



CITY OF SAVANNAH

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Petitioner: Core Design and Architecture, Tim Kinsey

MPC File No.: 25-005247-COA

Address: 309 West 31st Street

PIN: 20066 11011

Zoning: TN-2

Staff Reviewer: Jodie Brown, AICP

Date: April 22, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is proposing to construct a 1-story Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), including a special exception request for its location in the side yard.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

Located mid-block between Montgomery and Jefferson Streets on the south side of the street, the subject property is in the Lester Ward. The property was constructed in 1907 in the Colonial Revival style. The hipped roof with a front facing cut-away gable is sheathed with asphalt shingles. The exterior of the building is sheathed with wood lap siding and the recessed and rounded front porch is located at the northwest corner. The porch is located under the gable and supported by multiple Tuscan columns with simple picket railing in between. The first floor is accessed by two discrete paneled doors with transoms and a window in between. The second floor features a single door and a 2/2 window. Fenestration is evenly spaced and aligned on each façade. The windows are 2/2 double hung.

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

The proposed ADU will be located to the west of the contributing resource and approximately 19' back from the property line. The hipped roof structure will be 38.2'x 16.4' and have 568SF. Exterior materials will include:

- Siding-Hardie Plank lap siding, Select Cedarmill in Cobblestone
- Roof-Owens Corning architectural shingles in Peppercorn
- Foundation-Cherokee Brick, Providence Blend with Holcim Buff mortar flush tooling
- Windows-Andersen E-series (wood interior, aluminum exterior)

PROJECT HISTORY:

The project was originally heard at the November 19, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting and continued to allow the applicant to:

1. *Add, at a minimum, 2 additional windows to the east and west facades;*

The applicant revised the plans to include additional windows on the east and west facades.

2. *Utilize Hardie Plank with a smooth finish;*

It does not appear that this issue has been addressed.

3. *Reduce the size of the ADU to be 480SF which is 40% of the square footage of the primary structure;*

The applicant remeasured the primary structure footprint which is 1,420SF. The square footage of the ADU is allowed to be 40% of primary structure which is 568SF. This standard is met.

4. *Revise the plans to include the size of the muntin and that the front façade has 30% transparency consistent with the historic district design standards; and*

This issue has not been addressed.

5. *Revise the design of the railing and the front entry porch to be more in keeping with other contributing buildings in the neighborhood.*

The rail has been redesigned to reflect the flanking houses with metal.

Prior to returning to the HPC, it was determined that the applicant would need to apply for a Special Exception in relation to the location of the proposed ADU.

SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS:

The following standards from §3.12 Special Exceptions apply:

Special Exceptions.

Review by Historic Preservation Commission. *Special Exceptions (as listed below), not to include buildings within the Savannah Downtown Historic Overlay District, shall be considered by the Historic Preservation Commission.*

Applicable Special Exceptions.

To adjust Preservation and Design Standards for local historic districts as follows:

Secs. 7.8.10, 7.9.10, and 7.11.10 Design Standards.

The applicant applied for one Special Exception:

- §7.11.10.a.xiii.1- **Accessory Structures (including garages, carports and accessory dwelling units)**

In addition to compliance with the Visual Compatibility Criteria and the Design Standards, accessory structures shall also comply with the requirements set forth in [Sec. 8.7, Accessory Structures and Uses](#), and the following standards:

1. New accessory structures shall be located in the [rear yard](#).

Review Criteria for Special Exceptions. When reviewing a special exception request, a finding shall be made by the Historic Preservation Commission for each of the criteria listed below.

Whether the use for which the special exception is being considered would be located, operated and maintained in a manner in conformance with the goals, policies, and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and the provisions of this Ordinance.

The Special Exception falls within the following goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Land Use Goals
 - Goal 1, “Establish growth policies for the City of Savannah to guide development and redevelopment in a responsible manner, encouraging compact/mixed-use development, walkable neighborhoods, increased connectivity, and open space preservation.”
 - Incentivize projects that are located in areas with existing infrastructure and within close proximity to services, making greenfield development less attractive and economical
- Quality of Life
 - Goal 3, “Identify and address community health issues that impact historic preservation efforts and encourage healthy communities through historic preservation.”
 - Promote and support reinvestment in older and historic places as a key component of community health and resiliency

Whether the special exception would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, welfare, function, and appearance of the adjacent uses or general vicinity.

The location of the proposed ADU is at the side yard of the existing house. There is no lane, and the existing historic house is within 5’ of the rear property line. With a few minor adjustments, the ADU meets all the requirements per the code. Additionally, ADUs are typically allowed in the side yard, and it is only within the Streetcar Historic District that the code specifically states that accessory units must be in the rear yard. The location of the proposed ADU would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, welfare, function, and appearance of the adjacent uses or general vicinity. This standard has been met.

Additional Conditions, Restrictions and Safeguards. The Historic Preservation Commission may include conditions, restrictions or limitations as part of the approval in order to protect public health, safety, and welfare. When a special exception is approved with conditions, those conditions shall run with the land and shall be binding on the original applicant as well as any successor.

Staff does not have any additional conditions related to the Special Exception.

Time Limitations for Approved Special Conditions. Approval of a special exception pursuant to the provisions of this Ordinance shall become null and void unless the following is completed in the time period specified:

For any special exception that would require a building permit, the related building permit shall have been issued and have remained continuously valid thereafter within two (2) years from the date the special exception was granted.

FINDINGS:

The following standards from §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.

The proposed ADU will be detached from the historic building and set back from its front façade. The proposed building will be subordinate to the historic resource maintaining its historic character consistent with Standard 2.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 9– New Additions to not Damage. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

The proposed ADU is detached from the historic resource and subordinate. The material is differentiated from the historic resource by using a cementitious lap siding with wider exposure with simplified architectural features. The proposed ADU will not impact the integrity of the historic resource and is consistent with Standard 9.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 10– New Additions Reversible. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The proposed ADU will be detached from the historic resource and if removed in the future will have no impact on its integrity consistent with Standard 10.

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.*

The ADU will be located between two contributing buildings, to the east is a 2-story building and to the west is a 1-story. It will be built on a raised foundation, and the overall height will be 14'6 ¾" which is slightly less than the 1-story to the west. However, all three houses will have similar foundation height which places the window and door headers along the same lines creating a continuous look. The proposed ADU will be visually compatible with this criterion.

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.*

As a subordinate structure the width of the ADU is less than the surrounding homes. However, the individual components are equal, creating a cohesive appearance and visually compatible consistent with this criterion.

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 street section is comprised of both one- and two-story buildings, so the ADU will have a similar scale and be consistent with this criterion.

Setbacks. *The setbacks of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible with setbacks of contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The surrounding homes all have a similar setback near the sidewalk/property line. The ADU will be set back 25.8' from the property line creating the appearance of the secondary rear yard structure. Other homes in the immediate vicinity are in close proximity to each other eliminating space in between for secondary structures that can be seen from the street. The proposed set up is a very common relationship for historic resources consistent with this criterion.

Rhythm of Building or Structure. *The relationship of a building or structure to the open space between it and adjacent buildings or structures shall be visually compatible with the open spaces between contributing buildings or structures to which it is visually related.*

In 1916, per the Sanborn Maps, the area to west of the 2-story building was primarily open with only a detached garage. Other houses on the street are all fairly close to each other. Across the street there is varied spacing between the buildings. With the proposed ADU, there will be approximately 10' on both sides of the house. The project is consistent with this criterion.

Openings. *The rhythm and solid-to-void ratio of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible with contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

There are three openings on the front façade, two windows each on the east and west elevations and one at the rear. The proposed project is consistent with this criterion.

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 exterior materials include Hardie Plank siding, 2/2 aluminum clad windows, and asphalt shingles. The windows and shingles are consistent with other contributing properties. The Hardie Plank appears to have a wood grain texture. Historically, once paint was applied to the surface, the texture was no longer visible. A Hardie Plank with a smooth finish would be more appropriate and consistent with surrounding properties. This Hardie Plank material is not consistent with this criterion.

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.*

There are a number of roof shapes on the street including hip, gable and conical. The proposed roof is hipped and consistent with the houses on either side of the proposed location. The work is consistent with this criterion.

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.

Height and Mass. *The intent of these standards is to ensure that the height and mass are in context with contributing buildings in the same or adjacent block faces.*

The height and mass shall be subdivided both horizontally and vertically to convey human scale and visual interest that reflects the traditional size of buildings.

The height and mass of the ADU is consistent with surrounding properties which consist of one- and two-story buildings of varying widths. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Floor-to-Floor Heights.

In single-family detached, single-family attached, two-family attached, three-family/four-family, and townhouse dwellings, the exterior expression of the height of the first story shall not be less than 11 feet and the height of the upper stories shall not be less than nine (9) feet.

In all other building types, the exterior expression of the height of the first story shall not be less than 13 feet and height of the upper stories shall not be less than nine (9) feet.

With the raised foundation and the exterior wall, the ADU is just shy of 14'6 3/4". The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Exterior walls, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources, and additions.

Permitted materials, Exterior walls, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources, and additions. Brick, stone, wood, true stucco, and wood or fiber cement siding.

The applicant is proposing to use Hardie Plank Cedarmill fiber cement siding. This product has a wood grain texture but it should instead be smooth. The project is not consistent with this historic district design standard.

Windows, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources, and additions.

Materials, Windows, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources, and additions.

Window casings and sashes shall be made of PVC, metal, wood or clad wood material.

Window glass shall be transparent with no dark tints or reflective effects (except for stained glass windows). This provision does not preclude the use of Low Emissivity or laminated glass.

Solid vinyl windows are prohibited.

The applicant is proposing to use aluminum clad wood windows, Andersen E-Series. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Configuration, Windows, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources, and additions.

Windows shall be taller than they are wide, except for accent windows, which may be round or other shapes.

The proposed windows will be taller than wider at 60"x28". The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Windows shall be single-hung, double-hung, triple hung, awning, or casement, except for accent windows which may also be fixed or hopper.

The project will be using single hung windows. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Simulated divided light windows shall be permitted provided that the muntin is 7/8 inches or less, the muntin profile shall simulate traditional putty glazing, the lower sash rail shall be wider than the meeting and top rails, and there shall be a spacer bar in between double panes of glass. Between-the-glass, snap-in or applied muntins shall not be permitted.

The applicant is proposing to have 2/2 windows but the size of the muntin is not noted. This standard is not met.

Framing members shall be covered with appropriate trim; trim shall feature a header, surrounds, and pronounced sill where appropriate.

The windows will have the appropriate trim and a sill that stands proud. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Window sashes shall be inset a minimum of three (3) inches from the façade of a building, except for wood frame buildings.

The windows are inset in the wood frame wall plane. This standard is met.

All residential facades visible from a street shall incorporate transparent features (windows and doors) over a minimum of 30% of the ground floor façade.

It is not clear that there is 30% transparency is present on the front façade. The applicant should clarify.

Doors/Entrances, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources and additions.

Doors/Entrances, Materials, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources and additions.

Doors shall be made of glass, wood, clad wood or steel (without wood grain simulation).

The ADU will have a wood and glass door. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Doors/Entrances, Configuration, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources and additions.

Entrances shall face the primary street on which the building is located (normally the street from which it takes its address).

The ADU will front onto the primary street. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Porches, Stoops, Balconies and Decks, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources and additions. Front porches or covered or uncovered stoops shall be required on all entrances for new ground floor residential construction.

Materials, Porches, Stoops, Balconies and Decks, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources and additions.

On porches and stoops, piers and base walls shall be of the same material as the foundation wall facing the street.

Porch elements shall be constructed of brick, painted or stained wood, wood composite, precast stone, marble, sandstone, or slate.

Prohibited material: Vinyl.

The stoop steps are proposed as concrete while the foundation is brick which is contrary to the code. However, the majority of the steps are consistent with this mix. Based on this historic context, it is appropriate to have concrete steps and a brick foundation. The railing for the stoop

would be a simple single metal handrail. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Roof, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources and additions.

Roof, Materials, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources and additions.

Roof coverings shall be standing seam metal, v-crimp, slate or equivalent synthetic, or architectural asphalt or similar shingles.

Metal roofs shall have a metal drip edge covering all edges.

The applicant is proposing to use dimensional asphalt shingle roofing material. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Roof, Configuration, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources and additions.

Gable and hip roof shall be symmetrically pitched between 4:12 and 10:12.

The ADU roof will have a 5/12 pitch. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Eaves shall extend no less than 12 inches beyond supporting walls.

The subject building will have eaves that extend approximately a foot past the facades. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Soffits shall be placed perpendicular to the building wall, not sloping in plane with the roof (except for gable end rakes).

The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Accessory Structures. *(including garages, carports and accessory dwellings units, excluding fuel canopies). In addition to compliance with the Visual Compatibility Criteria and the Victorian Historic District Design Standards, accessory structures shall also comply with the requirements set forth in Sec. 8.7, Accessory Structures and Uses, and the following standards:*

New accessory structures shall be located in the rear yard.

The proposed ADU is located in the rear/side yard, approximately 25.8' back from the front property line. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

New accessory structures shall be in scale with other contributing accessory structures on the lane.

There are no other accessory structures for comparative purposes, however, the ADU is subordinate to the primary structure and set back from the front façade. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

The height and mass of the primary building shall not be exceeded by any new accessory structure on the same parcel.

The ADU is subordinate to the primary structure and set back from the front façade. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Accessory structures shall not be more than two (2) stories tall.

The ADU is only one-story. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Side yard setbacks for new accessory structures shall be a minimum of three (3) feet.

The ADU will have a side yard setback of 5' and 10' from the primary structure. The project is consistent with this historic district design standard.

The following standards from §8.7 - Accessory Structures and Uses apply:

Accessory Structures and Uses, Generally. *All accessory structures and uses shall be consistent with all standards of the base zoning district (Article 5.0), any applicable overlay district (Article 7.0) and any applicable use standards (Article 8.0), except as expressly set forth below. Accessory structure and uses shall:*

Be accessory and clearly incidental and subordinate to a permitted principal use. No accessory use may be established on a site prior to the establishment of a permitted principal use.

The proposed ADU is subordinate to the primary structure.

Be located on the same property as the principal use or structure.

The proposed ADU is located on the same property as the primary structure.

Not involve uses or structures not in keeping with the character of the principal use or principal structure served.

The proposed ADU is compatible with the character of the primary structure.

Be located within a district that permits the principal use.

The Streetcar Historic District allows for ADUs.

Not be erected in any required setback area, except as expressly set forth in this Ordinance.

The proposed ADU meets the required setbacks. It is 5' from the rear, 5' from the east property line and 10 from the primary structure.

A parcel shall include only one accessory dwelling unit or one caretaker's dwelling unit.

The applicant only proposes one ADU.

Accessory Dwelling Units (not including Caretaker's Dwelling Unit). *One (1) accessory dwelling unit shall be permitted as an accessory use to a principal dwelling located in the A-1, RSF-, RTF-, RMF-, TR-, TN-, TC-, D- and PD districts. Such use is not required to be included in the gross residential density calculations. Manufactured homes, shipping containers, recreational vehicles, and travel trailers shall not be used as accessory dwelling units. For such use, the following shall apply:*

Accessory Dwelling Units, Location.

The unit may be attached to or detached from the principal dwelling.

When the unit is attached, it shall share a common wall with and have a separate entrance from the principal dwelling or be connected by a covered walkway. When the unit shares a common wall with the principal dwelling, the entrance to the unit shall be located along the side or rear façade of the dwelling. An attached accessory dwelling unit shall meet the setback standards for the principal dwelling.

Detached accessory dwelling units shall meet the same side-yard setback requirement as the principal structure. Such units shall be separated from the principal structure by at least 10 feet.

The proposed ADU is detached and located 10' from the primary structure.

Accessory Dwelling Units, Building Size.

The building footprint of the accessory dwelling unit shall be a maximum of 40% of the building footprint of the principal dwelling not to exceed 700 square feet.

The accessory dwelling unit shall contain no more than one (1) bedroom.

The primary building's footprint is 1,420SF, 40% of that is 568SF. The proposed ADU is 568SF with one bedroom. The ADU meets the 40% requirement.

Accessory Dwelling Units, Architectural Style. *Such use shall be designed in a similar architectural style as the principal dwelling. If the site is located within an overlay district, the standards of the overlay district shall apply.*

The ADU is designed in a compatible style to the primary structure.

Accessory Dwelling Units, Parking and Access.

If parking is provided for the accessory dwelling, it shall be provided on the same lot on which the principal dwelling is located.

No parking is provided for the ADU.

Accessory Dwelling Units, Height.

Accessory dwelling units shall not exceed 25 feet or the height of the principal building, whichever is less.

The height of the proposed ADU 14'6 ¾" which is less than the primary structure.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE the request to construct an ADU at the property located at 309 West 31st Street, **WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS**, to be reviewed and approved by staff prior to starting the project, because the work is otherwise visually compatible and consistent with the standards:

1. Utilize Hardie Plank siding with a smooth finish.
2. Revise the plans to include the size of the muntin and clarify that the front façade has 30% transparency consistent with the historic district design standards.

AND

APPROVE the Special Exception request from the standards that reads:

- §7.11.10.a.xiii.1- Accessory Structures (including garages, carports and accessory dwelling units,)
In addition to compliance with the Visual Compatibility Criteria and the Design Standards, accessory structures shall also comply with the requirements set forth in Sec. 8.7, Accessory Structures and Uses, and the following standards:
 1. New accessory structures shall be located in the rear yard.

to allow construction of an ADU within the side yard rather than the rear yard because the Special Exception criteria are met.

MW: CC: JB

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