



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: Marchese, Lindsey Barron

MPC File No.: 26-000118-COA

Address: 234 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

PIN: 20023 10001

Zoning: D-CBD

Staff Reviewer: Alexander Merced

Date: February 11, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant would like to install two separate black metal handrails on the property: one 30' rail in front of the entrance that fronts Montgomery Street, and one 45' rail in front of the emergency exit that fronts West Perry Street. They will be installed into existing pre-drilled holes in the concrete via precision grout wet set.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The building was constructed between 1913-1916 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. Originally housing an auto shop, Electric Sales Inc. occupied the building in 1929. Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah has operated from the building since 1998 and now will soon be home to Old Savannah Distillery. Although the address is on MLK Boulevard the building fronts Montgomery Street, where it is the only contributing building on that block.

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 railings are not attached to the building in any way, and nothing is being removed. The standard is met.

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 railings are not conjectural nor are they taken from another building. They look reasonable in the context of the area but do not create any false sense of history. The standard is met.

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.*

Because it is not attached to the building, all features, finishes, techniques, and craftsmanship examples will remain untouched. The standard is met.

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.*

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.*

Across from the Perry Street exit there is a contributing building and a parking lot that is surrounded by a brick wall topped with black metal open fencing.



1. Proposed entrance railing on the left

Across from the Montgomery Street entrance is the non-contributing Civic Center, which has similar type railing in front of the entrance.



2. Similar railing across the street

The proposed railings are compatible with the contributing building on Perry Street and are compatible with the Civic Center on Montgomery Street, which, although it is non-contributing, is the main building on that block. 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 proposed railings will be constructed of metal and will be painted in a urethane gloss/semi-gloss black paint. This is compatible with the black fencing on top of the brick wall across Perry Street and is similar to the railing in front of the Civic Center across the street. The standard 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.

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.

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 railing is not in front of any dwelling unit so the 38" height is permissible. The standard is met.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the work proposed for the property at 234 MLK Blvd As Requested because the work is visually compatible and meets the standards.

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.