



S A V A N N A H H I S T O R I C D I S T R I C T
B O A R D O F R E V I E W

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Petitioner: Hansen Architects
MPC File No.: 23-002535-COA
Address: 127 East Gordon Street
PIN: 20032 45005
Zoning: D-R
Staff Reviewer: Leah G. Michalak
Date: June 14, 2023

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval for alterations and additions to the property located at 127 East Gordon Street.

Per the applicant:

127 East Gordon Street was originally constructed in the hall-parlor configuration, with a wooden side porch added sometime before 1916. Since that time, alterations to the building, including replacing the side porch with a masonry addition and adding an additional stair to the front stoop, have created a different building form and presence on the square and the building currently reads more like an "I" house with a central hallway. In fact, it was described as such on the historic resource card. The vision and goal of this project is to restore the building as a single-family residence, with the hall-parlor configuration legible, and restore the balance of the building with a wooden porch in the same footprint as the historic wooden porch.

To achieve this, we are proposing the following: a comprehensive rehabilitation for the main house, removal of a brick addition, an addition with massing and design aesthetic as an enclosed side porch, and a masonry element. A previously existing garage location is being re-established as a garage with a terrace space above. We will use Abercorn Street for garage and driveway access -- new wood double gates are proposed. The entry stoop will be modified to have a single stair toward Abercorn and also to have a masonry construction aesthetic vs that of a formed and poured concrete stoop and stair.

Through the review of the sanborn maps and zoning requirements, we have established that the existing three story brick addition is not a contributing element to the original side hall townhouse. Please review our contributing status documentation prepared by Ethos.

In the process of reviewing the history of the home, we learned that there was a wood side porch in the location of the masonry addition we are proposing for removal. Our plans for the addition of a mostly enclosed side porch are based on the same footprint of this porch noted in the sanborn maps. We are proposing this porch have an open porch bay toward the square and the balance will be enclosed with glass from the rail height up. The expression of the porch rail is maintained for the enclosed areas.

We are requesting in kind repairs for the historic main house including the stucco, stucco detail, wood trim, wood details, wood windows, and rear balcony reconstruction based on historic images.

The primary materials of the new addition are stucco over masonry (8" CMU) walls and wood framing and wood detailing on the enclosed porch. New Marvin brand windows are proposed for the new addition; cut sheets are provided.

The side yard facing Gordon Street will be restored as a garden. Upon approval of the rehabilitation and design work currently being presented, we intend to engage the services of a local Landscape Architect. We will return with this phase for review as appropriate as it relates to gates, garden walls, hardscape etc. In this application we are only asking for the removal of the concrete within the yard space.

PROJECT HISTORY:

On July 14, 2021, the HDBR issued a COA for alterations, additions, and demolition of a rear yard accessory structure [File No. 21-002859-COA]. The project was similar although it did not remove the brick addition from the west façade; it restored the addition. The only portion of the project that was executed was the demolition of the rear yard accessory structure. The conditions of that approval were as follows:

1. Ensure that the deteriorated roof be repaired in-kind (if possible) instead of being reconstructed, to reduce the damage and removal of any historic materials, and that the overall shape and overextended eaves of the historic roof are not altered in any way.
2. Ensure that the mechanical screening has a far enough setback so that it does not obscure the distinctive roof feature of this contributing resource.
3. Ensure that the current material selections are provided to Staff for review.
4. Ensure that the proposed replacement windows and doors are "Marvin," Ultimate, wood with transparent glass that has no dark tints or reflective effects and that the configurations are historically appropriate and match the existing lite patterns (when applicable). Ensure that the proposed door design is provided to Staff for review.
5. Ensure that the proposed Abercorn Street curb cut is the property's only point of vehicular access, and that the existing rear yard entry dimensions are not modified in any way. Ensure that all wood gates are painted or stained.
6. Ensure that all stucco repairs match the existing stucco in-kind.

FINDINGS:

The following standards from the Sec 7.8 - Savannah Downtown 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.*

Although not as tall as the historic portion of the building, the addition overpowers the historic building in mass and scale. The footprint appears to be equal to or exceed that of the historic building; the 'L' shaped addition alters the spaces that characterize the property.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 3– Physical Record. *Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*

Staff finds that the proposed new addition creates a false sense of historical development. It is designed to look like a (mostly) enclosed porch. There was a porch here historically; however, there are no photographs of it. Staff finds the design conjectural.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 4– Historic Changes. *Most properties change over time; those changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*

Staff finds that the brick addition has acquired historic significance through its age. Constructed sometime between 1937 and 1954, it was built during the local district's period of significance and, although physically separating from the main building, still maintains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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 guideline is met for the historic portion of the building. In-kind repairs are proposed for the stucco walls, stucco details, wood trim, and wood windows. Additionally, the missing rear balcony is proposed to be reconstructed.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 7– Chemical or Physical Treatments. *Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.*

Ensure that all treatments use the gentlest means possible.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 9– New Additions to not Damage. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*

Although the new work is differentiated from the old, it is not compatible with the scale of the historic building.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 10– New Additions Reversible. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

The guideline is met. The addition could be removed in the future without impairing the historic property and its environment.

Visual Compatibility Criteria. *To maintain the special character of the Savannah Downtown 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.*

Proportion of openings. *The relationship of the width of the windows to height of windows within a building or structure shall be visually compatible to the contributing buildings and structures to which the structure is visually related.*

Rhythm of solids to voids in front façades. *The relationship of solids to voids in the façades visible from the public right-of-way shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings and structures to which the structure is visually related.*

New window openings are taller than they are wide and have a visually compatible rhythm.

Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projection. *The relationship of entrances, porch projections, and walkways to buildings or structures shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings and structures to which they are visually related.*

Staff does not find the size of the addition visually compatible. Side porches present on visually related contributing buildings are smaller.

Relationship of materials, texture and color. *The relationship of materials, texture and color of the facade of a building or structure shall be visually compatible with the predominate materials, textures, and colors used on contributing buildings and structures to which the structure is visually related.*

The following paint colors are proposed:

- Existing and New Stucco: Oxford White
- Wood Trim and Railings: Brushed Aluminum
- Wood Lattice and Doors: Midnight Blue
- Window Head and Grille: Herbal Escape

- Windows: Stone White
- Vehicular Gates: Herbal Escape

Staff finds the colors visually compatible. See other standards for comments on materials.

Roof shapes. *The roof shape of a building or structure shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

New roof shapes are visually compatible.

Scale of a building. *The mass of a building or structure and size of windows, door openings, porches column spacing, stairs, balconies and additions shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings and structures to which the structure is visually related.*

Staff does not find the size of the addition visually compatible. Side porches present on visually related contributing buildings are smaller.

Savannah Downtown Historic District Design Standards. *The intent of these standards is to ensure appropriate new construction, additions, and alterations within the Savannah Downtown 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 resources.*

The following design standards shall apply to new construction, additions, alterations to contributing and non-contributing buildings and structures, unless otherwise specified. Though certain building materials are prescribed herein, the Board 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.

For the purposes of evaluating the visual compatibility and design standards of exterior fenestration, where voids (windows, doors, and storefronts) in the exterior façade are substantially blocked by interior walls or built-in furniture, these may be considered part of the exterior wall if they are built within three feet of the exterior wall. For example, if an interior wall is built abutting the storefront, that interior wall is impacting the exterior design of the fenestration and may be subject to review by the Historic Board of Review.

Setbacks, Side and rear yards. *Side and rear yard setbacks shall not be required.*

No setbacks are required for the addition.

Exterior walls, Alterations to contributing resources.

Exterior Walls, Materials.

Exterior walls shall be repaired with in-kind materials 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 replacement materials and configuration shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original wall.

Exterior Walls, Prohibited Materials.

Materials that cause damage, obscure, or change the appearance to the underlying historic fabric are prohibited.

Vinyl siding, aluminum siding, rolled asphalt, precast concrete panels, fiber cement wood simulated horizontal lap siding, fiber cement panels, EIFS, T-111, ceramic-based coatings and sealers on siding.

The stucco walls are proposed to be repaired in-kind. The standards are met.

Exterior Walls, Finishes and Treatments.

Color changes to contributing resources shall be historically appropriate.

The following paint colors are historically appropriate:

- Existing and New Stucco: Oxford White
- Wood Trim and Railings: Brushed Aluminum
- Wood Lattice and Doors: Midnight Blue
- Window Head and Grille: Herbal Escape
- Windows: Stone White
- Vehicular Gates: Herbal Escape

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

Exterior Walls, Permitted Materials.

Residential exterior walls shall be finished in brick, wood, or fiber cement siding with a smith finish or true stucco.

Exterior Walls, Prohibited materials. *Vinyl siding, aluminum siding, rolled asphalt, EIFS, one-part stucco over insulation and/or wood or metal-framing, T-111, corrugated metal, unpainted exposed CMU blocks, fiber cement panels, ceramic-based coatings and sealers on siding.*

The addition is constructed of stucco over CMU (true stucco). The standards are met.

Exterior Walls, Finishes and Treatments.

Colors, stains, and finishes shall be visually compatible with contributing resources within the block. If none exist, the color shall be compatible with contributing resources within the ward.

The following paint colors are visually compatible:

- Existing and New Stucco: Oxford White
- Wood Trim and Railings: Brushed Aluminum
- Wood Lattice and Doors: Midnight Blue
- Window Head and Grille: Herbal Escape
- Windows: Stone White
- Vehicular Gates: Herbal Escape

Entrances and Doors, Alterations to contributing resources.

Doors shall be repaired with in-kind materials rather than replaced, provided however, if the degree of degradation does not allow repair, the degradation of the door shall be

photographically documented and verified by the Planning Director and the new door shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original.

If the original door material and/or configuration is unknown, or if a new door is proposed in an unoriginal opening, the new door material and configuration shall be based on historic context.

No changes to existing doors are proposed.

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

Doors, Configuration. *Door frames shall be inset not less than three (3) inches from the exterior surface of the façade of a building, excluding façades with wood siding.*

This information was not provided with the submittal packet.

Doors, Permitted Materials. *Doors shall be made of glass, wood, clad wood or steel (without wood grain simulation).*

Doors, Prohibited Materials. *Vinyl; sliding glass doors visible from a street; steel-pressed doors simulating wood grain, half-moon, semi-circular, diamond or similar light insets; boarded-up doors or entrances.*

Door specifications were not provided.

Windows, Alterations to contributing resources.

Windows shall be repaired rather than replaced, provided however, if the degree of degradation does not allow repair, the degradation of each window shall be photographically documented and verified by the Planning Director, and the new window shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original (including single-glazed and true-divided lights, when appropriate).

If the original window material and/or configuration is unknown, or if a new window is proposed in an unoriginal opening, the new window material and configuration shall be based on historic context.

The boarding of windows and/or window openings shall not be permitted. Windows and frames shall be weather-tight and free from cracks. Openings shall contain windows, doors, or storefronts.

Existing windows are proposed to be retained and restored.

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

Windows, Configuration.

All windows facing a street, exclusive of storefronts, basement and top story windows, shall be rectangular and shall have a vertical to horizontal ratio of not less than 5:3; provided, however, nothing in this section precludes an arched window being used. Accent windows may be round or other shapes.

The standard is met.

Windows facing a street shall be double or triple hung, awning, casement or Palladian.

The windows are proposed to be double hung. The standard is met.

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

The standard is met. The new windows have a simple header and sill to differentiate from the historic building.

Window sashes shall be inset a minimum of three (3) inches from the façade of a building, excluding exterior surfaces with wood siding.

This information was not provided with the submittal packet.

The distance between windows shall be not less than for adjacent contributing buildings, nor more than two (2) times the width of the windows on primary facades. The Board may waive strict compliance with this standard where historic precedent exists within the visually-related context and is visually compatible.

Paired or grouped windows shall be permitted, provided the individual sashes have a vertical to horizontal ratio of not less than 5:3.

The standards are met.

Double glazed, simulated divided light, windows shall be permitted provided that the following are met: 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; There shall be a spacer bar in between double panes of glass, and Extrusions shall be covered with appropriate molding.

Between-the-glass, snap-in or applied muntins shall not be permitted.

Windows, Materials.

Window casings and sashes shall be made of 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 glass.

Solid vinyl windows shall be prohibited.

The standards are met. The proposed window is the Marvin Ultimate Double Hung G2 which has previously been approved by the Board for use on additions. It is a wood clad double hung window that is double-paned with clear glass and appropriate muntins.

Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Porticos, Exterior Stairs and Decks - Alterations to contributing resources.

Porches 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 porch materials and configuration shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original.

If the original porch material and/or configuration is unknown, the new porch material and configuration shall be based on historic context.

Prohibited materials: Fiberglass (including Perma-Cast), vinyl and PVC.

“The entry stoop will be modified to have a single stair toward Abercorn and also to have a masonry construction aesthetic vs that of a formed and poured concrete stoop and stair.” Composite columns and railings are proposed which does not meet the standards. Staff does not find the simplified design of the columns visually compatible. Although differentiated, they are over-simplified for a house of this design. The front stoop is missing a newel post at the bottom of the railing at grade.

Wrought iron brackets shall not be used with wood balcony railings.

Wood brackets are proposed.

Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Porticos, Exterior Stairs and Decks - New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources and additions. *Porches, stoops, balconies, porticos, and exterior stairs within the public right-of-way may be permitted with the approval of the encroachment by the Mayor and Aldermen and provided that the following criteria are met:*

Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Porticos, Exterior Stairs and Decks - Configuration.

Wood portico posts shall have cap and base molding. The column capital shall extend outward of the porch architrave.

Technically the standard is met. However, staff does not find the simplified design of the columns visually compatible. Although differentiated, they are over-simplified for a house of this design.

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.

The standards are met for all railings; however, the front stoop is missing a newel post at the bottom of the railing at grade.

Stoop heights shall be visually comparable to other historic stoops to which they are visually related and shall not exceed nine (9) feet, six (6) inches.

The stoop height is an existing condition.

Residential balconies shall not extend more than three (3) feet in depth from the face of a building and shall be supported by brackets or other types of architectural support.

The depth of the reconstructed balcony was not provided.

Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Porticos, Exterior Stairs and Decks - Materials.

On porches, porticos, and stoops, if proposed, piers and base walls shall be the same material as the foundation wall facing the street.

The standard is met. Stucco over masonry is proposed for the front stoop.

Porch elements shall be constructed of brick, painted or stained wood, wood composite, precast stone, marble, sandstone or slate.

Supported front porticos shall be constructed of wood unless the proposed material matches other facade details on the same building, such as terra cotta, marble, or metal.

The standards are not met. Wood composite is proposed for the porch elements.

Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Porticos, Exterior Stairs and Decks - Prohibited material. *Vinyl and wrought iron brackets shall not be used with wood balcony railings.*

The standard is met.

Roofs, Contributing Resources.

Roofs, Configuration.

Original roof configuration shall be maintained.

Roofs, Materials.

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 roof is not visible.

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

Roofs, Configuration.

Parapets shall have a stringcourse and a coping.

The standard is met.

Roofs, Materials.

Roof coverings shall be standing seam metal, v-crimp, slate or equivalent synthetic, tile, or architectural asphalt or similar shingles.

The roof is not visible.

Additions to Contributing Resources. *Additions shall comply with the above standards and the following standards:*

Additions shall not be on the primary or front façade of the resource, and shall be located to the rear of the resource or the most inconspicuous façade.

Additions shall be subordinate in mass and height to the resource.

Additions shall not obscure or damage any character-defining features.

An addition shall be sited such that it is clearly an appendage and distinguishable from the contributing building.

Additions shall be reversible with minimal damage to the contributing building.

Although not as tall as the historic portion of the building, the addition overpowers the historic building in mass and scale. The footprint appears to be equal to or exceed that of the historic building; the 'L' shaped addition alters the spaces that characterize the property. It is, however, distinguishable, and likely reversible.

Mechanical Equipment and Refuse. *Mechanical equipment and refuse shall comply with Sec. 9.5.3, Screening of Service Areas, except as provided below.*

Electrical vaults, meter boxes, communications devices, and similar equipment shall be located on the secondary and/or rear façades and shall be minimally visible from view.

The electric meter is on the rear façade.

Roof mounted equipment and HVAC units shall be screened from view from the public right-of-way.

Roof mounted equipment is screened by the parapet on the new addition.

Refuse storage areas for shall be located within a building or to the side or rear of the building and screened from the public right-of-way.

Refuse storage is in the rear yard screened by the vehicular gates.

Lighting. *In addition to the requirements set forth in Sec. 9.8, Lighting, the following standards apply:*

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

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

Source Type: White light source only.

No lighting is indicated.

Parking and Paving. *In addition to the requirements set forth in Sec. 9.3, Off-Street Parking and Loading, parking and paving shall comply with the following:*

Parking areas shall be located in the rear yard. Properties on Trust Lots or with double street frontage are exempt from this provision.

Vehicular access shall be from lanes or north-south service streets. When a property does not front a lane or north-south service street, parking may be accessed from east-west connecting streets or trust streets.

A new curb cut (to an existing vehicular gate) is proposed at the rear of the property from the north-south street. An existing vehicular access gate and curb cut is proposed to remain from the east-west street. Remove the vehicular gate and curb cut from the east-west street in order to meet the standard and have one point of vehicular access into the site.

Structured parking within the first floor of a building shall be setback a minimum of 30 feet from property lines along all public rights-of-way (not including lanes). This standard does not apply to structured parking on the same lot as single family and two family residential dwellings that are either on a corner lot with lane access or on a parcel that does not have access to a lane.

Curb cuts shall not exceed 20 feet in width. Loading areas for commercial development are exempt from this provision and shall be the minimum required.

Loose paving materials, such as crushed shell or gravel, may be permitted provided that it is no closer than 18 inches of the public-right-of-way.

The standards are met.

Fences, Trellises and Walls. *Fences and walls shall comply with Sec. 9.6, Fences and Walls except as provided below:*

Fences, Trellises and Walls, Configuration.

Fences, trellises or walls shall not exceed 11 feet in height; however, where adjoining walls exceed 11 feet, any new wall may be constructed to the height of the existing wall. Rooftop trellises may exceed 11 feet in height, provided they are visually compatible.

Fences, trellises and walls shall not extend beyond the facade of a building except in the following cases:

A building set back on a trust lot with a front garden;

A building set back on an east-west street with a front garden.

Where permitted, fences or walls shall not exceed 48 inches within the front yard.

The standards are met for the trellis.

Fences, Trellises and Walls, Materials.

Trellises shall be wood, metal or wire.

The intent of the standard is met. The trellis is wood and is supported by stucco columns.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Continue the request for alterations and additions to the property located at 127 East Gordon Street for a maximum of 90 days in order for the petitioner to address the following:

- 1. Redesign in order to retain the historic addition.**
- 2. Reduce the scale of the remainder of the new addition.**
- 3. Provide door specifications and inset door frames 3 inches from the exterior façade.**
- 4. Inset window sashes 3 inches from the exterior façade.**
- 5. Revise the design of the front stoop columns to be more in keeping with the historic building's design. Change the composite material to wood for front stoop elements. Provide a newel post at the bottom of the stoop railing.**
- 6. Provide the depth of the reconstructed balcony; ensure it does not exceed 3 feet in depth.**
- 7. Remove the curb cut and the vehicular gates from the east-west street.**

MW: LGM

Note: This recommendation could change subject to new information provided at the Historic District Board of Review meetings. Final decisions will be made by the Historic District Board of Review at the public hearing based on information provided at the meeting, as well as information submitted for the staff recommendation.