



## Agenda Item #2

### Application 2024-34-CA

#### DETAILS

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**Location:**

205 Congress Street

**Summary of Request:**

Completion of porch at SW corner to match porch at SE corner. Remove window at rear conservatory. Add new wood door and transom to match existing.

**Applicant (as applicable):**

Douglas Kearley

**Property Owner:**

Derek Norman

**Historic District:**

DeTonti Square

**Classification:**

Contributing

**Summary of Analysis:**

- The subject structure historically consisted of a full-width rear porch, which has been significantly altered.
- The proposed porch plan would match the existing east portion of the rear porch and adhere to all *Guidelines* regarding porch design and replacement.
- Proposed window removal, new wood door and transom, fence repairs, and installations comply with the *Guidelines* and meet the requirements of Staff level review.

**Report Contents:**

Property and Application History ..... 2  
 Scope of Work ..... 2  
 Applicable Standards ..... 2  
 Staff Analysis ..... 3  
 Attachments .....4

## PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

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DeTonti Square Historic District was initially listed in the National Register in 1972 under Criterion A for social and urban planning significance and Criterion C for significant architecture. The district was one of two historic districts created by a municipal ordinance in 1962 in an effort to halt the rapid demolition of historic buildings near the city's central business district. The district, named for the French explorer Henri DeTonti, contains a few structures surviving from the 1830s, but the majority were built in the 1850s as residences of the wealthy and influential cotton factors, merchants, and planters.

The structure at 205 Congress Street is a frame five-bay central hall raised cottage with a full-width front porch. This house originally sat at the southwest corner of St. Anthony and N. Hamilton streets (orientated to St. Anthony Street), where it was constructed c. 1886. Its representation on the 1891 Sanborn Map shows a rear projecting wing on the east end of the south elevation. The structure was moved to its current location in 1985. In 1986, the structure underwent an extensive restoration project. At this time, physical evidence was found to indicate that the rear projecting wing was not original to the house, which originally had a full-width open rear porch similar to that on the front. During the renovation, the rear wing was removed and a glass vestibule housing a spiral staircase was added to the center of the rear elevation. The open porch was rebuilt to the east of the vestibule, supported by columns modeled from those on the front porch. The porch floor to the west of the vestibule was eliminated, but the columns were retained.

According to Historic Development vertical files, this property appeared before the Architectural Review Board in 1986, when plans for the restoration of the property were approved.

## SCOPE OF WORK

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1. Rebuild rear porch on southwest corner of the house.
  - a. Install wood porch floor framing and decking to match existing porch on the southeast end of the structure.
  - b. Construct wood inset stairs and railing to match the existing staircase on the front porch. The stairs would rise from west to east against the southwest exterior end-wall of the house. Steps would measure 38" wide. The handrail would measure approximately 36" high.
  - c. Install a new wood handrail to enclose the porch. The handrail would match existing in materials, style, and dimensions.
  - d. Repair existing brick piers.
  - e. Install framed wood lattice infill panels between piers where needed to match existing.
  - f. Remove transom and cut down door on the lower west elevation of the glass vestibule to accommodate the porch floor. Fill opening with new wood siding to match that on the structure.
  - g. Remove second window (from the west) on the rear elevation and replace it with a new wood panel door and transom to match the existing door and transom on the east side of the vestibule. The door and transom would measure 3'-0" wide by 10'-0" high.
2. Repair existing brick wall to the west of the structure.
3. Install brick and iron fence on east property line which matches existing fence along west property line.
4. Install 6' wood privacy fence along south property line.

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

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1. **6.5** Repair a porch in a way that maintains the original character.
2. **6.6** If replacement is required, design it to reflect the time period of the historic structure.
  - Replace a historic porch element to match the original.
  - Use replacement materials and elements that are appropriate to the style, texture, finish, composition and proportion of the historic structure.

- Where an original porch is missing entirely, base a replacement porch on physical or photographic evidence. If no evidence exists, draw from similar structures in the neighborhood.
- Match the balustrade of a historic porch to the design and materials of the porch.
- When reconstructing a porch, pay particular attention to matching the handrails, lower rails, balusters, decking, posts/columns, proportions and decorative details.
- Do not completely replace an entire porch or element unless absolutely necessary. Only replace the element or portion of an element that requires replacement.
- Do not use cast-iron columns or railing where no evidence exists that these elements were used historically.
- Do not use a brick base for a wood column (exception is Craftsman styles).
- Do not use a railing that is too elaborate for the building (of a different style).

## STAFF ANALYSIS

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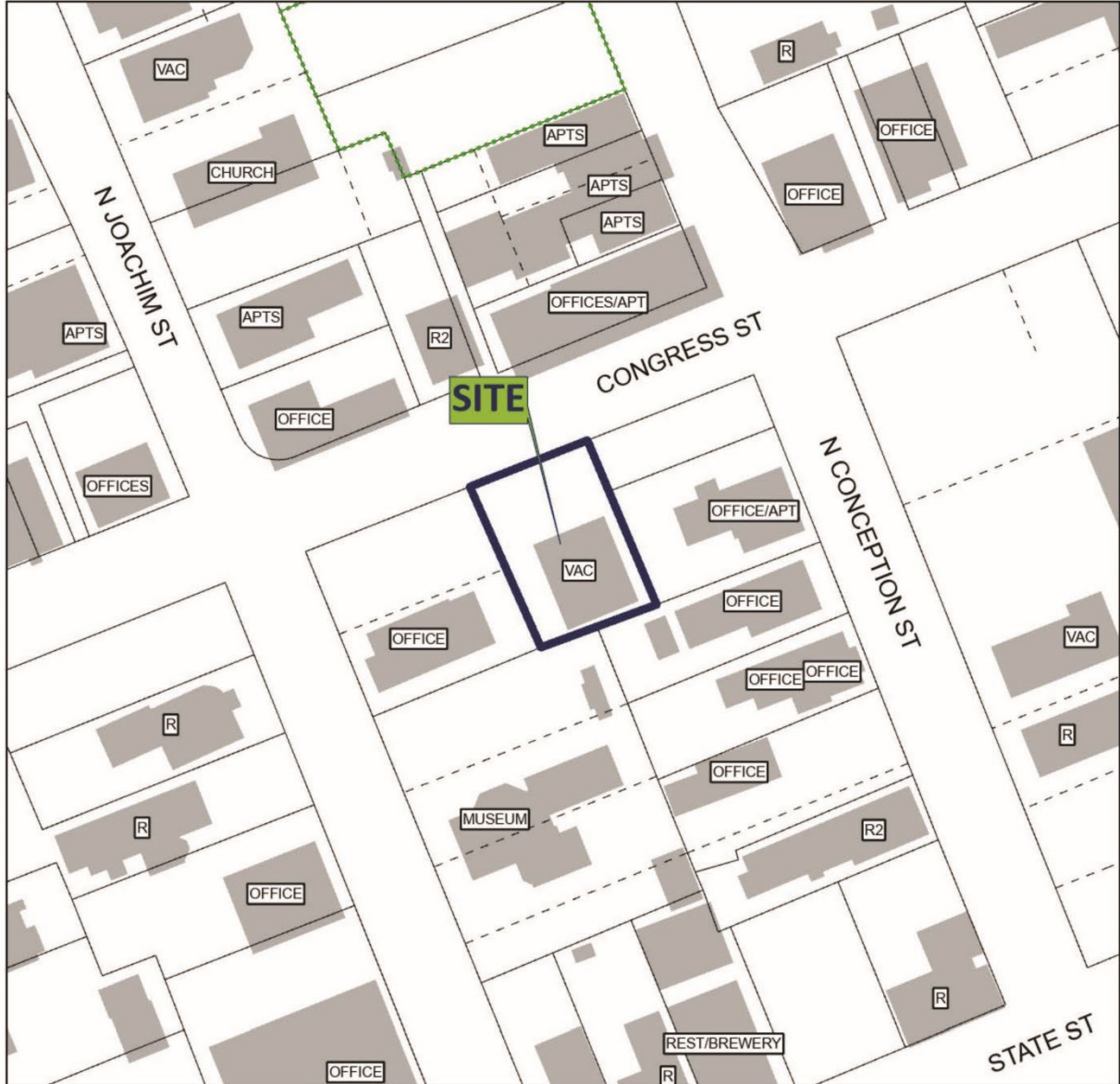
The subject property is a contributing structure to the DeTonti Square Historic District. The application under review proposes rebuilding the west portion of the rear porch. As stated above, the structure originally had a full-width porch on the rear (south) elevation. Extensive alterations were carried out on this elevation both early with the addition of a rear projection, and later after its relocation to 205 Congress, with the construction of a glass vestibule and the removal of the west portion of the porch decking to allow for access to a door under the floor level. There is little original fabric, if any, remaining of the original rear porch.

The proposed plan to rebuild the porch deck, railing, and inset stairs would match the design of both the east portion of the rear porch and the front porch, maintaining the structure's character and complying with the *Guidelines'* directive to design a replacement porch to echo that of the time period of the historic structure. (6.5, 6.6)

The proposed repairs to the existing brick wall, along with new fence installation comply with the *Guidelines* and meet the requirements of Staff level review.

Site Location – 205 Congress Street

**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
VICINITY MAP**



APPLICATION NUMBER 2 DATE 7/3/2024  
 APPLICANT Douglas Kearley on behalf of Derek Norman  
 PROJECT Completion of porch at SW corner to match porch at SE corner. Remove window at rear conservatory. Add new wood door and transom to match existing



## Site Photos – 205 Congress Street



1. North facade



2. Southwest corner, showing location of porch reconstruction. Note window to be replaced with door and lower door and transom to be cut down.



3. Southeast corner. Proposed porch would match.



4. Existing door on southeast corner. Proposed new door for west side would match.