



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

300 Martin Luther King Blvd.

March 10, 2022

TIME: 4:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

John Marsh called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Debbie Purves to approve the January 13, 2022 minutes. The motion was seconded by Linda Lanz. All approved.

1. Approve January 13, 2022 Minutes

3. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS

(Limit comments to five minutes or less)

4. OLD BUSINESS

5. NEW BUSINESS

2. 408 S. 8th St: Geneva Historic District

COA: Privacy Fence

Owner: Wendy Bonner & Aaron Bushey

Resources:

Condon-Floyd House, c. 1890; One and one-half story, frame, brick foundation, truncated hip roof with front gable over semi-octagonal bay, Eastlake porch trim on wraparound porch.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Install 8 ft. cedar or pine privacy fence around perimeter of yard. Replace the gates on the left and right sides of the house with the same size as they are currently. The North and East sides of the yard are adjacent to a commercial parking lot.

Proposed Guidelines:

b. Fences:

The size, scale, and transparent quality of the fence shall be considered in the design to minimize the impact on the historic fabric on the

neighborhood. The orientation and location of the fence shall also be considered, with the structural members located on the interior of the fence (pretty side out) and the location and size such that it does not block views of the buildings from the street.

Front, side and rear yard area will be determined on a case by case basis from a site plan showing the footprint of house and proposed fence, due to the variety of lot and building shapes. Generally speaking, the front yard is the portion of lot between the street and the rear edge of the building; the side yard is the portion of lot behind the house, between the sidewalk and the rear corner of the building, on corner lots; and the rear yard is the portion of lot behind house. Staff approval may be granted for fences that clearly fall within the guideline specifications; particularly those pertaining to staff permissible-materials and fence heights.

1. Low retaining walls in front and side yards should be kept where they exist. If new retaining walls are required, they should match the existing or match a documented example correct for the period of the structure.

1. Existing period fencing should be maintained and repaired. Where necessary to replace period fencing, it should be replaced with compatible fencing of the same material, size and appropriate design.

1. Materials:

Where a fence is desired to be installed, it should be appropriate for the period and architectural style of the structure. Materials and size of the fence should be documented as correct for the period of the structure.

- i. Appropriate materials: wood, iron, wire, stone or plants.
- ii. Inappropriate materials: chain link, concrete block, unfaced concrete, plastic, fiberglass, plywood, slatted "snow" fences and mesh "construction" fences

1. Chain link fences may be used in rear yards, if visible from the street, shall be camouflaged with vegetation.
2. Staff approved fences are limited to wood dog ear and open gothic fences as pictured below. Other styles or materials require formal Commission approval.

1. Heights:

Generally, low fences should be used at the fronts and visible street side yards near public sidewalks. Taller fences and solid walls may be used in rear yards and side yards when set back from the sidewalk.

- i. front yard fences should not be taller than 4 feet. A height of up to 6 feet is permitted only if set back at least 1/3 the structure's length or 1/3 the adjacent structure's length, whichever is furthest from the street. Measurement should be taken from the structures' respective facades.
- ii. side yard fences should not be taller than 6 feet
- iii. rear yard fences should not be taller than 8 feet

Requests for new fences must have a site plan, with proposed fence heights clearly marked.

The following items DO NOT require a COA:

- Repairs to existing walls and fences and other historic site features
- Wood dog ear and wood open gothic fences that clearly fall within the setback and height requirements (staff approval)

The following commonly requested projects require a COA:

- Changes to stone walls and other historic site features
- All new fences and walls

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommends approval of cedar or pine privacy fence meeting all required guidelines.

Discussion:

Staff explained the applicant wishes to install a wood privacy fence to separate their residential yard from the incoming parking lot in the year.

There was no further discussion.

3. 708 Ave E: Geneva Historic District
COA: Demolition
Owner: Pythoge, LLC

Resources:

This property is in the Geneva Historic District. However, it is not on the National Register and is not a contributing structure.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Property is structurally unsound, unsafe, and beyond repair. Request to demolish.

Proposed Guidelines:

H. DEMOLITION:

1. Definition: The tearing down of a building by active means or by neglect resulting in the structural decay of the original building fabric. Neglect means not maintaining a weatherproof, watertight, secure building, structurally stable and/or maintaining vegetation around the structure or structures on the property.
2. Since the purpose of historic zoning is to protect historic properties, the demolition of a building which contributes historically or architecturally to the character and significance of the district is inappropriate and shall be avoided. This means demolition by active means or by neglect in failure to maintain a property. This also includes any structure that contributes to the architectural character of the historic district, not just the most outstanding architectural structures in the district, but the ordinary period structures as well.
3. Demolition is inappropriate:

1. if a building is of such architectural or historical interest and value that its removal would be detrimental to the public interest.
 2. if a building is listed as contributing to the architectural character of the district.
 3. if a building is of such old or unusual or uncommon design and materials that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced without great difficulty and expense.
 4. if its proposed replacement would make a less positive visual contribution to the district, would disrupt the character of the district or would be visually incompatible.
 5. if a building is listed as contributing to the architectural character of the district or qualifies for any of the above a through d and can be feasibly stabilized and no new compatible structure is proposed to be built on the site. An existing structure shall not be demolished for a parking lot or vacant lot. The applicant for demolition must demonstrate financial resources for stabilizing the site after demolition and the construction of a new building or new structure. Stabilization plans as well as Architectural plans and specifications for the new construction along with a schedule for their completion shall be presented to the Opelika Historic Preservation Commission prior to a COA for demolition being issued.
4. Demolition is appropriate:
1. if a building has completely lost its architectural and historical integrity and importance and has become structurally unsound and its removal will not result in a more negative, less appropriate visual effect on the district.
 2. if a building is not listed as contributing to the historical or architectural character and importance of the historic district and its removal will result in a more positive, appropriate visual effect on the district.

Staff recommendation:

1. Staff recommends approval of demolition. This property is not a contributing structure and demolition will not affect the district.

Discussion:

Staff explained that this property is the old upholstery shop located in the Geneva Historic District but is not listed on the National Registry. It is a noncontributing structure. Applicant wishes to build either a single or multi-family unit on the property.
There was no further discussion.

4. 223 S. 9th St: Downtown Historic District
Discussion: Wall Repair
Owner: Barrett-Simpson, Inc.

Resources:

WJHO Building: C. 1900; two-story brick load bearing wall construction; original 2nd floor façade. Stucco over brick at pedestrian level.

Proposal: The petitioner requests a COA for the following:

1. Repair crumbling southern rock wall by grouting all crevices and applying a mortar wash.

History: A Certificate of Appropriateness was approved on 01/13/2022 for mortar repair of wall only but no mortar wash. Applicants wishes to discuss options further with commission.

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. Do not paint unpainted masonry. Once painted, it is often better to repaint rather than remove paint. Carefully investigate the condition of masonry before removing stucco. (See Preservation Brief #1, 6, 7)

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

Staff Recommendations:

No Staff recommendation required.

Discussion:

Staff explained that the applicant was not present at the January meeting and was unable to participate in the discussion. He wishes to discuss options to repair the wall with the commission at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Rice addressed the commission stating that his first desire is to face the wall. The wall is his property line, so he has no room to face it with brick. The back 1/3 is a cinder block addition in 1991. His goal is to repack the mortar and get it to a thin textured surface, including the cinder block, and have a color painted across the entire wall so that it is uniform. There was previous discussion about the need to retain this exterior wall. However, this is an interior wall from a building that burned around 1968. It is an interior foundation wall. If you reach in, you can grab and easily pull out rocks. Multiple snakes have been pulled out. Mice are living in the wall. My thought is to replicate the exterior of the two-story yellow building on S. 8th Street.

Rush Denson asked if it is known who owns the vacant lot. Mr. Rice replied that the owner lives in Atlanta and is not interested in building anything and is just sitting on the property. Mr. Rice wishes to do something to the wall to stabilize it and make it more appealing.

John Marsh stated previous discussion was comparing this wall the rear of Fringe, which had not previously had stucco. This wall looks like it has had stucco. Mr. Mosley said once clear difference is someone mechanically removed mortar off the

Fringe building. This building is weathered, and the mortar is falling off. He felt that there may have been some miscommunication on terminology, and he wanted to make sure everyone understood what materials and application would be allowed.

Linda Lanz asked if this would stabilize the wall. Mr. Marsh stated that yes it would. The fear is that water would get into the crevices of the rocks, freeze, and pushes the rock apart. Mr. Rice stated that he is losing 5-6 rocks per year and the holes are getting larger.

Mr. Marsh said that we have had some failed mortar wash, losing the details of the brick, as at Ingram, Rice and Parr. With stucco, you are allowed to put a coating on it like Loxon paint. Mortar wash has a limited colored pallet and is very aggressive. Debbie Purves stated that she prefers the finish to be textured instead of smooth. Mr. Rice said that the texture would be applied.

John Marsh stated that stucco is an approved material in the district. And this does appear to have been previously stucco across the top. Three finishes that can be considered are mortar, mortar wash, or Loxon. Loxon is a breathable paint.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

5. Enforcement Report
There were no new enforcement cases to discuss.
6. Staff Report
There were no new staff reports to discuss.
7. Next meeting DATE
1. Next Meeting April 14, 2022

7. ADJOURN

A motion was made to adjourn by Debbie Purves. The motion was seconded by Rush Denson. All approved.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Chair Margaret Mayfield,

Linda Lanz, Secretary

