



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: Mariela Orellana & Todd Nemanic

MPC File No.: 26-001855-COA

Address: 318 East Huntingdon St.

PIN: 20032 50013

Zoning: D-R

Staff Reviewer: Rohan Urs

Date: June 10, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant requests after-the-fact approval for exterior alterations to a contributing structure, including enclosure of an upper-level rear porch and expansion of an existing rear deck area, for the property located at 318 East Huntingdon Street. The work already completed includes the installation of new exterior wall materials, windows, and a rear door, resulting in an increase in building area and alteration of the rear building form. The improvements have been substantially completed prior to approval by the Board. This work was cited by the City's Code Compliance Department.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The subject property is located within the Downtown Historic District in an area characterized by contributing residential structures dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Buildings in the surrounding context commonly feature open rear porches, balconies, and decks that are secondary in character to the primary street facing façades. These rear elements are traditionally constructed of wood and maintain an open and lightweight appearance consistent with historic development patterns in the district.

318 East Huntingdon Street was built in 1895 and is a contributing resource in the local overlay and the National Historic Landmark District. It is a large three-story brick duplex, connected to 320 East Huntingdon Street along the corner lot on Huntingdon Street and Habersham Street. The rear porch area is visible from the vantage point of Habersham Street. Sanborn Maps show that there was a wooden one-story porch that went across the rear of both 318 and 320, but it appears that 320 has also modified theirs with a partial enclosure, but they maintained visibility of the earlier configuration showing decorative wooden arches (also seen in photos provided by the applicant).

Google Street View images from 2016 and 2017 show what the rear porch looked like, in part, before the enclosure work began. In these images, the decorative wood porch elements can be

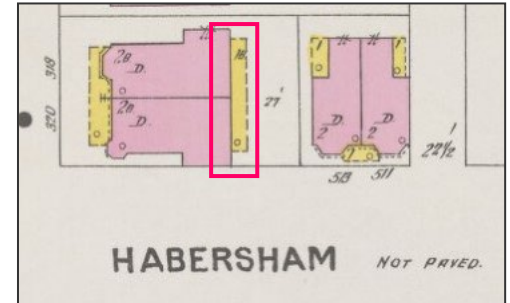
seen. These are still in existence but have now been enclosed with the current work that has taken place.



April 2016 Street View



February 2017 Street View



1898 Sanborn Map

PROJECT HISTORY:

This project was first presented at the November 12, 2025, Historic District Board of Review meeting, where it was continued to allow the applicant time to provide additional information regarding the completed work. The Board requested detailed product specifications, visual documentation, and clarifications necessary to evaluate visual compatibility and conformance with the Savannah Downtown Historic District Ordinance.

Since the November meeting, the applicant had submitted additional photographs, product information, and supplemental clarification regarding the materials installed as part of the project for the February Meeting. Upon review, the petition was denied by the board due to material choices.

The current review is for a new application with the updated submittal. The additional documentation has allowed staff to more fully evaluate the completed work and its compliance with the applicable standards of the Savannah Downtown Historic District Ordinance.

The updated submittal identifies the windows as Jeld-Wen Sitrine Series clad wood double-hung windows, the siding as smooth-finish HardiePlank fiber cement siding, and provides additional information regarding the door and exterior finishes. Staff has reviewed the additional information and finds that many of the concerns identified during the previous review have been addressed. While the enclosure continues to obscure portions of the historic decorative porch features, those features remain in place and have not been removed.

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.*

Standard 2 – Historic Record

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 enclosure of the rear porch alters the historic open character of a secondary porch element and changes the rear building form. However, the decorative porch arches and other historic porch features remain in place and have not been removed. The work is located on the rear elevation of the building and does not impact the primary street-facing façade. While the porch no longer reads as an open porch, the historic fabric remains largely intact beneath the enclosure.

Standard 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 shall not be undertaken.

The enclosure introduces a new exterior volume at the rear of the structure while retaining the underlying historic porch framework. Additional information submitted by the applicant identifies the use of clad wood double-hung windows and smooth-finish fiber cement siding. Although the rear elevation has been altered from its historic open condition, the intervention remains distinguishable from the original structure and does not create a false sense of historical development.

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.*

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 historic porch arches and decorative features remain in place and have not been removed. The enclosure appears capable of being removed in the future without substantial damage to the historic building, allowing the original porch configuration to be re-exposed. The work therefore remains reversible and does not permanently compromise the integrity of the contributing resource.

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 applicant has provided additional product information indicating the use of smooth-finish HardiePlank fiber cement siding finished in Sherwin Williams SW 7701 Cavern Clay and Jeld-Wen Sitrine Series clad wood double-hung windows. These materials are generally compatible with those permitted within the district and are visually appropriate for a secondary rear elevation. While the enclosure alters the historic open porch condition, the submitted materials are compatible with the character of the building and surrounding context.

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.*

Standards Met.

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.*

The enclosure modifies the historic open porch condition and obscures portions of the decorative porch detailing. However, the historic porch elements remain in place and have not been removed. The work occurs on the rear elevation and does not significantly alter the character of the surrounding streetscape.

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

Building Form. *Building form is based on the height, mass and envelope of a building. The proposed building form for new construction shall comply with the following:*

A proposed building on an east-west connecting street shall utilize a contributing building form located within the existing block front or on an immediately adjacent tithing or trust block.

The enclosure converts a portion of the historic rear porch into conditioned interior space and therefore alters the rear building form. However, the work remains subordinate to the principal structure, occurs on the rear elevation, and does not significantly alter the massing or character of the primary street-facing façade.

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.

Exterior Walls, Prohibited materials. *Vinyl siding, aluminum siding, rolled asphalt, EIFS, one-part stucco over insulation and/or wood or metal-framing, T-111, corrugated metal, unpainted exposed CMU blocks, fiber cement panels, ceramic-based coatings and sealers on siding.*

The applicant has identified the exterior wall material as smooth-finish HardiePlank fiber cement siding. Smooth-finish fiber cement siding is a permitted material under the ordinance. The proposed siding color is Sherwin Williams SW 7701 Cavern Clay. Staff finds the submitted wall material compliant with the applicable exterior wall standards.

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

Doors, Configuration. *Door frames shall be inset not less than three (3) inches from the exterior surface of the façade of a building, excluding façades with wood siding.*

Doors, Permitted Materials. *Doors shall be made of glass, wood, clad wood or steel (without wood grain simulation).*

Doors, Prohibited Materials. *Vinyl; sliding glass doors visible from a street; steel-pressed doors simulating wood grain, half-moon, semi-circular, diamond or similar light insets; boarded-up doors or entrances.*

The applicant has identified the proposed door as a Feather River fiberglass-clad French door. Fiberglass doors are not specifically listed as permitted materials nor are they expressly prohibited under the door standards. The Board may evaluate the appropriateness of this material as part of its review of alternative materials and overall visual compatibility.

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

Windows, Configuration.

All windows facing a street, exclusive of storefronts, basement and top story windows, shall be rectangular and shall have a vertical to horizontal ratio of not

less than 5:3; provided, however, nothing in this section precludes an arched window being used. Accent windows may be round or other shapes.

Windows facing a street shall be double or triple hung, awning, casement or Palladian.

Double glazed, simulated divided light, windows shall be permitted provided that the following are met: The muntin is 7/8 inches or less; The muntin profile shall simulate traditional putty glazing; The lower sash rail shall be wider than the meeting and top rails; There shall be a spacer bar in between double panes of glass, and Extrusions shall be covered with appropriate molding.

Between-the-glass, snap-in or applied muntins shall not be permitted.

Framing members shall be covered with appropriate trim; trim shall feature a header, surrounds, and pronounced sill where appropriate.

Window sashes shall be inset a minimum of three (3) inches from the façade of a building, excluding exterior surfaces with wood siding.

The distance between windows shall be not less than for adjacent contributing buildings, nor more than two (2) times the width of the windows on primary facades. The Board may waive strict compliance with this standard where historic precedent exists within the visually-related context and is visually compatible.

Paired or grouped windows shall be permitted, provided the individual sashes have a vertical to horizontal ratio of not less than 5:3.

The applicant has provided specifications identifying the windows as Jeld-Wen Sitrine Series clad wood double-hung windows. The windows appear to be rectangular and double-hung in configuration. Based on the submitted information, the window type is consistent with the requirements of the ordinance.

Windows, Materials.

Window casings and sashes shall be made of metal, wood or clad wood material.

Window glass shall be transparent with no dark tints or reflective effects (except for stained glass windows). This provision does not preclude the use of Low Emissivity glass.

Solid vinyl windows shall be prohibited.

The applicant has provided specifications indicating that the windows are clad wood rather than vinyl. Clad wood windows are a permitted material under the ordinance. Based on the information submitted, the window material standard is met.

Additions to Contributing Resources. *Additions shall comply with the above standards and the following standards:*

Additions shall not be on the primary or front façade of the resource, and shall be located to the rear of the resource or the most inconspicuous façade.

Additions shall be subordinate in mass and height to the resource.

Additions shall not obscure or damage any character-defining features.

An addition shall be sited such that it is clearly an appendage and distinguishable from the contributing building.

Additions shall be reversible with minimal damage to the contributing building.

The enclosure obscures the decorative wooden porch arches and other historic porch features that previously remained visible. However, these features have not been removed and remain intact behind the enclosure. Unlike a demolition or replacement of the porch, the work retains the historic elements and could be removed in the future to restore the original appearance

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.

Front porches shall not be enclosed. Historic side and rear porches may be screened with fine wire mesh, lattice or shutters, provided the porch continues to read as a porch and character-defining features (including but not limited to columns, balustrades, entablature, etc.) are retained and not obscured or damaged. Historic rear porches may also be enclosed with glazing.

Prohibited materials: Fiberglass (including Perma-Cast), vinyl and PVC.

Wrought iron brackets shall not be used with wood balcony railings.

The ordinance permits the enclosure of historic rear porches with glazing. The enclosure alters the historic open appearance of the porch and obscures portions of the decorative wooden arches and columns. However, the historic porch elements remain in place and have not been removed. The applicant has provided additional information indicating the use of clad wood windows and smooth-finish fiber cement siding, both of which are generally compatible with the ordinance requirements. While the porch no longer reads as an open porch, the enclosure occurs on the rear elevation, retains the underlying historic fabric, and remains reversible. Staff finds that the enclosure generally satisfies the intent of the ordinance.

Staff finds that the applicant has provided additional material specifications demonstrating the use of generally compatible exterior materials, that the historic porch features remain intact and reversible, and that the work meets the applicable standards of the Savannah Downtown Historic District Ordinance. The Board may separately consider the appropriateness of the proposed fiberglass-clad door material as part of its review.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the after-the-fact request for exterior alterations at 318 East Huntingdon Street, as the proposal is visually compatible and meets the standards.

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.