



Agenda Item #1

Application 2024-08-CA

DETAILS

Location:

54 N. Cedar Street

Summary of Request:

Install a chain link fence

Applicant (as applicable):

Lee Wilson on behalf of Janice Morrison

Property Owner:

Janice Morrison
Jaime Hobbs
Darnisha Boykin

Historic District:

Lower Dauphin Street Commercial

Classification:

Vacant Lot

Summary of Analysis:

- The height of the proposed fencing along the street-facing property line falls outside of the approved range stated in the Guidelines
- Chain link is listed in the Guidelines as an unapproved material for fences located in Mobile’s local historic districts
- The fencing proposed for the south portion of the property appears to cross onto the adjacent lot the south.

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PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

Lower Dauphin Street Commercial Historic District was initially listed in the National Register in 1979 under Criteria A (historic significance) and C (architectural significance) for its local significance in the areas of commerce and architecture. The district is significant for its unique character stemming from the high concentration of closely spaced two- and three-story brick buildings and as Mobile's nineteenth century commercial thoroughfare. The district boundaries were expanded in 1982, 1995, 1998, and 2019.

The contributing dwelling at 54 N. Cedar is a wood-frame shotgun type house with a rear projection on its south elevation. The 1878 City Directory, along with the 1891, 1904, and 1924 Sanborn maps, depict a large brick commercial building at 54 N. Cedar. This east side of the block remained predominately comprised of commercial structures through 1924. The subsequent Sanborn overlay, which occurred in 1955, depicts a domestic structure at 54 N. Cedar in a form that appears to be that of the existing dwelling. According to one of the owners, Ms. Morrison, the subject structure was moved to its current location. The original location is unknown. Aerial photography reveals that the house may have been extant at 54 N. Cedar in 1952. The National Register Nomination dates the structure to c. 1900.

A rear porch and carport on the north elevation were added to the structure at an unknown date. These were demolished in 2017. The house was relocated in 2025 to a lot on N Dearborn Street and is currently being restored, with additions planned for the rear. No site improvements have been implemented at the vacant lot created by the relocation.

Historic Development Department records show that the property has appeared twice before the Architectural Review Board (ARB). In 2017 an application was approved to remove the roof of a collapsing carport and portions of later additions. In 2024, the ARB granted approval to relocate the historic structure to 265 N Dearborn Street.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Install 111'-0" of chain link fence
 - a. The proposed new fence would begin at the northwest corner of the property and run 23'-0" along the north property line, where it would abut an existing fence.
 - b. The fence would run from the same northwest corner, 38'-0" southward along the west street-facing side of the lot to its southwest corner.
 - c. The fence would run from the southwest corner, 28'-0" northward along the south side of the lot. It would then turn and run to the south for 1'-0" where it would abut the rear northwest corner of the building on the adjacent lot to the south.
2. Install one (1) 10'-0" chain link double gate along the north end of the fence's west elevation.

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

1. **10.2** Design a fence to be compatible with the architectural style of the house and existing fences in the neighborhood.
 - Install a painted wood picket fence.
 - Install a simple wood or wire fence. Heights of wooden picket fences are ordinarily restricted to 36". Consideration for up to 48," depending on the location of the fence, shall be given. A variance might be required. Staff can advise and assist applicants with regard to a variance. If combined with a wall, the total vertical dimension of the wall and fence collectively should not exceed 36," or in some cases 48".
 - For surface parking areas associated with commercial uses, size a perimeter parking area fence to not exceed 48" in height.
 - Install a cast-iron or other metal fence not exceeding 48" in height if located in the front yard.

- Install a fence that uses alternative materials that have a very similar look and feel to wood, proven durability, matte finish and an accurate scale and proportion of components.
 - Face the finished side of a fence toward the public right-of-way.
 - Based on the chosen fence material, use proportions, heights, elements and levels of opacity similar to those of similar material and style seen in the historic district.
- REAR AND NON-CORNER SIDE FENCES (LOCATED BEHIND THE FRONT BUILDING PLANE)
- Design a fence located behind the front building plane to not exceed 72" in height. If the subject property abuts a multi-family residential or commercial property, a fence up to 96" will be considered.
 - An alternative fence material with proven durability, matte finish and an accurate scale and proportion of components is acceptable. A simple wood-and-wire fence is acceptable provided it is appropriate to the style of the house.

ACCEPTABLE FENCE MATERIALS

Materials that have a similar character, durability and finish to those of fences of historic properties in the district are acceptable.

These often include:

- » Wood picket
- » Wood slat
- » Wood lattice
- » Iron or steel
- » Historically appropriate wire fences
- » Aluminum that appears similar to iron

UNACCEPTABLE FENCE MATERIALS Materials that do not have a similar character, durability and finish to those of fences of historic properties in the district are unacceptable.

These often include:

- » Chain link
- » Stockade
- » Post and rail
- » Masonite
- » PVC
- » Plywood or asbestos paneling
- » Razor wire
- » Barbed wire

STAFF ANALYSIS

The property under review is a vacant lot in the Lower Dauphin Street Commercial Historic District. The application seeks approval to install a total of 111'-0" of 6'-0" high chain link fencing at the property along the north, west, and south ends of the lot. There is an existing chain link fence along the east lot line, with a portion of chain link fencing along the north property line.

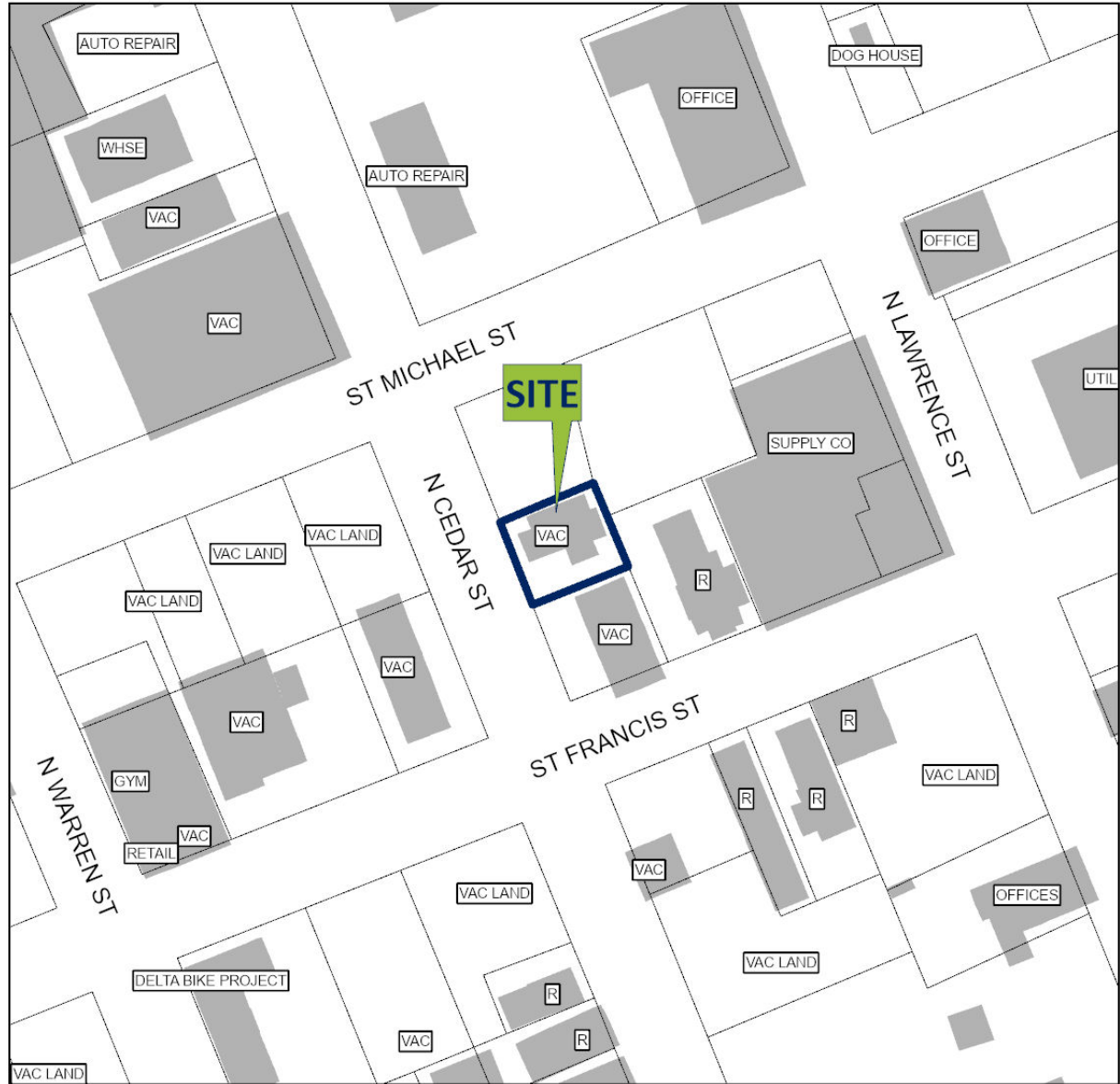
The *Guidelines* state that heights of front yard fences (forward of the building's front plane) should range from 36" to a maximum of 48", with side fences (located behind the front building plane) not to exceed 72". The guidelines for fencing do not contain standards that specifically address unimproved/vacant lots. However, the proposed material of chain link is listed in *Guidelines* as an unacceptable material for fences within historic districts. (10.2)


It appears that the fencing proposed for the south end of the lot crosses the south property boundary, onto the lot at 506 St. Francis Street.

The subject lot is also located within the Downtown Development District (DDD), which requires review of this project by the Consolidated Review Committee (CRC). Although DDD regulations do allow for fences with a

maximum height of 72" (6ft) along any property line on an unimproved lot, they also do not permit chain link fences along frontages. (*Unified Development Code - Appendix A Downtown Development District*) Any project proposed for a property located within both a local historic district and the Downtown Development District must comply with both the *Design Review Guidelines* and DDD regulations.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD VICINITY MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER <u> 1 </u> DATE <u> 2/19/2025 </u>	
APPLICANT <u> Lee Wilson on behalf of Janice Morrison </u>	
PROJECT <u> Install 6ft chain link fence along west (front), north and south property lines </u>	

Site Photos – 54 N. Cedar Street



1. View of lot, looking SE



2. View of lot, looking NE



3. View of south end of lot, existing fencing, and building on adjacent lot, looking E



4. View of existing fencing on north end of lot, looking NE

