



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: Dina Ort

MPC File No.: 26-003094-COA

Address: 426 Habersham Street

PIN: 20032 32005

Zoning: D-R

Staff Reviewer: Alexander Merced

Date: July 8, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant would like 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.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The building was constructed in 1896 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. It sits on the northeast trust lot facing Whitefield Square on the corner of Habersham Street and East Wayne Street. It is surrounded almost entirely by contributing buildings, with exception of the Rose of Sharon Apartment building on the northwest corner of the square.

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.*

No historic materials will be removed, and those that must be repaired will be done so in-kind. It is not clear that the existing concrete steps are not original to the building, and as such, covering them does not constitute removal of historic fabric nor does it damage the historic character. 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.

As stated above, the existing concrete steps are not original to the building. It is safe to assume that the original steps were constructed of either wood or brick, as these were the most common materials at the time and are still abundant in the district. In this specific case, the installation of the real brick veneer is consistent with the historic context and is more visually compatible in the district. Therefore, staff finds the proposal to be a reasonable one and the standard to be 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.

No distinctive features or techniques will be removed. The standard is met.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 6– Deteriorated Features. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

Deteriorated features will be repaired where possible, replaced in-kind where necessary. The standard is met.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 7– Chemical or Physical Treatments. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

The blue paint on the brick foundation will be removed using chemical masonry strippers that are designed to soften and lift the paint while preserving the integrity of the masonry. The potential products that are proposed for use are Citristrip Paint & Varnish Stripping Gel, Peel Away 1, and World's Best Bare Brick, Stone & Masonry Graffiti Remover. The contractor will spot test these products in order to see which works best. Staff recommends that small sections be tested and that the effectiveness on these areas must be verified by staff prior to continuing on the rest of the foundation.

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 materials will be in-kind and compatible with contributing buildings in the district. The brick veneer is made of real brick, and the applicant will bring a sample to the meeting. Sherwin Williams (SW) 0047 “Studio Blue Green” is proposed for the exterior siding color, and SW 6336 “Nearly Peach” is proposed for the existing light-colored trim elements. Architectural molding and window trim will be SW 2848 “Roycroft Pewter” and the porch ceiling will be SW 0031 “Dutch Tile Blue”. This palette of light turquoise and off-white pastel colors is common in a historic context and is visually compatible with other contemporary historic buildings throughout Savannah. 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.

Foundations, Alterations to contributing resources.

Foundations shall be repaired with in-kind materials 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 foundation shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original foundation.

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

The foundation material will remain unchanged, but the existing blue paint will be removed in order to expose the raw brick underneath. Staff finds this to be a reasonable change as long as the paint is removed with the gentlest means possible so as not to damage the brick, as noted previously.

Exterior walls, Alterations to contributing resources.

Exterior Walls, Materials.

Exterior walls shall be repaired with in-kind materials 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 replacement materials and configuration shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original wall.

The siding and window trim will be repaired, with select in-kind replacement only where necessary. The standard is met.

Exterior Walls, Prohibited Materials.

Materials that cause damage, obscure, or change the appearance to the underlying historic fabric are prohibited.

Vinyl siding, aluminum siding, rolled asphalt, precast concrete panels, fiber cement wood simulated horizontal lap siding, fiber cement panels, EIFS, T-111, ceramic-based coatings and sealers on siding.

The exterior wall material will remain unchanged. The standard is met.

Exterior Walls, Finishes and Treatments.

Color changes to contributing resources shall be historically appropriate.

Ceramic based-coatings and sealers on wood siding shall not be permitted.

Cleaning, when undertaken, shall be so as not to damage historic fabric. Sandblasting and disc sanding shall not be permitted.

The house has changed colors multiple times before, including within the past 30 years. The proposed color scheme, as noted above, is in-keeping with similar historic color schemes throughout the district on this style of home and is historically appropriate. The standard is met.

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.

The porch floorboards will be selectively replaced in-kind, where necessary. As noted previously, the existing concrete steps are not original to the building. It is safe to assume that the original steps were constructed of either wood or brick, as these were the most common materials at the time and are still abundant in the district. As noted previously, in this instance the installation of the real brick veneer is consistent with the historic context while also being more visually compatible in the district. Therefore, staff finds the proposal to be a reasonable one and the standard to be met.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

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.**

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.