

**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD AGENDA**  
**February 1, 2012 – 3:00 P.M.**  
**Pre-Council Chambers, Mobile Government Plaza, 205 Government Street**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Approval of Mid Month COAs Granted by Staff

**B. MID MONTH APPROVALS**

1. **Applicant: Toni Ryales**
  - a. Property Address: 6 South Conception Street
  - b. Date of Approval: 1/11/12
  - c. Project: Install a metal awning above the storefront. A canvas material will cover the armature. The awning will feature the name of the business establishment. Repaint the building per the existing color scheme.
2. **Applicant: Dennis Langan**
  - a. Property Address: 14 South Franklin Street
  - b. Date of Approval: 1/12/12
  - c. Project: Reroof flat roof and install gutter system, white painted metal.
3. **Applicant: Fred South for Susan Rhodes**
  - a. Property Address: 22 South Ann Street
  - b. Date of Approval: 1/17/12
  - c. Project: Install a door in the location of a later window located on the infilled porch of the rear elevation. The wooden door will access a deck-like walks that will connect the house to the garage.
4. **Applicant: Mary Monahan**
  - a. Property Address: 250 Dauphin Street
  - b. Date of Approval: 1/18/12
  - c. Project: Reopen closed windows on the East Elevation. Wooden two-over-two windows will be installed.
5. **Applicant: Woodrow Walker**
  - a. Property Address: 659 Dauphin Street
  - b. Date of Approval: 1/13/12
  - c. Project: Paint back wall Roycroft Vellum.
6. **Applicant: Bobby Gipson for Enen Yu**
  - a. Property Address: 1118 Dauphin Street
  - b. Date of Approval: 1/17/12
  - c. Project: Install and reinforce foundation, piers, and subfloors as needed. The work will not impact the exterior.
7. **Applicant: Enen Yu**
  - a. Property Address: 1118 Dauphin Street
  - b. Date of Approval: 1/13/12
  - c. Project: Paint the house Government Street Green. The porch decking will be repainted the same color. The trim will be white.
8. **Applicant: William T. Nichols**
  - a. Property Address: 1201 Old Shell Road
  - b. Date of Approval: 1/17/12
  - c. Project: Paint the house the following Devoe color scheme: Body: Copper Hill

Do0696; Trim: Peaches and Cream D0702; Foundation, Steps and Shutter: Holiday Bough D0390; Window Sash, Attic Vent Louvers & Front Door: Purple Haze D0115.

**9. Applicant: David Legett**

- a. Property Address: 1208 Selma Street
- b. Date of Approval: 1/12/12
- c. Project: Reroof garage with slate gray asphalt shingles.

**10. Applicant: Jaime & Sydney Betbeze**

- a. Property Address: 1210 Selma Street
- b. Date of Approval: 1/11/12
- c. Project: Remove two chimney stacks that rise from within the roof structure..

**11. Applicant: Emil Kraft**

- a. Property Address: 1702 Hunter Avenue
- b. Date of Approval: 1/18/12
- c. Project: Repaint the house per the existing color scheme. Repair any deteriorated woodwork to match the existing in profile and dimension.

**C. APPLICATIONS**

**1. 2012-07-CA: 260 Dauphin Street**

- a. Applicant: Fred Renfrey with Downtown Alliance for the Spring Board to Success
- b. Project: Install signage.

**2. 2010-06-CA: 1551 Old Shell Road**

- a. Applicant: Brown Chambless Architects for Dr. Philip Buttera
- b. Project: New Construction - Construct a medical office building.

**D. OTHER BUSINESS**

- 1. Guidelines
- 2. Discussion

**APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**  
**STAFF REPORT**

**2012-07-CA:** 260 Dauphin Street  
**Applicant:** Fred Renfrey with the Downtown Alliance for the Springboard to Success  
**Received:** 260 Dauphin Street  
**Meeting:** 2/1/12

**INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION**

Historic District: Lower Dauphin Commercial  
Classification: Contributing  
Zoning: B-4  
Project: Install Signage.

**BUILDING HISTORY**

This three story masonry building was completed in 1905. Built for the Meyer family, this three story commercial building marked a shift in taste away from the more florid designs that typified the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century.

**STANDARD OF REVIEW**

Section 9 of the Preservation Ordinance states “the Board shall not approve any application proposing a Material Change in Appearance unless it finds the change...will not materially impair the architectural or historic value of the building, the buildings on adjacent sites or in the immediate vicinity, or the general visual character of the district...”

**STAFF REPORT**

- A. This property last appeared before the Architectural Review Board on December 18, 1998. At that time, the Board approved the construction of a traditional ground floor storefront. The application appearing before the Board calls for the installation of signage.
- B. The Sign Design Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts and Government Street state, in pertinent part:
  - 1. “Signs shall be mounted or erected so they do not obscure the architectural features of a building.”
  - 2. “The overall design of all signage including mounting framework shall relate to the design of the principal building on the property.”
  - 3. “The total maximum allowable sign area for all signs is one half square foot per linear front foot of the principal building, not exceed 64 square feet.”
  - 4. “The materials of the sign should match the historic materials of the building. Wood, metal, stucco, stone or brick, is allowed. Plastic, vinyl or similar materials are prohibited.”
- C. Scope of Work:
  - 1. Install wall signage.
    - a. Install eight 14” x 8” wall plaques about the storefront entrance.
    - b. The plaques will be acrylic in composition.
    - c. The plaques will be ¼” in depth.

- d. The plaques will be centered within the rusticated blocks that frame the entrance
- e. The plaques will be secured to blocks by way of polished aluminum stand offs.
- f. The plaques will feature vinyl lettering identifying the building's tenants.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

This application calls for the installation of wall signage. Sign applications entail the review of the following components: lighting, design, size, location, installation, and materials.

The signage will not feature illumination. Said signage will rely upon street lights for illumination.

The sign design is in keeping with architectural and historical environment of the building and the surrounding district.

The Sign Design Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts and Government Street restrict the total square footage of a property's signage to sixty-four square feet. Any requests for signage exceeding sixty-four square feet would require the issuance of a variance. The existing and proposed signage would not exceed sixty-four square feet.

With regard to location, the proposed signage would be centered within the rusticated door surrounds. The Sign Design Guidelines state that signage should not obscure the architectural features of a building. By virtue of their location and composition, the proposed signs would not obscure either the overall form or individual detail of the building.

The proposed signage would be secured to the storefront via polished aluminum stand offs. This manner of installation would not impair the architectural, historical, or structural integrity of the building.

As per materials, the Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts list plastic as an inappropriate signage material. That said, the Sign Design Guidelines took into consideration only insubstantial, narrow plastic sign boards. The proposed acrylic sign would be made of a thicker cut material than that which the Sign Design Guidelines considered. The proposed material has been previously employed in Mobile's Historic Districts, an example being the Mobile Symphony just opposite the subject building. On account of the quality of the sign material and precedence of it existing use within the historic districts, Staff does not believe this application will impair the architectural or the historical integrity of the building.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Based on B (1-3), Staff does not believe this application will impair the architectural or the historical integrity of the building or the district. However, plastic is listed as an inappropriate signage material and this approval would result in an alteration to the guidelines.

**APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**  
**CERTIFIED RECORD**

**2012-06-CA: 1551 Old Shell Road**  
**Applicant: Brown Chambless Architects for Dr. Philip Buttera**  
**Received: 1/3/12 initial; 1/23/12 revised**  
**Meeting: 2/1/12**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION**

Historic District: Old Dauphin Way  
Classification: Non-Contributing  
Zoning: B-1  
Project: New Construction – Construct a medical office building.

**BUILDING HISTORY**

This non-contributing building dates from the 1970s.

**STANDARD OF REVIEW**

Section 9 of the Preservation Ordinance states “the Board shall not approve any application proposing a Material Change in Appearance unless it finds the change...will not materially impair the architectural or historic value of the building, the buildings on adjacent sites or in the immediate vicinity, or the general visual character of the district...”

**STAFF REPORT**

- A. This property last appeared before the Architectural Review Board on January 18, 2012. At that time, the Board reviewed an application calling for the construction of a medical office building. Said building would be located to the south of the existing medical office building that currently occupies the site. The Board denied the application for reason of lack of information. The applicant’s representatives return to the Board with a revised application that takes into account both Staff and Board recommendations.
- B. The Mobile Historic District Guidelines for New Commercial Construction state, in pertinent part:
  - 1. “**PLACEMENT AND ORIENTATION:** Placement has two components: setback, the distance between the street and a building; and spacing, the distance between its property lines and adjacent structures. New construction should be placed on the lot so that setback and spacing approximate those of nearby historic buildings. New buildings should not be placed too far forward or behind the traditional “facade line”, a visual line created by the fronts of buildings along a street. An inappropriate setback disrupts the facade line and diminishes the visual character of the streetscape. Current setback requirements of the City of Mobile Zoning Ordinance may not allow the building to be placed as close to the street as the majority of existing buildings. If the traditional facade line or “average” setback is considerably less than allowed under the Zoning Ordinance, the Review Boards will support an application for a Variance from

the Board of Adjustment to allow for new construction closer to the street and more in character with the surrounding historic buildings.

2. **MASS:** Building mass is established by the arrangement and proportion of its basic geometric components - the main building, wings and porches, the roof and the foundation. Similarity of massing helps create a rhythm along a street, which is one of the appealing aspects of historic districts. Therefore, new construction should reference the massing of forms of nearby historic buildings.
  - a. **FOUNDATIONS:** The foundation, the platform upon which a building rests, is a massing component of a building. Since diminished foundation proportions have a negative effect on massing and visual character, new buildings should have foundations similar in height to those of nearby historic buildings.
  - b. **MAIN BODY AND WINGS:** Although roofs and foundations reinforce massing, the main body and wings are the most significant components. A building's form or shape can be simple (a box) or complex (a combination of many boxes or projections and indentations). The main body of a building may be one or two stories. Interior floor and ceiling heights are reflected on the exterior of a building and should be compatible with nearby historic buildings.
  - c. **ROOFS:** A building's roof contributes significantly to its massing and to the character of the surrounding area. New construction may consider, where appropriate, roof shapes, pitches and complexity similar to or compatible with those of adjacent historic buildings.
3. **SCALE:** The size of a building is determined by its dimensions - height, width, and depth - which also dictate the building's square footage. Scale refers to building's size in relationship to other buildings - large, medium, and small. Buildings which are similar in massing may be very different in scale. To preserve the continuity of a historic district, new construction should be in scale with nearby historic buildings.
4. **FAÇADE ELEMENTS:** Facade elements such as porches, entrances, and windows make up the "face" or facade of a building. New construction should reflect the use of facade elements of nearby historic buildings. The number and proportion of openings - windows and entrances - within the facade of a building creates a solid-to-void ratio (wall-to-opening). New buildings should use windows and entrances that approximate the placement and solid-to-void ratio of nearby historic buildings. In addition, designs for new construction should incorporate the traditional use of window casements and door surrounds. Where a side elevation is clearly visible from the street, proportion and placement of their elements will have an impact upon the visual character of the neighborhood and must be addressed in the design.
5. **MATERIALS AND ORNAMENTATION:** The goal of new construction should be to blend into the historic district but to avoid creating a false sense of history by merely copying historic examples. The choice of materials and ornamentation for new construction is a good way for a new building to exert its own identity. By using historic examples as a point of departure, it is possible for new construction to use new materials and ornamentation and still fit into the historic district. Historic buildings feature the use of a variety of materials for roofs, foundations, wall cladding, and architectural details. In new buildings, exterior materials – both traditional and modern - should closely resemble surrounding historic examples.

6. **Fencing and Walls:** These should complement and not detract. Design, scale, placement and materials should be considered along with their relationship to the Historic District. The height of fences in Historic Districts is generally limited to three feet in front and six feet in the rear. In certain circumstances where a residential property adjoins properties with high traffic or commercial use (apartments, restaurants, etc.) an exception may be granted for an eight foot privacy fence. All fences should be finished with the good side facing the public view and neighbors. The City of Mobile Urban Development Department, in conjunction with the Traffic and Engineering Department must approve the placement of fences and gates at corners and driveways.
7. **Drives, Walks, Parking:** Modern paving materials are acceptable in the Historic Districts. However, it is important that the design, location and materials be compatible with the property. Landscaping can often assist in creating an appropriate setting. Asphalt is not an appropriate material for walkways. Gravel, crushed stone or shells are preferred paving materials along with most of the grasspave and geoblock cellular confinement systems. The appearances parking areas should be minimized.

C. Scope of Work (per submitted plans):

1. Construct a medical office building.
  - a. The building will measure approximately 13,452 square feet.
  - b. The building will be set back approximately 26' 3" feet from the right of way.
  - c. The two story brick veneered building will feature a sill level watertable.
  - d. The watertable will be punctuated by panels that will align with upper story fenestration.
  - e. The building will feature aluminum storefront windows with hardi-trim surrounds.
  - f. The building will feature an entablature punctuated by ornamental brackets.
  - g. The sloped portions of the truncated hip roof will be sheathed with asphalt shingles. The flat portions of the roof will be covered in tpo.
  - h. East Elevation (Street Façade)
    - i. The South Elevation will measure approximately 120.8 feet in length.
    - ii. The five part composition is comprised of a three part, two story main block featuring a recessed central bay with flanking advancing two story wings. A central one-story block occupies the space between the two advancing bays. Asymmetrically composed single story wings flank the main block
    - iii. The East Elevation's first floor features eight fenestrated window bays and the second story features five fenestrated window bays.
  - i. South Elevation
    - i. The two part South Elevation is comprised of a southernmost single story that fronts the two story main block.
    - ii. A hipped roof porte-cochere will front the single story portion of the South Elevation.
    - iii. The South Elevation's first floor is comprised of six fenestrated bays. Paired and single storefront windows comprise five of the bays. A storefront entrance with sliding door will comprise the sixth unit. Said entrance will be located under the porte-cochere.
    - iv. Two paired window units will punctuate the South Elevation's second floor.
  - j. West Elevation
    - i. The West Elevation will feature two advanced single story portions that will front the building's two story main block.

- ii. The first of the West Elevation will feature four single bay storefront units and a single aluminum door bay. The door will be surmounted by a wooden overhang featuring brackets like those found on the body of the building.
    - iii. Three paired and two single windows will comprise the West Elevation's second story fenestration.
  - k. North Elevation
    - i. The North Elevation will feature an advanced single story that will front the two story main block as well as a recessed single story section to the west of the main block.
    - ii. A single metal door will punctuate the easternmost section of the North Elevation's first story. A single aluminum door and a double metal door will be located within a recessed bay.
    - iii. Three single and one double unit aluminum storefront windows will comprise the North Elevation's second story fenestration.
- 1. Install hardscaping.
  - i. One existing and one proposed curbcut will afford ingress and egress from Catherine Street. The new curbcut will measure 24' 8" in width.
  - ii. The drives and parking areas will be paved with asphalt. The walkways and curbing will be laid in concrete.
  - iii. A concrete walk will extend from the street. Said walk will extend under the porte-cochere and wrap around the South and West sides of the building.
- 3. Remove trees (See site plan).
- 4. Install landscaping (See site plan. A landscape plan is forthcoming).
  - i. A ten foot landscape buffer will extend around the South and West sides of the lot.
- 5. Install fencing (See submitted photographs).
  - i. Install wooden fencing around a mechanical area located northwest of the building. The fencing will be six feet in height. Said fence will be painted to harmonize with the building
  - ii. Install perimeter fencing.

## **REQUESTS/CLARIFICATIONS**

1. Provide a more detailed landscaping plan. Include therein the depth of the landscape portions of the buffer. Provide a listing of the plantings proposed for installation.
2. Contact Urban Forestry with regard to the removal of any trees.
3. Provide a detail of the building's main entrance bay.
4. Provide any material samples and color palettes.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

This revised application calls for the construction of medical office building. The proposed building would be located to the south of an existing office building. Further development of the lot would also entail the installation of hardscaping, landscaping, and fencing. Though the Old Dauphin Way Historic District is primarily residential in nature, this area of N. Catherine Street has been compromised through the years with a modern office building to the north, two parking lots on the corners to the north and the McGill Toolen School complex across the street. Therefore the context for this large office building must take into account historic residential character of the neighborhood while balancing the requirements of the structure.



The Guidelines for New Commercial Construction in Mobile's Historic Districts require the review of the following design components: placement and orientation; mass; scale; façade elements; materials & ornamentation; fencing; and parking. At the previous meeting, the Board recommended that the final modifications to the watertable & windows, the addition of a cornice, the submission of landscape plan with overhanging plantings, a lighting schedule that did not invade surrounding residential properties, the inclusion of sidewalk accessing the entrance, and the provision of material samples. Submitted and forthcoming materials take into account recommendations made at both the January 18, 2012 meeting, as well as those outlined in the Staff Report thereof.

Placement involves of two aspects of building location, firstly the setback from the right of way and secondly the distance between buildings. The Guidelines for New Commercial Construction in Mobile's Historic Districts state that the setbacks of new buildings should approximate those of nearby historic structures. The section of the Old Dauphin Way Historic District has been greatly altered in recent decades. The proposed location is in keeping with the residential character of the area and the placement of the areas nearby historical institutional buildings. Though the proposed design does not feature a street-facing entrance, the façade's pavilion-like composition would impart a strong sense of presence on the streetscape.

Building mass is determined by the relationship between and the proportions of building components. The Guidelines for New Commercial Construction in Mobile's Historic Districts state that building massing should be compatible with nearby historic examples. As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the proposed building's façade is influenced by the pavilion articulated divisions of beaux arts design system. The five part vertical division of the façade is complemented by a traditional horizontal layering comprised of water-table zone, wall expanse, and roof structure. Similar massing divisions informed by this approach typify other nearby historic institutional building, namely Raphael Semmes and Old Shell Road Schools. Acting on recommendations made by the Board, the applicants have raised the watertable to the sill line of the windows. The raising of the watertable, regularization of window heights, and the employment of a more emphatic entablature were also Board suggestions.

Scale is established by the comparative relationships among buildings. The Design Review Guidelines for New Commercial Construction in Mobile's Historic Districts are directed toward preserving a visual continuity of building scale. The section of Catherine Street and Old Shell Road is devoid of historic structures. That said the design's pavilion-like massing and horizontal banding break up the mass thereby begetting a more pedestrian sense of scale to the design. By employing a truncated roof, the proposed design is not surmounted colossal roof structure that would overwhelm the building and its environment.

A façade is a building's primary elevation. The Design Review Guidelines for New Construction in Mobile's Historic Districts state the façades should employ the elements of nearby historic examples. This five part façade is comprised of symmetrical main block with asymmetrical wings. The detailing is derived and simplified from nearby historic examples. As aforementioned, the raising of the watertable, the regularization of window heights, and use of a more traditional entablature not only balance the vertical and horizontal elements of the design, but also serve to further improve the design.

With regard to materials and ornamentation, The Design Review Guidelines for New Commercial Construction in Mobile's Historic Districts state that new construction should blend with the historic surroundings without creating a false sense of history. In adopting traditional building divisions and facings, the proposed design blends with nearby historic buildings while the use of simplified forms of historic detailing and the employment of storefront fenestration allow the building to read as a historically attuned infill project.

The Design Review Guidelines for New Commercial Construction in Mobile's Historic Districts address the location, heights, and composition of fencing. The applicants propose fencing the southern and western lot lines. A photograph of the proposed fence design has been submitted. The proposed design and composition of the fencing meets the design standards. The eight foot privacy fence would extend around the perimeter of the property. Said fence would stop at point behind the front plane of the existing building. Additional fencing would enclose the mechanical area located northwest of the building, as well as a dumpster enclosure located ten feet of the South property line. The latter would be six feet in height and painted to harmonize with the building. The height of the dumpster enclosure would be

With regard to paving materials, the Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts allow the use of modern paving materials. That said, the design, location, and materials employed in parking areas should be compatible with the site. Landscaping greatly assists in creating a setting sensitive to the historical environs. The proposed parking area would be located to the rear of the main building. It would adjoin an existing parking lot that services the property's existing building. The applicant is applying for a PUD that would allow of shared parking after the property has been subdivided. Like the existing lot, the proposed parking extension would feature asphalt paving, concrete curbing, and concrete walks. The materials meet the design standards. While the parking is appropriately relegated to the rear of building, said parking abuts a residential neighborhood. In accord with municipal regulations, a ten foot buffer has been provided. No constructions or installations (such as garbage dumpsters) are allowed in said buffer zone. In addition to aforementioned recommendation regarding the height of fencing, Staff recommends the installation of extensive landscaping about the perimeter of the site, and the base of the building. Acting on a recommendation made at the previous meeting, the watertable-like divide has been raised so to be visible beyond foundation plantings. Additionally, a concrete walkway connecting the main entrance to the public sidewalk has been added. This feature was another Board recommendation. The previous Staff Report called for internal landscaping adequate to break up the extensive expanses of paving. A landscaped island has been provided. A detailed landscaping plan is forthcoming. Components of the plantings should be overstory. As depicted on the site plan, existing trees would have to be removed. Removal of any trees would have to be approved the office of Urban Forestry.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Based on B (1-7), Staff does not believe this application in its incomplete form impairs the architectural or the historical character of the historic district. Pending submissions pertaining to landscaping & materials, and clarifications regarding paving & details, Staff recommends a concept approval of this application with a final approval when all information is provided and accepted. In this instance, a concept approval would indicate that the information provided thus far is acceptable to the Board and, provided the missing information is acceptable, the project will be approved as presented.