



# CITY OF SAVANNAH

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## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

### REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

**Petitioner:** Duos Technologies, Shamar Gray

**MPC File No.:** 26-003865-COA

**Address:** 1515-1523 Bull Street

**PIN:** 20053 22003

**Zoning:** TC-1

**Staff Reviewer:** Caitlin Chamberlain

**Date:** August 26, 2026

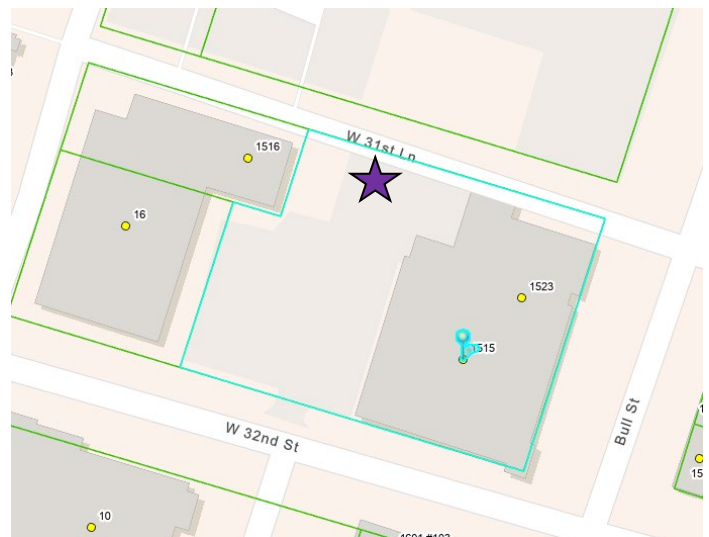
#### **NATURE OF REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting approval for the placement of a prefabricated modular accessory structure at the rear of the property located at 1515-1523 Bull Street. The purpose of the structure is an extension of telecom equipment for the Seimitsu offices at this location. It also includes an exterior air conditioning system, stacked on either side of the structure. Additionally, elsewhere on the site, generators are proposed.

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

The accessory structure would be placed at the rear of the property, where 1515-1523 is a non-contributing building (1961) within the Thomas Square-Streetcar National Register Historic District and the local Streetcar Historic District. The building is on a lot that takes up the block between West 31<sup>st</sup> Lane and West 32<sup>nd</sup> Street. It is surrounded by a mix of contributing and non-contributing buildings. The location of the accessory structure would be to the rear of the property along the West 31<sup>st</sup> Lane side of the property.

Typically, accessory structures are behind a principal building where the lane is at the rear of the property, and the accessory structure abuts the lane and there are no other structures behind it. But in this case the lane is down the side of



the principal building. This unconventional configuration also includes another building on an adjoining lot (see map above with property boundary lines). The proposed structure would sit between the principal building and the building on the adjoining lot (area marked with star).

## **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 Maximum Building Coverage.*** *None*

The standard is met.

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

The structure is one story and likely less than 45 feet, but this will be addressed in the accessory structure standards.

#### ***TC-1, Building Setbacks (ft), For blocks without contributing structures.***

##### ***Front yard: 5 (max)***

The front yard does not apply in the case of this accessory structure.

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

This is a TC-1 zoning district.

##### ***Side yard (corner): 5 (max)***

The corner side yard setback runs parallel to West 31<sup>st</sup> Lane and has a 3' setback.

##### ***Rear yard: 10 (min)***

The standard is not met. The rear of the structure has a 3' setback. It is also very close to the building on the adjacent lot. Staff recommends either reorienting the structure to be parallel with the primary building, which would allow for the setback to be met; or to apply for a variance to potentially get approval for maintaining the 3' setback.

The following standards from the Sec 7.11 - Streetcar Historic District Ordinance apply:

***Visual Compatibility Criteria.*** *To maintain the special character of the Streetcar 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.

***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 height, width, and scale are appropriate for the lot size as well as in relation to the principal commercial building fronting on Bull Street. Since this is on a lane, it is not a predominant view and would not compete with the surrounding historic buildings.

***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.

***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.

***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 structure will be made of a fiber reinforced polymer composite. Based on the drawings, it may be visually compatible in its setting, but this will also be discussed in the wall materials section of the report.

***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 flat roof is appropriate.

#### ***Streetcar 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 Streetcar 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 resources, 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.*

***Height and Mass.*** *The intent of these standards is to ensure that the height and mass are in context with contributing buildings in the same or adjacent block faces.*

*The height and mass shall be subdivided both horizontally and vertically to convey human scale and visual interest that reflects the traditional size of buildings.*

Based on the site plan the mass appears to meet the standard. The height of the structure would be just over twelve feet.

***Foundation, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources and additions.***

***Foundation Materials, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources and additions.***

*Slab-on-grade foundations shall be allowed where the slab has been built up to a minimum of 30 inches.*

This structure would be on a concrete slab foundation. This foundation type is typically less than 30" on accessory buildings. The standard is met.

***Exterior walls, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources, and additions.***

***Permitted materials, Exterior walls, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources, and additions.*** *Brick, stone, wood, true stucco, and wood or fiber cement siding.*

***Prohibited materials, Exterior walls, New construction, alterations to non-contributing resources, and additions.*** *Vinyl siding, aluminum siding, rolled asphalt, EIFS, one-part stucco over insulation and/or wood or metal framing, T-111, corrugated metal, and unpainted exposed CMU blocks.*

The material of the structure is a fiber reinforced polymer composite. This is a material that is neither permitted nor prohibited, and as such, could be reviewed by the Commission. In order to do so, staff recommends that the applicant provides a material sample so that an informed decision can be made.

***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.*

The proposed generators are set back to the rear of the property in a way that they should be minimally visible.

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

There are stacks of air conditioning units proposed to be installed on either side of the structure. These would need to be screened per the standard, but the new proposed fence may serve as this screening depending on the material and configuration.

***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, and extruded aluminum.*

*Chain link may be permitted in the rear yard but not along any street. Plastic or metal slats use in chain link shall not be permitted.*

There is mention of a fence in the submittal packet, but specific information was not provided. There is currently a chain link fence with barbed wire along the West 31<sup>st</sup> Lane side. This cannot be replicated, as it does not meet the ordinance. The chain link is on the side yard, not the rear in this case which also does not meet the ordinance.

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

Material information is needed to confirm none of the above materials are proposed.

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

*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.*

This information is needed.

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

This standard would need to be met and shown on the drawings.

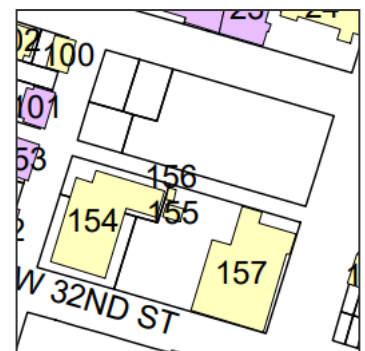
***Accessory Structures.*** *(including garages, carports and accessory dwellings units, excluding fuel canopies). In addition to compliance with the Visual Compatibility Criteria and the Victorian Historic District Design Standards, accessory structures shall also comply with the requirements set forth in Sec. 8.7, Accessory Structures and Uses, and the following standards:*

*New accessory structures shall be located in the rear yard.*

This would be in the rear yard behind the principal building on the site.

*New accessory structures shall be in scale with other contributing accessory structures on the lane.*

In this case, the 1515-1523 Bull Street building is the only building on the block of Bull Street between West 31<sup>st</sup> Lane and West 32<sup>nd</sup> Street. Along the West 32<sup>nd</sup> Street side, this is one of two buildings, with a large parking



lot between the two. On the lane side there are no contributing accessory structures.

*The height and mass of the primary building shall not be exceeded by any new accessory structure on the same parcel.*

Based on the renderings provided in the submittal packet this appears to be the case but staff requests that a context drawing is provided to confirm this.

*Accessory structures shall not be more than two (2) stories tall.*

Only one story is proposed.

*Garage openings shall not exceed 12 feet in width.*

Garage openings are not part of this project.

*New accessory structures may have up to a five (5) foot lane setback to allow a turning radius into the garage.*

A turning radius is not necessary.

*Side yard setbacks for new accessory structures shall be a minimum of three (3) feet.*

The standard is met.

The following standards from the Sec 8.7 - Accessory Structures and Uses apply:

***Accessory Structures and Uses, Generally.*** *All accessory structures and uses shall be consistent with all standards of the base zoning district (Article 5.0), any applicable overlay district (Article 7.0) and any applicable use standards (Article 8.0), except as expressly set forth below. Accessory structure and uses shall:*

*Be accessory and clearly incidental and subordinate to a permitted principal use. No accessory use may be established on a site prior to the establishment of a permitted principal use.*

The standard is met.

*Be located on the same property as the principal use or structure.*

The standard is met.

*Not involve uses or structures not in keeping with the character of the principal use or principal structure served.*

The accessory structure is directly related to the principal use of the building.

*Be located within a district that permits the principal use.*

The principal use is existing and permitted.

*Not be erected in any required setback area, except as expressly set forth in this Ordinance.*

Based on the information provided, the structure would be within the rear setback area, thus the standard is not met.

*Shipping containers and tractor trailers shall be prohibited as storage buildings or structures except as permitted on an active construction site of in Industrial zoning districts (see Article 8.8, Temporary Uses).*

The structure is not a shipping container. Staff discussed with the applicant, and they addressed that these are modular units designed specifically for the use of the internet equipment, including the use of fiber reinforced polymer composite material.

***Accessory Structures.*** *Accessory structures, not to include accessory dwelling units, are allowed in all zoning districts and shall be subject to the following requirements, except as expressly provided elsewhere in the Section:*

***Accessory Structures, Location.*** *Accessory structures shall be located in the side (interior) yard or rear yard of the principal building, with the exception of the following:*

*Guard or gate house;*

*Gazebo;*

*Pump or well house; and*

*Other similar structures.*

The accessory structure would be behind the principal building at 1515-1523 Bull Street. The standard is met.

***Accessory Structures, Setbacks.***

*An accessory building or structure shall not be located within five (5) feet of the rear property line. An accessory building or structure shall meet the same side yard setback requirements as the principal structure.*

The standard is not met for the rear setback but is met for the side setbacks.

***Accessory Structures, Height.*** *The height of an accessory building shall not exceed the height of the principal building in a Residential district or where otherwise prohibited by this Ordinance.*

The structure would be 12'2 1/8". There are renderings in the submittal packet showing that this would be lower than the height of the principal building, but staff requests a context drawing confirming this.

***Accessory Structures, Building Coverage.*** *Within all zoning districts, accessory structures shall be included in the calculations for maximum building coverage.*

TC-1 zoning allows for 100% lot coverage.

***Accessory Structures, Size, Residential Districts.*** *Within residential zoning districts, the floor area of an accessory structure shall not exceed 40% floor area of the principal building.*

This is a commercially zoned district.

***Accessory Structures, Size, Nonresidential.*** *Subject to maximum building coverage standards.*

Although 100% lot coverage is allowed in TC-1, the accessory structure will not bring the lot coverage to that.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

**Continue the request to install a prefabricated modular accessory structure at 1515-1523 Bull Street to the September 23, 2026, Historic Preservation Commission meeting to allow the applicant time to address the following:**

- 1. Provide a material sample of the fiber reinforced polymer composite for evaluation on material and visual appropriateness.**
- 2. Provide a context drawing showing how the accessory structure, plus generators and fence will relate to the site, including height of the structure to the principal building.**
- 3. To meet the rear setback, reorient the structure to be parallel with the primary building, or apply for a variance to potentially get approval for maintaining the 3' setback.**
- 4. Provide material and configuration information about the proposed new fence and ensure that the standards are met.**
- 5. Ensure that the air conditioning units are screened per the ordinance.**

**MW: CC:**

**Note:** This recommendation could change subject to new information provided at the Historic Preservation Commission meetings. Final decisions will be made by the Historic Preservation Commission at the public hearing based on information provided at the meeting, as well as information submitted for the staff recommendation.