

**CITY OF SAVANNAH
HISTORIC DISTRICT BOARD OF REVIEW
REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PETITIONER: Penny Johnson
417 East Taylor Street
Savannah, GA 31401

FILE NUMBER: 13-005424-COA

ADDRESS: 417 East Taylor Street

PIN: 2-0032 -32-003

ZONING: RIP-A (residential, medium density)

STAFF REVIEWER: Leah G. Michalak

DATE: November 13, 2013

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval to remove all of the asbestos siding and all of the wood clapboard siding beneath. The siding is proposed to be replaced with Hardie Plank Lap Siding (fiber cement siding) with a 5 ¼ inch exposure and “Select Cedarmill” finish (wood grain texture.) The existing siding has many holes from former pipes, ductwork, vents, wires, and animals.

CONTEXT:

The historic building located at 417 East Taylor Street was constructed in 1888 and is a rated structure in the Savannah Historic District.

The applicant/owner has begun replacing the siding with Hardi Plank Lap Siding (fiber cement siding) on the rear of the building, which faces East Wayne Street, and is visible from the public right-of-way.

On June 12, 2013, the Board approved a stucco privacy wall [File No. 13-002731-COA] and staff issued a COA [File No. 13-002747-COA] for a variety of exterior alterations including: color change, window replacement, door replacement, gutter and downspout replacement, awning removal, glass replacement, and soffit repair.

FINDINGS:

The following standards from the *Historic District Section (8-3030) of the City of Savannah zoning ordinance* apply:

Preservation of historic structures within the historic district. An historic structure, and any outbuildings, or any appurtenance related thereto, visible from a public street or lane,

including but not limited to walls, fences, light fixtures, steps, paving, sidewalks, and signs, shall only be moved, reconstructed, altered, or maintained in a manner that will preserve the historical and exterior architectural features of the historic structure or appurtenance thereto and are consistent with the current edition of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation published by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The visual compatibility factors [Section (m)] and the design standards [Section (n)] shall apply.

For the purposes of this section, exterior architectural features shall include but not be limited to the architectural style, scale, general design, and general arrangement of the exterior of the structure, including the kind and texture of the building material, the type and style of all roofs, windows, doors and signs. In considering proposals for the exterior alterations of historic structures in the historic district the documented original design of the structure may be considered.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 2– Historic Character. *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 5– Distinctive Features. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 6– Deteriorated Features. *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*

The preservation standards are not met. The original siding proposed to be removed is a distinctive feature and material that characterizes this historic building. Additionally, the proposed Hardi Plank Lap Siding (fiber cement siding) does not match the old in design, texture, or materials.

Visual compatibility factors. *New construction and existing buildings and structures and appurtenances thereof in the historic district which are moved, reconstructed, materially altered, repaired or changed in color shall be visually compatible with structures, squares and places to which they are visually related. The following factors shall be considered in determining the visual compatibility of such a building, structure or appurtenance. These factors shall not be the basis for appeal of an adverse decision. Greater weight shall be given to adjacent historic structures.*

Relationship of materials, texture and color. *The relationship of materials, texture and color of the facade of a structure shall be visually compatible with the predominate materials, textures, and colors used on contributing structures to which the structure is Visually Related.*

The visually compatibility factor is not met. Hardi Plank Lap Siding (fiber cement siding) is not visually compatible with the materials or textures used on the contributing structures to which this structure is visually related.

Design standards.** The following design standards shall apply to new construction, additions, and alterations to historic and non-historic buildings and structures. **Though certain building materials are prescribed herein, the Board may approve alternative materials that are not listed as prohibited upon a showing by the applicant that the material or product is visually compatible with historic building materials and has performed satisfactorily in the local climate.

***Exterior walls.** Exterior walls of new construction shall comply with the following:*

Residential exterior walls shall be finished in brick, wood, or true stucco.

Where wood siding has been determined to be appropriate (see “b” above), smooth finish fiber cement siding may be used on new residential construction, which includes additions. The use of fiber cement siding is prohibited on historic buildings as a replacement for existing wood siding. Fiber cement panels shall not be used in any case in the district.

The design standards are not met. Hardi Plank Lap Siding (fiber cement siding) is prohibited as a replacement for existing wood siding on the historic buildings. Additionally, a wood grain texture fiber cement siding is also not permitted. Staff recommends that if the asbestos siding is removed, that the wood siding below be retained and be repaired, patched, and restored where needed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Denial to remove all of the asbestos siding, and wood clapboard siding beneath, and replace it with Hardie Plank Lap Siding (fiber cement siding) with a 5 ¼ inch exposure and “Select Cedarmill” finish (wood grain texture) because Hardie Plank is not visually compatible, and does not meet the design and preservation standards. The use of fiber cement siding is prohibited on historic buildings as a replacement for existing wood siding.

Staff recommends that if the asbestos siding is removed, that the wood siding below be retained and be repaired, patched, and restored where needed.

EIH: lgm