



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: Cook Architecture, Scott Cook

MPC File No.: 26-003519-COA

Address: 111 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

PIN: 2006 22003

Zoning: D-CBD

Staff Reviewer: Alexander Merced

Date: August 12, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant would like to rehabilitate and alter the building at 111 MLK Boulevard. The scope of work includes:

Front (east) façade: replace all existing windows, including storefront windows, repair the existing wood cornice in-kind, changing one window opening into an exit door opening.

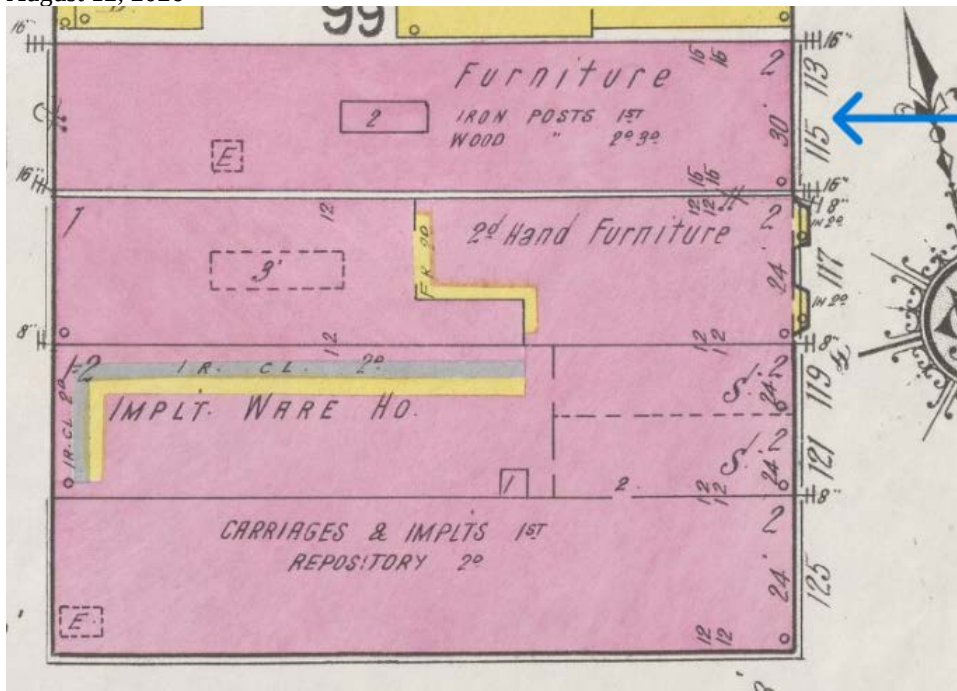
Rear (west) façade: infilling former window and door openings with brick, building a new concrete ramp and railing, and installing a new door.

Side (south) façade: introduction of five new doors and door openings, introduction of nine new windows and window openings, a new wood framed entrance portico, and new awnings over the door openings.

The roof will also be replaced, but as it is a flat roof and is not visible from the public right-of-way, it is not within the scope of our review.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The building was constructed in 1900 and is a non-contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. It sits midblock on the west side of MLK Boulevard and is bordered by an empty courtyard space to the south, created by the demolition of a similar building at some time between 2022 and 2024, and a contributor to the north, which is a mid-century modern building originally built as a Greyhound Bus station. It is otherwise surrounded by mostly non-contributors.



1. 1916 Sanborn Map with the subject property at the top of the image

Although the building was built within the period of significance, it is labeled as a non-contributor because of alterations that have occurred over the years, mainly the stucco infill of the second story windows on the front façade. According to the Georgia Historic Resources survey, this was already present by 1994. Also, the survey indicates that at that time there was a central aluminum framed three-panel window in that space. This has since been removed and replaced with the five separate double hung windows that currently exist.



2. Image from 1998 with subject building to the left showing double hung windows either non-existent or boarded



3. Also from 1998 showing the boarded or non-existent second floor windows

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.

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 are two other contributing structures on the block, one of which is a mid-century modern building and the other of which is more contemporary with the subject property. The proportion of the windows will be visually compatible with the contemporary contributor as well as the other contemporary non-contributors it is visually related to. The criterion is met.

Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projection. *The relationship of entrances, porch projections, and walkways to buildings or structures shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings and structures to which they are visually related.*

The new proposed entrance and doors will be located on the south façade of the building which faces the small courtyard and will be visible although it does not front the street on the main façade. However, this entrance and the doors will still be visually compatible with those of all of the surrounding structures, contributing and non-contributing. The criterion 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 front and rear (east and west) facades have already been painted and will receive fresh coats of paint with minor variations on accents. The south façade is raw brick which will remain unpainted. It will also receive four fabric awnings. The colors, materials, and textures proposed are all common in the district and will be visually compatible. The criterion is 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.

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

Exterior Walls, Permitted Materials.

Residential exterior walls shall be finished in brick, wood, or fiber cement siding with a smooth finish or true stucco. Commercial exterior walls shall be finished in brick, true stucco, concrete formed or assembled as stone, precast concrete panels with finish to simulate stucco texture, polished stone and glazed brick or tile where similar historic examples exist along the same block front.

Where there are new windows and doors proposed on the side façade, each will have a new brick soldier infill over a steel header and a brick rowlock sill under the windows. On the rear façade, the currently boarded second floor window openings and accent window opening above will be

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infilled with brick in order to match the already brick infilled first floor windows, as will the existing rear door. The brick will be inset ½ inch and the headers and sills will be retained and visible, as they are in the former first floor window openings. 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.

SW6147 – Panda White will be used for the main brick color while SW6148 – Wool Skein will be used as an accent color. These soft off-white colors are compatible with the block and widely used throughout the district. It is important to note that the brick that is proposed to be painted already has paint on it, and the side façade with the remaining raw unpainted brick will not be touched. Staff recommends that a masonry safe paint is used to maintain the integrity of the painted brick as best as possible. The standard is met.

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

Location, None of the above. *If none of the above conditions apply, the building entrance shall be consistent with contributing buildings within the context.*

The front entrance door will be replaced and one additional fire door will be added on the right side of the façade in place of what is currently a storefront window. On the side façade there will be a total of five new sets of double doors with transoms leading out to the open courtyard space, one of which will have sidelights and a portico with composite column wraps, composite trim, and standing seam metal roofing. The rear façade currently has a hollow metal double door in the middle. This is proposed to be filled in with brick and a new hollow metal exit door be installed on the left side of the façade. The doors being used are in proper scale and context with the surrounding area and are visually compatible. The standard is met.

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 plans indicate that the new door in the front will be recessed 4 inches. Staff recommends that the applicant clarifies that the rest of the new doors will be recessed by at least 3 inches.

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

The doors on the front and rear facades will be steel, as will the side façade door with the portico above it. The other four side façade doors will be clad 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.*

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 street facing windows will not have their dimensions altered and will all be double hung. The above standards are met.

The centerline of window and door openings shall align vertically on the primary façade.

The standard is met.

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.

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

The above standards are met.

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

The front façade windows will maintain their existing trim, and the new side façade windows will have brick trim as noted previously. 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 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.

Paired or grouped windows shall be permitted, provided the individual sashes have a vertical to horizontal ratio of not less than 5:3.

The new side façade windows will not face any adjacent contributing buildings, but they will still be spaced at a distance that is compatible with other contemporary historic buildings. The window spacing will be compatible with the building across the courtyard which, although it is also a non-contributor, is a contemporary building of similar construction. The above standards are met.

Windows, Materials.

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

The operable windows will be made of clad wood, and the storefront windows will be made of metal. 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.

Solid vinyl windows shall be prohibited.

The above standards are met.

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

Commercial Storefronts, Configuration.

The first story of a commercial building (except buildings with offices on the ground floor) shall be designed as storefront.

Storefront area glazing shall be not less than 55% of surface area. Such glazing shall be transparent; provided, however, opaque glass may be used in the storefront window transoms. Storefront glazing shall extend from the sill or from an 18-24 inch base of contrasting design or material to the lintel.

The configuration of the existing storefront will not be changed.

Storefront glazing in subdivided sashes shall be inset a minimum of four (4) inches from the face of the building; provided, however, that continuously glazed storefronts may be flush with the face of the building.

The standard is met.

Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Porticos, Exterior Stairs and Decks - New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources and additions. Porches, stoops, balconies, porticos, and exterior stairs within the public right-of-way may be permitted with the approval of the encroachment by the Mayor and Aldermen and provided that the following criteria are met:

Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Porticos, Exterior Stairs and Decks - Configuration.

Wood portico posts shall have cap and base molding. The column capital shall extend outward of the porch architrave.

The standard is met.

Balusters shall be placed between upper and lower rails, and the distances between balusters shall not exceed four (4) inches on center. The height of the railing shall not exceed 36 inches for single- and two-family dwelling units.

The new entrance ramp on the rear façade will have metal railings that are 3 inches on center. This is a commercial building so the 36 inch height limit does not apply. The standard is met.

Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Porticos, Exterior Stairs and Decks - Materials.

Porch elements shall be constructed of brick, painted or stained wood, wood composite, precast stone, marble, sandstone or slate.

The portico columns will be composite. The standard is met.

Supported front porticos shall be constructed of wood unless the proposed material matches other facade details on the same building, such as terra cotta, marble, or metal.

The portico is on the side façade. The standard does not apply.

Awnings, Canopies, and Shade Structures. *Awnings, canopies and shade structures within the public right-of-way may be permitted with the approval of the encroachment by the Mayor and Aldermen and provided that the following criteria are met:*

Awnings, Canopies, and Shade Structures, Configuration.

Installations extending above the public right-of-way shall have a minimum vertical clearance of eight (8) feet above the sidewalk.

The awnings will have a clearance of 9'7.5". The standard is met.

Awnings and canopies shall be integrated structurally and architecturally into the design of the façade.

Installations shall not obscure the character-defining features of historic façades.

Back-lit (internally lit) awnings shall be prohibited.

Awnings shall not connect two (2) facades.

The above standards are met.

Awnings, Canopies, and Shade Structures, Materials.

Installations shall be constructed of canvas, other equivalent cloth, metal, or glass.

Supports shall consist of metal or wood. PVC shall not be permitted.

The awnings will be made of cloth with metal framing. The standards are met.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the rehab and alteration of 111 MLK Boulevard with the following conditions because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards.

- 1. Use a masonry safe paint on the front and rear facades in order to preserve the integrity of the underlying brick.**
- 2. Ensure that the new doors on the south façade are recessed at least 3 inches.**

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.