

MINUTES

Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission

Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room
300 North Lee Street, Valdosta, Georgia

September 13, 2022 5:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Alex Alvarez
Ms. Celine Gladwin
Dr. Harry Hamm
Mr. Tommy Crane
Ms. Sally Querin
Ms. Laura Yale
Ms. Sandie Burkett

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Jeff Brammer
Ms. Lauren Hurley
Mr. Matt Martin

VISITORS PRESENT

Rusty McCall
Mark Jefferson
Sementha Mathews
Bruce Smith
Avery Walden
Dean Rexroth
Lisa Rexroth
Jennifer Blanc

I. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Alvarez. It was determined that a quorum of members was present. Dr. Alvarez thanked everyone for coming and reminded audience members to sign the attendance register.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

The August 1, 2022, draft minutes were reviewed by the Commission. Ms. Gladwin made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Querin seconded the motion, and it was called and carried unanimously (6-0 vote).

III. Consideration of Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Applications

- A. **HPC-2022-86 — 1901 North Patterson Street:** Mr. Brammer presents. The petitioner requests approval to expand a paved parking lot in the rear of a house on church property. This includes 19 new paved parking spaces and about 6,400 square feet of new asphalt surface. Staff noted that the new parking area is located to the rear of the property and is well screened behind the house and the main church facility. Asphalt is an approved material for driveways and parking areas. Staff recommends approval of the project as proposed.

Mr. Rusty McCall, an architect who attends the church, spoke on behalf of the application. He stated that the project is for overflow parking. Currently, on some Sundays, he said there is not enough parking. He said parishioners must park on Alden Avenue and in ancillary parking lots nearby. He said the church purchased this land two years ago for the sole purpose of expanding parking and additional greenspace.

With no one else in support or opposition of the case, the Commission discussed. Dr. Hamm said that he knows that the additional parking is needed, as he's tried to park there several times. Ms. Burkett

asked if the trees would remain. Mr. McCall said yes, all trees will remain. In fact, he said, they will add additional trees and landscaping.

Dr. Hamm made a motion to approve the request as proposed. Ms. Burkett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (6-0 vote).

- B. HPC-2022-89 — 1107 Williams Street:** Mr. Brammer presents. The petitioner requests approval to replace 10 exterior windows. Staff explained that the original wood-framed windows had already been replaced with vinyl-framed replacements. The property was purchased recently, and new ownership told staff that they didn't know the property was in the Local Historic District. Staff contacted the new owner by mail to inform them that the window replacements need HPC approval. Staff explained that the new owner understood the vinyl-framed replacements were not appropriate for the district.

The owner is proposing to replace 7 of the 10 windows he replaced with new clad-wood windows. These are the 7 front-facing windows along the façade. The owner requests approval to allow the remaining three vinyl-framed systems, which face north and south, to stay put. The proposed new windows will be 6/6 lite arrangements, matching the configuration of the formerly existing windows. The existing vinyl replacements are 1/1. Staff recommends disapproval of the project as proposed. Staff recommends in-kind replacements, i.e., wood-framed systems without exterior cladding.

Mr. Mark Jefferson, owner of the property, spoke on behalf of the application. He said he purchased the property in June, and that the realtor did not tell him that the property was in the Local Historic District. He said the windows were old and rotting, so he changed them. He acknowledged he received the letter and wanted to correct the situation. He said he got a quote from Lowe's for roughly \$7,000 to replace the 7 front-facing windows with new clad-wood windows. He said the cladding material would be better for protection and ensure the warranty. He said the arrangements would be 6/6, like the original windows.

With no one else in support or opposition, the Commission discussed. Ms. Gladwin said she appreciated that Mr. Jefferson was correcting what's been done. She said given the property's prominent location on Williams Street and its status as a contributing property, it is required that the windows be wood.

Ms. Gladwin made a motion to accept the proposal, with the condition that the windows be wood without a cladding material. Furthermore, she motioned the windows to be a 6/6 lite arrangement. Mr. Crane seconded the motion. Ms. Querin clarified that the motion affects the 7 front-facing windows only. Ms. Gladwin confirmed. The motion passed unanimously (6-0 vote).

- C. HPC-2022-90 — 512 North Ashley Street:** Mr. Brammer presents. The petitioner requests approval to construct an enclosed two-story, rear addition on an existing former commercial building. The petitioner also requests approval to enclose the rear drive-thru area for additional interior space. The enclosure of the drive-thru area is for new indoor museum space. The proposal is to match the existing brick and utilize the existing standing-seam metal roof. This is an area of nearly 1,500 square feet.

The second part of the project is the construction of a new, two-story, rear and side addition, totaling nearly 5,600 square feet. This is an L-shaped box consisting of 34-foot EIFS walls, and flat roof behind parapets hiding the mechanical systems. The idea for leaving the walls blank is to facilitate the painting of large public murals. Staff notes that the murals are to serve as the building's architectural distinction. This addition is to be attached to the existing former bank facility in the rear and wrap around the side along to the front, with three large wall elevations.

Staff acknowledges the existing property is not historic nor considered contributing to the Local Historic District. Furthermore, staff notes that the historic integrity of the surrounding area, including the Turner Arts Center campus, has already been compromised. However, staff finds that the massing, size, location, materials, and design of the project conflict with design guidelines and the general character of

the district. Staff recommends disapproval of the project as proposed. Staff recommends the HPC provide the applicant with feedback to make revisions to make the proposal more compatible with the guidelines.

Mr. Bruce Smith, an architect involved in the project, spoke on behalf of the application. Mr. Smith said the project has been in the works for a while. It started small, but has grown much larger. They originally intended to infill the building under the drive-thru and create a children's art museum. He said that as more people got involved, their ideas grew, and the scope of the project got larger. They engaged a company in Chicago to help design a "children's imagination station."

Mr. Smith said the desire was to keep the façade of the new addition simple to accommodate graphics and murals. He said he understands it's not consistent with traditional architecture. He said there are many examples of works blending traditional architecture with modern architecture, noting I.M. Pei's glass pyramid at the Louvre. Mr. Smith asked the board to allow the use of the simpler form to help facilitate the use of imagery. He said they would consider some changes and compromises, perhaps a cornice, but he insisted that the applicant really wanted to retain the open walls.

Sementha Mathews, executive director of the Turner Arts Center, also spoke on behalf of the project. She said that this area has been a hodgepodge of commercial development until the Arts Center came in around 2002-2003. She said now that the Arts Center has acquired additional property around its campus, the idea is to surround the area with some wrought iron fencing with brick along the North Ashley corridor. She said this would also help improve the appearance of the area.

With no one else in support or opposition, the Commission discussed. Ms. Querin, a member of the Arts Center board of directors, recused herself from voting. Speaking for herself, Ms. Querin said the Arts Center is not looking to set precedence with this application. She said the Arts Center is asking for this to be an exception because this is unique and different from what the HPC normally reviews. Ms. Querin said this project will encourage people to visit the Local Historic District. She said the intention is for this to be a destination for families.

Ms. Burkett asked if the facility would be used as a destination for students and school field trips. Mr. Smith and Ms. Mathews confirmed. Ms. Mathews then expanded on the educational and community value of the new facility as a unique resource to Valdosta. Mr. Smith said the new addition would look similar to the Turner Arts Center Annex building, a stucco building.

Ms. Gladwin said she felt the real issue concerned compatibility, not necessarily location, size, or materials. The question is "can we accept having two blank walls? Two large, blank, walls on the corner of Ashley and Webster streets." She said it's important that the whole vision be realized. She said given the circumstances, the HPC can make some exceptions. Ms. Gladwin said providing the walls some modulation and articulation could improve the appearance and acceptability, especially at the intersection of the two blank walls. She said she would like to see this further developed, with a follow-up hearing before the HPC.

Ms. Blanc, a member of the audience, said she felt the museum would appear more engaging and have more curb appeal if it wasn't blank walls. She said it would be more inviting to residents if it was more transparent and visible from the outside into the museum. Ms. Blanc said she recently visited Savannah and that that city has a museum with glass walls and it is more inviting to visitors.

Ms. Gladwin asked how they came up with the height of the walls. Mr. Smith said there is a catwalk inside the building, and they need that volume to house all amenities, including performing arts and stage activity. Dr. Hamm asked how they will protect the walls from vandalism. Mr. Smith said they will have a program in place to clean it up. Ms. Mathews said the property also has cameras. Ms. Querin said landscaping and fencing would also surround the buildings and property.

Ms. Gladwin reiterated her concerns that these are two large, blank walls without articulation facing prominent roads. Dr. Hamm asked if it would be possible to table this until next month. Mr. Smith said they came before the HPC hoping to get some reassurance that the Commission would consider the large walls as canvases. Dr. Hamm said he thinks this is a fabulous project. He said he's in favor of it, but there are a few issues that need to be, and can be, worked out. Ms. Yale asked if the board needs additional renderings or information. Ms. Gladwin said she thinks the applicant should consider some articulation on the walls, especially at the intersecting corner. She said that that area could be softened some, and perhaps treated with some transparency.

Mr. Dean Rexroth, a local architect in the audience, said he agreed with Ms. Gladwin. Mr. Rexroth asked about wall articulation and the possibility of vision glass or spandrel glass. Mr. Smith said it would have to be spandrel glass because all the interior walls have designated uses. Dr. Alvarez said the VSU building (on Baytree Road) is a good example of a large elevation with reveals and articulations.

Ms. Gladwin asked what would be a good time frame for continued review. Mr. Smith said it would take about six weeks to produce new renderings. Ms. Mathews said without approval upcoming fund-raising efforts would be difficult. Dr. Hamm asked if they could bring something back next month. Mr. Smith asked if they could proceed with some assurance that the building concept was acceptable, with some stipulations for articulations at the corner, and perhaps the cornice. He said that that would be helpful.

Ms. Gladwin made a motion to approve the application as proposed with one condition: For the applicant to return to the HPC within the next 3-6 months for further consideration of the canvas walls, including massing and articulation. Mr. Crane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0 vote).

- D. HPC-2022-94 — 1901 Williams Street:** Mr. Brammer presents. The petitioner requests approval to construct an enclosed rear addition, open carport, and make additional exterior renovations to the existing residence. The project includes many components. First, the construction of 1,100 square feet of additional living space and an open, rear carport. Second, swap locations of one front window and the front door. Third, bump out the south wall 2' to accommodate interior kitchen growth. Fourth, remove a non-historic backyard metal shed. Fifth, remove the existing aluminum siding and restore the original wood clapboards. Sixth, construct a wood privacy fence with brick columns around the sides and rear.

Staff acknowledges much of the project complies with district design guidelines. However, staff notes that two components conflict with district guidelines. First, altering the fenestration on the façade by swapping the location of a window and door. Second, by extending a portion of the south wall to project out 2 feet and remove three existing windows. Staff notes these changes alter the character of highly visible primary and secondary elevations.

Staff recommends approval as proposed, with two exceptions. First, disapprove the swapping of the front window and door to retain the existing façade. Second, disapprove the extended projection and removal of the windows on the south wall to retain the existence of a highly visible secondary elevation.

Mr. Avery Walden, owner of the property, spoke on behalf of the project. Mr. Walden said he purchased the house in 1996. He said it was a rental property until about five years ago, and it has been vacant since. Mr. Walden said this is the third property in the Brookwood North area on which he is undertaking rehabilitation. He said that the façade door and window that he would like to swap are not in their original configuration. Mr. Walden said he believes the right-side dependency is an old carport. He said, at one point, there was another entrance to the home, facing south.

Mr. Walden said the 2' bump out to the south is toward a large right-of-way, which encroaches upon no one. He said they won't be removing the windows, but will retain them. Mr. Walden said the carport would be connected to Cranford Avenue with an asphalt drive. He noted a front, circular driveway already exists.

Ms. Blanc, the neighbor to the north at 1905 Williams Street, spoke in favor of the project. She said the project was well thought out and would increase the property's curb appeal. She said the project would increase local property values and she appreciated the other projects the applicant has already done in the neighborhood. Ms. Gladwin asked where the existing kitchen is located. Mr. Walden said it is located at the north end of the residence, but it would be moved to the south end.

Mr. Rexroth, a neighbor who resides at 1804 Williams Street, also spoke in favor of the project. Mr. Rexroth commended Mr. Walden for making improvements to other houses within the district. Mr. Rexroth said these improvements have turned previous rental properties into owner-occupied residences, something he and fellow homeowners in the neighborhood appreciate. Mr. Rexroth said, as an architect, he understands the importance of circulation. He also said he believes the benefits of increased utilization given the proposed changes to this property outweigh the potential loss of historic fabric.

With no one else in support or opposition, the Commission discussed. Dr. Hamm asked if the proposed entrance would look the same as the existing entrance. Mr. Walden confirmed that it would. Ms. Gladwin said that this is a typical layout for a 1940s-era American Small House. She asked if the proposal was to create a front porch. Mr. Walden said yes, it would be about 3' deep. Ms. Gladwin said that is not appropriate for this type of historic home.

Mr. Walden said the way it stands now there is no way to keep water off the front door, which has continually rotted. He said making these alterations would help protect the door and framing. Ms. Gladwin said that changing the front entrance is not appropriate. Ms. Gladwin also said it is important that additions be clearly differentiated from the existing structure. This can be accomplished through design and the use of materials. Ms. Gladwin said there must be a specific articulation denoting the new and the old. However, she also said, the new additions must also be compatible with the existing structure.

Mr. Walden said to protect the front door properly will require that he put a stoop porch on the front. He said he believes that that represents a more significant alteration to the integrity of the building. Mr. Walden said he believes the main entry was originally through the south door, which used to exist before the carport was enclosed to add living space to the south end of the residence.

Dr. Alvarez asked what siding the applicant is proposing to use. Mr. Walden said he is proposing to remove the aluminum siding and restore the original wood clapboards. Mr. Walden said he proposes to use lapped fiber cement siding on the addition and carport to create differentiation between new and old.

Ms. Querin asked for clarification on the problems with water impacting the front door. Mr. Walden said the water from the roof runs off onto the brick entryway. He said this water splashes back onto the front door. Dr. Hamm asked if the same thing was happening on the back of the house. Mr. Walden said no because the roof slope is different on the rear. He said this leaves that area better protected. Ms. Querin asked what material the awning over the front door is. Mr. Walden said it was a canvas awning. He said the canvas awning will be removed.

Mr. Crane asked if the proposed entryway included sidelights. Mr. Walden said no. His elevation drawings were designed quickly, and don't properly reflect all the proposed elements. Mr. Walden said he personally does not like sidelights and won't use them in this project. Dr. Hamm asked for clarification about the style and arrangement of the window he is proposing to swap with the front door. Mr. Walden said he will place a 6/6, wood-framed window to match the two adjacent windows on the façade. Mr. Walden said the window on the other side of the door will remain an 8/8.

Ms. Gladwin made a motion to approve the project as proposed with two conditions: First, the main entry to remain in its current location. Second, to distinguish new work and additions from existing work through design and use of materials. Dr. Hamm seconded the motion. The vote was 3-3. Dr. Alvarez broke the tie and voted nay.

Ms. Querin made a motion to approve the project as proposed with one condition: Distinguish new work and additions from existing work through design and use of materials. Ms. Burkett seconded the motion. The vote was 3-3. Dr. Alvarez broke the tie and voted aye.

IV. Consideration of Administrative Review and Approvals

Board members reviewed the Administrative Reviews for the month of August with no questions.

V. Other Business

(A) **Local Historic District Survey Update (Phase II)** – Mr. Brammer stated that the third round of comments are due back to JMT on Sept. 15. Mr. Brammer also said that he will begin compiling the final paperwork to close out the grant project in the coming weeks.

(B) **Long-Term Preservation Planning (Phase III)** – Mr. Brammer acknowledged receipt of a letter from the Valdosta Black Heritage Group. The letter was distributed to all HPC members. Mr. Brammer said he hasn't heard anything from the VBHG or any of the other addressees. He said he attended the recent City Council meeting, and the issues raised in the letter were neither on the agenda nor mentioned in public comments. Mr. Brammer continued that, now with the local historic district survey wrapping up, staff will begin preparations for moving toward Phase III of the Long-Term Preservation Plan — e.g., exploring options for surveying additional parts of the City not located within the Local Historic District.

VII. New Business

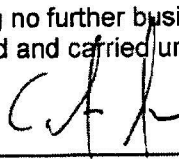
(A) **State Historic Preservation Conference** – Mr. Brammer said the annual state Historic Preservation Division Conference is scheduled for the week of Sept. 19-23. He said he will register all HPC members for the virtual conference, allowing them to attend the issues at their convenience. The sessions also will be recorded and archived.

(B) **Tour – 410 Terrace Boulevard, Valdosta** – Ms. Yale said HPC members are invited to attend a tour on Wednesday, Sept. 14 of the mid-century modern residence now for sale at this location. Ms. Yale said members of the Valdosta Heritage Foundation have also been invited.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Crane made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Querin seconded the motion. It was called and carried unanimously (6-0 vote). The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

HPC Chairman



Date

10/4/22