



Savannah Historic District Board of Review

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room - 112 East State Street
August 14, 2024 1:00 PM
MINUTES

August 14, 2024 Historic District Board of Review Meeting

A Pre-Meeting was held at 12:00 PM. Items on the Agenda were presented by Staff, as time permitted, and the Board asked questions. No testimony was received, and no votes were taken.

Members Present: Karen Guinn, Chair
Melissa Rowan, Vice Chair
Robert Becker
Michael Higgins
Stan Houle
Sabrina Nagel
Thomas Thomson

Members Absent:

MPC Staff Present: Melanie Wilson, Executive Director
Pamela Everett, Assistant Executive Director (virtually)
Jonathan Mellon, Director of Historic Preservation
Caitlin Chamberlain, Principal Planner
Kelli Mitchell, Senior Planner
Bri Morgan, Administrative Assistant
Hind Patel, Information Technology

I. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

II. SIGN POSTING

III. CONSENT AGENDA

IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

[1. Adopt the August 14, 2024 HDBR Meeting Agenda as presented.](#)

Motion

The Savannah Historic District of Review motioned to adopt the August 14, 2024 HDBR Agenda as presented.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Stan Houle

Second: Thomas L. Thomson

Stan Houle	- Aye
Karen Guinn	- Abstain
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye
Sabrina Nagel	- Aye

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. Approve the July 10, 2024 Historic District Board of Review meeting minutes as presented.

Motion

The Savannah Historic District Board of Review motioned to approve the July 10, 2024 HDBR meeting minutes as presented.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Thomas L. Thomson

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

Stan Houle	- Aye
Karen Guinn	- Abstain
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye
Sabrina Nagel	- Aye

VI. ITEM(S) REQUESTED TO BE REMOVED FROM THE FINAL AGENDA

VII. CONTINUED AGENDA

3. Petition of LS3P Savannah, Michael Garcia | 24-002767-COA | 200 East Saint Julian Street | Rehabilitation & Alterations

Motion

Continue

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Stan Houle

Stan Houle	- Aye
Karen Guinn	- Abstain
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye

Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye
Sabrina Nagel	- Aye

[4. Petition of LS3P Savannah, Michael Garcia | 24-003354 | 123 West Oglethorpe Avenue | Rehabilitation & Addition](#)

Motion

Continue

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Stan Houle

Stan Houle	- Aye
Karen Guinn	- Abstain
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye
Sabrina Nagel	- Aye

[5. Petition of Wubbena Architects | 23-005347-COA | 409 West Taylor Street | New Construction, Small: Part II, Design Details](#)

Motion

Continue.

Vote Results (Not Started)

Motion:

Second:

Motion

Continue

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Stan Houle

Stan Houle	- Aye
Karen Guinn	- Abstain
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye

Robert Becker	- Aye
Sabrina Nagel	- Aye

[6. Petition of Noble Hardee House Condo Association | 24-002498-COA | 501 East Charlton Street | Alterations](#)

Motion

Continue

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Stan Houle

Stan Houle	- Aye
Karen Guinn	- Abstain
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye
Sabrina Nagel	- Aye

VIII. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION

IX. REGULAR AGENDA

[7. Petition of 501 East Bay Street, LLC | 24-003804-COA | 501 East Bay Street | Amendment to 21-000257-COA](#)

Jonathan Mellon presented the petitioner's request for approval to amend 21-000257-COA for a rooftop addition to the property located at 501 East Bay Street.

Per the applicant:

“Narrative:

501 East Bay is a newly constructed building that includes one retail space (501 E. Bay) and three residential units (6 Price Street – Units A, B and C). The project was previously approved for Parts I and II and is nearing completion. The project received a COA that included stairs to a rooftop patio. At the time the COA was granted, there were no improvements on the roof. All equipment was planned for and subsequently placed on the south building.

During construction, the owners, 501 East Bay Street, LLC, decided that a small storage closet, toilet and small covered open patio would add utility to the rooftop. The proposed amendment call for a 16'-6" x 6'-6" enclosure (toilet and closet) connected to a 16'-6" x 13'-3" covered area. The proposed addition is 9'-0" tall above the roofdeck or about 5'-4" above the existing parapet. The addition is pushed to SW corner of the north building and abuts the adjacent parking deck. The proposed addition is substantially hidden from all perspectives on the adjacent rights-of-way, as evidenced in the attached pictorial perspectives. The only visible sightlines are on long visas from the north side of Bay Street closer to Houston and Habersham. No other rooftop improvements, such as umbrellas, lights, poles, trees, etc. are planned.

The site is designated for four stories in the Height Map, so the proposed addition is still

compliant with the HDBR ordinances. It appears as a small mechanical pop-up only partially visible from longer distances.”

501 East Bay Street was constructed in 2024 on a corner lot on the south side of East Bay Street and east side of Price Street and is a non-contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. 501 East Bay Street is a pair of two-story masonry (brick) mixed-use buildings with a connecting central courtyard space with staircase, punched openings with brick lintels and sills, brick cornices, and are topped by flat roofs.

The surrounding context includes both contributing and non-contributing buildings, including a large non-contributing parking garage structure directly to the side (east) of the building and frame and masonry contributing buildings along Price Street. A review of the Sanborn Maps shows that the site had previously been the location of a row of wood buildings fronting on East Bay Street with a wood garage to the rear fronting on East Bay Lane. By the 1950's these buildings had been demolished and the site was vacant.

At the May 12, 2021, HDBR meeting the Board approved (21-000257-COA) for New Construction, Part II: Design details for the construction of two, two-story mixed-use buildings connected by an exterior stair and fire rated wall with the following conditions:

1. Lower the height of the railing on the roof level exterior stair to below the parapets of the buildings.
2. Ensure the awning supports are constructed of wood or metal.
3. Ensure that if the paving material is to be loose that it is located no closer than 18 inches to the public right-of-way (East Bay Lane).

He reminded there is no purview by this Board for use.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Michael Garcia, of LS3P/petitioner, showed additional material regarding change of materiality. Replacing parapet, will have zero lot line. The use is a single-use bathroom and storage room. Overhang is wood that will match coping. Hollow metal doors that will match the frame. The stairs will not be visible from the street. The building is within height guidelines.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There was no public comment.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Robert Becker stated the size of the proposed addition is visible from Bay and Price streets. Rooftop patio not compatible.

Thomas Thomson stated they could come back with a third story, which is allowed.

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby Approve the rooftop addition for the property located at 501 East Bay Street with the following conditions because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards.

1. Provide additional details on the two doors proposed for the rooftop addition to ensure that the standards are met.

2. Have the construction of the rooftop addition be of masonry to allow for the application of stucco and meet the definition of "True Stucco" or alternatively return with a revised design that would use a compatible material.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Stan Houle

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

Stan Houle	- Aye
Karen Guinn	- Abstain
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Nay
Sabrina Nagel	- Aye

[8. Petition of Kat Tremblay | 24-003776-COA | 323 East Jones Street | Gate](#)

Caitlin Chamberlain presented the petitioner's request of approval to remove an area of plywood infill to install an appropriate iron gate on the brick garden wall located at 323 East Jones Street.

323 East Jones Street was built in 1853 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District.

For several years, there has been plywood installed over the gate opening. The applicant would like to remove the plywood and install a wrought iron gate, which they have already acquired. Staff research did not locate any photographs detailing what was in place prior to the plywood infill.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Kat Tremblay, petitioner, stated they will use 'Charleston Green', a green/black color.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There was no public comment.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Melissa Rowan confirmed the 'Charleston Green' looks black, but in direct sun shows dark green.

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby approve the removal of the plywood infill to replace with a wrought iron gate for the property located at 323 East Jones Street as requested because the project is visually compatible and meets the standards.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Stan Houle

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

Stan Houle	- Aye
Karen Guinn	- Abstain
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye
Sabrina Nagel	- Aye

[9. Petition of Pantheon ADC, Lavontae Decius | 24-003807-COA | 24 East Broughton Street | Alterations](#)

Caitlin Chamberlain presented the applicant's request of approval to install a new door opening on the rear elevation of 24 East Broughton Street. This door is proposed in an area that appears to be infilled with non-historic material and would be consistent with other doors along East Congress Lane.

24 East Broughton Street was built in 1921 and is a contributing resource within the Savannah National Historic Landmark District and the Savannah Downtown Historic District. The building has been modified several times. The original configuration included two or three storefronts. By 1955, three businesses were combined into one, the original storefronts removed and a version of what is there today installed. In 2000, the front façade was uncovered and restored; the current storefront remained in place. A recent project was approved for restoration of the storefront.

Staff was not able to locate historic documentation of the rear elevation on East Congress Lane, but the applicant provided a photo showing from the interior how there is non-historic infill on this wall.

Although this was not applied for as an amendment, an earlier COA was granted [22-001849-COA] which included an additional door opening on this side of the building. However, this earlier request was on the opposite side, with a condition to downsize the opening to be more visually compatible with the other doors on the lane. The current design is more visually compatible than what was previously requested. The images below will show the difference between the proposals with the first one being from 2022 and the second one being the current request.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Lavonte Decius, petitioner, was available for questions from the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There was no public comment.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

There was no Board discussion.

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby approve the installation of a new door opening on the rear elevation of 24 East Broughton Street as requested because the proposed work is

visually compatible and meets the standards.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Thomas L. Thomson

Second: Sabrina Nagel

Stan Houle	- Aye
Karen Guinn	- Abstain
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye
Sabrina Nagel	- Aye

[10. Petition of Anonymous Tattoo, Richard McGee | 24-0003792-COA | 209 East River Street/212 East Lower Factors Walks | Illumintated Sign](#)

Kelli Mitchell presented the petitioner's request of approval for one illuminated incidental sign at 212 E Lower Factors Walk/209 East River Street. The building was constructed in 1858 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

The representative for Richard McGee stated they would like to have the illuminated sign, as there are other illuminated signs in the area. It will be on only during business hours of 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. It is smaller than the illuminated sign next door.

Robert Becker asked if they would be open to alternative solution. The petitioner stated they are open to alternatives but would prefer to use the sign already paid for from previous location.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There was no public comment.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

The Board recommended working with Staff to find acceptable solution that meets the ordinance and continue this request for 30 days.

Motion

The Historic Downtown Board of Review does hereby continue the request for an incidental sign at 212 E Lower Factors Walk/209 East River for no more than thirty (30) days.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Robert Becker

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

Stan Houle	- Aye
Karen Guinn	- Abstain
Michael Higgins	- Aye

Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye
Sabrina Nagel	- Aye

[11. Petition of Eli Lurie | 24-003810-COA | 201 West Jones Street | Addition](#)

Jonathan Mellon stated there were several public comments and all were posted on the agenda for public access. All commenters were responded; 18 in opposition, 1 in support. The opposition in reference to scale and mass.

Kelli Mitchell presented the petitioner's request for approval to construct a rear addition and to make minor alterations to the front stoop at 201 West Jones Street. The building was constructed in 1852 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District.

The first application for 201 West Jones Street was heard at the March HDBR meeting. The proposal included the construction of an addition that saw the removal of a brick wall facing Barnard Street along with some minor alterations to the main home, outbuilding, and privacy wall.

Staff recommended a continuance of the project to allow the applicant to address the following concerns and recommendations:

1. Redesign the addition to retain the first-floor masonry wall facing Barnard Street and the
2. window opening and to inset the second-story portion of the addition.
3. Redesign the window configuration on the first floor rear windows on the addition to have a more traditional configuration.
4. Select a material that meets the standards for the fiber cement paneling under the windows.
5. Provide height and distance between banisters for front porch railing.
6. Provide the final color for the lattice work.

The Board, however, voted to deny the proposed project finding that “the project does not meet the Visual Compatibility Standards, is not appropriate in scale or massing, and due to the proposed removal of historic fabric.”

At the April 2024 HDBR meeting, the Board considered a request to rescind the decision from the March meeting, but the decision was upheld.

The applicant reapplied for the May meeting. The new application included the construction of a rear addition and the addition of stucco and lattice work on the front stoop. Staff recommended approval with no conditions. The Board had concerns, however, and denied the request, finding that “the work is not visually compatible and does not meet the standards, specifically for impacting historic features and seemingly not being reversible.”

The applicant appealed the board's decision to the City of Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals. Staff recommended that “the Petition be remanded to the Savannah Historic District Board of Review for further enumeration of each of the specific design standards that are not met, specifically for impacting historic features and the addition not considered reversible.” The Board made the following decision:

Approval that the Petition be remanded back to the Historic District Board of Review

for clarification that they be more specific on their reasons for denial and off the applicant a chance to make modifications in order to resolve the visual compatibility problems.

The meeting minutes can be found [here](#) while the audio can be found [here](#).

The new application includes three proposed designs for the Board's consideration. Staff will discuss each design and whether the standards are met. The applicant also provided examples of similar projects. Staff included additional information for the projects where the COA project number was provided. These are found in a supplemental packet.

The applicant provided three proposed designs for the project. Overall, the footprint and massing of the three designs are the same as what was proposed at the May HDBR meeting. No designs were provided that utilized a different footprint or less massing.

The applicant proposes encapsulating two of the three windows on the rear of the top story of the primary building (noted as the second level on the plans) and removing the brick and sill under the third window to allow for the creation of a door. The materials that are removed will be retained on site.

The following information was provided in the application about how the three designs are different from what was previously proposed. The applicant stated:

- The first design changes all the new windows to clad double hung to reflect the windows on the existing home and centers the new window along Barnard Street on the kitchen window below.
- The second design eliminates much of the detailing to the addition. We went from doubled columns to single columns, while also removing the shuttered openings along the Barnard Street facing facade. This design also centers the new window along Barnard Street on the kitchen window below.
- The third design changes the entire addition to stucco with no wood detailing. This design is the most modern and differentiates the addition from the building both in material and detailing. This design also centers the new window along Barnard Street on the kitchen window below.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Eli Lurie, petitioner, highlighted the different iterations of the project, hoping for approval of at least one. All will cover three historic openings, which will result in loss of HDBR jurisdiction. However, conditions can be placed to store windows and protect materials. He highlighted various structures in the neighborhood and district with rear additions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

John Clemson, owner of 201 W Jones, stated they are trying to design in harmony with the ordinance. Historic Savannah Foundation supports design. Remanded to HDBR from ZBA appeal based on visual incompatibility, questions the legality of the process taken. Supports historic preservation and wants clear directive or continuance. All design standards met.

Andrew Jones, Oglethorpe Plan Coalition, the public is opposition by those living close to the petitioner. The Downtown Neighborhood Association also opposes. Scale and mass stays as presented instead of adjusting but tweaking the design details. He stated the Zoning Board of Appeal does not have authority to remand, the City attorney should be involved due to unfair treatment provided to applicant.

Kaitlyn Koehen, designer, highlighted the various changes and meeting of ordinance standards. Feels the goalposts are moved in realtime. Favors progress; changes should be presented. Asks for fairness and ordinance adherence, not personal feelings.

Ellie Isaacs, Historic Savannah Foundation, supports Staff recommendation.

Eli Lurie stated rear additions are very common in the historic districts. This property previously had one that has increased over time.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Several Board members stated the issue is visual compatibility, which is in the Board's purview and based on context. None of the other examples presented have the mass and scale of this petition. None are equal in height, depth, and width; scale of original home is doubled. Decisions are made by ordinance and visual compatibility is determined. The addition should be had, but not this large. The design characteristics were addressed, not the size. Code states the mass additions should be comparable of structures related. The proposed are significantly larger and not visually compatible. Based on County records, the proposed is massive to the neighboring structures and in the district.

Several Board members supported Staff recommendation and commended the applicant for revision efforts.

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby approve Scheme A for the rear addition and minor alterations to the front stoop at 201 West Jones Street with the following condition because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards.

1. The applicant confirm that the handrail for the rear deck has balustrades that are four inches (4") on center.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Melissa H. Rowan

Second: Thomas L. Thomson

Stan Houle	- Aye
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Nay
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Nay
Sabrina Nagel	- Nay

X. APPROVED STAFF REVIEWS

[12. Acknowledge Staff-approved petitions as presented.](#)

Motion

Acknowledge

Vote Results (Not Started)

Motion:

Second:

[13. Petition of Brandon Aguilar | 24-003769-COA | 501 Montgomery Street | Change colors of previously approved illuminated sign.](#)

[14. Petition of AAA Signs | 301 West Broughton Street | 24-004044-COA | Storefront window sign \(vinyl\)](#)

[15. Petition of John Swinson | 315 East Jones Street | 24-004104-COA | Replace existing windows \(rear facade\), alter door opening to window \(third floor\), remove portion of rear stair, repair front windows](#)

[16. Petition of Anthony Koncul | 135 Lincoln Street | 24-004039-COA | Replace deteriorated windows](#)

[17. Petition of Doug Bean Signs | 309 W Broughton St | 24-004034-COA | Storefront window signage \(etch glass vinyl lettering\)](#)

[18. Petition of Harold Yellin | 4069 East Bay Street | 24-004035-COA | Temporary window boarding](#)

[19. Petition of Felder Associates | 201 East River Street | 24-003808-COA | Amend 24-000213-COA: modify proposed mechanical equipment design](#)

[20. Petition of Brian Robin | 520 East State Street | 24-003585-COA | In-kind siding replacement \(selective\) and paint](#)

[21. Petition of Benjamin Cobb | 108 West Jones Street | 24-003586-COA | Color change: windows and select trim](#)

[22. Petition of Coastal Canvas | 105 East Bay Street | 24-003806-COA | recover awnings](#)

[23. Petition of SpeediSign | 412 Whitaker Street | 24-003790-COA | Window Signs](#)

[24. Petition of Ethos Preservation | 705 Barnard Street | 24-003725-COA | Amend 23-002875-COA: shutter color change](#)

[25. Petition of The Pinyan Company | 309 Bull Street | 24-002761-COA | Remove existing stucco to repair masonry wall underneath, replace stucco, and repair windows](#)

XI. WORK PERFORMED WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

[26. Violations Report- August](#)

XII. REPORT ON ITEMS DEFERRED TO STAFF

XIII. NOTICES, PROCLAMATIONS, AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[27. Stamped Drawing Report - July/August](#)

[28. Inspections Completed by Staff - August Report](#)

XIV. OTHER BUSINESS

XV. ADJOURNMENT

[29. Next HDBR Pre-Meeting - Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at 12 pm - 112 East State Street](#)

[30. Next HDBR Meeting - Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at 1 pm - 112 East State Street](#)

[31. Adjourn](#)

There being no further business to present before the Board, the August 14, 2024 Historic District Board of Review adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Mellon
Director, Historic Preservation

/bm

Motion

Adjourn

Vote Results (Not Started)

Motion:

Second:

The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting minutes which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.