



CITY OF SAVANNAH

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Petitioner: GMSHAY Architecture, Patrick Shay

MPC File No.: 26-003307-COA

Address: 1700 Drayton Street/104 E. 34th Street

PIN: 200533 8013 & 200533 8007

Zoning: TC-1 & TN-2

Staff Reviewer: Caitlin Chamberlain

Date: July 22, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval to make design amendments to the previously approved new construction located at the corner of 1700 Drayton Street at 104 East 34th Street.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The site of the proposed project was an abandoned surplus property at the time of the initial approval in 2022 [21-001940-COA]. The intent was to create sustainable house for area workforce, which was mandated in the City's Request for Proposal and will be protected by property covenant.

The reason for the requested minor amendments is to accommodate the ruling of the City Zoning Administrator and qualify for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits which make the development possible. The applicant has also provided a letter from the City of Savannah Building Inspections Department verifying that the building permit is active, thus the COA is also still active.

The applicant noted that the project recently qualified for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit through a rigorous competitive process. This, along with the underlying covenant in the sale of the property from the City of Savannah, means that when completed the apartments will be rented at a cost affordable to a maximum of 80% of Savannah area average median income (AMI) and an overall average affordability of 60% AMI.

The proposed changes were triggered by a ruling from the City Zoning Administrator that the building on the southern side of the property could not have ground floor residential dwellings. As a consequence, the non-residential functions that had been planned for the northwest corner of the development in the northern building had to be shifted to the south, and the dwelling units shifted to the north.

Other changes include shifting the entrance across the proposed and approved courtyard in the northern building. The applicant plans to ‘mirror’ the building facades to retain the former expression and preserve the previously approved visual compatibility.

Also, the building contractor has requested horizontal lap siding with corner trim instead of the siding previously approved due to a severe lack of skilled labor that is capable of installing the previously approved siding correctly.

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.*

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 minor adjustments to the building will remain within the existing width and scale of the approved design. The ground level changes are reflective of the fact that residential cannot exist and thus is changed to non-residential. These changes in fenestration remain visually compatible.

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.*

With the proposed changes, the standard is still maintained.

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 proposed to be used are the same, just in different configurations. The one new material introduced is the Hardie plank lap siding, in place of the formerly approved Hardie Artisan V-Groove siding. The Hardie lap siding is commonly seen on non-historic buildings and new construction throughout the district and is visually appropriate for this area.

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.

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 Hardie Plank lap siding is an acceptable material. The standard is met.

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 same previously approved windows will be used in different locations. The standard is met.

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.

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

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.

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

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

Bay windows shall extend to the ground unless they are oriel, beveled or are supported by brackets.

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

All other nonresidential facades shall incorporate transparent features (windows and doors) over a minimum of 50% of the ground floor façade.

The standards are met.

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

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

Storefronts shall be constructed of wood, cast iron, Carrera glass, aluminum, steel or copper as part of a glazed storefront system.

Storefront bases shall consist of wood, bronze, glazed brick or tile.

The standards remain met.

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

Storefront glazing in subdivided sashes shall be inset a minimum of four inches from the face of the building.

Storefront glazing shall be transparent; provided, however, opaque glass may be used in the storefront window transoms.

The standards are met.

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).

Doors shall not have a decorative diamond inset or half-moon inset.

The same previously approved doors will be used in this case.

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).

Entrances on corner lots shall be oriented in the same direction as entrances of adjacent buildings, toward the corner of the intersection, or based on historic precedent.

Angled entrances shall only be permitted at intersections of streets or lanes.

There shall be a primary entrance along the primary street at intervals no greater than 60 feet.

The standards remain met.

Staff Report - Certificate of Appropriateness
MPC File No. 26-003307-COA
1700 Drayton St./104 E. 34th St.
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STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the requested design amendment for the property located at 1700 Drayton Street as requested because the proposed work is visually compatible and meets the standards.

MW: CC

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.