



October 2, 2025

Melanie Wilson
Executive Director
Chatham County – Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission
110 East State Street
Savannah, GA 31401

RE: Notice of Undertaking Pursuant to OCGA § 44-10-27

Dear Ms. Wilson,

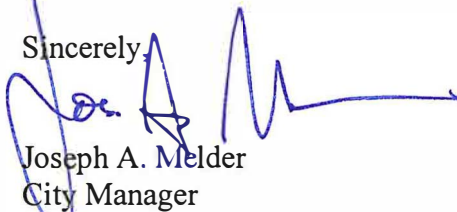
Please be advised that pursuant to that certain Amended and Restated Development Agreement ("Agreement") by and among FORSYTH COMMONS HOLDINGS, LLC, a Georgia limited liability company ("Forsyth"); SAVANNAH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, a public corporation of the State of Georgia ("SEDA"); and THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH, a municipal corporation existing under the laws of the State of Georgia ("City"), Forsyth will convey to the City the real property located at 1015 Whitaker Street, 1001 Whitaker Street, 120 West Park Avenue, 124 West Park Avenue, 111 West Wald burg Street, and 115 West Waldburg Street, which real property is more further identified by the property identification numbers 20044 25001, 20044 25002, 20044 24001, 20044 24002, 20044 24003, and 20044 24008 ("Property").

Under OCGA § 44-10-27, local governments are exempt from obtaining a certificate of appropriateness, ("COA"); provided, however, that local governments are required to notify the local historic preservation commission 45 days prior to beginning an undertaking that would otherwise require such COAs and allow the local historic preservation commission an opportunity to comment. The City's zoning ordinance (Sec. 3.18.3) restates the same requirements.

Since the City is a local government exempt from obtaining COAs and the Historic Preservation Commission is the local historic preservation commission for the subject Property, this letter shall serve as notice to the Historic Preservation Commission 45 days prior to beginning an undertaking that would otherwise require a COA, and pursuant to OCGA § 44-10-27 and Sec. 3.18.3 of the City's Zoning Ordinance, the Historic Preservation is provided the opportunity to comment.

The project narrative and plans for such undertaking are attached.

Sincerely,


Joseph A. Melder
City Manager

PROJECT NARRATIVE

RE: 1001/1015 Whitaker Street & 120/124 Park Avenue (Forsyth Park Office Buildings)

Below is the narrative of a proposed development located at the above referenced properties, along with exhibits to HPC for comment. The development proposes the new construction of (3) office buildings, and a 3-story underground parking deck:

- **Building 1** is proposed to be a multilevel office building (3 story structure with a partial/recessed 4th story) with the main entry fronting Whitaker Street and includes vehicular access from Howard Street to the underground parking deck within the ground floor building footprint. The vehicular access is within the ground floor building footprint to minimize visibility and maximize the parking deck efficiency in terms of parking layout and public access.
- **Building 2** is proposed to be a multilevel office building (4 story with a recessed 5th story) with the main entry also fronting Whitaker Street. This building mass will include approximately 3,000 SF of ground floor retail space and vertical circulation for public access to the underground parking deck. Buildings 1 and 2 masses are intended to be separate buildings but will be connected by a bridge for the upper floors 2-4, providing a pedestrian pass-through between Howard and Whitaker Street.
- **Building 3** is proposed to be a multi-level office building (3 stories) with the main entry at West Park Avenue.
- The underground parking deck's main entry will be located along Howard Street within the ground floor footprint of Building 1. All 3 proposed buildings vertical circulation will be incorporated into the parking deck layout. The deck spans between all buildings and a future residential development that will be submitted under a separate petition at a later date. Separate parking deck plans are included for reference in this submission.

Site Improvements & Parking

The surrounding site of Buildings 1-3 is proposed to receive several site improvements as noted in the General Development Plan included in this submission for reference:

- The underground parking deck will provide a total of 424 parking spaces, with access to a public stair and elevator lobby located on the southeast corner of Building 2.
- Existing tree lawns along West Park Avenue and West Waldburg are proposed to be expanded to enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Existing sidewalks are proposed to remain with improvements that address accessibility and pedestrian safety.
- New brick tree planters are proposed to be incorporated into the right-of-way and within the property boundary. Fauna and landscaping is proposed to be relatively shallow in root depth to avoid conflicts with the subgrade parking deck immediately below.

- Howard Street is proposed to be repaved with paver sidewalks and parking stalls.

Additional improvements along Howard Street are proposed such as expanding the sidewalks on both sides of the street and providing (10) parallel parking spaces within the street right-of-way.

Refuse storage and central utility plant, are proposed to be centralized between the office buildings and the future residential development. A central garbage enclosure made of extruded aluminum is located on the property within the future residential development. A new curb along Howard Street is proposed in order to provide access to the central refuse storage area. The new curb will be located in accordance with coordination with city of savannah traffic and engineering standards.

Victorian Historic District Visual Compatibility Criteria

The period of significance for the Victorian Historic District is 1870-1923.

This period of time with respect to development in Savannah saw the incorporation of several monumental contributing structures in and adjacent to the Victorian Historic District such as the Armstrong Mansion (1917-1919) and the Westside Apartments Building on Gwinnett and Whitaker Street. In the larger perspective of development in Savannah, this is also a period of advancements in construction and design, allowing for taller buildings.

When conceptualizing the proposed building(s) height and mass, these structures and factors of development were taken into consideration as important factors for visual compatibility. Corner lots in the City historically have expressively higher elevations than adjacent structures and many are 5 stories and above. The stylistic ornamentation and materiality of Beaux Arts was also prevalent during this time period in Savannah and influenced the overall design being reviewed in this submission.

Victorian Historic District Design Standards

I. Part I and Part II:

Setbacks

The site plans show the three building configurations site adapted to maintain right of way setbacks and continuity with the surrounding properties.

Building Height

Building heights proposed are consistent with the heights previously approved (now vacated) by MPC as listed below.

- Building 1 – (4) stories, 57'-0"
- Building 2 – (5) stories, 71'-0"

- Building 3 – (3) stories, 43'-0"

The area surrounding Forsyth Park is divided between the Historic District and Victorian District, with Gwinnett Street acting as the boundary line between the two. . With a site as prominent as this southwest corner of Forsyth Park, it is important to acknowledge the impact visually and how it maintains a boundary along the park similar to its surrounding context.

There are numerous examples of development patterns where larger structures in height abut shorter structures, both contributing and non-contributing. Additionally, in the last few years, several structures have been approved and allowed to proceed with construction in both the Victorian, Mid-City, and Historic Districts that are over 3 stories in height.

Compatible examples of development within the Victorian District, Mid-City, and Historic District are provided (Sheets A-051 and A-052)

Building Lot Coverage

The proposed lot coverage for these parcels are as follows:

- Building 1 & 2 – 75.3%
- Building 3 – 60.2%

Building Footprint

Building footprints for the three buildings are shown below and are coordinated with the garage structure, garage drive aisles, and lot and building setbacks adjacent to three rights of way for each building.

- Building 1 – 10,681.51 SF Excludes area for garage ramp
- Building 2 – 10,196 SF Includes area for public stair and elevator access to the garage
- Building 3 – 10,619 SF

Exterior Walls Description

Exterior wall finish for the three office buildings are proposed to be primarily full bed depth stone veneer and brick veneer. The stone veneer will be primarily located along the ground floor building façade, with cast stone banding that separates the ground floor from the upper floor on all buildings. Cast stone window surrounds are consistently provided between the punched window openings and storefront openings proposed.

Brick veneer is proposed to be the exterior finish of the upper floors for all buildings, with brick corbel detail banding expressed at pilaster locations and on the building's parapet. Metal Paneling is proposed as the exterior finish material at the partial upper floors for Building 1 and 2.

Windows, Doors, and Storefronts Description Aluminum clad casement & awning windows grouped into window assemblies on the upper floors of all (3) buildings are proposed. Window sashes will be inset a minimum of 3" from the façade .

Aluminum Storefronts are proposed for the ground floor windows and doors. Aluminum curtain wall with spandrel panels is proposed to span multiple stories of the recessed upper floor footprints and at the main entries. See elevations and window legend provided in this submission for reference.

Building 1 Glazing Percentages

- Whitaker Street – 51.8% Glazing
- Waldburg Street – 52.4% Glazing
- Howard Street – 50.7% Glazing (Parking Entrance not included in SF)

Building 2 Glazing Percentages

- Whitaker Street – 50.4% Glazing
- Park Avenue – 52.4% Glazing
- Howard Street – 52.1% Glazing

Building 3 Glazing Percentages

- Park Avenue – 50.7% Glazing
- Barnard Street – 51.2% Glazing
- Howard Street – 51.2% Glazing

Roof

The proposed roofing material of the three buildings is proposed to be a flat roof TPO roofing membrane system over tapered insulation and metal deck. Internal drainage is proposed for roof drainage, typical for both buildings. Stair cores and elevator overruns have been extended to provide access to both building roofs.

The parapet detailing at both buildings is comprised of the expressed pilasters extending over the top of the roof, with a balustrade system between pilaster bays. The pilaster/balustrade system is proposed to 3'-6" in height to comply with guardrail height minimum dimensions. The balusters provide reference to similar design ornamentation located in the Victorian District and immediate neighborhood such as the Armstrong Mansion. Portions of the parapet will be solid brick veneer finish with corbeling between pilaster expressions, carrying the brick detailing from the pilasters.

The proposed mechanical system will minimize rooftop mechanical equipment and relocate equipment to the ground floor or in designated mechanical areas within the building. Should mechanical equipment on the rooftop be visible from the right-of-way, mechanical screening shall be provided and submitted to staff for review.

II. Parking Deck Entrance:

The entry to the underground parking deck is purposefully located on Howard Street to minimize traffic congestion on Whitaker Street and Park Avenue for entry and egress into the deck. Additionally, the overall aesthetic of the block and the public right-of-way was a main priority for this development plan, and concealing a 3-lane entry/egress ramp was important to preserve the pedestrian experience. Placing the parking ramp within the building footprint provided an additional buffer between cars entering and exiting and the pedestrians within the right-of-way. A Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) was prepared and supports traffic flows for the garage and the location of its entrance.

Pedestrian connectivity westward:

Building's 1 and 2 massing is proposed to be connected at the upper floors with a "hyphen" or bridge between both masses. This helps to maximize leasable tenant space per floor but also allows for relief mid block and an additional connection between Forsyth Park and streets west of Whitaker Street. This proposed pedestrian path much like street fronting facades, benefits from an edge or a wall of continuity that is able to be perceived by the pedestrian at street level. Similar hyphens or upper floor bridge connectors exist in Savannah, maintaining a scale of opening that allows for visibility, but feels like a welcoming space with purpose.

A pedestrian pathway at 20'-0" allows for visual connectivity from the Whitaker Street right-of-way to the westward side of this area, towards Barnard Street. The increased area of Building 1's footprint is an effort provide an appropriately scaled edge for this pathway. This pathway midblock almost centrally aligns with the rear setback of Building 3, providing additional opportunities for enhancing pedestrian experience.

Lot Coverage / Wall of Continuity:

With this property abutting the Whitaker Street boundary of Forsyth, it is important to consider the wall of continuity along the western right-of-way provided by years of expansion and development. Buildings being built to the edge or zero-lot line or as close to the right-of-way as possible helps to reinforce pedestrian navigation as well as emphasis on the park, which is the main attraction of this district.

The current structures of these properties fronting Whitaker Street are setback over 10'-0" each, and while it does allow for more gracious sidewalks, it completely changes the experience for a pedestrian that is along that edge of Whitaker. The buildings will provide the edge and wall of continuity that is compatible with the other blocks surrounding Forsyth along Whitaker Street.

Adjacent properties along Whitaker Street facing Forsyth Park maintain by and large to a visual wall of continuity. The visual character of these structures varies, but the frontage along the right-of-way relatively runs the length of the entire property. With the future recombination of these parcels, the larger lot sizes require additional building frontage and building area to maintain the character and objectives of the provisions in the Ordinance by creating a consistent rhythm with visually related architectural context.

An increase to the overall building footprints promotes a more consistent pedestrian experience along Whitaker Street with a more consistent frontage and would not be detrimental to the public. Additionally, several other buildings in the Victorian District are examples of larger building footprints than their current zoning designation allows, either through being grandfathered in, or a variance was approved. This also applies to several contributing buildings as well

An Exhibit has been provided in this submission on sheet A-055 to provide examples within the Victorian District or at the boundary of larger structures in the vicinity of the property.