Agenda Item # 3

Application 2024-35-CA

DETAILS

Location:
105, 107, and 109 S. Jefferson Street

Summary of Request:
New construction: three (3) two-story townhouses

Applicant (as applicable):
Jeff Carter on behalf of Figures Investment, Inc.

Property Owner:
Figures Investment, Inc.

Historic District:
Church Street East

Classification:
Vacant

Summary of Analysis:

- The subject block has seen significant demolition.
- All proposed materials are approved under the *Guidelines*.
- The proposed design reflects certain elements of nearby historic structures.
- The proposed foundation is slab-on-grade.
- All exterior lighting would be recessed and is not visible on the submitted elevations.
- No landscape plan was provided.

Report Contents:

PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

Church Street East Historic District was initially listed in the National Register in 1971 under Criteria A (historic significance) and C (architectural significance) for its local significance in the areas of architecture, education, and urban planning. The district is significant for its concentration of multiple 19th century architectural styles and because it encompasses the site of Mobile in the early 1700s. The district boundaries were expanded in 1984 and 2005.

The properties at 105, 107, and 109 S. Jefferson are vacant lots and have not previously appeared before the ARB.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Construct three (3) two-story townhouses.
    a. The proposed structure would be rectangular in shape and would measure 62'- 3" wide by 49'-0" deep. The height of the building to top of the roof would measure 28'-0", with second floor ceiling height from finished floor measuring 21'-0".
    b. The structure would be located on the lot such that the front wall plane would sit 9'-0" back from the west (front) property line. The north and south side yards would measure approximately 7'-7" and 15'-10", respectively.
    c. The façade would be articulated by three (3) gabled roof projections. The first story would be clad in a white brick veneer, the second story in stucco, painted white. A decorative brick string course comprising a soldier bond topped by a rowlock would run across all four elevations and serve to define the division between the first and second floors.
    d. The hipped roof and projection gables would be clad in a shingle to look like slate, or shingles in the weather wood color.
    e. The foundation would be slab on grade and would measure 1'-4" high.
    f. Fenestration: All windows would be aluminum clad and black in color. Each door would be a black iron six-light pane-and-panel design and would measure 3'-0" wide by 7'-0" high.
    g. Elevations would appear as follows.
        1) <u>West façade</u> (from north to south)
        Each townhouse would consist of two bays. The north entry bay would measure approximately 6'-0" wide, and the wider south bay would measure approximately 15'-0" wide, and project approximately 3'-8" forward of the north bay.
        North bay – The first floor would consist of a 3'-0" wide by 7'-0" high iron entry door topped by a 1'-6" one-light transom. Three (3) 5'-6" concrete steps would access each door. A 6'-0" wide black metal awning would stretch the full width of the bay above the entry door. The second floor would consist of as single round four-light window, 2'-0" in diameter, with a 4" wood trim, centered on the bay.
        South bay – The first floor would consist of three six-light casement windows measuring 9'-0" wide by 8'-8" high, centered on the bay. The second floor would consist of three two-over-two windows measuring 9'-0" wide by 5'-9" high, centered on the bay.
        2) <u>East (rear) elevation</u> (from south to north)
        First floor – Door under awning, topped by transom and accessed by three (3) concrete steps measuring 5'-6" wide; paired two-over-two windows measuring 8'-0" wide by 6'-0" high; door under awning, topped by transom and accessed by three (3) concrete steps measuring 5'-6" wide; paired two-over-two windows measuring 8'-0" wide by 6'-0" high; paired) two-over-two windows measuring 8'-0" wide by 6'-0" high; door under awning, topped by transom and accessed by three (3) concrete steps measuring 5'-6" wide.
        Second floor – Two (2) two-over-two windows measuring 3'-0" wide by 5'-9" high, each pair equally spaced on the south, center, and north bay.
        3) <u>North elevation</u> (from east to west)

First floor – two pairs of six-light windows measuring 6'-0" side by 8'-6" high, regularly spaced along the east two-thirds of the elevation.
Second floor – Two (2) one-light fixed windows measuring 4'-0" wide by 1'-4" high, regularly spaced slightly west of center on the elevation.

4) South elevation (from west to east)
First floor – two pairs of six-light windows measuring 6'-0" wide by 8'-6" high, regularly spaced along the east two-thirds of the elevation.
Second floor – Two (2) one-light fixed windows measuring 4'-0" wide by 1'-4" high, regularly spaced slightly west of center on the elevation.

2. Proposed site improvements:
    a. Install a 10'-0" wide rock aggregate driveway south of the proposed structure, in line with existing curb cut. The driveway would extend east to the rear of the property.
    b. Install a rear paved parking area behind the structure. The paved area would encompass the entire open area behind the structure, measuring approximately 81'-6" wide by 37'-0" deep. Five (5) 10'-0" wide parking spaces orientated east to west would be located directly adjacent to the building's rear elevation.
    c. Three (3) walkways measuring 4'-6" (1) and 4'-11 ½" wide would connect the front door steps to the existing sidewalk. In addition, three (3) similar walkways would connect the back door steps to the rear parking area.

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

1. **6.34** Maintain the visual line created by the fronts of buildings along a street.
    - Where front yard setbacks are uniform, place a new structure in general alignment with its neighbors.
    - Where front yard setbacks vary, place a new structure within the established range of front yard setbacks on a block.
2. **6.35** Maintain the side yard spacing pattern on the block.
    - Locate a structure to preserve the side yard spacing pattern on the block as seen from the street.
    - Provide sufficient side setbacks for property maintenance.
    - Provide sufficient side setbacks to allow needed parking to occur behind the front wall of the house.
3. **6.36** Design the massing of new construction to appear similar to that of historic buildings in the district.
    - Choose the massing and shape of the new structure to maintain a rhythm of massing along the street.
    - Match the proportions of the front elevations of a new structure with those in the surrounding district.
4. **6.37** Design the scale of new construction to appear similar to that of historic buildings in the district.
    - Use a building height in front that is compatible with adjacent contributing properties.
    - Size foundation and floor heights to appear similar to those of nearby historic buildings
    - Match the scale of a porch to the main building and reflect the scale of porches of nearby historic buildings.
5. **6.38** Design exterior building walls to reflect traditional development patterns of nearby historic buildings.
    - Use a ratio of solid to void that is similar in proportion to those of nearby historic buildings.
    - Reflect the rhythm of windows and doors in a similar fashion on all exterior building walls. The ARB will consider all building walls; however, building walls facing streets may face increased scrutiny.
    - Use steps and balustrades in a similar fashion as nearby historic structures.

- Design building elements on exterior building walls to be compatible with those on nearby historic buildings. These elements include, but are not limited to:
    - Balconies
    - Chimneys
    - Dormers

6. **6.39** Use exterior materials and finishes that complement the character of the surrounding district.
    - Use material, ornamentation or a color scheme that blends with the historic district rather than making the building stand out.
    - If an alternative material is used that represents an evolution of a traditional material, suggest the finish of the original historic material from which it evolved.
    - Use a material with proven durability in the Mobile climate and that is similar in scale, character and finish to those used on nearby historic buildings.

    ACCEPTABLE MATERIALS

    Materials that are compatible in character, scale, and finish to those used on nearby historic buildings are acceptable. These often include:
    - Stucco
    - Brick
    - Stone
    - Wood (lap siding, shingles, board and batten)
    - Concrete siding
    - Cement fiber board siding
    - Skim stucco coat

    UNACCEPTABLE MATERIALS

    Materials that are incompatible in character, scale and finish to those used on nearby historic buildings are unacceptable. These often include:
    - Metal siding
    - Vinyl siding
    - Unfinished concrete block
    - Plywood
    - Masonite
    - Vinyl coatings
    - Ceramic coatings
    - Exterior insulation and finishing system (EIFS) wall systems
7. **6.40** Design a roof on new construction to be compatible with those on adjacent historic buildings.
    - Design the roof shape, height, pitch, and overall complexity to be similar to those on nearby historic buildings.
    - Use materials that appear similar in character, scale, texture, and color range to those on nearby historic buildings.
    - New materials that have proven durability may be used.

    ACCEPTABLE ROOF MATERIALS

    Materials that are similar in character, scale, texture, and color range to those used on nearby historic buildings are acceptable. These often include:
    - Asphalt dimensional or multi-tab shingles
    - Wood shake or shingle
    - Standing seam metal
    - Metal shingles
    - 5-V crimp metal
    - Clay tile
    - Imitation clay tile or slate
8. **6.41** Design a new door and doorway on new construction to be compatible with the historic district.

- Place and size a door to establish a solid-to-void ratio similar to that of nearby historic buildings.
- Place a door in a fashion that contributes to the traditional rhythm of the district as seen in nearby historic buildings.
- Incorporate a door casement and trim similar to those seen on nearby historic buildings.
- Place and size a special feature, including a transom, sidelight or decorative framing element, to complement those seen in nearby historic buildings.
- Use a door material that blends well with surrounding historic buildings. Wood is preferred. Paneled doors with or without glass are generally appropriate.

9. **6.43** Design piers, a foundation and foundation infill to be compatible with those of nearby historic properties.
    - Use raised, pier foundations.
    - If raised foundations are not feasible, use a simulated raised foundation.
    - Do not use slab-on-grade construction. This is not appropriate for Mobile's historic neighborhoods. If a raised slab is required, use water tables, exaggerated bases, faux piers or other methods to simulate a raised foundation.
    - Do not use raw concrete block or exposed slabs.
    - If foundation infill must be used, ensure that it is compatible with the neighborhood.
    - If solid infill is used, recess it and screen it with landscaping.
    - If lattice is used, hang it below the floor framing and between the piers. Finish it with trim.
    - Do not secure lattice to the face of the building or foundation.
    - Do not use landscaping to disguise inappropriate foundation design.

    ACCEPTABLE FOUNDATION MATERIALS

    Materials that are similar in character, texture and durability to those used on nearby historic buildings are acceptable. These often include:
    - Brick piers
    - Brick infill
    - Wood (vertical pickets)
    - Framed lattice infill

    UNACCEPTABLE FOUNDATION MATERIALS

    Materials that are not similar in character, texture, and durability to those used on nearby historic buildings are unacceptable. These often include:

    Mineral board panels

    Concrete block infill
    - Metal infill
    - Plywood panel infill
    - Plastic sheeting infill
    - Vinyl sheeting infill

10. **6.44** Use details and ornamentation that help new construction integrate with the historic buildings in the district.
    - Use a decorative detail in a manner similar to those on nearby historic buildings. A modern interpretation of a historic detail or decoration is encouraged.
    - Do not use a decorative detail that overpowers or negatively impacts nearby historic buildings.
11. **6.45** Locate and design windows to be compatible with those in the district.
    - Locate and size a window to create a solid-to-void ratio similar to the ratios seen on nearby historic buildings.
    - Locate a window to create a traditional rhythm and a proportion of openings similar to that seen in nearby historic buildings.
    - Use a traditional window casement and trim similar to those seen in nearby historic buildings.
    - Place a window to match the height of the front doorway.
    - Place a window so that there is proportionate space between the window and the floor level.
    - Do not place a window to directly abut the fascia of a building.
    - Use a window material that is compatible with other building materials.

- Do not use a reflective or tinted glass window.
- Use a 1/1 window instead of window with false muntins. A double paned window may be acceptable if the interior dividers and dimensional muntins are used on multi-light windows. A double paned 1/1 window is acceptable.
- Do not use false, interior muntins except as stated above.
- Recess window openings on masonry buildings.
- Use a window opening with a raised surround on a wood frame building.

ACCEPTABLE WINDOW MATERIALS

Materials that are similar in character, profile, finish and durability to those used on nearby historic buildings are acceptable. These often include:

- Wood
- Vinyl-clad wood
- Aluminum-clad customized wood
- Extruded Aluminum

UNACCEPTABLE WINDOW MATERIALS

Materials that are not similar in character, profile, finish and durability to those used on nearby historic buildings are unacceptable. These often include:

- Mill finish metal windows
- Snap-in or artificial muntins
- Vinyl

12. **10.5** Visually connect the street and building.
    - Maintain or install a walkway leading directly from the sidewalk to the main building entry.
13. **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.
    - Do not create a new driveway or garage that opens onto a primary street.
14. **10.10** Provide a landscaped front yard for a residential property in a historic district.
    - Maintain a predominant appearance of a planted front yard/lawn.
    - Minimize paved areas in a front yard.
    - Consider using decorative modular pavers, grass and cellular paving systems in order to minimize the impact of hard surface paving where grass or other plant materials are not used.
    - In commercial areas, consider using landscaping to screen and soften the appearance of surface parking areas. Use an internal and perimeter landscaping treatment to screen a fenced or walled parking area.
    - Do not use landscaping to hide a design feature that is inconsistent with these Design Review Guidelines.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The subject properties are vacant lots in the Church Street East historic district. The application under review seeks approval for the construction of three two-story townhouses.

The *Guidelines* state that a new structure should maintain the alignment with the established range of front and side setbacks on the street. This block of S. Jefferson Street has witnessed widespread demolition resulting in the loss of all residential structures previously extant on both the east and west sides of the street. Therefore, there is no established range of setbacks. However, the proposed placement does fall into the setback ranges of existing

historic residences along S. Jefferson, one block south below Church Street. Here, front setbacks range between approximately 4'-0" to 12"-0". Side setbacks are also similar to those proposed. Additionally, the proposed setbacks are comparable to those of the remaining historic structures on adjacent lots facing S. Bayou Street. (6.34, 6.35)

The massing of the proposed building – which according to the *Guidelines*, is established by the arrangement and proportion of a building's main block, wings, porches, roof, and foundation – is somewhat out of step with the rhythm of the massing of nearby buildings. The steeply pitched roof and the lower foundation height are visually out of proportion with neighboring historic two-story residences. The scale or size of the building appears compatible with the surrounding structures. (6.36, 6.37)

In regard to the new building's exterior walls and fenestration application, the solid to void pattern present on the façade serves to reflect the traditional patterns of nearby historic buildings. Likewise, the façade's rhythm of windows and doors echoes the fenestration pattern at nearby 803 Government in particular – also a multifamily residence. The use of a door and window pairing on the first floor and the grouping of three windows on the second floor resemble 803 Government's first floor façade and its three-part bay windows on the second floor. The longer multi-light windows planned for the first floor are suggestive of the multi-light sidelights at 106 and 110 S. Bayou, 805 Government, and of the storefront doors at 809 Government. In line with the *Guidelines*, the use of the round window above each entry door on the second floor at 105-109 S Jefferson reads as a modern interpretation of the quatrefoil element at 803 Government, along with the small one-over-one window used in 803's stair halls. Although the rear and side elevations of the proposed structure express a similar fenestration pattern as those seen on nearby buildings, with multi-light windows and pane-and-panel doors, the walls themselves present as flat surfaces, lacking the dimensionality of the side and rear elevations of surrounding historic structures which consist of projections, recesses, and decorative lintels and sills. Also conspicuous is the lack of building elements, or suggestions of elements, that are seen on nearby buildings such as balconies, porches, columns, and chimneys.
The application of details such as lintels, awnings, a string course, and transoms would help to integrate the new construction design with the character of the district. (6.38, 3.41, 6.45)

The brick and stucco cladding planned for the exterior of the building are common materials traditionally used in the surrounding district and throughout Mobile. However, historically brick would not have been painted. The proposed white paint finish on the brick veneer is not a traditional use of the material or finish. (6.39)

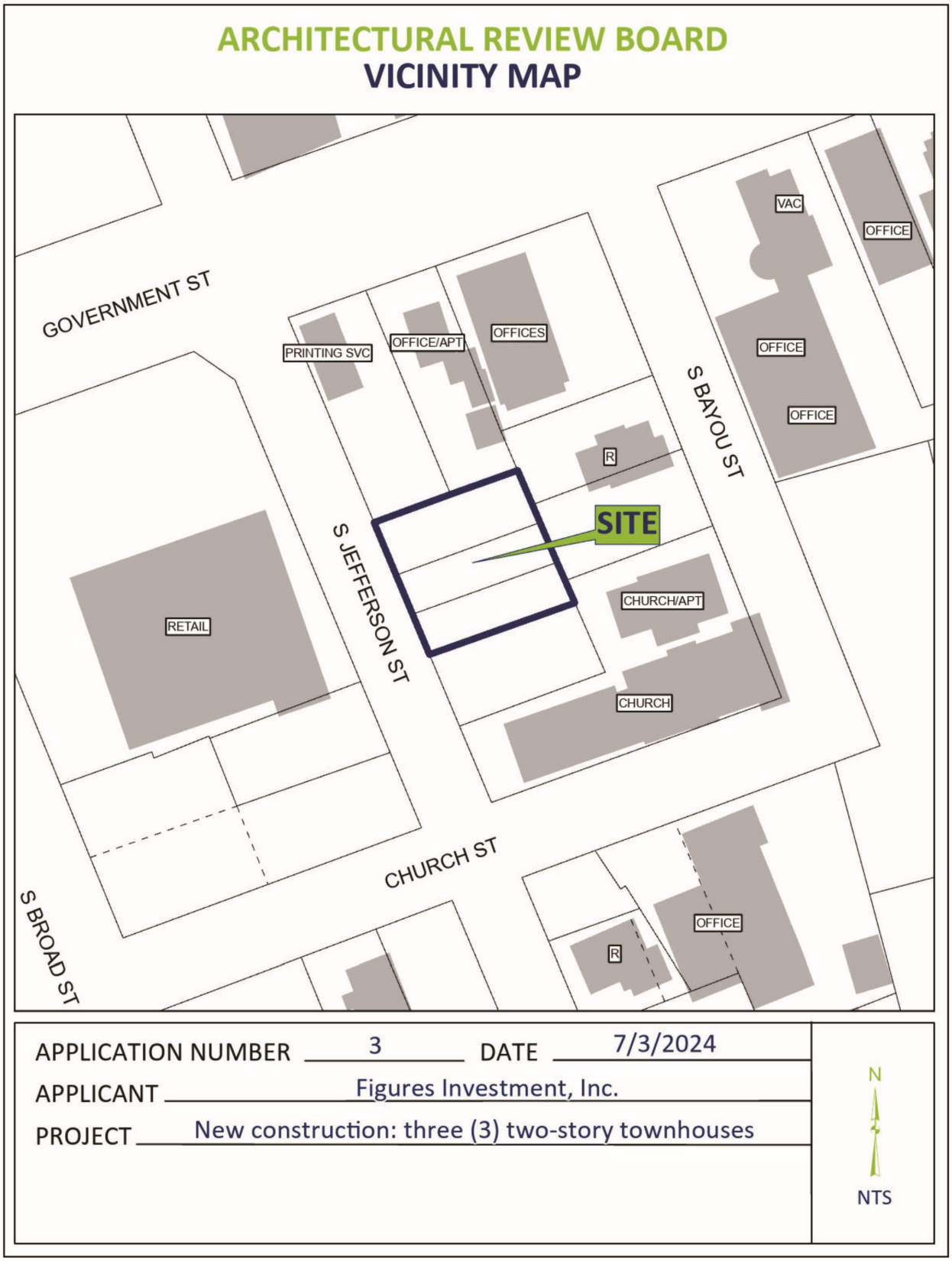
According to the *Guidelines*, the shape, height, pitch and complexity of a new roof should be comparable to those of adjacent historic structures. Hipped roofs are traditionally used throughout the district and are present on adjacent structures such as those at 110 and 106 S. Bayou. The pitches of these historic roofs are lower than the one proposed for the subject building. The combination of a hipped roof with gabled projections can be seen at the previously mentioned 803 Government. However, the main roofline of this historic building has a slighter pitch which sits lower than the gabled projections. This arrangement may be a more appropriate option for the subject design. (6.40)

The submitted drawings express a 1'-4" slab-on-grade foundation. The *Guidelines* state that a raised foundation or simulated raised foundation are to be used for new residential construction in historic districts. The proposed foundation does not appear to conform to traditional residential building practices in the immediate vicinity. A modest modification in height and the application of a simulated water table to simulate a raised foundation would create a more compatible design. (6.43)

The drawings propose three concrete walkways projecting from the west elevation, each of which would lead from the front entry door to the existing sidewalk on S. Jefferson Street, complying with the *Guidelines'* requirement to visually connect a structure to the street. A 10'-0" wide driveway which would lead to a rear parking area is planned for the south end of the property. Both would be paved with rock aggregate. Directing parking to the side and rear of the site conforms with the *Guidelines'* standard to minimize the visual impact of

parking. All exterior lighting would be recessed and are not visible on the submitted drawings. The *Guidelines* require a landscaped front yard for residential properties in historic districts. No landscape plan was provided. (10.5, 10.7, 10.10)

Site Location – 105, 107, 109 S. Jefferson Street



Site Photos – 105, 107, 109 S. Jefferson Street

1. Vacant lots, looking northeast.

2. Vacant lots, looking east.

3. View of southeast corner of vacant lots. Note adjacent structures.

4. 809 Government, adjacent commercial building north of subject lots.

5. 803 Government, adjacent residence northeast of subject lots.

6. 805 Government, adjacent residence northeast of subject lots.