



CITY OF SAVANNAH

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Petitioner: Jerome Elder

MPC File No.: 26-002753-COA

Address: 312 East 38th Street

PIN: 20065 33001

Zoning: TC-1

Staff Reviewer: Rohan Urs

Date: June 24, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The petitioner is requesting approval for New Construction, Large (Parts I and II) for a mixed-use building located at 312 East 38th Street within the Streetcar Historic District. The proposed development consists of a three-story building containing commercial tenant space at the ground level and residential units above. The project occupies an irregularly shaped corner parcel bounded by East 38th Street, Habersham Street, and the adjacent railroad corridor.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The subject site is located at the intersection of East 38th Street and Habersham Street within the Streetcar Historic District. The parcel is characterized by an irregular triangular configuration created by the adjacent railroad corridor. Surrounding development includes a mix of contributing residential, commercial, and mixed-use buildings of varying scales and architectural styles. The site occupies a prominent corner location and serves as a transition between the established neighborhood fabric and the railroad corridor.

FINDINGS:

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

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

TC-1 Development Standards for Permitted Uses.

The proposed mixed-use development is located within the TC-1 zoning district and includes commercial space at the ground level with residential units above. The proposal appears consistent with the intended development pattern of the Traditional Commercial district.

TC-1 Minimum Building frontage (min). 70%

The TC-1 district requires a minimum building frontage of 70 percent. Based on the submitted plans, the building generally establishes continuous frontage along the street edges. Staff recommends that the applicant verify compliance with the minimum frontage requirement during the review process.

TC-1 Building footprint (max sq. ft.). 5,500

The submitted plans indicate a building footprint of approximately 5,495 square feet. This is within the maximum permitted building footprint of 5,500 square feet. The standard is met.

TC-1, Building Setbacks (ft), For blocks with contributing structures.

Front yard: average of block face

Side yard (interior): 10 (min). There is no minimum side yard (interior) setback for properties adjacent to any TC zoning district.

Side yard (corner): average of block face

Rear yard: 10 (min)

The proposed building occupies a prominent corner site and establishes a consistent street edge along East 38th Street and Habersham Street. The setback pattern appears consistent with the development standards applicable to blocks containing contributing structures. The standard is met.

TC-1, Height (max). 3 stories up to 45 ft.

Monumental buildings in the Streetcar Overlay District are exempt from the maximum building footprint and maximum height standards provided that the visual compatibility criteria are met.

The submitted elevations indicate an overall building height of approximately 43 feet 8 inches. The proposal remains below the maximum permitted height of 45 feet and is consistent with the development standards of the TC-1 district. The standard is met.

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 building is approximately 43 feet 8 inches in height and occupies a prominent corner location. While larger than some nearby residential structures, the height remains within the range of buildings like 2018 Habersham found across the track and other buildings along the commercial corridor. The building's height is further moderated through articulated roof forms, parapets, and changes in massing. The standard is met.

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 building is divided into distinct façade components through changes in materials, wall planes, storefront bays, window groupings, and roof forms. These elements reduce the perception of a single large building mass and establish a rhythm more consistent with traditional commercial development patterns. The standard is 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 overall scale of the building responds to its prominent corner location and mixed-use program. The massing is visually subdivided into smaller components through façade articulation, material transitions, storefront divisions, balconies, and changes in roof form. These features help establish a pedestrian-scaled relationship along both street frontages. The standard is 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 proposed building reinforces the established urban street edge along East 38th Street and Habersham Street. The placement of the structure contributes to the traditional commercial development pattern present within the district and is visually compatible with surrounding development. The standard is met.

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 building maintains a consistent relationship with adjacent public spaces and establishes a strong street presence along both frontages. Variations in façade composition and building projections create visual interest while reinforcing the rhythm of development along the block. The standard is met.

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.*

The proposed storefront systems and upper-story window openings establish a consistent solid-to-void relationship across the façades. Window proportions are generally vertically oriented and organized into repeating patterns that contribute to a coherent façade composition. The standard is 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.*

The proposed design incorporates a combination of flat roof forms, parapets, and a mansard-inspired upper roof element that helps terminate the building mass and provide visual interest along the skyline. The varied roof forms contribute to the articulation of the building while remaining appropriate for the mixed-use character of the district. The standard is 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 building occupies an irregular triangular parcel bounded by East 38th Street, Habersham Street, and the adjacent railroad corridor. The building footprint responds directly to the geometry of the site while maintaining active street frontages along both public streets. The overall mass is subdivided through changes in height, material treatment, façade projections, roof forms, and distinct building bays, reducing the perception of a single large volume and contributing to a more pedestrian-scaled streetscape. The standard is met.

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 elevations indicate a first-floor height expression of approximately 12 feet 8 inches to the second-floor level and approximately 10 feet 11 inches between upper floor levels.

As a mixed-use building containing commercial space at the ground floor, the first-floor expression should meet the minimum 13-foot requirement.

First story height to be altered to meet the standards.

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

The building is designed as an urban mixed-use structure with commercial storefronts located at grade. The proposed foundation treatment is integrated into the overall architectural design and is appropriate to the building type and site context.

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

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

Shed and porch roofs, subordinate and attached to the primary building, shall be pitched between 2:12 and 6:12.

Where historically appropriate, flat roofs may be utilized.

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

Skylights and roof vents may be permitted if integrated into roof design.

Pergolas and roof decks shall not be permitted on the street façade.

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

Gable end rakes shall overhang at least eight (8) inches.

Eaves and rakes on accessory buildings and dormers shall overhang at least eight (8) inches.

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

Applied mansard roofs shall not be permitted.

The proposed roof design incorporates predominantly flat roof forms concealed behind parapets, together with an articulated upper roof element that contributes to the building's architectural character. The roof configuration is integrated into the overall massing composition and is visually compatible with the mixed-use character of the district. The standard is met.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the request for New Construction, Large - Part 1 for 312 East 38th Street with the following condition:

- 1. Revise the design to update the first story exterior expression to comply with the minimum required height of 13 feet.**

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.