

To: Members of the Dahlonega Historic Preservation Commission  
From: Bill Schmid, AICP, Acting Secretary to the Commission  
Date: August 25, 2017  
Re: COA Demolition Review – 24 East Main – Roberta Green Garrett

---

### Executive Summary

Applicant, Robert Green Garrett, seeks HPC approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of a siding clad masonry structure with wood joists and flooring located at 24 East Main Street, which is commonly known as “The Butler Mini-mall” or “Piazza Building”. Because the Dahlonega Historic District Design Guidelines require concurrent review of replacement structures at time of demolition review, this report also evaluates the suitability of the proposed replacement structure to the site.

The proposed replacement extends beyond the limits of 24 East Main Street and also incorporates an adjacent parcel under common ownership at 40 East Main Street. 40 East Main Street contains a dilapidated but standing wooden structure 80-110 years older than the subject building. 40 East Main was previously approved by City Council for demolition subject to conditions.

Please see the project webpage on the City’s website for 24 East Main Street for documents referenced herein.

The staff recommendation to the HPC in response to the applicant’s request for demolition is to deny the applicant’s request for 24 East Main Street. According to consultant reports prepared for the City the building is not in danger of collapse, can be restored to original features as an enhancement to the historic district without extraordinary effort, and can provide a reasonable economic return.

The applicant has options to demolition or complete restoration. As one example, if the owner chooses not to improve the structure and its systems, the ground floor of the building (former restaurant space) can remain closed to occupancy and use until such time an owner or tenant renovates it to a condition suitable for occupancy of a portion or all the space. There are also six apartments upstairs accessed via an exterior rear stairway. The one upstairs apartment the City was allowed to see is in poor condition. Additional inspection of the upstairs for code compliance is warranted, but has not been given. The basement remains unfinished space since original construction.

The staff recommendation to the HPC in response to the applicant’s request for approval of new construction is to deny the applicant’s request due to substantial conflicts with the Dahlonega Historic District Design Guidelines.

If the applicant wants to pursue the previously approved conditional demolition of 40 East Main Street, the current plan should be substantially revised in a meaningful way to be consistent with the guidelines. Suggestions of how to accomplish this are detailed near the end of the report.

The balance of this report is presented in three Parts as General, Demolition and New Construction.

## **PART I – GENERAL**

### Background

Founded in 1833 on the western frontier of Cherokee lands as the nation's first gold rush mining boom town, Dahlonega in 1840 very likely had more hotel rooms than Atlanta and Chicago combined.

Within short order the easy gold was gone and the community became agrarian. Despite episodic advances in mining technology and waves of mining activity Dahlonega remained a rural mountain community with limited access. Because of its topography there are few roads and very limited flat land suitable for easy development. Hydropower was used for mining and production of electricity and the City did not see manufacturing successes of the industrial revolution enjoyed by other Georgia communities.

Despite early economic successes, the City never achieved its long-sought railroad. Changes to the fabric of the community and particularly in its downtown have been incremental. As a result, it has remained a small city. It never was large enough for Sanborn Mapping Company to ever map the community for fire insurance risk purposes. The City was spared by Sherman's Savannah campaign (March to the Sea), but most of its early large wooden structures were, nonetheless, lost to fire.

The Main Street America program, of which Dahlonega is an active member, has as its aim the economic development of downtowns through historic preservation. Its methods are in use in several hundred communities across the country, including over 100 in Georgia. As a Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA) Community Dahlonega is distinguished as having and being one of the best downtowns in the country. A key part of this designation is the City's success with preserving and repurposing historic structures.

Successful preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings across a business district makes for successful Main Streets. Demolition is allowed under certain circumstances, but is not commonly practiced in historic districts. It is the action of last resort. Decisions regarding new buildings are careful and deliberate with the understanding that once buildings are constructed they and related site improvements become a more or less permanent part of the community fabric. The City has always been justifiably proud of its rich history and was an innovator and early adopter of historic preservation methods. It is one of over 140 communities in Georgia to have Historical Preservation Ordinances. Most have a Commission or Design Board of Review.

Many of Dahlonega's original wood frame commercial buildings, including several hotels, have been lost over time to fire or insects. Many parcels have been rebuilt on with contemporary (for their era) masonry/brick buildings. Over the passage of time these have themselves in turn become historic. The Butler Mini-mall is one of those examples.

The Butler Mini-Mall occupies a site that was first a gold-rush era hotel known variously as the Choice/Globe/Lawrence and Burnside Hotel until it was lost to fire in 1904. The property was used as a cabbage patch and cornfield until 1947 when Mr. Raleigh J Butler built the building known as Butler Mini-Mall.

For a variety of reasons (early settlement patterns and westward expansion, the railroad age, invention of electric elevators and air conditioning, early national highway system, etc.) the vast majority of

Georgia's commercial buildings in historic districts are one and two-story. Masonry (brick or stone) three or multi-story buildings are rare, except in the state's largest cities. Even in some of them their attraction of capital and growth as commercial centers occurred after the 1950s with growth of suburbs in conjunction with the interstate system.

From aerial photo review of dozens of Georgia downtowns, it appears that for every three-story historic brick commercial building, there may be roughly 100 two-story, and for every two-story roughly 20 one-story commercial historic brick structures. As a result, there is a general look and feel that is familiar to pedestrians that roughly corresponds with the historic population of the community.

The property owner is familiar with the HPC requirements of Dahunega and has done previous new construction and at least one other demolition project in the district. Mrs. Garrett did not approach the City before the fact about the suitability of purchasing the Parks property in order to replace it with a hotel. She purchased it with existing B-3 historic district zoning and development requirements in place. Nonetheless, the City Council recognized the poor condition of the older Payne-Parks structure and granted her conditional approval for its demolition.

She did not identify a desire to demolish two structures in her initial application. Instead, she described rehabilitation of the Butler building and incorporation of it into the replacement scheme for a boutique hotel with two stories above the street grade of Main Street with a surface parking lot to the rear. Presumably, that was a financially viable project at the time of its presentation less than two years ago.

The original application for COA approval in 2015 anticipated rehabilitation of the Butler Mini-Mall and incorporation of it as part of a small hotel (36 rooms) fronting Main Street with surface parking to the rear. Only after approval of the initial demolition did the applicant present drawings for a larger hotel. The Payne-Parks building remains standing. It can be restored, preserved, modified or demolished. If demolished, it should be replaced with a development suited to its location.

The second version of 2016 assumed demolition of the Butler building for a 60- room building, but this question had not been and is only now before the HPC for action. It introduced a front elevation that is materially the same as the current version, but it sought several variances from the City Board of Zoning Appeals, including reduction in number and dimensions of required parking spaces, which were denied.

The third version of 2017 that was informally shared with the HPC in July for comment enlarged the hotel further to 75 rooms and added two-level deck parking to satisfy the City's parking requirements.

Historically, three-story or larger brick commercial buildings are rare in Georgia's downtowns. Typically, the largest brick buildings were the courthouse, schools and churches found in county-seat communities. Occasionally, these were portions of factories or mills. The largest buildings of north Georgia are found in historic railroad communities. Even then presence of a railroad was not a guarantee of the land values and investment needed for three-story or larger buildings in the days before electric elevators and air conditioning.

A three-story building in too small a town would be out of place and out of character. From 1956-1979 the City did not have limits on height in the downtown business district. From 1979-1991 new construction was limited to 24 feet, because that was the limit of the fire department's ladders. Since 1991 the maximum height in downtown has been limited to 36.2 feet, by way of a conditional use permit. This is the height of the tallest building, which is the two-story 1836 Courthouse.

Competition for historic tourism dollars is keen. Whether it is evident or not, tourism dollars in any month, season or year is finite. Dahlonega competes against much larger southeastern historic tourism communities like St. Augustine, Savannah, Charleston, Mobile and New Orleans. It competes most directly with other historic mountain counties across the country and with Northeast Georgia mountain communities.

The City's Main Street program is preservation-based. The historic character of downtown is a key factor to the uniqueness of the community and its ability to attract tourists, which is our largest industry base. Removing historic buildings is contrary to the aims of preservation.

Within one block of the Public Square ground floor retail space is in very high demand, as is market demand for restaurant space. The City maintains a list of prospective tenants seeking to bring new businesses to Dahlonega. For several consecutive months there has been demand not met by available supply.

The property is subject to HPC review by virtue of its zoning district designation. The City's Zoning Ordinance requires the B-3 and CBD districts to be subject to the COA process under HPC review. Because of the importance of historic buildings to the community, historic properties of the B-3 district are subject to the most stringent requirements of the City. Demolition and new construction of historic properties requires compliance with the Zoning Ordinance, Historic Preservation Ordinance, Rules & Procedures of the Historic Preservation Commission, Historic District Design Guidelines, Subdivision Ordinance, Development Regulations and Standard Codes. Even so, numerous property owners, including the applicant, have been able to design, construct, occupy and enjoy successful projects which contribute to the district.

The challenge of moving this project forward is not of the City's making. It is a natural consequence of the applicant's design team or contract purchaser overlooking or ignoring established community standards trying to fit so much (or too much) into so relatively small a space. Because the building will be a more or less permanent fixture on the community's award-winning literal Main Street, the City needs a high degree of confidence as to what will be built and how it will look for decades to come.

#### General Factors to Consider

Consideration by the HPC of approval of a new hotel (or any other use involving both the Parks and Butler building sites and supported by zoning) requires:

- 1) determination of suitability of demolition (denial, approval with conditions in addition to those required under the Guidelines or approval without conditions additional to those required under the Guidelines) and only then
- 2) determination of suitability of the exterior design elements of the proposed replacement structure (approval, approval with conditions, or denial).

The City's guidelines do not have as their primary objective the maximizing of building envelope to the greatest degree possible at the expense of compatibility with surrounding buildings and the district as a whole. To the contrary, they exist to promote preservation of historic buildings, harmony of the district as new buildings are constructed, and an economically viable downtown historic district.

## Historical References

According to Anne Amerson's "Dahlonge's Historic Public Square" (2002) the building was built in 1947 by Raleigh J. Butler as a furniture store and chain store. It replaced a large hotel known as the Choice/Globe/Lawrence House/Dahlonge Hotel/Burnside Hotel that had stood on the site from 1834 or earlier until it burned in 1904. The Butler building has served many uses over the intervening 70 years. Amerson's full description accompanies this report and is used with permission. A detailed description of the original hotel's history by historian Sylvia Gailey Head may be found at <http://www.goldrushgallery.com/news/innkeep.html>

1970 - The property was included in the Revitalization Study by UGA's School of Environmental Design with Existing and Proposed Façade renderings. In the existing façade view along the south side of Main Street the building is shown without siding, awnings, canopy or covered walkway and as having three separate entrances of varying styles with transoms at street level. Four sets of paired windows with three over one sashes are shown. The proposed façade retained these elements and added a covered shed-roofed walkway attached to the building to be supported by what appears to be eight turned wood support columns.

1982 - The property was not identified or shown in the survey for the Dahlonge Commercial Historic District (National Register-1983). The structure would have been approximately 35 years old at the time.

1984/5 – UNG's Bella Lynn Collection Polaroids – These images show the building as it underwent changes to add upper projecting windows and replace a wall-anchored awning with covered walkway and supporting posts. Existing doorways and associated brickwork on the ground floor frontage appears to have been removed and the entirety of the building was apparently clad in siding as part of the change. The City concurrently developed its first version of historic district design guidelines. Building records from the time period have not been found, but may exist.

2001 – The property is listed as LU-D-13 in a survey of 178 properties by the Georgia Mtns RDC (Regional Development Commission), now known as GMRC. The building is not described for history or type of significance and is shown with a date of construction as "c. 1940". No buildings in the survey are specifically distinguished for period of contribution, so all surveyed buildings are assumed as generally contributing.

## DOI Preservation Briefs

Department of the Interior Preservation Briefs related to preservation and rehabilitation may be found at <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>. As two examples of possible options to demolition, Preservation Brief 11 addresses rehabilitating historic storefronts, while Preservation Brief 31 provides guidance for mothballing historic structures.

## Dahlonega Historic District Design Guidelines

Pertinent guidelines for demolition are found in Chapter 6 of the Guidelines and are reviewed in Part II. Pertinent guidelines for reviewing the Setting and Site Features are found in Chapter 3 and guidelines for New Construction are found in Chapter 5. Both are reviewed in Part III New Construction.

## Applicant Material

Items furnished by the applicant's design team related to the question of demolition are shown in ***bold italics*** text.

### November 21, 2016

- letter (November 16, 2016)
- application for certificate of appropriateness
- checklist
- floor plans (3 pages) dated November 3, 2016
- elevations (2 pages) dated November 3, 2016
- four photographs

### January 5, 2017

- letter regarding minutes of December 7, 2016 staff meeting with Applicant's representatives - minutes/notes (2 pages)

### January 31, 2017

- letter regarding notes/minutes - minutes/notes (2 pages)

### February 21, 2017

- letter-Jack K. Bailey, Jr. regarding demolition***
- conditional use permit application - height
- proposed site plan (dated February 17, 2017) (A1-A5 and C1)

### March 7, 2017

- conditional use application form (supplements February 21, 2017 application)

-includes revised proposed site plan C1 - dated March 7, 2017

March 28, 2017

supplement for COA (November 21, 2016) and conditional use application (February 21, 2017) - includes:

- (1) property tax record cards
- (2) tax map
- (3) responses to questions on conditional use application form
- (4) disclosure of campaign contributions (dated March 8, 2017) and owner's certification (dated March 8, 2017)
- (5) metes and bounds description
- (6) letter of intent

May 18, 2017

COA application

-includes site plan and photographs (supplements and amends November 21, 2016 application for Certificate of Appropriateness)

- ***distress analysis***

May 29, 2017

-site plan revised to include landscape plan

August 18, 2017

-***opinion letter of August 12, 2017 from Acme American, LLC***

The letter of February 21, 2017, by Mr. Bailey of Bailey & Associates, architect for the replacement building, describes inspection of a building that is "wood frame". 24 East Main is exterior masonry block from the ground to roof on all four exterior walls. It has interior wooden floors and is clad in siding. Mr. Bailey's qualifications and relevant project experience in evaluating structures for alternatives to demolition have not been presented to the City in writing and remain unconfirmed. He is known to have had local involvement in the restoration of the Old 1836 Courthouse (Gold Museum) and to have

served on the HPC for Gainesville. The statement in his letter suggests his time or access for inspection may have been limited.

The distress analysis of May 18, 2017, does not bear the name of its author. It is assumed to have been prepared by Mr. Roger DeBoy of Satori, Inc. Mr. DeBoy's qualifications and relevant project experience in evaluating structures for alternatives to demolition have not been presented to the City in writing and remain unconfirmed. He has publicly affirmed personal involvement in two or more restoration projects involving commercial buildings. He affirms extensive new construction experience.

The letter of August 18, 2017, by Mr. Jasper Wayne Proctor of Acme American, LLC appears to be answering the question for his client of whether 24 East Main Street meets the requirements of the International Building Code (IBC). This has never been a question from the City's perspective. Even cursory review shows the building does not comply with the current IBC. As with virtually all historic buildings in Dahunega's National Register or local B-3 historic districts the building qualifies for consideration and treatment as a Historic Building under Chapter 12 and other code references of the locally adopted International Existing Building Code, 2012 with Georgia amendments (IEBC). His opinion letter shows he is a Professional Engineer in Georgia and holds/held CABO certification. CABO was a national standard, primarily associated with 1 & 2 Family Dwellings. The nature of his CABO certification and relevant project experience in evaluating commercial structures for alternatives to demolition remain unconfirmed.

As shown above the referenced material from the applicant contains only limited references to matters addressed by the Guidelines for Demolition detailed in Chapter 6 of the Dahunega Historic District Design Guidelines. They provide virtually no discussion or evaluation of alternatives to demolition. They instead relate primarily to proposed new construction. The bulk of applicant material is repetition and restatement, rather than new or additional information.

#### Additional Material

Please see the City's webpage for 24 East Main, which includes consultant reports by Mr. Rex Pless, PE, principal, of Bennett & Pless and Mr. Curtis Whitsel, general contractor. Among other items it includes a review of historic commercial building sizes in communities across north Georgia to provide context for review of determining historically appropriate new construction.

The webpage contains much important, relevant information, and is substantial, but incomplete. There are a variety of meeting notes and email exchanges with the applicant's consultant team from 2015 to the present too numerous to efficiently research, retrieve, print, scan and post online.



## **PART II - REVIEW FOR DEMOLITION**

### Recent Demolition History

Demolitions on B-3 or CBD zoned property (the City's zoning districts subject to HPC review) are infrequent, but do happen. In the past ten years there are three demolition COA requests considered by the HPC:

- 1) Payne-Parks denied by HPC in 2015 approved on appeal by Council in 2016
- 2) approved COA by the HPC in 2013 for demolition of two long-time vacant houses with many problems at 262 & 270 Main Street for Tony Owen; and
- 3) approval of COA for Ruby Gooch in 2007 for property being purchased by the college.

### Basic questions

Is the Butler building suitable for demolition? Asked another way is it one of the historic buildings not just in poor condition, but so structurally unstable so that it cannot be preserved, rehabilitated or otherwise repurposed? Has the applicant's team sufficiently demonstrated this?

If the building is structurally unsound or cost prohibitive to bring to current codes, or renovate, is demolition warranted for parts of the building, or for the whole?

If demolition were to be denied, what else can an owner of the building do with it?

Is the building or site of national historic significance? No. It is adjacent to, but not part of the National Register Historic District. At the time of the District's creation (1983) the structure was not old enough to qualify for inclusion. Because it lacks integrity from its original construction, it might not qualify for National Register listing unless restored to its original design. It is not sufficiently old yet for its false façade to have become historic in its own right.

Is the building or site of state or regional historic significance? No events or people of state or regional historic significance have been identified with the building. The site is of local significance but has been dramatically changed over time. At the time of Alexander Cain's 1936 book on the first 100 years of Dahlenega the property was a cabbage patch. The property was from 1834 or earlier the location of the Choice Hotel "at the sign of the golden ball". The Choice later operated as the Globe, Eagle, Lawrence and the Burnside. It burned in 1904. The building is considered to have local significance because of its unique masonry materials, which seem likely to be locally produced cement block, and locally produced lumber.

Only if the HPC determines the Butler building is suitable for complete demolition should a new façade as part of a new building be considered.

### Options to Demolition

Either independent of work that might be done on the adjacent Parks parcel, or in a coordinated fashion in conjunction with adjacent work, an owner could:

- 1) sell either or both parcels to another owner;
- 2) fully renovate or improve the interior for a different use or uses;
- 3) obtain approval for suitable additions to the Butler building on the adjacent Parks property;

- 4) use it more or less as is (apartments over restaurant) or offices over retail, provided the building is brought up to codes (the Existing Building Code makes provisions for Historic Buildings); or
- 5) convert the building to two-story restaurant.

The building cannot be used as a restaurant currently, because neither the owner nor otherwise interested tenants have chosen to pursue the option to repair its damaged condition. It is not because the City has prevented anyone from doing so. Options 1,2,4,5 do not require HPC involvement. Only exterior renovations, additions or new construction involve the HPC review process.

Evaluation of Factors – Proposed Demolition

The following is offered to assist the HPC members, individually and collectively, foster discussion and render a decision based on findings of fact:

Guidelines Review – Chapter 6 – Demolition

Guidelines	Staff Comments	Personal Notes
6.2.1 Demolition of historic buildings should be avoided. All feasible alternatives to demolition should be considered by working with the Historic Preservation Commission and other interested parties.	Alternatives to Consider: Restore (to 1947) Preserve Repurpose Maintain Status Quo Mothball Relocate (not feasible) Demolish (last resort)	
6.2.2 The factors for consideration for approval of a demolition request as specified in Dahlongega’s Historic Preservation Ordinance shall be evaluated. These factors include:	Evaluation by the HPC of these factors (a -f) found in the Dahlongega Historic Preservation Ordinance is mandatory (“shall”), and is not discretionary.	
a. The historic, scenic, or architectural significance of the building, structure, site, tree, or object;	There are no known national, state or local historic events or people associated with the building. Historic events or people associated with the earlier building and site (Choice Hotel 1834-1904) were lost by fire, subdivision of the land and construction of new buildings (service station and Butler Mini-mall). There is no scenic significance	

	of the building. The building may have architectural significance based on its unique masonry construction. The concrete blocks used have not been previously identified in Dahlonega and may be previously unknown in Georgia. Further research is warranted.	
b. The importance of the building, structure, site, tree, or object to the ambiance of the district;	The building contributes somewhat to the ambiance of the district, but does so by presenting a false sense of its date of construction. The original character of the post- WWII building was obscured by construction of a front façade and cladding of the exterior in 1984/5, which led to the establishment of design guidelines for the district. If restored, the original character of the building would add to the ambiance of the district.	
c. The difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a building, structure, site, tree, or object because of its design, texture, material, detail, or unique location;	The current exterior appearance of the building could easily be reproduced. However, the underlying structure could not. It is made of irregular sized concrete block previously unknown to the locale, region and possibly the state.	
d. Whether the building, structure, site, tree, or object is one of the last remaining examples of its kind in the district;	There were few commercial buildings constructed in Dahlonega in the decade after WWII. This may be the only one of the period constructed as multi-use space with retail uses on the ground floor and residential apartments above. It is the only known and last remaining example using the unique masonry construction materials chosen.	
e. Whether there are definite plans for use of the property if the proposed demolition is carried out, and what the effect of those plans on the character of the surrounding area would be;	The applicant has definite plans for use of the property if the proposed demolition is carried out. The effects on character of the surrounding area would be mixed. New construction would bring the benefit of additional hotel rooms with self-contained non-surface lot parking to downtown.	

	<p>However, as currently shown it would do so by eliminating traditional retail and restaurant uses at the ground-floor level for the rest of the block. This would have the effect of presenting visiting and local shoppers and diners a disconnect in the first block from Public Square to the rest of the south side of East Main Street. This would present long-term, if not permanent, challenges to growing the tourism district to the east. Tourist district growth to the west is already limited by the campus of UNG.</p> <p>Because of elevation changes in the site, the proposed three- story structure at the front presents as a four-story structure at the rear (Choice Street). The proposed building form of a commercial three- story brick building for 149 feet along the public right-of-way of East Main Street or along any street in Dahlongega’s downtown is unknown historically or presently. The same can be said for a three- to four-story building along 200 feet of Meaders Street, or 60 feet of four-story building along Choice Street. Such a structure or structures are not known historically in Dahlongega or communities of similar size. Even in many railroad-based communities of Georgia such a building would have been out of character historically. Historically, the largest masonry building in small or medium sized communities would be public buildings such as a courthouse, church or school. Although a definite plan, if approved and constructed, such a large building would dwarf other buildings in the same block and across from structures on all facing streets.</p>	
--	---	--

	<p>The Guidelines provide options to mitigate these issues, which have been overlooked or disregarded by the applicant’s design team. As an example, building step backs on the uppermost floor could be used to reduce the building’s impact on Main and Choice. Similarly, landscaping in front of the building would soften its presentation, as would the use of a porch or porches. As presented and maintained by the applicant for several months, the proposed replacement building plan is not in keeping with the character of the area, although the proposed use (hotel) is. It should be remembered the Council approved demolition of the adjacent Parks building with the understanding the same applicant at that time was proposing a boutique hotel which would incorporate a renovated Butler Mini-mall as part of the plan. Presumably, this was a viable option and sincere intent when proposed to secure Parks demolition approval.</p>	
<p>f. Whether reasonable measures can be taken to save the building, structure, site, tree, or object from collapse;</p>	<p>The building has been examined for the HPC by Rex Pless, PE, principal structural engineer of Bennett &amp; Pless. Mr. Pless has expertise in Georgia with structural analysis of historic masonry and timber buildings. His inspection and report find that the building is not in danger of collapse, but that reasonable measures can be taken to extend its serviceable life for a range of purposes.</p>	
<p>g. Whether the building, structure, site, tree, or object is capable of earning reasonable economic return on its value.</p>	<p>The 9,600 square feet building does not earn reasonable economic return on its value in its current condition, not because of its design or materials of construction, but because of damage by former occupants, lack of repair, and poor maintenance. The ground floor restaurants are not operable due to damage and the</p>	

	<p>second-floor apartment the City was given access to is in poor condition. The condition of five remaining apartments is unknown.</p> <p>The building has been examined for the HPC by Curtis Whitsel of Whitsel Construction Services, Inc. Mr. Whitsel is a general contractor with expertise in Georgia with evaluating condition and restoration potential of historic buildings. His inspection and report demonstrate the building is capable of earning reasonable economic return on its value, if restored or otherwise repurposed. Specifically, for restoration of the building under two scenarios for two restaurants on the ground-floor and six apartments on the second-floor, he found an estimated cost of \$1,036,500 with ROI of 13.24% (whitebox) or \$1,244,200 with ROI of 13.15% (buildout).</p> <p>The restoration scenario is an important one to consider. Because demolition for a hotel would involve a new building and change to a new use, full compliance with zoning requirements including parking, would be required. If the uses of residences over restaurants is continued, the uses will not have changed, and additional parking will not be required. This leaves the applicant still able to build a hotel with retail or other use(s) on the adjacent tract.</p>	
--	--	--

### Decision Criteria - Demolition

The Dahlonega Historic Preservation Ordinance provides decision criteria in Section IV F 1 c:

c. Demolition: A decision by the Commission approving or denying a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of buildings, structures, sites, trees judged to be 50 years old or older, or objects shall be guided by:

1. the historic, scenic, or architectural significance of the building, structure, site, tree, or object;
2. the importance of the building, structure, site, tree, or object to the ambiance of the district;
3. the difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a building, structure, site, tree, or object because of its design, texture, material, detail, or unique location;
4. whether the building, structure, site, tree, or object is one of the last remaining examples of its kind in the neighborhood or the city;
5. whether there are definite plans for use of the property if the proposed demolition is carried out, and what the effect of those plans on the character of the surrounding area would be;
6. whether reasonable measures can be taken to save the building, structure, site, tree, or object from collapse;
7. whether the building, structure, site, tree, or object is capable of earning reasonable economic return on its value.

### Staff Recommendation

Based on the applicant's submitted material, findings of consultants to the City, discussions with the applicant's design team and comments above, staff recommends the following as Findings of Fact relative to the proposed demolition of 24 East Main Street:

- 1) Significance of the building is primarily architectural as it relates to the original underlying structure's design and materials. Its construction materials may be unique to the area. There are no readily identifiable historic events or people associated with the building of national or state significance.
- 2) The building lacks some elements of integrity of the original construction and presents a false façade which is not accurate as to its period of significance. It contributes to the district as an "old building", but is not well maintained. Contribution to the ambiance of the district from the building would be improved through restoration rather than demolition. Restoration of the underlying building could be done at present by the applicant, or following sale to others, or by mothballing the building until such time as the applicant or others wanted to undertake restoration. However, demolition would forever prevent its restoration.
- 3) The underlying building would be difficult to reproduce given the uniqueness of its building materials.

4) The cement block multi-use building from the decade after WWII is the only known and last remaining one of its kind in Dahlonaga.

5) Plans for a replacement, if demolition were approved, would be primarily adverse to the district.

6) The building is not in danger of collapse and reasonable measures can be taken to extend its useful life.

7) If damage to the building and its systems are properly repaired, the building is capable of yielding reasonable economic return on its value.

Demolition of the structure is not the only feasible alternative for the site and is not a last resort in terms of possible use. Demolition is inappropriate as no plan meeting the design standards and historic guidelines has been offered for the building's replacement. The applicant has failed to support specific demolition guidelines through the application process. For example, correspondence is long on generalization but short on specifics such as the feasibility of repair.

Accordingly, staff recommends denial of the applicant's petition. If demolition is denied, discussion of the applicant's proposed replacement building for this site is rendered moot.

#### Recommended Motion

I move that the applicant's petition for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition be denied based upon the findings of fact identified by staff in the staff report.

#### Alternative Motions

I move that the applicant's petition for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition be denied based upon the findings of fact proposed by staff in the staff report modified as follows: (enumerate)

I move that the applicant's petition for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition be approved with specific conditions based upon the following findings of fact: (enumerate) and under the following conditions of approval: (enumerate)

I move that the applicant's petition for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition be approved as presented by the applicant based upon the following findings of fact: (enumerate)



### **PART III – REVIEW FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION**

#### Considerations if demolition is approved

##### Use

If a building is permitted to be demolished in Dahlonga's historic district, what is the owner allowed to do with the property? The City's historic districts are regulated as part of its zoning code. There are two historic districts regulated for HPC review (B-3 and CBD). B-3 is the City's local historic district. Despite being historic the B-3 district allows for a range of uses. However, demolitions are only approved for historic buildings when there is a specific approved plan for replacement of the building in a manner compatible with surrounding properties and the district as the whole.

Is a hotel allowed under the current zoning of the property? Yes, and clearly so - the City's B-3 zoning district allows for a wide range of uses, including 48 specifically enumerated uses and two identified conditional uses. Permitted use #23 is "Hotels, motels, and bed and breakfast inns"

Is there a need for additional lodging rooms in the City? Probably so, based on anecdotal evidence of day visitors in the region overnighing elsewhere.

Would this location make sense for a hotel? Probably so, based on the nearby businesses that would benefit from additional visitors who specifically choose to lodge in a historic downtown. The use is consistent with the stated intent of the owner during consideration of the Payne-Parks building demolition.

Is a hotel a desirable use? Yes, but that is not a question for the HPC to determine. It is out of the jurisdiction of the HPC to determine use.

Is a 75-room hotel the only reasonable use of the property? No, there are many conceivable alternatives. The applicant has not demonstrated a specific number of rooms are required for financial viability of the project.

Is a 75-room hotel required by chain hotel companies in order to use their national or international reservations system? No, as one example Hampton Inn, one of the most family-oriented franchise hotel companies, has franchise standards for 51-room facilities.

The first proposal recognized the high value of East Main Street by placing a building in the front portion of the adjacent lot (40 East Main) with surface parking to the rear. The current proposal does the same, but takes advantage of the natural change in grade along Meaders Street to create two levels of parking with no internal ramp. This approach is the most efficient that can be attained consistent with the City's parking requirements detailed in its Zoning Ordinance. This approach increases building height and cost, but is superior to surface parking lots from a land use perspective. Although efficient, internal deck parking is not required, and a common development scheme for both lots would be allowed for smaller building(s) with smaller parking lot. An often overlooked fact is that in Dahlonga's downtown B-3 and CBD districts up to 50% of the required parking can be provided offsite within a distance of 400 feet.

Public owned right-of-way on the square is large enough to accommodate angled parking, planters and sidewalks. West Main has parallel parking, landscape strips and sidewalks. East Main has angled parking and sidewalks. In order to add street trees along East Main, either public parking spaces will

need to be converted to planter beds or new replacement buildings need to be setback from the street (or both as opportunities present). The current plan places all landscaping to the sides and rear of the building. Because 25% of the site has to be maintained as open space, the building could be moved closer to Choice Street in order to increase space in the front of the building for street side canopy trees, particularly since there are no overhead utilities on this block face.

Evaluation of Factors – Proposed New Construction

Only if demolition is determined to be unavoidable and demolition is the only feasible alternative does consideration of the proposed new building come into play. Pertinent guidelines for review include Chapter 3 Setting and Site Features and Chapter 5 New Construction.

The following is offered to assist the HPC members, individually and collectively, foster discussion and render a decision based on findings of fact. The following notation is used:

- 1 – This guideline applies, and the application is viewed as supportive.
- 2 - This guideline applies, and the application is viewed as neutral.
- 3 – This guideline applies, and the application is viewed as in conflict.
- 4 – This guideline applies, but is not shown in the plan.
- 5 – This guideline does not apply.

Guidelines Review – Chapter 3 – Setting and Site Features

Walkways, Driveways and On-Site Parking

Guideline	Staff	Self
3.1.1 Retain existing paving materials used in walks, such as unified brick or concrete, as well as any decorative design patterns.	2	
3.1.2 Use materials and designs that complement existing site features in new walkway, driveway, and/or on-site parking construction. Color and texture should be carefully reviewed prior to installation. The dimensions, materials, and configurations proposed should be consistent and complementary with existing walkways, driveways, and/or onsite parking in the district.	3	
3.1.3 Locate new walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas so that the topography of the building site and significant site features, including mature trees, are retained.	1	
3.1.4 In residential areas, off-street parking should be located to the rear of the principal structure and should be completely screened from public view with vegetative landscaping. If approved, side-yard parking areas, including the required vegetative screening, should not go beyond the front façade of the principal building.	5	
3.1.5 In residential areas, use existing or similar materials in both walks and driveways.	5	

3.1.6 Demolishing historic structures to provide areas for parking is not recommended and will detract from the historic character of the district.	1	
3.1.7 Screen off-street parking lots from streets and sidewalks with landscape plantings, tree canopy and shrub hedges.	2	
3.1.8 In the commercial core, parking areas should be located behind rather than in front of buildings when possible.	1	
3.1.9 Avoid asphalt in visible areas or at minimum, provide visual relief and shade from large expanses of asphalt with landscaping and interior planting islands.	1	
3.1.10 The design of new parking lots should take into consideration and incorporate existing mature trees and historic paths or walkways. Special attention is required to protect existing mature trees, particularly root zones. Working with a Certified Arborist is recommended to identify approaches for redevelopment within sensitive tree root zones.	2 – parking on 40 East Main – removal of magnolia and crape myrtle previously approved	

Fences and Walls

Guideline	Staff	Self
3.2.1 Retain historic stone walls, fences, and hedges. When a portion of wall or fence needs replacing, salvage original parts for prominent locations from less visible areas. Match original construction in design, dimension, detail, texture, pattern, material, and color. If this is not possible, use a simplified design of similar materials and height.	5	
3.2.2 If replacement of an entire fence or wall is necessary because of deterioration, replace it in kind, matching the original in design, dimension, detail, texture, pattern, material, and color. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.	5	
3.2.3 Design of new walls and fences should blend with materials and designs found and traditionally used in the district and on the property. Commonly used materials in Dahunega are stone, brick, iron, and wood.	4	
3.2.4 The use of materials such as chain link fencing, concrete blocks, or modern wood privacy fencing is discouraged especially in locations visible from the street or public-right-of-way.	4	
3.2.5 The scale and ornamentation of new walls and fences should relate to the scale and ornamentation of existing walls and fences.	4	
3.2.6 Privacy fences are not appropriate in front yards. In side and rear yards, they can be used but materials and design should relate to the buildings on the site and to any nearby fences.	4	
3.2.7 Use of non-historic artificial man-made concrete stone products designed to emulate stacked stone or other historic stone materials are not appropriate and are discouraged.	4	

### Site Features, Landscaping and Plantings

Guideline	Staff	Self
3.3.1 Retain existing trees and plants that help define the character of the district. Replace diseased or dead plants and trees with appropriate species.	5	
3.3.2 Maintain the canopy of mature deciduous shade trees.	5	
3.3.3 When planning new landscaping, repeat the dominant street character in terms of border and heights.	3	
3.3.4 During new construction, identify and protect trees and other plantings. Special attention must be provided to sensitive root zones.	5	
3.3.5 Retain existing site features that aid the pedestrian and that offer visual continuity, such as the historically styled street lamps, stone planters, as well as the dark wooden benches, waste receptacles, and signposts. Maintain the compatible and traditional design, color, and materials used for these features.	4	
3.3.6 Retain site features such as bollards, plant beds, and historic stone curbstones that protect turf and plantings from excessive pedestrian and vehicular traffic.	5	
3.3.7 Avoid paving areas that could be landscaped.	1	
3.3.8 Keep necessary utilities, such as transformers and overhead wires, out of sight or in the least visible places.	1	
3.3.9 Protect large trees and other significant site features from immediate damage during construction and from delayed damage due to construction activities, such as loss of root area or compaction of the soil by construction activities.	5	
3.3.10 It is not appropriate to introduce contemporary equipment or incompatible site features, including satellite dishes, storage units, and swimming pools, in locations that compromise the historic character of the building, site, or the district. Locate such features unobtrusively, and screen them from view.	1	
3.3.11 Replace missing or deteriorated site features with new features that are compatible with the character of the site and historic district.	5	
3.3.12 Design new construction or additions so that large trees and other significant site features are preserved.	5	
3.3.13 Avoid the use of invasive exotic plant species. Use native species or non-native species which are historically appropriate and non-invasive.	4	

### Outbuildings, Mechanical Systems & Accessory Structures

Guideline	Staff	Self
3.4.1 Retain existing outbuildings and accessory structures that contribute to the overall character of the historic district.	5	
3.4.2 Retain and preserve the character-defining materials, features, and details of historic garages and accessory buildings, including foundations, roofs, siding, masonry, windows, doors, and architectural trim.	5	

3.4.3 Design of new outbuildings and accessory structures should blend with the materials and style of the major buildings on the site. The design of the roof shape is of great importance in creating a compatible new structure.	5	
3.4.4 Uses of outbuildings and accessory buildings that are not compatible with the historic nature of the property should be screened from view if possible.	5	
3.4.5 It is not appropriate to introduce features or details to a garage or an accessory building in an attempt to create a false historical appearance.	5	
3.4.6 Mechanical systems (including HVAC units), utility meters, dumpsters, satellite dishes, and other similar components should be screened from public view with vegetation or with a fence or freestanding wall and vegetation.	5	
3.4.7 Exterior HVAC units should be placed to the rear façade or other non-visible area of a secondary façade. If visible from public view, exterior HVAC units should be screened with wood or brick fencing and/or vegetation.	3 – PTACs proposed all 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor rooms – no photos of prior installation(s) using detail proposed by the applicant	
3.4.8 Installation of window air-conditioning units should be avoided. If unavoidable or required, window air-conditioning units should not be installed on a primary façade. Window units should not result in the removal or replacement of the original window sash or the alteration of the window framing or surrounds.	3 – PTACs proposed all 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor rooms, including Main Street	

#### Archeological Features

Guideline	Staff	Self
3.5.1 County records and maps should be reviewed to see if previously recorded or known archaeological sites are located on property before undertaking any changes.	5	
3.5.2 If a site has potential for yielding significant archaeological resources, a certified archaeologist should be hired to conduct a brief survey of the property. Previously disturbed areas, or areas with little potential for having such resources, should not require additional investigation. If the archaeologist states that there is potential after the brief survey, then a certified archaeologist should also conduct an intensive survey of the site.	5	
3.5.3 If a site is deemed archaeologically significant but change cannot be avoided, then plans for a project should lessen the impact on the resources.	5	

## Exterior Lighting

Guideline	Staff	Self
3.6.1 Retain and preserve exterior lighting fixtures that contribute to the overall historic character of a building, site, or streetscape.	5	
3.6.2 Maintain and repair historic exterior lighting fixtures through appropriate methods.	5	
3.6.3 If replacement of a missing or deteriorated historic exterior lighting fixture is necessary, replace it with a fixture that is similar in appearance, material, and scale to the original or with a fixture that is compatible in scale, design, materials, color, finish, and historic character with the building and the streetscape.	5	
3.6.4 Introduce new site and street lighting that is compatible with the scale and the historic character of the district. Consider the location, design, material, size, color, finish, scale, and brightness of a proposed fixture in determining its compatibility.	4	
3.6.5 Lighting may be used to illuminate entrances and/or signs or to highlight ornamentation. Ornamentation should not be obscured by mounted fixture.	4	
3.6.6 Lighting fixtures should not be simple in form such as exposed bare bulbs.	4	
3.6.7 Illuminated signs should not be used, in accordance with the City of Dahlonga Sign Ordinance (2008-4) (See Appendix G).	4	
3.6.8 Do not use bright floodlights or rows of lights along driveways or walks.	4	
3.6.9 Bare floodlights without reflectors should not be used to illuminate signs due to undesirable glare.	4	
3.6.10 Exposed fluorescent lights are not appropriate.	4	
3.6.11 Fixtures that predate Dahlonga's history, such as colonial light fixtures, are not appropriate.	4	
3.6.12 Exterior lights should be limited to 40-watt equivalent bulbs and below.	4	

## Signs and Signage

Guideline	Staff	Self
3.7.1 Significant historic signs and landmark signs within the district should be preserved and maintained. Restoration of historic signage is encouraged.	5	
3.7.2 Original signage incorporated into the architectural detail of commercial buildings should also be preserved.	5	
3.7.3 Sign size, shape, font styles, and color should conform to those traditionally used in the historic area. Requests for	4	

restoration of historic signs should be supported by historic documentation, illustrations, or pictures of the original signage.		
3.7.4 Materials for restored signs should be compatible with those of the building's front façade.	5	

Guidelines Review – Chapter 5 – New Construction

Commercial Guidelines are 5.1.1 - 5.1.16 (Guidelines 5.1.17 - 5.1.31 relate to Residential Construction)

“The purpose of the guidelines for new construction is to assist in the design and construction of a contemporary structure or structures on undeveloped or underdeveloped land in a historic district. These guidelines can also be appropriate in the design for significant exterior renovation of existing nonhistoric properties in these locations.

In a district, often the historic significance is contained in the collective character of all the improvements—houses, commercial buildings, street and sidewalk improvements, etc.—rather than the form, details, or materials of a specific building. The design of new buildings, often called “infill development,” should be influenced by the character of the district as well as be evaluated for their impact on the district. New buildings should reflect their own time as well as the traditional building patterns in the Historic District. These considerations should include not only the building but also the site design and landscape treatment.

The following guidelines represent significant principles and other considerations that should be used in the design of and the review of designs for new buildings in the historic district. These guidelines attempt to ensure the proposed house or building will be compatible in size, scale, and setback with the character of neighboring structures as well as being in character with the larger surrounding area. These guidelines are intended to support a creative design process for new buildings while ensuring the historic resources of the community are preserved in the midst of progress.

***Owners and architects should begin their design process by reading the applicable guidelines and contacting the city’s planning staff for assistance. Using the Dahlonga Historic District Design Guidelines from the beginning of the design process, before the architect or builder produces any drawings or proposals will help property owners create complementary new structures while protecting the Historic District as a whole.” [emphasis in original available online and provided multiple times to the applicant’s design team]***

Guideline	Staff	Self
5.1.1 New construction must be compatible in size, scale, mass, form, proportion, spacing, orientation, setback, and materials to existing buildings on the same street and in the district generally.	3	
5.1.2 New building forms should match those used historically.	3	
5.1.3 Maintain the rhythm created by the shape of the existing nearby buildings. Shape may vary but is generally rectangular, square, or massed combinations of square forms—there are no curvilinear elements present.	2	
5.1.4 The percentage of lot covered by the proposed building or buildings should be similar in coverage of surrounding parcels and not to exceed 75% of the lot.	1	
5.1.5 Use compatible roof shapes and forms. Most existing roofs are either gabled (front or side) or hipped and are of moderate pitch. Many	2	



commercial roofs are flat or sloped behind parapet walls. Roofs with historic shapes and pitches are encouraged.		
5.1.6 If the rear façade of a building is a primary or secondary view, such as those buildings on the courthouse square, they should maintain design congruency with existing historic neighbors.	3	
5.1.7 Orient the main entrances of new buildings in a manner similar to established patterns in the district.	3	
5.1.8 Use elements similar to neighboring buildings to define entrances.	3	
5.1.9 Second story porches such as those seen on existing historic buildings are encouraged where appropriate.	3	
5.1.10 Windows and doors for new buildings should be compatible in material, subdivision, proportion, pattern, and detail with existing historic elements. The openings on proposed new construction should follow the solid-to-void ratio characteristic of historic buildings in the district.	3	
5.1.11 Materials for roofs should be similar in appearance to those used historically.	4	
5.1.12 Materials employed in new construction should be similar to those used historically for all major surfaces. The use of modern building materials such as vinyl and aluminum is not compatible with the character of the district. High-quality modern versions of older materials such as fiber cement siding (Hardi products) may be acceptable; however, applications will be approved on a case-by-case basis.	3	
5.1.13 Finishes should be compatible with historic finishes found in the district in terms of composition, scale, color, module, pattern, detail, texture, finish, and sheen.	4	
5.1.14 Landscape is considered as important in defining the historic character of a property. Therefore, removing or radically changing landscape features that destroy the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape or diminish the historic character of the property is discouraged.	1	
5.1.15 Radically changing the grade on the property or adjacent to a building is not recommended.	1	
5.1.16 New parking areas should be designed to be as unobtrusive as possible, thus minimizing the effect on the historic character of the setting. Screening parking areas with vegetation is recommended. *	1	

RECOMMENDED	Staff	Self
A properly planned building will orient itself in line with and similarly to the adjacent and nearby buildings so as to blend in with the existing environment.	3	
Massing of large-scale structures should be reduced so that they will not overpower the traditional scale of the district. Techniques which could achieve this include varying the surface planes of the structure, breaking up the roofline with different elements to create smaller compositions, and stepping back the building as height increases.	3	
Infill construction should not obscure or confuse the historic form and character of adjacent historic buildings or the historic context of the district.	3	
New building design should be tied to the architectural/visual characteristics of the district and echo, or complement, such characteristics.	3	
The relationship of materials and textures of a structure should be visually compatible with the predominant materials used on existing structures.	3	
New materials should be similar to historic materials in texture, size, and finish. Traditional building components should be used: roof form, pitch, and overhang; porch configuration and location; window and door size, shape, and location.	3	
Identify and protect important landscape features, such as trees, from damage during construction.	1	
Replace vegetation damaged or removed during construction with in kind or compatible plant material.	1	

NOT RECOMMENDED	Staff	Self
Construction of houses and commercial buildings with building styles not original to the district is discouraged.	2	
New construction should not try to recreate a particular historical style or period. Adding styles and periods such as Greek Revival, Colonial, and log cabins creates a false sense of the district’s history. New construction based on historic styles should find subtle but recognizable ways to differentiate itself from buildings originally of that style.	2	
Proposed new construction that has a foundation that is not similar in appearance to that found on surrounding historic buildings is discouraged. Most historic buildings in the district were built with a raised foundation. New buildings built on a slab may appear out of scale with surrounding historic buildings.	3	
Using an asymmetrical placement of doors and windows when the established pattern on adjacent and nearby buildings in the district is a symmetrical façade is discouraged.	1	
Failure to align openings with other buildings on the same block is inappropriate.	2	
Construction of a building that is much wider or excessively taller than neighboring structures creates an inappropriate appearance.	3	
Introduction of a new landscape feature, including plant material, that is visually incompatible with the site or that alters or destroys the historic site patterns or vistas is inappropriate.	2	
Placing parking facilities directly adjacent to historic buildings which may cause damage to historic landscape features including removal of plant material and relocation of paths and walkways is inappropriate	1	

Decision Criteria – New Construction

The Dahlonge Historic Preservation Ordinance provides decision criteria in Section IV F 1 a:

F. Acceptable Commission Reaction to the Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness: Commission Action: The Commission may approve the Certificate of Appropriateness as proposed, approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with any modifications it deems necessary, or reject it.

1. The Commission shall approve the application and issue a Certificate of Appropriateness if it finds that the proposed material change(s) in the appearance would not have a substantial adverse effect on the aesthetic, historic, or architectural significance and value of the historic property or the historic district. In making this determination, the Commission shall consider

applicable Standards for Rehabilitation in the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects, any design guidelines the Commission may adopt, any other factors the Commission may deem pertinent, and the following specific criteria depending on the type of action proposed by the application:

a. Reconstruction, Alteration, New Construction or Renovation: A decision by the Commission approving or denying a Certificate of Appropriateness for the reconstruction, alteration, new construction or renovation of any building, structure, site feature, or object within a historic district shall be guided by:

1. the architectural style of the structures located on or proposed to be located on the property;
2. the general design, arrangement, texture, and material of the architectural features involved; and
3. the relationship of the property to the exterior architectural style and pertinent features of other structures on properties adjacent to or directly across the street from the subject property.

Further guidance for HPC decision-making is found in the Rules of Procedure Dahlonga Historic Preservation Commission at Section V F:

F. Review Criteria. When reviewing an application for a certificate of appropriateness (COA), the Commission shall take into account maps and other available data showing the historic and architectural significance of the subject property or structure and nearby structures that would potentially be affected. The Secretary of the Interior Guidelines will be used in all rehabilitation projects. In its review the Commission shall consider the recommendations and applicability of any design guidelines that the Commission may have adopted and take into account the following elements as the Commission may deem appropriate to ensure that the exterior form and appearance of the structure is consistent with the historical or visual character of the District:

1. The height of the building in relation to the average height of the nearest and adjacent and opposite buildings.
2. The setback and placement on the lot of the building in relation to the average setback and placement of the surrounding buildings.
3. Exterior construction materials, including textures and patterns but not to include color.
4. Architectural detailing, such as lintels, cornices, brick bond, and foundation materials.
5. Roof shapes, forms and materials.
6. Proportions, shapes, positioning and locations, patterns and sizes of any elements of fenestration.
7. General form and proportions of buildings and structures.
8. Appurtenant fixtures and other features such as lighting.

9. Structural condition and soundness. The Commission may designate more explicit design criteria as it deems necessary.

#### Staff Recommendation

Based on approval of a motion in some form to approve the demolition of 24 East Main Street, previously recommended in Part II for denial, and in consideration of the applicant's submitted material, findings of consultants to the City and comments noted above, staff recommends the following as Findings of Fact relative to the proposed new construction of the applicant's new hotel at 24 East Main Street in accordance with review criteria of Section IV F 1 a of the Dahlenega Historic Preservation Ordinance:

1. The architectural style of the structures located on or proposed to be located on the property.

The historic architecture of Dahlenega's several early hotels was two-and-a-half story wood frame buildings with deep porches for the lower two floors and large dormer windows providing light and air to attic units. The intended architectural style of the structure as presented ignores previous historic hotel design in the community and is currently unknown to the community and the district. The proposal removes historic ground floor retail space along the majority of a block face and replaces it with a wall of windows and two false doors with one functioning door into a hotel lobby. The proposed building extends the depth of a city block as an all brick three-story structure along Main Street and four-story along Choice. Its front elevation along East Main is broken into three sections two of which appear intended to mimic other structures in town (Hall's Block and the Old Jail), but not maintain their proportions. These two areas are set back two feet from the right-of-way and front face of the central portion of the building. The central portion makes use of a canopy, while awnings are used to the right and left. False doors are under the awnings, while the canopy covers the main entrance. Horizontal banding of brick on the second and third floors and protruding from the building face are intended to obscure the presence of individual air conditioning units (PTACS). The applicant has not demonstrated use of this technique elsewhere.

2. The general design, arrangement, texture, and material of the architectural features involved.

Brick color is proposed to vary across the three façade elements along Main Street. Brick bonds and mortar joints are assumed to be uniform, since no further detail has been provided. Doors and windows with cornices and lintels vary across the front. Spacing of windows appears to be uniform along the front and both sides. The uniform window sizes, ratio of width to height, spacing and aluminum materials proposed for the second and third floors makes the building appear as a contemporary hotel, despite the use of minor architectural treatments or details.

3. The relationship of the property to the exterior architectural style and pertinent features of other structures on properties adjacent to or directly across the street from the subject property.

The proposed building bears little relationship to the exterior architectural style and pertinent features of other structures on properties adjacent to or directly across the street, except where brick is the material used. The front elevation proposed by the applicant in the drawings of May 29, 2017, (Sheet 2) can be scaled at 35 feet for the two side sections and 39.5 feet for the

central portion. Email correspondence of Mr. DeBoy of August 23, 2017 seeks to reduce the front elevation to 30 feet, which means the drawings before the HPC are not an accurate depiction. He proposes a distance between the ground floor and second floor of 11 feet. The majority of the buildings in the district have ground floor separation of 12 to 14 feet.

And in accordance with review criteria found in Section 5 D of the Historic Preservation Commission By-laws:

1. The height of the building in relation to the average height of the nearest and adjacent and opposite buildings.

Building height has been removed from recent drawings and according to Mr. DeBoy the new building may not be drawn to scale relative to the joint City/County building in the applicant's submittal, but a corrected replacement has not been received. Height between floors is not consistent with historical norms. Building height of the nearest and adjacent and opposite buildings is not known. The applicant proposes a building that presents as an above grade three- to four-story building depending on the viewing location. However, the nearest building to the west is the two and half story joint City-County building, the nearest building to the west is the two-story Park Place Hotel, the nearest building to the south is the two-story former "Rick's restaurant", the nearest building opposite to the east of Meaders Street is the one story with basement Gold City Antique gallery, the nearest building opposite East Main to the north is the two-story Battle Branch building. Without substantial modification, such as building step backs on the upper floor from Main and Choice Streets, the building would be incompatible with the character of the area and district as a whole and should be denied.

Dimensions of the building elevations were previously shown in plans provided to the City through February 21, 2017, but inexplicably removed from the drawings of May 29, 2017. In place of dimensioned wall heights previously provided, the five page plan set of May 29, 2017 variously describes the building height as not to exceed 34' 9" (pages 2 & 4) or not to exceed 39' 4" (pages 3 & 5). A reference to 40' 6" on page 1 was masked with liquid white-out after plan printing. The plans are drawn to scale at 1/8"=1'. As such they can be measured with an architect's scale. Measured dimensions from the plans show front elevation building height of 39.5 feet. Meaders Street side elevation at the midline of the building measures 39 feet. Choice Street rear elevation measures 43 feet. Park Street side elevation at the midline of the building measures 39.5 feet. Using the City's method for determining building height (as used in the Zoning Ordinance), the height shown in the drawings is 40.25 feet  $(43 + 39 + 39.5 + 39.5)/4 = 40.25$ ). This is in conflict with notes on all four pages and exceeds the maximum building height for the district. This issue is important because in order to fit all the building and all the rooms under the maximum height cap the distances between floors must be reduced from historic norms to more typical contemporary distances. This would be a reduction in

height of 13% from the current plan as drawn. Misdrawn renderings are of little benefit or use because they do not accurately represent scale, proportion and ratio of various architectural features.

Conditional approval could be supported for 40 East Main Street, if the building maintained historic distances between floors, stepped back for its upper floor along Main Street so the topmost roof was not visible from street level of Main Street and the top floor had similar step-back from Choice Street. This would reduce the perceived height and mass of the structure to two-story along East Main and three-story along Choice. A partial or complete covered or open porch along Main Street would be historically accurate and compatible with the district. One example of this was shown in the City's comments during the conceptual review of July 6, 2017.

2. The setback and placement on the lot of the building in relation to the average setback and placement of the surrounding buildings.

The lot coverage, setbacks and building placement is better than other surrounding buildings, but could be improved further by moving the building from Main Street right-of-way to allow canopy trees to soften the length and height of the structure. The adjacent joint city-county building and related hardscape occupies substantially all of its parcel but accommodates public space "plaza" with setback and covered walkway on the ground floor and second level continuous porch. The adjacent Park Place Hotel occupies the majority of its parcel but provides landscape area and walkways outside the building. The adjacent use to the rear is a City owned public surface parking lot. The Gold City Antique Gallery occupies roughly 80% of its parcel and the balance is impervious area for parking. The Antique Mall occupies all of its parcel with no greenspace. The Battle Branch building has upstairs porch but occupies all of its parcel with no greenspace. The use of all one species tree is discouraged because of risk of disease or blight impacting all in short order.

Conditional approval could be supported for 40 East Main Street, if:

1) the building were setback eight to ten feet from the right-of-way of East Main toward Choice Street so as to allow hardscape area in front of the building with planted trees in combination with landscaped raised granite planter beds similar to those on Public Square; and 2) a variety of large deciduous and evergreen trees were to be planted adjacent to the deck so as to add variable height, form, texture, color and screening year round.

3. Exterior construction materials, including textures and patterns but not to include color.

Three variety of brick are proposed to interrupt the otherwise linear continuity of the structure along Main Street, but the appearance along Meaders is monolithic. The applicant has proposed alternates to guideline standards for windows using aluminum frames, which are not recommended for the district.

Conditional approval could be supported for 40 East Main Street, if the plan: 1) used allowed materials for the district, or offered equivalent alternatives demonstrated as approved windows and doors from larger historic communities (ex. Savannah, Charleston, etc.); and 2) if the plan showed required protection, maintenance or replacement of brick sidewalk along East Main and extension of brick sidewalk along Meaders and Choice Street.

#### 4. Architectural detailing, such as lintels, cornices, brick bond, and foundation materials.

Lintels and cornices are included and vary corresponding to three portions of the building along Main Street. Varying types of brick bonds and mortar joints have been requested by staff, but are not shown to vary in the plans or noted in applicant's comments, so must be assumed to remain uniform. No foundation materials are proposed, but have been previously requested to better match the look of the district, provide contrast, and vary the appearance of different portions of this very large building, so as to break its appearance and continue interest of pedestrians as they walk.

Conditional approval could be supported for 40 East Main Street, if: 1) varying types of historic brick bonds and mortar joints were detailed for use on the various wall faces so as to suggest construction at various points in time or by various builders, rather than a uniform look and feel for the brickwork across the entire structure; and 2) use of varying historic architectural details and materials (brick or facing stone) at foundations.

#### 5. Roof shapes, forms and materials.

The plan proposes a very large flat roof of unknown material. Unspecified brackets or corbels are shown in one section of the front façade. Otherwise, the roofline is broken only by a raised cornice in the central portion of the building. One of the characteristics of the district noted in the guidelines is the presence of varying building heights and rooflines.

Conditional approval could be supported for 40 East Main Street, if the building maintained historic distances between floors, stepped back for its upper floor along Main Street so the topmost roof was not visible from street level of Main Street and the top floor had similar step-back from Choice Street. This would reduce the perceived



height and mass of the structure as viewed from Meaders Street and Park Street. A partial or complete covered or open porch along Main Street making use of a projecting gable end would vary the visual texture at the roofline, be historically accurate and compatible with the district. One example of this was shown in the City's comments during the conceptual review of July 6, 2017.

6. Proportions, shapes, positioning and locations, patterns and sizes of any elements of fenestration.

At staff's request the applicant has broken the appearance of one façade into three facades through use of a staggered front building line. What was originally shown by the applicant as a variety of building materials reflecting the appearance of three buildings reflecting characteristics from three different eras of construction is now the use of different colored bricks. These walls are broken by regularly spaced windows containing paired six over six light windows or paired three over one light windows. Faux windows along Choice Street were added at the request of staff and more appropriately reflect historic windows with height roughly double width.

7. General form and proportions of buildings and structures.

One building structure is proposed. If constructed as currently proposed to include both 24 and 40 East Main the assembled parcel will be the largest privately owned structure in the downtown area by footprint and volume. It is second only in size to the UNG recreation building and deck and has a larger footprint than the UNG downtown office building (former Bank of Dahlonge/BB&T building). By these factors alone it is not in keeping with the historic character of the B-3 or CBD zoning districts or nearby National Register Dahlonge Commercial Historic District.

Conditional approval could be supported for 40 East Main Street, if the plan were revised to show new construction for 40 East Main Street.

8. Appurtenant fixtures and other features such as lighting.

Exterior lighting is addressed in Section 3.6 of the Guidelines (in Chapter 3 Setting and Site Features), and as a checklist item in the COA application checklist in the Guidelines. It is also specifically identified in the checklist provided to the applicant's design team as part of the application package. However, no exterior lighting plan is found in submitted application material, so exterior lighting will remain a separate HPC review.

Signage is addressed in Section 3.7 of the Guidelines and asked of the applicant's design team, but no signage plan has been proposed by the applicant, so sign approval will remain a separate HPC review.

Similarly, fences and walls, if any are planned, remain unidentified and will be a separate HPC review.

Noise and condensate from individual room air conditioning units remain a concern, particularly in the form of PTAC units above and adjacent at no or limited setback from public sidewalk of East Main Street. Potential PTACs for rooms above the parking deck are of less concern because of setbacks from the sides and use of large trees. The applicant has been asked to provide evidence of the solution they propose from use in other jurisdictions, but has not yet done so.

Conditional approval could be supported for 40 East Main, if the plan were to be revised to show: 1) exterior lighting as to locations, materials and types of fixtures with wattage, lumens and color temperature of lighting planned; 2) a sign plan consistent with the Dahunega sign ordinance as appropriate for the B-3 district; a statement on the plans consistent with an email from Roger DeBoy of August 24, 2017, that no walls or fences are planned or will be constructed on the site and showing screening fencing for offsite waste collection at the adjacent property; and 3) removal of the PTAC units from the East Main elevation.

#### 9. Structural condition and soundness

A replacement structure would be all new construction from ground up and compliant with all locally adopted requirements of the standard codes with Georgia amendments. As such the building will be structurally sound and in new condition.

Please recall, if demolition is denied for 24 East Main Street, discussion of the applicant's proposed replacement building for 24 East Main is rendered moot. However, if demolition is approved, staff recommends denial of the applicant's petition for new construction and conditioning of the demolition approval to require the applicant to revise the plan in a meaningful way consistent with the guidelines and to secure COA approval for the new construction before the demolition actually occurs.

#### Recommended Motion

Denial as Presented - I move that the applicant's petition for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction be denied based upon the findings of fact detailed by staff in the staff report and staff recommendation conditioning the demolition as described be required.

Alternate Motions

Denial Based on Alternate Findings - I move that the applicant's petition for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction be denied based upon the findings of fact proposed by staff in the staff report modified as follows (enumerate):

Conditional Approval of Applicant's Proposal - I move that the applicant's petition for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction be approved with specific conditions based upon the following findings of fact: (enumerate) and under the following conditions of approval: (enumerate)

Full Approval as Presented by Applicant - I move that the applicant's petition for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction be approved as presented by the applicant based upon the following findings of fact: (enumerate)