



CITY OF SAVANNAH

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Petitioner: Architecture 360

MPC File No.: 23-004683-COA

Address: 1502-1504 Habersham Street

PIN: 20053 27009

Zoning: TN-2

Staff Reviewer: Caitlin Chamberlain

Date: October 25, 2023

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting to install an additional porch column to the upper and lower porches for the property located at 1502-1504 Habersham Street.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

1502-1504 Habersham Street was built in 1916 and is a contributing resource within the National Register Thomas Square Streetcar Historic District and the local Streetcar Historic District. It is the only remaining duplex left of three that had been built for Mrs. Agnes Kenny, according to the 1917 New Improvement Book.

The property has not undergone any major changes but based on a Google Street View image from 2007, and a COA application from December 12, 2007 [N-20071211-58669-2], the front and rear porches have been repaired and it is likely that some or all of the current railing, baluster, and column materials were replaced. The COA was for an in-kind replacement of the rear first and second story porches. Though focused on the rear porches, the photos included in the December 2007 application show that the lower front porch had metal columns and railings at the time the pictures were taken.

Further, the Google Street View images show unpainted railings and balusters on the second-floor porch of the front elevation, and a worksite set up in the side yard. Staff were not able to locate a COA for the in-kind replacement work done on the front porches but based on the Street View photos it occurred sometime between 2007 and 2012.

1502-1504 is the only remaining contributing resource on that side of the street, along the block of Habersham between East 31st and East 32nd Streets. 1526 Habersham Street was built in the early 1900s but is not listed as a contributing resource and is of a different style. There are two non-contributing houses between those buildings that both have four columned two-story porches. It is unknown whether that is based on the historic houses that had been there

previously. There are houses of similar styles on nearby East 31st and East 32nd Streets (and two in the 1400 block of Abercorn Street) feature four porch columns.

More recently, the applicant received a COA on July 20, 2022 [22-003330-COA] for in-kind exterior siding and window repair work.

FINDINGS:

The following standards from the Sec 7.11 - Streetcar Historic District Ordinance apply:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation. *Material changes to contributing resources and resources that are eligible for listing as contributing shall be evaluated by use of the current edition of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation as published by the U.S. Department of the Interior. In considering proposals for alterations to contributing resources, the documented original design of the resource may be considered.*

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

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 3– Physical Record. *Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*

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

The above standards are met. The proposed work deals with non-historic features where the original porch railings, balusters, and columns are distinctive features that have been previously replaced. The fourth column is contextual rather than conjectural based on porch configurations seen on nearby historic houses from the same time period.

Visual Compatibility Criteria. *To maintain the special character of the Streetcar Historic District as identified in the architectural survey and visual analysis, new construction and any material change in appearance shall be consistent with the standards, criteria and guidelines developed for the district. The applicable criteria below shall be used to assess new construction and material changes. These criteria shall not be the basis for appeal to any board, commission or administrator described in this Ordinance, or to the Mayor and Aldermen.*

Scale. *The overall scale and the scale of individual components of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible to the contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The standard is met. The scale of adding a fourth column is visually compatible with the surrounding contributing buildings.

Projections. *Entrances, porches, and other projections of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible with contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The standard is met. The only visual element changing from the existing configuration is the addition of the fourth column on the first and second floor porches of the front elevation. This configuration is seen on multiple contributing resources that are visually related to 1502-1504 Habersham Street.

***Materials.** The relationship of materials and textures of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The custom-made wood columns will match the existing ones. There is no other material aside from wood proposed.

Streetcar Historic District Design Standards.

New Construction, Additions, and Alterations. The intent of these standards is to ensure appropriate new construction, additions, and alterations within the Streetcar Historic District. They are not intended to promote copies of the architectural designs of the past, but to encourage contemporary designs that protect and complement existing contributing resources. They are further intended to protect the historic integrity of the contributing resource.

The following design standards shall apply to new construction, additions, alterations to contributing and non-contributing resources, and site alterations, unless otherwise specified. Though certain building materials are prescribed below, the Historic Preservation Commission 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.

Porches, Stoops, Balconies and Decks, Alterations to contributing resources.

Porches shall be repaired rather than replaced, provided however, if the degree of degradation does not allow repair, the degradation shall be photographically documented and verified by the Planning Director, and the new porch materials and configuration shall be of the same material and configuration as the original.

If the original porch material and/or configuration is unknown, the new porch material and configuration shall be based on historic context.

The original configuration of the columns for the upper and lower porches is unknown but based on historic context from surrounding contributing resources, the four-column configuration is appropriate. It appears that the wood elements including railing, balusters, and columns have all been replaced based on photographic evidence from 2007.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the installation of the proposed fourth column to the first and second story front porches for the property located at 1502-1504 Habersham Street as requested because the proposed work is visually compatible and meets the standards.

MW: LGM: cc

Note: This recommendation could change subject to new information provided at the Historic District Board of Review meetings. Final decisions will be made by the Historic District Board of Review at the public hearing based on information provided at the meeting, as well as information submitted for the staff recommendation.