



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: **Russell Finland**

MPC File No.: **26-000090-COA**

Address: **409 East Hall Street**

PIN: **20044 08024**

Zoning: **D-R**

Staff Reviewer: **Jodie Brown, AICP**

Date: **March 11, 2026**

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is proposing to replace the deck boards at the front porch of the house.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

Constructed mid-block on the south side of Hall Street, the house is located in the Stephens Ward. The house was constructed in 1892 and designed as a duplex. It is one of three similar duplexes that line the street. It was designed in the Colonial Revival style with a hipped roof and a centrally located dormer. The exterior is sheathed with rusticated block. The front façade features a full-width porch supported by Tuscan columns and an upper uncovered deck. Fenestration consists of a wood and glass main entrance with a transom, diamond patterned French doors and 2/2 double hung windows.

The subject building is listed as a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District.

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 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 proposed work is located at the front of the property. The work involves replacing deteriorated deck boards on the front porch. The boards will be replaced in-kind and will have no impact on the historic character of the property. The proposed work is consistent with Standard 2.

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 proposed work is located at the front of the property. The work involves replacing deteriorated deck boards on the front porch. It appears that the decking may have been replaced at some point in the past based on the cut line that runs down the middle on a portion of the porch. The boards will be replaced in-kind and will have no impact on the historic character of the property. The proposed work is consistent with Standard 6.

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 is proposing to use 1"x4" pressure treated wood to replace the deteriorated decking. Once replaced the decking will be painted dark green to match the existing. The materials and color are an in-kind replacement and 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.

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.

The applicant is proposing to replace the deck boards in-kind. The existing decking material has deteriorated and requires attention. It also appears that the deck boards were previously replaced based on the cut line that runs down a portion of the width of the deck. The new material will be installed to match the existing. The proposed work is consistent with the historic district design standards.

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.

The work is limited to replacement of the decking and will not involve any enclosure. The work is consistent with the historic district design standards.

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

The applicant will not be using any prohibited materials. The work is consistent with the historic district design standards.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE the request to replace the deck boards on the front porch in-kind on the property at 409 East Hall Street **AS REQUESTED** because the work is visually compatible and meets the Standards.

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.