



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: SpeediSign, Flint North

MPC File No.: 26-001295-COA

Address: 127 Fahm Street

PIN: 20016 18006

Zoning: D-X

Staff Reviewer: Alexander Merced

Date: April 8, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant would like to install illuminated and non-illuminated signage on two brick façades of the building at 127 Fahm Street.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The building was constructed between 2013-2015 and is a non-contributing resource within the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. Most recently a Family Dollar, it sits across from two 1960's buildings that have been designated contributing: the 1965 Greyhound bus station, and the 1964 Thunderbird Inn motel, to the east and southeast respectively. Aside from these relatively modern structures, it sits in a mostly non-contributing and non-residential area off of downtown, including a vacant lot to the south, and a gas station to the west.



1. Contributing Greyhound bus station built in 1965



2. Contributing Thunderbird Inn Motel built in 1964

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.

Signs. Signs, where permitted, shall be visually compatible with contributing buildings and structures to which they are visually related.

The building is located in an area west of MLK, inside the local overlay but outside of the National Historic Landmark district. This area has far less historic character than the rest of downtown, and these signs fit the area. Aside from the two mid-century modern structures that have been designated as contributing, there are no other contributing structures that this building is visually related to. The standard is met.

Savannah Downtown Historic Sign District. The Savannah Downtown Historic Sign District shall include any area location within the Savannah Downtown Historic Overlay District, with the exception of City Market, Broughton Street, Factors Walk, and Plant Riverside Sign Districts.

Signs Allowed in Historic Special Sign Districts. Sign types in historic special sign districts shall be allowed in accordance with the following table. Regardless of sign type, with the

exception of decorative pole signs and signs painted on walls, non-illuminated signs that are three (3) square feet in size or less shall be permitted without a sign permit (COA).

Special Sign Standards for the Savannah Downtown Historic, City Market, Broughton Street, Factors Walk and Neighborhood Sign Districts.

Sign Illumination.

Signs shall not be illuminated unless specifically indicated below.

Where illumination is permitted, reverse silhouette or “cut-out” letters are encouraged to reduce glare where back lighting is applied.

The illuminated signage will be reverse channel letters. The standard is met.

Restrictions on Materials.

Signs using reflective paint, lettering or graphics; and

Paper, cardboard and dry erase boards shall not be used as materials for signs.

The above standards are met.

Ground, Projecting and Wall Signs.

Savannah Downtown Historic and City Market Sign Districts.

Ground, Projecting and Wall Signs. Only one (1) ground, projecting or wall sign shall be permitted for each business establishment. Where a business establishment fronts on more than one (1) street or pedestrian walkway providing public access to the establishment, one (1) wall or projecting sign for each frontage providing public access shall be permitted.

The current proposal has more than one wall sign and therefore staff cannot recommend approval as is. However, the applicant has indicated that they plan on applying for a variance in order to allow for their proposed number of signs. Once applied for, staff can support approval due to the fact that the building is quite large and is outside of the downtown core in an area with much less existing historic character than the rest of the district.

The aggregate sign area shall not exceed a size of more than one (1) square foot of sign area per linear foot of lot frontage along a given street or shall meet the following size requirements, whichever is the most restrictive:

D-C, D-CBD, D-X, I-L, I-LT Zoning Districts:

40 sq. ft.: Wall sign (max)

In addition to the above maximum sign size requirements for buildings with over 75 feet of lot frontage, one (1) additional square foot of wall sign area shall be allowed for every two (2) linear feet of building frontage within the D-CBD, D-C and D-X districts.

On the Oglethorpe Street façade, there is 174.3 linear feet of lot frontage and 80 linear feet of building frontage. The proposed signage has a total area of 36.36 square feet. The standard is met.

On the Fahm Street façade, there is 162.4 linear feet of lot frontage and 100 linear feet of building frontage. This means that, according to the above standard for buildings with over 75

feet of lot frontage, this side of the building is granted at least 12.5 square feet additional signage space, for a maximum of 52.5 square feet. The proposed signage is 52.09 square feet. The standard is met.

Wall and projecting signs shall be erected only on the signable area of the structure and shall not project over the roofline or parapet wall elevation of the structure.

Wall signs shall be mounted flat to a wall of the façade of the building.

Ground, projecting and wall signs in D-C, D-CBD, D-X, I-L, and I-LT districts may be illuminated in accordance with Sec. 9.9.6 and 9.9.17.g.i.

All of the above standards are met.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Continue the proposed signage project for 127 Fahm Street to the May 13, 2026, Historic District Board of Review meeting in order to allow the applicant time to apply for the necessary variance to increase the number of wall signs.

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.