



CITY OF SAVANNAH

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Petitioner: Rose Architects, Kevin Rose

MPC File No.: 25-002213-COA

Address: 15 West 39th Street

PIN: 20065 40002

Zoning: TN-2

Staff Reviewer: Caitlin Chamberlain

Date: September 23, 2026

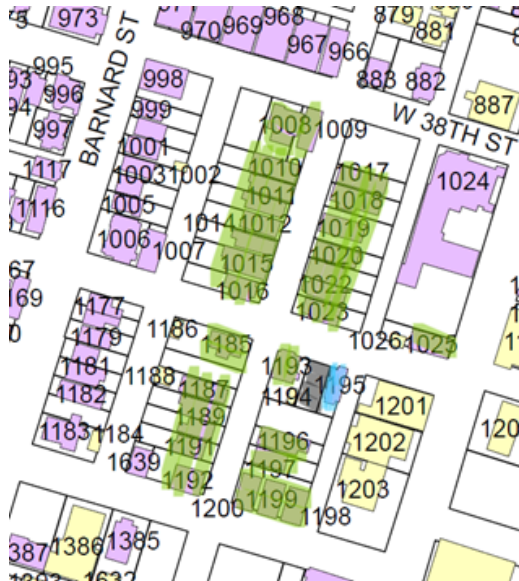
NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval for an amended design to a new single-family dwelling with an attached accessory dwelling unit at 15 West 39th Street. This is an amendment to a previous design that was presented to the Historic Preservation Commission in 2025. The current project design consists of one variance recommendation request for relief from the 70% street frontage requirement for TN-2 zoning in order to meet the parking requirement.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The property is a vacant lot with no resources that contribute to the Thomas Square-Streetcar National Register Historic District or the local Streetcar Historic District. The lot is shown in the photo below.



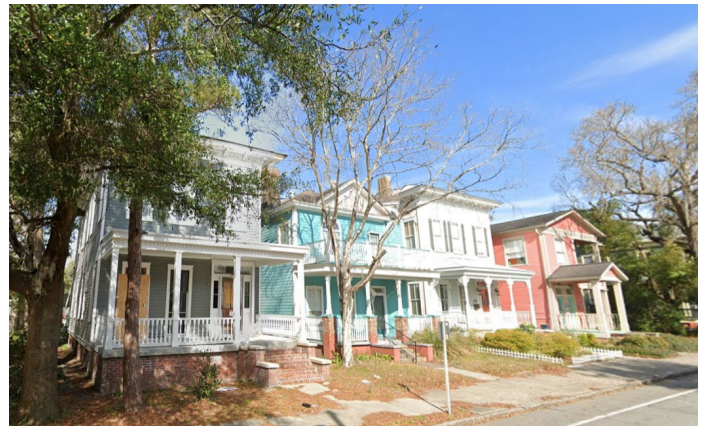


The property highlighted in black is the subject property. Those highlighted in green are two-story homes while the one in blue is a one-story structure.

The vacant lot at this address is surrounded by multiple contributing resources, the majority of which are two story wood frame structures. The proposed design would fit within the context of the existing structures.

The previous design presented to the HPC on June 25, 2025, was continued due to Commission concerns about the design and at the time, the need for three variances. That version of the project did not return. The current proposal is a different design from a different architect and requesting only one variance.

The following images show the surrounding neighborhood context.



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, Minimum Lot Dimensions, Single-family Detached.

Lot area (sq. ft.): 3,000

Lot width (ft.): 30

The lot meets the minimum lot width but does not meet the minimum lot area. This is not due to an action by the applicant. No variance is needed.

TN-2, Maximum Building Coverage. 60%

Per the application, the lot coverage is less than 60%. The standard is met.

TN-2, Minimum Building frontage. 70%

The standard is not met, hence the variance recommendation request for a frontage of 61.52%.

TN-2, Building Setbacks (ft), For blocks with contributing structures.

Front yard: average of block face

Side yard (interior): 3 (min)

Side yard (corner): average of block face

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

Per the drawings, the setback standards are met.

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

The height is 29'4" and two stories, which meets the standard.

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.*

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 height, width, and scale of the proposed building are compatible with the surrounding historic structures within the viewshed of this address and would be an appropriate infill for this neighborhood.

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 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 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 standard is met.

Projections. *Entrances, porches, and other projections of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible with contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The standard is met and is representative of the porch styles seen in the vicinity.

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 standard is met. Proposed materials include:

- Hardie siding and trim
- Wood composite porch columns
- Wood picket handrails
- Stucco coated CMU piers with 4" hog boards for porch foundation
- ½ lite entry doors with transoms
- Windsor double-hung clad windows
- Architectural asphalt roof shingles & wood rafters with PT knee braces

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 gable roof shape is appropriate and visually compatible amongst the surrounding contributing buildings.

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 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.

The standard is met per the drawings.

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

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

Foundations shall be constructed of brick, stone, or true stucco over concrete block piers.

The space between piers may be filled with heavy gauge wood lattice with at least one-half (0.5) inch thick lattice boards, horizontal boards, brick or true stucco over concrete block. Infill material shall be recessed a minimum of three inches behind the front edge of the pier so that the piers are clearly visible and differentiated.

The foundation standards are met.

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

In single-family detached, single-family attached, two-family attached, three-family/four-family, and townhouse dwellings, foundations shall be the average height of foundations on contributing buildings on the block face, or if no contributing buildings exist, shall have a minimum finished floor height of 30 inches above grade.

Based on the context elevation and observing the conditions in the field, the standard is met.

Front porches shall have expressed piers.

The standard is met.

Beneath a wood frame building, the foundation shall be recessed and not project forward of the building plane.

The standard is met.

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.*

Hardie siding is proposed which meets the 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.

The windows will be clad wood with clear glass.

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.

The above window standards are met. The Windsor Legend series windows have been approved on various new construction projects in the overlay districts. These particular windows meet the standards. The proposed types are double hung with 5/8" muntin profiles. This is a wood frame building, thus, the 3" inset is not required.

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

The drawings note that out of the total 230.61 square feet of the ground floor façade, 80.88 of that square footage is transparent elements which is 35.07% which meets the standard.

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.

Doors will be glass and wood and will not have the prohibited insets.

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 standard is met.

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 above porch standards are met.

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

On single-family detached, single-family attached and two-family attached dwellings, a front porch a minimum of six (6) feet in depth shall be required over a minimum of 50% of the front façade.

Wood portico posts shall have cap and base molding.

Balusters shall be placed between upper and lower rails, and the distances between balusters shall not exceed four (4) inches on center. The height of the railing shall not exceed 36 inches for single- and two-family dwelling units.

Front porches shall not be enclosed.

Per the drawings, the above porch standards are met.

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.

Architectural asphalt shingles are proposed. Standard met.

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.

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

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

Gable end rakes 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).

Per the drawings, the roof standards are met.

Lighting. *The intent of these standards is to ensure that light fixtures have appropriate scale, are sited appropriately, are made of appropriate materials and complement the building on which they are located. In addition to the requirements set forth in Sec. 9.8, Lighting, lighting shall comply with the following:*

Materials: Light fixtures shall be constructed of metal and/or glass.

Configuration: Light fixtures shall be compatible with the scale of the subject property and with the character of the district.

Source Type: White light source only.

The lighting standards are 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.

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

The ADU is connected to the house at the rear. In this case, since it is not a traditional detached carriage house type of ADU, and there is no lane in this situation. The ADU portion of the building is two stories, and the setbacks are the same as the main house. Standards met.

Parking and Paving. The intent of these standards is to create and protect contiguous, active pedestrian street fronts. In addition to the requirements set forth in Sec. 9.3, Off-Street Parking and Loading, parking and paving shall comply with the following:

New construction shall include a private sidewalk that connects the main entrance of the principal structure to the public sidewalk. Private sidewalks shall be constructed of brick, concrete, stone, or other materials as approved by the Planning Director.

There is an existing sidewalk which the main entrance will connect to.

Parking areas shall be located in the rear yard except for single- and two-family dwelling units which may also provide parking in the side yard behind the face of the front façade.

A side yard driveway is proposed due to the fact that there is no lane for parking access at the rear.

Vehicular Access.

For single- and two-family dwellings, where a site has access to a lane, the lane shall be the sole means of vehicular access to the site. Where lane access is not available, a driveway shall be permitted from the street provided that it is a ribbon strip design. The driveway shall be no wider than 12 feet and the area between the strips shall be planted with grass or plants that grow or are maintained to no taller than one-half foot.

The proposed driveway is a ribbon strip design that does not exceed 12 feet.

The following standards from the Sec 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.

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

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

Be located within a district that permits the principal use.

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

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

The above standards are met.

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.

The unit will be attached.

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.

The ADU will share a common wall but has a separate entrance. The ADU part is located at the side/rear façade of the building. The same setback standards are met.

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 standards are met.

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.

In this case with an attached ADU, it is incorporated into the style of the principal dwelling and thus meets the standard.

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.

Where there is no lane and parking is provided, the parking space shall be served by the same driveway as the principal dwelling.

The proposed driveway would serve this purpose since there is no lane.

Accessory Dwelling Units, Height.

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

Any portion of an accessory dwelling unit over 15 feet in height shall be located at least 15 feet from a rear property line that does not abut a lane.

Since the ADU is attached and incorporated into the house the standard does not apply. The height is taller than 15 feet and the building is 20 feet from the property line. The standard is met.

The following standards from the Sec 3.21.10 Variance Criteria apply:

Variance Criteria.

Criteria for Approval. The responsible review authority shall make a finding that the variance criteria does comply or does not comply with each individual criterion provided below. The Zoning Board of Appeals shall consider the criteria below when determining whether a variance shall be provided:

General Consistency. The variance shall be consistent with the intent of this Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan and shall not be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare.

The standard is met. The variance request is minimal, is consistent with the development pattern of the block, and is not detrimental to public health, safety, or welfare.

Special Conditions.

Special conditions and/or circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, buildings or structures involved and which are not applicable to other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district.

The houses on this block do not have lane access, but there is still a parking requirement to have one space. However, when the driveway is included to accommodate this requirement, the minimum lot coverage drops below 70%.

The special conditions and/or circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant.

The lot conditions are preexisting, whether there was something built on this lot or not does not change the fact that there's no lane of which to access a rear parking area.

The special conditions and/or circumstances are not purely financial in nature so as to allow the applicant to use the land, buildings or structures involved more profitably or to save money.

This is not purely financial in nature and many infill construction projects include a primary structure and an ADU throughout this district; this is a common type of project.

Literal Interpretation. Literal interpretation of the provisions of the regulations would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of the Ordinance and would result in unreasonable hardship on the applicant.

The proposed project as presented brings the frontage to approximately 61% which allows for the placement of a ribbon strip side driveway and meeting the parking requirement. The request is minor and also allows for only one variance being requested, as opposed to a previous version of the project that was requesting three variances.

Minimum Variance. The variance, if granted, shall be the minimum variance necessary to make possible the reasonable use of land, buildings, or structures.

This standard is met.

Special Privilege Not Granted. The variance shall not confer on the applicant's property any special privilege that is denied by this Ordinance to other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district.

There would be no special privileges granted if this variance request were to be approved.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the request to construct one (1) single family dwelling with an attached accessory dwelling unit on the vacant lot located at 15 West 39th Street as requested because the proposed project is visually compatible and meets the standards.

AND

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend approval to the Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals, for relief from the standard that requires a minimum lot frontage of 70% in TN-2 zoning, to allow for a 61.52% lot frontage to accommodate the parking requirement, because the variance criteria are met.

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.