

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
March 18, 2009 – 3:00 P.M.
Pre-Council Chambers, Mobile Government Plaza, 205 Government Street

A. CALL TO ORDER

1. The Chair, Bunky Ralph, called the meeting to order at 3:03. Tom Karwinski, Bradford Ladd, Harris Oswalt, Craig Roberts, Jim Wagoner, and Barja Wilson were in attendance.
2. Craig Roberts moved to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2009 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Tom Karwinski moved to approve the mid month COAs granted by Staff. The motion passed unanimously.

B. MID MONTH APPROVALS

1. Applicant: Kellie King Schodgrass

- a. Property Address: 56 Bradford St.
- b. Date of Approval: 03/16/09
- c. Project: Install 6 foot privacy fence.

2. Applicant: Jeff Mizell

- a. Property Address: 108 Houston St.
- b. Date of Approval: 03/01/09
- c. Project: Reroof (weathered wood timberline).

3. Applicant: Lawrence Hallett

- a. Property Address: 503 Government St.
- b. Date of Approval: 01/07/09
- c. Project: Remove deteriorated soffit and fascia along second floor of the east elevation; repair and replace rotten wood as needed, matching the existing in profile and dimension.

4. Applicant: Brent Ericson

- a. Property Address: 1658 Government St.
- b. Date of Approval: 02/27/09
- c. Project: Replace rotting handrail on upper front porch with materials that match existing porch on first floor in profile and dimension; replace several missing siding pieces to match existing in profile and dimension; reroof house with charcoal black fiberglass shingles; repair rotting soffit with materials to match existing in profile and dimension.

5. Applicant: Chris King

- a. Property Address: 208 South Georgia St.
- b. Date of Approval: 2/25/09
- c. Project: Replace rotten wood on porch and/or soffit to match existing in material, dimension, and detail; repair per existing in profile and dimension.

6. Applicant: Mark and Ramon Macines

- a. Property Address: 959 Palmetto St.
- b. Date of Approval: 03/05/09

- c. Project: Paint residence in the following BLP color scheme: Body - Palmetto Street Bronze; Trim and Porch Floor – Fort Conde Beige; Ironwork – Bellingrath Green; Front Door – Government Street Olive.

7. Applicant: Nicholas Vrakelos

- a. Property Address: 56 LeMoyne Place
- b. Date of Approval: 02/26/09
- c. Project: Install storm windows (white, flat baked enamel finish) to north and south elevations.

8. Applicant: Robin Pittman; Scott Electric Sign Company

- a. Property Address: 1500 Government Street; AT&T storefront
- b. Date of Approval: 02/15/09
- c. Project: Wall sign approved, as illustrated by submitted drawing; Door approved, as illustrated by submitted drawing.

9. Applicant: Damon Lett

- a. Property Address: 72 North Reed St.
- b. Date of Approval: 03/3/09
- c. Project: Reroof with charcoal grey shingles.

10. Applicant: Blackard Roofing Company

- a. Property Address: 359 Charles St.
- b. Date of Approval: 03/05/09
- c. Project: Reroof with three tab asphalt shingles.

11. Applicant: Jerald Bates, II

- a. Property Address: 266 Dexter Ave.
- b. Date of Approval: 03/09/09
- c. Project: Repair and Replace column and siding to match existing dimensions, profile, and material; reroof with architectural charcoal or black shingles; replace broken glass in windows to match existing; paint house same as existing.

12. Applicant: Tina Campbell

- a. Property Address: 958 Selma St.
- b. Date of Approval: 02/10/09
- c. Project: Install new Timberline roof in charcoal; stabilize foundation piers; paint either white or SW 2811 (muted green) with white trim.

12. Applicant: Mike Myrick

- a. Property Address: 359 Charles Street
- b. Date of Approval: 03/11/09
- c. Project: Paint exterior walls Benjamin Moore “Georgian Green;” replace roof with in-kind asphalt shingles; replace porch in-kind.

13. Applicant: Sai Wo Au

- a. Property Address: 1706 Government Str.
- b. Date of Approval: 03/06/09
- c. Project: Install 8 foot fence.

C. APPLICATIONS

- 1. 021-09: 1211 Palmetto Street
 - a. Applicants: Max B. McGill and Josh Burkett
 - b. Project: Fenestration Changes on Enclosed Porch.
APPROVED AS AMENDED. CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED.
- 2. 026-09: 251 Government Street.
 - a. Applicant: Admiral Semmes Corporation

- b. Project: Fence Approval.
DENIED. CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED.
- 3. 027-09: 310 Dauphin Street
 - a. Applicant: Mike Moore
 - b. Project: Sign Approval.
APPROVED. CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED

D. OTHER BUSINESS

- 1. Fence Guidelines
Applications for fencing approval constitute one of the principal submissions to the Mobile Historic Development Commission. A discussion of what should constitute the Board's approach to fencing ensued. Mobile Historic Commission Director Devereaux Bemis submitted a revised fencing guideline for the Board to review.
- 2. Revised Certificate of Appropriateness Applications
Mr. Bemis presented to the Board a revised copy of the Mobile Historic Development's Certificate of Appropriateness application form. The revised application resulted from suggestions made at the March 4, 2009 meeting. Mr. Bemis asked the Board to review the revised application, suggesting any final alterations, so the new application can be put into use.

APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
CERTIFIED RECORD

021-09-CA: 1211 Palmetto Street
Applicant: Daniel J. Burkett / Max B. McGill
Received: 02/27/09
Meeting: 03/18/09

INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION

Historic District: Oakleigh Garden
Classification: Contributing
Zoning: R-1
Project: Renovation; window replacement

BUILDING HISTORY

This is American 4-square was constructed in 1907 and has gone through numerous changes to its south (rear) and north (front) elevations.

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. The applicants seek approval to make some exterior changes based on interior, floor plan changes as the house undergoes renovation. This house received a significant overhaul in the 1960s or 1970s. The front porch was removed and replaced with the existing portico and all original windows were removed and replaced with 18-lite, fixed pane wood windows. The original windows, judging from adjacent properties which mirror this house, were one-over-one. More recently, the southeast corner of the home, which was once a back porch with rear stair, was enclosed and non-conforming, vinyl windows were installed. When the applicants appeared with proposals at the February 18, 2009 meeting, the Board tabled their request for eliminating windows in the upper porch area. The applicants have returned in order to seek approval of an alternate plan for the enclosed rear porches fenestration.
- B. The Mobile Historic District Guidelines read, in pertinent part:
 - 1. “The type, size and dividing lights of windows and their location and configuration (rhythm) on the building help establish the historic character of a building.
 - 2. Original window openings should be retained as well as original window sashes and glazing.
 - 3. The size and placement of new windows for additions or alterations should be compatible with the general character of the building.”
- C. Scope of Work includes:
 - 1. removing previously-installed, non-conforming windows in enclosed porch
 - 2. replacing windows on rear elevation of the enclosed porch with salvaged windows
 - 3. replacing the window of the southernmost bay of the enclosed porch’s side elevation with a blind paneled shutter to match in scale and dimensions the proposed windows for the rear of the porch

STAFF ANALYSIS

The applicants appeared before the ARB on February 18, 2009 and a Design Review Committee was convened on February 27, 2009 to discuss the applicants proposed treatment for the rear, enclosed porch. The applicants were encouraged to retain some sort of fenestration along these walls. During the committee meeting, the applicants were advised to leave a window on each façade or shutter the openings. The applicants returned the following proposal. Staff is unconvinced this is most appropriate treatment for these rear walls and will be continuing to work with these applicants prior to the ARB meeting to discuss options.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Max B. McGill and Josh Burkett were present to discuss the application.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The board discussion took place concurrently with the public testimony. Mr. Roberts and Ms. Ralph explained to the applicants that the Mobile Historic Districts Design Review Guidelines recommend, with regard to side and rear porch enclosures, the preservation of original porch configurations. In order to better maintain the impression of the solid and void spaces that defined the former porch, the Board advised the applicants that most appropriate course of action was to remove all existing and proposed fenestration on the enclosed porch's east elevation. Consequently, the proposed blind window was removed from consideration. The Board added the provision that the dividing post found at the midpoint of the east elevation be painted the same color as the trim so to make the reality of a porch infill more apparent. With regard to the enclosed porch's south elevation, the Board approved the applicant's proposal to insert the salvaged windows submitted in their application.

FINDING OF FACT

Mr. Roberts moved that, based upon the evidence presented in the application and during the public testimony, the Board finds the facts in the Staff report, only removing existing C(3) from consideration and replacing it with "the painting of the porch's midpoint vertical member to match the trim of the house."

The motion received a second and was unanimously approved.

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION

Jim Wagoner 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.

Certificate of Appropriateness Expiration Date: 3/18/10

APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED

027-09-CA: **251 Government St.**
Received: **02/16/09**
Meeting: **03/18/09**

INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION

Historic District: **Church Street East**
Classification: **Non-Contributing Property**
Zoning: **B-4**
Project: **Fence Approval**

BUILDING HISTORY

The twelve-story masonry building opened in 1940 as the Admiral Semmes Manor hotel. It is currently part of the Radisson chain of mid to high range business and leisure hotels.

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. On June 5, 2008, Staff issued a six month Certificate of Appropriateness for 56 ‘O’ chain link fence on the Church Street and Joachim corner of the Admiral Semmes property. The ASH Corporation now requests to retain that fence permanently.
- B. The Mobile Historic District Guidelines read, in pertinent part, as follows:
 - 1. “Fences should complement the building and not detract from it. Design, scale, placement and materials should be considered along with their relationship to the Historic District. The height of solid fences in historic districts is generally restricted to six feet, however, if a commercial property or multi-family housing adjoins the subject property, an eight foot fence may be considered.
- C. Scope of Work:
 - 1. Retain existing chain link fence on the northwest corner of Church and Joachim Streets until the hotel moves forward with its expansion plans.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff understands that the applicant intends to appear with plans for the hotel’s proposed expansion at this site; however, in discussion with the applicant, Staff has also been advised that this expansion is a year or two years out.

The use of chain link fencing is not deemed appropriate for Mobile’s historic districts. Given the degree of visibility afforded by this site’s prominent location and the type of fencing chosen, granting another extension for this proposal is inadvisable.

The parking lot encompassed by the fencing is bound by a parking garage to the west, and a service alley running alongside a fenced pool area to the north. A narrow strip of landscaping fronting an iron fence with interspersed brick piers surrounds the pool area along Joachim Street. The service alley is separated from the area enclosed by the chain link fence by a wood fence.

Staff recommends that the applicant submit an application for fencing and landscaping which takes in to account the Mobile Historic District Guidelines and the prominence of location.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Greg Dickinson was present to discuss the application. Mr. Dickinson explained to the Board that the Radisson Corporation plans to expand the Radisson Admiral Semmes Hotel complex in one to two years. The proposed expansion would occupy the undeveloped lot surrounded by the fencing in question. Mr. Dickinson requested a one to two year extension of the Certificate of Authenticity allowing the chain link fence enclosing the site of expansion.

BOARD DISCUSSION

The board discussion took place concurrently with the public testimony. The Board advised the applicant that a new and different fence design could be submitted. They questioned the fence's purpose and appearance. The applicant can within a ninety day period of time either remove the existing fencing or replace said fencing with a design more respectful of the historic character of the district.

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.

The motion received a second and was unanimously approved.

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION

Mr. Wagoner moved that the application does impair the historic integrity of the district or the building and that a Certificate of Appropriateness not be issued.

The motion received a second and was unanimously approved.

Following the vote on the application the Board gave the applicant ninety days to remove the fence.

APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
CERTIFIED RECORD

025-09-CA: 310 Dauphin Street.
Applicant: Mike Moore
Received: 03/05/09
Meeting: 03/14/09

INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION

Historic District: Lower Dauphin Street
Classification: Non-Contributing Property
Zoning: B-4
Project: Signage

BUILDING HISTORY

The historic façade of this building faces Dauphin St; the sign proposed will attach a new addition overlooking a Francis St. parking lot at the rear of the building.

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. On September 3, 2008, the Board granted approval for the construction of a free standing vestibule on the rear entrance off the building. The applicant’s proposal places the sign within the gable face of the new vestibule. The building’s rear elevation has undergone many changes over the years. It is probable that this building face was never very finished in appearance. In this proposal the applicant seeks to add another element, a metal sign with neon lighting, to a historically neglected elevation.

B. The Sign Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts and Government Street read in pertinent part, as follows:

1. “The overall design of all signage including the mounting framework shall relate to the design of the principal building on the property. Buildings with a recognizable style such....This can be done through the use of similar decorative features such as columns or brackets. For buildings without a recognizable style, the sign shall adopt the decorative features of the building, utilizing the same materials and colors.
2. The size of the sign shall be in proportion to the building and the neighboring structures and signs. The total maximum allowable sign area for all signs is one and one half square feet per linear foot of the principal building, not to exceed 64 feet. A multi-tenant building is permitted a maximum of 64 square feet. The size of the sign shall be determined by measuring the area within each face of a geometric shape enclosing all elements of functional or representational matter including blank masking. ... For double faced signs, each side shall be counted toward the maximum allowable square footage.
3. The structural materials of the sign should match the historic materials of the building.
4. Internally lit signs are prohibited. Lighted signs shall use focused, low intensity illumination. Such lighting shall not shine into or create at pedestrian or vehicular traffic,

nor shall it shine into adjacent areas. Flashing, blinking, revolving, or rotating signs are not permitted.”

C. Scope of Work:

1. Mount a metal wall sign measuring 11 feet 10 inches in height by 4 feet 8 inches in width (total square footage of 10.9 square feet) with neon lighting to a building frontage of 50 feet square.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The proposed sign faces a large parking lot spanning the whole of a St. Francis Street block. Though visible diagonally from Claiborne and Jackson Streets, the sign is viewed frontally only at a great distance. Since the building’s rear elevation has been altered, probably never fully finished, it defies a stylistic categorization upon which a design could be based. Other criteria, including additional aspects of design, scale, material, and lighting, remain to be considered. The sign is to be affixed to the building’s recently constructed rear vestibule. Since the vestibule does not ascribe to a historical stylistic precedent, a degree of license extends to the design of the proposed sign. The proposed sign does not exceed the total square footage allotted for signage. Metal is an approved material for use in signs found in the historic districts. The lighting will infringe upon neither pedestrian nor vehicular traffic. The sign appears to meet guidelines. Font, color, and illumination still need to be considered. Staff defers to the Board for approval.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

No applicant was present to discuss the application.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Design, lighting, and location were key factors in the Board’s discussion. The appropriateness of the proposed sign’s design was debated. Members of the Board asked for existing examples of neon signage in the Lower Dauphin Street Historic District. Examples were cited. The location of the sign received further scrutiny.

FINDING OF FACT

Harold Oswalt moved that, based upon the evidence presented in the application, the Board finds the facts in the Staff report as written.

The motion received a second and was unanimously approved.

DECISION ON THE APPLICATION

Harold 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.

A vote took place as to the suitability of the proposed sign. In a four to three decision, the Board ruled that the sign did not detract from the character of the site or district.

Certificate of Appropriateness Expiration Date: 3/18/10