



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: Paul Bush

MPC File No.: 25-005014-COA

Address: 318 East Huntingdon St.

PIN: 20032 50013

Zoning: D-R

Staff Reviewer: Rohan Urs

Date: February 11, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant requests after-the-fact approval for exterior alterations to a contributing structure, including enclosure of an upper-level rear porch and expansion of an existing rear deck area, for the property located at 318 East Huntingdon Street. The work already completed includes the installation of new exterior wall materials, windows, and a rear door, resulting in an increase in building area and alteration of the rear building form. The improvements have been substantially completed prior to approval by the Board. This work was cited by the City's Code Compliance Department.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The subject property is located within the Downtown Historic District in an area characterized by contributing residential structures dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Buildings in the surrounding context commonly feature open rear porches, balconies, and decks that are secondary in character to the primary street facing façades. These rear elements are traditionally constructed of wood and maintain an open and lightweight appearance consistent with historic development patterns in the district.

318 East Huntingdon Street was built in 1895 and is a contributing resource in the local overlay and the National Historic Landmark District. It is a large three-story brick duplex, connected to 320 East Huntingdon Street along the corner lot on Huntingdon Street and Habersham Street. The rear porch area is visible from the vantage point of Habersham Street. Sanborn Maps show that there was a wooden one-story porch that went across the rear of both 318 and 320, but it appears that 320 has also modified theirs with a partial enclosure, but they maintained visibility of the earlier configuration showing decorative wooden arches (also seen in photos provided by the applicant).

Google Street View images from 2016 and 2017 show what the rear porch looked like, in part, before the enclosure work began. In these images, the decorative wood porch elements can be

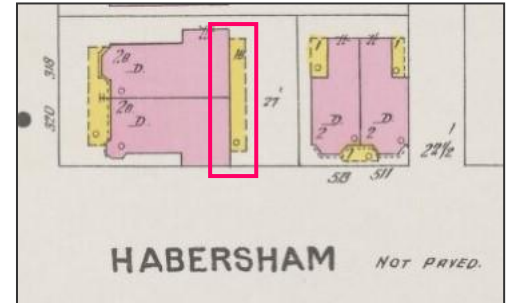
seen. These are still in existence but have now been enclosed with the current work that has taken place.



April 2016 Street View



February 2017 Street View



1898 Sanborn Map

PROJECT HISTORY:

This project was first presented at the November 12, 2025, Historic District Board of Review meeting where it was continued to allow the applicant time to provide more details about the current status of the project to be able to make an informed decision, as follows:

The Savannah Downtown Board of Review does hereby continue the petition for 318 East Huntingdon Street, for a period not to exceed ninety (90) days, to allow the applicant to submit detailed product specifications, visual documentation, and clarifications necessary to evaluate visual compatibility and conformance with the Historic District ordinance.

In the time since the November meeting, the applicant has provided some updated photographs and conversations with the architect, Paul Bush, have provided some of the requested clarification, but staff still found that there were unanswered questions and inappropriate materials being proposed.

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.

Standard 2 – Historic Record

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 enclosure of the rear porch alters the historic open character of a secondary porch element and changes the rear building form. While rear alterations may be appropriate under certain

circumstances, the materials used in the enclosure are not consistent with the requirements for contributing resources within the district.

Standard 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 shall not be undertaken.

The enclosure introduces contemporary materials that are not visually or materially consistent with historic porch construction within the district, resulting in a rear elevation that does not reflect traditional porch enclosure practices.

While the work occurs at the rear and does not appear to require removal of character defining historic fabric on the primary façade, the enclosure creates a new exterior volume that changes the form, massing, and historic open porch character of the rear elevation. The updated submittal includes additional photographs documenting the completed condition. However, the submittal still does not include sufficient product specifications or construction detail to evaluate compatibility, including the proposed or installed trim profiles, window muntin configuration, sash and frame material, exterior finish system, texture, and detailing at transitions. Due to these missing technical details, staff cannot verify compliance with the applicable rehabilitation standards, including compatibility of the new work with the historic building.

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards 9– New Additions to not Damage. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards 10– New Additions Reversible. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

It appears that what has been done could be removed to re-expose the character defining historic porch features without destroying the historic structure or configuration.

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 fiberglass materials used in the rear porch enclosure are not visually compatible with traditional wood porch construction found on contributing buildings within the district. As installed, the materials conflict with the visual compatibility criteria.

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.*

Standards 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 rear porch addition does not alter the character of the immediate surroundings. However, the materials remain incompatible with that of the surroundings.

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 proposed use of vinyl windows, fiberglass doors, and cementitious siding may be visually compatible in limited rear yard contexts, but no cut sheets or detailed specifications were submitted. The enclosure changes the profile and rhythm of the rear elevation, and its scale and material compatibility require further analysis. Some of the materials proposed are prohibited for use on historic buildings.

Visual compatibility cannot be confirmed without additional material data and visualizations.

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

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 on an east-west connecting street shall utilize a contributing building form located within the existing block front or on an immediately adjacent tithing or trust block.

The enclosure alters the form and massing of the rear elevation by converting an open porch into an enclosed volume. Even if the updated volumes are not considered incompatible, the material details make the form incompatible.

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.

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.

Fiber cement siding is proposed but product specifications, including color, were not provided. There is also concern that while some of this may be considered an addition that extends beyond the historic porch, some of that porch area has also been enveloped by this wall.

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.

It is not clear if the standard is met.

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

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.*

There are fiberglass doors installed. These are not permitted, nor are they prohibited. In such cases, the applicant may provide a sample of the proposed material to the Board so that they may consider whether the fiberglass in this case is appropriate.

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.

The windows are rectangular.

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

The windows appear to be double hung.

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.

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.

Window specifications were not provided, thus it is not possible to determine whether any of these standards are 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.

The distance between windows is closer than what is seen on the main historic building and other contributing buildings within the viewshed of this one.

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

This appears to be the case for the three grouped windows.

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.

Solid vinyl windows shall be prohibited.

The installed windows are vinyl and are prohibited.

Additions to Contributing Resources. *Additions shall comply with the above standards and the following standards:*

Additions shall not be on the primary or front façade of the resource, and shall be located to the rear of the resource or the most inconspicuous façade.

The addition off of the porch is on the rear on the most inconspicuous façade.

Additions shall be subordinate in mass and height to the resource.

The standard is met.

Additions shall not obscure or damage any character-defining features.

This addition obscures the character defining decorative wooden porch arches and columns. The other half of the property at 320 has a partial enclosure that leaves half of the historic porch still exposed. Perhaps a redesign may consider a similar option for 318.

An addition shall be sited such that it is clearly an appendage and distinguishable from the contributing building.

The standard is met.

Additions shall be reversible with minimal damage to the contributing building.

Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Porticos, Exterior Stairs and Decks - Alterations to contributing resources.

Porches 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 porch materials and configuration shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original.

If the original porch material and/or configuration is unknown, the new porch material and configuration shall be based on historic context.

Front porches shall not be enclosed. Historic side and rear porches may be screened with fine wire mesh, lattice or shutters, provided the porch continues to read as a porch and character-defining features (including but not limited to columns, balustrades, entablature, etc.) are retained and not obscured or damaged. Historic rear porches may also be enclosed with glazing.

Prohibited materials: Fiberglass (including Perma-Cast), vinyl and PVC.

Wrought iron brackets shall not be used with wood balcony railings.

The enclosure of the rear porch replaces an open porch configuration with an enclosed condition using prohibited materials. Although additional documentation has been submitted since the previous review, the completed work does not comply with the requirement that replacement porch materials and configuration match the original. The use of fiberglass materials is explicitly prohibited by the ordinance, and the altered configuration is inconsistent with historic porch treatment in the district.

The ordinance specifically states that rear porches may be screened with wire mesh, lattice, or shutters provided that the porch continues to read as a porch and character-defining features are not obscured. In this case the decorative wood arches were not removed but have been obscured. Thus, the standard is not met for these reasons.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Deny the after-the-fact request for exterior alterations at 318 East Huntingdon Street, as the installed and updated materials do not comply with the Downtown Historic District Design Standards.

MW: CC: RU

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.