



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: Eli Lurie

MPC File No.: 24-006550-COA

Address: 11 West Gordon Street

PIN: 20032 43004

Zoning: D-R

Staff Reviewer: Caitlin Chamberlain

Date: September 9, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval for an amendment to the previously approved New Construction, Accessory Building, Parts I & II from April 9, 2025, to allow for the removal of a non-historic site wall and moving the accessory structure slightly from the property line.

Per the applicant:

“During the course of the work, we discovered that the existing western site wall does not align with the property line, but is instead located approximately 1’2” inside the property line. We are proposing to remove the existing site wall and construct the new carriage house along the same line, maintaining the existing 1’2” setback from the property line.”

The applicant included a stamped survey from a GA licensed land surveyor showing this detail where the site wall is inside the property line.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

11 West Gordon Street was constructed in 1858 and is a three-story with raised basement masonry (stucco) free-standing building on the south side of West Gordon Street between Bull Street and Whitaker Street on Monterey Square. It is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District.

The building is three bays wide, with punched openings with nine-over-nine and six-over-six windows and wood shutters, stone sills, and is topped by a hipped roof with bracketed eaves. The site also includes a two-story non-contributing carriage house at the rear (south) that fronts on West Gordon Lane as well as a surface parking area and wall that separates the rear yard from the lane.

Staff Report - Certificate of Appropriateness
MPC File No. 24-006550-COA
11 W. Gordon St.
September 9, 2026

The surrounding context includes a collection of architecturally significant buildings found in the including to the north the Mercer House and to the south the Armstrong Mansion along with a number of other ones in a rich variety of architectural styles.



Staff Site Visit Photos – views of front (West Gordon Street) elevation and rear (West Gordon Lane) elevation

The Sanborn Map from 1916 shows that the area had managed to retain both the historic primary and secondary buildings that gave the area its notable architectural character even as many of the buildings had been repurposed to other uses from their original residential ones.

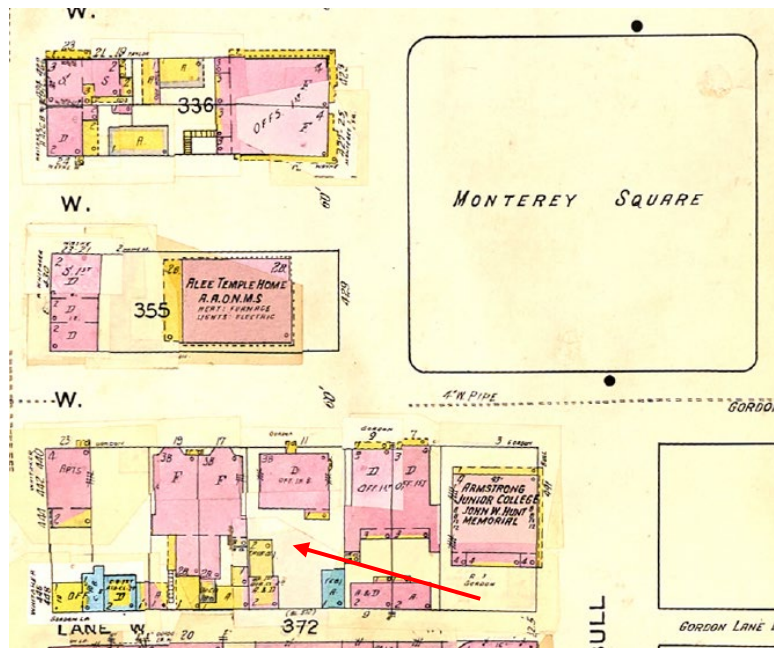


Figure 1 - 1916 Sanborn Map with paste-ins through 1953 showing 11 West Gordon Street

The Sanborn Map from 1955 shows that the built environment had largely been preserved which has continued to this day resulting in the rich collection of historic buildings in a notable variety of architectural styles.

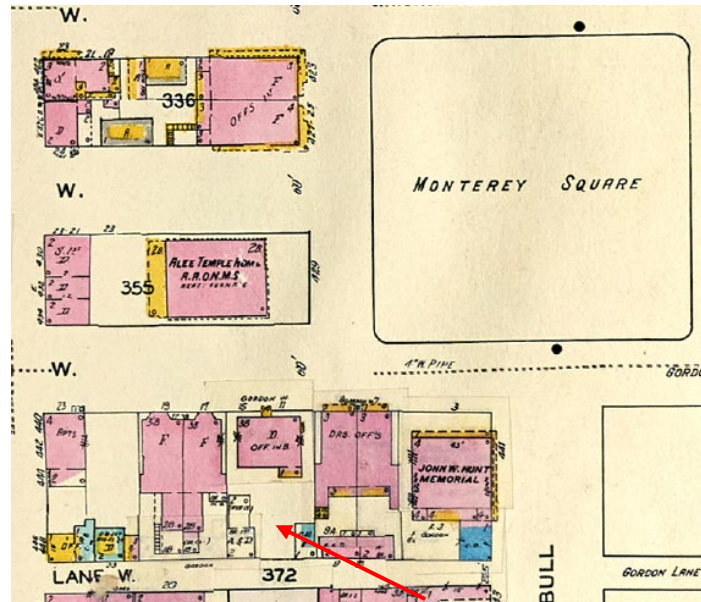


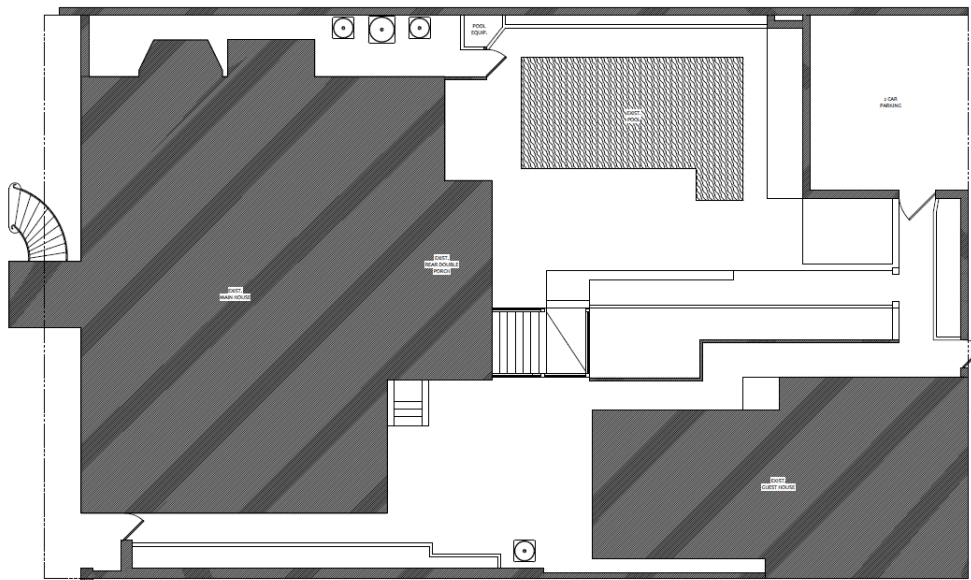
Figure 2 – 1955 Sanborn Map with paste-ins through 1966 showing 11 West Gordon Street

PROJECT HISTORY:

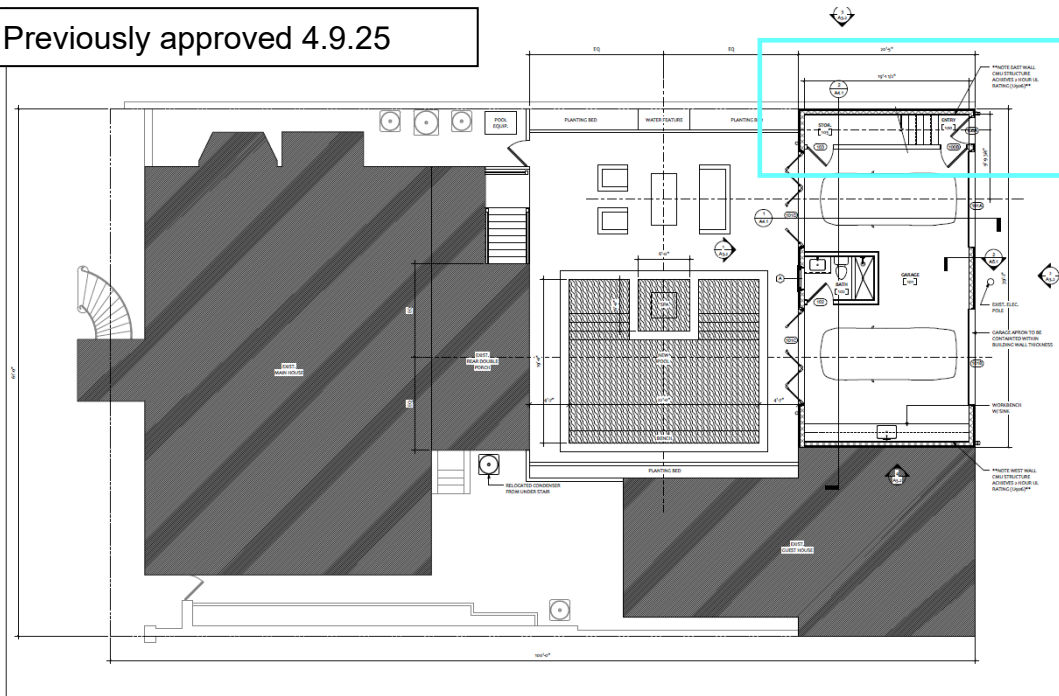
This project was most recently heard at the April 9, 2025, Historic District Board of Review (HDBR) meeting. It had been continued twice before that to allow the applicant time to address conditions to do with the design of the project. Those were addressed, which lead to an approval at that time. The project also included the installation of a swimming pool in the rear yard.

FINDINGS:

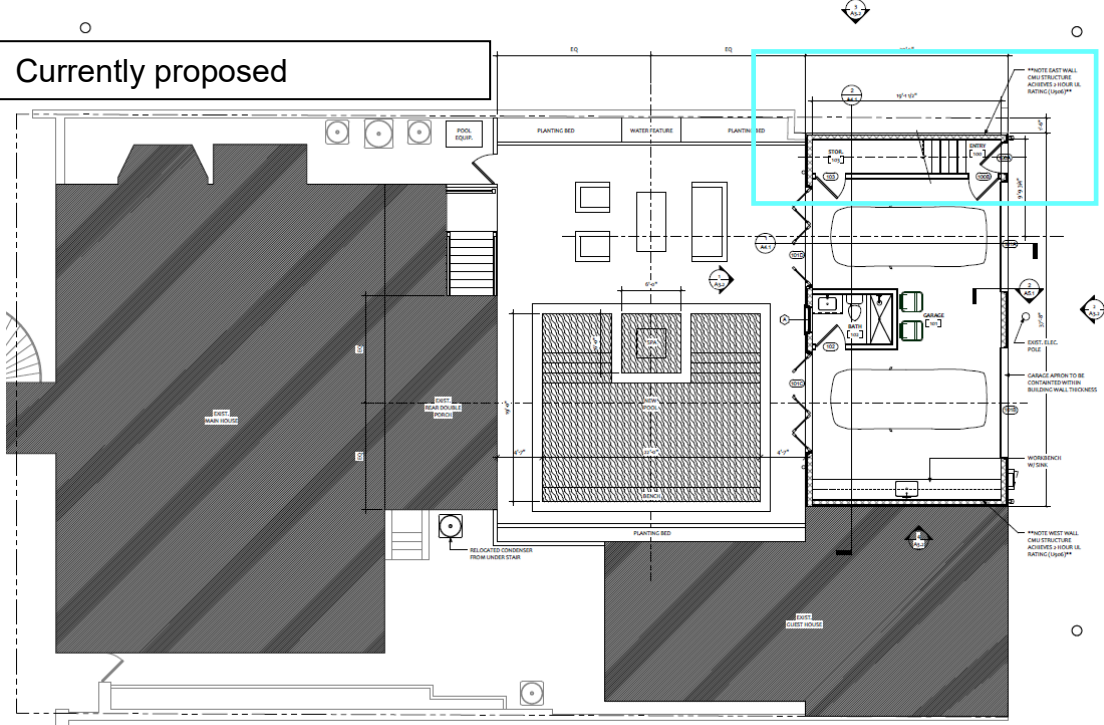
The images below provide the as-built site plan (directly below), previously approved site plan (top, next page) and the current site plan revision (bottom, next page).



Previously approved 4.9.25



Currently proposed



The design of the accessory structure will not be changed, though it will be slightly scaled down and no longer on the property line. Therefore, the standards are still met. Staff recommends though, that the applicant provides updated drawings reflecting the change to be restamped for permitting prior to construction.

The following standards from the Article 5 - Base Zoning Districts apply:

(D) Downtown District Development Standards. *Development in any D- district shall meet the development standards as set forth below.*

D-R Development Standards for Permitted Uses. *If a historic precedent exists within Troup and Wesley Wards and the visual compatibility criteria have been met, lower lot width and area may be permitted. See Sec. 3.21 and Sec. 7.8 for specific standards.*

D-R Building Coverage (max). 75%

The standard is met. The original proposed coverage is 58.6%. With the smaller footprint of the accessory structure, staff recommends that the drawings are updated to reflect the coverage which would still be below the 75%.

D-R Building Setback (max ft).

Side (interior) yard. None

Rear yard. None

The standard is met. No rear yard setback is proposed. For the side yard setback that was approved at the zero-lot line, it will now be 1'2" from that lot line, which still meets the standard.

As per the previous approval, the info is below and should be updated.

The footprint square footages for 11 West Gordon are as follows:

Main House: 2,004 SF

Existing Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU): 772 SF

Existing Total Footprint: 2,776 SF

Proposed Accessory Building: 800 SF

Percentage to Main House: 39.9%

Maximum Allowed: 40%

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 site wall is not historic, as can be evidenced by the exposed concrete block. Its removal will not affect the historic character of the principal historic building.

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 concrete block wall has not acquired historic significance.

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 site wall and the accessory structure are separate from the historic house. The removal of the site wall will not damage the house for this reason. The construction of the accessory structure is not connected to the historic house and will also not damage in its construction or potential removal in the future.

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.*

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 accessory structure be visible from West Gordon Lane with an elevation that would be two bays wide at the first floor and three at the second with a revised overall width of 37'8" that would span the remaining open frontage on the lane and would be visually compatible with the notable variety of two-story contributing accessory buildings to which it will be visually related.

Rhythm of structures on streets. *The relationship of a building or structure to the open space between it and adjacent buildings or structures shall be visually compatible with the open spaces between contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

Walls of continuity. Brick walls, wrought iron fences, landscape masses, building facades, or combinations of these shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings, structures and objects to which they are visually related and shall form continuous walls of enclosure along the street.

The standard is met. The introduction of an accessory building would serve to help continue the re-establishment of the form of West Gordon Lane and would be visually compatible with the contributing carriage houses to which it will be related.

Scale of a building. The mass of a building or structure and size of windows, door openings, porches column spacing, stairs, balconies and additions shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings and structures to which the structure is visually related.

The standard is met. The proposed two-story accessory building would rise to a height of 23 feet (reduced from an original height of 25 feet) at the top of the parapet with a footprint of 37'8" wide and 19'1 1/2" deep (previously was 39'2" wide and 20'5" deep). The contributing accessory buildings on West Gordon Lane are of a similar scale and as a result both the mass and design of the proposed accessory building would be visually compatible both with the character of the lane as well as with the primary house.

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.

Streets and Lanes.

Development shall preserve or reconstruct the historic ward pattern of streets and lanes within the Oglethorpe Plan Area.

The standard is met. The proposed accessory building will not negatively impact the historic ward pattern of streets and lanes within the *Oglethorpe Plan Area* and will serve to help further reestablish the character of West Gordon Lane.

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 located on an east-west through street shall utilize a contributing building form fronting the same street within the same ward or in an adjacent ward.

The standard is met. The proposed accessory building is to be two stories in height and have a flat roof with parapet which would be in-keeping with the predominant historic pattern of development for accessory buildings along West Gordon Lane.

Setbacks, Side and rear yards. *Side and rear yard setbacks shall not be required.*

Though there are 0' side yard setbacks in this district, the proposed accessory structure will now be 1'2" from the lot line. The standard is met.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the design amendment for the accessory structure at the rear of 11 West Gordon Street, including removal of a non-historic site wall and scaled-down footprint of the structure, with the following condition because the amendment is visually compatible and meets the standards:

- 1. Submit revised elevation drawings that show the wall has been removed, the smaller footprint, and revised lot coverage percentage.**