



402 LEE STREET
DECATUR, ALABAMA 35601
November 14, 2024
MINUTES

Council Chambers

Architectural Review Board

4:00 PM

I CALL MEETING TO ORDER 4:00 PM

Roll Call:

Present: Ellis Chenault, Barbara Kelly, Patrick Rasco, Jacob Woods

Absent: Michael Rogers

II APPROVAL OF MINUTES: October 10, 2024

Vote: Motion made by Barbara Kelly to approve the Minutes as submitted, seconded by Patrick Rasco. Unanimous approval, motion carried.

III EXPEDITED CoAs SINCE THE OCTOBER MEETING:

809 Line Street NE (Thomas) installation of gutters (#31 for the CoA)

644 Johnston Street SE (Hughes) complete fence along property line at rear of house (#26 for the CoA)

435 Jackson Street SE (Denney) repair siding in-kind for painting (#9 for the CoA)

522 Oak Street NE (Cole) repair in-kind masonry on front porch and repair fascia on rooftop deck (#9 for the CoA)

223 Lafayette Street NE (Picket) repair fascia in-kind (#9 for the CoA)

110 Walnut Street NE (Mosely) repair in-kind rotting deck boards at rear and door to storage at rear (#9 for the CoA)

IV NEW CoA REVIEWS:

CoA #1: 301 Oak (Dickson)

Background: This in-fill house is located in the Old Decatur District. Staff received a call about a new 6' fence installed. No CoA approved for fencing work. Staff reached out to the owner. A storm damaged the house and prior non-compliant fence. Owner had non-compliant fence replaced in-kind without a CoA.

Action Requested: Approve a 6' tall fence connected to the front corner of the façade.

Decatur's Design Review Standards: 16.0 Fences and Walls 16.6 Fences in front and side yards shall not exceed a height of three (3) feet. Back yards and other areas not readily visible may have a fence up to six (6) feet in height. Fences at back yards should begin no further forward than at half the depth of the principal structure including the porch.

Staff Assessment: The current location of the 6' fence is not consistent with the design review standards. In prior cases of property damage by storm (722 Ferry with vinyl siding, and 721 Ferry with the sunporch) the commission has required that repairs and/or replacements meet current design review standards.

Discussion: Jacob Woods and Ellis Chenault noted that the fence is too tall for that location. The height needs to be shortened or the fence needs to move location. Ellis Chenault and Patrick Rasco both suggested evergreen plantings to accommodate privacy screening.

Vote: Motion made by Patrick Rasco to approve an amended CoA allowing for a the horizontal center board of the fence (on the raw side) to be the new cross bar at the top of the fence, as long as the new fence is no higher than 48" (4 feet) tall. Alteration or removal of the fence must be complete within 90 days, by February 12, 2025. Motion seconded by Ellis Chenault. Unanimous approval, motion carried.

CoA #2: 120 Cherry (Odom)

Background: This house is located in the Old Decatur district.

Action Requested: Installation of a single hand railing, centered on the brick steps. Applicant feels the railing needs to be in the center to accommodate holiday decorations that side railings could interfere with.

Decatur's Design Review Standards: Porch railings down front steps are a detail that was not addressed in the current design review standards.

Staff Assessment: Single family residential railings are traditionally located on the side of the front steps. Staff was unable to locate an example of a centered front railing that was approved by the ARB. Centered railings are standard for large width steps that are found at commercial properties (churches, schools, etc.)

When a detailed request is not specifically addressed in the Design Review Standards, the board should use the existing standards of what is historically appropriate for the era and design of the house, in addition to determining if the requested non-traditional approval would be appropriate for all other applicants who could request the same installation.

Discussion: Jacob Woods asked Mr. Odom if the railing design would have pickets, Mr. Odom responded that it would not, it would essentially be in the shape of an upside down U, with one vertical on each end and a hand bar at the top.

Vote:

Motion made by Jacob Woods to approve an amended CoA allowing for one side railing or two side railings no more than 21" from the edge of the brick sidewall along the steps. Staff to review and approve the final design. Motion seconded by Patrick Rasco. Unanimous approval, motion carried.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 5:00 by Jacob Woods, seconded by Barbara Kelly. Unanimous approval, motion carried. Meeting adjourned.