Architectural Review Board
February 5, 2025

Agenda Item #1

Application 2025-05-CA

DETAILS

Location:
N. Claiborne Street, Parcel Number R022906400003036

Summary of Request:
Construct a two-story single-family dwelling

Applicant (as applicable):
Maurin Architecture on behalf of Rashawn Figures

Property Owner:
City of Mobile

Historic District:
DeTonti Square

Classification:
Vacant lot

Summary of Analysis:

- The proposed design is intended for Lot #4 on the west side of N. Claiborne Street, north of Congress Street.
- The proposed materials are appropriate for the district and approvable for new construction under the *Guidelines*.
- The submitted plans attempt to incorporate the traditional design elements seen in the surrounding district.
- The massing of the proposed structure is not compatible with surrounding historic structures.

Report Contents:

PROPERTY AND APPLICATION HISTORY

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.

According to Historic Development survey records and the City's Geographical Information System, the projected lot (lot #4) proposed for the subject project, along the west side of N. Claiborne Street, straddles what was once 305 and 307 N. Claiborne Street. The lot at 305 N. Claiborne was occupied by a c. 1894 five-bay raised cottage with Victorian features. A full-width front porch was supported by turned posts and decorated with spindle work and decorative brackets. Brick knee and cheek walls in the Craftsman style were later added to the porch. Pairs of full height six-over-nine windows flanked the centered paneled entry door. A two-story cross-gable addition was added to the south end of the rear elevation sometime after 1955.

The adjacent property to the north, 307 N. Claiborne, was a c. 1904 two-story double-gallery frame dwelling with Victorian detailing. The façade was accentuated by a broken pedimented gable, decorative trim, and spindle work. A paneled door topped by a two-light transom was located in the southernmost bay on the first and second floors. Two-over-four full length windows graced the first floor, with two-over-two windows on the second floor. The porch was supported by turned posts and enclosed on the second floor by a carved handrail and balusters.

Detailed plans to fully rehabilitate the houses at 305 and 307 N. Claiborne under the supervision of the Mobile Housing Board and the Architectural Review Board were drawn up in the early 1980s. Both houses were demolished, along with all remaining historic structures along the west side the block of N. Claiborne Street north of Congress Street.

This property has never previously appeared before the Architectural Review Board.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Construct a two-story single-family dwelling.
    a. The new structure would be oriented to the east with a 0'-0" setback. Side yard setbacks on the north and south sides are unknown.
    b. The proposed two-story house would measure 36'-0" wide by 52'-7 3/8" deep.
    c. An 11/-2" deep attached open carport would extend along the west (rear) elevation. The carport would be supported by 10x10 square posts and would be topped by a shingled hipped roof.
    d. The structure would sit on a parged masonry foundation. Finished floor to first floor top-of-plate height would measure 12'-0". The second-floor plate height from finished floor would measure 23'-6".
    e. The structure would sit under a hipped roof clad in shingles. Exterior walls would be clad in Hardie lapped siding. All trim would be Hardie board.
    f. Fenestration would consist of aluminum-clad wood windows.
    g. The east façade would feature a recessed entry, centered on the elevation. The recess would consist of a multi-light glazed door topped by a two-light transom. The door would be flanked by four-over eight fixed windows. The recessed entry way would be accessed by three (3) masonry steps spanning the width of the recess and flanked by masonry cheek walls.
    h. A second-floor open gallery would run along the south elevation and be open to the east façade. An iron balustrade would enclose the gallery.
    i. Fenestration would appear as follows:
    <u>East façade</u> (from south to north)

First floor: A grouping of three (3) four-over-eight fixed windows; one (1) four-over-eight fixed window; multi-light entry door with two-light transom; one (1) four-over-eight fixed window; one (1) eight-light fixed window
Second floor: Open gallery; three (3) eight-light fixed windows, evenly spaced across the elevation; one (1) smaller eight-light fixed window (matching dimensions of first-floor eight-light window below)
West elevation (from north to south)
First floor: two (2) eight-light fixed windows, equally spaced along the north half of the elevation; one (1) multi-light entry door with two-light transom, roughly centered on the south half of the elevation.
North elevation (from east to west)
Multi-light fixed windows of varying sizes, irregularly spaced along the elevation.
South elevation (from west to east)
First floor: one (1) smaller eight-light fixed window; A grouping of three (3) six-light fixed windows; two (2) four-over-eight fixed windows, evenly spaced along the easternmost third of the elevation.
Second floor: One (1) eight-light fixed window; opening along second-story gallery showing multi-light entry door accessing the second floor; multi-light door accessing the second floor from gallery on east end of elevation.

2. Site improvements would include the installation of a driveway along the north end of the lot.

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. **6.42** Design a porch to be compatible with the neighborhood.
   - Include a front porch as part of new construction if it is contextual and feasible.
   - When designing a porch, consider porch location, proportion, rhythm, roof form, supports, steps, balustrades and ornamentation relative to the main building and porches in the district.
   - Design the elements of a porch to be at a scale proportional to the main building.
   - Where a rhythm of porches exists on a street or block, design a porch that continues this historic rhythm.
   - Design a rear or side porch that is visible from the public right-of-way to be subordinate in character to the front porch.
10. **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
11. **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.
12. **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

13. **10.5** Visually connect the street and building.
    - Maintain or install a walkway leading directly from the sidewalk to the main building entry.
14. **10.6** Install a new sidewalk to be compatible with historic ones in the area.
    - Maintain the existing width of neighboring sidewalks.
    - Use a traditional sidewalk material as seen in the district if permitted by the City Code. Consult Staff if necessary.
15. **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.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The property under review is part of a vacant parcel located in the DeTonti Square Historic District. The application proposes the construction of a two-story single-family residence on what is currently proposed at Lot #4 along the west side of N. Claiborne Street, north of Congress Street.

The *Guidelines* direct that the placement of a new structure should maintain the established range of front setbacks along the street. Because there are no extant structures along the street, no setback range currently exists. Across the street, front setbacks range from approximately 3'-6" to 23'-0". The submitted plans show a front setback of approximately 0'-0", with the front steps connecting to the sidewalk. The proposed setback would not fall into the present range along this block of N. Claiborne Street. It should be noted that there are high occurrences of structures sitting close or nearly adjacent to the sidewalk in DeTonti Square in particular. The side yard setback measurements have not been provided. The Guidelines state that these setbacks should also follow the established pattern on the block and should provide room for yard maintenance and off-street parking. The proposed plan provides space for a driveway along the north end of the property, and a limited area of yard space on the south end. (6.34, 6.35)

The *Guidelines* state that the scale of new construction should be compatible with those of surrounding historic structures along the street. The scale of the proposed structure is slightly larger than most historic buildings on the street (except for 310 N Claiborne) but does fall into a range that would be in keeping with many structures in the district at large. The scale of the proposed porch along the south elevation does not match the main building, or the scale of porches in the district, as outlined in the *Guidelines*. Similarly, the foundation does not appear to reflect the height of those of surrounding structures. (6.37, 6.43)

The submitted design does not achieve the *Guidelines'* objective of compatibility regarding massing. The large block form with hipped roof is out of step with dwellings across the street and those further afield in the district. The plans convey an attempt to break up the massing by introducing recesses and projections with the inset entry surround and the second-floor side porch. While these features could certainly produce a more compatible arrangement, as submitted, they do not read as fully developed nor serve to produce a cohesive design. Adjustments to these features could help to bring the plan into compatibility with the surrounding district. (6.36, 6.38, 6.44, 6.42)

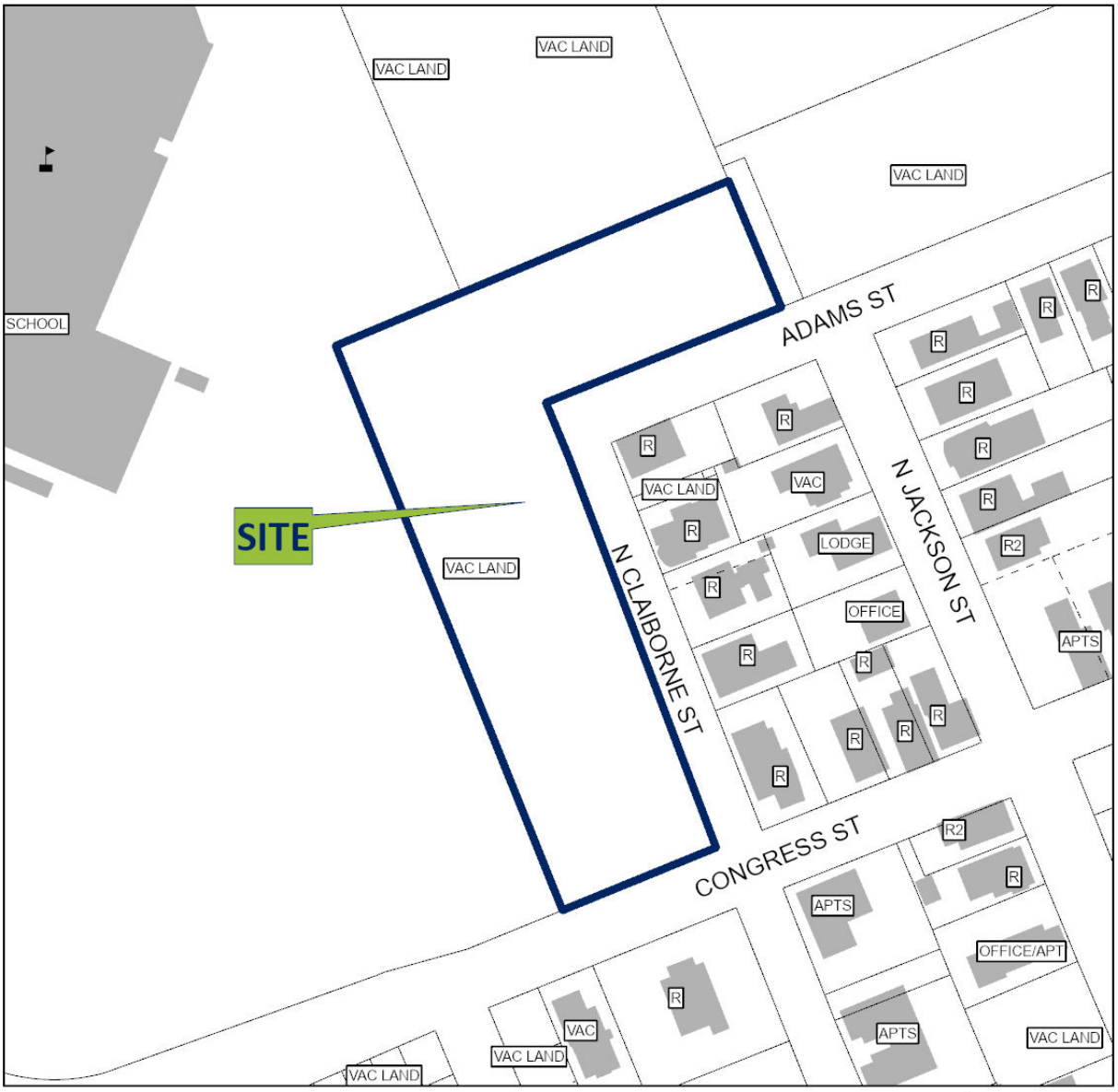
The proposed hipped roof design echoes the roof structures of many historic buildings in the district. However, the most hipped roofs in DeTonti are of a lower slope that are not as visually evident. The scale, ratio, and pattern of the proposed fenestration on the exterior walls do not appropriately reflect the building traditions seen in DeTonti Square. On the façade, the second-floor windows above the recessed entrance seem too small for the space. The same is the case for the two stacked eight-light windows used on the stair hall's façade. The result of the various sizes communicates a lack of a distinct style and consistency. (6.38, 6.40, 6.45)

The building traditions in DeTonti Square predominantly emphasize rectangular design with offset wings that feature front or side galleries; there are more symmetrical examples with centered entryways, which are at times recessed and accentuated with classical trim. These styles most often consist of a flat or low-sloping hipped roofs (some with parapet walls). There are irregular forms common in DeTonti Square, with complex roof forms, wrapped porches, and cross gables. Fenestration is consistently proportional to the main building. As stated above, the plans depict an attempt to implement some of these elements, which could be modified to appropriately reflect the above building patterns.

The chosen materials for siding, foundation, roof, windows, and trim are all compatible with the district and are approvable for new construction under the *Guidelines*. (6.39, 6.40)

Site Location – Lot #4 N. Claiborne Street North of Congress Street

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
VICINITY MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 2 DATE 2/5/2025

APPLICANT Maurin Architecture

PROJECT Construct two-story single-family residence

N

NTS

Site Photos - Lot #4 N. Claiborne Street North of Congress Street

1. View of lot looking NW

2. View of lot looking SW

3. Streetscape view of N. Claiborne, looking N

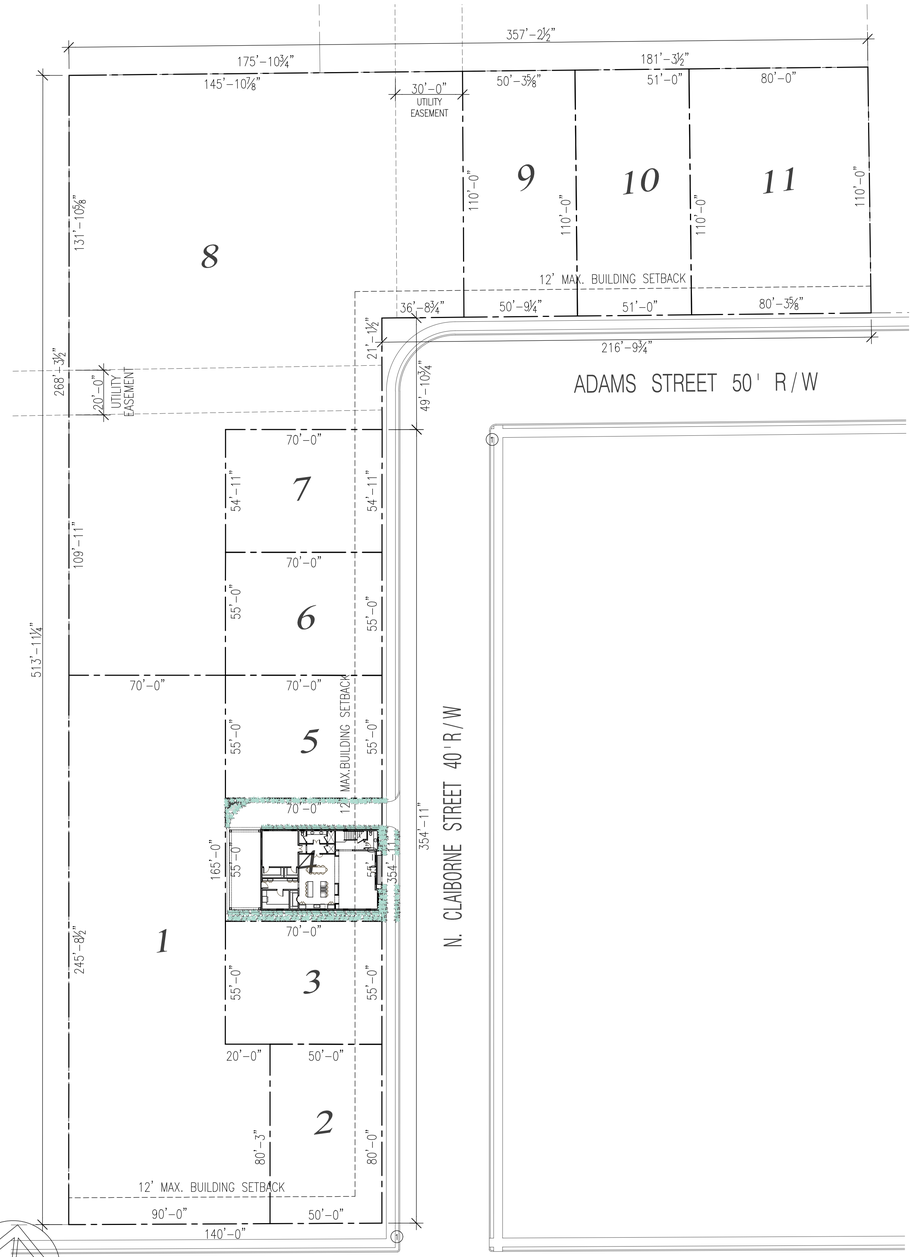
4. Streetview across from lot, looking NE

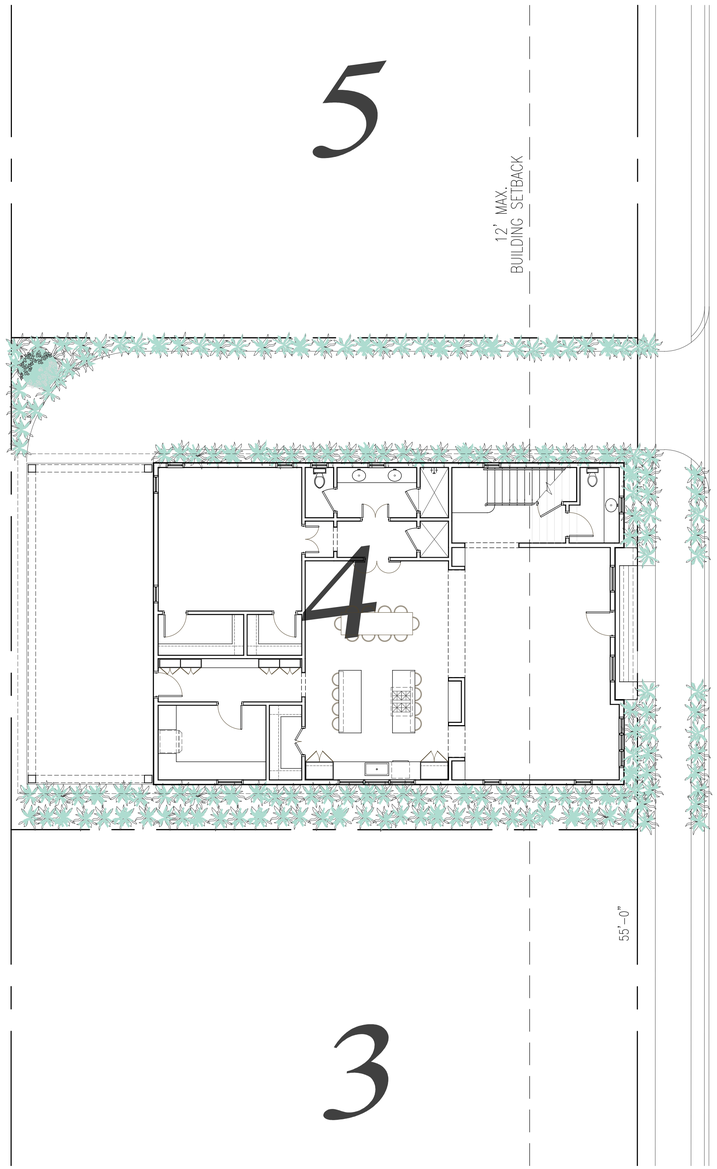
5. Streetview across from lot, looking E

6. Streetscape view of N. Claiborne, looking SE

NOTES

① APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF EXISTING FIRE HYDRANT





1 AREA PLAN - NEW WORK

SCALE: 1/32"=1'-0"

2 SITE PLAN - NEW WORK

SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

MAURIN ARCHITECTURE P.C.

601 ST. ANTHONY STREET MOBILE ALABAMA 36603
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NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR
LA MAISON @ DE TONTI SQUARE

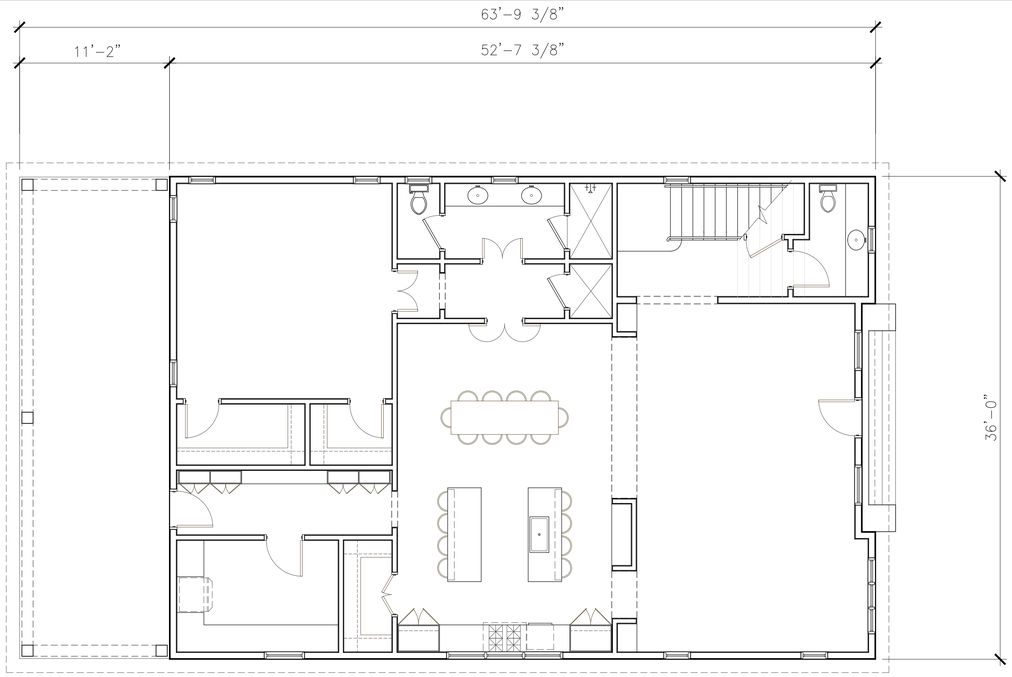
N CLAIBORNE STREET & ADAMS STREET
MOBILE, AL 36603

11.06.2024

PROJECT 2424

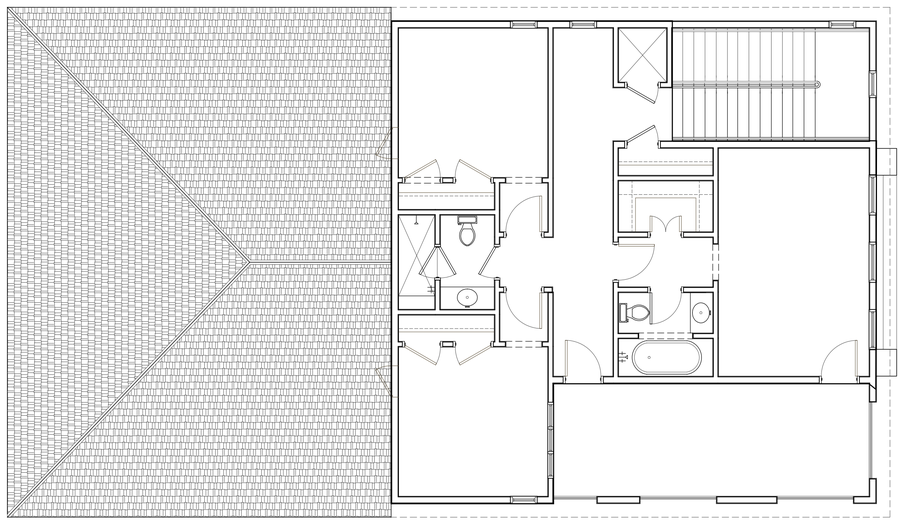
AS1.0

ARCHITECTURAL SITE PLAN



1 | 1ST FLOOR PLAN - NEW WORK

SCALE: 3/16"=1'-0" | LOT #4



2 | 2ND FLOOR PLAN - NEW WORK

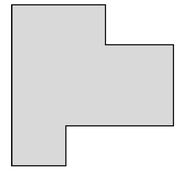
SCALE: 3/16"=1'-0" | LOT #4

NOTE

TOTAL SQUARE FEET HEATED & COOLED – 2,829

1ST FLOOR
1,878 SQ. FT.

2ND FLOOR
951 SQ. FT.



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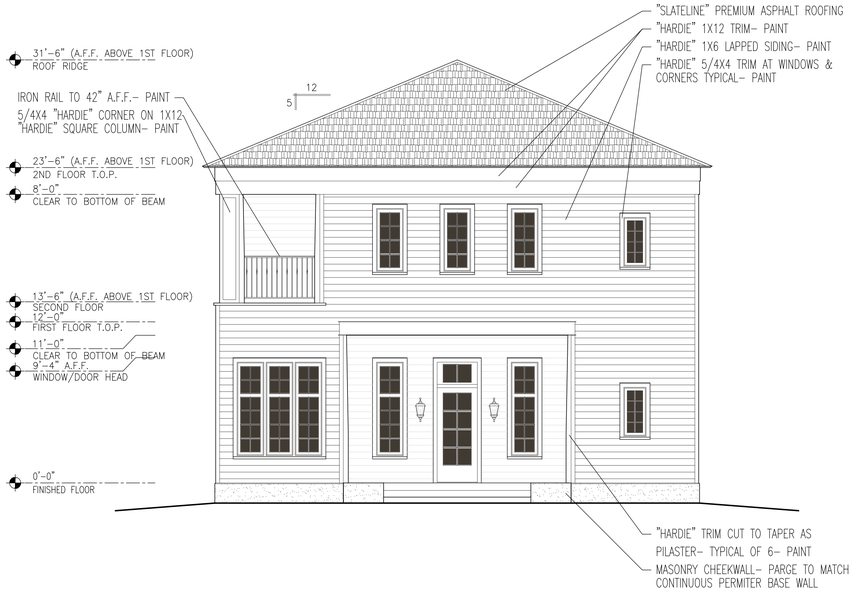
NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR
LA MAISON @ DE TONTI SQUARE
N CLAIBORNE STREET & ADAMS STREET
MOBILE, AL 36603

11.06.2024
PROJECT 2424

A2.1

1ST & 2ND FLOOR PLAN- NEW WORK
LOT #4

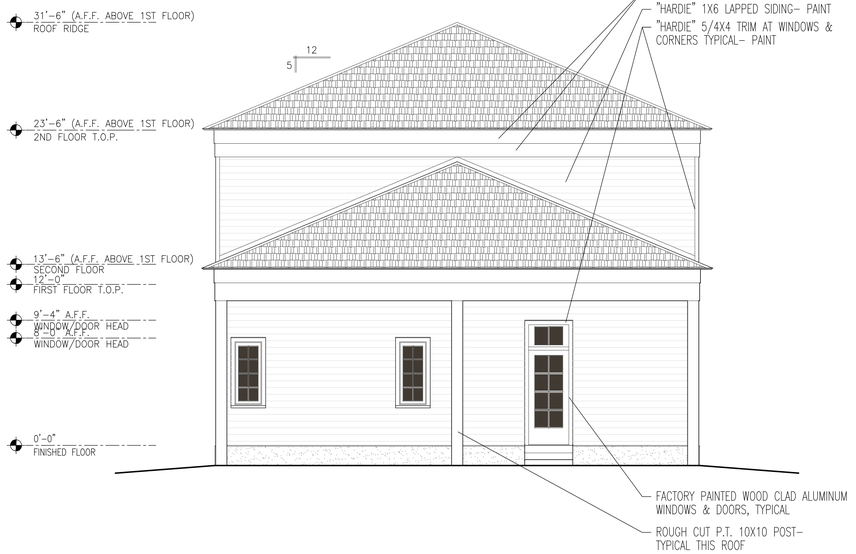


1 BUILDING ELEVATION

SCALE: 3/16"=1'-0" FRONT ELEVATION

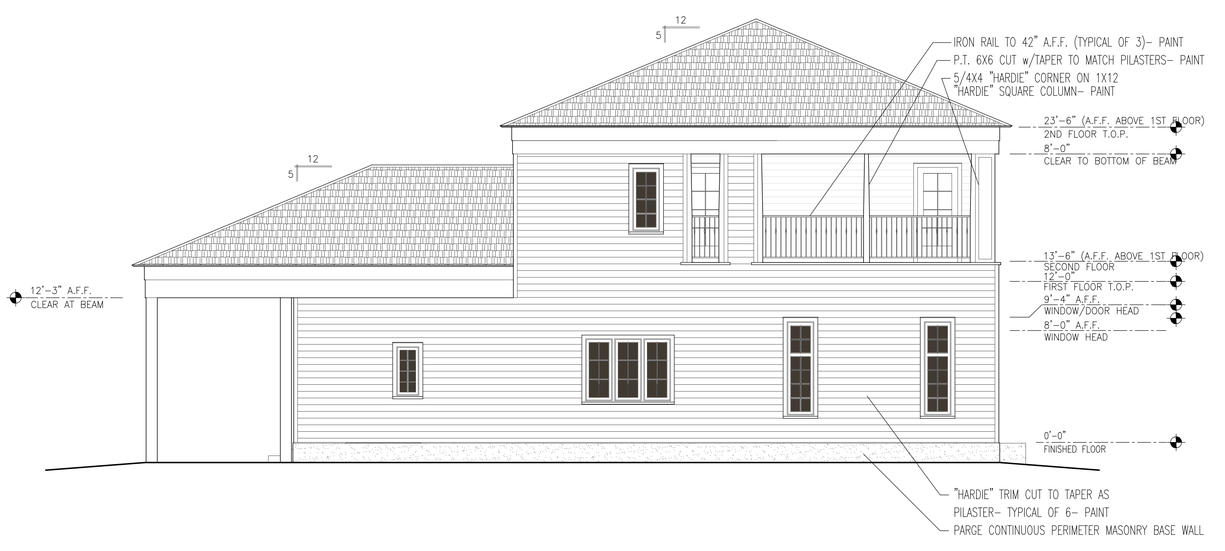
2 BUILDING ELEVATION

SCALE: 3/16"=1'-0" SIDE ELEVATION



3 BUILDING ELEVATION

SCALE: 3/16"=1'-0" SIDE ELEVATION



4 BUILDING ELEVATION

SCALE: 3/16"=1'-0" BACK ELEVATION

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NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR LA MAISON @ DE TONTI SQUARE

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A5.1

BUILDING ELEVATIONS- LOT #4