



Architectural Review Board Minutes

June 5, 2024 – 3:00 P.M.

ADMINISTRATIVE

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

1. Roll Call

Christine Dawson, Historic Development staff, called the roll as follows:

Members Present: Abby Davis, Stephen Howle, Karrie Maurin, Stephen McNair, Cameron Pfeiffer-Traylor, Jennifer Roselius, and Barja Wilson

Members Absent: Cartledge Blackwell and Catarina Echols

Staff Members Present: Annie Allen, Kimberly Branch-Thomas, Christine Dawson, Marion McElroy, Bruce McGowin, and Meredith Wilson

2. Approval of Minutes from May 15, 2024

Stephen McNair moved to approve the minutes from the May 15th, 2024 meeting.

The motion was seconded by Karrie Maurin and approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Mid-Month COAs granted by Staff

Ms. Maurin moved to approve the mid-month COAs granted by Staff.

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

MID-MONTH APPROVALS - APPROVED

1. **Applicant:** AOT, L.L.C.
Property Address: 34 S. Reed Avenue
Issue Date: 05/07/2024
Project:
 1. Install and paint wood turned porch posts.
 2. Add wood trim around newly installed windows and doors on façade. Window and door trim will sit forward of existing framing, in the manner of door trim on the extant historic front doorway.
2. **Applicant:** Michael Stevens
Property Address: 1114 Caroline Avenue
Issue Date: 05/7/2024
Project:
 1. Complete reconstruction of front (South) elevation porch. Install framed wood lattice in between piers.
 2. Conduct in-kind repairs.
 - a. Repair and replace deteriorated wood such as siding to match existing in dimension, profile, and material.
 - b. Repair one existing wood window to match in dimension, profile, and material.
 - c. Repaint the body of the house white with black shutters.
3. **Applicant:** Hodge Alves
Property Address: 1257 Selma Street
Issue Date: 05/08/2024
Project:
 1. Repair and replace in-kind two wood side railings on front porch.
 2. Repaint to match
4. **Applicant:** Chris McCarron
Property Address: 54 S. Hallett Street
Issue Date: 05/10/2024
Project:
 1. Replace portion of wood siding on north elevation that was damaged by fire. Replacement material would be wood lapped siding to match existing.
 2. Paint new siding to match existing structure.
5. **Applicant:** Melissa Kyle
Property Address: 906 Church Street
Issue Date: 05/10/2024
Project: Paint exterior: siding, window frames, porch columns and railing - light cream or beige; window frames and door surround - light green
6. **Applicant:** Mobile Bay Roofing LLC
Property Address: 260 Roper Street
Issue Date: 05/10/2024
Project: Reroof in-kind with shingles. Color: Georgetown Grey
7. **Applicant:** DBK Incorporated
Property Address: 1209 Selma Street
Issue Date: 05/11/2024
Project:
 1. Construct a 25-6"x24' two-car carport/storage structure to the rear of the main residence on the southeast corner of the lot.

- a. The hipped roof will be clad in dimensional fiberglass/asphalt shingles.
 - b. The siding, trim and cornices will be cement fiber.
 - c. The foundation will be concrete slab on grade.
2. Extend concrete driveway to the north. The concrete driveway will widen in front of the carport's west elevation to create a parking area.
8. **Applicant:** John Noce
Property Address: 1709 Laurel Street
Issue Date: 05/13/2024
Project:
 1. Reroof in-kind with shingles. Color: Pewter Gray or Slate
 2. Repaint exterior in following colors: body and trim - SW 7008 Alabaster White; porch deck - BLP Slate Gray 50 85; doors, window sashes, and Foundation - SW 7069 Iron Ore
9. **Applicant:** Michael and Ethel Keeble
Property Address: 259 Charles Street
Issue Date: 05/15/2024
Project: Install a salvaged 36" white picket fence to enclose the front yard.
10. **Applicant:** Demetrius Hendrix
Property Address: 351 Flint Street
Issue Date: 05/15/2024
Project:
 1. Construct a 20'x12' rear wood deck with wood handrail. Four wood steps would access the deck on its east elevation (just north of center) and would be flanked on either side by wood handrails.
 2. Install a 6'-tall wood privacy fence to run the length of the east (rear) property line. Install a 5'-tall aluminum open fence to abut the structure about two-thirds of the way along the north elevation and extend approximately 5'-0" north, then run east along the north property line, abutting the wood privacy fence at the northeast corner of the lot. A double aluminum gate to match the fence would be installed along this elevation across the existing driveway.
 3. Extend the existing driveway 8'-0" to the south.
11. **Applicant:** Philip Smith
Property Address: 603 Church Street
Issue Date: 05/15/2024
Project:
 1. Replace portion of deteriorated 6'-0" wood privacy fence that runs along the south (rear) property line. The replacement fence would be a 6'-0" high and would measure approximately 52'-0" in total along the south property line.
 2. Replace a 22'-0" portion of damaged 8'-0" wood privacy fence located west of the garage, which runs parallel to the north property line. The fence would be replaced with a 6'-0" high painted wood privacy fence and wood gate. Color: Renwick Heather (SW 2818)
12. **Applicant:** Heyer Properties LLC
Property Address: 1354 Dauphin Street
Issue Date: 05/15/2024
Project:
 1. Remove section of siding on west elevation of rear addition to allow for installation of new electric service. Siding to be reinstalled after installation of electric service.

2. Repair and minor replacement of damaged siding around property.
Siding to be replaced in kind with wood and painted to match existing.
 3. Replace porch decking with tongue-and-groove wood decking to match existing.
13. **Applicant:** Octavia Jackson
Property Address: 364 Tuttle Street
Issue Date: 05/17/2024
Project: Replace missing boards and remove/replace damaged boards with new wood siding to match existing. Paint exterior: body - Barracks St. Gray (Vieux Carre Exterior Colors, Sherwin Williams); trim - white or off-white
14. **Applicant:** Chad E Foster
Property Address: 30 McPhillips Avenue
Issue Date: 05/17/2024
Project: Reroof with shingles. Color: Oyster Gray
15. **Applicant:** Cato Services LLC
Property Address: 1559 Bruister Street
Issue Date: 05/20/2024
Project: Repaint exterior of the structure: body - Conde grey beige; porch - Conti Street grey green; trim- De Tonti Square off-white
16. **Applicant:** All Weather Roofing & Construction, LLC
Property Address: 11 N. Reed Avenue
Issue Date: 05/21/2024
Project: Reroof with singles. Color: Black
17. **Applicant:** Poeima, LLC
Property Address: 355 Regina Avenue
Issue Date: 05/22/2024
Project: Reconstruct collapsing two-story front porch to match historic appearance (based on historic photographs and surviving architectural elements), per submitted plans.
18. **Applicant:** FD Stonewater
Property Address: 100 Canal Street
Issue Date: 05/24/2024
Project:
 1. Install 8'-high aluminum picket fencing around perimeter of site, per submitted site plan.
 2. Install landscape/site lighting (4w) and exterior building lighting (8w) per submitted plans.
 3. Install 60' wide, 40' deep, 12'-high perforated metal mechanical yard screen wall on north elevation of office building.
19. **Applicant:** FD Stonewater
Property Address: 100 Canal Street
Issue Date: 05/24/2024
Project: Install 3.5'x4' anodized aluminum and acrylic unlit signage and logo at west end of brick retaining wall along southern perimeter of parcel (at Canal Street). Text to read "U.S. Army Corps of Engineers".
20. **Applicant:** Kimberly Knight
Property Address: 10 S. Conception Street
Issue Date: 05/24/2024

Project: Install a 10'x4' painted sign on panel above storefront. Text to read "Great Day Latte".

APPLICATIONS

1. 2024-28-CA

Address: 401 Civic Center Drive
Historic District: Church Street East
Applicant / Agent: Sam Matheny/Volkert, Inc. on behalf of the City of Mobile
Project: Demolish the Civic Center complex (theater, arena, and exposition hall buildings). Prepare site for redevelopment.

APPROVED - **CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED**

2. 2024-29-CA

Address: 7 Hannon Avenue
Historic District: Old Dauphin Way
Applicant / Agent: M & T Construction and Painting, LLC. on behalf of Abby Bradley
Project: Replace existing siding with fiber cement siding; replace windows with vinyl sashes.

APPROVED - **CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED**

3. 2024-30-CA

Address: 961 Texas Street/505 Charles Street
Historic District: Oakleigh Garden District/none
Applicant / Agent: Tracy Hunter
Project: Relocate contributing house from Oakleigh Garden District to adjacent parcel at 505 Charles Street (no district). Landscape newly vacant lot as side yard to 963 Texas Street.

WITHDRAWN - **CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED**

4. 2024-32-CA

Address: 1001 Oak Street
Historic District: Old Dauphin Way
Applicant / Agent: Douglas Kearley on behalf of Heath Stephens
Project: Reopen front porch; construct new rear porch; fenestration changes on rear elevation.

APPROVED - **CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED**

OTHER BUSINESS

The next ARB meeting will be held on **Tuesday, June 18, 2024**.



Agenda Item #1

Certified Record 2024-28-CA

DETAILS

Location:

401 Civic Center Drive

Summary of Request:

Demolish civic center complex (theater, arena/auditorium, and exposition hall) and related site improvements (landscaping and hardscaping). Prepare property for redevelopment.

Applicant (as applicable):

Sam Matheny/Volkert, Inc.

Property Owner:

City of Mobile

Historic District:

Church Street East

Classification:

Non-Contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- The Civic Center theater and arena buildings were constructed in 1964, and the exposition hall building was constructed in 1973. All three buildings were considered Non-Contributing to the Church Street East district at the time of the last update to the National Register district in 2005.
- The property may be considered historically significant for its association with the Urban Renewal movement, but no official determination has been made by the Alabama Historical Commission or National Park Service.
- The property is not considered architecturally significant.
- The overall condition of the property is good, and the applicant has explored the renovation option.
- The applicant has submitted conceptual plans for a replacement arena.

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PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

Church Street East was locally designated as a historic district by the City of Mobile's Board of Commissioners in 1962, and it was initially listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Department of the Interior (National Park Service) 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 area where the Civic Center complex (theater, arena/auditorium, and exposition hall) is located has been inside the boundaries of the district since at least 1971. 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 subject property, which recently has been subdivided to accommodate a new U.S. Army Corps of Engineers building and a six-story parking garage, is occupied by the 1964 Civic Center theater and arena and the 1973 exposition hall. The 1876 Hopkins ward map of Mobile showed the area bounded by Church, Lawrence, Canal, and Claiborne streets - the land on which the Civic Center and associated parking now exist - was densely developed with residences. The 1885 Sanborn map illustrates only the far northwest corner of the current Civic Center property, showing an area populated with one-story frame dwellings, "tenements", and "shanties." A two-story brick stable with attached one-story brick barber shop is shown on Lawrence Street just north of the current location of Civic Center Drive. Two grocery stores, one at the northeast corner of Monroe and Lawrence and one at the southwest corner of Monroe and Hamilton, were recorded, and a saloon was placed at the southeast corner of Monroe and Lawrence.

The entire Civic Center area is illustrated on the 1891 Sanborn map, which continues to show a densely developed residential area. Interspersed with the mostly one-story frame houses of varying size were grocery stores, barber shops, an ice cream shop, retail stores, a fire station, a church, a saloon, and a restaurant. By the time the 1904 Sanborn map was prepared, more residences including more two-story dwellings were present, and the variety of businesses appears to have narrowed. A two-story frame residence with apparent bay window on its façade was shown at the northeast corner of Monroe and Franklin streets, and a two-story brick furniture store was at the opposite end of the block at the northwest corner of Monroe and Franklin streets. The neighborhood included a Chinese laundry, a barber, Bethel A.M.E. Church, and a furniture warehouse.

The 1924 Sanborn map, updated in 1955, shows a similar pattern with a few exceptions. A cinder block dwelling had been constructed at the southwest corner of Hamilton and Eslava streets at some point between 1924 and 1955, and a cinder block addition had been made to a frame house on Claiborne Street south of Monroe in the same period. The grocery stores and barbers seem to have disappeared, and the block bounded by Madison, Claiborne, Canal, and Franklin streets had been cleared for use as a "Public Play Ground" complete with public restrooms. The two and one-half story brick Robert E. Lee Public School occupied the block bounded by Madison, Franklin, Hamilton, and Canal streets. Available aerial photographs of the Civic Center area taken in 1938, 1952, 1955, and 1960 show essentially the same development as reflected in the 1924/1955 Sanborn map.

By the time of the next available aerial photograph, 1967, more than seven blocks had been leveled to make way for the Civic Center. The only structure remaining was the public school bounded by Madison, Franklin, Hamilton, and Canal streets. The school disappeared by the time of the next available aerial photograph, taken in 1980.

According to the vertical files of the Historic Development Department, the larger parcel, of which the subject complex was part until recently, has appeared seven (7) times previously before the Architectural Review Board (ARB). In November 1983, the ARB approved placement of a commemorative plaque on a brick base at the corner of Claiborne Street and Auditorium Drive (now Civic Center Drive). The installation of a 100' telecommunications tower and construction of a one-story 10'x16' accessory structure on a small parcel to the immediate north of the current site of a new office building was approved by the ARB in July 1998. The ARB approved the construction of two steel and glass bus shelters located along the Lawrence Street side of the parcel was approved in October 2009. The ARB approved construction of a six-story office building at the southeast corner of the Civic Center site

over three meetings from August 2022 through April 2023. A six-level City parking garage was approved by the ARB in July 2023.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Demolish the Civic Center complex (theater, arena/auditorium, and exposition hall) and associated site improvements (landscaping, drives, walks, parking, etc.).
2. Prepare the area for future development by installing appropriate utilities such as electrical and fiber optics.

APPLICABLE STANDARDS *(Code of the City of Mobile, Chapter 44, Article IV, Sec. 44-80)*

- (a) Required Findings. The Board shall not grant Certificates of Appropriateness for the demolition...of any Historic Property or property within a local Historic District unless the Board finds that the removal...of such building will not be detrimental to the historic or architectural character of the District. In making this determination, the Board shall consider:
 - (1) The historical or architectural significance of the structure;
 - (2) The importance of the structure to the integrity of the local Historic District, the immediate vicinity or area, or relationship to other structures;
 - (3) The difficulty or the impossibility of reproducing the structure because of its design, texture, material, detail or unique location;
 - (4) Whether the structure is one of the last remaining examples of its kind in the neighborhood, the county, or the region, or is a good example of its type, or is part of an ensemble of historic buildings creating a neighborhood; and
 - (5) Whether there are definite plans for reuse of the property if the proposed demolition is carried out, and what effect such plans will have on the architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological, social, aesthetic, or environmental character of the surrounding area.
- (b) Content of Applications. All applications to demolish or remove a Historic Property or a structure in a local Historic District shall contain the following minimum information:
 - (1) The date the owner acquired the property, purchase price, and condition on date of acquisition;
 - (2) The number and types of adaptive uses of the property considered by the owner;
 - (3) Whether the property has been listed for sale, prices asked and offers received, if any;
 - (4) Description of the options currently held for the purchase of such property, including the price received for such option, the condition placed upon such option and the date of expiration of such option;
 - (5) Replacement construction plans for the property in question, amounts expended upon such plans, and the dates of such expenditures;
 - (6) Financial proof of the ability to complete the replacement project, which may include but not be limited to a performance bond, a letter of credit, a trust for completion of improvements, or a letter of commitment from a financial institution; and
 - (7) Such other information as may reasonably be required by the Board...
- (c) Post Demolition...Plans Required. In no event shall the Board entertain any application for the demolition...of any Historic Property or property in a local Historic District, unless the applicant also presents at the same time the post-demolition...plans for the site.”

STAFF ANALYSIS

The applicant wishes to raze the Civic Center theater, arena/auditorium, exposition hall, and related landscaping and hardscaping in anticipation of constructing a new arena and related development to include retail, dining, and residences.

(a) Required Findings

(1) Historical or Architectural Significance of the Structure

The Civic Center Theater and Arena/Auditorium buildings were constructed in 1964 and are 60 years old. The Expo(sition) Hall building was constructed in 1973 and is 51 years old. At the time of the last update to the Church Street East National Register listing in 2005, none of these buildings was considered contributing to the district because the district's period of significance was defined as 1834 to 1957, and these buildings were not yet 50 years old. In general, the National Park Service begins considering significance of properties in relation to the National Register of Historic Places when they reach 50 years of age.

The *Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts (Guidelines)* instruct, "An analysis should be undertaken to determine if the historic structure retains its integrity...In some cases, the original designation of a structure as contributing or non-contributing to the historic district in which it is located may no longer be valid either because the structure has lost its historic integrity or because the passage of time or change in appreciation of the structure has resulted in the structure contributing to the character of the district." (12.0)

The existing Civic Center complex was constructed using instruments and funding made available through federal legislation. The United States Housing Act of 1937 (Act) directed the federal government to subsidize local public housing agencies to improve living conditions for low-income families. The 1949 expansion of the Act provided funding for "slum clearance and community development and redevelopment." Title I of the 1949 Act authorized \$1 billion in loans to help cities acquire slums and blighted land for public or private redevelopment. Urban Renewal, as the projects planned and executed under this legislation came to be known, changed the built landscape of cities across the country from the 1940s through the 1970s.

The Mobile Housing Board began acquiring properties in the current Civic Center area in the 1950s with the intention of moving residents to better accommodations and selling the properties to the City of Mobile for redevelopment. In January 1962, the U.S. Urban Renewal Administration approved a \$3,382,925 grant to the City of Mobile for the project in Church Street East to develop a "new civic center, municipal auditorium, park, and parking lots, as well as commercial facilities."¹ *Urban Renewal Plan for Project ALA. R-33* describes the project area as "a slum and blighted area, predominantly residential in character." The plan proposed acquiring, clearing, and redeveloping the area in order to "eliminate the slum and blighting conditions...establish a cultural center related to the Central Business District...provide adequate space for park and permanent open space...provide for restoration and preservation of an area of historical significance...provide for improved traffic flow in accordance with the Major Street Plan and with proposals for Interstate Route 10 adjacent to the Project Area... [and] provide maximum opportunity for development by private enterprise." The existing houses, churches, stores, fire station, and other neighborhood buildings were removed from the current Civic Center, Chamber of Commerce, Spanish Plaza, and Malaga Square Park areas. In addition to the arena/auditorium, theater, and expo hall, Spanish Plaza and Malaga Square were developed as a result of the execution of Project ALA. R-33.

The criteria for evaluation for listing in the National Register of Historic Places are (A) *Event* (properties associated with an important event in American history or a pattern of events or historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, a state, or the nation), (B) *Person* (properties associated with

the lives of persons significant in our past), (C) *Design/Construction* (properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that

¹ Telegram from U.S. Senators Lister Hill and John Sparkman to Mayor George McNally, January 5, 1962

possess high artistic values), and (D) *Information Potential* (properties that have yielded or may yield information important in prehistory or history; these are predominantly archaeological sites).² The structures that are the subject of this application may be considered significant under Criterion A for their association with the nationwide Urban Renewal program, which had a powerful impact on public and low-income housing in the United States and the redevelopment of large swaths of American cities.

The Civic Center arena/auditorium and theater were designed by local architectural firm Slater & Slater, and the expo hall was designed by architects Frederick C. Woods and Thomas P. Steber. When considered against Criterion C, none of the buildings that are the subject of this application would seem to qualify as architecturally significant. While the buildings do embody distinctive characteristics of their type and period, those characteristics are not outstanding when compared against theaters, arenas/auditoriums, and exposition halls constructed in the same period in other cities. Other designs by Mr. Woods include the Greek Orthodox church in Malbis, Alabama; Christ the King Catholic Church in Daphne, Alabama; Central Plaza Towers and the Strickland Youth Center in Mobile, as well as a consulting role in the design of Government Plaza.³ However, none of the three subject buildings would be considered as representing “the work of a master.” Although the buildings were thoughtfully designed in terms of materials and massing, none possesses high artistic values.

It is doubtful the buildings that are the subject of this application would be considered eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion B, as the property is not known to be associated with any historically significant person. Whether the property would be considered eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion D is unknown at this time. The construction of the subject buildings in the 1960s and 1970s likely destroyed any archaeological features or foundational remains of the neighborhood formerly existing there. Areas that have been used as surface parking lots have a higher probability of containing artifacts and features, but the historic significance of any such below-ground properties would require evaluation by a qualified archaeologist, and no such studies are known to exist.

Listing in the National Register is contingent upon a property or district being considered significant under one of the four criteria outlined above as well as retaining historic integrity. The National Park Service (NPS) defines “integrity” as the ability of a property or district to convey its significance.⁴ Of the seven (7) aspects of integrity identified by NPS (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association), the subject complex has retained all seven aspects of integrity. It should be noted, however, that neither the Alabama Historical Commission nor the National Park Service has made a determination on the Civic Center’s eligibility for either individual listing in the National Register or being reclassified as contributing to the Church Street East district.

(2) Importance of the Structure to the Integrity of the Local Historic District, the Immediate Vicinity or Area, or Relationship to Other Structures

The Church Street East Historic District is listed in the National Register of Historic Places 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 period of significance for the district, as defined in the 2005 revision to the National Register nomination, is 1834 to 1957. The subject buildings were constructed outside the period of significance. The theater, arena/auditorium, and expo hall may be considered significant in the area of urban planning, but their importance to the integrity of the district is debatable.

² National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 1997.

³ <https://obits.al.com/us/obitusries/mobile/name/frederick-woods-obituary?id=13740453>. Accessed May 2024

⁴ National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin 15 – How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 1997.

The area known as the Civic Center site – consisting of the three subject buildings, surface parking, areas of construction for a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers facility and a parking garage, and all related landscaping and hardscaping - was occupied by residential and commercial development from the early nineteenth century through the early 1960s. Approximately seven blocks of a dense urban neighborhood similar to the extant Church Street East Historic District existed on the Civic Center site prior to its clearance for construction of Interstate 10 and the civic center. Those structures were similar in character to the rest of Church Street East, but the existing Civic Center complex relates poorly to the rest of Church Street East. When compared to the rest of Church Street East, the Civic Center complex detracts from the district’s integrity of design, setting, workmanship, and feeling. As noted above, the massing and materials of the three subject buildings were designed with some thought to their visual relationships to nearby historic structures, but the complex as a whole does not contribute to the historic integrity of the district, the immediate vicinity, or other structures.

The *Guidelines* instruct us to, “Consider the impact that demolition will have on surrounding structures, including neighboring properties, properties on the same block or across the street.” (12.0) If demolition of the subject buildings is approved, the visual context of surrounding contributing properties would briefly return to the period in the early 1960s when the area was cleared but not yet redeveloped. The removal of the three subject buildings and their related landscaping and hardscaping would result in open space that has not existed there since the early 1960s. Therefore, the space has historically been occupied by these buildings. The applicant anticipates filling the created space with a new arena on the approximate east half of the space and with mixed use and residential structures on the approximate west half. Therefore, the space is not proposed to remain open, thus avoiding a large, incongruously open area in an urban landscape.

The proposed demolition likely would cause impacts to the visual setting of contributing properties located across the street to the east at 203 S. Claiborne Street (Phoenix Fire Museum, formerly located within the Civic Center site), to the north at 359 (Malaga Inn), 401, and 407 Church Street, and to the west at 210, 212, and 214 South Lawrence Street, as the viewsheds from those properties would be altered. The setting of the contributing property 501 Eslava Street, located to the west across South Lawrence Street, would be impacted to a lesser degree due to its location southwest of Expo Hall. There are no historic buildings on the same superblock as the existing Civic Center.

(3) Difficulty or Impossibility of Reproducing the Structure Because of its Design, Texture, Material, Detail or Unique Location

The three subject structures would not be prohibitively difficult or expensive to reproduce. The architectural and construction plans for the buildings are at hand, and the building materials are all easily accessible, contemporary products. The sole unique feature of the complex is the inclusion of two mosaic murals in the structure of the arena/auditorium building. The original murals by noted artist Conrad Albrizio cannot be reproduced, but the applicant has stated that the murals would be carefully removed by a company with expertise in such operations, and the murals would be placed prominently within the new arena. The applicant also has stated that reproducing the buildings in their current form would result in continued loss of utility as the buildings are obsolete as designed.

(4) Whether the Structure is One of the Last Remaining Examples of its Kind in the Neighborhood, the County, or the Region, or is a Good Example of its Type, or is Part of an Ensemble of Historic Buildings Creating a Neighborhood

The Civic Center theater, arena/auditorium, and exposition hall are not the only remaining structures of their type and era in the region. The 1962 domed Nashville Municipal Auditorium is another Urban Renewal project. Though not part of the Urban Renewal movement, the Bojangles Coliseum (1955) in Charlotte, North Carolina; Dome Civic and Convention Center (1957) in Borger, Texas; Mid-South Coliseum (1964) in Memphis, Tennessee, and the 1965

Houston Astrodome are contemporary examples of domed entertainment venues. The Mid-South Coliseum and Astrodome are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Because the subject buildings have retained all aspects of historic integrity as defined by the National Park Service (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association), they would be considered good examples of their types. However, when compared to contemporary developments of the same type, the Mobile Civic Center would not be considered outstanding. The theater building presents a façade with curved corners suggesting the Art Moderne style of the 1930s. The doors on its east and west elevations are sheltered by flat concrete canopies evocative of the building's mid-century construction.

The domed arena/auditorium building hints at New Formalism with the repetition of concrete uprights circling the exterior. As noted above, the arena/auditorium was designed with a modicum of responsiveness to its historic environment, as the seven-story tall dome is stepped back from the street to the degree that it is not visible from the sidewalk at the south end of Malaga Square across the street. The flat concrete canopies at the side and rear entries, covered walkways at the southeast and southwest sets of doors, and the breeze block enclosed mechanical areas along the south elevation complete the vernacular mid-century appearance of the building.

Expo Hall attempts to recreate the pilastered appearance of revival styles on its west and south elevations. The three buildings are connected by lower, non-descript concourses, but the use of these concourses helped to break up the massive scale of the new construction in relation to the historic buildings across the street to the north. The nearby historic properties were further buffered from the complex by landscaping installed at the northeast and northwest corners of the superblock.

The overall effect of the complex is that of a vernacular set of public buildings. The Civic Center complex is reflective of its era, but it is not high style.

(5) Whether There are Definite Plans for Reuse of the Property if the Proposed Demolition is Carried Out, and What Effect Such Plans Will Have on the Architectural, Cultural, Historical, Archaeological, Social, Aesthetic, or Environmental Character of the Surrounding Area

The applicant has submitted conceptual renderings and a site plan for the proposed new arena. The site plan depicts a larger, basically rectangular arena located in the northeast quadrant of the superblock and a "redevelopment pad" at the northwest quadrant designated by zoning for mixed use and residential development. If executed, the proposed plans would have visual effects upon the architectural and aesthetic environment of the surrounding area, but specific effects cannot be determined until more detailed plans are submitted. Construction of a new arena would have little to no effect on the cultural, historic, social, and environmental character of the surrounding area. The effect on archaeological resources, as discussed above, is unknown.

Building Condition:

In addition to the five considerations outlined in the City of Mobile Code, the *Guidelines* direct that the condition of the structure in question should be considered. "Demolition may be appropriate when a building is deteriorated or in poor condition." (12.0) The applicant submitted a Condition Evaluation Report for the building envelopes (exteriors) of the Civic Center theater and arena/auditorium buildings, prepared by Williamson & Associates. No evaluation of the exposition hall has been submitted. The Condition Evaluation Report, completed in October 2023, concluded that two areas of brick veneer on the theater building were in imminent danger of collapse and should be removed without delay. A Certificate of Appropriateness was issued for the emergency work, and the work was completed. Less critical but still concerning was the finding that "the cladding exterior

was found to be in poor condition with significant distress at shelf angles on each elevation of the building.”⁵ The consultant (Williamson & Associates) recommended re-cladding the entire theater building due to corroding steel shelf angles and corroded masonry wall ties. The consultant recommended further evaluation of the theater roof to determine if the roof needs replacement.

Regarding the arena/auditorium building, Williamson & Associates found the brick veneer cladding to be in good condition, but concrete repairs are needed at the exposed concrete columns. The consultant further recommended full replacement of the low-sloped roof system with built-in gutter. Photographs included in the report illustrated localized areas of deterioration to the roof structure, but the report did not indicate that the underlying structure of the arena walls had sustained damage due to water infiltration that would compromise the building’s continued structural stability.

Historic Development (HD) staff conducted an interior investigation of the Civic Center complex (theater, arena/auditorium, and expo hall) in May 2024 and found the buildings to be in overall good condition. HD Staff observed localized ceiling damage caused by water intrusion through the roof in the arena/auditorium. In addition, damaged floor tiles and bubbling or peeling wall paint indicative of plumbing leaks were noted in a relatively small number of places in the theater and arena/auditorium buildings. The applicant’s statement that the renovation of the property was considered and the submitted building envelope evaluation report suggest that the property is in reparable condition, and HD staff concurs with that assessment.

(b) Content of Applications

- (1) The date the owner acquired the property, purchase price, and condition on date of acquisition

Information provided by the applicant indicates that the individual parcels making up the superblock on which the Civic Center complex is located were purchased by the City between 1919 and 1974 for a total price of \$535,479 and that at the time of each acquisition, the properties were vacant.

- (2) The number and types of adaptive uses of the property considered by the owner

Per a submitted statement from the applicant, “The City of Mobile originally intended to renovate the existing Civic Center/ During early concept engineering building condition assessment was conducted which revealed that the current condition of the existing Civic Center was far worse than anticipated. Based upon the current conditions a renovation estimate was prepared. This estimate determined that the cost to renovate was only 20-25% lower than the cost to replace the Civic Center. Renovation would extend the serviceable life of the Civic Center approximately 10-15 years, whereas a newly constructed Civic Center would have a serviceable life of 50+ years. The City determined that renovation would be fiscally irresponsible and made the decision to demolish and replace the Civic Center.”

- (3) Whether the property has been listed for sale, prices asked and offers received, if any

The property is not listed for sale; thus, there is no asking price, and no offers have been received.

- (4) Description of the options currently held for the purchase of such property, including the price received for such option, the condition placed upon such option and the date of expiration of such option

No options have been granted on this property.

- (5) Replacement construction plans for the property in question, amounts expended upon such plans, and the dates of such expenditures

⁵ Williamson & Associates. “Condition Evaluation Report: Mobile Civic Center & Theater”, October 27, 2023.

The City of Mobile contracted with Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC) in June 2023 to provide design services for the proposed new Civic Center. Replacement plans currently are approximately 30% complete. To date, the City has spent \$2,928,667 on design plans.

- (6) Financial proof of the ability to complete the replacement project, which may include but not be limited to a performance bond, a letter of credit, a trust for completion of improvements, or a letter of commitment from a financial institution

Per the submitted application, the project will be paid for through a combination of the following financing methods. (1) Approximately \$30 million will be provided by the arena operating partner. (2) Approximately \$40 million will be provided through naming rights and other sponsorships. (3) Approximately \$2 million will be provided through donations for the preservation of the Conrad Albrizio murals. (4) Approximately \$50 million will come from City deposits. (5) Approximately \$50 million will come from the City's unassigned funds. (6) Approximately \$128 million will come from bonds.

(c) Post Demolition Plans

The application states, "Replacement plans are approximately 30% complete. Exterior renderings (subject to ongoing revisions as design develops) are attached..."

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

James Barber, Chief of Staff for the City of Mobile, George Talbot, and Sam Matheny, both of Volkert, Inc. were present to discuss the application.

Mr. Barber gave context for the project, stating that the Civic Center complex is obsolete with subpar customer experience compared to other venues along the Gulf Coast and is a financial drain on the City. He continued that the previous administrations had the will to address the Civic Center but did not have the opportunity to do so. He discussed the features of the intended new city arena, stating that it would have a 10,000-person capacity and the ability to house all types of entertainment. He added that the unique feature of this center would be its custom design to accommodate Mardi Gras. He also assured the Board that the custom murals would be removed and saved for the new arena.

Mr. Talbot noted that the new development at the Civic Center site is an exciting opportunity for Mobile. He referred to the challenge of keeping the project on schedule and the motivation to not miss more than two Mardi Gras seasons (2025 and 2026). He stated that the plan is to commence the demolition of the center in August and subsequently break ground for the new arena in February 2025. A ribbon cutting is tentatively planned for 2027.

Reggie Hill came forward to speak in opposition to the application. He stated that he appreciates the redevelopment efforts but noted that the timeline was rushed. He voiced concern that there has been no concrete plan released for the complete redevelopment, complete autonomy has been granted to the developer, that there has been minimal community input, and that the public has not seen a study comparing renovation costs and rebuilding expenses. Mr. Hill stated that he was of the opinion that it was illegal for the city to tear down the civic center.

Rachel Hines, a professional archaeologist, came forward to speak to her concerns with the application. She stated that she is not opposed to the demolition but specified the need for a professional archeological survey. She recommended a Phase I survey that would fit into the short development timeframe. She discussed a previous survey done during development I-10 during which colonial era resources were found under the pavement. She noted that, because two centuries ago, this site was part of a dense neighborhood, there are more than likely similar important archeological resources extant. She added that the ¹⁸⁴⁰ Troost Map of Mobile

demonstrates the thriving development present at this site, and also mentioned the historic city fire that commenced near the Army Corps of Engineer building currently under construction. Ms. Hines stated that these resources and events demark this place as significant to Mobile's history and now that the above-ground resources have been deleted, it is more vital that an underground investigation is completed to retrieve those historic resources in order to further understand Mobile's history. She asked that the Board require a Phase I archeological survey.

Seventeen (17) unique public comments were received.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Jennifer Roselius asked whether the city has a plan for the preservation of trees and historic structures in the immediate vicinity of the demolition site. Mr. Matheny stated that some trees would have to be removed but some will be protected, as shown on the demolition plan. He added that there is a mechanical demolition planned for the civic center structures, meaning no explosives would be used, and that all processing would take place on the Claiborne Street side of the site, away from historic residences on Lawrence Street.

Ms. Roselius asked if any changes in massing and scale were expected. Mr. Matheny responded that the shape of the arena has changed but will sit in same general location.

Ms. Roselius commented that the new arena will be a significant reduction in massing and scale.

Abby Davis inquired whether the building's general proximity to the street would remain as shown on the submitted renderings. Mr. Matheny replied that it would.

Cameron Pfeiffer-Traylor commented that she does not think the demolition poses a problem but stated concerns about the post-demolition integrity of the Church Street East Historic District. She stated that the goal should be to preserve the city's historic resources while promoting economic growth, adding that she agrees with Ms. Hines that it is significant to assess what is underground through archeological investigation. She made the point that it is incongruous to hold applicants accountable to such things as using true divided lights on replacement windows but forego a Phase I survey at this significantly historic site. She remarked that an expedited survey could be an opportunity to discover an asset which in turn could boost the city's heritage tourism industry. She stated that the entire site should be surveyed, not just the area where the new structure will go.

Mr. McNair thanked Mr. Matheny for the thoughtful consideration of the surrounding district and historic resources in the demolition plan. In regard to the subject of archeological investigation, he stated that he believes there was a study done prior to the 1964 development of the site. He also noted that the site is not a contributing property to the National Register district; therefore, it requires no Section 106 review under federal law. He stated that a Phase I survey may hold up the timeline and does not seem feasible due to prior disturbance.

Ms. Davis stated that the Board determines the demolition and reconstruction plan and how it impacts the district and considers the present built environment, not what was there before.

Ms. Roselius asked the City to speak to the aforementioned past studies. Mr. Barber replied that prior studies would be investigated.

Ms. Traylor commented that the Staff reports states that there are no known studies.

Ms. Roselius stated that usually in demolition contracts, there are stop work caveats included in the case of any archeological discoveries. Mr. Matheny replied that these are standard and would be included.

Ms. Roselius spoke to the character of the new development plan, stating that the existing civic center complex has long been an impediment to the surrounding area and that the proposed plan would open up the area to a more pedestrian friendly rhythm, which is more in line with the immediate vicinity.

FINDING FACTS

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

Ms. Traylor asked the Board if there would be no contingencies included in the motion.

Ms. Davis replied there would be none.

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

DECISION ON APPLICATION

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

Mr. Howle seconded the motion, and it was approved with a 6:1 vote, with Ms. Traylor voting to deny.



Agenda Item #2

Certified Record 2024-29-CA

DETAILS

Location:

7 Hannon Avenue

Summary of Request:

Remove and replace existing siding with fiber cement lap siding. Replace windows on all elevations except for façade.

Applicant (as applicable):

Tatjana Gotovac/M&T Construction & Painting, LLC

Property Owner:

Abby Bradley

Historic District:

Old Dauphin Way

Classification:

Contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- The house is currently clad in a mix of siding materials.
- Wholesale replacement of siding on a primary elevation is generally not allowed under the *Guidelines*.
- The existing windows do not appear to be deteriorated beyond repair.
- The proposed replacement windows are of an appropriate alternative material and light configuration.

Report Contents:

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Scope of Work 2

Applicable Standards 2

Staff Analysis 4

Attachments 5

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.”

According to the National Register nomination, the house at 7 Hannon Avenue, a side-gabled center hall plan dwelling, was constructed c. 1920. A gable-on-hip roof covers a porch centered on the façade, which expresses a neoclassical revival character with four columns supporting the porch roof and pilasters with capitals at each of the house’s front corners. The 1925 Sanborn map, republished in 1956, depicts the house as a one-story structure, square in form, with a shallow rear wing which does not quite span the entire east elevation. It is likely that this wing is an enclosed porch, or that it was later removed and replaced with a rear addition with a similar footprint. According to aerial photography and historic maps, the gable roof portion of the rear addition was constructed sometime between 1956 and 1967.

This property has appeared twice before the Architectural Review Board. An application to partially demolish and renovate an existing garage received approval in 2021. In 2023, a project to construct a rear second half-story addition and porch was granted a COA but was not executed.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Remove existing siding from all elevations of original dwelling and replace with fiber cement siding.
2. Replace all windows on side and rear elevations with the exception of two windows on the south elevation of a rear addition.
 - a. Existing windows on the façade would remain.
 - b. Replacement windows would be aluminum clad one-over-one windows to match existing window openings.

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

1. **5.3** Preserve the key historic walls of a building.
 - Maintain significant historic façades in their original form.
 - Maintain historic façade elements.
 - Pay special attention to maintaining the historic appearance of building walls of corner buildings.
2. **5.4** Preserve original building materials.
 - Repair deteriorated building materials by patching, piecing-in, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing the material.
 - Remove only those materials which are deteriorated, and beyond reasonable repair.
 - Do not remove original materials that are in good condition.
3. **5.6** Use original materials to replace damaged materials on primary surfaces where possible.
 - Use original materials to replace damaged building materials on a primary façade if possible. If the original material is wood clapboard, for example, then the replacement material should be a material that matches the original in finish, size and the amount of exposed lap. If the original material is not available from the site, use a replacement material that is visually comparable with the original material.

- Replace only the amount of material required. If a few boards are damaged beyond repair, for example, then only they should be replaced, rather than the entire wall.
 - Do not replace building materials on the primary façade, such as wood siding and masonry, with alternative or imitation materials unless it cannot be avoided.
 - Wholesale replacement of exterior finishes is generally not allowed.
4. **5.7** When replacing materials on a non-primary façade or elevation, match the original material in composition, scale and finish.
- Use original materials to replace damaged materials on a non-primary façade when possible.
 - The ARB will consider the use of green building materials, such as those made with renewable and local resources to replace damaged materials on a nonprimary façade if they do not impact the integrity of the building or its key features.
 - Use alternative or imitation materials that match the style and detail of the original material to replace damaged non-primary building materials.
 - Replace exterior finishes to match original in profile, dimension and materials.
- ACCEPTABLE REPLACEMENT MATERIALS (FOR HISTORIC MATERIALS) Materials that are the same as the original, or that appear similar in finish, scale, style, and detail are acceptable. These often include:
- Stucco
 - Wood
 - Brick
 - Stone
 - Cast stone
 - Wood: lap siding, shingles, board and batten
 - Other materials original to the building, which are not listed above
- UNACCEPTABLE REPLACEMENT MATERIALS (FOR HISTORIC MATERIAL) Materials that do not appear similar to the original in finish, scale, style, and detail are unacceptable. These often include:
- Mineral fiber shingle (unless original to the building)
 - Imitation brick or stone (unless original to the building)
 - Metal siding
 - Vinyl siding
 - Exposed/raw concrete block
 - Plywood or mineral fiber siding or panels
 - Vinyl or elastomeric paint (such as Rhinoshield)
 - Ceramic paint
 - Exterior Insulation Finish System (EIFS)
5. **5.20** Preserve the functional historic and decorative features of a historic window.
- Where historic (wooden or metal) windows are intact and in repairable condition, retain and repair them to match the existing as per location, light configuration, detail and material.
 - Preserve historic window features, including the frame, sash, muntins, mullions, glazing, sills, heads, jambs, moldings, operation, and groupings of windows.
 - Repair, rather than replace, frames and sashes, wherever possible.
 - For repair of window components, epoxies and related products may serve as effective solutions to material deterioration and operational malfunction.
6. **5.21** When historic windows are not in a repairable condition, match the replacement window design to the original.
- In instances where there is a request to replace a building's windows, the new windows shall match the existing as per location, framing, and light configuration.
 - Use any salvageable window components on a primary elevation.

ACCEPTABLE WINDOW MATERIALS Materials that are the same as the original, or that appear similar in texture, profile and finish to the original are acceptable.

These often include:

- Wood sash
- Steel, if original to structure
- Custom extruded aluminum
- Aluminum clad wood
- Windows approved by the National Park Service

UNACCEPTABLE WINDOW MATERIALS Materials that do not appear similar to the original in texture, profile and finish are unacceptable.

These often include:

- Vinyl
- Mill-finished aluminum
- Interior snap-in muntins (except when used in concert with exterior muntins and intervening dividers)

STAFF ANALYSIS

The subject property is a contributing structure in the Old Dauphin Way Historic District. The application under review proposes the removal of the existing siding on all elevations of the original house and the subsequent replacement with fiber cement siding.

The house is currently clad in a mix of asbestos and cement fiber siding, with the exception of the west facing façade, which is clad in the original wood lap siding. The asbestos is not original to the house, and the fiber cement siding is located on later additions. The *Guidelines* state that on non-primary elevations, alternative materials that match the style and detail of the original may be used. (5.7) Re-cladding the side and rear elevations in a uniform fiber cement lap siding would be a more sympathetic alteration to what is currently extant. Additionally, fiber cement siding has been approved for use in Mobile's historic districts. In regard to replacing the original wood lap siding on the façade, the *Guidelines* clearly direct to preserve key walls of a historic building, their original materials, and further states that original materials be used to replace damaged materials on primary elevations where possible, and to replace only the damaged areas. (5.3, 5.4, 5.6) The applicant has submitted photos showing the condition of the façade's existing wood siding which denote areas of significant damage, deterioration, and the presence of lead paint.

In consideration of the proposed window replacement, the *Guidelines* direct to preserve and repair windows that are in repairable condition, and when they are not repairable, to match the replacement window to the original. (5.20) The applicant completed a window survey, assessing the condition of the windows intended for replacement on the non-primary elevations at 7 Hannon Avenue. The survey and visual inspection reveal that the existing windows are not in a significantly deteriorated or unrepairable state. The proposed replacement windows would be aluminum-clad wood windows, which is an acceptable window material under the *Guidelines*. Similar to the cladding material at 7 Hannon, the existing windows are a mix of original and replacements and vary in size and light configuration. The replacement windows' one-over-one light configuration would be a period appropriate pattern and would contribute a more uniform and planned appearance to the non-primary façades. (5.21)

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Abby Bradley, the homeowner, and Matthew Taylor, the contractor/applicant were present to discuss the application.

Ms. Bradley stated that she wishes to make the house livable, noting that the windows leak.

Mr. Taylor spoke to the project, stating that the façade siding is original and is covered in lead paint. He noted that if fiber cement siding is installed on the side elevations, the reveal would differ from that of the façade drop siding. He added that the replacement vinyl windows would not be visible from the street and are more economical for the homeowner.

No one from the public came forward to speak for or against the application. No written public comments were received.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. McNair asked the applicant if the wood on the façade was in bad condition. Mr. Taylor replied that the lead from the paint was absorbed into the wood, and it would be safer to replace it.

Ms. Roselius asked if the intention to wrap the front porch columns in fiber cement casings was included in the application's scope of work. Annie Allen replied that it was not.

Ms. Davis told Ms. Bradley that the windows must be replaced by something approvable by the Board and that vinyl is not an approved material for windows under the *Guidelines*.

Mr. Taylor asked about a six-over-six configuration. Ms. Davis said that the material could not be vinyl.

Ms. Roselius stated that the submitted window survey did not depict the problems that the homeowner and applicant were describing. She asked Staff if they had been able to get a visual of the windows. Ms. Allen confirmed that she had looked at the windows while at the property and did not observe deterioration to the degree that would merit wholesale replacement of windows.

Mr. Taylor stated that the windows are painted shut and are single pane.

Ms. Roselius asked the homeowner and applicant if all of the windows leak. Ms. Bradley and Mr. Taylor concurred that 95% of them do.

Ms. Davis asked if the windows are salvageable. Ms. Bradley stated that egress was a problem due to the windows being painted shut. She told the Board that the vinyl and wood windows look identical to her from the street.

Ms. Davis suggested that it might be more economical to repair the windows.

Ms. Taylor stated that windows often got painted shut but releasing them is an easy fix. She encouraged the homeowner to keep all the windows that can be repaired. She added that the window survey was not complete, in that it circles "poor" for condition but does not include any explanation or evidence of why that condition was chosen. She stated that energy efficiency is important, but the historic integrity of the district is important to the Board.

Mr. McNair added that weather-stripping and adding an invisible film over the glazing can create more efficiency. He reiterated that vinyl is not possible and suggested an aluminum-clad window.

Ms. Roselius asked Ms. Bradley if she would be amenable to using an aluminum-clad window. Mr. Taylor stated that, in his experience, re-glazing and repairing wood windows is more expensive than replacement.

Ms. Roselius revisited the siding issue, clarifying that the applicant wishes to replace the façade siding with fiber cement because the existing siding would not match the replacement siding on the rest of the house. Mr. Taylor confirmed that this was the intent. Ms. Roselius stated that she is okay with that alteration, due to the observed deterioration on the façade.

FINDING FACTS

Ms. Roselius moved that, based on the evidence presented in the application, the Board finds the facts in the Staff's report of the application, amended to include the use of aluminum-clad one-over-one windows with internal spacer bars that fit into the existing openings for the replacement windows and that the fiber cement siding will be smooth.

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

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION

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

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



Agenda Item #3

Certified Record 2024-30-CA

DETAILS

Location:

961 Texas Street/505 Charles Street

Summary of Request:

Relocate house to 505 Charles Street and create a landscaped side-yard at vacant lot.

Applicant (as applicable):

Tracy Hunter

Property Owner:

Same

Historic District:

Oakleigh Garden/none

Classification:

Contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- The receiving lot at 505 Charles Street is not located within a historic district.
- The areas surrounding both the current and proposed receiving lots have witnessed loss of historic fabric.
- The application proposes creating a landscaped side yard at 961 Texas Street.

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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 structure at 961 Texas Street is a frame, hipped roof raised cottage with full-width front porch. Its earliest representation on the 1904 Sanborn map shows a square main block with a rectangular projection on the rear. This form remained consistent through the 1956 overlay. At some point after 1956, the recessed area created by the rear projection was filled in, creating a single long rectangular form. The dwelling currently has two seemingly identical front entry doors, each topped by a three-light transom. Due to a lack of photographic evidence or access to the interior, it is difficult to know if this is an original feature of the house or a later alteration. From the exterior, it appears to be original. Historically, there is precedent for this type of vernacular raised cottage to have two entry doors, which would have aligned with a four-room floorplan with no hallway, and the front two rooms opening directly onto the porch. Later alterations are also apparent on the front porch, which is missing its original supports and railing. A dividing wall has been added between the two entry doors, as it appears the house was divided into a duplex at some point in time.

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

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Relocate house at 961 Texas Street to the vacant lot at 505 Charles Street.
 - a. The house would sit on the site 25'-0" east of the Charles Street ROW.
 - b. The applicant plans to rehabilitate the house once relocated.
2. Create a landscaped yard and outdoor living area at 961 Texas Street, to be used as a side yard for 963 Texas Street.

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

- (6) 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.
- (7) 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)
- (8) Nature of Proposed Development
 - Consider the future utilization of the site. (12.0)
- (9) Relocation Guidelines
 - New Location: Consider whether or not a structure will be relocated within the same district and in a similar context. Relocation may be more appropriate when the receiving site is in the district. Relocated buildings shall be placed in situations that do not impair the architecture or the historic character of the surrounding buildings and district.

- Building Placement: When relocating a building, maintain its general placement and orientation on the new site so as to maintain the architectural and historical character of the streetscape and district.
- Where possible, relocate a building to a site that is similar in size as perceived from the street. (12.0)

STAFF ANALYSIS

The application involves relocating the historic structure at 961 Texas Street to the vacant lot at 505 Charles Street. The applicant owns both lots and has plans to carry out improvements to the structure and property once relocated to 505 Charles.

The Code of the City of Mobile (Chapter 44, Article IV, Sec. 44-80) requires that the ARB not grant a Certificate of Appropriateness “for the demolition or relocation of any Historic Property or property within a local Historic District unless the Board finds that the removal or relocation of such building will not be detrimental to the historic or architectural character of the District.”

The structure to be moved is located in the locally designated portion of the Oakleigh Garden Historic District. The house would be removed from its current site, subsequently producing an end result for Texas Street identical to a demolition. Therefore, when relocation is considered, the *Guidelines* direct consideration of the following: the significance of the structure, the impact on the street and district, the nature of proposed development at the origination property, the new location, and the building placement of the relocated building. (12.0)

The significance of the structure

The house at 961 Texas is listed as a contributing property in the locally designated portion of the Oakleigh Garden Historic District. The modest raised Creole cottage with full-width front porch and two front entry doors represents a vernacular form common throughout the Southeast. The subject property is a hipped-roof structure with a later enclosed rear portion, intended to create more living space. Although quite a bit of alterations have been carried out on the property, especially to the front porch, most of the alterations are superficial and do not compromise the historic integrity of the structure.

Impact on the Street and District

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 raised Creole cottage form, such as the one located at 961 Texas 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, a substantial number have been and continue to be lost.

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 taken into account. Approximately half of the historic dwellings once extant on the portion of Texas Street where the house now sits have been lost. The 1956 Sanborn map shows fourteen homes on the block; five sitting on the north side of Texas, and nine sitting on the south side (including 961 Texas). Three out of five have been lost on the north side of the street, and four out of nine on the south side. Removal of the historic cottage at 961 Texas would further diminish the historic integrity of the block.

Nature of proposed development at the origination property

The *Guidelines* instruct that the future use of a cleared site should be considered. Conceptual plans for a landscaped side yard that would relate to the house at 963 Texas Street have been submitted with the application. The applicant intends to create an outdoor space which would include retaining the existing fence

that runs along the east and south lot lines, the installation of flowering trees and raised beds, and the creation of a patio seating area. Although the *Guidelines* do not specifically address creating a side yard at an adjacent property, there is precedent for this scenario in Mobile’s historic districts. One such example is 603 Church Street, which has incorporated the adjacent lot to the west into a fenced side yard.

Relocation Guidelines: New location

In regard to the receiving location, the *Guidelines* state, “Consider whether or not a structure will be relocated within the same district and in a similar context. Relocation may be more appropriate when the receiving site is in the district. Relocated buildings shall be placed in situations that do not impair the architecture or the historic character of the surrounding buildings and district.” The receiving site, 505 Charles Street, is not located in a historic district, and relocating the structure at 961 Texas Street to 505 Charles Street would place a contributing historic building outside the purview of the ARB, meaning any exterior changes or demolition proposed for the property in the future would not be subject to review under the City’s preservation ordinance.

The north property line of the receiving lot is the rear property line of 961 Texas and is the southern boundary of the Oakleigh Garden Historic District. As it is located in the same neighborhood setting, 505 Charles is a suitable context for the historic structure at 961 Texas. In fact, historical evidence shows that until around 2011, a structure of similar form and size was extant on the receiving lot. This block of Charles Street is a mix of historic structures and new construction, with the west side of the street having experienced much less loss of historic fabric. There are more vacant lots on the east side of Charles Street, and placing the subject structure on lot 505 would provide a more balanced historic streetscape.

The house, once relocated, would sit on the lot at 505 Charles such that the front yard setback would be 25’-0” from the ROW, which is consistent with the established range along the street. The side yard setbacks on the north and south would measure 9’-0” and 11’-5”, respectively.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Tracy Hunter, the applicant, was present to discuss the application. She noted that she purchased the proposed receiving lot at 505 Charles from the City as part of Neighborhood Renewal Program and, as such, must either build or place a structure on it. She stated that she plans to rehabilitate the house once moved from 961 Texas, then use the subsequent vacant lot as a side yard for her property at 963 Texas.

Tim Maness, president of the Mobile Historic Development Commission (MHDC), came forward to speak in opposition to the application. He said that the MHDC opposes moving a historic home out of the district and outside of the purview of the ARB. He added that the organization would support the structure being moved to an empty lot within the district. He told the Board that the MHDC offered the homeowner the option of placing an easement on the property at 505 Charles, which would keep the structure under the purview of the ARB and the Design Review Guidelines. He stated that the homeowner declined this offer.

Ms. Hunter rebutted, stating her concern that the easement would limit future homeowners’ property rights and therefore inhibit future buyers.

No one from the public came forward to speak in favor of the application. One piece of written public comment was received.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Ms. Traylor asked the homeowner if it had always been her intention to move the house. Ms. Hunter replied that essentially it was.

Ms. Roselius explained that the purpose of the Neighborhood Renewal Program is to create infill and moving the subject structure from 961 Texas would not be in accord with this goal as it would just create another vacant lot, which would also be in a historic district.

Ms. Traylor stated that relocation is discouraged because it diminishes the character of the district, that it has essentially the same impact as demolition in that it changes the patterns and rhythms of the area. She added that, especially if there is no emergent need, relocation is problematic and expanded on why this is particularly so if moving the structure outside of the district.

Mr. McNair noted that the proposed changes visible on the submitted plans would make the building non-contributing.

Ms. Hunter explained that the submitted plans are preliminary and conceptual and do not represent the exact intended rehabilitation plan. She stated that they were submitted primarily to show placement and setbacks. She added that she is not trying to create a vacant lot but would be creating a landscaped side yard for her adjacent property. She also commented that she may be amenable to moving the structure to a vacant lot within the district.

Ms. Davis asked the applicant if she would like to withdraw the application. Ms. Hunter replied that she would.

The applicant withdrew the application.



Agenda Item #4

Certified Record 2024-32-CA

DETAILS

Location:

1001 Oak Street

Summary of Request:

Reopen front porch; construct new rear porch; fenestration changes on rear elevation.

Applicant (as applicable):

Douglas Kearley

Property Owner:

Heath Stephens

Historic District:

Old Dauphin Way

Classification:

Contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- The proposed repairs and replacement work and the alterations to the front porch are compliant with the *Guidelines*.
- The new rear porch would project from a rear addition and does not impair the massing or historic integrity of the original portion of the building.
- The proposed fenestration changes are on a rear end wall of an addition and would not be visible from the street.

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Scope of Work 2

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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 building at 1001 Oak Street is a one-story frame gable roof structure with a full-width enclosed front porch and multiple additions to the rear. Information from city directories and surveys deduce that the house was constructed c. 1903 for Mr. William Kepler. The 1904 Sanborn map lists the lot as 5 Oak Street, which had changed to 1001 Oak by the time of the 1925 survey. The structure’s rectangular form represented on both overlays is similar to its present form, though much shorter, supporting the visual evidence of rear additions. One rear addition is differentiated along the west side wall by a vertical board and deviating window design. A subsequent addition abuts the first, distinguished by a lower roof height, alternate roof profile, and additional fenestration variation. The additions are clearly not present on the latest Sanborn overlay produced in 1956. However, a lack of further documentary evidence and discernable aerial imagery creates a challenge to accurately dating the additions. Stylistic indications such as window types and proportions suggest that the additions were constructed shortly after 1956. A small rear ancillary structure that sat to the southwest of the structure was removed sometime after 2016.

According to Historic Development vertical files, this property has never appeared before the Architectural Review Board.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Open up and alter existing front porch.
 - a. Remove existing infill material and window.
 - b. Install four (4) 8” square wood columns under the existing cornice.
 - c. Install a 36”-high wood railing between columns.
 - d. Existing concrete steps, cheek walls, and foundation would remain along façade.
 - e. Install a relocated door (from the rear of the house) and new one-lite transom in the existing door opening on the façade.
2. Remove all existing windows, doors, and a small pent eave hood (over existing rear door) on rear end wall.
 - a. Close openings with wood siding to match existing.
 - b. Install a 2’-10” wide by 6’-8” high 15-lite wood door, centered on the elevation.
 - c. Remove existing metal security bars from windows on east and west elevations.
3. Remove existing concrete steps on the east end of the rear (south) elevation.
4. Construct a rear porch.
 - a. The porch would project from the rear (south) elevation and would measure 10’-0” wide by 8’-0” deep and would be centered on the elevation.
 - b. The porch would sit on a foundation of brick piers with wood framed infill panels (described below). The foundation height would measure approximately 2’-2”.
 - c. An approximate ceiling height of 7’-4” would match that of the existing rear addition.
 - d. The porch would be topped by a hipped roof with exposed rafter tails. The roof would be clad in asphalt shingles and supported by two (2) 6” square wood posts.
 - e. A 36” high wood railing would be installed between the columns.
 - f. Three (3) wood steps would access the porch on its west elevation. The steps would measure approximately 3’-0” wide and would be flanked on either side by a wood post and handrail.
5. Repair existing wood siding, trim, cornice, and windows where necessary.

6. Install new foundation infill screens. The infill screens would be wood framed panels consisting of vertical 1"x 2" boards set 3 ½" apart.
7. Reroof the house in fiberglass asphalt shingles.

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

1. **6.17** Design and place a new porch to maintain the visibility to and integrity of an original historic porch, as well as the overall historic building.
 - Do not expand an original historic front porch. Additions of new front porches or expansion of existing front porches are generally not appropriate.
 - Limit the height of a porch addition roofline so it does not interfere with second story elevations.
 - Replace a rear porch where a previously existing rear porch is lost or enclosed.
 - Design a rear porch so that its height and slopes are compatible with the original historic structure.
2. **6.18** Design a new porch to be compatible with the existing historic building.
 - Design the scale, proportion and character of a porch addition element, including columns, corner brackets, railings and pickets, to be compatible with the existing historic residential structure.
 - Match the foundation height of a porch addition to that of the existing historic structure.
 - Design a porch addition roofline to be compatible with the existing historic structure. However, a porch addition roofline need not match exactly that of the existing historic building. For example, a porch addition may have a shed roof.
 - Use materials for a porch addition that are appropriate to the building.
 - Do not use a contemporary deck railing for a porch addition placed at a location visible from the public street.
 - Do not use cast concrete steps on façades or primary elevations.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The subject property is a contributing structure to the Old Dauphin Way Historic District. The proposed repairs and replacement work and the alterations to the front porch conform with the standards set by the *Guidelines* and fall under work items that Staff have been given authority to review and approve. (5.4,5.6, 5.7, 5.13, 5.14, 5.20, 6.4-6.6)

The application also includes the construction of a rear porch addition. The inferior height and slope of the porch addition, along with its foundation height are compatible with the existing building and do not visibly interfere with the integrity of the structure. The porch would be attached to a later rear addition and would not disrupt the massing or historic form of the structure. The proposed hipped roof is suited to the existing home and incorporates exposed rafter tails similar to those on the existing structure. Likewise, the proposed materials of wood and brick are compatible with the existing building. (6.17,6.18)

In reference to the wholesale removal of the existing fenestration on the rear (south) wall, the *Residential Design Guidelines* state, "For most contributing properties in historic districts, the windows that are on the front elevation and those on the sidewalls that are visible from the street will be the most important to preserve. Windows in other locations that have distinctive designs and that represent fine craftsmanship may also be important to preserve." (p.40) The application proposes the removal of the doors and windows located on the rear end wall of a later addition, which is not visible from the street. Additionally, the design of the subject windows does not stylistically complement the original structure. The submitted plans show that the removed door would be relocated to the front entryway and restored.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Douglas Kearley was present to discuss the application. He outlined the restoration work on the front porch and alterations to the rear addition.

No one came forward to speak for or against the application. No written public comments were received.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Ms. Roselius asked the applicant if the front door was going back to its original location.

Mr. Kearley responded that it would.

FINDING FACTS

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

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 does not impair the architectural or historic character of the property or the district and should be granted a COA.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. McGowin discussed with the Board the formation of a Design Review Committee to meet with the applicants for 900 Government to discuss newly proposed site plans. He added that four or fewer volunteers would be needed. Ms. Maurin and Mr. McNair volunteered to serve on the Design Review Committee, which would convene immediately after the next ARB meeting on June 18th.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:38 pm.

These minutes were approved by the ARB in their meeting on June 18, 2024.