



Staff Report

Case #361

COA25-0045

Ocala Historic Preservation Advisory Board: February 5, 2026

Petitioner/ Property Owner: Stephen R. Dawson

Agent: Anton S. Dawson

Project Planner: Charlita Whitehead

Applicant Request:

Remove the existing deck and construct a new, expanded deck using Trex Enhance Basics composite decking (1" x 6" x 8', Clam Shell, square-edge). The new deck will include PVC railing panels, with a "Waves" pattern installed along the front façade facing NE Second Street and a traditional picket pattern installed on the remaining sections of the deck, using 1" thick cellular PVC materials from Porch Store.

The project also includes converting the second-floor rear door into a window and converting the first-floor, right-side front door back into a window. Both windows will be Pella Lifestyle Series double-hung units with Low-E glass, argon gas fill, and simulated divided-light grilles featuring a traditional pattern with 7/8" spacer bars.

Parcel Information

Acres: ±0.34 acres
Parcel(s) #: 2820-045-006
Location: 721 NE Second St.
Future Land Use: High Intensity/Central Core
Zoning District: R-3: Multi-Family Residential
Existing Use: Residential

Background:

The home was constructed in 1918 in the Carpenter Gothic style and is a contributing structure to the Tuscawilla Historic District. The property has several previously approved Certificates of Appropriateness, including a 2021 approval for reroofing, a 2023 approval for siding repair, and a 2026 approval for replacement of windows and exterior doors, excluding the doors being converted to windows in this request. The home was previously converted from a single-family residence to a three-unit, multi-family structure, and the proposed project seeks to return the property to single-family use. A CRA grant approved in January 2026 provided funding for mechanical, electrical, and plumbing improvements to support the renovations.

Staff Analysis

Certificate of Appropriateness Criteria for Decisions (Section 94-82(g)):

The Code states that the Board may issue a certificate of appropriateness for the reconstruction, alteration, new construction, non-permanent structures, demolition, partial demolition, or removal of any building or structure within a locally designated historic district or any designated local landmark, or any other activity for which a CA is required, if such action is not deemed contrary to the purposes of historic preservation and to the special character of districts, sites and resources as designated specifically. The board's decisions will be based on the Secretary of the Interior's (SOI) Standards, the city's Historic Preservation Design Guidelines, this chapter, and the following criteria:

1. Exterior alterations shall not diminish the architectural quality or historical character of the building or the building site.

The proposed deck expansion is designed to complement the historic character; however, the use of composite materials and expansion beyond the original footprint does not fully align with SOI Standards (p. 50).

The "Waves" railing PVC panels on the NE façade introduce a contemporary design element that is visually prominent and not recommended for primary elevations under SOI Standards (p. 50).

Changing openings is generally discouraged by SOI Standards (p. 109); however, the front door conversion restores the original window opening, and the rear door conversion matches the appearance, dimensions, and profiles of existing approved windows.

2. Sandblasting of any materials except for iron is prohibited.

The proposed work does not include sandblasting. This criterion is not applicable.

3. Only through very controlled conditions can most historic building material be abrasively cleaned of soil or paint without measurable damage to the surface or profile of the substrate. Decisions regarding the proper cleaning process for historic structures can be made only after careful analysis of the building fabric, and testing. Generally, wet abrasive cleaning of a historic structure should be conducted within the range of 20 to 100 psi at a range of three to 12 inches.

The proposed work does not include abrasive cleaning. This criterion is not applicable.

4. Landscaping, signs, parking and site development should be sensitive to the individual building and should be visually compatible with the buildings and environment with which they are visually related.

No changes to landscaping, signage, parking, or site development are proposed. This criterion is not applicable.

5. New construction shall be visually compatible with the buildings and environment with which the new construction is visually related. When an application involves new construction, the applicant may present conceptual plans to the board for review and comment before the application for a certificate of appropriateness is submitted and before construction drawings of the project are prepared. Aspects to be considered include:

- a. The height, volume, proportion between width and height of the facades, the proportions and relationship between doors and windows, the rhythm of solids and voids created by openings in the facades, the materials used in the facades, the texture inherent in the facades, the colors, pattern and trim used in the facades, and the design of the roof.

The proposed deck addition maintains appropriate scale and proportion relative to the primary structure, which aligns with SOI Standards to preserve the rhythm and proportion of historic facades. However, the “Waves” pattern PVC railing on the street-facing elevation introduces a contemporary design element that is visually prominent and not recommended under SOI Standards (p. 50). The converted windows maintain the consistent pattern and spacing of the existing façade, which is consistent with SOI Standards for preserving the relationship between openings (p. 109). While changing openings is generally discouraged (p. 109), the front door conversion restores the original window opening, and the rear door conversion matches the appearance, dimensions, and profiles of existing approved windows, aligning with SOI Standards for recreating missing features based on documentary evidence (p. 189)..

- b. The existing rhythm created by existing building masses and spaces between them should be preserved.

The existing rhythm created by existing building masses and spaces between them is preserved. The enlarged porch introduces a secondary mass that slightly alters the original rhythm of the property. While the overall rhythm remains generally intact, the expanded footprint adds a new element not historically documented. According to SOI Standards, “New additions should be compatible with the historic character of the property and preserve the historic relationship between buildings and their surroundings” (p. 50). This change does not fully preserve the existing building mass and spatial relationship.

- c. Landscape plans should be visually compatible with the buildings and environment with which the landscaping is visually related.

No landscape modifications are proposed. This criterion is not applicable.

- d. Proportions of existing facades which are visually related shall be maintained when neighboring buildings have a dominant horizontal or vertical expression, that expression should be carried over in the new facade.

The proportions of the existing facades are maintained.

- e. Architectural details should be incorporated as necessary to relate the new with the old and to preserve and enhance the inherent architectural characteristics of the area.

The deck and railing incorporate compatible detailing, and the window/door conversions retain a historic appearance. According to SOI Standards, “Identifying, retaining, and preserving entrances and porches and their functional and decorative features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building” (p. 49) and “Replacing in kind extensively deteriorated or missing components... The new work should match the old in material, design, scale, color, and finish” (p. 50).

The use of composite decking and PVC railing introduces non-historic materials, which are specifically noted as not recommended under SOI Standards (p. 50).

- f. Accessory structures shall be compatible with the scale, shape, roof form, materials, and detailing of the main structure to protect the historic integrity of the neighborhood. The accessory structure shall not exceed the maximum height allowed by the applicable zoning or the height of the existing primary structure.

The deck is an accessory structure compatible with the main structure protecting the historic integrity of the district.

The Secretary of the Interior Standards

Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving entrances and porches and their functional and decorative features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. The materials themselves (including wood, masonry, and metal) are significant, as are the features, such as doors, transoms, pilasters, columns, balustrades, stairs, roofs, and projecting canopies. (p. 49)

The proposed work preserves the primary historic entrance and porch features. The second-floor rear door and first-floor right-side front door are being converted to windows in a manner that preserves overall historic proportion and character, though changing openings is generally discouraged under SOI Standards (p. 109). The front door conversion restores the original window opening, and the rear door conversion matches the appearance, dimensions, and profiles of existing approved windows.

Recommended: Replacing in kind extensively deteriorated or missing components of entrance and porch features when there are surviving prototypes, such as railings, balustrades, cornices, columns, sidelights, stairs, and roofs, or when the replacement can be based on documentary or physical evidence. The new work should match the old in material, design, scale, color, and finish. (p. 50)

The deck replacement without the expansion would have been considered acceptable as “like-for-like” and approved as a staff COA because the appearance remains consistent, even though the material differs. However, SOI guidance emphasizes matching historic materials in-kind, which this proposal does not achieve. Trex composite boards are synthetic and, while durable, differ from the original material.

Not Recommended: Replacing an entire entrance or porch feature when limited replacement of deteriorated and missing components is appropriate. Using replacement material that does not match the historic entrance or porch feature. (p. 50)

Trex composite boards do not match the current porch material. Under local practice, a deck replacement without expansion might be considered acceptable as “like-for-like” and approved as a staff COA because the appearance remains consistent, even though the material differs. However, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards discourage wholesale replacement and the use of non-historic materials (SOI Standards, p. 50).

Recommended: Replacing in kind an entire window from the restoration period that is too deteriorated to repair (if the overall form and detailing are still evident) using the physical evidence as a model to reproduce the feature or when the replacement can be based on historic

documentation. If using the same kind of material is not feasible, then a compatible substitute material may be considered. The new work may be unobtrusively dated to guide future research and treatment (p. 189)

The Pella Lifestyle Series double-hung windows with Low-E glass, argon gas, and simulated divided light grilles have been approved for use in other COAs within the historic district. While they differ from original materials, their dimensions and appearance match the historic character and existing windows. Simulated divided lights are acceptable when true divided lights are not feasible, provided profiles and muntin patterns match historic configurations. This approach aligns with SOI guidance allowing compatible substitute materials when in-kind replacement is not feasible.

Recommended: Recreating a missing window or window feature that existed during the restoration period based on documentary and physical evidence; for example, duplicating a hoodmold or shutter (p. 189)

The first-floor right-side front door conversion returns the opening to its original window configuration, which aligns with historic documentation and partially meets SOI recommendations.

Staff Recommendation: Approval