



## Agenda Item #2

### Certified Record 2025-15-CA

#### DETAILS

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**Location:**

615 Dauphin Street

**Summary of Request:**

Install 130-square-foot painted wall sign and 6-square-foot hanging blade sign

**Applicant (as applicable):**

New Hand Signs on behalf of La Delicia

**Property Owner:**

Wendell H. Quimby

**Historic District:**

Lower Dauphin Commercial

**Classification:**

Contributing

**Summary of Analysis:**

- The wall sign exceeds the 64-square-foot signage allowance for properties within a local historic district.
- The wall sign would cover an existing wall sign placed by a previous tenant and would not require painting unpainted historic brickwork.
- The blade sign meets all Design Guidelines.

**Report Contents:**

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

## PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

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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 20<sup>th</sup>-century apartments.”

The property at 1550 Government is a two-story two-part commercial building constructed between 1866 and 1878. The load-bearing brick walls are stuccoed and scored to give the appearance of stone ashlar. The construction date, tall narrow window openings, and decorative window lintels suggest the property was originally conceived in the Italianate style. However, successive alterations have obscured the original design. The six-over-nine windows are not typical of commercial construction of the 1860s and 1870s, when one-over-one and two-over-two configurations were in vogue. The first floor was altered to a 20<sup>th</sup>-century storefront with large plate-glass windows sometime before 1980. The original awnings – visible in the 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map – had also been removed by this time. A shed-roof canopy was constructed over the first-floor storefront sometime between 1980 and 1994. The canopy has since been altered. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps also indicate that the existing structure is the east half of a duplex mixed-use building. Originally a party wall divided 615 Dauphin Street from what was likely an identical structure at the corner of Dauphin and Dearborn Streets. This matching building was demolished sometime after 1956. The exposed party wall was stuccoed and finished to match the façade. The rough brick party wall has since been exposed at the first-floor level. The southwest addition dates to 2001.

According to Historic Development Department files, this property has previously appeared five times before the Architectural Review Board (ARB). In May 2001, the ARB approved the construction of an “enclosed courtyard” at the southwest corner of the lot. This application included construction of a 4-foot capped and stuccoed knee wall around a landscaped courtyard in the northwest corner of the lot. In April 2017, the ARB approved removal of a non-original storefront and bulkhead, construction of a new storefront, and alterations to the northwest corner courtyard. In September of the same year, the ARB approved plans to construct a two-story iron gallery across the north façade. This was never constructed. In November 2017, the ARB approved plans that included removal of a later storefront, installation of a new wooden storefront, redesign of the courtyard, and the painting of two wall signs with the El Papi restaurant logo. These wall signs are extant. Finally, in June 2018, the ARB approved an application to install sail cloth shades over the courtyard and sheet metal awnings over windows on the 2001 additions and a secondary entrance on the west elevation of the original structure.

## SCOPE OF WORK

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1. Paint a wall sign over an existing wall sign on the west (secondary) elevation.
  - a. The proposed sign would be painted directly onto the existing stucco wall finish. The sign would consist of the business name – “La Delicia Mexican Bruch & Cantina” – and logo.
  - b. The wall sign would measure 13’-0” wide by 10’-0” high, for a total of approximately 130 square feet of painted surface area.
2. Install a blade sign over the entrance on the north (primary) façade.
  - a. The proposed sign would be hand painted onto Medium Density Overlay (MDO) plywood and feature the same text and logo as the painted wall sign.
  - b. The blade sign would be suspended from the underside of the existing shed-roof canopy.
  - c. The sign would measure 3’-0” wide by 2’-0” high, for a total of approximately 6 square feet.
3. The total square footage of proposed signage is 136 square feet.
4. The proposed signage is not internally lit, and the application does not include plans for any additional exterior lighting.

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

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1. **11.3** Design a new sign to be compatible with the character of a building and the district.
2. **11.5** New signs are restricted to a maximum of 64 square feet.
3. **11.6** Place a sign to be compatible with those in the district.
  - When placing a new sign on a historic building, locate a sign to emphasize design elements of the historic building façade.
  - Mount a sign to fit within existing architectural features.

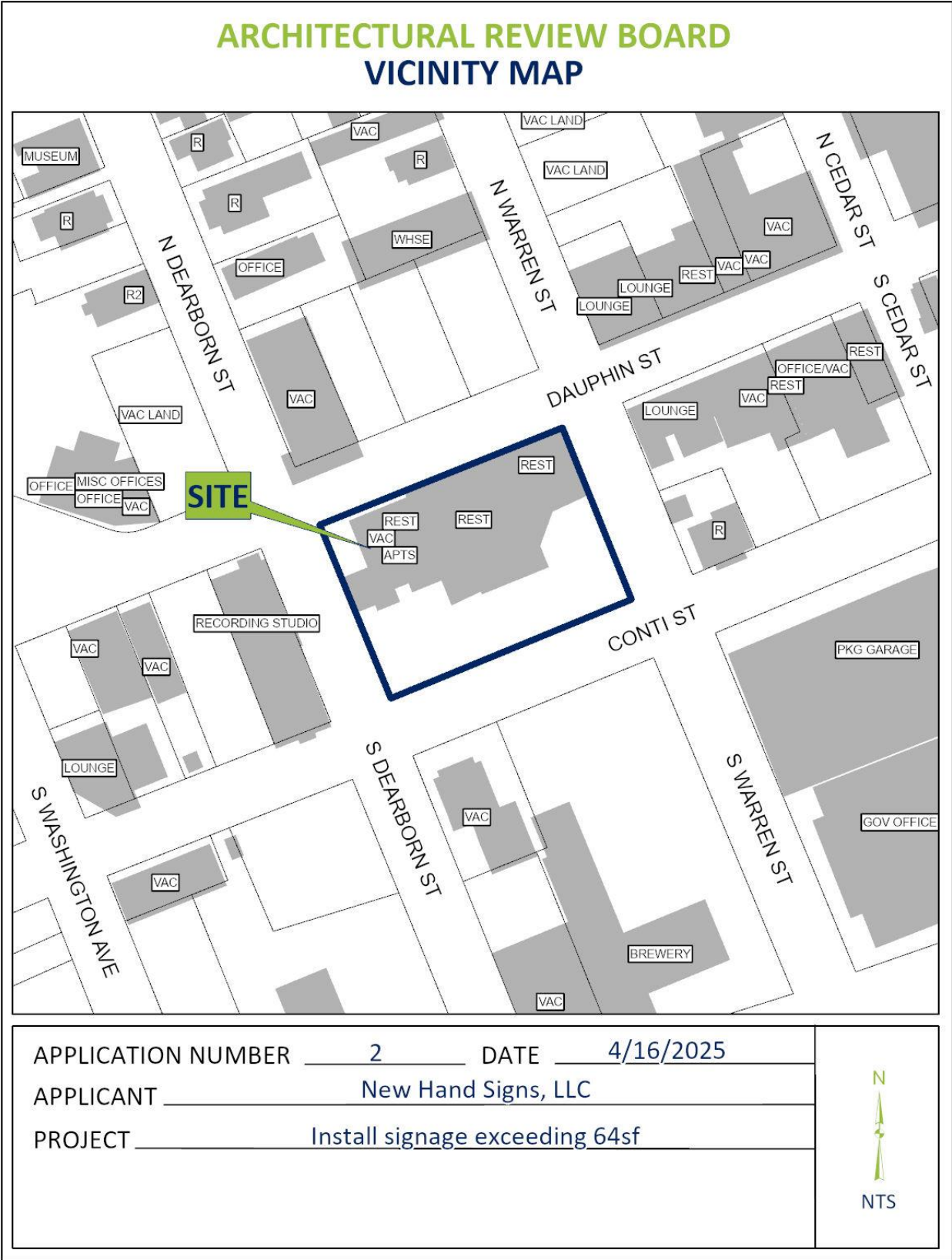
## STAFF ANALYSIS

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The property under review is a contributing structure in the Old Dauphin Way Historic District. This application involves the installation of a painted wall sign on the west (secondary) elevation and a hanging blade sign on above the main entrance on the north (primary) façade.

The *Design Review Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts (Guidelines)* direct that new signage in historic districts be "compatible with the character of a building and the district." (11.3, 11.6, 11.7, 11.8) The proposed sign materials would be consistent with the established historic precedent of painting large commercial signage on secondary elevations of downtown commercial buildings in Mobile (fig. 7-10). The proposed sign would also be placed over an existing wall sign of similar proportions. The placement of the wall sign on existing painted stucco will also not require painting of previously unpainted historic brick, which the *Guidelines* discourage. (5.8) Moreover, two brick commercial buildings visible from the subject property feature extensive wall murals on their secondary elevations. The proposed wall sign, while commercial in nature, would not result in a significant aesthetic change to the subject property or the surrounding streetscape. The proposed blade sign complies fully with the *Guidelines* and does not contribute significantly to the overall square footage of signage at the property. It is only included in this application because it is part of a signage package that would substantially exceed the allowed sign square footage for the property.

This property is located in the Downtown Development District, which requires review of the subject project by the Consolidated Review Committee (CRC). As of this writing, no application has been submitted to the CRC.





## Site Photos – 615 Dauphin Street



1. North façade and west elevation, looking southwest



2. West elevation with existing wall sign, looking east



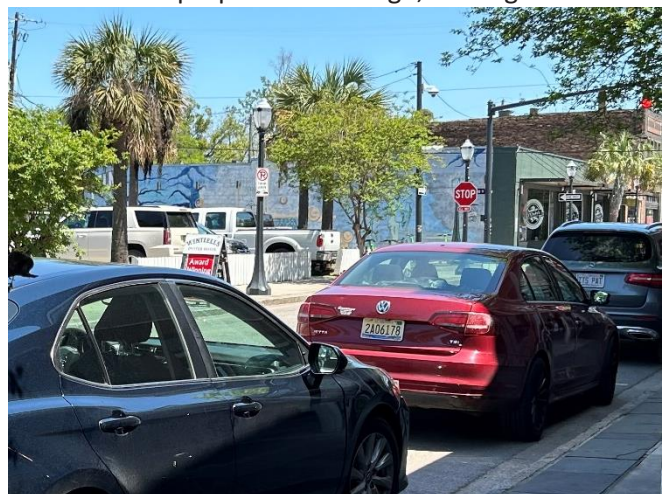
3. Location of proposed blade sign, looking east



4. Location of proposed blade sign, looking west



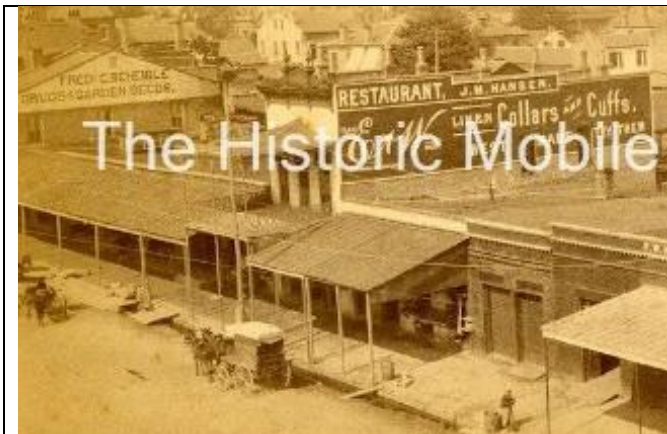
5. Large mural at 651 Dauphin Street, looking west



6. Large mural at 568 Dauphin Street, looking east



## Precedent Images – Wall Signs in Downtown Mobile



7. Government between St. Emanuel and S. Royal, c. 1891, looking northwest (image courtesy of Historic Mobile Preservation Society)



8. Royal between Government and Conti, c. 1901, looking north (image courtesy of Historic Mobile Preservation Society)



9. Riverfront between Theatre and Church, c. 1906, looking southwest (image courtesy of Alabama Department of Archives and History)



10. Riverfront between Church and Government, c. 1906, looking west (image courtesy of Alabama Department of Archives and History)



## Sign Renderings – Provided by Applicant



**36"x24" Double sided Hanging sign  
Wooden MDO Sign Routed With  
Hand Painted  
Elements**

