



S A V A N N A H   H I S T O R I C   D I S T R I C T  

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**B O A R D   O F   R E V I E W**

**REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

**Petitioner:** Homeline Architecture  
**MPC File No.:** 24-004954-COA  
**Address:** 422 East Charlton Street  
**PIN:** 20014 17008  
**Zoning:** D-R  
**Staff Reviewer:** Caitlin Chamberlain  
**Date:** October 9, 2024

**NATURE OF REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting approval to install an elevator addition on the rear elevation of 422 East Charlton Street.

**CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:**

422 East Charlton is part of eight connected rowhomes constructed in 1882 and known as McDonough Row. It is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. The entire row has an easement from the Historic Savannah Foundation. Easement properties must first obtain approval from HSF prior to applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

In the 1960s, the property was part of two rows of 19<sup>th</sup> century houses that were saved and privately restored using Federal Housing Authority loans as part of an Urban Renewal program. The Georgia Historic Resources Survey sheet notes that alterations were made to the buildings in 1950, 1968, 1972, and an extensive renovation of all units in 1988, although specific details of the work were not provided.

**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 proposal includes removal of three windows- one on each floor. Staff believes the current windows could date to either the 1972 or 1988 rehabilitations, based on observation from the street and old photos. When comparing the current configuration of the rear elevations of the row to a photo from circa 1960s (prior to restoration), one thing that stands out is that the third story windows within the blind arches changed from a window pair to a single window. The narrow side window openings are not closed off, in contrast to the faux windows seen on most of the units currently (or not at all in a few cases). These details give the impression that the rear configuration has been changed during the restorations that occurred in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

While removing these windows would not be eliminating historic materials, the windowsills and a portion of the wall on each level would also be removed to accommodate the openings needed for the elevator. Staff finds that this is the minimal amount of removal required for the project and that overall, the stucco and scoring on the wall would remain intact. Even though this is a largely a replication of the original, the historic character still exists and would overall not be completely destroyed.

***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.*

***Secretary of the Interior's Standards 5– Distinctive Features.*** *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*

The standards are met. The elevator is proposed to blend in with the same color stucco, but it will not be scored like what is seen on the walls. This will help prevent a false assumption that this is part of the building. There are no other such additions on the rest of the row, further suggesting it is not historic. An elevator is not a conjectural feature on a building from the 1880s.

***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.*

There will be some demolition as part of the project but based on the pre-restoration era photograph, it appears that the rear elevations were subject to a restoration effort that did not follow exactly what had been there previously. For this reason, staff finds the standard is met.

***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.*

Although there is some demolition involved with expanding the window openings, it is minimal and could be reinstalled, along with appropriate windows to reverse the addition.

***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.*

There will be a window opening on each level of the elevator addition. The narrower window style is seen on the rear elevation and is visually compatible with these. Since the addition is still within one bay, the narrower windows are proportional to the project and the historic building.

***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 meet the standards and include:

- Argos 2-part stucco in “Magnolia Buff” sand finish
- Marvin ultimate G2 aluminum clad double hung windows in “Stone White”

***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.*

The addition does not overpower the rear elevation and stays below the roofline. The standard is met for the overall scale of the addition.

***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.*

***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 with the rectangular windows.

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

Windows are double hung.

*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.*

The standard is met.

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

These are not being proposed.

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

The standard is met.

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

The inset is 4". The standard is met.

*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.*

The standard is met.

***Windows, Materials.***

*Window casings and sashes shall be made of metal, wood or clad wood material.*

The material is aluminum clad. The standard is met.

*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.*

The standard is met.

***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.*

This is proposed to be on the rear façade.

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

The standard is met.

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

The addition will not obscure the overall scoring on the stucco nor the blind arch feature. Non-historic windows will be removed.

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

The standard is met.

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

The standard is met.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

**Approve the request to install an elevator addition on the rear elevation of 422 East Charlton Street as requested because the project 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.**