



Savannah Historic District Board of Review

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room - 112 East State Street
November 8, 2023 1:00 PM
MINUTES

November 8, 2023 Historic District Board of Review Meeting

A Pre-Meeting was held at 12:00 PM in the Mendonsa Hearing Room, 112 East State Street. Items on the Agenda were presented by Staff, as time permitted, and the Board asked questions. No testimony was received, and no votes were taken.

Members Present: Ellie Isaacs, Chair
Robert Becker
Michael Higgins
Karen Guinn
Melissa Rowan
Stan Houle
Nan Taylor
Thomas Thomson

Members Absent: David Altschiller

MPC Staff Present: Pamela Everett, Assistant Executive Director Compliance and Operations
Leah Michalak, Director of Historic Preservation
Caitlin Chamberlain, Senior Planner
Bri Morgan, Administrative Assistant
Hind Patel, Information Technology

I. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

II. SIGN POSTING

III. CONSENT AGENDA

[1. Petition of Kathryn Murph | 23-004075-COA | 541 East Congress Street | Alterations](#)

- [☞ Staff Report - 23-004075-COA 541 E Congress St.pdf](#)
- [☞ Submittal Packet - 541 E Congress St.pdf](#)
- [☞ Staff Research.pdf](#)
- [☞ Previous Submittal Packet - 541 E Congress St.pdf](#)

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby approve alterations to the front elevation of the building located at 541 East Congress Street. with the following condition to be submitted to staff for final review and approval because the proposed work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the

standards:

1. Add a horizontal rail to the shutters and ensure that it corresponds to the location of the meeting rail of the window.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Thomas L. Thomson

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

[2. Petition of Greenline Architecture | 23-005357-COA | 402-412 West Hall Street/623-625 Montgomery Street | Fence](#)

[Staff Report - 23-005357-COA 402 W Hall St.pdf](#)

[Submittal Packet - 402 W Hall St.pdf](#)

[Staff Site Photograph - 402 W Hall St.pdf](#)

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby approve to install a fence in the rear yard for the property located at 402-412 West Hall Street/623-625 Montgomery Street as requested because the proposed work is visually compatible and meets the standards.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Thomas L. Thomson

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

[3. Petition of Lynch Architects | 23-005361-COA | 570 Indian Street | Alterations](#)

- [📎 Submittal Packet - 570 Indian Street.pdf](#)
- [📎 Staff Report - 23-005361-COA 570 Indian St.pdf](#)
- [📎 Staff Research - 570 Indian Street.pdf](#)

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby approve the proposed rehabilitation and alterations at 570 Indian Street with the following condition to be submitted to staff for final review and approval because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards.

1. Provide details about where on the rear elevation the electrical meter will be relocated to when the information is available.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Thomas L. Thomson

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

[4. Petition of Cook Architecture | 23-005542-COA | 119 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. | Amendment](#)

- [📎 Staff Report - 23-005542-COA 119 MLK.pdf](#)
- [📎 Submittal Packet - 119 MLK, Jr. Blvd..pdf](#)

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby approve amendments to a previously approved Certificate of Appropriateness for rehabilitation of the building located at 119 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd [File No. 22-002851-COA] with the following conditions to be submitted to staff for final review and approval because the proposed work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards:

1. Window sashes and door frames shall be inset a minimum of three (3) inches from the façade of a building.
2. Screen HVAC equipment if visible from the right-of-way.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Thomas L. Thomson

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye

Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

[5. Adopt the November 8, 2023 Agenda](#)

Motion

The Savannah Historic Board of Review motioned to adopt the November 8, 2023 agenda as presented.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Stan Houle

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[6. Approve the October 11, 2023 HDBR Meeting Minutes as presented](#)

[10.11.23 MEETING MINUTES.pdf](#)

Motion

The Savannah Historic District Board of Review motioned to approve the October 11, 2023 meeting minutes as presented.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Nan Taylor

Second: Thomas L. Thomson

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain

Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

VI. ITEM(S) REQUESTED TO BE REMOVED FROM THE FINAL AGENDA

VII. CONTINUED AGENDA

[7. Petition of Wubbena Architects | 23-005347-COA | 409 West Taylor Street | New Construction, Part I](#)

Motion

The Savannah Historic District Board of Review motioned to continue this petition.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Nan Taylor

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

[8. Petition of Sottile & Sottile | 23-004876-COA | 202 East Gwinnett Street | New Construction, Small \(Part II: Design Details\)](#)

Motion

The Savannah Historic District Board of Review motioned to continue this petition.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Nan Taylor

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye

Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

[9. Petition of Wakely Properties, LLC | 23-004866-COA | 520 East Oglethorpe Avenue | New Construction, Part II: Design Details](#)

Motion

The Savannah Historic District Board of Review motioned to continue this petition.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Nan Taylor

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

[10. Petition of Pantheon ADC | 23-005353-COA | 24 East Broughton Street | Amendment](#)

Motion

The Savannah Historic District Board of Review motioned to continue the petition.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Nan Taylor

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

VIII. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION

IX. REGULAR AGENDA

[11. Petition of Lominack Kolman Smith Architects | 23-004230-COA | 208 East Liberty Street | New Construction, Accessory Building \(Part I: Height and Mass\)](#)

- 🔗 [Staff Report - 23-004230-COA 208 E Liberty St.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Submittal Packet - 208 E Liberty St.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Staff Research - Sanborn Maps.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Previous Submittal Packet - 208 E Liberty St.pdf](#)

Ms. Leah Michalak presented the petitioner's request of approval for New Construction, Part I: Height and Mass for a two-story carriage house at the rear of the property located at 208 East Liberty Street. The rear of the property is currently an open parking area. The applicant is also requesting a Variance Recommendation Request to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance from the standard that states:

The building footprint of the accessory dwelling unit shall be a maximum of 40% of the building footprint of the principal dwelling not to exceed 700 square feet.

In order to allow the accessory dwelling unit footprint to be 48.3%.

Per the applicant:

"The proposed 600 square foot carriage house apartment is proposed to be constructed of concrete masonry at the first level and wood frame construction above. Both will be finished with face brick. The original part of the primary dwelling unit is Savannah Gray brick, with the Liberty Street façade painted white. The proposed windows and exterior doors are Andersen A-Series with a white finish. The garage doors are Clopay Avanti Series with solid panels in lower three sections and translucent glass in top sections. The panels and frame will be finished to match panels below windows. Brick and paint colors are to be selected later. The drawings further describe the proposed structure.

The two 21" tall outside HVAC units will be behind the parapet wall. The refuse containers will be located within the courtyard space and not visible from a public way. The new electric meter will be located adjacent to the existing meters in the alleyway between 208 E Liberty and the house to the west."

At the September 13, 2023 HDBR meeting, the Board continued the request for New Construction, Part I: Height and Mass for a two-story carriage house at the rear of the property located at 208 East Liberty Street for a maximum of 90 days in order for the petitioner to address the following:

1. Redesign the ground floor garage opening(s) to meet the 12 foot maximum width standard and add garage doors.
2. Redesign the frame construction of the second level to be masonry to meet the definition of 'true stucco' in the ordinance.
3. The principal structure must be separated from the accessory dwelling unit by a minimum of 10 feet; provide a dimension and ensure that the standard is met.
4. The building footprint of the accessory dwelling unit must be a maximum of 40% of the building footprint of the principal dwelling; provide a calculation and ensure that the standard is met.
5. Redesign the windows on the north façade to be more visually compatible.

The historic principal building was constructed in 1868 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. The block face, along the lane, consists of one contributing carriage house

and one non-contributing carport. Historically, a wide variety of accessory buildings existed at the rear of this site. However, by the 1973 Sanborn Map, the rear yard was vacant.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the request for New Construction, Part I: Height and Mass for a two-story carriage house at the rear of the property located at 208 East Liberty Street as requested because the proposed work is visually compatible and meets the standards.

AND

Approve a Variance Recommendation Request to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance from the standard that states:

The building footprint of the accessory dwelling unit shall be a maximum of 40% of the building footprint of the principal dwelling not to exceed 700 square feet.

In order to allow the accessory dwelling unit footprint to be 48.3% because the variance criteria are met.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Jerry Lominack, Petitioner, stated they agree with staff recommendations.

The Board expressed concern about the Juliette balconies applied to the wall, the window infill and decorative wood panels. There was question about the undue hardship. **Mr. Lominack** stated it is financial ion in nature, in that it is hard to get a dwelling unit less that 600 square feet. If the house were larger, the new construction could be as well.

Ms. Guinn asked what the total lot coverage with the variance request is. Staff replied it is around 65%.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. John Tatum, an area resident, stated he opposes the petition.

Mr. Andrew Jones, of the Oglethorpe Coalition Plan, stated it is not visually compatible.

Mr. Bill Campbell, an area resident, stated he is opposed, as it will not be as the other structures are. It will impose on the view of the current owners.

Mr. Steve Edwards, of the Downtown Neighborhood Association, opposed the appropriateness of an oversized carriage house. The variance criteria are not met, nor is it owner occupied.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

The Board expressed concern with the 48%; it is not justification to go above by variance, as it does not meet the criteria. It leads to visual incompatibility, as it is overbuilt. While the changes are appreciated, there are also concerns with the Juliette balconies and windows.

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby deny the request for New Construction, Part I: Height and Mass for a two-story carriage house at the rear of the property located at 208 East Liberty Street based on incompatibility of design standards and height and mass.

AND

Deny a Variance Recommendation Request to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance from the standard that states:

The building footprint of the accessory dwelling unit shall be a maximum of 40% of the building footprint of the principal dwelling not to exceed 700 square feet.

In order to allow the accessory dwelling unit footprint to be 48.3% because evidence of an undue hardship was not provided.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Robert Becker

Second: Michael Higgins

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

[12. Petition of James Burnsed | 23-005047-COA | 36 Whitaker Street | Illuminated Sign](#)

[📎 Submittal Packet - 36 Whitaker St.pdf](#)

[📎 Staff Report - 23-005047-COA 36 Whitaker St.pdf](#)

Ms. Caitlin Chamberlain presented the petitioner's request of approval for the installation of an illuminated projecting sign for the business located at 36 Whitaker Street. 36 Whitaker Street was built in 1851 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. It is one of many businesses within the ground floor of the building which covers both Whitaker and West Congress Streets. The official address of the building is 31 West Congress Street.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

The petitioner was not present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

The Board had question about additional proposed lighting.

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby approve the illuminated projecting sign for the business located at 36 Whitaker Street with the following condition to be submitted to staff for final review and approval because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards.

1.If it is determined that there are residential units facing 36 Whitaker Street, at the building across the street, that the applicant changes the sign to becoming externally illuminated.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Nan Taylor

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

[13. Petition of Smoke and Vape Market | 23-005306-COA | 107 West Congress Street | Signage](#)

[☞ Staff Report - 23-005306-COA 107 W Congress St.pdf](#)

[☞ Submittal Packet - 107 W. Congress St..pdf](#)

[☞ Staff Research - 107 W. Congress St..pdf](#)

[☞ Petitioner Presentation - 107 W Congress St.pdf](#)

Ms. Caitlin Chamberlain presented the petitioner's request for an after-the-fact approval for one non-illuminated window sign and one illuminated incidental open sign for the business located at 107 West Congress Street. 107 West Congress Street is a non-contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. It is along a block of Congress Street that is surrounded by many commercial buildings. From a collection of photos in the MPC archives, a portion of the former historic building may still be intact but the façade was heavily altered to the appearance that is seen today. 107 West Congress Street is far from the only business in the vicinity with illuminated open signs. Other businesses include B&D Burgers, Twisted Sugar, The Salt Table, The Chicken Box, Madame Butterfly, and Octane Bar.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the after-the-fact installation of one non-illuminated window sign and one illuminated incidental open sign for the business located at 107 West Congress Street as requested because the signs are visually compatible and meet the standards.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Ashok Lakhani, Petitioner, stated he had no comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There was no public comment.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

The Board stated the colors were not appropriate and wanted to have soft white lighting as a condition for approval. Disproval was expressed regarding the after-the-fact work.

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby approve the after-the-fact installation of one non-illuminated window sign and one illuminated incidental open sign for the business located at 107 West Congress Street with the following condition for staff review and approval because the signs are visually compatible and meet the standards.

1. Replace existing illuminated incidental open sign with a different illuminated incidental open sign that emits soft white light only, to be more visually compatible with the contributing buildings in the area.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Robert Becker

Second: Karen Guinn

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

[14. Petition of Bethany Ralph | 23-004871-COA | 424 Habersham Street | After-the-Fact Fence and Gate](#)

[📎 Submittal Packet - 424 Habersham St.pdf](#)

[📎 Staff Research - 424 Habersham St.pdf](#)

[📎 Staff Report - 23-004871-COA 424 Habersham.pdf](#)

Ms. Caitlin Chamberlain presented the Petitioner's request for approval of an after-the-fact fence installation and also construction of two brick columns to support a set of antique wooden gates for the property located at 424 Habersham Street.

424 Habersham Street was built in 1896 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District. It is a two-story wood-framed house on a trust lot, facing Whitefield Square. There is a very similar house directly next door on the trust lot, 426 Habersham Street. There are several other wood-framed structures in the vicinity.

The applicant made an in-kind fence replacement without a COA. Based on Google Street View photos between 2012-2022, this can be verified that the new fence was placed in the same location as the old one. In the older photos, there is a small storage shed built in the same plane as the fence. It is highly overgrown with vines but there is concrete block beneath the foliage. Where there had been a shingle roof, it looks like the applicant added some height using the same material as the fence and added a corrugated metal roof. The applicant has a variety of elements proposed to be added to this project, including brick columns and two antique wooden gates. Included with the work is the addition of two stone griffons to be placed atop the brick columns. This decorative element is something not typically reviewed, but in order to provide the full project scope, it is mentioned here.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the after-the-fact fence installation and the proposed installation of brick columns and antique wood gates for the property located at 424 Habersham Street as requested because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Ms. Bethany Ralph, Petitioner, stated she agreed with the Staff recommendation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

The Board expressed appreciation for the removal of the gryphons. The Board also expressed concern regarding another after-the-fact submission.

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby approve the after-the-fact fence installation and the proposed installation of brick columns and antique wood gates for the property located at 424 Habersham Street with the following condition because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards.

1.Ensure that the wood fence is stained or painted.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Michael Higgins

Second: Thomas L. Thomson

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Aye

[15. Petition of SHEDDarchitecture | 23-005415-COA | 414 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard | Non-Contributing Demolition](#)

📎 [Staff Report - 23-005415-COA 414 MLK.pdf](#)

📎 [Staff Research 414 MLK Blvd.pdf](#)

📎 [Submittal Packet - 414 MLK Blvd.pdf](#)

Ms. Caitlin Chamberlain presented the applicant's request of approval to demolish the non-contributing building at 414 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The original construction date of the structure located at 414 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, is unknown but it is listed as a non-contributing resource within the National

Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District.

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1888 shows two attached one-story wood frame dwellings at the site of 414 West Broad Street. In 1898, 414 West Broad Street is not shown as an address but there are four attached two-story wood frame dwellings that fronted on Berrien Street, with the end of the row adjacent to the corner of West Broad Street. Changes to the buildings began to appear starting with the 1916 Sanborn Map, where only one of the original four Berrien Street facing houses reads as a dwelling unit. The other three were incorporated into a two-story store building facing West Broad Street as 414 A and 414 B West Broad Street. Also, by this time, a brick façade was added to the first story whereas the bay windows still appear from the other three houses. This configuration was in place until the 1973 Sanborn Map which shows the bay windows gone, the last remaining of the four houses incorporated into the rest of the modified building, and an expansion that allowed for there to be a connecting interior wall between it and 412 West Broad Street. There were still addresses noted on the Berrien Street side.

Photographs from the 1940s reflect what is also seen on the Sanborn maps, with a commercial business on the street level and residential units above. Later photographs that extend beyond the end of the local Period of Significance of 1960 show further alterations to the building.

The Savannah Ward Notebook for the Berrien Ward has a note to omit 414 West Broad Street, but a reason is not given. This page does not include much detail about the structure except to note that it has a vague construction date of '20th Century.' Based on the Sanborn Maps and historic photographs, it is likely that the building was not noted as contributing because of the array of alterations that it has undergone, even beyond the Period of Significance.

Two structural reports were conducted for 414 MLK Blvd, the first on December 10, 2018, and more recently on July 18, 2023. The December 2018 report was undertaken by Tharpe Engineering Group. The report makes note of issues such as unsupported framing, major termite damage, major water damage, inadequate bearing conditions, fire damage, failure in floor decking, deflected beams and girders, deteriorated brick mortar, and major brick repairs required. Some recommendations to stabilize and repair the building included reconstructing the sloped second-floor framing on the north wall in order to stabilize the framing system; resolving the truss deflections and bearing issues, as the report stated that additional deterioration could initiate a complete failure. The report also noted that if left unaddressed, the unsupported framing presents a potential life-safety hazard with a failure of the floor system. There was a recommendation to immediately address the fire and water damage at the front corner of the building.

The structural report from July 18, 2023, was undertaken by F. Michael Sikes, Structural Engineer. This report noted similar issues such as severe brick cracking in the brick masonry walls, mortar failure, severe deflections of the second-floor framing system, fire and water damage, insufficient bearing, and insect damage. The report's recommendation was as follows: *"Based on the condition of the existing building framing system and the extent of repairs required to make this building functional, it is my professional opinion this building should be demolished and rebuilt."*

As for the history of the area where the building is situated, West Broad Street was Savannah's Black business district from the early 1900s to the 1960s. It was a thriving district for Black-owned and immigrant-owned businesses and provided a sense of community in the era of segregation. Union Station was a bustling train station that brought visitors to the many businesses along this stretch of West Broad Street. The West Broad

Street Corridor was a large stretch of today's Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. Its epicenter was said to be at West Broad Street between the former Union Station and Bolton Street. Union Station was demolished as part of the project to build the I-16 flyover.

In addition to the B&B pawn, loans, clothing, and later paint shops at 414 (and 412) West Broad Street, some other prominent businesses and banks within this corridor included Wage Earner's Savings Bank (West Broad and Alice Streets); Carver State Bank; the Pekin, the Star, and the Air Dome theatres.

The Wage Earner's Savings Bank became one of the most profitable African American owned banks in the country. During the era of segregation, three Black-owned banks allowed this area to become the banking capital of Georgia for African Americans.

The decline of the West Broad Street Corridor can be attributed to the negative effects from the demolition brought about by constructing the I-16 flyover and Urban Renewal of the 1960s-1970s. This caused the corridor to be divided and no longer a walkable area on the grid pattern. Desegregation in Savannah also meant that Black owned businesses could operate elsewhere in the City. The train yards closed around this time as well, which led to a major loss of jobs in the corridor.

Historic Building Map Background

The Savannah National Historic Landmark District was originally surveyed in 1966. In 1973, Section 8-3029 (Historic District) of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance was adopted. This section established the Historic District Board of Review and created the Historic Buildings Map. All structures within the Historic District were divided into two classes, "historic" and "non-rated." Historic structures included all those buildings listed in Historic Savannah; the architectural survey book published by Historic Savannah Foundation in 1968.

In 1985 an MPC Staff study was adopted, and the Historic Buildings Map was amended to include all those buildings listed in the 1979 second edition of Historic Savannah, as well as those buildings identified by a consultant working on behalf of the National Park Service. The Park Service had extended the period of significance for contributing buildings in the National Historic Landmark District to 1935.

Demolition of a non-rated historic structure in the 500 block of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, and the attempted demolition of a non-rated historic cottage in the Beach Institute Neighborhood spurred the updating of the Historic Buildings Map. In April 2000 and September 2000, the Mayor and Aldermen approved the addition of a number of buildings previously omitted from the map in the eastern and western neighborhoods of the Historic District.

On April 20, 2000, the Building Map was amended to include buildings on MLK Boulevard and Montgomery Street, and the period of significance was extended locally to 1950 [File No. 00-103-S]. City Council Minutes from the April 20, 2000, meeting provide details of every building that was proposed to be added. Several of these are twentieth century commercial buildings on MLK Blvd, ranging from the 0-block through the 700-block, where only one from the 400-block was proposed (406). The buildings recommended for listing cover categories of significance such as 20th century commerce, local commerce, architecture, neighborhood business with living quarters above, early commerce on MLK, early 20th century business development of MLK, overall business development of the historic district, structures built by African American developers, and Black Heritage.

The Building Map was also amended on September 7, 2000, to include buildings in the

Beach Institute [File No. Z-000524-55903]; on July 12, 2001, to include the Yamacraw Village Administration Building [File No. Z-10425-87171-2]; on September 5, 2002, to include carriage houses [File No. Z-010824-39270-2].

In 2010 the Historic Building Map was updated to include 112 new structures through a Staff study. Buildings included carriage houses, commercial structures, residential buildings, mid-century modernism, and two buildings of exceptional importance [File No. Z-121213-36582-2].

During the updates to the Historic Building Map, at no point was 412 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard noted to be added as a contributing resource. Georgia Historic Resource Survey sheets from 1994 exist for 414 MLK Blvd. Although three neighboring properties in the 400-block are considered contributing buildings, 414 was not included.

PROJECT HISTORY

This request was first heard at the July 12, 2023, HDBR Meeting, where a joint application was presented for 412 and 414 MLK Blvd. The Board expressed concerns over the lack of a structural assessment. Members felt that there was not enough information presented to be able to make a recommendation. The Board continued the application for no more than ninety (90) days, to allow time for the applicant to provide information such as structural reports and photographs, and for Staff to reevaluate whether the buildings qualified for contributing status. The Applicant contacted MPC Staff with a request to continue their application until October 11, 2023.

For the following meeting, on August 9, 2023, the Applicant provided the requested information including structural reports for 414 MLK Blvd. A letter from a descendant of the family who owned the buildings stated that the property was not involved in the Civil Rights movement.

Staff research included further archival searches through the Georgia Historical Society, City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Library of Congress, Digital Library of Georgia, and the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the demolition request for the building located at 414 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard with the following conditions because the building otherwise meets the criteria for non-contributing demolition.

1. The building must be documented per the MPC Policy for Documenting Buildings.
2. Rather than traditional demolition, the building be deconstructed, and the materials salvaged for reuse.

Mr. Higgins asked why integrity of location was lost due to flyover.

Ms. Chamberlain stated the majority of the other structures on the street were destroyed; some of the 400 integrity is still intact.

Ms. Taylor stated she submitted pictures of the area to support preserving the structure.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Howard Yellin highlighted the prior Board actions on the structures, as one petition. He stated they believe both structures are non-contributing and eligible for demolition, yet they separated the petitions as requested by the Board. He asked that they be heard as for the first time as individual petitions.

Mr. Shedrick Coleman commended Staff for their recommendation for 414 MLK and supported it.

Ms. Taylor presented historical pictures of the structures.

Mr. Coleman stated many of the materials have been replaced and lost historical integrity. Additionally, the structural integrity has been compromised.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Ryan Jarles, Historic Savannah Foundation, stated it is unusual for them to support demolition, but in this instance due to safety issues, they support the Petitioner's request. It is the Board's purview only to review the exterior, not interior, of historic buildings.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Ms. Rowan stated it is non-contributing and should be salvaged, particularly due to structural safety issues.

Ms. Taylor stated it should be considered contributing based on the Ordinance, Secretary of Interior Standards, classification of resources and criteria for resource designation: meets period of significance (1730 - 1960), possesses integrity of location, design settings, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and being associated with historic events, and embodies of type, method, and construction. She stated the building was occupied by Harry Blumenthal in 1907 and opened a store next door as a ready to wear retail. She highlighted a tile with his name, as he was an immigrant and Jewish business owner.

She continued that in 1946, the son Herbert separated the buildings for business use. They have been there for 80 years, survived the destruction of many other historic buildings as a result of the I-16 flyover. She stated many renovations were indicative of time post-World War II construction. The Secretary of Interior Standards stated though properties change over time, properties that have attained historic significance in their own right should be retained and preserved. That is what is being presented; not to put back or put back to their 1907 state. The 1940's state should be preserved. The integrity of the structure was addressed, and stated the majority of the character-defining features settings remain to make it a contributing structure. She stated buildings in the 300 block won awards, in spite of the debilitating state of the structures.

Mr. Thomson supported the demolition, but praised Ms. Taylor's research.

Mr. Higgins agreed with Ms. Taylor. He stated he is not sure why it is listed as noncontributing. This is an opportunity to rectify the mistake made.

Ms. Guinn stated it is noncontributing and the expert report indicates its lack of structural integrity. She expressed appreciation for the owner salvaging the building materials.

Mr. Houle, Ms. Rowan, and Mr. Thomson agreed with Staff recommendation.

Ms. Taylor stated this has to stop; this is an opportunity. Savannah is on the threatened list and should not take demos lightly. These two structures closest to flyover should remain. There are buildings in the 300 block that were in same condition and were rehabilitated.

Mr. Higgins stated the interior indicates the historic fabric is still there.

Motion

Approve the demolition request for the building located at 414 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard with the following conditions because the building otherwise meets the criteria for non-contributing demolition.

The building must be documented per the MPC Policy for Documenting Buildings.

Rather than traditional demolition, the building be deconstructed, and the materials salvaged for reuse.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Melissa H. Rowan

Second: Thomas L. Thomson

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Nay
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Nay

[16. Petition of SHEDDarchitecture | 23-005414-COA | 412 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard | Non-contributing Demolition](#)

[☞ Staff Research - 412 MLK Blvd.pdf](#)

[☞ Staff Report - 23-005414-COA 412 MLK.pdf](#)

[☞ Submittal Packet - 412 MLK Blvd.pdf](#)

Ms. Caitlin Chamberlain presented the Petitioner's request of approval to demolish the non-contributing building at 412 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

The exact date of construction for 412 MLK Boulevard is unknown but was likely built in the early 1900s. It is listed as a non-contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District.

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1888 shows a two-story wood frame dwelling at the approximate site of 412. By 1898, 412 West Broad Street is still a two-story wood frame dwelling but with some alterations at the rear. The 1916 Sanborn Map shows a three-story masonry store on this lot. At some point between 1953 and 1973 Sanborn Maps, 412 was adjoined with the neighboring building, 414 MLK Blvd.

The 1916 Savannah City Directory notes an L. Mirsky at 412 West Broad Street, and a Mrs. E.B. Novak at 412 ½ West Broad Street. A photograph from the 1940s shows a sign on the building for a dry goods, shoes, and luggage shop with the name Eisenman, who was the successor to Mirsky. At a later date, the building was acquired by the Blumenthals to become part of the B&B Loan and Pawn shop.

The Savannah Ward Notebook for the Berrien Ward has a note to omit 412 West Broad Street, but a reason is not given. This page does not include much detail about the structure except to note that it has a vague construction date of '20th Century.' Based on photographs starting in the 1930s, it appears that 412 has undergone major renovations where it is nearly unrecognizable from the earlier photos.

In 2011, a COA was issued to repair and paint the stucco and window frames, add a new awning, and install the gooseneck lamps still seen on the building [File No. H-110822-4491 (S)-2]. No information was noted about the original form of the building, but Staff noted that the building was listed as non-contributing due to the exterior alterations resulting in a loss of integrity.

As for the history of the area where the building is situated, West Broad Street was Savannah's Black business district from the early 1900s to the 1960s. It was a thriving district for Black-owned and immigrant-owned businesses and provided a sense of community in the era of segregation. Union Station was a bustling train station that brought visitors to the many businesses along this stretch of West Broad Street. The West Broad Street Corridor was a large stretch of today's Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. Its epicenter was said to be at West Broad Street between the former Union Station and Bolton Street. Union Station was demolished as part of the project to build the I-16 flyover.

In addition to the B&B businesses at 412 (and 414) MLK Blvd. some other prominent businesses and banks within this corridor included Wage Earner's Savings Bank (West Broad and Alice Streets); Carver State Bank; the Pekin, the Star, and the Air Dome theatres.

The Wage Earner's Savings Bank became one of the most profitable African American owned banks in the country. During the era of segregation, three Black-owned banks allowed this area to become the banking capital of Georgia for African Americans.

The decline of the West Broad Street Corridor can be attributed to the negative effects from the demolition brought about by constructing the I-16 flyover and Urban Renewal of the 1960s-1970s. This caused the corridor to be divided and no longer a walkable area on the grid pattern. Desegregation in Savannah also meant that Black owned businesses could operate elsewhere in the City. The train yards closed around this time as well, which led to a major loss of jobs in the corridor.

Historic Building Map Background

The Savannah National Historic Landmark District was originally surveyed in 1966. In 1973, Section 8-3029 (Historic District) of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance was adopted. This section established the Historic District Board of Review and created the Historic Buildings Map. All structures within the Historic District were divided into two classes, "historic" and "non-rated." Historic structures included all those buildings listed in Historic Savannah; the architectural survey book published by Historic Savannah Foundation in 1968.

In 1985 an MPC Staff study was adopted, and the Historic Buildings Map was amended to include all those buildings listed in the 1979 second edition of Historic Savannah, as well as those buildings identified by a consultant working on behalf of the National Park Service. The Park Service had extended the period of significance for contributing buildings in the National Historic Landmark District to 1935.

Demolition of a non-rated historic structure in the 500 block of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard (MLK), and the attempted demolition of a non-rated historic cottage in the Beach Institute Neighborhood spurred the updating of the Historic Buildings Map. In April 2000 and

September 2000, the Mayor and Aldermen approved the addition of a number of buildings previously omitted from the map in the eastern and western neighborhoods of the Historic District.

On April 20, 2000, the Building Map was amended to include buildings on MLK Boulevard and Montgomery Street, and the period of significance was extended locally to 1950 [File No. 00-103-S]. City Council Minutes from the April 20, 2000, meeting provide details of every building that was proposed to be added. Several of these are twentieth century commercial buildings on MLK Blvd, ranging from the 0-block through the 700-block, where only one from the 400-block was proposed (406). The buildings recommended for listing cover categories of significance such as 20th century commerce, local commerce, architecture, neighborhood business with living quarters above, early commerce on MLK, early 20th century business development of MLK, overall business development of the historic district, structures built by African American developers, and Black Heritage.

The Building Map was also amended on September 7, 2000, to include buildings in the Beach Institute [File No. Z-000524-55903]; on July 12, 2001, to include the Yamacraw Village Administration Building [File No. Z-10425-87171-2]; on September 5, 2002, to include carriage houses [File No. Z-010824-39270-2].

In 2010 the Historic Building Map was updated to include 112 new structures through a Staff study. Buildings included carriage houses, commercial structures, residential buildings, mid-century modernism, and two buildings of exceptional importance [File No. Z-121213-36582-2].

During the updates to the Historic Building Map, at no point was 412 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard noted to be added as a contributing resource. Georgia Historic Resource Survey sheets from 1994 exist for 412 MLK Blvd. Although three neighboring properties in the 400-block are considered contributing buildings; however, 412 was not included.

PROJECT HISTORY

This request was first heard at the July 12, 2023, HDBR Meeting, where the Board had concerns over the lack of a structural assessment which was not provided by the applicant, as well as expressing a desire to see more information about 412 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Members felt that there was not enough information presented to be able to make a recommendation. It was stated that in the interior photographs, the fact that old knob and tube wiring can still be seen inside shows that the building dates to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. There was also mention of the need to further explore the rich Civil Rights era history and African American history associated with what little remains of the West Broad Street corridor, which had not been destroyed by the I-16 flyover project. The Board stated that 412 could potentially still be saved and may be more intact under the stucco. Board members felt that not having criteria or guidelines for deconstruction made it difficult to approve that as a condition.

The HDBR continued *the application for the request for demolition of the non-contributing buildings located at 412-414 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, for no more than ninety (90) days, to allow time for the applicant to provide information such as structural reports and photographs, and for staff to reevaluate whether these buildings qualify for contributing status.*

On August 9, 2023, the Applicant provided interior images of 412 MLK Blvd. A letter from a descendant of the family who owned the buildings stated that the property was not involved in the Civil Rights movement.

Staff research included further archival searches through the Georgia Historical Society, City

of Savannah Municipal Archives, Library of Congress, Digital Library of Georgia, and the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum.

Further information was provided by the Applicant including interior photos of 412. The Applicant's presentation also included a presentation by Repurpose Savannah, detailing their work in general but also the specific plan for deconstructing the two buildings. After much Board discussion, the Board voted to *continued the request for demolition of the non-contributing buildings located at 412-414 Martin Luther King, Jr. to the September 13, 2023, HDBR Meeting.*

The Applicant reached out to MPC Staff with a request to continue their application until October 11, 2023. On August 21, 2023, a structural analysis of 412 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard was undertaken by F. Michael Sikes, a structural engineer. The findings by Mr. Sikes indicated that *"the lack of capacity the existing building framing systems have, it is my professional opinion that this building should be demolished and rebuilt."*

On October 11, 2023, the HDBR denied the request for demolition of the non-contributing buildings located at 412-414 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard because the criteria for non-contributing demolition have not been met: the buildings are structurally sound, 412 has not been shown to be structurally unsound, and 414 has not been shown to meet the criteria for non-contributing buildings.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the demolition request for the building located at 412 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard with the following conditions because the building otherwise meets the criteria for non-contributing demolition.

1. The building must be documented per the MPC Policy for Documenting Buildings.
2. Rather than traditional demolition, the building be deconstructed, and the materials salvaged for reuse.

Mr. Houle asked was there a study done that indicates 412 MLK was not structurally stable. Staff responded there are no interior load bearing walls and is compromised.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Harold Yellin stated he spoke with the prior owner's son and provided an affidavit the structure has no historic value through event or materials.

Mr. Shedrick Coleman stated he has a deep understanding and respect for historic properties and does not take this or historic demolition lightly. These structures have been modified greatly. They are different from the 300 block buildings. The client did not want to demolish until it was determined trying to save cannot be done safely.

Mr. Houle stated the study did not say 412 was not salvageable. He stated there is no imminent danger. The petitioner stated the structural system is insufficient to support new structural loads.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Andrew Jones stated the fact that the building has current a non-contributing listing should not be a factor in making a decision.

Mr. Coleman stated the process questioned is what has happened. Staff has reviewed and recommended based on observation.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Mr. Higgins stated the structure should be considered as contributing and is disappointed

Staff was not able to do own review.

Mr. Thomson supported Staff recommendation.

Ms. Taylor stated the research she performed was the research that should have been done years ago. She presented a detailed historical finding on the two structures, which she provided to Staff to be attached to the findings for the record (see Exhibit A).

Based on her extensive research, **Ms. Taylor** stated it is her belief that the structures have historical significance and meet the Exceptional Importance criteria for non-contributing buildings, therefore, should not be demolished.

Mr. Becker stated he supports Ms. Taylor's research.

Motion

Approve the demolition request for the building located at 412 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard with the following conditions because the building otherwise meets the criteria for non-contributing demolition.

- 1.The building must be documented per the MPC Policy for Documenting Buildings.
- 2.Rather than traditional demolition, the building be deconstructed, and the materials salvaged for reuse.

Vote Results (Rejected)

Motion: Thomas L. Thomson

Second: Melissa H. Rowan

David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Nay
Stan Houle	- Nay
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Aye
Michael Higgins	- Nay
Melissa H. Rowan	- Aye
Thomas L. Thomson	- Aye
Robert Becker	- Nay

Motion

The Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review does hereby deny the demolition request for the building located at 412 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard because the property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master; and because the property possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Further, the Savannah Downtown Historic District Board of Review recommends that an application to become a contributing building is completed.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Nan Taylor

Second: Michael Higgins	
David Altschiller	- Not Present
Nan Taylor	- Aye
Stan Houle	- Aye
Ellie Isaacs	- Abstain
Karen Guinn	- Nay
Michael Higgins	- Aye
Melissa H. Rowan	- Nay
Thomas L. Thomson	- Nay
Robert Becker	- Aye

X. APPROVED STAFF REVIEWS

[17. Acknowledgement and approval of Staff-approved petitions.](#)

[18. Petition of Trey Fludd | 23-005375-COA | 226 West Broughton Street | Awning sign](#)

[📎 SIGNED Staff Decision - 23-05375-COA 226 W Broughton St.pdf](#)

[19. Petition of FastSigns | 23-005018-COA | 128 E Broughton St | Projecting sign re-facings \(2\)](#)

[📎 SIGNED Staff Decision - 23-005018-COA 128 E Broughton St.pdf](#)

[20. Petition of Steve Bodek | 23-00556980-COA | 610 Howard Street | Repaint exterior and roof repair](#)

[📎 SIGNED Staff Decision - 23-005569-COA 610 Howard St.pdf](#)

XI. WORK PERFORMED WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

[21. Violation - November Report \(4 Items\)](#)

[📎 Violations Report - November 2023.pdf](#)

XII. REPORT ON ITEMS DEFERRED TO STAFF

[22. Items Deferred to Staff - November Report \(2 Items\)](#)

[📎 Items Deferred to Staff - November Report.pdf](#)

XIII. NOTICES, PROCLAMATIONS, AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[23. Inspections - November Report \(3 Items\)](#)

[📎 Inspections - November Report.pdf](#)

[24. Stamped Drawings - November Report \(7 Items\)](#)

[📎 Stamped Drawings - November Report.pdf](#)

XIV. OTHER BUSINESS

[25. Subdivision Revisions - City of Savannah Presentation](#)

[📎 SUBDIVISION REVISIONS 11.02.23.pdf](#)

Ms. Bridget Lidy presented the amendments of subdivisions and recombination in the historic districts.

Mr. Andrew Jones, Mr. Stever Edwards, and Mr. Ryan Jarles expressed support of the presentation proposals.

26. Nominating Committee to Present Nominations

The nominating committee, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Becker, and Mr. Thomson nominated:

Ms. Ellie Isaacs, Chair

Ms. Karen Guinn, Vice Chair

XV. ADJOURNMENT

27. Next HDBR Pre-Meeting - Wednesday December 13, 2023 at 12pm - 112 East State Street

28. Next HDBR Regular Meeting - Wednesday December 13, 2023 at 1pm - 112 East State Street

29. Adjourn

There being no further business to present before the Board, the November 8, 2023 Historic District Board of Review adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Caitlin Chamberlain
Principal Planner, Historic Preservation

/bm

The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting minutes which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.