



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: 351 MLK LLC, Hiru Patel
MPC File No.: 24-003348-COA
Address: 351 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
PIN: 20031 24003
Zoning: D-X
Staff Reviewer: Caitlin Chamberlain
Date: July 10, 2024

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval to complete the work initially approved in 2021 [21-005431-COA], for the property located at 351 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. The proposed scope of work includes:

- The addition of a wood cornice above storefront, painted Sherwin Williams “Tricorn” SW 6258
- Replacement of existing storefront system with a new wood storefront system, painted Sherwin Williams “Tricorn” SW 6258.
- All exterior doors to be repaired or replaced in kind
- Repainting the brick exterior walls
- Repair top cornice as needed
- Refurbish existing ventilation grills

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

351-355 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard was constructed in 1897 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District.

351 and 355 are within a row of three connected addresses; 347 is not part of the scope of the project. The building is situated on MLK between Jones Street and Charlton Street. There is another commercial contributing building adjacent to 315-355 MLK Blvd. and a row contributing buildings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries across the street as well.

PROJECT HISTORY:

On November 10, 2021, a COA was approved for the rehabilitation of 351-355 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. The scope of work was the same as mentioned above in this report. The HDBR Decision was as follows:

“The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby approve the petition for rehabilitation of the property located at 351 and 355 Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd., as requested, because the work is visually compatible and meets the standards.”

The project started but has only been partially completed. The COA expired on November 10, 2023, and thus, the Petitioner is reapplying for the same work that has already been approved, to complete the work.

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.*

The standard is met. The historic character of the property is to be retained and preserved.

***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 standard is met. The historic features are to be repaired in-kind rather than replaced.

***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.*

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 proposed materials, textures, and colors for this rehabilitation project are visually compatible and have all been previously approved in the earlier COA. Staff still finds that the standard is met.

The following standards from the Sec 7.8 - Savannah Downtown Historic District Ordinance apply:

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.

Exterior walls, Alterations to contributing resources.

Exterior Walls, Finishes and Treatments.

Color changes to contributing resources shall be historically appropriate.

The color change to the brick has taken place under the first COA and meets the standard. However, the original application notes that the windows will be painted Sherwin Williams Tricorn Black and currently they are painted the same color as the brick. Staff spoke with the applicants about this, and they confirmed that they would like to keep everything the same color. Staff finds that this modification to the original color scheme still meets the standard.

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.

The doors were in varying condition on both sides of 351 and 355. Any replacement doors were replaced with the previously approved Marvin Ultimate Wood Doors. Some of this work is still in progress.

Commercial Storefronts, Alterations to contributing resources.

Original storefronts 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 storefront shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original.

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

The standard is met. The former deteriorated storefront window system was replaced with a new wood storefront system. The original proposal was to paint it Sherwin Williams “Tricorn SW 6258” but at this time, it is the same color as the repainted brick. As with the windows, staff spoke with the applicants who noted that instead of painting the storefronts black, they would like to keep it all the same color. The standard is met.

Also approved was the addition of new custom wood brackets on the side of the new storefront, which is one of the project elements still in need of completion with a renewed COA.

Roofs, Contributing Resources.

Roofs, Configuration.

Original roof configuration shall be maintained.

Skylights, roof decks, pergolas and roof vents shall be permitted only on the roof plane opposite the street, or when screened from public view and shall not damage or obscure character-defining features.

Dormers shall not damage or obscure character-defining features and shall reinforce the existing historic window pattern.

The standard is met. The previous COA [21-005907-COA] approved the proposed TPO roof replacement. Configuration is not to change. A new black metal coping is also proposed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the request to renew the previously approved COA for 351-355 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, as requested because the work is visually compatible and meets the standards.

MW: JM: CC

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.