



AGENDA

CITY OF OPELIKA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
March 12, 2026
4:30 p.m.
Meeting Chambers at Opelika Municipal Courtroom
300 MLK Boulevard

Call to Order

Approve February 12, 2026 minutes.

Public Comment/Citizen Communication

Old Business

New Business

1. 1100 3rd Ave: Northside Historic District
COA: Porch railings, Decking, and Gutter
Applicant: Michelle Johnson

Other Business

2. Enforcement Report
3. Staff Report
4. Next meeting April 9, 2026
5. Adjournment

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

300 Martin Luther King Blvd.

February 12, 2026

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 Mike Buckalew to approve the January 15, 2026 minutes. The motion was seconded by Aaron Bushey. All approved.

1. Approve January 15, 2026 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. 809 1st Ave: Downtown Historic District

COA: Facade Renovation

Applicant: Rudy Sardinas

Agenda Item #: 1

Meeting Date: 02/12/2026

Action Requested: COA: New Storefront

Location of Property: 809 1st Ave; Downtown Historic District

Petitioner: Rudy Sardinas

Resources:

This warehouse space is in the Downtown Historic District but not listed on the National Registry. Non-Contributing Structure.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Remove current wood panels and doors. Replace with aluminum framed storefront windows, double aluminum framed full glass doors, and metal wall panels to match existing upper metal panels. A second brick façade option has been provided. Install metal canopy with steel framing and emergency egress down lights. Paint color to be charcoal black.
2. Existing roof will get new metal flashing.
3. Remove existing window on left side and install new entry on left rear with metal security doors for emergency egress.
4. Install white metal channel letters mounted on raceways for signage.

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)

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.

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.

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff does **not** recommend approval of the proposed aluminum storefront because it would not be compatible with surrounding properties within the Downtown Historic District. The second option of brick or even cinder block with a stucco finish would be appropriate.
2. Staff recommends approval of aluminum storefront windows and full glass doors.
3. Staff recommends approval of metal frame and awning. Metal shall be standing seam.
4. Staff recommends approval to remove the side window and adding two new metal security doors at the side elevation to allow for emergency exits.
5. Staff recommends approval of metal signage meeting size requirements and gooseneck lighting.

Discussion:

Staff provided an overview of the requested changes to the storefront and side elevation and provided she contacted the State Historic Preservation Office to ask about allowing a metal storefront. SHPO stated that the use of metal would be inappropriate. The use of brick would be compatible with surrounding properties in our historic district.

The applicant was not present.

Aaron Bushey asked if metal-framed storefronts have been allowed. Staff stated that they have been allowed along 1st Ave in the Warehouse District.

There was no further discussion.

A motion was made by Debbie Purves to approve, with staff's recommendation, of a brick storefront. The motion was seconded by Aaron Kovak. All approved.

3. 601 S. Railroad Ave: Downtown Historic District
COA: Windows and Windows Walk Addition
Applicant: Jake Whaley

Agenda Item #: 2

Meeting Date: 02/12/2026

Action Requested: COA: Renovations to Exterior

Location of Property: 601 S. Railroad Ave; Downtown Historic District

Petitioner: Jake Whaley

Resources:

Robertson-Huskey House. Circa 1894. Two story Second Empire-Italianate home, wood frame, mansard roof and dormers. This home is in the Downtown Historic District. However, it is not on the National Registry.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Install decorative wrought iron fencing on the roof for widows' walk.
2. Replace asphalt with DaVinci synthetic slate on the mansard roof.
3. Install additional wood windows on the back addition.
4. Modification of previously approved additional wood windows on the main

structure due to structural members.

5. Install a new wood door with transom in the rear.

Proposed Guidelines:

9. Architectural Details:

a. Original details shall be maintained.

b. The replacement of missing original details should be based on accurate historic, physical or pictorial documentation and should be a close visual approximation of the original.

c. Architectural details of any period or style not original to the building should not be introduced.

d. Changes that have taken place in the course of time which are evidence of the history and development of a building, and its environment may have acquired significance in their own right; their significance should be recognized and respected.

3. Architectural Metals:

a. Architectural metals such as cast iron, steel, pressed tin, aluminum, and zinc shall be retained whenever possible.

b. It shall be prohibited to remove architectural metal features that are an essential part of a building's character and appearance. These materials shall be stabilized and preserved intact on the structure.

c. Where it is necessary to clean these architectural metals, they should be cleaned with a method that does not abrade the surface and which will not alter the color, texture and tone of the metal. After cleaning, the metals shall be coated with an appropriate protective coating. Do not expose metal which was originally protected from the environment.

ROOFS - #11.

Preserve the original roof form.

SLOPE: Preserve the pitch of the original roof. Roofs of most commercial buildings have a parapet wall in front of a flat roof; however, in some cases historic commercial buildings have gable, hip, or Mansard roofs. Adding a new fake mansard roof is not appropriate. Skylights and roof decks not visible from street may be acceptable.

MAINTENANCE: Retain and preserve original roofing materials where feasible. Regularly maintain your roof as a shelter against water penetration. Clean and maintain the roof drainage system.

4. Roofs and Roofing:

a. Original roof shape and pitch should be maintained.

b. Provide adequate roof drainage and ensure that the roofing materials provide a weather tight covering for the structure.

c. Retain the original roofing material whenever possible.

d. Replace deteriorated roof covering with new materials that are compatible with the period of the structure and appropriate to the structure. Fiberglass asphalt shingles may be substituted for original roofing when it is not economically feasible to replace or repair with original materials or when the original roof is beyond repair. The color and texture of fiberglass-asphalt shingles should be appropriate to the architectural style and period of the structure.

e. Built-in gutters may be covered over when it is not economically feasible to maintain or replace or repair with original material. Care should be taken to provide for the drainage of water away from the structure if built-in gutters are covered over.

f. Preserve or replace where necessary, but do not remove, all architectural features that give the roof its essential character, such as dormer windows, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys, cresting and weathervanes.

g. Do not introduce new roof features, such as dormers where none existed before. Low profile skylights may be used on the side or rear facades not facing a street.

• Built-in gutters may be covered over when it is not economically feasible to maintain or replace or repair with original material. Care should be taken to provide for the drainage of water away from the structure if built-in gutters are covered over.

- Replacement of existing asphalt composition roofing shingles

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Changes in roofing material including the removal and replacement of slate, terracotta tile and standing seam metal roofing materials

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 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 an iron railing on widow's walk.
2. Staff recommends approval of synthetic/composite multi-width slate on the mansard roof.
3. Staff recommends approval of adding new wood windows to the rear addition.
4. Staff recommends approval of a revised window configuration to include bay windows on each side of the house.
5. Staff recommends approval of a new wooden door with transom at the rear. Applicant to submit doors for staff approval.

Discussion:

Staff reviewed the proposed alterations and improvements and explained the change to a bay window is based on a historic photo showing a bay window in place.

The applicant, Jake Whaley, was present to answer questions. He stated the iron design has not been finalized.

Rush Denson asked that he provide final design for iron and wood doors for staff approval prior to installation.

There was no further discussion.

A motion was made by Aaron Kovak to approve. The motion was seconded by Debbie Purvis. All approved.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

4. Enforcement Report

There were no enforcement cases to report.

5. Staff Report
There was no additional information for staff to report.
6. Next meeting DATE
1. Next meeting March 12, 2026

7. ADJOURN

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Debbie Purves to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Aaron Bushey. All approved.

Rush Denson, Chair

Linda Lanz, Secretary

City of Opelika
Historic Preservation Commission
Staff Report



Agenda Item #: 1
Meeting Date: 03/12/2026
Action Requested: Retroactive COA: Porch railings, Decking, and Gutters
Location of Property: 1100 3rd Ave; Northside Historic District
Petitioner: Michelle Johnson

Resources:

Circa 1900. Two story, wood frame Neoclassical Revival residence with hip roof of asphalt shingles, interior chimney, dentils under eaves, second story façade with central wood door, flanking double hung sash windows, partial width balcony, first floor façade with central double leaf wood and glass door, flanking 1/1 double hung sash window, two story portico with Corinthian columns. Contributing Resource.

History: Applicant received COA approval to remove two exterior doors and install windows, exchanging single door on front top floor with a double door unit, and installing railing on front porch matching the second floor on 05/11/2023. However, this approval has expired. On 1/21/26 it was discovered that a new railing had been installed that did not meet specifications. Also, a side porch/deck was added. Contact was made immediately with the contractor.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Install new railing on the first floor and replace railing on the top floor to match the design of the original railing.
2. Install 10' x 60' side deck to allow exit from side door.
3. Replace back porch decking and extend porch. Add rail to match the side deck.
4. Install metal gutter on carport to divert water from structure.

Guidelines:

7. Entrances, Porches and Steps:

- a. Porches and steps that are appropriate to the building and its development should be retained. Porches or additions that reflect later architectural styles are often important to the building's historical integrity and wherever possible, should be retained.
- b. Original material and architectural features, such as handrails, balusters, columns, brackets and roof decoration shall be preserved. Where necessary to replace deteriorated pieces, the new material should match the original in texture, shape, size and color.
- c. Original details and shape, outline, roof height and roof pitch should be retained.

- d. Enclosing of front porches is inappropriate if done in a manner that destroys their intended appearance.
- e. The enclosing of side and rear porches may be considered appropriate if the visual openness and character of the original porch is maintained.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

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

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

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

4. Roofs and Roofing:

- a. Original roof shape and pitch should be maintained.
- b. Provide adequate roof drainage and ensure that the roofing materials provide a weather tight covering for the structure.
- c. Retain the original roofing material whenever possible.
- d. Replace deteriorated roof covering with new materials that are compatible with the period of the structure and appropriate to the structure. Fiberglass asphalt shingles may be substituted for original roofing when it is not economically feasible to replace or repair with original materials or when the original roof is beyond repair. The color and texture of fiberglass-asphalt shingles should be appropriate to the architectural style and period of the structure.
- e. Built-in gutters may be covered over when it is not economically feasible to maintain or replace or repair with original material. Care should be taken to provide for the drainage of water away from the structure if built-in gutters are covered over.
- f. Preserve or replace where necessary, but do not remove, all architectural features that give the roof its essential character, such as dormer windows, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys, cresting and weathervanes.
- g. Do not introduce new roof features, such as dormers where none existed before. Low profile skylights may be used on the side or rear facades not facing a street.
 - Built-in gutters may be covered over when it is not economically feasible to maintain or replace or repair with original material. Care should be taken to provide for the drainage of water away from the structure if built-in gutters are covered over.
 - Replacement of existing asphalt composition roofing shingles

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Changes in roofing material including the removal and replacement of slate, terracotta tile and standing seam metal roofing materials

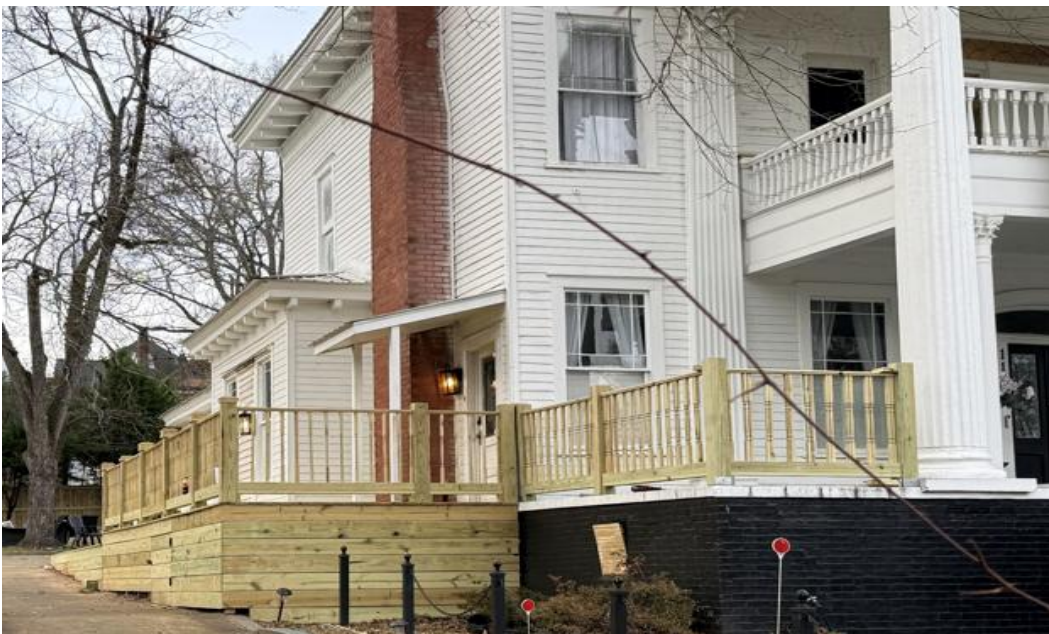
Photos:



Example of Neoclassical home with first and second floor railing



New railing on the right side



New railing and deck on the left side



Existing Victorian railing



New spindles used



New spindles and railing system



Proposed 4" x 24" wood Victorian spindle to be use on both the lower and upper railing system. Posts are 4" x 4" and capped to match existing posts.



New 10' x 60' deck with ADA ramp



Close view of deck and railing system



Previous side exit doors and concrete steps



Previous rear porch



New rear decking-railings to be added to match left side porch



Add metal gutter to rear carport to move water away from main structure

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommends approval of replacing the upper floor railings and installing a new railing on the first floor with wood spindles and posts closely matching the original design.
2. Staff recommends approval of 10' x 60' side deck with ramp to allow for accessible accommodation. However, Staff recommends spindles either match the front porch or be a less decorative square design that does not compete with the spindles on the front.
3. Staff recommends replacement of back porch decking and extending the porch to include wood railing and spindles matching the side deck.
4. Staff recommends approval of metal gutters on the carport to divert water away from structure.