



SAVANNAH HISTORIC DISTRICT BOARD OF REVIEW

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Petitioner: Hansen Architects, Patrick Phelps

MPC File No.: 26-001293-COA

Address: 350 Bull Street

PIN: 20032 06011

Zoning: D-R

Staff Reviewer: Caitlin Chamberlain

Date: April 8, 2026

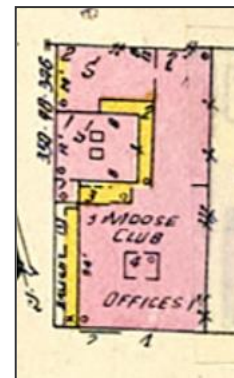
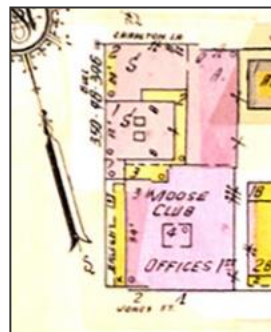
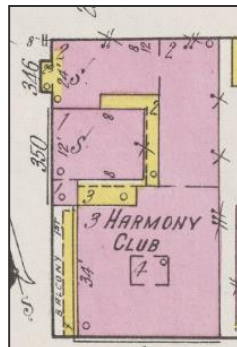
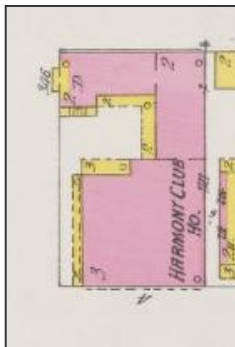
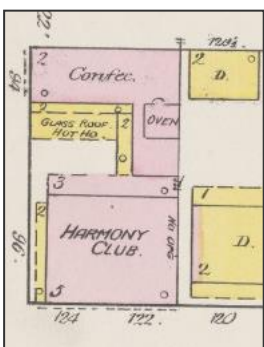
NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval for a rehabilitation and alterations project on the building located at 350 Bull Street, also referred to as Morris Hall of the Savannah College of Art and Design. The project seeks to return a storefront configuration to the building. The scope of work includes the removal of four (4) windows on the left side of the front elevation and door system of front entrance, to replace with a custom fabricated three-bay wood storefront and new custom wood door within the existing openings, with paint to match existing.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

350 Bull Street is partially contributing, with the main part of the building constructed circa 1853, and the smaller addition is noted as non-contributing. The non-contributing part of the building connects to the larger portion of Morris Hall, at 2-4 East Jones Street.

The building has undergone a variety of alterations over time and based on historic photos provided in the application, the façade where the work is proposed is among the areas with the changes.



Map years from left to right: 1888, 1898, 1916, 1953, 1973.

The Sanborn Maps help tell the story of the evolution of the building. It is attributed to renowned architect John S. Norris, where the main portion of the building faces Jones Street. The small rear area on the building was functioning as a confectionary in 1888, was a dwelling by 1898, and then noted as a shop in 1916. It is not until the 1950 map that the middle section is seen. It remained unchanged through the 1973 map.

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 historic character of the property has been altered with a variety of changes over time. Older photos show how much the rear original building section and the non-contributing middle section look very different, including a stepped gable design on the middle section, and a projecting bay on the older section of the building. Another photo provided by the applicant clearly shows a storefront configuration on this part of the building. To return this to a storefront would be appropriate and would help restore a version, though not identical, of the historic configuration.

***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.*

This would not be a false sense of history, as much of the exterior fabric has already been changed.

***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.*

The current form of the building with the multiple changes do not appear to have gained historical significance. The Georgia Historic Resources Survey notes that the whole building underwent renovations in the 1980s, which may be the time that the façade of the rear building section was changed as well.

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.

Based on older photos, the distinctive features of anything on the rear connected outbuilding section have been changed. Even what is seen in the photos does not appear to be original to 1853. The proposed work will return a semblance of the storefront configuration. Further, the work will not impact the main historic building at 2-4 East Jones Street where much of the historic integrity remains intact.

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 front façade. The relationship of the width of a building or structure to the height of its front facade shall be visually compatible to the contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.

The proposed changes appropriately meet the standard.

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.

The change to storefront windows will remain balanced. The door opening to the right of the storefront windows will not be changed but rather, curved doors to match the arched entryway will be brought forward instead of in a recessed configuration. The standard is met.

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 standard is met. A custom fabricated wood storefront, painted to match the existing trim is appropriate as well as the custom-made wood doors that will fit within the arched opening.

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.

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.

Though the arched doorway is not original as seen in photos, the inclusion of custom-made wood doors to fit into this opening is appropriate.

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 storefront will be returned to a variation of its earlier configuration. A complete replica would not be feasible due to the projecting bay of this part of the building that has long since been removed. The storefront design is respectful to the historic photos as well as the surrounding historic context.

Staff Report - Certificate of Appropriateness
MPC File No. 26-001293-COA
350 Bull St.
April 8, 2026

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the request for a rehabilitation and alterations project on the building located at 350 Bull Street as requested because the work is visually compatible and meets the standards.

MW: 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.