



# Agenda Item #3

## Application 2024-45-CA

### DETAILS

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**Location:**

1555 Dauphin Street

**Summary of Request:**

Replace front porch columns with fiberglass columns of similar design

**Applicant (as applicable):**

Nunez M Construction, LLC.

**Property Owner:**

Jane Inge

**Historic District:**

Old Dauphin Way

**Classification:**

Contributing

**Summary of Analysis:**

- The existing columns show signs of deterioration and loss of structural integrity.
- The proposed replacement columns generally match the dimensions of the existing with the exception of a lack of tapering seen on the existing columns.
- The fiberglass material of the proposed replacement columns could be considered an acceptable substitute material.

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## 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 frame structure at 1555 Dauphin Street is a two-story American Foursquare dwelling with a hip roof with wide overhangs and exposed rafters that shelters two porches. A first-story porch extends past the façade on the east and wraps around the side one bay deep. The two-bay second-story porch has a molded handrail. Both porches are supported by slightly tapered Tuscan columns.

Historic Development property files indicate that the existing home was constructed c. 1911 for William A. Douglas, a banana importer, replacing an earlier small frame cottage. Around 1990 alterations were carried out to the rear of the house, and a two-story rear addition was constructed, along with a new carport and connecting breezeway. A masonry wall and gate were installed along the east and south lot lines in 2014.

According to Historic Development records, this property has never appeared before the Architectural Review Board (ARB).

## SCOPE OF WORK

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Remove and replace all existing porch columns (eight in total).

- a. The proposed replacement columns would retain the Tuscan profile of the existing columns, including the base and capital.
- b. The new columns would generally match the dimensions of the existing first-floor porch columns; however, they would not taper as the existing columns do.
- c. Dimensions: The proposed new columns would sit on a square base which would measure 12' -6 5/8" wide by 3 3/8" high. The shaft would have a diameter of 14" and would measure 10'-0" high.
- d. The original columns are wood, whereas the proposed replacements would be fiberglass.
- e. The new columns would be painted to match existing.

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

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1. **5.17** Preserve historic stylistic and architectural details and ornamentation.
  - Preserve storefronts, cornices, turned columns, brackets, exposed rafter tails, jigsaw ornaments and other key architectural features that are in good condition.
  - Retain historic details and ornamentation intact.
  - Retain and treat exterior stylistic features and examples of skilled craftsmanship with sensitivity.
  - Repair historic details and ornamentation that are deteriorated.
  - Employ preventive maintenance measures such as rust removal, caulking and repainting.
  - Minimize damage to historic architectural details when repairs are necessary.
  - Document the location of a historic feature that must be removed and repaired so it may be repositioned accurately.
  - Patch, piece-in, splice, consolidate or otherwise upgrade deteriorated features using recognized preservation methods.
  - Stabilize or fix isolated areas of damage using consolidants. Epoxies and resins may be considered for wood repair.
  - Protect significant features that are adjacent to the area being worked on

2. **5.19** Where repair is impossible, replace details and ornamentation accurately.
  - When replacing historic details, match the original in profile, dimension, and material.
  - A substitute material may be considered if it appears similar in character and finish to the original.
  - A measured drawing may be required in these instances to recreate missing historic details from photographs.
  - Do not apply architectural details that were not part of the original structure. For example, decorative mill work should not be added to a building if it was not an original feature. Doing so would convey a false history.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

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The property under review is a contributing structure the Old Dauphin Way Historic District. The subject application seeks approval to replace eight wood round tapered porch columns – five on the first story and three on the second story – with eight new fiberglass round non-tapered columns.

The *Guidelines* state that historic architectural features and elements should be preserved, and repairs should be carried out to deteriorated or damaged areas, instead of replacement. However, they specify that when repair is not possible, replacement features should match the original in profile, dimension, and material. Photographic and visual evidence show that some of the porch columns have significantly deteriorated in areas that are integral to the structural soundness of the column and the front porch. The proposed replacement columns would match the Tuscan profile expressed by the existing columns. (5.17, 5.19) Although they would match the existing columns' height on the first and second stories, the replacement columns lack the slightly tapered design of the original. Further, the second-story columns are slightly smaller in diameter. The taper feature and the pairing of a wider column on a first-story with a narrower column on a second-story is exhibited on surrounding historic structures of a similar period as the subject dwelling, both in the immediate vicinity and throughout the Old Dauphin Way Historic District. Replacing the columns on the first and second stories with columns of equal diameter may not be considered an accurate detail replacement as specified in the *Guidelines*. (5.19)

Although the *Guidelines* discuss replacing details with those that match in material, they further stipulate that a substitute material may be considered if it appears similar in character and finish to the original. The use of fiberglass for the replacement columns could be allowable if deemed similar in character and finish. (5.17)

# ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD VICINITY MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 3 DATE 9/4/2024  
APPLICANT Nunez M Construction, LLC on behalf of Jane Inge  
PROJECT Replace front porch columns with fiberglass columns of similar design



## Site Photos – 1555 Dauphin Street



1. View of property looking southeast.



2. View of property looking south.



3. View of porch looking southwest.



4. Details of column on southeast end of porch.



5. Detail of column cap on southeast end of porch.



6. Detail of column on northeast end of porch.