Architectural Review Board Minutes

October 15, 2025 – 3:00 P.M.

ADMINISTRATIVE

The meeting was called to order by the acting Chair, Abby Davis, at 3:00 pm.

1. **Roll Call**

Members present: Abby Davis, Karrie Maurin, Stephen McNair, Jennifer Roselius, and Barja Wilson

Members absent: Cartledge Blackwell, Catarina Echols, Stephen Howle, and Cameron Pfeiffer-Traylor

2. Approval of Minutes from September 17, 2025

Jennifer Roselius moved to approve the minutes from the September 17, 2025 meeting.

The motion was seconded by Karrie Maurin and approved unanimously.

3. **Approval of Mid-Month COAs granted by Staff**

Stephen McNair moved to approve the mid-month COAs granted by Staff.

The motion was seconded by Barja Wilson and approved unanimously.

MID-MONTH APPROVALS - APPROVED

1. **Applicant:** Wrico Signs
   Property Address: 101 Dauphin Street
   Date of Approval: 09/25/2025
   Project: Install a 30" x 74" single-faced pan sign with flat cut lettering. Letters will be mounted with angle brackets and attached to center of storefront transom. Sign will read "Canfor" in black letters on white background

2. **Applicant:** Old Shell Real Estate
   Property Address: 1321 Springhill Ave
   Date of Approval: 09/25/2025
   Project: Reroof with shingles. Color: Pewter

3. **Applicant:** Novare LLC
Date of Approval: 09/26/2025
Property Address: 154 Davitt Street
Project: Reroof with shingles. Color: Black Shadow

4. **Applicant:** Morgan Harland
Property Address: 310 Regina Ave
Date of Approval: 09/26/2025
Project: Reroof with shingles. Color: Charcoal

5. **Applicant:** Norman Sigler
Property Address: 1137 Montauk Ave
Date of Approval: 09/29/2025
Project: Install new handrail at porch stair. Handrail to be wood with simple square pickets painted to match trim.

6. **Applicant:** Fortified Exteriors LLC
Property Address: 358 Adler Ave
Date of Approval: 09/30/2025
Project: Reroof with shingles. Color: Charcoal Black

7. **Applicant:** Porchlight LLC
Property Address: 413 Dauphin Street
Date of Approval: 09/30/25
Project: Temporary removal of projecting blade signage for repairs and renovations to the sign and historic structure. The sign will be replaced after renovations are complete.

8. **Applicant:** ASF Contracting LLC
Property Address: 153 S. Catherine St
Date of Approval: 10/01/25
Project: Reroof with shingles. Color: Old English Pewter

9. **Applicant:** Moore Housing Group LLC
Property Address: 1719 Dauphin Street
Date of Approval: 10/01/25
Project: After the fact installation of a low-sloping wood walkway to accommodate ADA compliance. Sidewalk would measure approximately 3'-0" wide and would extend from front entry door on east side of facade, westward for 33' -9 1/4" The walkway would sit behind (south) existing concrete walkway, minimally visible from ROW

10. **Applicant:** Big Moore Roofing

Property Address: 1358 Dauphin Street
Date of Approval: 10/02/25
Project: Reroof with shingles. Color: Black

11. **Applicant:** Joseph Hartman
Property Address: 1169 Elmira Street
Date of Approval: 10/06/25
Project: Stabilize and secure building with temporary exterior grade plywood to include windows, exterior walls, porch floor, etc. Open roof will be 'dried in' in anticipation of a reroof permit.
THIS TEMPORARY COA IS VALID FOR 60 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF ISSUANCE

APPLICATIONS - APPROVED

1. 2025-39-CA
Address: 1008 Elmira Street
Historic District: Oakleigh Garden
Applicant/Agent GeeGee Watt on behalf of Jesse Burks
Project: Demolish historic dwelling

2. 2025-40-CA
Address: 356 Dunham Street
Historic District: Oakleigh Garden
Applicant/Agent GeeGee Watt on behalf of Jesse Burks
Project: Demolish historic dwelling

3. 2025-45-CA
Address: 60 Fearnway Street
Historic District: Old Dauphin Way
Applicant/Agent John King
Project: Construct a detached garage

4. 2025-46-CA
Address: 406 Conti Street
Historic District: Church Street East
Applicant/Agent John Ruzic on behalf of Cheerful Credit, LLC.
Project: Demolish historic structure

5. 2025-47-CA
Address: 360 Dauphin Street
Historic District: Lower Dauphin Street
Applicant/Agent Deas Construction, Inc.
Project: Install new storefront and bulkhead in existing opening on south façade

OTHER BUSINESS

The next ARB meeting is scheduled for November 5, 2025.

Architectural Review Board
October 15, 2025

Agenda Item #1
Application 2025-39-CA

DETAILS

Location:
1008 Elmira Street

Summary of Request:
Demolish historic dwelling

Applicant (as applicable):
GeeGee Watt

Property Owner:
Jesse Burks

Historic District:
Oakleigh Garden

Classification:
Contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- The subject dwelling is an advanced state of deterioration.
- The application does not include redevelopment plans

Report Contents:

PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

Oakleigh Garden Historic District was initially listed in the National Register in 1972 under Criteria A (historic significance) and C (architectural significance) for its local significance in the areas of architecture, landscape architecture, and planning and development. The district is significant for its high concentration of 19th- and 20th-century architectural types and styles and significant in the area of landscape architecture for its canopies of live oaks planted from 1850 to 1910. The district is significant in the area of planning and development as the location of Washington Square, one of only two antebellum public parks remaining in Mobile. The district was expanded in 1984, and an updated nomination was approved in 2016.

The property at 1008 Elmira is a c. 1895 one-story wood frame shotgun with Victorian detailing. It consists of a two-bay façade with full-width front porch incorporated under a gable roof and supported by turned posts with decorative brackets. A cross-gable projection extends from the west elevation. The house has been minimally altered from its original form. It is currently in a deteriorated state.

According to Historic Development records, this property has never appeared before the Architectural Review Board (ARB).

SCOPE OF WORK

Demolish historic dwelling.

APPLICABLE STANDARDS (*Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts*)

1. Consider the current significance of a structure previously determined to be historic.
    - An analysis should be undertaken to determine if the historic structure retains its integrity. In some cases, a property previously identified as a contributing historic structure may no longer retain its integrity due to changes to the structure since the time it was originally determined to be historic.
2. Impact on the Street and District
    - Consider the impact of removing the historic structure relative to its context.
    - Consider whether the building is part of an ensemble of historic buildings that create a neighborhood. (12.0)
3. Nature of Proposed Development
    - Consider the future utilization of the site. (12.0)

STAFF ANALYSIS

<u>The significance of the structure</u>

The house at 1008 Elmira is listed as a contributing property in the Oakleigh Garden Historic District. The modest two-bay shotgun cottage with full-width front porch represents a vernacular form common throughout the Southeast. Permit history, along with aerial and street view photos demonstrate that the structure has been allowed to deteriorate significantly in the last ten years. A site visit revealed severe rot, collapsed walls, exposure to the elements, and overgrown vegetation

<u>Impact on the Street and District</u>

The *Guidelines* state that whether the building in question is "one of the last remaining positive examples of its kind in the neighborhood, county, or region" should be factored into any decision involving the removal of a structure within a historic district. As stated above, the shotgun form, such as the one located at 1008 Elmira Street, is common to this region, and the prevalence of its form is a defining feature of Mobile's historic built environment. Although many can still be seen throughout Mobile's historic districts and beyond, the numbers are declining due to demolition.

The *Guidelines* further instruct that the impact of a structure's demolition on surrounding structures, including neighboring properties, properties on the same block or across the street, or properties throughout the individual historic district should be considered. The historic rhythm of development along the north side of the subject block along Elmira Street remains intact, with all structures represented on the 1956 Sanborn Insurance Map still extant. The deletion of the historic cottage at 1008 Elmira would be the first disruption of the historic development along the north side of the subject block. Along the south side of the block, the historic dwelling at 1005 Elmira has been removed, creating a vacant lot. The loss of a structure along the north side of Elmira Street would contribute to the emergence of a gap-toothed appearance along this part of the street.

Nature of proposed development at the origination property

The *Guidelines* instruct that the future use of a cleared site should be considered. No plans for development of the lot post demolition have been submitted with the application.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY - September 17, 2025

Gerlinde Watt and Ellen Thomas were present to represent the application.

No members of the public spoke for or against the application

BOARD DISCUSSION - September 17, 2025

Catarina Echols stated that demolition applications typically included a structurally engineering report and plans for future development, neither of which were submitted in this case. Jennifer Roselius asked if the Board could make approval conditional on receiving plans for future development in future. Ms. Roselius clarified that she would not support demolition without a structural assessment. Cameron Pfeiffer-Traylor concurred that the board did not have sufficient information before them to show that demolition was the only viable path forward.

Ms. Watt stated that her employer was considering purchasing the property from the current owner but would only do so if able to demolish the existing house. Ms. Watt's employer did not want to spend money drawing up new construction plans before knowing that demolition would be allowed. Ms. Watt stated that her employer planned to construct a single-family home on the property.

Ms. Traylor asked if Ms. Watt had experience evaluating the condition of historic properties. Ms. Watt responded that she had some experience evaluating housing with the South Alabama Regional Planning Society. Ms. Watt stated that, in her opinion, rehabilitation of the existing structure would not be economically viable. Abby Davis recommended that the applicant engage a structural engineer to complete a building condition assessment. Ms. Davis also stated that the Board had to have a plan for the future of the sight to review. This could be as simple as plans to clear debris and then sod and mow the empty lot.

Ellen Thomas, also representing the application, stated that the City of Mobile's Code Enforcement Division had been in the process of recording a lis pendens on the property. However, the division had delayed issuing the lis pendens on the understanding that the applicant would purchase and demolish the property. Ms. Echols asked if there was any formal documentation of this. Annie Allen confirmed that the city had delayed officially condemning the building to allow the owner time to either secure or demolish the building or to sell the property.

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION - September 17, 2025

Ms. Roselius moved that the Board table the application for discussion in the future when the applicant was able to provide proper documentation that the building so structurally unsound as to be beyond rehabilitation.

Ms. Davis seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY - October 15, 2025

Gerlinde Watt and Christine Irby of Irby Group were present to represent the application. Ms. Watt explained that, since asking to table the application on September 17, Irby Group had submitted a letter from a structural engineer stating that the subject property was unsound. Ms. Irby stated that they intended to reuse any salvageable design elements in the new design for a single-family home on the subject lot.

No members of the public spoke for or against the application

BOARD DISCUSSION - October 15, 2025

Ms. Roselius thanked the applicant for submitting the engineer's report, as requested. Ms. Roselius asked if the City had ever officially condemned the building. Ms. Watt explained that a City official had agreed to delay condemnation to allow the applicant to purchase the property with clear title. Ms. Watt further explained that she had submitted a letter detailing Irby Group's intent to remove debris, maintain the lot, and move forward with reconstruction as soon as possible.

Ms. Davis asked if Irby Group already had concrete construction plans, or if they would need time to develop these after demolition. Ms. Watt confirmed that there would be a period of time that the lot sat vacant while they developed construction plans. Ms. Watt stated that the lot would be well maintained until ready to begin construction.

Stephen McNair asked if the intent was to construct a duplex or a single-family home. Ms. Irby confirmed that they intend to build a new single-family residence. Ms. Irby further stated that they planned to reuse any salvageable design elements, such as decorative brackets, if these were in salvageable condition. If no original material is salvageable, Irby Group plans to replicate some original details using new materials.

Ms. Roselius stated that, while she hates to see any demolition in the historic districts, the submitted engineering report indicates that the building is in such an advanced state of deterioration that demolition is now the only option.

FINDING FACTS - October 15, 2025

Mr. McNair moved that, based on the evidence presented, the Board find the facts in the Staff's report as written.

Karrie Maurin seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION - October 15, 2025

Ms. Roselius moved that, based on the facts approved by the Board, the application would not impair the architectural or historic character of the property or the district, and that the application should be granted a COA.

Mr. McNair seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Architectural Review Board
October 15, 2025

Agenda Item #2
Application 2025-40-CA

DETAILS

Location:
356 Dunham Street

Summary of Request:
Demolish historic dwelling

Applicant (as applicable):
Jesse Burks

Property Owner:
GeeGee Watt

Historic District:
Oakleigh Garden (Local Only)

Classification:
Contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- The subject dwelling is an advanced state of deterioration which presents a public danger
- The property has been cited by Municipal Enforcement
- The application does not include redevelopment plans

Report Contents:

PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

Oakleigh Garden Historic District was initially listed in the National Register in 1972 under Criteria A (historic significance) and C (architectural significance) for its local significance in the areas of architecture, landscape architecture, and planning and development. The district is significant for its high concentration of 19th- and 20th-century architectural types and styles and significant in the area of landscape architecture for its canopies of live oaks planted from 1850 to 1910. The district is significant in the area of planning and development as the location of Washington Square, one of only two antebellum public parks remaining in Mobile. The district was expanded in 1984, and an updated nomination was approved in 2016.

The property at 356 Dunham is a c. 1900 one-story raised frame dwelling with hipped roof and a full-width front porch. A small side wing projects off the south elevation. The 1904 Sanborn map shows that originally both the façade and the side projection were accentuated by full-width porches. At some point, the side porch was removed, and the front porch was rebuilt with masonry in the Craftsman style and screened in.

According to Historic Development records, this property has never appeared before the Architectural Review Board (ARB).

SCOPE OF WORK

Demolish historic dwelling.

APPLICABLE STANDARDS (*Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts*)

1. Consider the current significance of a structure previously determined to be historic.
    - An analysis should be undertaken to determine if the historic structure retains its integrity. In some cases, a property previously identified as a contributing historic structure may no longer retain its integrity due to changes to the structure since the time it was originally determined to be historic.
2. Impact on the Street and District
    - Consider the impact of removing the historic structure relative to its context.
    - Consider whether the building is part of an ensemble of historic buildings that create a neighborhood. (12.0)
3. Nature of Proposed Development
    - Consider the future utilization of the site. (12.0)

STAFF ANALYSIS

<u>The significance of the structure</u>

The house at 365 Dunham is listed as a contributing property in the local only portion of the Oakleigh Garden Historic District. The modest raised cottage with full-width front porch and small side projection represents a vernacular form common throughout Mobile's historic districts. Permit history, along with aerial and street view photos demonstrate that the structure has been allowed to deteriorate significantly. A site visit revealed that the dwelling appears structurally compromised. Of note were a collapsed rear end wall and extensive rot to exterior elevations. The property was cited by Municipal Enforcement as a public nuisance in May of this year.

<u>Impact on the Street and District</u>

The *Guidelines* state that whether the building in question is "one of the last remaining positive examples of its kind in the neighborhood, county, or region" should be factored into any decision involving the removal of a structure within a historic district. As stated above, the vernacular form such as the one located at 356 Dunham Street, is common to the local area, and the prevalence of its form is a defining feature of Mobile's historic built environment. Although many can still be seen throughout Mobile's historic districts and beyond, the numbers are declining due to demolition.

The *Guidelines* further instruct that the impact of a structure's demolition on surrounding structures, including neighboring properties, properties on the same block or across the street, or properties throughout the individual historic district should be considered. The historic rhythm of development along the west side of the subject block along Dunham Street remains mostly intact, with all but one of the structures represented on the 1904 Sanborn Insurance Map still extant. The deletion of the historic cottage at 356 Dunham would further disrupt this largely preserved historic development along this side of the street. The east side of this block of Dunham Street had experienced more significant loss of its original structures, leaving multiple vacant lots. The loss of a structure along the west side of Dunham Street would further contribute to the street's loss of integrity.

Nature of proposed development at the origination property

The *Guidelines* instruct that the future use of a cleared site should be considered. No plans for development of the lot post demolition have been submitted with the application.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY - September 17, 2025

Gerlinde Watt and Ellen Thomas were present to represent the application. Ms. Watt explained that the City had formally condemned the subject property. Ms. Watt stated that her employer intended to demolish the structure, maintain the lot, and make plans to construct a new single-family home.

No members of the public spoke for or against the application

BOARD DISCUSSION - September 17, 2025

Abby Davis stated that the official condemnation by the city made approving demolition more likely. Ms. Davis explained to the applicant that the Board would still need to see a more concrete plan for the future use of the site. Ms. Watt responded that her employer intended to remove all debris, sod, and maintain the lot.

Catarina Echols echoed Ms. Davis's concern that the Board had not been presented with a clear plan for the future use of the site. Ms. Echols wondered why the applicant did not simply develop one of the nearby vacant lots. Cameron Pfeiffer-Traylor stated that the application presented too many unknowns to allow the Board to review it.

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION - September 17, 2025

Ms. Davis moved that the Board table the application for discussion in the future when the applicant was able to provide clear plans for the future use of the site.

Ms. Traylor seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY - October 15, 2025

Gerlinde Watt and Christine Irby of Irby Group were present to represent the application. Ms. Watt explained that, since asking to table the application on September 17, the City had removed vegetation from the property, which allowed her and a structural engineer to see that the damage to the property was more significant than previously thought. Referencing photographs submitted to the Board, Ms. Watt explained that entire walls and portions of the roof had completely collapsed, leaving much of the building interior open to the elements. Portions of the building were in imminent danger of collapse.

Ms. Irby stated that Irby Group intended to take on the full cost of demolition, if given Board approval. Ms. Irby explained that this property was already condemned by the City, and if Irby Group was not given approval to demolish, the demolition would still occur at the City's expense.

No members of the public spoke for or against the application

BOARD DISCUSSION - October 15, 2025

Karrie Maurin stated that it was unfortunate that the Board was reviewing multiple demolitions in a single agenda. However, Ms. Maurin stated that the applicant had worked diligently with the Board to provide adequate documentation that the subject properties were indeed beyond the point of rehabilitation.

Ms. Davis asked for confirmation that Irby Group also intended to construct a single-family residence on the subject property. Ms. Watt and Ms. Irby answered in the affirmative.

FINDING FACTS - October 15, 2025

Jennifer Roselius moved that, based on the evidence presented, the Board find the facts in the Staff's report as written.

Ms. Maurin seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION - October 15, 2025

Barja Wilson moved that, based on the facts approved by the Board, the application would not impair the architectural or historic character of the property or the district, and that the application should be granted a COA.

Stephen McNair seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Architectural Review Board
October 15, 2025

Agenda Item #3
Certified Record 2025-45-CA

DETAILS

Location:
60 Fearnway Street

Summary of Request:
construct a new garage structure

Applicant (as applicable):
John King

Property Owner:
John and Bradley King

Historic District:
Old Dauphin Way

Classification:
Contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- The proposed new garage would be located to the rear of the main residence.
- The scale of the proposed structure is larger than typical historic accessory structures yet is compatible with the existing structure.
- All materials comply with the Guidelines.

Report Contents:

PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

Old Dauphin Way Historic District was initially listed in the National Register in 1984 under Criterion C for significant architecture and community planning. The district includes most nineteenth-century architectural styles and shows adaptations of middle-class domestic designs of the nineteenth century to the regional, Gulf Coast climate. It includes "fine examples of commercial, institutional, and religious structures as well as 20th-century apartments."

The property at 60 Fearnway Street is a c. 1910 frame bungalow designed by C.L. Hutchinsson Sr. for Mr. G. Russell Hollinger. Originally a one-story rectangular structure with a projecting west gable and a wide single bay porch, the dwelling received a rear second story addition in 2020.

The property has never appeared before the Architectural Review Board (ARB).

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Construct new enclosed garage structure.
   a. The proposed structure would be located to the east (rear) of the main structure. It would measure 24'-0" wide by 42'-0" deep. Side setbacks would measure 1'-6" off the north property line, and 25'-1" off of the south property line.
   b. The height of the enclosed garage from grade to ridge would measure 21'-2 3/6" high. The side walls would measure 9'-11", with a roof height of 10'-11 3/8".
   c. The garage would rest on a concrete slab foundation.
   d. The garage structure would be covered by a gable roof and clad in architectural shingles to match the existing dwelling.
   e. The walls would be clad in cementitious siding with a profile matching that on the original dwelling.
   f. Three gabled dormers would project from the south slope of the roof.
   g. Elevations would appear as follows:
      South elevation – Three steel paneled overhead garage doors would be equally spaced across the elevation. Doors would measure 12'-0" W by 8'-0" H.
      North elevation- No fenestration is proposed for this elevation.
      East elevation – One six-over-six window would be centered on the gable. The window would measure 3'-0" W by 5'-0" H.
      West elevation – One six-over-six window would be centered on the gable. The window would measure 3'-0" W by 5'-0" H; One pane-and-panel door measuring 3'-0" W by 6'-8" H would be located on the south end of the elevation.
   h. All windows would be aluminum-clad wood.

APPLICABLE STANDARDS (*Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts*)

1. **9.1** Design an accessory structure to be subordinate in scale to that of the primary structure.
   - If a proposed accessory structure is larger than the size of typical historic accessory structures in the district, break up the mass of the larger structure into smaller modules that reflect traditional accessory structures.
2. **9.2** Locate a new accessory structure in line with other visible accessory structures in the district.
   - These are traditionally located at the rear of a lot.

ACCEPTABLE ACCESSORY STRUCTURE MATERIALS Materials that are compatible with the historic district in scale and character are acceptable.
These often include:
» Wood frame
» Masonry
» Cement-based fiber siding

» Installations (Pre-made store-bought sheds, provided they are minimally visible from public areas)

UNACCEPTABLE ACCESSORY STRUCTURE MATERIALS Materials that are not compatible with the historic district in scale and character are unacceptable.
These often include:
» Metal (except for a greenhouse)
» Plastic (except for a greenhouse)
» Fiberglass (except for a greenhouse)

STAFF ANALYSIS

The dwelling at 60 Fearnway is a contributing resource to the Old Dauphin Way Historic District. The application under review seeks approval to construct a new freestanding garage.

The *Guidelines* require new accessory structures to be subordinate in scale to that of the primary structure. At approximately 21'-0", the height of the proposed building is taller than most one-story accessory structures. The rear portion of the main residence has been raised to a full two-story height and measures over 24'-0" high, making the proposed garage comparable in height. The existing dwelling measures 3266sf compared to the proposed garage's smaller footprint of 1008sf. Although the proposed garage structure expresses a somewhat larger footprint than typical historic accessory structures in the surrounding area, the structure would sit at a considerable distance from the dwelling. As such its massing does not appear out of place on the large lot. (9.1)

Accessory structures should be placed behind or to the side of the primary structure on a property and be composed of materials that are compatible with the primary structure and the district. The proposed structure would be placed to the rear the existing house, in accordance with the *Guidelines*. The structure would employ materials considered approvable under the *Guidelines*. (9.2)

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

John King was present to discuss the application. Mr. King stated that he and his wife had lived in the residence at 60 Fearnway for more than 20 years. Mr. King explained that he had three teenaged children who were of driving age, and that the family owns five cars. The new garage was therefore a much-needed addition to the property.

No members of the public spoke for or against the application

BOARD DISCUSSION

Karrie Maurin asked if an existing garage had been demolished. Mr. King stated that there was no existing garage. He believed that the staff report reference to an existing structure was a clerical error. Ms. Maurin stated that the proposed design did not really match the main residence. She stated that some bracketing similar to that on the main residence would help. Ms. Maurin asked if the structure could be located at the rear of the lot. Mr. King stated that moving the structure to the rear of the lot would cut off their access to a rear alleyway. Currently they have an agreement with their neighbor to use a shared driveway. If that arrangement ever changed, the rear alleyway would provide their only vehicular access to the property.

Jennifer Roselius stated that the garage would be so close to the property line that it would likely require a zoning variance. Mr. King stated that he was in the process of applying for this approval.

Abby Davis expressed agreement with Ms. Maurin that the building was not architecturally similar to the main residence. She stated that shed dormers would be more appropriate than the gable dormers shown in the elevation drawings. Ms. Davis also recommended using carriage doors and exposed rafter tails.

Ms. Roselius stated that she was less bothered by the lack of architectural details since the garage would be minimally visible from the public right-of-way. Ms. Roselius suggested that the Board could approve the plans as submitted and that the applicant could work with staff to make any alterations to architectural details that would be more appropriate to the style of the main residence. Ms. Maurin seconded this and added that she would be willing to sit on a Design Review Committee if the applicant so chose.

Annie Allen asked for confirmation that the ARB was giving the application full approval as submitted and without a condition that the applicant work with staff to add more appropriate architectural details. Ms. Roselius responded in the affirmative.

FINDING FACTS

Ms. Roselius moved that, based on the evidence presented, the Board find the facts in the Staff's report as written.

Stephen McNair seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION

Ms. Roselius moved that, based on the facts approved by the Board, the application would not impair the architectural or historic character of the property or the district, and that the application should be granted a COA.

Ms. Maurin seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Architectural Review Board
October 15, 2025

Agenda Item #4
Application 2025-46-CA

DETAILS

Location:
406 Conti Street

Summary of Request:
Demolish historic structure

Applicant (as applicable):
John Ruzic

Property Owner:
Cheerful Credit, LLC.

Historic District:
Church Street East

Classification:
Non-contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- The property under review includes two frame dwellings incorporated into one building
- The house to the west is in a state of disrepair
- The applicant has included statements of structural integrity
- The dwelling has lost all architectural integrity

Report Contents:

PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

Church Street East Historic District was initially listed in the National Register in 1971 under Criteria A (historic significance) and C (architectural significance) for its local significance in the areas of architecture, education, and urban planning. The district is significant for its concentration of multiple 19th century architectural styles and because it encompasses the site of Mobile in the early 1700s. The district boundaries were expanded in 1984 and 2005.

The property at 406 Conti consists of two c. 19th century frame dwellings encapsulated within a more modern façade. The frame dwelling to the west is slightly older, appearing on the 1885 Sanborn map as a two-story structure. Its actual construction date is unclear. The frame dwelling to the west is not present on the 1885 Sanborn but appears on the 1891 overlay. The dwellings were combined with the addition of outer partially masonry walls sometime in the 1950s.

The property has never appeared before the Architectural Review Board (ARB).

SCOPE OF WORK

Demolish historic structure

APPLICABLE STANDARDS (*Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts*)

1. Consider the current significance of a structure previously determined to be historic.
    - An analysis should be undertaken to determine if the historic structure retains its integrity. In some cases, a property previously identified as a contributing historic structure may no longer retain its integrity due to changes to the structure since the time it was originally determined to be historic.
2. Impact on the Street and District
    - Consider the impact of removing the historic structure relative to its context.
    - Consider whether the building is part of an ensemble of historic buildings that create a neighborhood. (12.0)
3. Nature of Proposed Development
    - Consider the future utilization of the site. (12.0)

STAFF ANALYSIS

The application under review proposes the demolition of one of two historic dwellings at 406 Conti Street.

The property at 406 Conti, which consists of two frame historic dwellings, is designated as non-contributing. Due to extensive alterations, the two houses have lost their architectural integrity and no longer contribute to the district's historic built heritage. The houses are in a state of disrepair. According to submitted letters from architects and designers on site who are involved in a wider project at the subject and adjoining parcels, the house on the west end of the lot has lost its structural integrity.

Because of the loss of architectural integrity, the loss of this structure would not adversely impact the architectural character of the district. However, the vacancy created by the demolition would contribute to a gap-tooth appearance along the street.

The *Guidelines* instruct that the future use of a cleared site should be considered. No plans for development of the lot post demolition have been submitted with the application. The applicant plans to keep and reuse all salvageable materials from the building. Post demolition, the area would be incorporated into a collective site plan and wider redevelopment scheme which includes 413 and 415 Dauphin Street. Preliminary plans for this

broader project are underway. In the interim, all debris would be removed, and the site would be secured and maintained. (12.0)

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

John Ruzic was present to discuss the application. Mr. Ruzic briefly explained the history of the development of the property. As Mr. Ruzic stated, the building at 406 Conti Street is actually two 19th-century dwellings connected and encased in a later 20th-century shell. Mr. Ruzic stated that the earlier dwelling at the west end of the property was originally two stories but that the upper story had been demolished sometime in the 20th Century. Mr. Ruzic explained that the earlier dwelling is now in danger of imminent collapse. He stated that the later dwelling at the east end of the property would be preserved and rehabilitated as part of the larger historic tax credit project on the north side of this city block.

No members of the public spoke for or against the application

BOARD DISCUSSION

Stephen McNair stated that he was familiar with the property in question, and he agreed with Mr. Ruzic's characterization of the two conjoined residences on Conti Street as a "Frankenstein of two dwellings." Mr. McNair stated that he had been to the property and agreed that the older of the two dwellings was unstable and unsafe.

Karrie Maurin asked if the CMU wall to the west of the building would remain. Mr. Ruzic said that it would remain for the time being.

Abby Davis asked what the full plan for the site would be after demolition. Mr. Ruzic stated that he was still working on the full site plan. Ms. Maurin asked if he had a timeline for this design process. Mr. Ruzic stated he expected to have a completed plan in 6 months. Mr. Ruzic explained that the lot resulting from demolition would be worked into the larger project ongoing at 415 Dauphin Street.

Ms. Maurin asked why Mr. Ruzic was proposing a demolition before he had a completed design. Mr. Ruzic explained that the property was a puzzle of several different buildings that have undergone so many alterations that it is difficult to understand how the complex fits together. Mr. Ruzic stated that his team had to peel back layers of alterations before they could fully understand the main core of the structure. Ms. Maurin asked if he had any plans for demolishing the second later residence at 406 Conti. Mr. Ruzic answered in the negative.

Ms. Maurin expressed concern that the demolition would create a void in the street frontage for an unknown length of time. Ms. Davis seconded Ms. Maurin's concerns in addition to concerns over security of the site. Both Ms. Maurin and Ms. Davis expressed a reluctance to approve a demolition without concrete plans going forward. Mr. Ruzic explained that to move forward with rehabilitation plans at 404 Conti Street, it would be necessary to remove the connector roof between the two properties. Mr. Ruzic stated that the connector roof was all that was holding up the portion of 406 Conti Street proposed for demolition. Removal of the connector roof would likely lead to a partial collapse of the property. Mr. Ruzic expressed his belief that partial demolition of 406 Conti Street was necessary for the safety of the crew working on the portion of the building that was still salvageable.

Jennifer Roselius asked how Mr. Ruzic proposed securing the vacant lot after demolition. Mr. Ruzic explained that he would install a construction fence as temporary security until he could finalize plans to construct a new structure on the site. He stated that he hoped to avoid spending funds on more permanent fencing in the interim.

Ms. Davis asked what the grade material would be on the vacant lot. Mr. Ruzic stated that he planned maintain the land with temporary plantings until construction began. Mr. McNair stated that he would need to secure the

building opening left by partial demolition against vagrants. He suggested something lockable, such as painted plywood on hinges. Mr. Ruzic stated that he was amenable to this suggestion.

Ms. Roselius stated that she was comfortable moving forward with approval of the application today. She asked if the Board would like to amend the application to state that there will be temporary construction fencing and some type of sodding or gravel on the site to control erosion. Mr. Ruzic was agreeable to these conditions.

FINDING FACTS

Ms. Roselius moved that, based on the evidence presented, the Board amend the facts in the Staff's report to include that after demolition the applicant will provide planting, sodding, or gravel to stabilize erosion and construction fencing to secure the site.

Ms. Maurin seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION

Ms. Roselius moved that, based on the facts approved by the Board, the application would not impair the architectural or historic character of the property or the district, and that the application should be granted a COA.

Barja Wilson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #5
Certified Record 2025-47-CA

DETAILS

Location:
360 Dauphin Street

Summary of Request:
Alterations to south facade

Applicant (as applicable):
Deas Construction Inc.

Property Owner:
Propiedades Downtown, LLC

Historic District:
Lower Dauphin Commercial District

Classification:
Non-contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- The subject structure is a facade remnant of a building listed as non-contributing in the original district nomination in 1982. The building roof, interior, and storefront were demolished in 1981.
- The *Guidelines* allow the ARB to consider alternative designs where a traditional storefront display window is not needed.
- The overall proportions and materials of the proposed windows and brick infill echo the form of a storefront window over a masonry bulkhead.
- The proposed windows do not have transom lights. Transom lights would better comply with the Guidelines and maintain the streetscape's established fenestration patterns.
- The application proposes applying a low-e film. The Guidelines direct that applied window films should not be opaque or reflective.

Report Contents:

PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

Lower Dauphin Street Commercial Historic District was initially listed in the National Register in 1979 under Criteria A (historic significance) and C (architectural significance) for its local significance in the areas of commerce and architecture. The district is significant for its unique character stemming from the high concentration of closely spaced two- and three-story brick buildings and as Mobile's nineteenth century commercial thoroughfare. The district boundaries were expanded in 1982, 1995, 1998, and 2019.

360 Dauphin Street is three-story commercial building constructed in stages between 1994 and 2013 and tied into the c. 1919 facade of the former Wilkins-Higgins Candy Company. The three-story building was initially listed as contributing to the Lower Dauphin Commercial Historic District in 1982 but was reclassified as non-contributing in 2008 due to a loss of original building elements including the full interior and all windows and storefronts. A one-story masonry facade abuts the west exterior wall of the main three-story structure. The one-story facade currently does not have a roof structure or any interior walls or finishes. Both properties are parceled as 360 Dauphin Street. The current application concerns proposed alterations to the one-story facade only.

What remains of the one-story facade dates to sometime between 1924 and 1956. From 1885 to 1924, Sanborn maps show a two-story masonry structure in this location. By 1956, Sanborn maps show the same building footprint but only one-story in height. The façade was likely reconstructed or significantly altered during this time. The existing facade is clad in a brick that closely matches the ca. 1919 facade of the adjoining 3-story Wilkins-Higgins building. This new cladding likely occurred when the second story of the subject structure was removed. A cold joint between the two claddings supports the conclusion that the facade of the one-story structure postdates the 1919 construction of the Wilkins-Higgins building.

A photograph taken in 1981 shows the one-story structure with its existing brick cladding and a recessed plateglass storefront over a bulkhead of unknown material. In 1981, a Federal Historic Tax Credit application was submitted for both properties. Construction progress photos taken between 1981 and 1985 show that all existing windows and storefronts were removed from both buildings during this period. By 1985, the one-story building had also lost its roof and full interior. In 1994, a fire reportedly gutted what remained of the interior of the neighboring Wilkins-Higgins building. Both facades were stabilized and shortly thereafter a one-story interior constructed behind the Wilkins-Higgins facade. This space operated as a restaurant throughout much of the 2000s and 2010s. During this period, the shell of the one-story structure was used as an outdoor courtyard dining area. The second and third floors of the Wilkins-Higgins building were reconstructed in 2015.

This property has appeared seven times before the Architectural Review Board (ARB). In 1989, the ARB approved an application to install awnings over entrances across both facades. In May 1994, the ARB issued concept approval for a rehabilitation project with instructions to return with more detailed plans. In October 1994, the ARB approved installation of fencing across the storefront openings for both facades and denied a request to replace existing balconies on the Wilkins-Higgins buildings with more decorative wrought iron balconies. In 2006, the ARB denied an application to demolish and later reconstruct the upper third of the Wilkins-Higgins facade. The façade wall was later stabilized. The ARB approved substantial alterations in September 2013, including relocating an existing stair, constructing a new exterior stair, constructing tiered decks behind the façade wall, and constructing an elevator shaft. In October 2015, the ARB approved replacing non-original windows, doors, and balcony railings as part of the full rehabilitation of the second and third floors. In September 2016, the ARB approved enclosing the shell of the single-story building, including constructing a new roof and installing a flush wood-and-glass storefront in the opening on the south façade. This work was never completed.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Infill existing rough opening
    a. The existing storefront opening would be infilled and framed to accommodate a bank of windows
    b. The infill would be recessed 1' behind the existing brick facade.
    c. A roll-up impact-rated storm shutter would be concealed above the windows in the cavity between the existing facade and the recessed infill.
    d. Apply a faux "limewash" treatment to blend new brick infill with existing brick claddings from two different construction periods.
2. Install 4 aluminum-and-plate-glass windows
    a. Each window would be a single large pane of plate glass set in an aluminum frame with a clear anodized finish. Each window would measure 6'-0" in height by approximately 3'-10.5" wide, for a total combined width of 15'-6".
    b. Apply a low-e film to window glass.
    c. The proposed sliding windows could be opened in good weather to create an open-air dining area for the adjoining restaurant.

APPLICABLE STANDARDS (*Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts*)

1. **7.2** Repair an altered storefront to its original design.
    - Use historic photographs when determining the original character of a storefront design.
    - Where evidence does not exist, use a contemporary interpretation of a traditional storefront. Consider retaining a non-original storefront where it has achieved historic importance as an option.
2. **7.3** Retain an original bulkhead as a decorative panel.
    - If the original bulkhead is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design that is similar in profile, texture and durability to the original.
3. **7.6** Replace a historic storefront to be consistent with the historic location.
    - Locate a new storefront in the same plane as it was historically.
5. **7.8** If replacement of some material is required, use a material that is similar to that of the original.
6. **7.17** If replacement is required, design a detail or ornamentation element to be compatible with the existing historic building and the district.
    - Where a detail has been removed, use photographic evidence to recreate it.
    - Where exact reconstruction is not possible, use a simplified interpretation of the original design detail that maintains the scale and character of original or similar detailing used on buildings of the same period.
    - Use a replacement material that is visually compatible with the original.
7. **7.18**
    - Maintain the original space patterns and location of windows. Most display windows have a bulkhead below and a transom above.
8. **7.19** If required, replace original historic windows to be compatible with the windows on the original historic building.
    - Use large panes of glass that fit the original opening for a display window. Where a display window is no longer required, the ARB will consider an alternative design.
    - Do not use opaque treatments for a window, including black plexiglass. Do not paint a window.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Where a storefront is no longer extant, the *Design Review Guidelines* call for an altered storefront be repaired to its original design using photographic or other documentary evidence. Where evidence does not exist, the Guidelines encourage creating a "contemporary interpretation of a traditional storefront." When constructing a new storefront, the Guidelines prioritize maintaining the storefront's original plane (i.e., not recessing a storefront where the

original was flush and vise versa) as well as the "original space patterns and locations of windows." The Guidelines further specify that most display windows include a bulkhead and a transom and that windows should not have opaque or reflective glass treatments. Finally, while the Guidelines prefer maintaining or recreating an original storefront window and entry, it does allow that "where a display window is no longer required, the ARB will consider an alternative design." (7.2, 7.3, 7.6, 7.18, 7.19)

The proposed design would introduce a bank of windows rather than the traditional storefront entryway. This is typically not considered appropriate in the historic district. However, the Guidelines do allow deviations from the traditional storefront configuration where there is no extant storefront, there is little photographic evidence for reconstruction, and there is no longer a need for a traditional display window. The subject property meets all of these standards. It should also be noted that the subject structure is a facade remnant of a building that was listed as non-contributing. As a facade remnant, the structure has not operated as a traditional commercial property with need of a storefront display window for more than four decades. The ARB therefore has considerable latitude to consider a deviation from a traditional storefront, provided it is compatible in material and proportion with the subject property and the district. (7.2, 7.17, 7.19)

There is no storefront extant on the facade in question, and photographic evidence is insufficient for replicating the form, orientation, or details of an original or historic storefront in this location. Photographic evidence shows that a chamfered recessed glass-and-aluminum storefront existed in 1981, but the storefront shown is clearly not original. The photograph shows that a transom window had been either painted over or boarded. The transom is flush with the facade, suggesting that an earlier storefront may have been flush rather than recessed. At least one panel of a semi-reflective cladding material has been removed or fallen away, revealing brick that appears to have been painted. In short, existing photographic evidence does not provide one specific original or historic design to emulate.

Despite not being a traditional storefront, the proposed design meets the Guidelines requirements in that it includes a bulkhead below the window, uses a high proportion of transparent glass, and uses replacement materials that are visually compatible with the original. The banded windows will emulate the proportions and transparency of a traditional storefront and, when open, will encourage interaction between the building interior and the public realm at least as much as a storefront entrance would have done. The brick bulkhead below the windows will be roughly the same height as that of the neighboring property at 362 Dauphin Street, thereby contributing to the existing rhythm of the streetscape. The brick infill is compatible with existing facade materials, and the aluminum windows are also visually compatible the Wilkins-Higgins and other neighboring buildings. (7.3, 7.8, 7.18, 7.19)

The proposed windows do lack an upper division to give the appearance of a transom. All other buildings on the block feature visible transoms above their storefront windows and/or entrance doors. Moreover, the Design Guidelines encourage including transoms in any new or replacement storefront design. A light divider across the top of the proposed windows roughly in line with the bottom of the transom glass at 362 Dauphin Street would blend better with the established fenestration pattern of the street. (7.18)

The application also proposes installing a low-e film on the windows. The Guidelines discourage the use of opaque window treatments, so any applied window films should maintain an appropriate level of transparency. (7.19)

This project has gone through CRC review.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY - October 15, 2025

Geoff Anderson was present to discuss the application. Mr. Anderson explained that the existing opening in the building façade would be infilled four sliding aluminum windows over a brick bulkhead. The window and brick infill would be recessed slightly from the existing façade to allow for a rolltop storm shutter that could be lowered over the windows when needed.

No members of the public spoke for or against the application

BOARD DISCUSSION - October 15, 2025

Abby Davis asked why the windows themselves were not impact resistant. Mr. Anderson stated that the owner wanted as much transparent glazing as possible and that the impact-resistant windows all had wider frames and less glass. Ms. Davis asked if the permitting department would allow impact resistant windows even with the shutter. According to Ms. Davis, impact resistant windows were typically required in commercial construction whether or not there were storm shutters. Mr. Anderson stated that he had checked with building permitting and that the shutter alone was sufficient.

Stephen McNair asked if the applicant had considered using a protective mesh that could be placed over the windows instead of the rolldown shutter. Mr. McNair stated that since the mesh was fully removable, this would eliminate the need to recess the windows to allow room for the shutter. This would allow for a more traditional façade arrangement. Mr. McNair did point out that the mesh would require adding attachment hooks to the face of the window frame. Mr. Anderson said he had discussed the mesh with permitting and was open to using it.

Karrie Maurin asked why the applicant proposed having a brick bulkhead instead of a wood storefront surround, which would be more in keeping with neighboring buildings. Mr. Anderson stated that he was open to this suggestion, but he would need to consult the property owner. Ms. Maurin also asked why there was no transom above the windows, which would be more in keeping with historic storefronts. Mr. Anderson stated that he was open to adding transoms.

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION - October 15, 2025

Ms. Maurin suggested that the Board table the application for discussion in the future when the applicant was able to provide updated plans showing finalized storm protective measures, transom lights over the windows, and a wood storefront surround and bulkhead instead of the proposed brick bulkhead. Mr. Anderson was agreeable to tabling the application.

Annie Allen asked the Board members present to let her know if they were able to participate in a Design Review Committee for 201 St. Joseph Street immediately following the next ARB hearing on November 5. Ms. Allen stated she would also send this request to all Board members by email.

There being no further business, the hearing adjourned at 3:55.