

**ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

APPLICATION NUMBER..... COA-2025-11-2317
DATE..... December 17, 2025
PETITIONER..... Lane Seabolt as agent for Jennifer Avis Harper
REQUEST..... Addition and Renovation
LOCATION..... 245 Buena Vista Avenue
PROPERTY INFORMATION..... Tax Parcel # 141C2 E003, Buena Vista, RS-8
RECOMMENDATION..... Approval with Conditions

REQUEST

Approval is requested to add a rear addition and dormer and modify select window openings.

BACKGROUND

Parcel Status: The property is considered a contributing resource to the Buena Vista Heights Historic District. This means that changes are reviewed for the impact to the overall district as well as to the character of this property.

Parcel History: This project received conceptual preliminary design review comments at the November hearing. No previous applications for Certificates of Appropriateness are on file for this property. Sanborn Maps for the area show that this structure was built by 1918 when the mapping first included this area. The existing areas all seem to have been in place by 1918 with the exception of the modern rear deck.

Lot Features: The subject property is located on the western side of Buena Vista Avenue and is the second parcel north of the intersection with Yonah Avenue. The parcel has around 105' of lot width and about 242 feet of lot depth. The topography of the property sees a rise of about two feet from the front of the parcel to around the middle of the house then dropping about four feet to the rear of the lot.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Rear Addition: The proposed rear addition would have two parts- an extension of the gable at the south and a new screened porch at the north.

- The rear extension of the gable on the south end of the rear elevation would utilize the same roof and wall planes to extend out an addition 16' for the full width (14'). A corner board would be used at the south wall to demark the new addition. A paired window opening would be used at the south wall and west wall of the extension utilizing the common head height. An option to utilize a hipped roof form instead of a gable at the new extension is included in the renderings provided.
- A new rear screened porch would be added at the northern 2/3 of the rear elevation. The porch would have a low hipped roof extending from under the eaves of the existing rear hip about 14' to be about 2'2" recessed from the proposed gable extension. The porch roof would be supported by 6" square posts to divide it into two bays at the north and two bays plus the doorway at the west. The doorway would be at the south end of the new porch with a wood stoop and steps

down to the south. A simple railing with square balusters would be used at the porch and steps. The porch is shown as having a solid stone foundation to match that on the existing structure and proposed gable extension.

- Note that the openings within the new screened porch are not clear. The entry into the enclosed part of the house appears to be a double door with 2/3 glazing to align with the existing rear entry. A single window exists to its north that is not depicted on the elevations provided.

Rear Dormer Addition: The existing conditions include hipped dormers at the front and both sides of the main hipped roofline. The proposed design would add a rear hipped dormer similar to that at the front elevation with a paired window. The new rear dormer would have hipped roofline with a ridge about 4" above that of the front dormer but still 1'10" below the peak of the main roof. The dormer would be 8'9" in width compared to 7'2" at the front dormer. The wall height of the new dormer would be 3'5", about a foot less than that at the front elevation.

Window Changes: Several changes in window openings at the existing structure are proposed.

- The left (south) elevation would include a reduction in window length of about 1'9" for a paired and single window at the center of the existing south elevation. The single window currently has a slightly lesser length than that of the paired windows. A corner board is found directly at the east side of this window suggesting it was at a later addition. The corner board is not shown on the elevations. To the west of this window is an area without openings. A new paired window to match the existing conditions of the paired window to be shortened is proposed in this area with a common head height. As described for the addition above, a paired window would also be used at the new gable extension area on this elevation.
- At the right (north) elevation, an existing single window at the west end of the existing structure would see a reduction in length of 1'9". To the west of this opening a new opening would be added with the same size of the adjusted window in an area currently without openings.
- As noted above, it is unclear if changes to the single window on the rear elevation that would be inside the new screened porch are proposed.

Materials:

- **Roofing:** Standing seam metal roofing is proposed for the low hipped roof at the proposed screened porch. Metal roofing is currently used at the front wrap porch. Shingle roofing is to be used for the gable extension and new dormer to match that used elsewhere on the structure.
- **Siding and Trim:** The siding for the new rear addition and dormer would be either cementitious lap siding or wood lap siding to match that existing in dimensions and exposure. Trim would be either cementitious or wood.
- **Windows:** All existing windows are double-hung wood sash though the light division vary. The main level windows are all one-over-one except for two-over-two at the three rear windows and the westernmost window at the north side. The dormers include two-over-two at the front, six-over-six at the left and four-over-four at the right. These divisions are not illustrated in the elevations and renderings provided. All new windows are to be of wood construction. No cladding is denoted. No light divisions are shown though the application states that the window "muntin profiles may be simplified to ensure new work is discernible as contemporary." No changes to the windows in the existing dormers is described.
- **Doors:** All wood doors for the new rear entry and rear screen door.
- **Porches:** Porch materials are not specified beyond the use of metal roofing.
- **Foundation:** The existing foundation is brick piers with infill between them with field stone and scored stucco over the brick piers except at the rear areas of the house where just scored stucco is

used. An exception to this is the foundation under the existing rear entry which is uncoated block. The proposed foundation is not stated in the application materials though the depictions show field stone at all areas.

REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION:

Review of this application would follow the general set of Design Guidelines including Chapter 2 regarding the Building Materials and Features, Chapter 4 on additions as New Construction.

	Met?	Comments
2A.8: Roofing/Dormers	Yes	Dormers exist at the front and both sides of the historic hipped roofline. These are all hip roofed and with no width beyond that of the windows and casing. A composite lap siding is currently found at the sides of each existing dormers. The proposed rear dormer would be located with less visibility than those existing. It would have greater width including siding beyond the paired windows. It would also have a taller hipped roofline and shorter windows than the others. These differences would help to differentiate the rear dormer as a later change.
2B.8: Changing Window Openings	Partly	Windows would be shortened at two openings on the south side and one opening on the north side. The south side would see a new paired window at the existing structure while the north side would see a new single window added. These changes would have varying degrees of impact on the solid-to-void ratio, rhythm of openings, and the understanding of the evolution of the property. The paired opening on the southern side elevation is the only change at the core oldest part of the structure with the others on early additions and further to the rear of the structure. This further placement reduces the impact of the changes and if the siding is infilled in a manner to preserve an understanding of the original length, then no false sense of history would be created. The new window openings on each side are to be spaced with a similar rhythm to the existing. However, the size of the openings proposed does not consider that the space at the north elevation is drafted incorrectly to the eave height and could not accommodate a matching eave height. The reduced length needed would also help this window to be easily read as a later change and if the new paired window opening at the south side then matched the windows of the proposed gable extension then understanding the evolution of the structure would be better preserved.
2C Entrances	Yes	The proposed double rear doors are not clearly visible in the renderings and elevation submitted but appear to be wood with a 2/3 light. If accurate, this is a simple design and appropriate material. This is also true of the single screen door proposed.
2D Porches	Mostly	Material specifications have not been provided beyond standing seam metal roofing. The posts appear to be simple square posts rather than having the turned detailing of the front porch posts, which is an appropriate simplification. (Note that the 1995 architectural survey photo shows round doric columns.) The railing appears to be equally

		simple with square balusters, but clarification of the design and materials is needed.
2F: Foundations	Unclear	It is not clear what the intention is with the foundation for the gable extension and screened porch. It is depicted with field stone but not addressed as such on the application materials. Use of a plain stucco coating instead of field stone or scored like field stone could be a good way to subtly differentiate from the earlier building area.
4F: Applying New Construction Criteria to Additions	Mostly	The proposed addition is at the rear of the structure- a less visible location- and within the wall planes of the existing conditions. The screened porch addition is easily read as a later addition both in its use and its massing. The gable extension- whether having a gable or hipped roofline- extends from the same roofline and wall plane and therefore needs to rely on differences in siding, windows, and/or foundation to differentiate itself.

Staff finds that the proposed changes to the property are largely appropriate with conditions to address the concerns noted above:

- The paired window on the southern side elevation to remain at its existing length.
- The other existing window openings to be shortened do so with infill of wood siding in a manner to allow the original opening size to be subtly discernible.
- The plans be corrected regarding the northern rear corner massing's eave-line and the applicant work with staff on the design of new openings and any impact on the proposed screened porch.
- The existing single window within the screened porch shall remain.
- The materials and railing specifications for the screened porch be identified.
- The foundation for the new additions be subtly differentiated from the existing building area.

This recommendation is made to address the design guidelines noted above, as well as Section 8-5-5 D (1) of the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Ordinance regarding Acceptable Historic Preservation Commission Reaction to an Application for Certificate of Appropriateness.

REPORT FOR:		245 Buena Vista Ave
In evaluating the attached report, the following standards, which are checked, were considered in making a recommendation. Items that are not applicable are marked as such. More detailed descriptions of each item are included in the attached report.		
REVIEWED	NOT APPLICABLE	
X		1. HISTORIC USES OF PROPERTY
X		2. NECESSITY OF PROPOSED CHANGES
X		3. INTEGRITY OF HISTORIC RESOURCE
		4. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE CHANGE WILL AFFECT:
X		A. INTEGRITY OF THE BUILDING
X		B. INTEGRITY OF THE AREA
X		5. ORIGINAL AND CURRENT USES

245 Buena Vista Ave. Review Worksheet

	Met?	Comments
2A.8: Roofing/Dormers		
2B.8: Changing Window Openings		
2C Entrances		
2D Porches		
2F: Foundations		
4F: Applying New Construction Criteria to Additions		