



CITY OF SAVANNAH

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Petitioner: Bobby Myers, JCB Roofing

MPC File No.: 26-000213-COA

Address: 1900 Abercorn Street

PIN: 20065 03003

Zoning: TC-1

Staff Reviewer: Jodie Brown, AICP

Date: February 25, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is proposing to replace the existing roofing material due to several leaks.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The subject property is located on the northeast corner of East 36th and Abercorn Street in the Dasher Ward. Constructed in 1871 as the Georgia Infirmary, the building has been expanded several times over the years and has Greek Revival influences. The building is “L” shaped with a gable roof. The portion of the building along 35th and Lincoln Streets is predominantly 2-stories while the remainder of the building is 1-story. The exterior is sheathed with brick and fenestration is symmetrically placed 1/1 double hung windows on the wall planes.

The Georgia Infirmary was chartered December 24, 1832 for the care of infirm and aged African American people. It was the first hospital in the United States founded for African American people, though it was operated solely by white individuals. The Georgia Infirmary was established under a grant in the will of Thomas F. Williams, a Baptist minister and landowner. The original hospital was on the grounds of the Bethesda Orphanage, about ten miles outside of Savannah, Georgia. The institution was moved to Abercorn Street in Savannah in 1838, where it remained until its closing in 1973.

During the Civil War, the hospital's buildings were destroyed, and the new hospital reopened in 1871. The Georgia Infirmary established the first nursing school for African American students in the United States, which operated from 1906 until the 1930s. A 100th Anniversary ceremony was held in 1933 at which a bronze tablet was unveiled commemorating the hospital's unique history. In 1964, the hospital admitted white patients for the first time in an attempt to counteract the loss of patients following integration. The Georgia Infirmary closed in November 1973 due to a decrease in referrals and therefore patients. In 1974, a stroke rehabilitation center was opened in the building using the name, The Georgia Infirmary.

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

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 applicant is proposing to replace this existing asphalt shingle roof with GAF Timberline HDZ in Pewter Gray. The pitch, configuration and shape will remain the same. The proposed work is consistent with Standard 2.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 6– Deteriorated Features. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

The existing roof has reached the end of its life and has started to leak. To arrest further damage, the applicant has requested to replace it in-kind. The asphalt shingles on the roof are not original and replacement in-kind will not negatively impact the historic character. The proposed work is consistent with Standard 6.

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.

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 existing roofing material is asphalt shingles and the applicant is proposing to replace them in-kind. The material will be visually compatible with the existing roofing shingles. The proposed work is 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.*

The applicant is not proposing to modify the existing roof shape. Additionally, the asphalt shingles are ubiquitous within the historic district. The proposed 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.

Roof, Contributing Resources.

Roof, Materials, Contributing Resources.

Original roof material 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 roof shall be of the same material and configuration as the original (except wood or asbestos).

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

The non-historic roofing material has reached the end of its life, and it is leaking. The applicant is proposing to replace the roofing material in-kind. There will be no changes to the pitch, configuration or shape. The proposed work is consistent with the historic district design standards.

Roof, Configuration, Contributing Resources.

Original roof configuration shall be maintained.

The applicant will be maintaining the original roof configuration. The proposed work is consistent with the historic district design standards.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE the request to replace the roofing material in-kind for the property at 1900 Abercorn Street **AS REQUESTED** because the work is visually compatible and meets the Standards.

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.