



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: Ward Architecture, Josh Ward

MPC File No.: 25-006059-COA

Address: 307 Lorch Street

PIN: 20045 26012

Zoning: D-R

Staff Reviewer: Rohan Urs

Date: January 14, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval for new construction of an accessory dwelling unit and garage carriage house structure at 307 Lorch Street, located along Lorch Lane, including Part I: Height and Mass, and Part II: Design Details, in connection with a contributing principal building.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The residential principal building was constructed in 1889 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District.

The subject property contains a contributing principal structure and is located in an established lane condition with historic development patterns that include carriage house forms, and accessory structures oriented to lanes. Sanborn Map documentation included in the submittal indicates that a historic accessory structure previously existed in an approximate location along the lane. The proposed work introduces a new two-story carriage house form intended to read as a secondary building, with access, service functions, and garage frontage oriented to Lorch Lane.

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.

Height. *New construction shall be permitted to build to the number of stories as shown on the “Savannah Downtown Historic District Height Map,” referred to herein as “Height Map,” and the overall height of a building and the height of individual components of a building or structure shall be visually compatible to the contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

A two-story structure is allowed and is visually compatible in scale and form with historic accessory structures. However, the proposed accessory dwelling unit exceeds the maximum permitted height of 25 feet, with a proposed height of approximately 27 feet. The height is not compliant with Sec. 8.7.4 and requires revision.

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.*

Window and door openings are vertically proportioned, modest in scale, and appropriately spaced, maintaining visual compatibility with traditional carriage house precedents. The proposed fenestration pattern includes primarily double hung window units with limited casement windows, all consistent with historic accessory building character.

Rhythm of structures on streets. *The relationship of a building or structure to the open space between it and adjacent buildings or structures shall be visually compatible with the open spaces between contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

Accessory structures are present throughout the surrounding context along Lorch Lane, and the proposed ADU maintains the established rhythm, spacing, and orientation of lane facing secondary buildings. The standards are 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 materials include smooth fiber cement lap siding with a five-inch exposure, smooth beadboard siding at accent locations, painted wood trim, and painted wood doors. The proposed color palette is subdued and compatible with the principal structure and surrounding historic accessory buildings. Standards met.

Roof shapes. *The roof shape of a building or structure shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The proposed side gable roof form is consistent with historic carriage house typologies within the district.

Scale of a building. *The mass of a building or structure and size of windows, door openings, porches column spacing, stairs, balconies and additions shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings and structures to which the structure is visually related.*

The proposed ADU is clearly subordinate to the principal structure and reflects the scale and massing of historic rear yard accessory buildings within the district.

Directional expression of front elevation. *A building or structure shall be visually compatible with the buildings and structures to which it is visually related in its directional character, including vertical character, horizontal character, or nondirectional character.*

The building exhibits a vertical and compact expression appropriate for an accessory structure located along a service lane.

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.

Wood or fiber cement siding shall be permitted on townhouses only in wards where wood-sided townhouses already exist or where more than 75% of the lot frontage in the ward contains wood-sided buildings. Where wood siding has been determined to be appropriate, smooth finish fiber cement siding may be used.

The proposed fiber cement lap siding, smooth beadboard panels, and painted wood trim are compatible with traditional materials used on historic accessory structures.

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.

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.

Stoop heights shall be visually comparable to other historic stoops to which they are visually related and shall not exceed nine (9) feet, six (6) inches.

Infill between foundation piers shall be recessed so that the piers are distinguishable.

Residential balconies shall not extend more than three (3) feet in depth from the face of a building and shall be supported by brackets or other types of architectural support.

Decks shall be screened from areas visible from the street and shall be stained or painted to blend with the colors of the main building.

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

On porches, porticos, and stoops, if proposed, piers and base walls shall be the same material as the foundation wall facing the street.

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

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 exterior stair, landing, and associated louvered privacy wall are located along the lane-facing facade and are appropriately scaled for a service elevation. The louver wall is constructed of painted wood members spaced to allow visual permeability while providing privacy, consistent with historic service elements found along rear lanes. The standards are met.

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

Roofs, Configuration.

Gable and hip roof pitches shall be between 4:12 and 8:12. Gable and hip roofs in excess of 8:12 pitch shall be permitted only where a similar contributing building roof pitch exists within the same block front.

Eaves and rakes on accessory buildings and dormers shall overhang at least eight (8) inches.

Soffits shall be placed perpendicular to the building wall, not sloping in plane with the roof (except for gable end rakes).

The proposed side gable roof complies with permitted roof forms for accessory structures. Eave overhangs and rake projections are provided and are consistent with district standards.

Roofs, Materials.

Roof coverings shall be standing seam metal, v-crimp, slate or equivalent synthetic, tile, or architectural asphalt or similar shingles.

The proposed architectural asphalt shingle roof is an appropriate roofing material for a carriage house structure and is visually compatible with historic accessory buildings within the district.

Accessory Structures. *Accessory structures, including accessory dwellings, shall comply with the Visual Compatibility Criteria, the above design standards, the requirements set forth in Sec. 8.7, Accessory Structures and Uses, except as provided below:*

Accessory Structures, Configuration. *Accessory structures shall be located in the rear yard even if there is no lane access.*

The height and mass of the primary building shall not be exceeded by any accessory building or structure on the same parcel.

Accessory buildings and structures shall not be more than two (2) stories tall.

Where contributing accessory dwellings are to be expanded in depth, such expansion shall not occur on the lane façade of the building.

New accessory dwellings and garages may have up to a five (5) foot lane setback to allow a turning radius into the garage.

Roofs shall be side gable, hip with parapet, flat or shed hidden by a parapet.

The proposed accessory structure is located in the rear yard along a public lane, does not exceed two stories, and does not exceed the mass of the principal structure. Standards are met.

Accessory Structures, Doors and Openings.

Where garage doors front streets or are adjacent to sidewalks, they shall resemble carriage house doors.

Garage openings shall not exceed 12 feet in width.

Garage doors facing the lane are designed to resemble traditional carriage house doors and do not exceed the maximum permitted width. Window and door sizes, proportions, and placement are compatible with historic accessory dwelling patterns.

The following standards from the Sec 8.7 - Accessory Structures and Uses apply:

Accessory Dwelling Units (not including Caretaker's Dwelling Unit). *One (1) accessory dwelling unit shall be permitted as an accessory use to a principal dwelling located in the A-1, RSF-, RTF-, RMF-, TR-, TN-, TC-, D- and PD districts. Such use is not required to be included in the gross residential density calculations. Manufactured homes, shipping*

containers, recreational vehicles, and travel trailers shall not be used as accessory dwelling units. For such use, the following shall apply:

Accessory Dwelling Units, Location.

The unit may be attached to or detached from the principal dwelling.

Detached accessory dwelling units shall meet the same side-yard setback requirement as the principal structure. Such units shall be separated from the principal structure by at least 10 feet.

Accessory Dwelling Units, Building Size.

The building footprint of the accessory dwelling unit shall be a maximum of 40% of the building footprint of the principal dwelling not to exceed 700 square feet.

The accessory dwelling unit shall contain no more than one (1) bedroom.

Accessory Dwelling Units, Architectural Style. *Such use shall be designed in a similar architectural style as the principal dwelling. If the site is located within an overlay district, the standards of the overlay district shall apply.*

Accessory Dwelling Units, Parking and Access.

If parking is provided for the accessory dwelling, it shall be provided on the same lot on which the principal dwelling is located.

Where there is no lane and parking is provided, the parking space shall be served by the same driveway as the principal dwelling.

Accessory Dwelling Units, Height.

Accessory dwelling units shall not exceed 25 feet or the height of the principal building, whichever is less.

Any portion of an accessory dwelling unit over 15 feet in height shall be located at least 15 feet from a rear property line that does not abut a lane.

The proposed ADU is located in the rear yard, subordinate to the principal structure, and consistent with the historic development pattern documented on the site. With the exception of height, the proposal meets the requirements of Sec. 8.7.4.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Part I and II, New Construction of an ADU at 307 Lorch St with the following condition to be submitted to staff for review and approval prior to submitting for permits, because the proposed work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards:

- 1. Revise height to comply with the maximum permitted height of 25 feet in accordance with Sec. 8.7.4.**

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.