with an accessible parking pad at the rear. A graveled parking area will also be at the rear and a site plan is required to be submitted to the Planning Department for approval.

The applicant, Curt Hilyer, stated that they have decided to forego the concrete ramp and install a wood ramp with wood railings like A-1 Employment. The ramp will go along the right side of the property to avoid mechanical equipment and a root cellar. A gravel parking lot is in place; however, it is overgrown. He is consulting with an architect for the best layout for the parking area, and it will be submitted when ready.

There was no further discussion.

A motion was made by Aaron Bushey to approve installing a wood ramp with wood railings and rear concrete parking pad. The motion was seconded by Debbie Purves. All approved.

4. 813 S Railroad Ave: Downtown Historic District
COA: Front & Rear Facade
Applicant: Compass Construction
Agenda Item #: 3
Meeting Date: 11/13/2025
Action Requested: COA: Façade Renovation
Location of Property: 813 S. Railroad Ave; Downtown Historic District
Petitioner: Compass Construction

Resources:

Southern Crossings Building: c. 1880's; one story brick load bearing wall construction has original façade; fan shaped ventilation openings at upper level; corbels; original wood and glass storefront; additional at rear.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Remove wood bulkhead and install a brick base for durability.
2. Expand frame for entry from 5' wide to a 6' wide door frame to allow better ADA access. Install two new wood full glass doors.
3. Install Hardie cladding to storefront for durability.
4. Remove existing stoop cover on rear and install new steel doors.
5. Install new 1/1 aluminum clad double hung windows on rear.

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)

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 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 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. Rehabilitation Standards state: “Although the traditional material for bulkheads is wood, brick and stone are not uncommon. Whenever possible, the original material should be retained and repaired. Replacement materials should match as closely as possible to the original. Staff recommends retaining the look of the wood bulkhead using a more sustainable material, such as Hardi, to provide the same look. Decorative bulkhead vents should be retained.
2. Staff recommends approval of an expanded front entry to 6’0” for accessibility and new wood full-glass double doors.
3. Staff recommends approval of Hardie cladding to the storefront. Cladding should match existing framing.
4. Staff recommends removing the existing rear stoop and installation of new steel doors.
5. Staff recommends approval of new 1/1 aluminum-cladded double-hung windows in the rear.

Discussion:

The applicant, Jeremy Clark, stated that the current doors do not meet ADA requirements. A 3’ wide door is needed. Two new wood doors will be installed. They hope to repurpose the old doors in the interior buildout. If allowed to replace the bulkhead with brick, the brick would recreate the details and relief seen in the wood currently in place. The echo would be there with a more sustainable material.

There was no further discussion.

A motion was made by Linda Lanz to approve the application with staff recommendations. The motion was seconded by Debbie Purves. All approved.

5. 121 S. 9th St: Downtown Historic District

COA: Paint Front Facade

Applicant: Randy Brown

Agenda Item #: 4

Meeting Date: 10/13/2025

Action Requested: COA: Paint Front Facade

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. Paint the front brick of the museum to match the color and appearance of the adjoining building to maintain visual consistency and enhance the overall aesthetic. The new brick facing was installed approximately 20 years ago and is not original.

Proposed Guidelines:***MASONRY - #15.***

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

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

1. The masonry is not historic, nor is likely to become contributing in the future.
2. The brick is soft brick or porous historic brick that was intended to be sealed. Most known brick in Opelika's historic districts have more modern bricks.
3. A majority of the existing structure's masonry is already painted.
4. Masonry at ground level or below needs to be waterproofed to exclude ground water.
5. The structure has been extensively damaged by fire, natural disaster, or pre-existing alterations that the masonry no longer conveys the buildings historic character. This should not include major additions or changes that show the historic evolution of a building. (rev. 01/19/2022)

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

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommend approval of painting the brick, as it is not original to the building.

Discussion:

Staff explained that the applicant wishes to paint the unpainted portion of the building to provide a more consistent look. The brick is not original to the structure. The paint color will be a sepia beige to blend with the mural on the side of the building. All trim will be a darker brown. The green awnings will remain.

There was no further discussion.

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

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6. Enforcement Report
There were no enforcement cases to discuss.
7. Staff Report
There was no staff report.
8. Next meeting DATE
1. Next meeting December 11, 2025

7. ADJOURN

With no further discussion, a motion was made by Debbie Purves to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Linda Lanz. All approved.

Rush Denson, Chair

Linda Lanz, Secretary