Savannah Historic District Board of Review

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room
July 8, 2026
1:00 P.M.
MINUTES

July 8, 2026 HISTORIC District Board of Review Meeting

A Pre-Meeting was held at 12:00 PM in the Jerry Surrency Conference Room, 112 East State Street. Items on the Agenda were presented by Staff, as time permitted, and the Board asked questions. No testimony was received, and no votes were taken.

Members Present: Thomas L. Thomson, Chair
Melissa Rowan, Vice Chair
Shedrick Coleman
Mariel Hamer
Michael Higgins

Members Absent: Karen Guinn
Robert Helms
Sara Woodfield

MPC Staff Present: Caitlin Chamberlain, Director of Historic Preservation
Jodie Brown, Principal Planner
Alexander Merced. Planner
Rohan Urs, Planner
Bri Morgan, Administrative Assistant II
Hind Patel, Information Technology

I. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

II. SIGN POSTING

III. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Petition of Sid Was Here, Julie Gates | 26-002914-COA | 601 Jefferson Street | Pergolas

Motion

Approve the construction of two wooden pergolas in the rear courtyard of 601 Jefferson Street as requested because they are visually compatible and meet the standards.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Mariel Hamer

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

Karen Guinn	- Not Present
Michael Higgins	- Aye

Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Abstain
Sabrina Nagel	- Not Present
Sara Woodfield	- Not Present
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Mariel Hamer	- Aye
Robert Helms	- Not Present

IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2. Adopt the July 8, 2026 HDBR meeting agenda as presented.

Motion

The Historic District Board of Review motioned to approve the July 8, 2026 agenda as presented.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

Karen Guinn	- Not Present
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Abstain
Sabrina Nagel	- Not Present
Sara Woodfield	- Not Present
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Mariel Hamer	- Aye
Robert Helms	- Not Present

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3. Approve the June 10, 2026 Historic District Board of Review meeting minutes as presented.

Motion

The Historic District Board of Review motioned to approve the June 10, 2026 HDBR meeting minutes as presented.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Mariel Hamer

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

Karen Guinn	- Not Present
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Abstain

Sabrina Nagel	- Not Present
Sara Woodfield	- Not Present
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Mariel Hamer	- Aye
Robert Helms	- Not Present

VI. ITEM(S) REQUESTED TO BE REMOVED FROM THE FINAL AGENDA

VII. CONTINUED AGENDA

4. Petition of Rose Architects, Kevin Rose | 25-005674-COA | 402 East Broughton Street | New Construction, Part II

Motion

CONTINUE

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Shedrick Coleman

Second: Mariel Hamer

Karen Guinn	- Not Present
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Abstain
Sabrina Nagel	- Not Present
Sara Woodfield	- Not Present
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Mariel Hamer	- Aye
Robert Helms	- Not Present

VIII. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION

IX. REGULAR AGENDA

5. Petition of Ethos Preservation, Ellen Harris | 26-002945-COA | 215 West Broughton Street | Fence

Jodie Brown presented the applicant's request to fence a vacant lot.
Staff recommended to APPROVE the request to install a fence at 215 West Broughton Street WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITION to be reviewed and approved by staff because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the Standards:

1. Revise the plans to include a 12” brick base along Broughton Street.

PETITONER COMMENTS:
Ellen Harris, petitioner, made herself available for questions.

Hamer asked the elevation showing woodgrain over the posts. Harris stated it will be painted black steel, no woodgrain.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
There was no public comment.

BOARD DISCUSSION:
There was no Board discussion.

Motion

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE the request to install a fence at 215 West Broughton Street WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITION to be reviewed and approved by staff because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the Standards:

Revise the plans to include a 12"; brick base along Broughton Street.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Mariel Hamer

Karen Guinn	- Not Present
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Abstain
Sabrina Nagel	- Not Present
Sara Woodfield	- Not Present
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Mariel Hamer	- Aye
Robert Helms	- Not Present

6. Petition of Peter & Dina Ort | 26-003094-COA | 426 Habersham Street | Color Change & Rehabilitation

**This item was considered on the Consent Agenda.

Alexander Merced prepared the applican's to rehabilitate and repaint the exterior of 426 Habersham Street. The scope of work will include: spot repair of the exterior siding, spot repair and in-kind replacement of the porch floorboards, removal of the blue paint that is currently covering the brick foundation, installing brick veneer on the existing turquoise painted concrete porch steps, and changing the paint color of the exterior to a turquoise/light blue.

Staff recommended to approve the proposed rehabilitation work to 426 Habersham Street with the following condition because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards:

1. Provide a 6”x6” test area of each paint removal product on an inconspicuous section of the foundation and confer with staff to verify minimal damage to the underlying brick

before proceeding to the rest of the foundation.

Motion

Approve the proposed rehabilitation work to 426 Habersham Street with the following condition because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards:

Provide a 6";x6"; test area of each paint removal product on an inconspicuous section of the foundation and confer with staff to verify minimal damage to the underlying brick before proceeding to the rest of the foundation.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Mariel Hamer

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

Karen Guinn	- Not Present
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Abstain
Sabrina Nagel	- Not Present
Sara Woodfield	- Not Present
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Mariel Hamer	- Aye
Robert Helms	- Not Present

7. Petition of 16 W. Oglethorpe, LLC, Ronnie Hall | 26-002943-COA | 17 West York Lane | After-the-Fact Alteration

Alexander Merced presented the after the fact request of the applicant filling in a short passageway opening with brick. They would also like to change the color of a small section of existing wood siding next to said opening.

Staff recommended to approve the proposed color change and after the fact alteration at 17 West York Lane as requested because they are visually compatible and meet the standards.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:
Sophia Rodriguez, petitioner, made herself available for questions.

Higgins asked if a licensed contractor to do the infill; was contractor aware that permission was needed to perform. Petitioner stated not aware.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:
Sandra Hensly expressed opposition to the after-the-fact work and stated the entrance to the carriage house was altered.

BOARD DISCUSSION:
The Board expressed concern with approving blatant after-the-fact work. Reasoned that the

brick infill is not done on a historic wall; but it is removable, so not unrestorable. The work done meets standards and is reversible.

Motion

Approve the proposed color change and after the fact alteration at 17 West York Lane as requested because they are visually compatible and meet the standards.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Mariel Hamer

Second: Shedrick Coleman

Karen Guinn	- Not Present
Michael Higgins	- Nay
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Abstain
Sabrina Nagel	- Not Present
Sara Woodfield	- Not Present
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Mariel Hamer	- Aye
Robert Helms	- Not Present

8. Petition of Studio H Architects, Julie Miller | 26-002967-COA | 114 West Bay Street | Rehabilitation & Alterations

Caitlin Chamberlain presented the applicant's request of approval for rehabilitation & alterations on the building located at114 West Bay Street, the building that houses the expansion area of the Cotton Sail Hotel. The historic building was constructed in 1852 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. It is part of the row comprised of 112-130 West Bay Street.

The scope of work is focused on the expansion area, in the building that had most recently been Finnegan’s Package Shop but has sat vacant for several years.

Bay Street Side:

-Existing metal coping to be removed and replaced with new prefinished metal coping to match existing adjacent coping
-Existing stucco to be repaired and refinished
-Installation of windows in boarded up openings, including replacing deteriorated window trim- windows based on configuration seen in historic photos
-Existing storefront to be removed and replaced with new wood storefronts to match the existing hotel storefront
-Preserve existing columns, repaint including gold trim and accents

River Street Side:

-Reinstalling windows in areas where there are none
-Replacing existing metal coping
-Removal of the existing enclosed second-floor balcony, and replacing with a new open-air, covered balcony

-Stucco restoration and repainting

The project history timeline encompasses the full context of the building that was rehabilitated to reopen as The Cotton Sail Hotel, known as 126 West Bay Street, as well as the evolution of the expansion area project, at 114 West Bay Street.
October 12, 2005: The Board approved the rehabilitation of, with alterations to, the building located at 126 West Bay Street [H-05-3477-2].
June 14, 2006: The Board approved the rehabilitation of Factors Walk [H-05-3477-2 (Amended)].
August 22, 2007, The Board approved a rooftop addition above 126 West Bay Street [H-05-3477-2 (Amended)]. However, the approved work never transpired due to a lack of funding.
September 14, 2011: The Board approved a rooftop addition (again), as well as the installation of balconies on the River Street façade with the condition that "continuous balconies be used on the fourth and fifth floors instead of the proposed individual balconies" [H-11-4500-2].
April 11, 2012: The Board approved an amendment to the previously approved rooftop addition [File No. H-11-4500-2 (Amended)].
September 12, 2012: The Board approved an amendment to the previously approved balcony design – "instead of being continuous on the fourth and fifth floors, the Board approved them to be individual balconies" [File No. 12-000377-COA].
August 12, 2013: Staff approved exterior color changes for 126 West Bay Street [13-004090-COA].

April 13, 2022: The Board continued the requested rehabilitation and alterations to the top three levels of 114 West Bay Street, as well as a rooftop addition [22-001268-COA]. The continuation was based on requesting more information about the addition and the materials in the rehab process. The project was continued to the May 11, 2022, HDBR meeting but did not come back.

August 9, 2023: Another application was submitted for the rehabilitation and alterations to 114 West Bay Street, with a different petitioner, Studio H. Architects, who are the current petitioners. This project was approved with conditions [23-003320-COA]. It expired before the project started.

January 30, 2026: Staff approved in-kind wood window replacements and mortar repair work for the operational side of the hotel at 126 West Bay Street [25-005607-COA].

June 10, 2026: The Board denied the re-application of this expired project which also included a new element of removing the second-floor balcony on the River Street side and replacing with a new balcony [26-00. This was applied for as an amendment. The Board had concerns that this was a procedural error and that it should be reapplied for as a new application. The new application for rehabilitation and alterations will be presented at the July 8, 2026, HDBR meeting.

Staff recommended to approve the proposed rehabilitation and alterations for the property located at 114 West Bay Street as requested because the work is visually compatible and meets the standards.

Coleman stated a screen is not applicable at this time; the roof plan is not a part of the project.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:
The petitioner was not present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:
There was no public comment.

BOARD DISCUSSION:
The Board motioned to continue due to lack of petitioner attendance.

Motion

The Savannah Historic District Board of Review does hereby continue the proposed rehabilitation and alterations project for the property located at 114 West Bay Street to the August 12, 2026, Historic District Board of Review Meeting.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Mariel Hamer

Karen Guinn	- Not Present
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Abstain
Sabrina Nagel	- Not Present
Sara Woodfield	- Not Present
Shedrick Coleman	- Aye
Mariel Hamer	- Aye
Robert Helms	- Not Present

X. APPROVED STAFF REVIEWS

XI. WORK PERFORMED WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

XII. REPORT ON ITEMS DEFERRED TO STAFF

XIII. NOTICES, PROCLAMATIONS, AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9. COA Inspections Report - July 2026

10. Stamped Drawing Report - July 2026

XIV. OTHER BUSINESS

XV. ADJOURNMENT

11. Next HDBR Pre-Meeting - Wednesday August 12, 2026 at 12pm - 112 East State Street

12. Next HDBR Meeting - Wednesday August 12, 2026 at 1pm - 112 East State Street

There being no further business to present before the Board, the July 8, 2026 Historic District Board of Review adjourned at 1:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Caitlin Chamberlain
Director of Historic Preservation

/bm

The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting minutes which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.