



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: Ellen Harris
MPC File No.: 26-002945-COA
Address: 215 West Broughton Street
PIN: 20016 25004
Zoning: D-CBD
Staff Reviewer: Jodie Brown, AICP
Date: July 8, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting to fence a vacant lot.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The vacant lot is located on the south side of the road between Jefferson and Barnard Streets in the Heathcote Ward. The vacant lot was historically occupied by a 3-story building constructed ca. 1884. Over the years, the site was occupied by various entities from a carpet shop to a shoe store to restaurants. In the mid-1990s, the building was demolished and the site has remained vacant since.

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 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.*

The applicant intends to install a fence on both the north and the south sides of the vacant lot. For a number of years, the lot was enclosed with a chain link fence but more recently it was removed. As an open vacant lot, people have begun parking on it and using it as refuse dumping

spot. The fence will protect the site until future development occurs. The fence will only be attached to poles and not supported by the flanking buildings. The proposed fence will not negatively impact the historic resources. The proposed work is consistent with Standard 9.

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.*

The applicant intends to install a fence on both the north and the south sides of the vacant lot. The fence will only be attached to poles and not supported by the flanking buildings. The proposed fence will not negatively impact the historic resources and is reversible. The proposed work is consistent with Standard 10.

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 owner intends to install a metal fence of 10-gauge steel that will be 10' tall at the posts and 7' for the fence along the northern and southern property lines. The southern fence will have a gate that accesses the Lane. The fence will be painted black. While it is not common to see fencing along Broughton Street, the proposed material and color are not. There are some storefronts with an aluminum (metal) material and numerous surrounding storefronts with dark colors. 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.

Fences, Trellises and Walls. *Fences and walls shall comply with Sec. 9.6, Fences and Walls except as provided below:*

Fences, Trellises and Walls, Configuration.

Fences, trellises or walls shall not exceed 11 feet in height; however, where adjoining walls exceed 11 feet, any new wall may be constructed to the height of the existing wall. Rooftop trellises may exceed 11 feet in height, provided they are visually compatible.

The proposed height is 10' tall. The work is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Fences, trellises and walls shall not extend beyond the facade of a building except in the following cases:

A building set back on a trust lot with a front garden;

A building set back on an east-west street with a front garden.

The proposed fence will not extend past the face of the existing buildings. The work is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Where permitted, fences or walls shall not exceed 48 inches within the front yard.

There is no front yard at this location. The proposed fence helps to create a wall of continuity for the commercial storefronts along Broughton Street. The work is consistent with this historic district design standard.

Fences, Trellises and Walls, Materials.

Fences and walls facing a public street shall be constructed of the material and color of the primary building; provided however, iron or extruded aluminum fencing may be used with a masonry structure.

While there is no building at this site, the flanking buildings are brick and proposed metal fencing would be appropriate. The work is consistent with this historic district design standard.

A masonry base shall be used with iron or extruded aluminum fencing.

The applicant is not proposing to use brick as the base. The applicant should revise the plan to include a 12" brick base along Broughton Street.

Prohibited: Chain-link, vinyl, PVC, corrugated metal, barbed wire, razor wire.

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

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:

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

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.