



# CITY OF SAVANNAH

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## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

### REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

**Petitioner:** Ward Architecture, Josh Ward

**MPC File No.:** 24-002996-COA

**Address:** 2001 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

**PIN:** 20066 48001

**Zoning:** TC-1

**Staff Reviewer:** Jonathan Mellon

**Date:** June 26, 2024

#### **NATURE OF REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting approval for the rehabilitation and alterations to the building located at 2001 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard which is to serve as part of the proposed campus for the Kiah Museum. In addition, under a separate application, the applicant is requesting to construct an addition for a staircase and elevator on the rear of the building, alterations to the building including a deck and ADA ramp, and alterations to the previously approved accessory building with ADU, for the property located at 505 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street.

Per the applicant:

*“The existing 1-story building at 2001 MLK Jr. Blvd. has a stucco veneer on 3 sides of its cmu exterior walls. Constructed ca. 1954, it is a contributing building to the Cuyler-Brownville Historic District and thus will be rehabilitated as part of the arts campus. On its east façade, the original fenestration pattern is barely discernable. Many openings appear to be altered and incongruous materials have been added along a portion of the wall. We propose unifying the storefront openings by matching their sizes and materials. We have created a rhythm of openings determined by what appears to be the original spacing. Each opening will have a single clear anodized aluminum storefront window atop a solid base surfaced with zinc diamond shaped shingles. A simple steel plate canopy will provide protection from the elements. The north façade has a single storefront opening matching the east. The west (rear) façade, facing the courtyard and Kiah Museum, will have the most alterations. Currently this façade is the back of the building with bare cmu walls, an assortment of conduit and systems, various punched openings, and no continuous parapet. We propose to remove a portion of the wall to create a wide expanse of butt-joint glazing. This will increase connectivity to the museum and allow visitors to the Studio full visual access of the courtyard and Kiah House. This wall of glass is slightly angled to help focus your view. On either end of the glazing are 1’ thick*

walls covered with zinc diamond shaped shingles. The walls extend above the roof plane to help define the entry and the art gallery inside. Two clear anodized storefront doors welcome you inside the lobby. The south façade along the lane is unchanged other than the proposed aluminum louver mechanical screen on the roof of this end of the building.

The unifying element between the 3 buildings will be the courtyard. We have the opportunity to create a semi-public garden that will complete the arts campus. The Artist Jerome Meadows has been commissioned to create a piece of sculpture to anchor the courtyard. Milling Land Design will incorporate the landscape with the sculpture giving Savannah another garden to admire. Elements such as paving materials, garden walls, lighting, and signage are still being design and coordinated with the various designers/artists. These items will be submitted at a later date for consideration.”

### **PROJECT HISTORY:**

At the November 20, 2023, HPC meeting the Commission approved (23-005730-COA) a plan for the adjacent building located at 505 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street that included the renovation of the building, deconstruction of the accessory building and its replacement with a newly constructed one with an ADU. Since that time, this building at 2001 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard has been acquired with the plan to have both properties serve as a combined campus for the Kiah Museum.

### **CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:**

2001 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is a one-story masonry (stucco) building which was constructed in 1930 on a corner lot with frontage on West 36<sup>th</sup> Street. The building is a contributing resource within the Thomas Square-Streetcar National Register Historic District and the local Streetcar Historic District.

The adjacent building and site at 505 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street have a notable history having been the site of the Kiah House Museum but have been vacant for several years resulting in the existing conditions that require considerable restoration work.

The Kiah House Museum was the vision of Virginia Kiah who “*who retrofitted it in 1959 in order to establish the first African American-founded museum in Savannah.*”<sup>1</sup> The story of Virginia Kiah is important on both the local and national level, as she responded to being denied access to the arts by working to open a museum that was open to all in the City of Savannah.

The Sanborn maps show how the site was developed as the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard transitioned in this section from a largely residential set of buildings / uses to commercial ones.

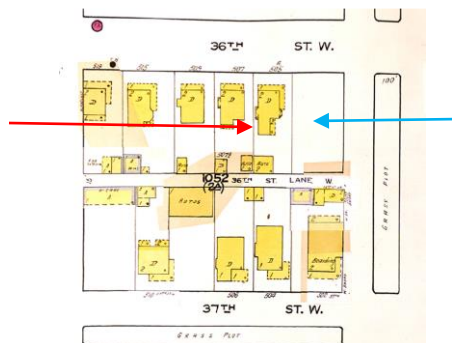


Figure 1 – 1916 Sanborn Map showing 505 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street and the vacant parcel to the side (east) at 2001 Martin Luther King

<sup>1</sup> Galvan Foundation

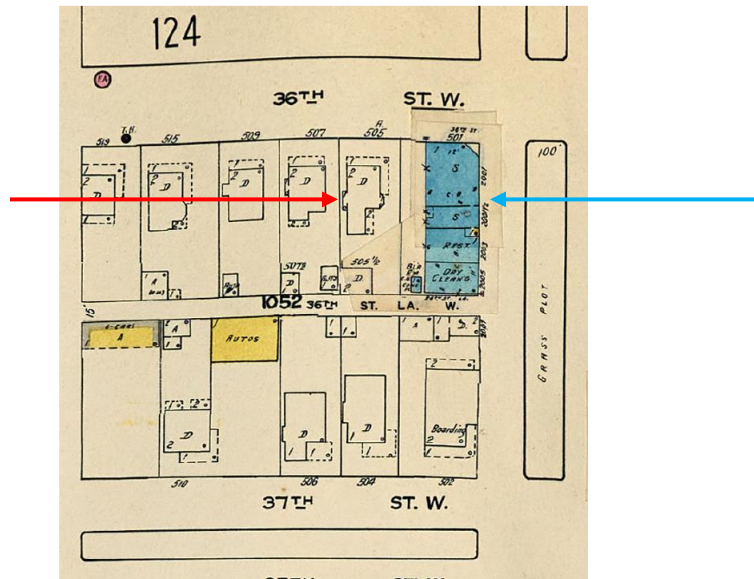


Figure 2 – 1955 Sanborn Map showing 505 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street and the developed parcel to the side (east) at 2001 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard



Staff Site Visit Photos – Confirmation of Posting; views of front elevation (Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard), side elevation (West 36<sup>th</sup> Street), and rear elevation (west)

**FINDINGS:**

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

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

***TC-1 Development Standards for Permitted Uses.***

***TC-1, Minimum Lot Dimensions, Nonresidential.***

*Lot area per unit (sq. ft.): None*

*Lot width per unit (ft.): 20*

The standards are met.

***TC-1 Maximum Building Coverage. None***

***TC-1 Minimum Building frontage (min). 70%***

***TC-1 Building footprint (max sq. ft.). 5,500***

The standards are met. The existing building has a frontage along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard of 100%, and the proposed building footprint would be 4,236 SF with the rear addition.

***TC-1, Building Setbacks (ft), For blocks with contributing structures.***

*Front yard: average of block face*

*Side yard (interior): 10 (min). There is no minimum side yard (interior) setback for properties adjacent to any TC zoning district.*

*Side yard (corner): average of block face*

*Rear yard: 10 (min)*

The standards are met. The existing building is proposed to be retained with a rear addition that would meet the setback requirements.

***TC-1, Height (max). 3 stories up to 45 ft.***

*Monumental buildings in the Streetcar Overlay District are exempt from the maximum building footprint and maximum height standards provided that the visual compatibility criteria are met.*

The standard is met. The existing building is one-story in height, which would be preserved with the proposed one-story rear addition.

The following standards from the Sec 7.10 - Cuyler-Brownville 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 standard is met. The proposed scope of work would include alterations to the 1930 one-story commercial building that would consist of alterations to the fenestration on the front (east) elevation as well as to the side elevations (north and south) and the removal and replacement of the blank rear elevation with an addition. The front (east) elevation has seen considerable alterations to its original fenestration pattern, save for the canted corner entrance, and the proposed scope of work would by taking cues from what looked to be the original spacing, introduce new openings. The proposed alterations to the side elevations (north and south) would include alterations to the fenestration and the rear addition that would be visible on the side (north) elevation as well as minor alterations to the side (south) elevation. The rear (west)

elevation is utilitarian in nature with a largely blank expanse with some punched openings and mechanical equipment. The proposed scope of work would remove the rear (west) elevation and replace it with a new largely glass wall system that would provide views and visually link the building with the adjacent building at 505 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street across the planned courtyard space.

The proposed scope of work would not result in the removal of character-defining features of this one-story commercial 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 standard is met. The proposed scope of work would include the removal of non-historic windows, doors, and storefronts, and the introduction of new ones that would be clearly identifiable of being of their own time.

***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 standard is met. The proposed scope of work would not result in the removal of alterations that have occurred to the building over the past decades that have acquired historic significance. Rather, the proposed scope of work would seek to restore the building to a design more in-keeping with the original design / look.

***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 standard is met. The proposed scope of work would retain the distinctive canted corner entrance and canopy.

***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 standard is met. The proposed scope of work would include the retention and restoration of the canted corner entrance and canopy as well as restoration of the stucco façade.

***Secretary of the Interior's Standards 7– Chemical or Physical Treatments.*** *Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.*

The standard is met. The proposed scope of work would not include the use of any chemical or physical treatments that could result in damage to the historic fabric of the building.

***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.*

The intent of the standard is met. While the proposed rear addition would result in the removal of the rear (west) elevation, this elevation is of a utilitarian nature and is not a character-defining feature of the one-story commercial building. The proposed one-story rear addition would be clearly differentiated from the 1930 building and would be compatible with the massing, scale, and architectural character of this simple commercial structure.

***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 intent of the standard is met. Given the utilitarian nature of the rear (west) elevation, it could be rebuilt with concrete block and a stucco finish.

***Visual Compatibility Criteria.*** *To maintain the special character of the Cuyler-Brownville 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.*

***Height.*** *The overall height and the height of individual components of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible with contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

***Width.*** *The proportion of the overall width and the width of individual components of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible to the contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The standards are met. The existing conditions of this one-story building are a design that resulted in a short and wide structure, and proposed one-story rear addition would be in-keeping with the established historic character of the building and be visually compatible with the contributing buildings to which it is related.

***Scale.*** *The overall scale and the scale of individual components of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible to the contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The standard is met. The existing condition of the one-story building is a scale that is short and wide, which would be retained, with a one-story rear addition that would be visually compatible with the contributing buildings to which it is related.

***Setbacks.*** *The setbacks of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible with setbacks of contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The standard is met. The existing front and side setbacks would be retained with the proposed scope of work including a one-story rear addition that would allow for a considerable amount of open space between the building and the adjacent building at 505 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street that would be visually compatible and allow both buildings to read as clearly separate historic structures.

***Rhythm of Building or Structure.*** *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 or structures to which it is visually related.*

The standard is met. The existing footprint of the one-story building would largely be retained with the introduction of a one-story rear addition that would allow for a visually compatible rhythm with the adjacent contributing building at 505 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street and the additional contributing buildings along this block of West 36<sup>th</sup> Street.

***Openings.*** *The rhythm and solid-to-void ratio of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible with contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The standard is met. The proposed scope of work would seek to restore the original fenestration pattern on the front (east) and side (north) elevations while introducing a new open fenestration pattern on the rear (west) elevation. In total, the proposed openings would be visually compatible with the adjacent contributing building on West 36<sup>th</sup> Street as well as the other contributing buildings along West 36<sup>th</sup> Street and Marting Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

***Projections.*** *Entrances, porches, and other projections of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible with contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The standard is met. The proposed scope of work would include the introduction of simply detailed steel plate canopies above the openings and steel channel frame canopy over the new entrance on West 36<sup>th</sup> Street, which would be visually compatible with the one-story commercial building and contributing buildings and structures to which it is related.

***Materials.*** *The relationship of materials and textures of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The standard is met. The proposed scope of work would include a visually compatible material palette of stucco, zinc shingles, metal, and glass.

***Roof Shapes.*** *The roof shape of the proposed building or structure shall be visually compatible with contributing buildings and structures to which it is visually related.*

The standard is met. The existing flat roof of the one-story commercial building would not see any changes to its shape and the proposed one-story addition would have a visually compatible flat roof.

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

The proposed signage for the building is to be submitted for review by the Historic Preservation Commission under a separate application.

***Cuyler-Brownville Historic District Design Standards.***

*New Construction, Additions, and Alterations. The intent of these standards is to ensure appropriate new construction, additions, and alterations within the Cuyler-Brownville 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 resource.*

*The following design standards shall apply to new construction, additions, alterations to contributing and non-contributing buildings and structures, and site alterations, unless otherwise specified. Though certain building materials are prescribed below, the Historic Preservation Commission 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.*

***Foundation, Alterations to contributing resources.*** *The intent of these standards is to ensure that foundations match the traditional pattern of construction in height and materials and complement the craftsmanship of contributing buildings.*

*Foundations 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 foundation shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original foundation.*

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

*The space between piers may be filled with heavy gauge wood lattice with at least one-half (0.5) inch thick lattice boards, horizontal boards, brick or true stucco over concrete block. Infill material shall be recessed a minimum of three inches behind the front edge of the pier so that the piers are clearly visible and differentiated.*

The standards are met. The existing building does not have an expressed foundation and the proposed scope of work would include the restoration of the stucco façade.

***Exterior walls, Alterations to contributing resources.*** *The intent of these standards is to ensure that exterior building walls reflect and complement the traditional materials and construction techniques of the district's architecture.*

*Exterior walls 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 replacement wall shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original wall.*

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

The standards are met. The proposed scope of work would include the restoration of the stucco façade, and the introduction of zing shingles/tiles below the fenestration in-place of the non-historic materials.

***Prohibited materials, Exterior walls, Alterations to contributing resources.*** *Vinyl siding, aluminum siding, rolled asphalt, precast concrete panels, fiber cement wood siding, EIFS, one-part stucco over insulation and/or wood or metal framing, and T-111.*

The standard is met. None of the prohibited materials are proposed to be used as part of the scope of work on the building.



***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.*

The standard is met. The existing windows are not original historic fabric and do not contribute to the design of this one-story commercial building. The proposed replacement windows would be in-keeping with the storefront windows and overall spacing pattern that the building would have seen historically.

***Doors/Entrances, Alterations to contributing resources.***

*Doors shall be repaired 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 material 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.*

The standard is met. The character-defining wood entrance doors in the canted corner entrance are proposed to be retained and restored as part of the scope of work, with the replacement of the other non-historic doors with compatible ones both in terms of design and materiality.

***Mechanical Equipment and Refuse.*** *The intent of these standards is to ensure that mechanical equipment and refuse is appropriately sited to provide the least negative visual impact. In addition to the requirements set forth in Sec. 9.5, Screening and Buffers, mechanical equipment and refuse shall comply with the following:*

*Electrical vaults, meter boxes, communications devices, and satellite dishes shall be located on the secondary or rear façades and shall be minimally visible.*

*Roof mounted equipment and HVAC units shall be screened from view from the street.*

*Refuse storage areas for dumpsters and compactors shall be located within a building or to the side of rear of the building and screened from the public right-of-way.*

*Through-the-wall and through-the-window air conditioners shall be located on the secondary or rear facades and shall be minimally visible.*

*Alternative energy source devices may be permitted on new construction, additions, and alterations to non-contributing resources provided they are integrated in to the building design. Alternative energy source devices may be permitted on contributing resources provided they are not visible from the street and do not damage or obscure any character-defining features.*

The standards are met. The proposed scope of work would include the creation of an interior mechanical room for electrical and meter boxes, the installation of roof mounted mechanical

equipment that would be screened from view by aluminum louver screening, and refuse storage located within the building. No through-wall or window mounted air conditioners are proposed, nor are alternative energy sources at this time.

**Lighting.** *The intent of these standards is to ensure that light fixtures have appropriate scale, are sited appropriately, are made of appropriate materials and complement the building on which they are located. In addition to the requirements set forth in Sec. 9.8, Lighting, lighting shall comply with the following:*

*Materials: Light fixtures shall be constructed of metal and/or glass.*

*Configuration: Light fixtures shall be compatible with the scale of the subject property and with the character of the district.*

*Source Type: White light source only.*

The submission package does not provide details on any proposed exterior lighting as part of the scope of the work. The applicant should provide the Commission with a thorough review of any proposed exterior lighting in order to ensure that it meets the standards.

**Parking and Paving.** *The intent of these standards is to create and protect contiguous, active pedestrian street fronts. In addition to the requirements set forth in Sec. 9.3, Off-Street Parking and Loading, parking and paving shall comply with the following:*

*New construction shall include a private sidewalk that connects the main entrance of the principal structure to the public sidewalk. Private sidewalks shall be constructed of brick, concrete, stone, or other materials as approved by the Planning Director.*

*Parking areas shall be located in the rear yard except for single- and two-family dwelling units which may also provide parking in the side yard behind the face of the front façade.*

The standards are met. The proposed scope of work would include sidewalks to the canted corner entrance as well as the new entrance off West 36<sup>th</sup> Street. The proposed parking area would be in the rear yard with access off West 36<sup>th</sup> Lane.

**Vehicular Access.**

*For single- and two-family dwellings, where a site has access to a lane, the lane shall be the sole means of vehicular access to the site. Where lane access is not available, a driveway shall be permitted from the street provided that it is a ribbon strip design. The driveway shall be no wider than 12 feet and the area between the strips shall be planted with grass or plants that grow or are maintained to no taller than one-half foot.*

*For uses other than single- and two-family dwellings, vehicular access shall be from the lane. Where there is no lane, the Governing Body Engineer shall consult with each other to determine the most appropriate access location.*

The standard is met. The proposed vehicular access will be off West 36<sup>th</sup> Lane at the rear of the site.

**Fencing and Walls.** *The intent of these standards is to ensure that walls and fences define outdoor spaces appropriately, separate private and public realms and add architectural interest to a building's façade. In addition to compliance with the requirements set forth in Sec. 9.6, Fences and Walls, fences and walls shall also comply with the following standards:*

***Fencing and Walls, Permitted Materials.***

*Wood, iron, brick, true stucco over concrete block, smooth fiber cement or extruded aluminum.*

*Chain link may be permitted in the rear yard but not along any street.*

*Plastic or metal slats used in chain link shall not be permitted.*

No fencing or walls are proposed as part of the scope of work for the site. Fencing / walls, paving, lighting, and the overall landscape plan for the courtyard space are to be submitted for review by the Historic Preservation Commission under a separate application.

***Fencing and Walls, Prohibited Materials.*** *Vinyl, PVC, and corrugated metal.*

***Fencing and Walls, Configuration.***

*Fences or walls no more than 36 inches in height may be installed within the front yard.*

*Fences or walls no more than eight (8) feet in height may be installed within the side or rear yards behind the front façade of the building.*

*A minimum of five (5) feet must be provided between a fence and a building where they are parallel.*

No fencing or walls are proposed as part of the scope of work for the site. Fencing / walls, paving, lighting, and the overall landscape plan for the courtyard space are to be submitted for review by the Historic Preservation Commission under a separate application.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

**Approve the request for the rehabilitation and alterations to the property located at 2001 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard with the following condition because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards.**

- 1. Provide detailed information on any proposed exterior lighting or note that it would be submitted under a separate application to the Commission.**

**MW: LGM**

**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.