



Agenda Item #4

Application 2025-17-CA

DETAILS

Location:

1401 Blacklawn Street

Summary of Request:

Paint exterior of home with Sherwin Williams colors Jacaranda (SW 6802), Avocado (SW 2861), and Porch Ceiling (SW 9063) and Valspar color Zydeco (V036-3)

Applicant (as applicable):

Russ and Renee Culler

Property Owner:

Russ and Renee Culler

Historic District:

Old Dauphin Way

Classification:

Contributing

Summary of Analysis:

- The proposed paint scheme does not reflect the predominant historic period of either the subject property or the surrounding historic district.

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PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

Old Dauphin Way Historic District was initially listed in the National Register in 1984 under Criterion C for significant architecture and community planning. The district includes most nineteenth-century architectural styles and shows adaptations of middle-class domestic designs of the nineteenth century to the regional, Gulf Coast climate. It includes “fine examples of commercial, institutional, and religious structures as well as 20th-century apartments.”

The property at 1401 Blacklawn Street is a Spanish-Revival style bungalow constructed between 1928 and 1929. The dwelling does not appear on the 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, and Blacklawn Street was not listed in the Mobile City Directory until 1926. The first person listed as residing at this address was G. P. Brock in 1929. The 1956 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map indicates that the house is constructed of loadbearing concrete-block walls covered with cement stucco. The second-story camelback is wood-frame with horizontal wood clapboards. The different construction types suggest the camelback may have been added sometime between 1929 and 1956. The footprint of the home has been unchanged since 1956.

According to Historic Development Department files, this property has previously appeared once before the Architectural Review Board (ARB). In 2008, an application to remove the terra cotta tile roof and replace it with architectural shingles was withdrawn prior to going before the board. In 2012, the ARB approved an application to remove the original terra cotta roof and replace it with metal Decra Villa tile roofing sheets that would match the original in pitch, form, and color. The ARB issued approval on the condition that the homeowner retain and reinstall the historic ridge tiles and finials.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Paint exterior in the following color scheme
 - a. Paint Manufacturer: Sherwin Williams
 - i. Main body: Jacaranda (SW 6802)
 - ii. Trim and window sash: Avocado (SW 2861)
 - iii. Porch ceiling: Porch Ceiling (SW 9063)
 - b. Paint Manufacturer: Valspar
 - i. Doors: Zydeco (V036-3)

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

1. Use of color and color schemes that reflect a building’s predominant historic period are encouraged. A painting project should reflect the historic character of the property and of the district. Paint colors and schemes will generally be approved if it is in keeping with the historic style and period of the building and the neighborhood (35).

STAFF ANALYSIS

The property under review is a contributing structure in the Old Dauphin Way Historic District. This application involves painting the building exterior with a color scheme that is not in keeping with the predominant historic period of either the subject property or the surrounding district. Specifically, the bright, saturated blue (Jacaranda SW 6802) does not reflect the historic finish schemes of the 1920s, when Blacklawn Street was first laid out. Homes constructed in this period were typically painted light earth tones and pastel colors. This was especially true of Spanish Revival homes with stucco walls. Staff were unable to find any evidence of homes of this style having a main body color as bright and saturated as Jacaranda (SW 6802).

To come to this conclusion, staff reviewed period publications relating to architecture, design, color theory, and paint manufacturers. All sources show a marked preference for light neutral and pastel colors throughout the

1920s and 1930s. House paint advertisements and trade catalogs overwhelmingly favored white, cream, yellow, or light gray for main body colors with white or green trim and accents (fig. 7). Pastel shades – including light greens, pinks, and oranges – were less common but still popular (fig. 8). The Color Book (c. 1920) states that bright hues are “hardly appropriate for large areas” and recommends using “more intense colors” on trim and small accents “with discretion.” Some publications did show homes painted dark brown or charcoal. In these instances, trim colors were painted white, cream, or the same color as the walls (fig. 9 and 10).

Paint catalogs show that blue was not a generally popular color for houses between 1920 and 1935. The Color Book (c. 1920) explicitly states that “blue is to be used with discretion in the color scheme of a home exterior,” adding that it is most effective as a trim color. Five of the consulted catalogs depicted homes with blue trim or shutters. Of the 15 period publications that staff consulted, three included illustrations of homes with blue exterior walls. These houses were exclusively Colonial Revival in style, and only one appeared to be stucco. One illustration features a light blue body color with darker blue trim and shutters. Only two illustrations pair more saturated blue body colors with white trim (fig. 11 and 12).

Light blue was sometimes used as a main body color on Spanish-style homes. *Fifty-One Beautiful Homes* (1925) describes Spanish-style homes as having “light colored stucco” and states that either light tan or light blue are appropriate for exterior stucco walls. *New Color Harmony For Your Home* (1935) states that, when selecting a color scheme for Spanish-style home, “it is possible to go beyond the range of body colors that are adaptable for the more formal architectural types.” The text notes that, while the most common schemes are white or yellow walls with green or red trim, Spanish-style houses “can just as well be done in almost any color the owner desires, ranging from the White to Light Blue and even Pink.”

Catalogs showed that, while dark or saturated blues were never used as main body colors on Spanish-style homes, they did occasionally appear as trim and accent colors. Light blue trim was commonly paired with white, cream, or pale-yellow walls (fig. 13 and 15). More moderate shades of blue tended to complement yellow, tan, or gold walls (fig. 14). Heavily saturated dark blue trim sometimes appeared on Spanish-style homes with pink or peach-colored walls (fig. 16 and 17). The smaller the accented areas, the bolder the trim color could be. When using heavily saturated blues or reds especially, most of the trim was painted the main body color and only small areas were picked out in the accent color (fig. 17 and 18).

If blue walls are desired on a 1920s Spanish Revival home, light muted shades are most appropriate. Period-appropriate BLP colors are Church Street East Gray and Selma Street Gray. Examples from other paint manufacturers include First Snowfall (Benjamin Moore) and Icicle (Sherwin Williams). For this scheme, period-appropriate accent colors include white, terra cotta, and deep, saturated reds. If a dark or saturated blue is to be used, it is most appropriate to use it sparingly as a trim or accent color. Bold blue trim may be paired with a warmer body color, such as gold or pink. Moderate shades of blue – such as Ft. Gaines Blue (BLP), Powder Blue (SW), or Marlboro Blue (BM) – may complement a yellow or pale gold body color. Appropriate accent colors for this scheme would include rich browns and brownish reds. Saturated navy or cobalt trim – such as Chatham Street Blue (BLP), Dress Blues (SW), or Blueberry Hill (BM) – may be paired with a pink or peach body. This scheme may include additional accents of terra cotta. Staff did not find any historic precedent for dark or saturated blue as a body color on 1920s Spanish Revival houses, and evidence indicates this treatment was not typical of any 1920s residential style. However, paint catalogs do demonstrate that, if exterior walls are painted a dark or saturated blue, the most appropriate trim color is either white or cream.

Site Location – 1401 Blacklawn Street



Site Photos – 1401 Blacklawn Street



1. North façade before painting, looking south



2. East elevation before painting, looking southwest



3. West elevation before painting, looking southeast



4. East elevation partially painted, looking southwest



5. East elevation partially painted, looking northwest



6. West elevation partially painted, looking southeast

Precedent Images – Period Color Schemes



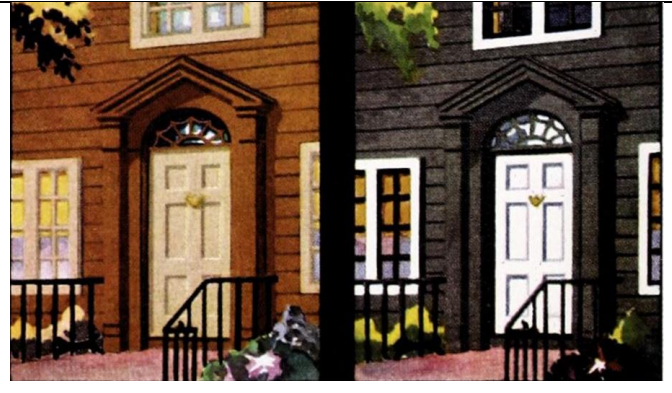
7. White body with green shutters
(*Color Harmony*, 1928)



8. Pastel shades for body colors
(*The Home Decorator*, 1933)



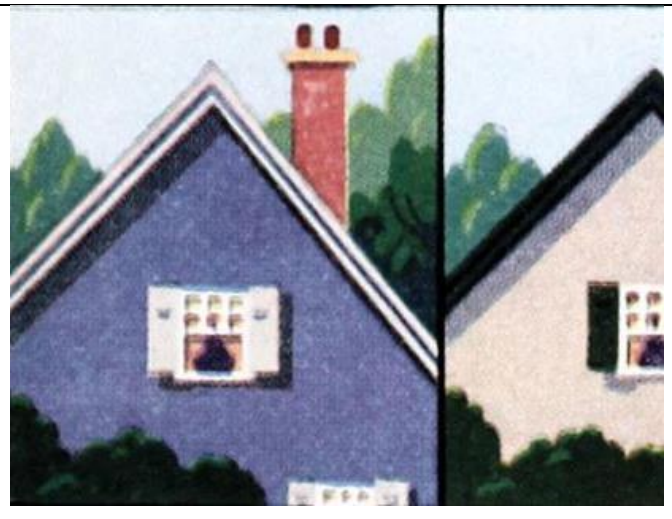
9. Dark brown body with cream trim
(*Home Builders Catalog*, 1928)



10. Dark body colors with cream and white trim
(*How to Get the Paint Job You Want*, 1933)



11. Greenish blue body with white trim
(*Color and the Home*, 1930)

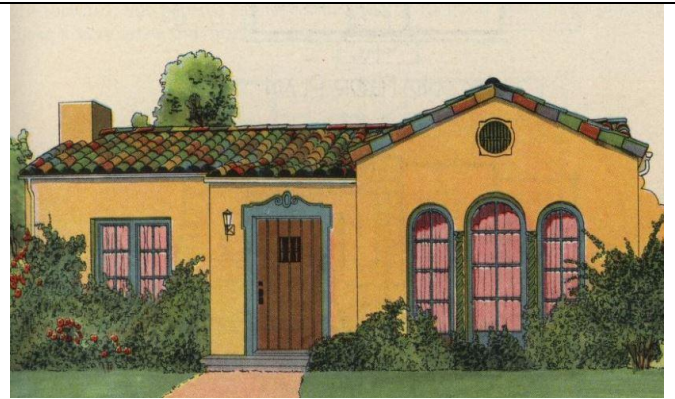


12. Cobalt blue body with white trim
(*How to Get the Paint Job You Want*, 1933)

Precedent Images – Period Color Schemes for Spanish Revival Houses



13. Gray body with blue trim (*Artistic Homes*, 1925)



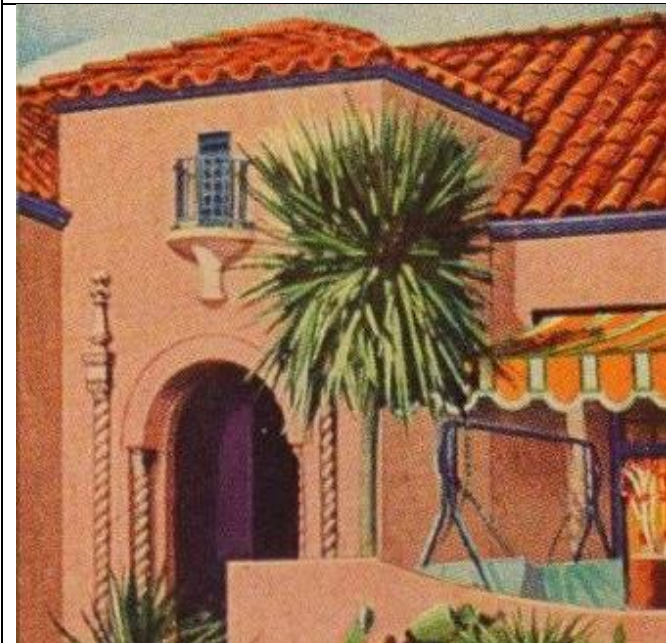
14. Gold body with blue trim (*Artistic Homes*, 1925)



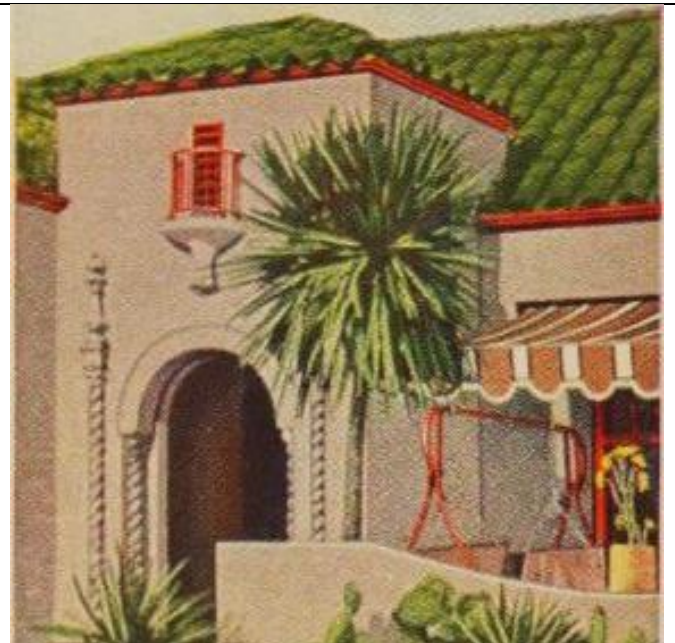
15. Cream body with blue trim
(*Colorkeed Home Plans*, 1927)



16. Coral and pale peach with blue trim
(*Color and the Home*, 1930)

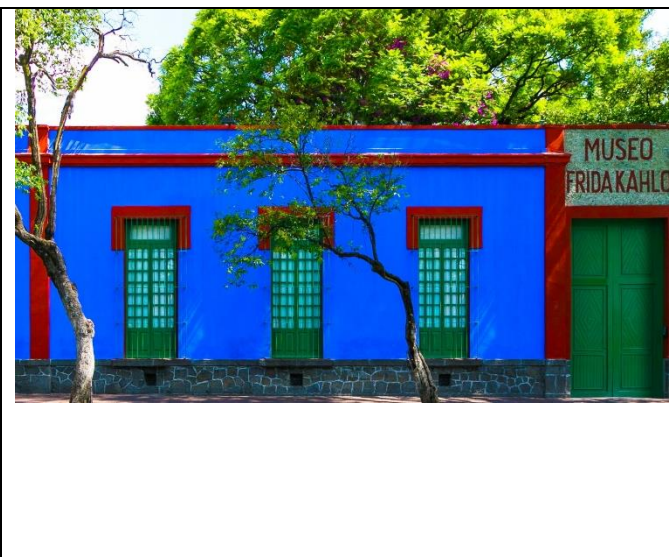


17. Coral body with deep blue trim
(*The New Home Decorator*, 1934)



18. Gray body with bright red trim
(*The New Home Decorator*, 1934)

Inspiration Images – Provided by Applicant



19. Frida Kahlo Museum, Mexico City, Mexico



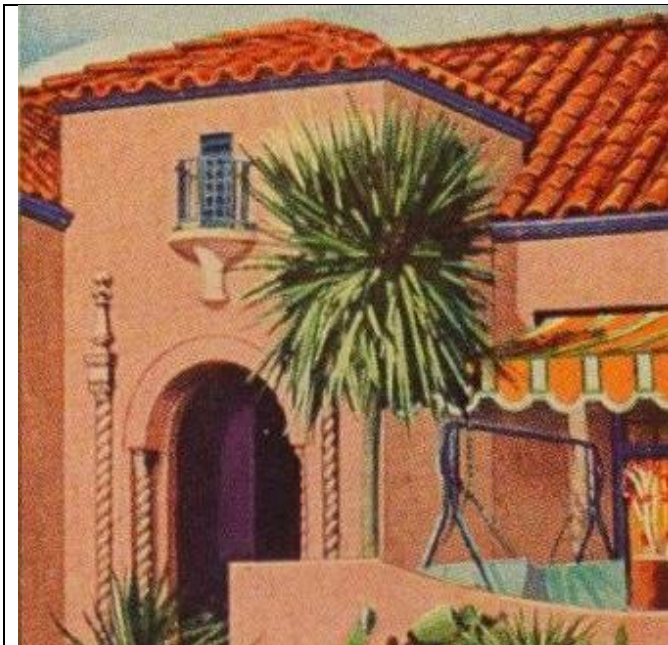
20. Blue Spanish-style house



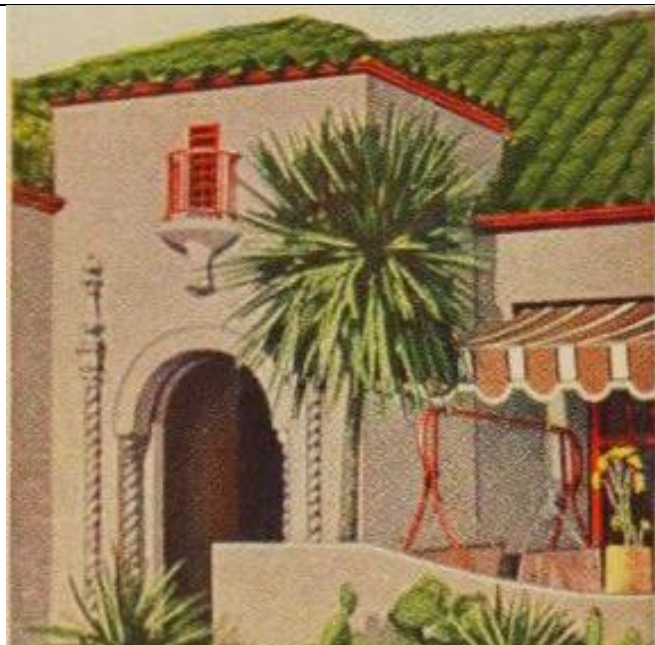
21. Blue Spanish-style house



22. Blue Spanish-style house



17. Coral body with deep blue trim
(The New Home Decorator, 1934)



18. Gray body with bright red trim
(The New Home Decorator, 1934)