



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: September 23, 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 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. It expired before the applicant was able to return to the HPC. The previous application proposed a two-story mixed-use principal building and a detached accessory dwelling unit.

The 2023 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. The petition did not return within the required continuance period and subsequently expired.

A revised application was submitted in 2026. The rear residential structure was identified as a **Caretaker Dwelling Unit rather than an Accessory Dwelling Unit**, and the ADU-specific size, separation, and height standards identified during the 2023 review therefore did not apply to the revised proposal.

On August 26, 2026, the Historic Preservation Commission continued the Part I application to allow the applicant time to provide:

1. Exact building footprints for the principal building and caretaker building.
2. Revised total building coverage demonstrating compliance with the TN-2 maximum of 60%.
3. Clarified setback dimensions.
4. Overall roof-peak heights for both structures.
5. Additional zoning information regarding the caretaker dwelling use.

The applicant subsequently submitted revised drawings dated September 3, 2026, addressing the outstanding dimensional information.

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 revised drawings identify the principal building footprint as 1,220 square feet and the caretaker building footprint as 563 square feet.

Based on these individual building footprints, the combined building footprint is 1,783 square feet. On the approximately 2,984 square-foot lot, the resulting building coverage is approximately 59.8%.

Staff is using the submitted individual building footprints as the controlling measurements. The total footprint figure of 1,792 square feet shown elsewhere on the drawings appears inconsistent with the submitted individual footprint dimensions.

The resulting building coverage remains below the TN-2 maximum of 60%.

Standard met.

TN-2, Minimum Building frontage. 70%

The revised site plan identifies approximately **80.79% building frontage**, exceeding the 70% minimum required within the TN-2 district.

Standard 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 the principal building and caretaker building are proposed at two stories.

The revised elevations identify the principal building at approximately **33 feet 4 inches** in overall height and the caretaker building at approximately **31 feet 8 3/8 inches** in overall height. Both structures are below the maximum permitted height, and the caretaker building remains lower than the principal building.

Standard met

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 revised site plan provides clarified setback dimensions for the principal building and caretaker building. The principal building is positioned toward West 42nd Street and Barnard Street, while the caretaker building is located toward West 43rd Street.

The submitted setbacks are consistent with the applicable TN-2 development pattern and provide adequate separation between the proposed structures and property lines.

Standard 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 principal building is proposed at approximately 33 feet 4 inches in overall height, while the caretaker building is proposed at approximately 31 feet 8 3/8 inches. Both structures are two stories and are within the range of nearby two-story development.

The caretaker building remains lower and subordinate to the principal structure.

Standard 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 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 hierarchy between the two structures is 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 changes in façade plane, openings, corner articulation, balconies, and roof forms that reduce the perception of overall mass.

The caretaker building has a smaller footprint, width, and overall height and remains clearly subordinate to the principal building.

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.

The revised site plan clarifies the building placement and maintains the traditional relationship of a principal structure with a smaller secondary structure toward the rear of the property.

Standard 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 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 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**.

The proposed roof forms are compatible with residential and mixed-use forms 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 remains subordinate in overall height, width, and mass.

The revised overall height dimensions confirm that the caretaker building does not exceed the principal building.

Standard 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 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, width, height, and overall mass are smaller than those of the principal building, maintaining a visually subordinate relationship.

The revised site plan demonstrates adequate side-yard separation for the caretaker building.

The submitted elevation depicts a garage opening associated with the caretaker building. Final garage-door dimensions and compliance with the 12-foot maximum garage-opening width shall be reviewed as part of Part II: Design Details.

Standard met for Part I review.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the request for New Construction, Small, Part I: Height and Mass, at 117 West 42nd Street as requested as the proposal is visually compatible and meets the applicable standards.

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.