



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: Josh Ward

MPC File No.: 26-001288-COA

Address: 404 East Liberty Street

PIN: 20015 18012

Zoning: D-R

Staff Reviewer: Alexander Merced

Date: April 8, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant would like to construct a new two-story carriage house with an accessory dwelling unit on the lane behind 404 East Liberty Street. This application has been submitted in conjunction with the nearly identical application for 402 East Liberty Street immediately next door which also seeks to build a new two-story carriage house with an accessory dwelling unit. These two proposed units will be connected, as the owners of each property agreed to build at the same time with the same contractor, and the units are intended to read as architecturally unified, similar to the primary structures on each property. It should also be noted that the application includes the demolition of the current non-contributing and non-significant cinderblock two-car garage on the lane.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The building was constructed in 1882 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. It is part of a set of connected rowhouses built in the Italianate style in the 1880's, all of which are contributing. The lane behind the house has no contributing secondary structures, although there are four other ADU carriage houses in addition to numerous other non-contributing garage structures. With that being said, the proposed ADU would be visually related to 242 Habersham Street, a contributing rowhouse which fronts Habersham but abuts the lane immediately across from the proposed ADU.



1. View looking east down the lane, green arrow showing the proposed ADU location and yellow arrow showing the contributing 242 Habersham



2. Existing ADU across the lane



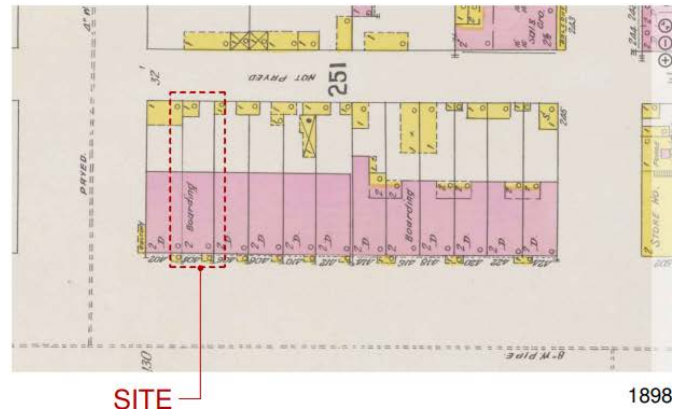
3. Existing adjacent ADU behind 406 E Liberty

Sanborn Maps

According to historic Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, there were secondary structures abutting the lane going back to at least 1888. With various alterations along the way, the maps show this being the case all the way to at least 1953. Subsequent maps as recent as 1973 show that at some point after 1953 these structures were demolished, indicating that the current garages are not original.

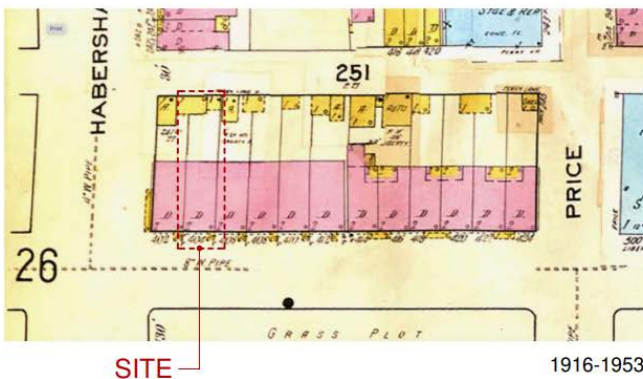


1888

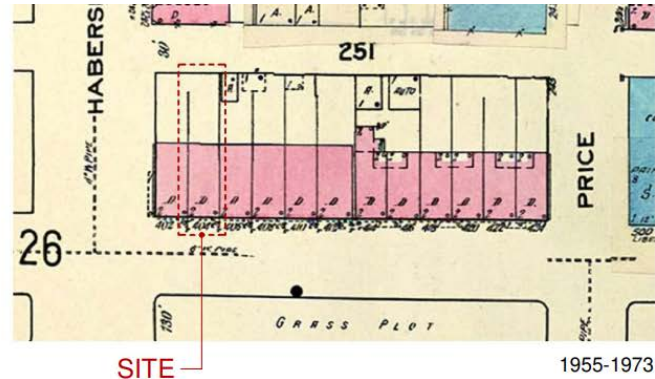


1898

4. 1888 and 1898 Sanborn Maps showing secondary structures on the lane



1916-1953



1955-1973

5. 1916 through 1973 Sanborn Maps showing the eventual demolition of the secondary structures

FINDINGS:

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

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.*

Height. *New construction shall be permitted to build to the number of stories as shown on the “Savannah Downtown Historic District Height Map,” referred to herein as “Height Map,” and the overall height of a building and the height of individual components of a building or structure shall be visually compatible to the contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

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.*

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.*

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.*

Walls of continuity. *Brick walls, wrought iron fences, landscape masses, building facades, or combinations of these shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings, structures and objects to which they are visually related and shall form continuous walls of enclosure along the street.*

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.*

All of the above standards are met.

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.

Height. *The number of stories as shown on the Height Map shall be permitted. Variances from the Height Map shall not be permitted.*

The ADU will be two-stories as permitted in the height map and prescribed in the ordinance. The standard is met.

Building Form. *Building form is based on the height, mass and envelope of a building. The proposed building form for new construction shall comply with the following:*

A proposed building located on an east-west through street shall utilize a contributing building form fronting the same street within the same ward or in an adjacent ward.

A proposed building located on a trust block which fronts into a tithing block shall utilize a contributing building form within such trust block. If, however, no contributing buildings exist on such trust block, a contributing building form from the tithing block across the street shall be utilized.

A proposed building located on a trust block which fronts another trust block shall utilize a contributing building form from the same trust block. If, however, no contributing building exists on the trust block, a contributing building form from the trust block across the street shall be utilized. If, however, no contributing building exists on such trust block, a contributing building form from the tithing block across the street shall be utilized.

The ADU will abut a lane instead of a street so the previous standards do not apply, however, there are multiple other contributing carriage houses and ADUs that inform the design of this one.



6. Carriage house & ADU in adjacent ward



7. Carriage house & ADU in adjacent ward

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

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

Foundations, Configuration. Beneath a wood frame building, the foundation shall be recessed and not project forward of the building plane.

The ADU will be constructed of brick. The standard does not apply.

Foundations, Materials.

Foundations piers shall be constructed of brick, stone, or true stucco over concrete block piers.

The space between piers may be filled with wood lattice, horizontal boards, brick, or true stucco over concrete block. Infill material shall be recessed a minimum of

three (3) inches behind the front edge of the pier so that the piers are clearly visible and differentiated.

No foundation piers will be visible. The standard does not apply.

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

Exterior Walls, Configuration. *On lots less than 60 feet in width the front face shall be constructed so as to form a continuous plane parallel to the street. Bays and porches attached to such elevation may project streetward of the plane.*

The standard is met.

Exterior Walls, Permitted Materials.

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

The exterior walls will be made of brick with the projecting bay window made of smooth fiber cement. The standard is met.

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 standard is 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 brick will be uncolored. The standard does not apply.

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.*

The standard is met.

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

The entrance door will be made of wood. The standard is met.

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.*

The standard is met.

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.

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

The ADU does not face a street, so the above standards do not apply. However, two windows will be double hung and the third will be casement. Additionally, the windows also meet the vertical to horizontal ratio.

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.

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

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

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 above standards are met.

Bay windows shall extend to the ground unless they are oriel, beveled or are supported by brackets.

The bay window will be oriel that is supported by brackets. The standard is met.

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.

Marvin Ultimate Series aluminum clad wood windows will be used, which are an approved style for new construction in the district. The above standards are met.

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 will be flat with a parapet that will utilize a TPO membrane roofing system. The standard is met.

Accessory Structures. *Accessory structures, including accessory dwellings, shall comply with the Visual Compatibility Criteria, the above design standards, the requirements set forth in Sec. 8.7, Accessory Structures and Uses, except as provided below:*

Accessory Structures, Configuration. *Accessory structures shall be located in the rear yard even if there is no lane access.*

The height and mass of the primary building shall not be exceeded by any accessory building or structure on the same parcel.

The primary building is 23'8" tall at its lowest eave, and the ADU will be 22 feet tall. Additionally, the footprint of the primary building is 940 square feet and the footprint of the ADU will be 376 square feet. The standard is met.

Accessory buildings and structures shall not be more than two (2) stories tall.

The ADU will be two (2) stories tall. The standard is met.

New accessory dwellings and garages may have up to a five (5) foot lane setback to allow a turning radius into the garage.

The ADU will have an 11.5-inch setback from the lane. The standard is met.

Roofs shall be side gable, hip with parapet, flat or shed hidden by a parapet.

The roof will be flat with a parapet. The standard is met.

Accessory Structures, Doors and Openings.

Where garage doors front streets or are adjacent to sidewalks, they shall resemble carriage house doors.

This specific unit is not adjacent to a sidewalk. However, since it will be connected to the carriage house behind 402 E Liberty and the two will read as a single carriage house, the standard does apply, and is met.

Garage openings shall not exceed 12 feet in width.

The garage door will measure 7 feet tall by 9 feet 10.5 inches wide. The standard is met.

The following standards from the Sec 8.7 - Accessory Structures and Uses apply:

Accessory Structures and Uses, Generally. All accessory structures and uses shall be consistent with all standards of the base zoning district (Article 5.0), any applicable overlay district (Article 7.0) and any applicable use standards (Article 8.0), except as expressly set forth below. Accessory structure and uses shall:

Be accessory and clearly incidental and subordinate to a permitted principal use. No accessory use may be established on a site prior to the establishment of a permitted principal use.

Be located on the same property as the principal use or structure.

Not involve uses or structures not in keeping with the character of the principal use or principal structure served.

Be located within a district that permits the principal use.

Not be erected in any required setback area, except as expressly set forth in this Ordinance.

Shipping containers and tractor trailers shall be prohibited as storage buildings or structures except as permitted on an active construction site of in Industrial zoning districts (see Article 8.8, Temporary Uses).

A parcel shall include only one accessory dwelling unit or one caretaker's dwelling unit.

The above standards are met.

Accessory Structures. Accessory structures, not to include accessory dwelling units, are allowed in all zoning districts and shall be subject to the following requirements, except as expressly provided elsewhere in the Section:

Accessory Structures, Location. Accessory structures shall be located in the side (interior) yard or rear yard of the principal building.

The ADU will be in the rear yard of the principal building. The standard is met.

Accessory Structures, Height. The height of an accessory building shall not exceed the height of the principal building in a Residential district or where otherwise prohibited by this Ordinance.

The primary building is 23'8" tall at its lowest eave, and the ADU will be 22 feet tall. The standard is met.

Accessory Structures, Building Coverage. Within all zoning districts, accessory structures shall be included in the calculations for maximum building coverage.

The D-R zoning allows a 75% max building coverage. The proposed building coverage will be 73.8%. The standard is met

Accessory Structures, Size, Residential Districts. Within residential zoning districts, the floor area of an accessory structure shall not exceed 40% floor area of the principal building.

The footprint of the primary building is 940 square feet and the footprint of the ADU will be 376 square feet which is exactly 40%. The standard is met.

Accessory Dwelling Units (not including Caretaker's Dwelling Unit). One (1) accessory dwelling unit shall be permitted as an accessory use to a principal dwelling located in the A-1, RSF-, RTF-, RMF-, TR-, TN-, TC-, D- and PD districts. Such use is not required to be included in the gross residential density calculations. Manufactured homes, shipping containers, recreational vehicles, and travel trailers shall not be used as accessory dwelling units. For such use, the following shall apply:

Accessory Dwelling Units, Location.

The unit may be attached to or detached from the principal dwelling.

Detached accessory dwelling units shall meet the same side-yard setback requirement as the principal structure. Such units shall be separated from the principal structure by at least 10 feet.

The ADU will be detached and will be separated from the principal structure by 24 feet 8 inches. The above standards are met.

Accessory Dwelling Units, Building Size.

The building footprint of the accessory dwelling unit shall be a maximum of 40% of the building footprint of the principal dwelling not to exceed 700 square feet.

As stated previously, the footprint of the primary building is 940 square feet and the footprint of the ADU will be 376 square feet which is exactly 40%. The standard is met.

The accessory dwelling unit shall contain no more than one (1) bedroom.

The ADU will have one (1) bedroom. The standard is met.

Accessory Dwelling Units, Architectural Style. Such use shall be designed in a similar architectural style as the principal dwelling. If the site is located within an overlay district, the standards of the overlay district shall apply.

The standard is met.

Accessory Dwelling Units, Height.

Accessory dwelling units shall not exceed 25 feet or the height of the principal building, whichever is less.

The ADU will be 22 feet tall. The standard is met.

Any portion of an accessory dwelling unit over 15 feet in height shall be located at least 15 feet from a rear property line that does not abut a lane.

The ADU abuts a lane. The standard does not apply.

Staff Report - Certificate of Appropriateness
MPC File No. 26-001288-COA
404 E. Liberty St.
April 8, 2026

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the proposed accessory dwelling unit for 404 East Liberty Street as requested because the work is visually compatible and meets the standards.

MW: CC: APM

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.