CITY OF SAVANNAH
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Petitioner:	**Jones Custom Holdings, LLC d/b/a Southeast Energy Solutions**
MPC File No.:	**24-000881-COA**
Address:	**514 East 34th Street**
PIN:	**20064 08018**
Zoning:	**TN-2**
Staff Reviewer:	**Kelli Mitchell**
Date:	**March 27, 2024**

NATURE OF REQUEST:
The applicant is requesting to install solar panels on the roof of the home located at 514 East 34th Street.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The building is a noncontributing resource within the Thomas Square-Streetcar National Register Historic District and the local Streetcar Historic District.

At the June 2020 HPC meeting, the Commission heard an application for New Construction Small (Parts I and II) and for a fence. The application included a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals from the Article 5 – Base Zoning Districts standards:

> "*TN-2. Lot Dimensions (min). Single-family Detached. Lot area (sq. ft.): 3,000* and *Lot width (ft.): 30"*

To allow for a lot area of 2,700 square feet and a lot width of 27'-0".

The Commission made the following decision.

> The Savannah Historic Preservation Commission does hereby approve the petition for New Construction Small (parts I and II) and a fence located at 514 East 34th Street with the following conditions to be submitted to staff for review and approval because otherwise the work is visually compatible and meets the standards:
>
> 1. If lighting is to be proposed revise the drawings to include said lighting and provide staff with material specifications prior to providing staff with drawings to be stamped for permitting.

2. Lower the foundation height to be compatible with the average of the adjacent contributing buildings.
3. Revise the stucco inset to be a minimum of three inches.
4. Incorporate more windows along the ground floor façade of the east and west elevations to ensure that the 30% standard is met.
5. Redesign the shutters so that the porch railing is still incorporated in order to be visually compatible.

AND

The Savannah Historic Preservation Commission does hereby recommend approval to the Zoning Board of Appeals from the Article 5 - Base Zoning Districts standards "TN-2. Lot Dimensions (min). Single-family Detached. Lot area (sq. ft.): 3,000 and Lot width (ft.): 30" to allow for a lot area of 2,700 square feet and a lot width of 27'-0" because the variance criteria are met.

FINDINGS:

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

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.*

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

Width. *The proportion of the overall width and the width 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.*

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 solar panels, as shown in the submittal packet, will follow the slope of the roof and will be about three inches in height and will not take up the entire roof plane. The standards are met.

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 materials will be black with the framing in particular will be aluminum. The house, as constructed, has a black roof, allowing the materials to blend in with the surroundings.

Roof Shapes. *The roof shape of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible with contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

Based on the information provided by the applicant, the solar panels will follow the roof slope of the structure. The overall roof shape of the building, however, will not be impacted by the installation of the solar panels, and if the solar panels are removed in the future, the existing roof form will not be altered.

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.

Mechanical Equipment and Refuse. *The intent of these standards is to ensure that mechanical equipment and refuse is appropriately sited to provide the least negative visual impact. In addition to the requirements set forth in Sec. 9.5, Screening and Buffers, mechanical equipment and refuse shall comply with the following:*

Alternative energy source devices may be permitted on new construction, additions, and alterations to non-contributing resources provided they are integrated in to the building design. Alternative energy source devices may be permitted on contributing resources provided they are not visible from the street and do not damage or obscure any character-defining features.

The home in question is a newly constructed infill that was heard by the Commission back in 2020. While the solar panels will be visible, staff finds the proposal to be appropriate given that the home is new construction, given that the panels will not be obstructing any character defining features, and given that the solar panels will not be altering the overall roof form of the building and will have a relatively low profile and as per the ordinance will be integrated into the design of the building.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the installation of solar panels on the roof of the home located at 514 East 34th Street as requested because the work is visually compatible and meets the standards.

MW: JM : KM

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.