



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: GMShey Architects, Patrick Shay

MPC File No.: 23-002293-COA

Address: 301 West Bay Street

PIN: 20016 02001

Zoning: D-CBD

Staff Reviewer: Jodie Brown, AICP

Date: August 12, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting to amend an existing active COA to eliminate some previously approved changes to an existing building. Additionally, a proposed fire stair will be relocated to the exterior of the existing non-historic rooftop addition.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

Located at the southwest corner of Bay and Jefferson Streets, the building is located in the Franklin Ward. The red brick building was originally constructed as a 3-story wholesale grocery building. At some point, in the early 2000s, a smaller gable roof addition was constructed on top of the building.

The subject building is listed as a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District.

FINDINGS:

The following standards from §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 applicant is requesting an amendment to a previously approved project that entailed work at the roof top level. An existing non-historic roof top addition would be maintained in the current condition. The only significant change would be the location of the exterior stair which would be located on the west side set back (approximately 18') from the north façade. The historic character will be maintained, and the work is consistent with Standard 2.

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.*

The existing roof top addition appears to be sheathed in stucco which helps distinguish it from the historic brick building. While the windows will be maintained as rounded tops which match those on the historic portion, the gable roof and the stucco finish maintain a physical record of the later construction. The work is consistent with Standard 3.

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.*

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 existing materials will be maintained on the building. The new element will be located on the west side of the building setback from the north elevation. The exterior stair will be relocated from the interior to this location. It would be sheathed with horizontal cedar siding and placed below screened mechanical equipment that was previously approved. Visibility of the exterior stair will be limited. The proposed work is consistent with this criterion.

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 smith 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.

The existing exterior walls are sheathed in stucco and the proposed stair addition will use horizontal wood siding. Cladding in wood differentiates the new construction from the 2000s and historic portions. The proposed work is consistent with this historic district design standard.

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 applicant is not proposing to use any prohibited material. The proposed work is consistent with this historic district design standard.

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 wood exterior would be stained. The stain color was previously approved. The proposed work is consistent with this historic district design standard.

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.

The doors that were previously approved for replacement will be maintained as they currently exist. The proposed work is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Windows, Alterations to contributing resources.

Windows shall be repaired rather than replaced, provided however, if the degree of degradation does not allow repair, the degradation of each window shall be photographically documented and verified by the Planning Director, and the new window shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original (including single-glazed and true-divided lights, when appropriate).

The windows that were previously approved for replacement will be maintained as they currently exist. The proposed work is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Staff Report - Certificate of Appropriateness
MPC File No. 26-002293-COA (Amendment)
301 West Bay Street
August 12, 2026

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE amendment to the previously approved project and the relocation of the exterior stair for the property located at 301 West Bay Street **AS SUBMITTED** because the work is visually compatible and meets the standards.

MW: CC: JB

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.