



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: SpeediSign, Flint North

MPC File No.: 26-001295-COA

Address: 127 North Fahm Street

PIN: 20016 18006

Zoning: D-X

Staff Reviewer: Alexander Merced

Date: May 13, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant has applied for a variance that will allow one extra wall sign on the Fahm Street elevation of 127 Fahm Street. This will be part illuminated and part non-illuminated signage. This project was first heard at the April 8th HDBR meeting, where there was a partial approval and a continuance in order to allow for this variance request, which will be heard by the ZBA.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The building was constructed between 2013-2015 and is a non-contributing resource within the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. Most recently a Family Dollar, it sits across from two 1960's buildings that have been designated contributing: the 1965 Greyhound bus station, and the 1964 Thunderbird Inn motel, to the east and southeast respectively. Aside from these relatively modern structures, it sits in a mostly non-contributing and non-residential area off of downtown, including a vacant lot to the south, and a gas station to the west.

PROJECT HISTORY

This project was initially heard at the April 8, 2026, HDBR meeting. It was partially approved, and the rest was continued in order for the applicant to receive the necessary variance to allow two wall signs on the Fahm Street elevation. That variance will be heard by the ZBA on May 28, 2026, because the 30-day newspaper notice requirement was not met in time to be heard at this month's HDBR meeting but will allow them to potentially receive the variance in time for their early June grand opening.



1. Contributing Greyhound bus station built in 1965



2. Contributing Thunderbird Inn Motel built in 1964

FINDINGS:

The following standards from the Sec 7.8 - Savannah Downtown Historic District Ordinance apply:

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.*

The sign in question is visually compatible with the two mid-century contributing buildings that it is related to. These are the only contributing buildings in the area. The standard is met.

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.*

Historic Special Sign District Boundaries.

Savannah Downtown Historic Sign District. *The Savannah Downtown Historic Sign District shall include any area location within the Savannah Downtown Historic Overlay District, with the exception of City Market, Broughton Street, Factors Walk, and Plant Riverside Sign Districts.*

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

Sign Illumination.

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

The “Union Mission” will be illuminated in this manner. The standard is met.

Restrictions on Materials.

Within Sector “B” of the Factors Walk Sign District, all ground, projecting and wall signs, except those located on a canopy or awning, shall be constructed from wood or from a material of similar texture or appearance. Lettering shall be restricted to either raised, painted, indented or carved characters or designs on the sign;

Signs using reflective paint, lettering or graphics; and

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

The standards are met.

Ground, Projecting and Wall Signs.

Savannah Downtown Historic and City Market Sign Districts.

Ground, Projecting and Wall Signs. Only one (1) ground, 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) wall or projecting sign for each frontage providing public access shall be permitted.

The applicant would like two wall signs on the Fahm Street elevation which does not meet the standard. Staff recommends that the applicant go to the ZBA to apply for a variance.

The aggregate sign area shall not exceed a size of more than one (1) square foot of sign area per linear foot of lot frontage along a given street or shall meet the following size requirements, whichever is the most restrictive:

D-C, D-CBD, D-X, I-L, I-LT Zoning Districts:

40 sq. ft.: Wall sign (max)

In addition to the above maximum sign size requirements for buildings with over 75 feet of lot frontage, one (1) additional square foot of wall sign area shall be allowed for every two (2) linear feet of building frontage within the D-CBD, D-C and D-X districts.

The building frontage along Fahm Street is 100 feet, so the max sign area is 52.5 square feet. With this extra sign, the total sign area on this elevation is 52.09 square feet. The standard is met.

Wall and projecting signs shall be erected only on the signable area of the structure and shall not project over the roofline or parapet wall elevation of the structure.

Wall signs shall be mounted flat to a wall of the façade of the building.

Ground, projecting and wall signs in D-C, D-CBD, D-X, I-L, and I-LT districts may be illuminated in accordance with Sec. 9.9.6 and 9.9.17.g.i.

The above standards are met.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the extra wall sign on the Fahm Street elevation of 127 North Fahm Street with the following condition because it is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards:

- 1. Approve on the condition that the ZBA grants the necessary variance.**

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.