



Agenda Item #1

Application 2023-36-CA

DETAILS

Location:

500 Charles Street

Summary of Request:

Fenestration changes on front and rear elevations;
window repair; fence installation; driveway
installation

Applicant (as applicable):

Foster Veazey/Oakleigh Construction, LLC

Property Owner:

Same

Staff Reviewer:

Annie Allen

Historic District:

Oakleigh Garden (local only)

Classification:

Contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- The application under review proposes the removal of two original door openings which contribute to the character and historic function of the structure.
- The removal of one existing window on the southern end of the rear façade would minimally impact the visual character of the building.
- The windows proposed to replace the door openings would match those existing in size and lite configuration.
- The proposed removal, repair and replacement of two existing windows on the north elevation are alterations which have been approved on the Staff level.
- The 6'-0" privacy fence and new concrete driveway comply with *Guidelines* in regard to placement, size and materials.

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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 property at 500 Charles Street is represented as a vacant corner lot on the 1878 Hopkins Map. The existing wood-frame cottage type dwelling is extant on the lot by the time of the 1904 Sanborn Map. According to MHDC records, the dwelling was constructed c. 1895. The single pile structure is rectangular in shape and sits on the lot in such a way that the long axis sits parallel to Charles Street. The façade consists of three original entry doors and one window. Documentary evidence shows that the pair of doors on the northern side of the elevation were historically covered by a single porch which spanned the width of the doors, and the third door to the south was sheltered by a second smaller porch. At some point between 1955 and 1980, these porches were replaced with a single porch spanning the length of all three door openings. Between 2014 and 2020, the house underwent repairs, during which time shutters were added to the windows.

MHDC records show that this property has never before appeared before the Architectural Review Board.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Remove two original outer entry doorways on the east façade of the house and replace with windows.
 - a. Door openings would be replaced with aluminum clad two-over-two windows to match existing windows in size and lite configuration.
2. Remove one original window located on the south end of the west elevation; close the resulting opening with wood siding to match the existing.
3. Remove, repair and reset two windows on the north elevation.
4. Install a 6'-0" privacy fence and gate.
 - a. The privacy fence would extend from the northwest corner of the structure and run westward for 9'-0". It would then run south along the west property line for 72'-0"; would run east to west for 29'-0" along the southern property line; and north to south for 26'-0" along the east property line, abutting the southeast corner of the house behind the front plane. A 10'-0" wide double gate would be installed on the east property line portion, across the driveway to the south of the dwelling.
5. Install a concrete driveway on the south end of the lot which would extend west from the existing curb cut on Charles Street.

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. 5.14 Preserve the decorative and functional features of a primary door.
 - Original doors and openings, including their dimensions, should be retained along with any moldings, transoms or sidelights.
 - Maintain the original position and proportions of a historically significant door.
 3. 10.2 Design a fence to be compatible with the architectural style of the house and existing fences in the neighborhood.
 - Install a painted wood picket fence.
 - Install a simple wood or wire fence. Heights of wooden picket fences are ordinarily restricted to 36". Consideration for up to 48," depending on the location of the fence, shall be given. A variance might be required. Staff can advise and assist applicants with regard to a variance. If combined with a wall, the total vertical dimension of the wall and fence collectively should not exceed 36," or in some cases 48".
 - For surface parking areas associated with commercial uses, size a perimeter parking area fence to not exceed 48" in height.
 - Install a cast-iron or other metal fence not exceeding 48" in height if located in the front yard.
 - Install a fence that uses alternative materials that have a very similar look and feel to wood, proven durability, matte finish and an accurate scale and proportion of components.
 - Face the finished side of a fence toward the public right-of-way.
 - Based on the chosen fence material, use proportions, heights, elements and levels of opacity similar to those of similar material and style seen in the historic district.

REAR AND NON-CORNER SIDE FENCES (LOCATED BEHIND THE FRONT BUILDING PLANE)

- Design a fence located behind the front building plane to not exceed 72" in height. If the subject property abuts a multi-family residential or commercial property, a fence up to 96" will be considered.
 - An alternative fence material with proven durability, matte finish and an accurate scale and proportion of components is acceptable. A simple wood and-wire fence is acceptable provided it is appropriate to the style of the house.
4. 10.7 Minimize the visual impact of parking.
 - Locate a parking area at the rear or to the side of a site whenever possible.
 - Use landscaping to screen a parking area.
 - Minimize the widths of a paved area or a curb cut.
 - If a curb cut is no longer in use, repair the curb. In some areas, granite curbs may be required.
 - Do not use paving in the front yard for a parking area. Paving stones might be acceptable in certain instances.
 - Do not create a new driveway or garage that opens onto a primary street.

ACCEPTABLE WALK AND PAVING MATERIALS Materials that have a similar character, durability and level of detail to walks and paved areas associated with historic properties in the district are acceptable. These often include:

- Gravel or crushed stone
- Shell
- Brick
- Cobblestone
- Grasspave or grasscrete (mix of grass and hard surface paving material that provides a solid surface)

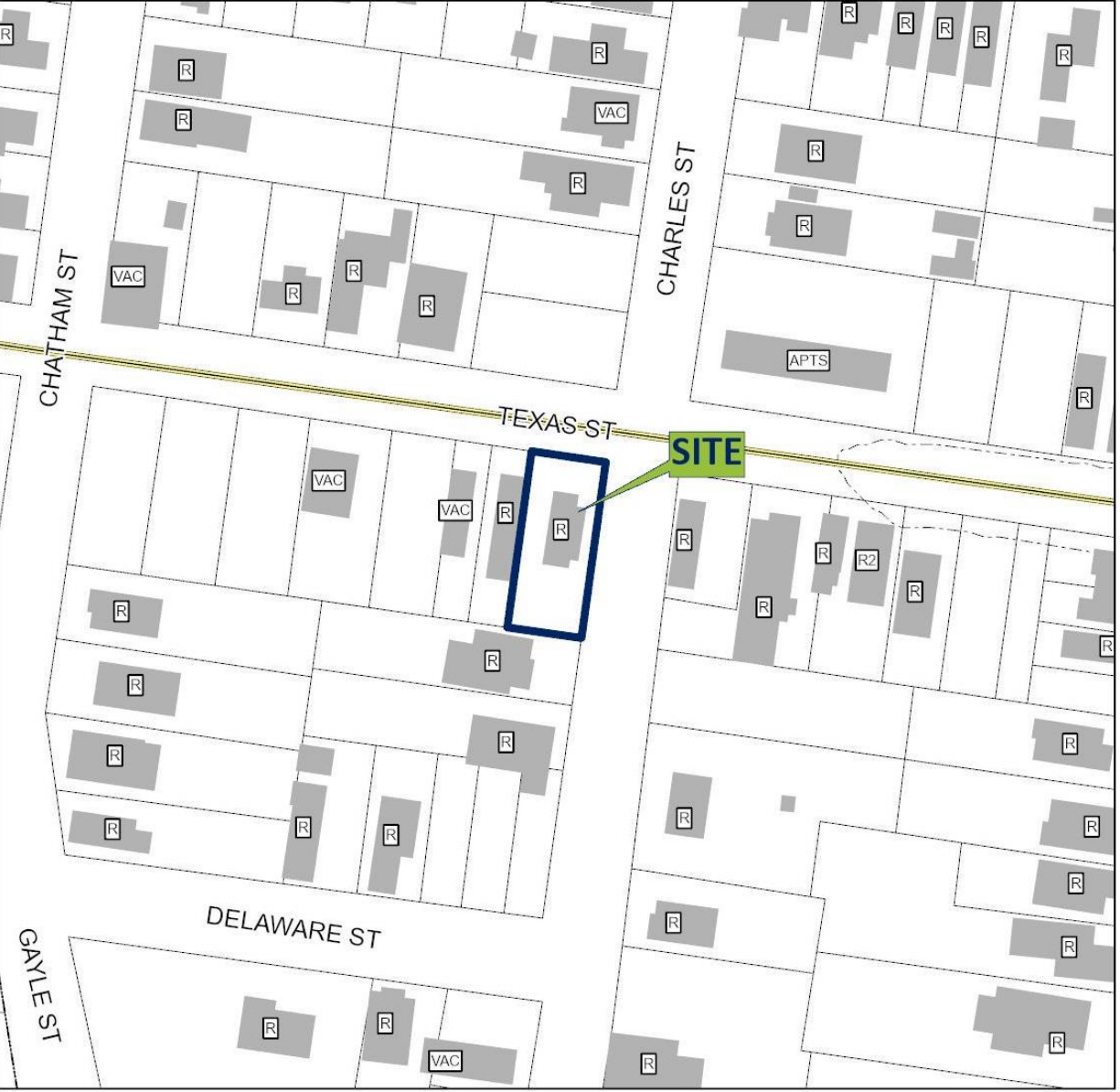

STAFF ANALYSIS

The subject property is a contributing resource within the locally designated portion of the Oakleigh Garden Historic District. The application under review includes the proposed removal of two of three original entry door openings on the east-facing elevation, to be replaced with aluminum clad windows; the removal of an existing window on the rear of the house; the construction a 6'-0" privacy fence on the property; and installation of a new concrete driveway.

The *Guidelines* direct that significant historic façades and their elements be maintained in their original form and that original doors and openings be retained in their original position. (A. 1,2) The three (3) entry doors on the façade of the dwelling are original openings. Documentary evidence shows that the pair of doors on the northern side of the elevation were historically covered by a single porch which spanned the width of the doors, and the third door to the south was sheltered by a second smaller porch. At a later date these porches were replaced with a single porch spanning the length of all three door openings. This type of wood-framed, shallow and long structure with multiple entry doors and windows distributed in varying patterns across an elongated façade is a form which was commonly used for tenant housing in Mobile. There are few existing examples which date as early as the subject structure, as many are either no longer extant or have been altered. 206-216 Cuba Street, 1250 State Street, and 1202 Chinquapin Street are existing representations of the form. Another variation is the servants quarters building at Oakleigh, which had originally been built as military barracks for Union soldiers after the Civil War and was moved to its current location in the early twentieth century. All of these examples replicate a fenestration pattern similar to the one expressed at 500 Charles. Variations on this form were replicated throughout the years and can still be seen in Mobile, employing different materials such as brick and cinder block. The ratio of doors to windows on the façade is a character-defining feature of this structure type. The proposed removal of the two doors and replacement with windows would disrupt the historic façade of the dwelling. The proposed removal of the window on the rear (west) elevation is a minor fenestration change which would have minimal impact on the character of the structure.

The proposed 6'-0" wood privacy fence would be compatible with the architectural style of the house and with existing fences within the district. Its proposed placement (behind the front plane of the building) and height falls within the perimeters set out in the *Guidelines*. Likewise, the new concrete driveway would direct parking to a less visible location from the street as directed by the *Guidelines* (A.3, 4).

Site Location – 500 Charles Street

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD VICINITY MAP	
	
APPLICATION NUMBER	1
DATE	7/19/2023
APPLICANT	Oakleigh Construction Co. LLC
PROJECT	Fenestration changes, Window repair, Fence installation, Repainting
	

Site Plan – 500 Charles Street



Site Photos – 500 Charles Street



1. East (front) elevation



2. View of doors to be removed



3. West (rear) elevation depicting window to be removed



4. North elevation/windows to be repaired



5. North elevation windows to be repaired



6. Location of proposed privacy fence

Site Photos – 500 Charles Street



7. 206-216 Cuba Street



8. 1202 Chinquapin



9. Oakleigh



10. 1250 State Street