



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: Whitfield Signs
MPC File No.: 26-000404-COA
Address: 15 West Broughton Street
PIN: 20004 44012
Zoning: D-CBD
Staff Reviewer: Alexander Merced
Date: March 11, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant would like to install one illuminated wall sign.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The building was constructed in 1867 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. It is located within the Broughton Street Sign District.

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.*

The sign does not affect the historic materials or characteristics of the building. The standard is 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, finishes, or construction techniques will be affected. The standard is met.

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 sign can be removed in the future. The standard is met.

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.*

Signs. *Signs, where permitted, shall be visually compatible with contributing buildings and structures to which they are visually related.*

There is a wide variety of sign types in the Broughton Street Sign District and the surrounding area, and this is true historically as well. The scale, design, and color of the sign is visually compatible in its location. The standard is met.



1. Illuminated sign on Broughton Street



2. Immediately adjacent storefront sign



3. Sign on the same block

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.

The following standards from the Sec. 9.9.17 - Special Sign Districts apply:

Special Sign Districts. *In Addition to the requirements of Sec. 9.9.1 through 9.9.13, signs in the following special sign districts shall comply with the provisions of this Section, provided that where such provisions are in conflict with any requirements of Sec. 9.9.1 through 9.9.13, the requirements of this section shall prevail.*

Broughton Street Sign District. *The Broughton Street Sign District shall be bounded on the north by the centerline of Congress Lane, on the east by the western right-of-way line of Habersham Street, on the south by the centerline of Broughton Lane, or the*

extension thereof, and on the west by the eastern right-of-way line of Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard.

Signs Allowed in Historic Special Sign Districts. Sign types in historic special sign districts shall be allowed in accordance with the following table. Regardless of sign type, with the exception of decorative pole signs and signs painted on walls, non-illuminated signs that are three (3) square feet in size or less shall be permitted without a sign permit (COA).

Special Sign Standards for the Savannah Downtown Historic, City Market, Broughton Street, Factors Walk and Neighborhood Sign Districts.

Sign Illumination.

Signs shall not be illuminated unless specifically indicated below.

Where illumination is permitted, reverse silhouette or “cut-out” letters are encouraged to reduce glare where back lighting is applied.

Sign will be reverse halo-illuminated. The standard is met.

Restrictions on Materials.

Signs using reflective paint, lettering or graphics; and

Paper, cardboard and dry erase boards shall not be used as materials for signs.

No restricted materials will be used. The standard is met.

Ground, Projecting and Wall Signs.

Broughton Street Sign District.

Projecting Signs and Wall Signs.

Only one (1) projecting or wall sign shall be permitted for each business establishment. Where a business establishment fronts on more than one (1) street or pedestrian walkway providing public access to the establishment, one (1) projecting or wall sign for each frontage providing public access shall be permitted.

There will be one (1) wall sign. The standard is met.

The maximum sign area shall not exceed the following:

Street Frontage. 125 linear feet or less:

Wall Sign: 1 sq. ft. of display area per linear foot of building frontage occupied by each principal use. Not to exceed 90 sq. ft.

The storefront has a frontage of 20 feet. The sign will be 5.49 square feet. The standard is met.

A projecting or wall sign may be illuminated in accordance with Sec. 9.9.6 and 9.9.17.g.i.

9.9.6 Sign Illumination

Sign illumination, where permitted, shall be designed and installed so that it does not cast light directly from any source of illumination onto any street or adjacent property.

The standard is met.

Enclosed lamp, neon or exposed fluorescent lighting shall not be permitted within any Residential district or across the street from any residential use.

The type of sign is individually illuminated letters, which is none of the above-mentioned types. This is in a commercial district. Further, 15 West Broughton Street is not across from a residential use.

Internally illuminated signs shall be designed with:

- i. Individual illuminated letters, i.e. channel letters, including illumination with exposed neon lighting; or*
- ii. An opaque background.*

The standard is met.

A wall sign shall not extend above the parapet wall of the building or extend beyond the edge of the building or an adjoining principal use, nor shall such sign project out from the building façade more than 15 inches.

The sign will project out 4 inches from the building façade. All above standards are met.

Staff Report - Certificate of Appropriateness
MPC File No. 26-000404-COA
15 W. Broughton St.
March 11, 2026

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the proposed sign at 15 West Broughton Street as requested because it is visually compatible and meets the standards.

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.