



CITY OF SAVANNAH

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Petitioner: Eric Brown

MPC File No.: 26-002948-COA

Address: 117 West 42nd Street

PIN: 20074 15001

Zoning: TN-2

Staff Reviewer: Rohan Urs

Date: August 26, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The petitioner is requesting approval for New Construction, Small, Part I: Height and Mass, for development of the vacant property at 117 West 42nd Street within the Streetcar Historic District.

The proposal includes construction of a two-story mixed-use principal building oriented toward West 42nd Street and Barnard Street. The ground floor is proposed for commercial use, with residential use above. A smaller two-story caretaker building is proposed toward West 43rd Street, containing a garage at the ground level and a caretaker dwelling above. The present request is limited to Part I review of the height, mass, scale, setbacks, and general configuration of the proposed development. Detailed architectural elements and materials will be reviewed as part of Part II.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The subject property is a vacant corner lot located at the intersection of West 42nd Street and Barnard Street within the Streetcar Historic District and is zoned TN-2.

The surrounding area contains a mix of residential, commercial, and mixed-use development, including one- and two-story contributing buildings and larger commercial structures. The property is unusual in that it is bounded by West 42nd Street, Barnard Street, and West 43rd Street. Historically, West 43rd Street functioned as a minor street or lane, and the proposal places the smaller caretaker building, parking, and vehicular access toward this portion of the property.

PROJECT HISTORY:

In June 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed a previous Part I proposal for the property and continued the petition. The previous application proposed a two-story mixed-use principal building and a detached accessory dwelling unit [23-003048-COA].

The 2023 staff review identified several zoning and dimensional issues associated primarily with the accessory dwelling unit, including its side-yard setback, separation from the principal structure, building footprint, and height/setback requirements. At that time, the HPC continued the project, but it did not return within the 90-day window for a continuance, and hence expired.

The applicant has now submitted a revised application. The rear residential structure has been confirmed as a **Caretaker Dwelling Unit rather than an Accessory Dwelling Unit**; therefore, the ADU-specific size, separation, and height standards identified during the 2023 review are not applicable to the current proposal.

FINDINGS:

The following standards from the Article 5 - Base Zoning Districts apply:

***(TN) Traditional Neighborhood District Development Standards.** Development in any TN-district shall meet the development standards as set forth below.*

TN-2 Development Standards for Permitted Uses.

TN-2, Maximum Building Coverage. 60%

The current site plan identifies a lot area of approximately **2,984 square feet** and states a proposed building coverage of **59.8%**. However, the submitted dimensions and area labels do not presently reconcile.

Sheet A1.3 identifies the caretaker building as **554 square feet**, while the dimensioned plans depict a structure measuring approximately **26 feet by 22 feet**, which results in a footprint of approximately **572 square feet**. The area identified for the principal building and the resulting total building footprint also require clarification.

Because building coverage is limited to 60% within the TN-2 district, Staff cannot verify compliance until accurate footprint calculations for both structures and the resulting total building coverage are provided.

Compliance cannot presently be determined

TN-2, Minimum Building frontage. 70%

The submitted site plan identifies approximately **80.79% building frontage**, exceeding the 70% minimum identified for the TN-2 district.

Standard appears met.

Nonresidential building footprint (max sq ft). 2,500

The proposed principal mixed-use building has an approximate footprint of 1,250 square feet and is below the maximum permitted footprint. **Standard met.**

TN-2, Maximum Height. 3 stories, not to exceed 45 ft.

Both buildings are proposed at two stories. The elevations indicate that the caretaker building is lower and smaller in overall mass than the principal building.

However, the overall height to the roof peak of each structure is not clearly and consistently identified within the submitted drawings. Because Part I specifically evaluates height and mass, these dimensions should be provided prior to final review.

Standard appears capable of being met; additional dimensional information is required.

TN-2, Building Setbacks (ft), For blocks without contributing structures.

Front yard (interior lot): 5 (min); 10 (max)

Front yard (corner lot): 5 (max)

Side yard (interior): 3 (min)

Side yard (corner): 5 (max)

Rear yard: 20 (min). For buildings oriented to north-south streets, the minimum rear yard setback may be reduced to (5) feet.

The current drawings depict the principal building with an interior-yard setback of approximately 6'-2 7/8" and the caretaker building inset farther from the same property line at approximately 7'-1". The drawings also appear to provide the applicable five-foot setback conditions elsewhere on the site.

The proposed configuration appears generally consistent with the required setback pattern; however, the applicable setback dimensions should be clearly identified and confirmed on the revised site plan so that Staff can make a final determination based upon one consistent set of dimensions.

Standard appears capable of being met; confirmation required.

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.*

The proposed principal building and caretaker building are both two stories. The caretaker structure is visibly subordinate to the principal structure through its smaller footprint and reduced overall mass. The proposed heights appear generally consistent with nearby two-story development.

Exact overall roof-peak heights should be provided for both structures before a final finding is made.

Final determination deferred pending dimensional clarification.

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.*

The principal building occupies the primary portion of the site and establishes the principal building mass along West 42nd Street and Barnard Street. The caretaker building is substantially narrower and maintains a secondary relationship toward West 43rd Street.

The proposed widths and hierarchy between the two structures are visually compatible with the surrounding development pattern.

Standard met.

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 two-story principal building is divided into distinct first- and second-story components and incorporates articulated corner and balcony elements that reduce the perception of overall mass. The smaller caretaker building remains subordinate in footprint and mass.

The proposed scale is generally compatible with nearby contributing development.

Standard met.

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 principal building is positioned toward West 42nd Street and Barnard Street, while the caretaker building is located toward the rear portion of the property along West 43rd Street. This configuration maintains the traditional relationship of a principal structure with a smaller secondary structure toward the rear of the property.

Final confirmation of the submitted setback dimensions is necessary before a final finding can be made.

Final determination deferred pending clarification.

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.*

The placement of the larger principal building toward West 42nd Street and Barnard Street and the smaller caretaker structure toward West 43rd Street establishes a clear hierarchy of primary and secondary building masses. The open space separating the structures further reinforces this relationship.

Standard met.

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.*

Both structures utilize hip roof forms with subordinate shed roof elements. The primary roofs are shown at approximately **8:12**, with subordinate roof elements shown at approximately **3:12**. These roof forms are compatible with residential and mixed-use forms found within the Streetcar Historic District.

Standard met.

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 proposed principal building is subdivided horizontally through differentiation between the commercial first story and residential upper story and vertically through changes in façade plane, openings, corner articulation, balconies, and roof forms.

The caretaker building has a substantially smaller footprint and maintains a subordinate relationship to the principal structure.

The overall massing concept appears compatible with the surrounding district; however, final review of the height relationship cannot be completed until the overall height of both structures is clearly dimensioned.

Final determination deferred pending clarification.

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.

The submitted sections indicate a first-story exterior expression of approximately **13'-3 3/4"** and an upper-story expression exceeding nine feet.

The proposed floor-to-floor heights comply with the applicable Streetcar Historic District standards.

Standard met.

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.

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

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

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

Garage openings shall not exceed 12 feet in width.

New accessory structures may have up to a five (5) foot lane setback to allow a turning radius into the garage.

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

The caretaker building is located behind the principal structure toward West 43rd Street and is limited to two stories. Its footprint and overall mass are smaller than those of the principal building, allowing it to maintain a visually subordinate relationship.

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The current drawings also appear to provide sufficient side-yard separation for the accessory structure; however, the applicable setback dimensions should be clearly confirmed on the revised site plan.

Standard appears capable of being met; dimensional confirmation required.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Continue the request for New Construction, Small, Part I: Height and Mass, at 117 West 42nd Street to the September 23, 2026, Historic Preservation Commission Meeting, to allow the applicant time to provide revised and consistent dimensional information necessary for Staff to determine compliance with the applicable standards, including the following:

- 1. Provide the exact building footprint of the principal building and caretaker building and revise the submitted area calculations accordingly.**
- 2. Provide the resulting total building footprint and building coverage based on the current 2,984-square-foot lot and demonstrate compliance with the TN-2 maximum building coverage of 60%.**
- 3. Revise or clarify the site plan to consistently identify the applicable setbacks for the principal building and caretaker building.**
- 4. Provide the overall height to the roof peak for both the principal building and caretaker building.**

MW: CC: RU

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.