Architectural Review Board
May 1, 2024

Agenda Item #3
Application 2024-19-CA

DETAILS

Location:
950 Elmira Street

Summary of Request:
Demolish rear porch and construct new rear addition; repairs and alteration to the original structure.

Applicant (as applicable):
Tim Spafford

Property Owner:
Bayleigh Thompson

Historic District:
Oakleigh Garden District

Classification:
Contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- The rear porch proposed for demolition is not original to the structure.
- The proposed addition is in conformance with the Guidelines' standards for compatibility in placement, massing, scale, and materials.
- The proposed repairs, replacements and alterations to the original structure do not impair its integrity or significance.
- The proposed new fence and parking are acceptable site improvements in regard to placement, dimensions, and materials.

Report Contents:

PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

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

The contributing dwelling at 950 Elmira is a wood-frame cottage reflecting the Gulf Coast Cottage style, including features such as the full width front porch tucked under the side-gable roof and the classical symmetry expressed by the arrangement of architectural elements and fenestration patterns. Historic Development records date the house to c. 1905. It is represented on the 1904 Sanborn Insurance map with a form much like the current, though without the extant rear porch which runs along the west side of the rear elevation. On the 1925 overlay, the rear porch is present, along with a large one-story rectangular addition abutting the east side wall and sitting slightly forward of the original cottage, overlapping the northeast corner of Elmira and Marine Streets. This addition is labeled "S" for "Store" and is not represented on the subsequent 1956 overlay. It is also not present in a 1952 aerial photo.

Historic Development Department records show that the property has never appeared before the Architectural Review Board.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Remove existing rear enclosed porch and cross-gable roof on rear of structure. Construct a new master bedroom, bath and laundry addition that encompasses the footprint of the removed rear porch.
    a. The existing cross-gable roof located on the east end of the structure would be removed. A proposed new cross-gable roof would extend northward from the center of the existing ridgeline of the side-gable roof and would cover the existing rear portion of the structure. This roof portion would measure 22'-1 ½" at the ridge, matching that of the original roof.
    b. The proposed one-story addition would measure 292 sf and would be located to the rear of the original structure. The west side setback would remain the same as that of the original structure. The setback from the rear property line would be 5'-0".
    c. The proposed addition would be topped by a gable roof. This gable would sit subordinate to the rest of the roof structure. All proposed new roof portions would be clad in black shingles to match the existing.
    d. The ceiling height of the of the addition would match the original structure at 11'-2".
    e. The new addition would be clad in wood clapboard siding, painted Warm Eucalyptus by Valspar.
    f. The proposed addition would sit on a foundation of brick piers with framed wood lattice infill panels to match the original.
    g. All proposed new windows would be six-over-six aluminum clad wood windows to match existing. All would measure 2'-1" wide by 5'-2" high, with the exception of one window located on the far north end of the west elevation. This window would measure 2'-0" wide by 4'-6" high.
    h. Elevations of the proposed addition would appear as follows:
        - North (rear) elevation (from east to west)
          Side elevation of proposed new side porch, steps, and handrail; corner board; window centered on the east half of the original rear end wall; corner board of projecting wing addition; window centered on the wing; corner board.

- West elevation (from north to south)
  One 2'-0" wide by 4'-6" high window; two 2'-1" wide by 5'-2" high windows, all regularly spaced across the addition portion of the elevation; corner board.
- East elevation (from south to north)
  Window, located slightly south of center of the side wall; corner board

2. Proposed repairs and alteration to existing structure
   a. Repair and replace existing siding where needed with in-kind materials, painted to match existing.
   b. Repair existing windows where needed using matching materials. If replacement is needed, windows will be replaced with six-over-six wood sash windows to match existing in size and profile.
   c. Repair front porch decking where needed with tongue and groove decking.
   d. Install a suspended copper gas lantern on the front porch centered on the entry doorway.
   e. Replace existing non-original front porch columns with new 12"x12" square columns, each with cap and base.
   f. A new 36"-high wood balustrade would be installed on the front porch.
   g. Remove and replace existing concrete front porch steps with wood steps of the same width. The proposed new front porch steps would be flanked by a wood balustrade which would match the balustrade on the porch.
   h. Painted wood louvered shutters would flank the existing windows on the façade.
   i. On the east elevation, the fourth existing window from the front would be replaced with a 7'-0" high wood paneled door, painted white. A proposed new landing measuring 4'-0" wide by 6'-0" deep would extend eastward from the doorway and would be accessed by five wood steps. The landing would be topped by a gable roof supported by two 7'-2" high square posts, each with base and cap. The gable roof would be clad in shingles to match the existing roof. The steps would be flanked by a wood handrail and the landing enclosed by a wood balustrade to match that proposed for the front porch.
3. Proposed site improvements
   a. Remove existing chain link fencing.
   b. A 6'-0" high wood privacy fence would project from the east elevation, approximately 6" behind the front plane of the structure, and would extend to the east property line, then run north along the east property line to the northeast corner of the property, where it would abut an existing privacy fence. Along this elevation, a 20'-0" wide rolling gate would stretch across the existing driveway. The gate would match the privacy fence in materials and design. The existing curb cut will be moved to accommodate the entrance.
   c. A parking area would be created to the rear of the dwelling, on the east side of the property. This area would be paved with crushed limestone. The existing curb cut on the east ROW, adjacent to the proposed parking area, will be adjusted to accommodate the new widened entrance.

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

1. **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.
2. **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.

3. **5.17** Preserve historic stylistic and architectural details and ornamentation.
    - Repair historic details and ornamentation that are deteriorated.
4. **6.5** Repair a porch in a way that maintains the original character.
5. **6.9** Place an addition so that it is subordinate to the historic residential structure.
    - Place and design an addition to the rear or side of the historic building wherever possible.
    - Place a vertical addition in the rear so it is not visible from the street.
6. **6.10** Design an addition to be compatible in massing and scale with the original historic structure.
    - Design the massing of an addition to appear subordinate to the historic building.
    - Where feasible, use a lower-scale connecting element to join an addition to a historic structure.
    - Where possible, match the foundation and floor heights of an addition to those of the historic building.
7. **6.11** Design the exterior walls of an addition to be compatible in scale and rhythm with the original historic structure.
    - Design the height of an addition to be proportionate with the historic building, paying particular attention to the foundation and other horizontal elements.
    - Design the addition to express floor heights on the exterior of the addition in a fashion that reflects floor heights of the original historic building.
8. **6.12** Clearly differentiate the exterior walls of an addition from the original historic structure.
    - Use a physical break or setback from the original exterior wall to visually separate the old from new.
    - Use an alteration in the roofline to create a visual break between the original and new, but ensure that the pitches generally match.
9. **6.13** Use exterior materials and finishes that are comparable to those of the original historic residential structure in profile, dimension, and composition. Modern building materials will be evaluated for appropriateness or compatibility with the original historic structure on an individual basis, with the objective of ensuring the materials are similar in their profile, dimension, and composition to those of the original historic structure.
    - Utilize an alternative material for siding as necessary, such as cement-based fiber board, provided that it matches the siding of the historic building in profile, character and finish.
    - Use a material with proven durability.
    - Use a material with a similar appearance in profile, texture and composition to those on the original building.
    - Choose a color and finish that matches or blends with those of the historic building.
    - Do not use a material with a composition that will impair the structural integrity and visual character of the building.
    - Do not use a faux stucco application.
10. **6.14** Design a roof of an addition to be compatible with the existing historic building.
    - Design a roof shape, pitch, material and level of complexity to be similar to those of the existing historic building.
    - Incorporate overhanging exposed rafters, soffits, cornices, fascias, frieze boards, moldings or other elements into an addition that are generally similar to those of the historic building.
    - Use a roofing material for an addition that matches or is compatible with the original historic building and the district.
11. **6.15** Design roofs such that the addition remains subordinate to the existing historic buildings in the district.
    - Where possible, locate a dormer or skylight on a new addition in an inconspicuous location.
    - In most cases, match a roof and window on a dormer to those of the original building

12. **6.19** Design piers, foundations and foundation infill on a new addition to be compatible with those on the historic building.
    - Match the foundation of an addition to that of the original.
    - Use a material that is similar to that of the historic foundation.
    - Match foundation height to that of the original historic building.
    - Use pier foundations if feasible and if consistent with the original building.
    - Do not use raw concrete block or wood posts on a foundation.
13. **6.21** Design a window on an addition to be compatible with the original historic building.
    - Size, place and space a window for an addition to be in character with the original historic building.
    - If an aluminum window is used, use dimensions that are similar to the original windows of the house. An extruded custom aluminum window approved by the NPS or an aluminum clad wood window may be used, provided it has a profile, dimension and durability similar to a window in the historic building.
14. **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.
15. **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 structure to the Oakleigh Garden Historic District. The application under review proposes the construction of a one-story addition which would project from the west half of the north (rear) elevation.

The *Guidelines* call for an addition to an existing historic structure to be subordinate to and compatible with the main structure in placement, massing, scale, and rhythm. This application achieves these objectives with the placement of the one-story addition to the rear of the property, which does not disrupt the existing massing and scale of the property. The footprint, which would measure 292 square feet, would be approximately 23% of the footprint of the historic mass of the house. The roof proposed for the addition also sits subordinate to the height of the existing roof. Foundation and ceiling heights proposed for the addition match those of the existing house. (6.9 - 6.11, 6.15)

As directed by the *Guidelines*, the proposed addition is differentiated by the alternation in roofline and roof height. On the north and east elevations, the projecting footprint would further distinguish the addition from the original structure. (6.12)

All exterior materials intended for the addition match the original historic structure or are approvable materials for additions to historic structures. These materials include wood siding, aluminum clad wood windows, and wood trim, along with matching brick foundation piers and lattice infill panels. (6.13, 6.19, 6.21) Likewise, the cross-gable roof configuration planned for the addition complements the original roof plan. The new roof would be clad in a matching material and adopt the same overhang depth as the existing roof. (6.14)

Repairs and replacement work proposed for the existing building include repairs to siding, windows, front porch decking, railing, shutters, and foundation infill. All proposed replacement materials would match existing. The existing wood posts across the front porch are later additions that appear to have replaced larger and more substantial posts. The proposed 12”x 12” wood columns could be considered more comparable to the previous columns, and more compatible with the scale of the front porch. Installing shutters would be a fitting alteration also, as there is hardware evidence of earlier shutters flanking the front porch windows. The somewhat rudimentary railing currently enclosing the front porch does not appear to be original. The design and scale of the proposed porch balustrade would contribute to the classical rhythm expressed on this Gulf Coast cottage. Although it is unknown whether historically there was a railing on the porch, there are extant examples of this type of cottage with a front porch railing similar to the one proposed in the application. Both 1055 Augusta and 1013 Selma are side-gable cottages with picket railings enclosing full-width front porches. There are also a number of structures in the more immediate vicinity along Elmira Street with a similar front porch railing design, including 952, 954, and 909 Elmira.

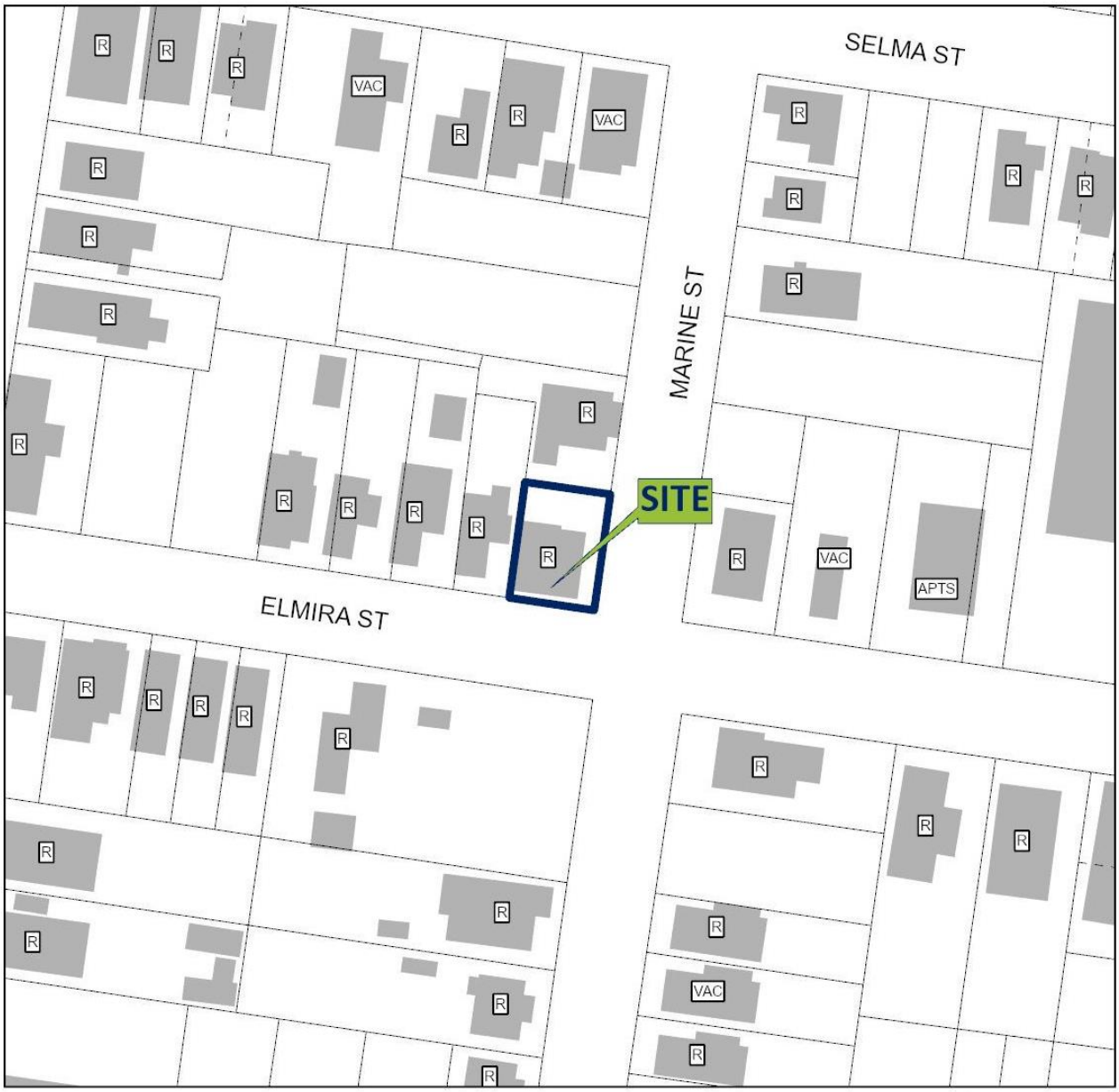
The design, proportions, and placement of the proposed gas lantern are fitting with the style of the historic cottage. The existing concrete steps leading to the front porch are not original. Photographic evidence reveals that wood steps were previously extant in that location. Therefore, going back with wood steps as proposed in the

scope of work is an appropriate alteration. The replacement of a historic window with a wood panel door on the rear end of the east elevation would not disrupt the established fenestration pattern and would allow access to the house from the rear parking area. Likewise, the covered landing and steps providing access to the side door echo the style of the front porch. (5.6, 5.7, 5.17)

The replacement of the chain link fence with a 6'-0" wood privacy fence and rolling gate brings this site element into compliance with the *Guidelines*. The proposed fence and rolling gate fit within the *Guidelines'* parameters in regard to material, size, and placement. (10.2) The proposed parking area also follows the Guidelines' directive to place parking areas to the side or rear of a property to minimize the visual impact of parking. A new curb cut would be required for this alteration to be fully compliant. The applicant intends to make this adjustment, which may require a variance. (10.7)

Site Location – 950 Elmira Street

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
VICINITY MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 3 DATE 5/1/2024

APPLICANT Tim Spafford on behalf of Bayleigh Thompson

PROJECT Remove rear porch and construct 200sf addition. Add new entry with stoop at north end of east elevation

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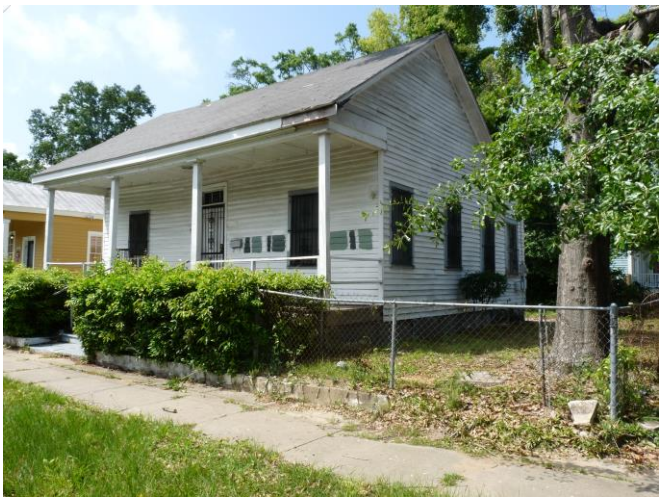
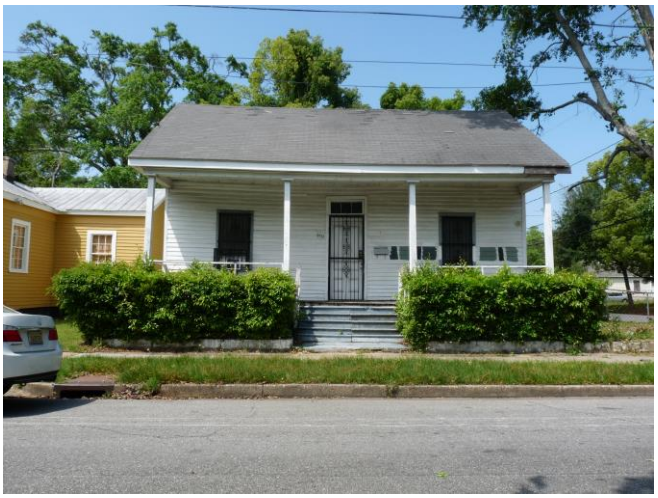
NTS

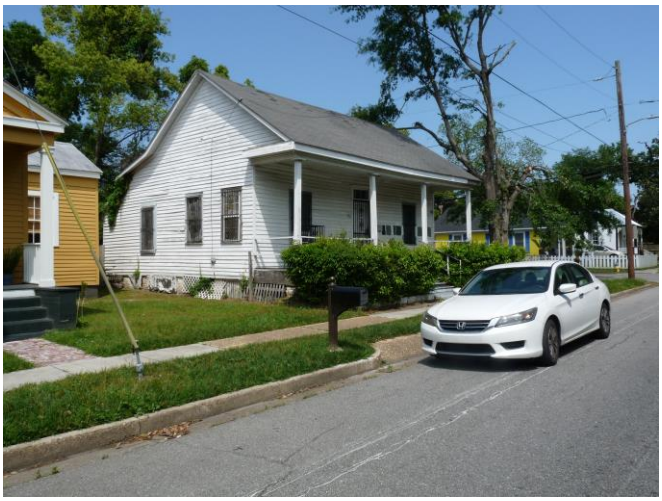
Site Photos – 950 Elmira Street



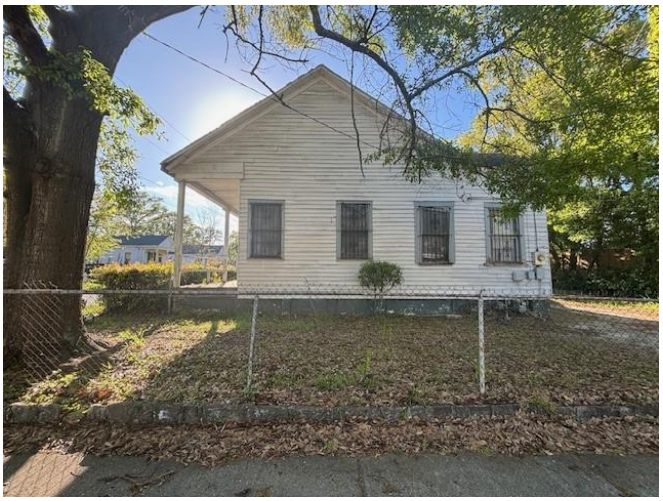
1. View of property, looking northwest



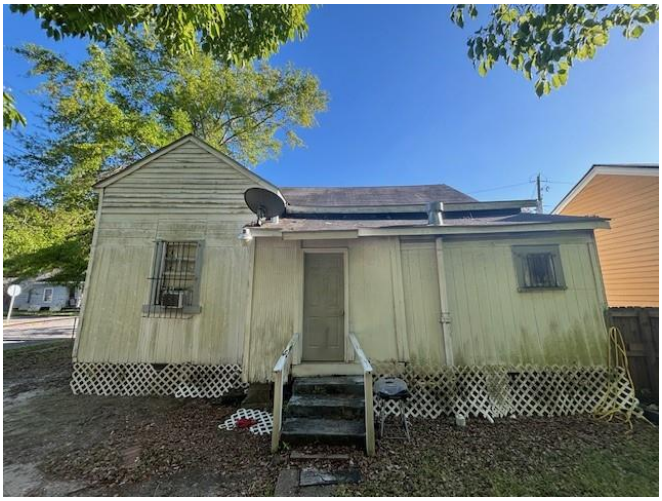
2. View of façade, looking north



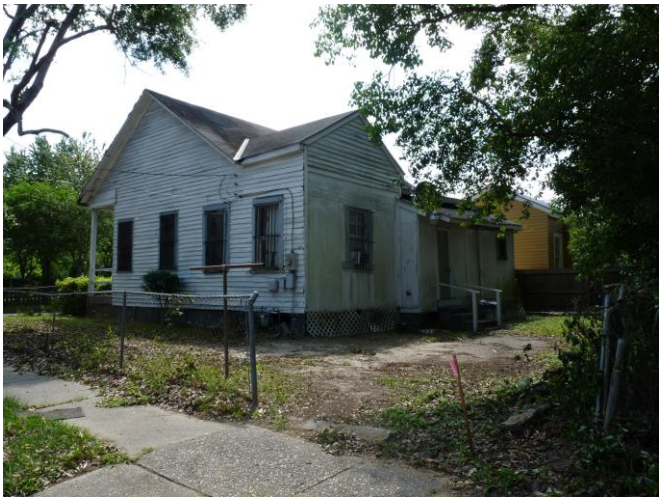
3. View of west elevation, looking northeast



4. View of east elevation, looking west



5. View of rear elevation, looking south



6. View of proposed parking area, looking southwest