

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MINUTES

July 20, 2011 – 3:00 P.M.

Pre-Council Chambers, Mobile Government Plaza, 205 Government Street

A. CALL TO ORDER

1. The Chair, Bradford Ladd, called the meeting to order at 3:00. Cart Blackwell, MHDC Staff, called the roll as follows:
Members Present: Gertrude Baker, Kim Harden, Thomas Karwinski, Bradford Ladd, Harris Oswalt, Craig Roberts, and Jim Wagoner,
Members Absent: Carlos Gant, Bill James, Janetta Whitt-Mitchell, and Barja Wilson.
Staff Members Present: Devereaux Bemis, Cart Blackwell, and John Lawler.
2. Mr. Karwinski moved to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2011 meeting. The motion received a second and passed unanimously.
3. Mr. Karwinski moved to approve the midmonth COA's granted by Staff. The motion received a second and passed unanimously.

B. MID MONTH APPROVALS: APPROVED

1. **Applicant: Teague Construction Systems**
 - a. Property Address: 260 North Joachim Street
 - b. Date of Approval: 6/27/11
 - c. Project: Reroof the building using GAF 3 tab asphalt shingles, Weathered Gray in color. Replace the rear flat roof with a new modified bitumen roof to match the existing.
2. **Applicant: Eddie & Rebecca Dickerson**
 - a. Property Address: 1114 Old Shell Road
 - b. Date of Approval: 6/20/11
 - c. Project: Install lattice skirting. Replace the front door with a wooden door to match. Repair and replace deteriorated woodwork to match the existing. Replace wooden windows to match. Replace aluminum windows with wooden windows to match those found elsewhere on the house. Paint the house per the submitted Sherwin Williams color scheme. The body will be Jubilee. The shutters and porch decking will be Peppercorn. The trim will be white.
3. **Applicant: Mr. & Mrs. J. Edgar Brister**
 - a. Property Address: 106 Lanier Avenue
 - b. Date of Approval: 6/28/11
 - c. Project: Extend an existing interior lot privacy fence. The fence is not visible from street. Repair an exterior entry to the basement.
4. **Applicant: Anne Moore**
 - a. Property Address: 1365 Dauphin Street
 - b. Date of Approval: 6/29/11
 - c. Project: Paint the building per the submitted Sherwin Williams color scheme. The body will be Cavern Clay. The detailing will be repainted per the existing color scheme.
5. **Applicant: Warren Bettis**
 - a. Property Address: 62 Bradford Avenue
 - b. Date of Approval: 7/1/11
 - c. Project: Install a 3 foot picket fence, painted white per the submitted site plan. There will be a single gate at the sidewalk.
6. **Applicant: Brian & Susan Pape**
 - a. Property Address: 210 South Cedar Street
 - b. Date of Approval: 7/5/11

- c. Project: Repair and replace rotten woodwork to match the existing. Touch up the paintwork per the existing color scheme.
- 7. **Applicant: David Newell**
 - a. Property Address: 960 Savannah Street
 - b. Date of Approval: 7/5/11
 - c. Project: Repaint body aqua, trim white, lattice and shutters peacock blue.
- 8. **Applicant: Nelson Patterson**
 - a. Property Address: 1051 Elmira Street
 - b. Date of Approval: 7/6/11
 - c. Project: Repaint the house per the existing color scheme. The window trim will be painted green. Repair and replace any deteriorated woodwork to match the existing in profile, dimension, and material.
- 9. **Applicant: Kim Richardson**
 - a. Property Address: 1671 Government Street
 - b. Date of Approval: 7/6/11
 - c. Project: Install storm windows in the upper floor windows to match those on the first floor, frames to be black.
- 10. **Applicant: Jim Wagoner**
 - a. Property Address: 1805 Dauphin Street
 - b. Date of Approval: 7/8/11
 - c. Project: Install a canvas awning over the detached garage's second story side-facing French door. The awning will match that installed off the rear sun porch.
- 11. **Applicant: Brian Doyle**
 - a. Property Address: 1752 Hunter Avenue
 - b. Date of Approval: 7/8/11
 - c. Project: Install 16 DBL hung white metal storm windows on east, west, and south front sides of house.

C. APPLICATIONS

- 1. **2011-47-CA: 912 Elmira Street**
 - a. Applicant: Jimmie & Jaquita Todd
 - b. Project: Demolition Request – Demolish a contributing dwelling.
WITHDRAWN. CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED.
- 2. **2011-48-CA: 2254 Ashland Place Avenue**
 - a. Applicant: Nicholas H. Holmes, III for Mr. & Mrs. E. Bailey Slaton, Jr.
 - b. Project: New Construction – Construct a rear porch.
APPROVED. CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED.
- 3. **2011-46-CA: 1307 Government Street**
 - a. Applicant: Nicholas H. Holmes, III for Team Holdings LLC & Baker Family Holdings LLC
 - b. Project: Demolition Request & Redevelopment - Demolish a service station and gas canopy; construct a new a gas station/convenience store and canopy; remove and install hardscaping; install landscaping; and install signage.
CONCEPTUAL APPROVAL. CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED.

D. OTHER BUSINESS

- 1. Discussion

APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
CERTIFIED RECORD

2011-46-CA: 912 Elmira Street
Applicant: James & Jaquita Todd
Received: 6/21/11
Meeting: 7/20/11

INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION

Historic District: Oakleigh
Classification: Contributing
Zoning: R-1
Project: Demolition Request – Demolish a contributing dwelling.

BUILDING HISTORY

This three-room shotgun is distinctive in terms of its construction and articulation. Though faced with weatherboards, this dwelling is one of the few remaining extant examples of a vertical boarded shotgun in Mobile (The wide pieces of scantling were later faced with horizontal siding). The porch brackets give the prevalent vernacular type a measure of stylish sophistication.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

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

STAFF REPORT

- A. This property has never appeared before the Architectural Review Board. The applicants propose the demolition of the architecturally significant shotgun. While the completed application mentions post demolition redevelopment, the construction of a new single family residence, no plans accompanied the application.
- B. The regards to demolition, the Guidelines read as follows: “Proposed demolition of a building must be brought before the Board for consideration. The Board may deny a demolition request if the building’s loss will impair the historic integrity of the district.” However, our ordinance mirrors the Mobile City Code, see §44-79, which sets forth the following standard of review and required findings for the demolition of historic structures:
 - 1. *Required findings; demolition/relocation.* The Board shall not grant certificates of appropriateness for the demolition or relocation of any property within a historic district unless the Board finds that the removal or relocation of such building will not be detrimental to the historical or architectural character of the district. In making this determination, the Board shall consider:
 - i. The historic or architectural significance of the structure:
This three room deep shotgun is a unique architectural survival. As originally constructed, the house’s walls were sheathed with vertical boarding. Surviving examples of this type of construction are rare in Mobile. A greater number of vertical boarded and more sophisticated board and batten structures, residential and ancillary, survive in the state’s rural regions. The wide pieces of scantling that faced the subject dwelling were later faced with weatherboarding. The porch

- brackets added a modish touch to this vernacular building type. Staff files date the building to 1907, but Staff believes the house to be older on account of its structure, materials, and detailing.
- ii. The importance of the structures to the integrity of the historic district, the immediate vicinity, an area, or relationship to other structures;
 1. This building is a contributing structure in the Oakleigh Garden District. Located in the vicinity of vacant, commercial, and historic properties, this structurally and stylistically significant building is defining element on the altered streetscape.
 - iii. The difficulty or the impossibility of reproducing the structure because of its design, texture, material, detail or unique location;
 1. The building components (the wide pieces of scantling) are not capable of being reproduced.
 - iv. 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;
 1. This building is one of few extant examples of a vertical boarded shotgun remaining in Mobile.
 - v. 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.
 1. If granted demolition approval the owner/applicants propose constructing a new single family residence on the lot. No plans accompanied the application.
 - vi. The date the owner acquired the property, purchase price, and condition on date of acquisition;
 1. The applicants purchased the property on January 1, 2010 at a purchase price of \$6,000.
 - vii. The number and types of adaptive uses of the property considered by the owner;
 1. The owners invested rehabilitating the house, but financing was not available.
 - viii. Whether the property has been listed for sale, prices asked and offers received, if any;
 1. The property has not been listed for sale.
 - ix. Description of the options currently held for the purchase of such property, including the price received for such option, the conditions placed upon such option and the date of expiration of such option;
 1. Not applicable.
 - x. Replacement construction plans for the property in question and amounts expended upon such plans, and the dates of such expenditures;
 1. Not given.
 - xi. 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
 1. Application submitted.
 - xii. Such other information as may reasonably be required by the board.
 1. See submitted application.

3. *Post demolition or relocation plans required.* In no event shall the Board entertain any application for the demolition or relocation of any historic property unless the applicant also presents at the same time the post-demolition or post-relocation plans for the site.”

C. Scope of Work (per submitted site plan):

1. Demolish the shotgun dwelling.
2. Level the lot.
3. If granted demolition approval, construct a new single family residence (no plans provided).

STAFF ANALYSIS

This application involves the demolition of a contributing building. Demolition applications entail the review of the following: the architectural significance of the building; the existing condition of the building; the impact of the demolition on the streetscape; and the nature of any proposed redevelopment. The ordinance requires that applications which impair the historic integrity of the building or the district are to be denied.

On account of its construction and its detailing, this shotgun is of great architectural significance. The house is one of the few extant examples of a vertical boarded shotgun in Mobile. Often utilized on rental or ancillary construction, most of Mobile’s vertical boarded dwellings have been demolished or extensively altered (as evidenced by this house’s later weatherboard sheathing). Chamfered posts and sawn brackets lend the vernacular a measure of stylistic aplomb.

While deteriorated in condition, the mothballed building is capable of being restored. The building is structurally sound. Framing members and architectural members remain intact.

This section of Elmira Street experienced numerous changes over the second course of the 20th Century. Vacant lots and non-contributing buildings are located to the east of the property. Altered commercial and restored residential properties are found on the opposite block to the south. Infill construction is located immediately to the west of the dwelling. As the only remaining historic building on southern side of the nine hundred block of Elmira Street, the building’s continued presence on the streetscape is of great architectural and historical importance for the district and the streetscape.

Though the applicant mentions redeveloping the lot, no plans were provided.

Taking into account the architectural significance of the building, the condition of the structure, and the affect of the demolition, Staff believes this application will impair the architectural and the historical integrity of the building and the district.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on B (1-3), Staff believes this application will impair the architectural and the historical character of the building and the district. Staff does not recommend approval of the demolition request.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

James Todd was present to discuss the application.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board discussion took place concurrently with the public testimony. Mr. Ladd welcomed the applicant. He asked Mr. Todd if he had any comments to add, questions to ask, or clarifications to address with regard to the Staff Report.

Mr. Todd explained he and his wife recently inherited the derelict property. He said that upon applying for loans they were unable to obtain financing. They were also ineligible for grants. Mr. Todd told the Board that they had recently come into compliance with the City after they boarded up the house and cut down the undergrowth. He said that while he and his wife wanted to restore the house, they had after mutual and lengthy discussion decided to apply for a demolition permit. Mr. Todd added that neither of them wanted to demolish the building though.

Mr. Wagoner asked Mr. Todd as to the aforementioned City stipulations regarding mothballing and site maintenance. Mr. Todd informed the Board that City inspectors monitor the site to ensure maintenance of the status quo or continued stabilization efforts.

Mr. Wagoner asked Staff if the applicants were required to restore the building. Mr. Bemis answered no but stated that would be the ideal scenario. He said that the building would need to be properly mothballed to prevent any continued deterioration. Mr. Bemis said that Staff could work with the applicants and Urban Development to develop a working plan that would make the building weather tight, secure, and in compliance. Ms. Harden stated that the mothballing approach would allow the applicants additional time to consider other options.

Mr. Todd reiterated that he did not want to demolish the house. He told the Board that understood the historic district requirements.

Ms. Baker asked for a definition of mothballing. She said that she wanted the applicants to know exactly what would be required of them. Mr. Bemis explained that proper mothballing prevents further decay by making a building water tight and secure. He added that boarding should not only cover openings, but fit reveals.

Mr. Karwinski asked for clarification regarding the grant Mr. Todd mentioned. Mr. Bemis addressed Mr. Karwinski's query.

A discussion as to whether it would be in the applicant's best interest to withdraw the application ensued.

Mr. Ladd asked his fellow Board members if they had questions to ask the applicant. No questions ensued from the Board. Mr. Ladd asked if there was anyone from the audience who wished to speak either for or against the application. Upon hearing no response, he closed the period of public comment

Mr. Todd was asked if he wanted to withdraw his application. Mr. Todd answered yes.

Mr. Blackwell said he would contact the applicant following the meeting.

WITHDRAWN

APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
CERTIFIED RECORD

2011-00-CA: 2254 Ashland Place Avenue
Applicant: Nicholas H. Holmes, III for Mr. & Mrs. E. Bailey Slaton, Jr.
Received: 6/29/11
Meeting: 7/20/11

INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION

Historic District: Ashland Place
Classification: Contributing
Zoning: R-1
Project: New Construction – Construct a rear addition.

BUILDING HISTORY

This expanded four-square house of Arts & Crafts inspiration and nascent Colonial Revival detail was constructed in 1909. The façade features a wraparound porch with distinctive columniation.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

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

STAFF REPORT

- A. This property last appeared before the Architectural Review Board on December 27, 2004. At that time the Board approved alterations to the rear elevation and the construction of a garage. The owner/applicants return to the Board with a proposal calling for the construction of a rear porch.
- B. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Rehabilitation state and the Design Review Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts state, in pertinent part:
 - 1. “New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy the historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.”
 - 2. “New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.”
- C. Scope of Work (per submitted plans):
 - 1. New Construction – Construct a rear porch.
 - a. The porch will measure 17 feet in length and 24’ 6” in depth.
 - b. The porch will rest atop brick foundation piers matching those found on the body of the house.
 - c. Boxed, framed, and suspended lattice skirting will extend between the foundation piers.
 - d. The porch will feature wooden decking.

- e. Paneled square section wooden columnar piers like those found on the body of the house will support the porch.
- f. The porch will feature a simple fascia and boxed rafter tails like those found on the body of the house.
- g. The porch's hipped roof will be connected to the rear elevation via an intermediate gable (so not to alter second story rear fenestration).
- h. The porch will feature roofing shingles matching those found on the main house.
- i. The four bay porch's east elevation will be demarcated by four columnar piers.
- j. A single flight of steps will access the porch from the southernmost bay of the east elevation. A concrete landing pad will be located at the end of the steps.
- k. The three bay north elevation will feature a centrally located chimney.
- l. The four bay west elevation will be demarcated by four columnar piers.
- m. A single flight of steps will access the porch from one of the two inner bays.
- n. Relocate mechanical equipment.

STAFF ANALYSIS

This application involves the building of a rear porch. The porch will not be visible from the public right of way. The new construction will not entail the alteration to the existing fenestration.

As called for by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation, the proposed work will be differentiated from yet compatible to the existing historic fabric. The overall form of the shape will "read" as a contemporary addition to an older structure, while the continuity of detail will allow the addition to complement to the rest of the house. The proposed materials meet the standards outlined by the Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts.

On account of the design and detailing, Staff does not believe this application will impair the architectural or the historical integrity of the building or the district.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on B (1-2), Staff does not believe this application will impair the architectural or the historical character of the building or the district. Staff recommends approval of this application.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Mr. E. Bailey Slaton, Jr. was present to discuss the application.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board discussion took place concurrently with the public testimony. Mr. Ladd welcomed the applicant. He asked Mr. Slaton if anyone had any comments to add, questions to ask, or clarifications to address with regard to the Staff Report. Mr. Slaton answering no saying Staff had addressed the application in full.

Mr. Karwinski recused himself from the meeting.

Mr. Ladd asked his fellow Board members if they had questions to ask the applicant. No questions ensued from the Board.

Mr. Ladd asked if there was anyone from the audience who wished to speak either for or against the application. Upon hearing no response, he closed the period of public comment

FINDING OF FACT

Mr. Wagoner moved that, based upon the evidence presented in the application and during the public testimony, the Board finds the facts in the Staff report as written.

The motion received a second and was unanimously approved.

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION

Mr. Wagoner moved that, based upon the facts as written by the Board, the application does not impair the historic integrity of the district or the building and that a Certificate of Appropriateness be issued.

The motion received a second and was unanimously approved.

Certificate of Appropriateness Expiration Date: 7/20/12

APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
CERTIFIED RECORD

2011-46-CA: 1307 Government Street
Applicant: Nicholas H. Holmes, III for Team Holdings LLC & Baker Family Holdings LLC
Received: 6/6/11
Meeting: 7/20/11

INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION

Historic District: Leinkauf
Classification: Non-Contributing
Zoning: B-2
Project: Demolition Request & Redevelopment Proposal - Demolish a service station and canopy; construct a new a gas station/convenience store and canopy; remove and install hardscaping; install landscaping; and install signage.

BUILDING HISTORY

According to the 1955 Sanborn Map, a gas/corner store stood on this lot. The current building dates from the 1970s.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

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

STAFF REPORT

- A. This application was scheduled to appear before the Architectural Review Board on July 6, 2011. The application was withdrawn in order to better address the clarifications outlined in the Staff Report. With the exception of this application, the property has never appeared before the Architectural Review Board. The applicants propose the demolition of the existing service station & gas canopy. The redevelopment plan calls for the construction of a new convenience store & gas canopy and the installation of signage, hardscaping, and landscaping.
- B. The regards to demolition, the Guidelines read as follows: “Proposed demolition of a building must be brought before the Board for consideration. The Board may deny a demolition request if the building’s loss will impair the historic integrity of the district.” However, our ordinance mirrors the Mobile City Code, see §44-79, which sets forth the following standard of review and required findings for the demolition of historic structures:
 - 1. *Required findings; demolition/relocation.* The Board shall not grant certificates of appropriateness for the demolition or relocation of any property within a historic district unless the Board finds that the removal or relocation of such building will not be detrimental to the historical or architectural character of the district. In making this determination, the Board shall consider:
 - xiii. The historic or architectural significance of the structure;
This service station constitutes non-contributing commercial infill in the Leinkauf Historic District.
 - xiv. The importance of the structures to the integrity of the historic district, the immediate vicinity, an area, or relationship to other structures;

1. The building does not contribute architecturally or historically to the district or the streetscape. The development is indicative of the commercialization of Mobile's grandest commercial thoroughfare.
 - xv. The difficulty or the impossibility of reproducing the structure because of its design, texture, material, detail or unique location;
 1. The building materials are capable of being reproduced.
 - xvi. 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;
 1. "Strip" commercial design of this type is found across the United States. Government Street possesses a number of these ensembles.
 - xvii. 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.
 1. If granted demolition approval, the applicants will demolish the structures and construct new buildings. The landscaping allotment will be increased. Hardscaping and curbcuts will be decreased.
 - xviii. The date the owner acquired the property, purchase price, and condition on date of acquisition;
 1. The applicants are currently negotiating the sale/purchase of the property.
 - xix. The number and types of adaptive uses of the property considered by the owner;
 1. The owners have placed the property on market. Redevelopment plans are proposed by a possible purchaser.
 - xx. Whether the property has been listed for sale, prices asked and offers received, if any;
 1. The sale of the property is under negotiation.
 - xxi. Description of the options currently held for the purchase of such property, including the price received for such option, the conditions placed upon such option and the date of expiration of such option;
 1. See submitted materials.
 - xxii. Replacement construction plans for the property in question and amounts expended upon such plans, and the dates of such expenditures;
 1. See submitted materials.
 - xxiii. 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
 1. Application submitted.
 - xxiv. Such other information as may reasonably be required by the board.
 1. See submitted materials.
 3. *Post demolition or relocation plans required.* In no event shall the Board entertain any application for the demolition or relocation of any historic property unless the applicant also presents at the same time the post-demolition or post-relocation plans for the site."
- C. The Mobile Historic District Guidelines for New Commercial Construction state, in pertinent part:
1. **"Placement and Orientation:** Placement has two components: setback, the distance between the street and a building; and spacing, the distance between its property lines and adjacent structures. New construction should be placed on the lot so that setback

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

- D. The Sign Design Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts and Government Street state, in Pertinent part:
1. “The size of the sign shall be in proportion to the building and the neighboring structures and signs.”
 2. “The total maximum sign area for all signs is one and one half square feet per linear foot of the principal building, not to exceed 64 square feet.”
 3. “The maximum allowable square footage for the display area of a monument sign is (50) fifty square feet.”
 4. The size of the sign shall be determined by measuring the area within each face of the geometric shape enclosing all elements of informational or representational matter including blank masking. Structural supports not bearing information shall not be included in the computation of display area. For double faced signs, each side shall be counted toward the maximum allowable square footage.”
 5. “Plastic, vinyl, or similar materials are prohibited.”
 6. “Internally light signs are prohibited. Signs shall use focused, low intensity illumination. Such lighting shall not shine into or create glare at pedestrian or vehicular traffic, nor shall it shine into adjacent areas. Light fixtures mounted on the ground shall be screened by landscaping.”
 7. “The height of free-standing signage shall not be higher than six feet.”
- E. Scope of Work (per submitted plans):
1. Demolish a single story service station and gas canopy.
 2. Construct a convenience store/gas station and gas canopy.
 - a. The pentagon-shaped building will be located in the southwest corner of the lot.
 - b. The single story brick building will measure a total 2,790 square feet.
 - c. The building will be elevated atop a concrete slab.
 - e. The larger center bay of the five bay façade will feature an arc-like roof.
 - f. The façade will feature a smooth limestone veneered dado. A cap will surmount the dado.
 - g. The façade will feature a stuccoed cornice.
 - h. The intermediate wall expanses will be faced with brick.
 - i. The two outermost bays will not feature fenestration.
 - j. The bays located adjacent to the aforementioned outer bays will feature single aluminum storefront windows. The dado will step down in height to accommodate the storefront windows.
 - k. The larger central bay will be faced with stucco.
 - l. The dado will step down in height to accommodate the storefront windows.
 - m. The center five bay store front unit will feature a centrally located aluminum double door.
 - n. A standing seam metal awning will surmount the five bay storefront unit.
 - o. A sequence of transom-like windows (whose dimensions correspond to the storefront windows) will be located above the awning.
 - p. Construct a metal gas canopy.
 - q. The canopy will cover an area measuring 24’ by 76’ in plan.

- r. The canopy will measure 17' in height.
- s. Six posts will support the canopy's roof.
- t. Three fuel islands will be located between the three pairs of piers.
- 3. Remove and reinstall hardscaping.
 - a. Remove two curbcuts from Government Street.
 - b. Remove two curbcuts from Michigan Avenue.
 - c. Install two curbcuts, one on Government Street and one on Michigan Avenue.
 - d. The Government Street curbcut will measure 46' at its inner edge and 70' at its outer edge. Said curbcut will feature a traffic diverter.
 - e. The Michigan Avenue curbcut will measure 36' at its inner edge and 65' at its outer edge.
 - f. Install concrete paving within the lot.
 - g. Install a 5' depth concrete entrance pad before building's central entrance bay.
 - h. The aforementioned pad will be sloped for handicap access.
- 4. Install landscaping.
 - a. Landscaping will be installed around the perimeter of the lot and around the convenience store.
 - b. Crepe Myrtles, Live Oaks, Indian Hawthorns, and Clevera will comprise the planting schedule.
 - c. The plantings will be mulched. Sections of the perimeter will be mulched.
 - b. Centipede sod will be planted.
- 5. Install signage.
 - a. The total square footage of all signage will be 88 square feet.
 - b. Wall and monument signage will be installed.
 - c. Install an aluminum wall signage within the central bay of the canted façade.
 - d. The wall sign will measure 2' 6" in height and 12' in length.
 - e. The name of the commercial entity will comprise the signage.
 - f. Construct a monument sign.
 - g. The monument sign will be located in the northeast corner of the lot.
 - h. The monument sign will feature a pole base.
 - i. The total height of the monument sign (counting the base) will be 6' 5/8".
 - j. The double-faced aluminum monument signage will feature 78" by 58 5/8" of signage per face. The sign faces will be Tufglass.
 - k. The double-faced signage will be divided into four divisions per face.
 - l. The franchise and oil company's names will be located within two divisions.
 - m. Gas prices will be shown on the two remaining divisions.
 - n. Neither the monument nor the wall sign will feature internal illumination. The monument sign will be uplit from the ground.

Requests/Clarifications

- 1. Provide a plan of the building.
- 2. Provide an elevation/detailing showing the depth of the entrance awning.
- 3. Drop more measurements on the plan (storefronts and cornice dimensions).
- 4. Will the limestone veneer be true limestone or a synthetic veneer?
- 5. Provide material samples for the meeting.
- 6. Provide a color rendering of the building.
- 7. Provide a more detailed design of the proposed canopy. A schematic fascia is submitted.

STAFF ANALYSIS

This two part application involves the demolition of a non-contributing commercial building and the subsequent redevelopment of the property. The corner lot adjoins and is opposite other commercial developments. The redevelopment plan calls for the following: the construction a single story commercial structure; the construction a gas canopy; the installation of hardscaping; the installation of landscaping; and the installation of signage.

Demolition applications entail the review of the following: the architectural significance of the building; the existing condition of the building; the impact of the demolition on the streetscape; and the nature of any proposed redevelopment. 1503 Government Street features a single story convenience/service station and gas canopy. The building dates from the third quarter of the 20th century. The demolition of the derelict non-contributing building would not impair the architectural or the historical significance of the Leinkauf Historic District or the Government Street corridor.

The Guidelines for New Commercial Construction in Mobile's Historic Districts address: placement & orientation; mass; scale; façade treatment; and materials & ornamentation.

Building placement and orientation takes into account building setbacks and rhythms. The Guidelines for New Commercial Construction in Mobile's Historic Districts state that setbacks should approximate the setbacks of nearby historic buildings. Like the existing non-contributing building, the proposed gas station/convenience store would be setback behind the plane of neighboring commercial structures on Government and Michigan Avenue. The flanking buildings (1401 Government Street and 158 Michigan Avenue), while listed as non-contributing structures are in fact eligible for contributing status. When next resurveyed, both structures would be upgraded in terms of their historical and architectural significance.

The proposed new construction would occupy a portion of the footprint of the existing building; however the new store would be pushed further back to the southwestern corner of the lot. The new convenience store and canopy will be oriented to the corner. The approximate setback from the Government Street right of way is 62'; the approximate setback from the Michigan Avenue is 79'. From the corner, the building will be setback approximately 110' from the edge of the landscaping required at the corner. The setbacks are not compatible with traditional commercial construction.

The canted corner entry of the symmetrical block-like building observes the rectilinear massing that characterizes much 20th-century commercial construction. The simple massing and relatively small scaled building is segmented into smaller components both vertically and horizontally. The five bay facade features a traditional tripartite division of dado, field, and cornice. The concentration of elements on the central entrance bay is in keeping with traditional commercial design sensibilities and tactics. The stone, brick, and stucco facings are historically appropriate as well as aesthetically conducive in their layering. However, it's unclear how the proposed building, situated on the lot line, will interplay with the adjacent historic structures. The drawings should clarify this relationship.

The proposed canopy design is too indeterminately detailed for recommendation. Drawings should clarify how the canopy will relate to the proposed convenience store in both scale and design. The Board generally requires final design of the canopy before a gas station can be approved.

The proposed redevelopment of this lot would involve the removal of all existing hardscaping. The plan calls for a decrease in the amount of paved surfaces presently on the lot. The amount of pavement will still exceed 10,000 square feet. The number of curbcuts would be reduced by half. One curbcut would serve Government Street and a second would serve Michigan Avenue.

This landscaping plan calls for perimeter and corner landscaping. Said landscaping is a marked improvement in terms of allotment and placement; however, the ARB generally requires internal landscaping for commercial projects to break up the large expanse of concrete. The proposed plan does not include internal landscaping. The plantings and sod selected are both traditional in type and heat resistant in selection.

The Sign Design Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts and Government Street state that the total square footage of monument signs shall not exceed fifty square feet. The proposed monument sign measures in excess of fifty square feet. Additionally, the sign exceeds the maximum five foot height limit established by previous board rulings. The proposed signage exceeds the maximum 50 square footage signage allotment for monument signs and the 64 square feet for total signage.

Staff has identified several areas of concern: excessive signage requires a variance; the sign package is incomplete; the canopy design is not detailed; the lack of a floor plan does not allow a complete understanding of the building; the materials are not available for review; generally the Board asks for some type of internal landscaping; and, the placement of the building in relation to the streets and the adjacent structures may be problematic.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on C (1-7), Staff does not believe the demolition of the non-contributing building would impair the historic integrity of the district and would recommend its approval if the Board feels confident that the problems with the proposed new building can be worked out.

There is insufficient information to approve the new construction, signage, landscaping, and hardscaping components of this application. Since new commercial construction can be very complicated, pending the aforementioned clarifications and requests, Staff recommends the Board review those portions of the application presented to provide direction for a final submission. Based on D (2-3, 5-7) and lack of information, Staff believes the proposed signage package impairs the architectural and the historical character of the building.

Staff therefore recommends denial of all but the demolition portion of the request due to lack of information. This will allow the applicants to present a modified application once they review the Board's suggestions.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Nicholas H. Holmes, III and Keith Baker were present to discuss the application. Present in the audience were Cameron Weavil, Bennett Long, Trey Jinright, and Richard Weavil.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board discussion took place concurrently with the public testimony. Mr. Ladd welcomed the applicants' representatives. He asked them if they had any comments to make, questions to ask, or clarifications to make with regard to the Staff Report.

Mr. Holmes addressed the Board. He said that he had several points that he and the applicants' other representatives wanted to address. He enumerated those points as follows: the history of the project; the length of time the property had been on the market; and the proposed plans for redevelopment of the site. Mr. Holmes introduced the applicants' other representatives.

Mr. Richard Weavil, a real estate developer, was the first to address the Board. He thanked the Board for the opportunity of explaining the real estate component on the application. He said that he had been listing the property for two years. Mr. Weavil allowed that all told property had been on the market for eight years. He stated the property had been hard to sell on account of the lot size and configuration. He added that the economy of recent years had been of little help in marketing the site. Telling the Board that he lived on Government Street, Mr. Weavil said that he was personally in favor of the project.

Mr. Trey Jinright, a civil engineer, addressed the project from a traffic and engineering perspective. He told the Board that the site plan had to be approved by municipal and state traffic authorities on account of its location on a state highway. Mr. Jinright first addressed the existing site conditions. He pointed out that currently a box-like building and canopy are accessed by four curbcuts. He said that the original intention had been to reuse the existing components, both built and vehicular. Mr. Jinright informed the Board that in recent years the Alabama Department of Education (ALDOT) had enacted new standards regarding access. Pertinent to this application, he said that curbcuts had to be located approximately 250 feet from a traffic light. This pushed the Government Street access essentially to the western property. Mr. Jinright said that the City of Mobile had additional site requirements. He discussed the municipal requirements in relation to Michigan Avenue. Mr. Jinright stated that they were not as stringent as the State requirements, but they necessitated that points of ingress and/or egress be located be roughly 150 from light. He said that multiple alternatives had been projected, but the ingress and egress restrictions dictated the location buildings.

Mr. Roberts asked about the trucks servicing the proposed gas/convenience station.

Mr. Ladd acknowledged the site plan restrictions.

Mr. Jinright reiterated that the traffic requirements determined the whole of the site plan from the placement of the trashcans to the location of the building. He said that State and Municipal Traffic bodies had respectively approved and/or reviewed the site plan.

Mr. Roberts addressed zoning and setback concerns.

Ms. Baker asked the name of the pertinent ALDOT legislation. Mr. Jinright addressed Ms. Baker's query.

Mr. Holmes told the Board that ALDOT approval had been a time consuming project that restricted the site plan. He then addressed the history of the application. Mr. Holmes told the Board that Mr. Baker first approved the idea and the plan to Mr. Bemis. He said that later Board members had convened on the site for feed back. Mr. Holmes stated that at this proto Design Review Committee many issues had been discussed. He said that only after these meetings were traditional setback requirements discussed. Mr. Holmes stated that his office had provided the Board with the setbacks of surrounding contributing and non-contributing buildings. This exercise showed that the proposed building meets traditional historic setbacks. Mr. Bemis acknowledged the setbacks saying that historic residences on Government Street west of Broad were setback on large lots. He noted that historic commercial structures on this section of Government Street had been closer to the street, but they were no longer extant.

Mr. Holmes stated that the proposed design meets the Design Review Guidelines as well as the draft Guidelines for the New Construction of Mobile's Historic Districts. He said that the project was determined by outside forces.

A discussion of traditional commercial setbacks ensued.

Mr. Roberts brought up the subject of optional overlay zoning as employed in Spring Hill.

Mr. Karwinski said he had several comments to make. He stated that the relationship between building setback and sidewalk pedestrian engagement was a concern.

Mr. Ladd said that trucks, which would have to service any development on the site, would determine setbacks.

Mr. Roberts stated that most modern gas stations were not located in close proximity to the street.

Mr. Karwinski said that he had done a study that would allow the building to better engage the street.

Referencing the Staff Report, Ms. Baker said that setbacks were not the concern. She stated that lack of information was what Staff identified as a stumbling block.

Mr. Roberts suggested a phased approval of the project.

Mr. Karwinski said that this project presented a unique opportunity. He urged the applicants to develop and the Board to ask for an exceptional design that could be a model for gas stations in historic districts elsewhere. Mr. Karwinski cited the old Chinese Gas Station that once stood on Government Street near the Washington Avenue. He said that he wanted something more than a simple solution, he wanted architecture.

A discussion of a phased approval ensued. Mr. Ladd and Ms. Baker made comments.

Canopy designs were discussed. Mr. Roberts asked the applicants to consider a more articulated canopy design. Mr. Bemis said the Board could entertain a more modern design.

Mr. Holmes addressed the Board. He said it was not their task to redesign, but determine impairment.

Mr. Ladd asked how long the property had been on the market. Mr. Holmes answered that the property had been for sale for over eight years. He said that a gas station had been on the site since at least the mid 1950s.

Mr. Ladd asked if there was anyone from the audience who wished to speak either for or against the application.

Jaime Betbeze addressed the audience. He said that he had to respectfully disagree with Mr. Holmes. Mr. Betbeze said that once constructed, building would remain in place for year to come. He stated that idea of merely approving a proposal on account of it being an improvement over the existing was not the proper approach. Mr. Betbeze added that approving a project in a piecemeal manner would result in a cheap product that would be inappropriate for the historic districts. He said the proposal was likable to fitting a square peg into a round hole. In other words, the site was not appropriate to the use. Mr. Betbeze stated that the Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts should not give way to ALDOT requirements. The former are of equal importance as the latter.

Mr. Weavil asked Mr. Betbeze if the Oakleigh District would like to purchase and develop the property.

Mr. Baker addressed Mr. Betbeze's concerns regarding the building's design. He stated that the building, one featuring limestone facings and true stucco treatments, was well thought out in detail and would be soundly constructed.

Mr. Ladd said that ideas and opinions could be voiced but reminded all that the discussion should remain civil in tone and germane in content.

Mr. Long spoke to the Board as to the amenities offered by the proposed developers saying theirs was reputable establishment whose wares, upkeep, and service were in no way like a Seven Eleven. He stated the developers care about their respective communities. Mr. Long explained that they were a third generation privately held concern whose buildings were examples of good architecture and construction.

A discussion of the best means to facilitate a phased approval ensued. It was understood that the site plan was the determining factor. The canopy design and signage package were discussed.

Mr. Bemis told the Board that the applicants' representatives needed an idea as to if the project would be turned down. They needed direction. Mr. Bemis suggested that concept approval be given so the applicants' representatives could address clarifications and concerns.

Mr. Bemis was asked the extent of what should be approved. He answered saying that it was up for the Board to determine. He referenced the Staff Report saying the canopy and the signage needed to be addressed. He pointed out to the Board that they had not discussed the building design at any length.

Mr. Ladd stated that he realized time frames likely applied to this proposal. He asked if the site plan was the determining factor. Mr. Baker answered yes.

FINDING OF FACT

Mr. Oswalt moved that, based upon the evidence presented in the application and during the public testimony, the Board finds the facts in the Staff report, amending the application to note approval of the demolition, the site plan, as well as conceptual approval of the remainder of the application. Final approval of the project awaits submission of the following: a monument sign design; a building plan; a drawing depicting the scale relationship of the proposed and adjacent buildings; and sample materials.

The motion received a second and was unanimously approved.

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION

Mr. Oswalt moved that, based upon the facts as amended by the Board, the application does not impair the historic integrity of the district or the building and that a Certificate of Appropriateness be issued for demolition and the site plan, but the monument sign, canopy, and building plan, materials, and scale relationship would need to be clarified.

The motion received a second. Ms. Harden abstained from the ruling and Mr. Karwinski voted in opposition.

Certificate of Appropriateness Expiration Date: 7/20/12