



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: Studio H Architects, Julie Miller

MPC File No.: 26-002480-COA

Address: 114 West Bay Street

PIN: 20004 07004

Zoning: D-W

Staff Reviewer: Caitlin Chamberlain

Date: June 10, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a design amendment to the previously approved project at 114 West Bay Street, the building that houses the Cotton Sail Hotel.

The project is an expansion to the existing Cotton Sail Hotel. 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 exhaust cap to be removed
- 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
- Existing window trim to be removed
- 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

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

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 image below left shows the 1962 Ward Notebook image and the image to the right is present day. The upper-level windows have been covered and the storefront doors and windows have changed, though the columns and decorative work remain intact. The applicant intends to preserve these.



FINDINGS:

The following standards from the Preservation Brief 22 - The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco apply:

General Stucco Summary. The term "stucco" is used here to describe a type of exterior plaster applied as a two-or-three-part coating directly onto masonry or applied over wood or metal lath to a log or wood frame structure.

Historic stucco is sometimes incorrectly viewed as a sacrificial coating, and consequently removed to reveal stone, brick or logs that historically were never intended to be exposed.

Stucco on historic buildings is especially vulnerable not only to the wear of time and exposure to the elements, but also at the hands of well-intentioned "restorers," who may want to remove stucco from eighteenth and nineteenth century structures, to expose what they believe to be the original or more "historic" brick, stone or log underneath. Historic stucco is a character-defining feature and should be considered an important historic building

material, significant in its own right. While many eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings were stuccoed at the time of construction, others were stuccoed later for reasons of fashion or practicality. As such, it is likely that this stucco has acquired significance over time, as part of the history and evolution of a building. Thus, even later, non-historic stucco should be retained in most instances; and similar logic dictates that new stucco should not be applied to a historic building that was not stuccoed previously. When repairing historic stucco, the new stucco should duplicate the old as closely as possible in strength, composition, color and texture.

Repairing Deteriorated Stucco. *Historic stucco is inherently not a particularly permanent or long-lasting building material.*

Identifying the Stucco Type. *Analysis of the historic stucco will provide useful information on its primary ingredients and their proportions and will help to ensure that the new replacement stucco will duplicate the old in strength, composition, color and texture as closely as possible. However, unless authentic, period restoration is required, it may not be worthwhile, nor in many instances possible, to attempt to duplicate all of the ingredients (particularly some of the additives), in creating the new stucco mortar.*

While it is safe to assume that a late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth century stucco is lime-based, late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century stucco may be based on either lime or portland cement. Another important factor to take into consideration is that an early lime-stucco building is likely to have been repaired many times over the ensuing years, and it is probable that at least some of these patches consist of portland cement.

It is not clear when the stucco was added to the building; a 1949 photograph provided with the submittal packet does not show the stucco. The submittal packet does not contain the proposed stucco mix identification. Staff recommends that the type of stucco be identified, and the information be provided to staff for review.

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.*

The original windows and storefront no longer exist. The window openings are boarded, and the storefront is a later replacement. The window openings on the River Street side are also boarded. The current enclosed second-story balcony is not historic and thus its removal and replacement will not be detrimental to the historic character of the building.

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.

The window configuration and muntin pattern does not create a false sense of historical development as the window configuration and muntin pattern appears in a 1949 photograph provided with the submittal packet.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 4– Historic Changes. Most properties change over time; those changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

The enclosed balcony on the River Street side has not acquired historic significance.

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.

The most distinctive feature on the Bay Street elevation are the columns with ornamentation which will be preserved.

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.

The windows are missing and boarded up, but older photographs show what the window configuration was, which the new ones will match. As for the stucco, there are areas that require replacement. The stucco needs to be matched to what is there, but this information was not provided.

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.

Proportion of front façade. The relationship of the width of a building or structure to the height of its front facade shall be visually compatible to the contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.

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.

The change of the storefront on the first floor on the Bay Street elevation is proportional and maintains the original ornamental columns. The upper-level fenestration pattern will not change, and this is also the case for the windows on the River Street elevation.

Rhythm of solids to voids in front façades. *The relationship of solids to voids in the façades visible from the public right-of-way shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings and structures to which the structure is visually related.*

The storefront will match the rehabilitated storefront design at the existing Cotton Sail Hotel which maintains a rhythm that was lost when the storefronts were altered at various stages.

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 replacement open-air covered balcony on the River Street side will span across the rear elevation which is visually compatible.

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 and colors include:

- Marvin Ultimate wood windows to match what is seen at the existing Cotton Sail Hotel, painted black.
- Standing seam metal porch roof
- Material information is needed for the balcony elements such as the columns and railings, and if they will be painted or stained, and what the color will be.
- Stucco mixture information was not provided but the submittal packet shows a dark grey color proposed. However, the rendering shows a lighter shade, so staff requests clarification and color sample of which is proposed
- Wood storefront painted black to match existing- storefront system product specs are requested by staff
- Existing columns will remain and repainted the black color to match the existing, and ornamentation will be painted gold

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, 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 stucco replacement in areas where it has failed is appropriated. As mentioned above in this report, the applicant should provide the stucco mixture to ensure that it is a true stucco that matches the existing.

Exterior Walls, Finishes and Treatments.

Color changes to contributing resources shall be historically appropriate.

The submittal packet shows a dark grey shade for the stucco, but the renderings show something lighter. Staff finds that the lighter color would be more appropriate than the dark grey but requests the color specification.

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

Any cleaning of the historic stucco should be done with the gentlest means possible.

Entrances and Doors, Alterations to contributing resources.

Doors shall be repaired with in-kind materials rather than replaced, provided however, if the degree of degradation does not allow repair, the degradation of the door shall be photographically documented and verified by the Planning Director and the new door shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original.

If the original door material and/or configuration is unknown, or if a new door is proposed in an unoriginal opening, the new door material and configuration shall be based on historic context.

On the River Street elevation, there is a proposal for in-kind replacements of the existing doors on the ground level. They do not appear to be original. The drawings show two sets of double doors built to fit the arched entry ways, but the drawings note that the doors will be a match to the existing, which are each one single door. Clarification is requested.

Windows, Alterations to contributing resources.

Windows shall be repaired rather than replaced, provided however, if the degree of degradation does not allow repair, the degradation of each window shall be photographically documented and verified by the Planning Director, and the new window shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original (including single-glazed and true-divided lights, when appropriate).

If the original window material and/or configuration is unknown, or if a new window is proposed in an unoriginal opening, the new window material and configuration shall be based on historic context.

A photo from the Ward Notebook from the 1960s shows the window pattern before they were boarded up. This is a match to the windows at the Cotton Sail Hotel building that were also replaced to match what had been there historically. The Marvin Ultimate wood windows have been approved for many historic rehabilitation projects throughout Downtown and are appropriate.

Commercial Storefronts, Alterations to contributing resources.

Original storefronts 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 storefront shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original.

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

The storefronts across the buildings in this row had all undergone significant alterations. The applicant seeks to install a wood storefront system with clear glazing to match the existing, while maintaining the decorative columns that still exist.

Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Porticos, Exterior Stairs and Decks - Alterations to contributing resources.

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

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

Staff requests confirmation of this information.

Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Porticos, Exterior Stairs and Decks - Prohibited material. *Vinyl and wrought iron brackets shall not be used with wood balcony railings.*

It does not appear that vinyl materials are proposed, nor iron brackets with wood balcony railings.

Roofs, Contributing Resources.

Roofs, Configuration.

Original roof configuration shall be maintained.

Skylights, roof decks, pergolas and roof vents shall be permitted only on the roof plane opposite the street, or when screened from public view and shall not damage or obscure character-defining features.

The new metal coping is appropriate on the roof parapet and maintains its configuration.

Roofs, Materials.

Original roof material 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 roof shall be of the same material and configuration as the original (except wood or asbestos).

Metal roofs shall have a metal drip edge covering all edges.

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

Roofs, Configuration.

Shed roof, and porch roofs, subordinate and attached to the primary building, shall be pitched between 2:12 and 6:12. Where historically appropriate, flat roofs may be utilized.

The pitch of the porch roof was not noted on the drawings.

Roofs, Materials.

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

Metal roofs shall have a metal drip edge covering all edges.

A standing seam metal porch roof is proposed over the balcony. Ensure that there is a metal drip edge.

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 new balcony addition would be going in the same place as the current, non-historic enclosed balcony is now. It is on the rear of the building, which faces River Street. The placement of the balcony does not disturb any character defining features and is clearly a distinguishable appendage from the contributing building. This balcony could be removed in the future and the building repaired to leave no trace of its existence.

Mechanical Equipment and Refuse. *Mechanical equipment and refuse shall comply with Sec. 9.5.3, Screening of Service Areas, except as provided below.*

Roof mounted equipment and HVAC units shall be screened from view from the public right-of-way.

New mechanical screening is proposed and appears to meet the standard based on the sightline drawings in the submittal packet. Material of the screening was not included.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Continue the proposed rehabilitation work for the property located at 114 West Bay Street, to the July 10, 2026, Historic District Board of Review meeting to allow the applicant time to address the following:

- 1. Identify the stucco type to be used for repairs, to ensure it is a true stucco that matches the existing and confirm the color selection.**
- 2. Provide product specifications for the storefront system, metal porch roof (including roof pitch detail), replacement doors, and mechanical screening to ensure that they meet the standards.**
- 3. Provide a clear, detailed drawing of the balcony including material information and product specifications for the balcony elements such as the columns and railings, and if they will be painted or stained, and what the color will be.**
- 4. Clarify whether the River Street ground level doors will be replaced with single doors as they are currently, or double doors as shown in the drawings.**

MW: CC

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.