



S A V A N N A H - C H A T H A M C O U N T Y  
HISTORIC SITE & MONUMENT COMMISSION

**Petitioner:** Joan Levy  
**File No.:** 25-004882-HM  
**Address:** 122 West Broughton Street  
**PIN:** 20004 36017  
**Staff Reviewer:** Caitlin Chamberlain  
**Date:** November 6, 2025

**NATURE OF REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting approval to install a 12” x 24” bronze plaque on the site of the home of Mordecai Sheftall, presently located at 122 West Broughton Street. The proposed marker would be embedded in the brick on the sidewalk outside of the Kress Building, presently The Gap.

Per the applicant:

*“This proposed plaque is planned to be ready to coincide with the 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence, which will be honored by the City of Savannah, GHS, and Congregation Mickie Israel.”*

The Sheftall House no longer exists, but there is documentation of its location, noted in the book *Mordecai Sheftall: Jewish Revolutionary Patriot* by B.H. Levy (P.35) which states, “Almost certainly upon their marriage, Mordecai took his bride [Frances Hart Sheftall of Charleston, SC] to the Sheftall family home on the north side of Broughton Street, the second house east of Barnard Street (Lot Seven, Heathcote Tything, Decker Ward). Mordecai had purchased the lot and dwelling, where he had been living prior to his marriage, from Thomas Burrington; it measured sixty



MORDECAI SHEFTALL



FRANCES HART SHEFTALL, his Wife

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by ninety feet.” It is possible that the house was lost in one of the many fires in the area of Broughton Street in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

**FINDINGS:**

The following standards from the Historic Site and Monument Commission Guidelines for Markers, Monuments and Public Art apply:

*Evaluating Themes for Markers and Monuments. New markers and monuments commemorate and honor people, places, and/or events.*

*Proposed themes should fall into one or more of the following categories.*

*Arts and Humanities. Includes art, architecture, music, theater, literature, education, etc.*

*Science and Engineering. Includes technology, inventions, medical, communications, etc.*

*Civil and Institutional.*

*Social and Humanitarian.*

*Industry and Commerce. Includes economics, agriculture, transportation, etc.*

*Politics and Government.*

*Military History. Includes people, places, or events.*

*Religious History. Includes people, places, or events.*

*Maritime History.*

*Colonial History.*

*Local History. Includes folklore and/or local heroes.*

*Cultural and Ethnic History.*

*Education.*

Themes include local history, Colonial history, cultural and ethnic history, military history, and religious history. As stated by the applicant, Colonel Mordecai Sheftall “*was the leading Jewish American of the Revolution, Chairman of the Parochial Committee of Christ Church, a provisional government during the Revolution, and the highest-ranking Jewish officer in the Revolutionary army*”

There is at least one recorded event of Sheftall using a room in his home for worship, on the eve of the Day of Atonement in 1774. Sheftall was known as “the great rebel” patriot, landowner, and more importantly, Chairman of the Parochial Committee of Christ Church parish, with ‘parish’ being the operative word omitted- the de facto government for Georgia between being a royal colony and statehood. As a colonel in the Continental Forces, he was also the highest-ranking Jewish officer, and with his own funds provided military supplies, clothing and food for the rebel cause.

In 1773, Sheftall conveyed some of his nearby land to allow for the burial of a Jewish man from elsewhere who died in Savannah and could not be interred in the Levi Sheftall cemetery on Cohen Street because it was restricted by its trust agreement to Sheftall family members. This land was conveyed to a trust he established for the burial of anyone in the Jewish faith. That trust continues to own the cemetery to this day.

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*The proposed theme should have documented significant, clear and direct local relevance to the history and development of Chatham County. The local focus should be the predominant theme of the monument.*

The history of the Sheftall family, including Mordecai, is well documented.

*The level of significance should be high enough to warrant a public presence.*

The standard is met.

*The person, place or event commemorated should not have been sufficiently commemorated elsewhere in the County. The theme should be distinct and original, and not be duplicated in other existing markers or monuments.*

There is the Sheftall cemetery but there is no specific commemoration to Mordecai Sheftall as a significant Savannahian. Further, this plaque is intended to be a marker to where the house was located on Broughton Street, so it is site specific.

*The theme should reflect a larger connection to the community as a whole, and not only to one distinct group.*

Being from a founding family of the Congregation Mickve Israel, which is still in existence, reflects a larger connection to the community as a whole. It not only still exists to this day, but has flourished, its numbers now exceeding 500 member families.

Sheftall also contributed to the Revolutionary cause, using his own [personal funds](#) to care for the men he led to cover munitions, food, uniforms, and horses. His loans were never repaid to either himself or his heirs. Much of his property was seized by the British while he was a prisoner of war. He was later appointed by the State of Georgia as Agent for the State of Georgia for Purchasing Clothing.

*Commemorated persons should have endured historical significance and have been dead at least twenty-five years. Living persons should not be commemorated.*

Sheftall died on July 6, 1797.

*There should be significant documented evidence (written or oral) of the commemorated event, person, or place.*

Such evidence can be found in multiple collections including the Georgia Historical Society, the New Georgia Encyclopedia, the American Jewish Archives, the American Jewish Historical Society, and the Southern Jewish Historical Society.

***Evaluating Sites for Markers, Monuments, or Public Art.*** *Certain factors should be taken into consideration when evaluating whether a site is the appropriate location for a marker, monument or public art [hereto referred to as “object” to indicate the inclusion of all three types]. These factors include:*

*The installation of an object should not cause overcrowding of the site, if there are existing objects. Objects should be sited far enough away from other objects as to allow the visitor proper appreciation of each individually.*

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The plaque would be embedded in the sidewalk where there is nothing else like this in the immediate vicinity and would thus not overcrowd the site.

*The proposed object should not damage or disturb existing established vegetation on the site including low tree limbs, or significant tree roots.*

There are no trees in the area where the plaque is proposed to be installed.

*The proposed object should not require the removal or alteration of existing above or below ground utilities.*

This would be a minimally invasive alteration where a few sidewalk bricks would be removed to allow space for the plaque.

*The proposed site should be large enough to accommodate an object, and should not encroach on other existing object sites, buildings, or designated green space.*

*The proposed site should not be utilized for special events (such as sports, festivals, ceremonies, etc.) on a regular basis which an object would disrupt.*

*The proposed site should not be prone to frequent automobile accidents which could damage the proposed object.*

*The proposed site should be visible and accessible from a public right of way.*

The above standards are met.

*The proposed site should not have a high probability of significant archaeology unless an archaeological study is part of the proposal.*

This is likely to not be the case.

*The proposed site should be easy to maintain.*

The standard is met.

*The installation of the object should enhance the space and character of the surrounding neighborhood.*

The standard is met.

*The installation of the object should not require the alteration or removal of existing signage (traffic, street, etc.)*

This will not be the case.

*The installation of the object should not require the removal or alteration of existing sidewalks, unless it is part of a comprehensive redesign for the entire site (which is generally discouraged).*

There would be a few bricks that would be removed along the brick sidewalk (rather than a concrete sidewalk) to install the plaque. In this case the work is minor and would not interfere with the ability of pedestrians to traverse this sidewalk.

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***Site in Relation to Theme for Markers or Monuments.*** *The relationship between site and theme for a marker or monument is critical in determining the appropriate site for a particular theme.*

***Marker.*** *A marker should be erected in as close proximity to the site to which it is related as possible and be clearly visible from a public right-of-way.*

Based on historic records, the Sheftall house was in the location where The Gap building currently sits, and this is where it is proposed to go.

*Markers commemorating a person should be sited where that person was born, lived, died, or performed some act of enduring significance or adjacent to the nearest public right-of-way.*

The site would be as close proximity to the Mordecai and Frances Sheftall home was located as it could be recognized with a plaque.

***Design.*** *The design of a marker, monument, or public work of art should be of the highest quality and caliber and enhance public space. In order to promote the high standards, the City of Savannah has historically enjoyed in its markers, monuments, and public art, the following guidelines should be observed.*

The applicant is working with Noble Bronze, a forge based out of Arlington, VA, which has fabricated many such plaques for the City.

***Markers.*** *Markers may be mounted on a freestanding pole, wall-mounted, or embedded in the ground. As the primary purpose is to inform the public about an event, place or person, the aesthetic significance of a marker is generally minimal.*

*Marker text should be created in a manner that, to the extent possible, prevents fading and erosion.*

*Markers should be made of an enduring, non-corroding material.*

*Markers should be considered permanent and designed accordingly.*

The Noble Bronze foundry will create the marker out of iron and bronze, which are standard materials for markers.

### ***Funding.***

***Budget.*** *The Mayor and Aldermen do not fund new markers, monuments, or works of art. The applicant is fully responsible for funding the design, construction, installation, and any necessary landscaping, paving, or lighting involved with a new marker, monument, or work of art.*

The applicant is the responsible party for financing the marker.

***Escrow Payment.*** *All markers, monuments and public art erected on public property become the property of the Mayor and Aldermen. The Mayor and Aldermen assume responsibility for the future maintenance and upkeep of the marker, monument or artwork. Therefore, an initial Escrow Payment is required of the applicant subsequent to approval of the application. The Mayor and Aldermen, or their designee, will determine the appropriate Escrow Payment and will notify the applicant. The Escrow Payment must be paid prior to construction/installation of the*

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*monument or public art. Any marker, monument or artwork erected on private property is the responsibility of the property owner.*

The applicant has been made aware of the escrow fee which will be determined through the City upon approval of the project.

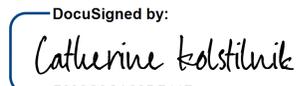
***Public Notice.*** *As required in the Master Plan and Guidelines, written notice was sent to all property owners, and the neighborhood association, within 200 feet of the subject property. There were no public comments received at the time of the writing of this report.*

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**HSMC RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Historic Site and Monument Commission recommends approval to the Savannah City Council, for the installation of the commemorative plaque of the Sheftall house located in the vicinity of 122 West Broughton Street, with the following condition because the proposed work otherwise meets the standards within the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art.**

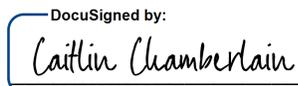
- 1. Provide rendering from sign manufacturer showing the height of the letters on the plaque to ensure they meet the standards.**

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**Catherine D. Kostilnik, Chair**  
**Historic Site and Monument Commission**

**November 6, 2025**  
**Date**

Signed by:  
  
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**Pamela Everett, Assistant Executive Director for**  
**Melanie Wilson, Executive Director & CEO**  
**Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission**

**November 6, 2025**  
**Date**

DocuSigned by:  
  
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**Caitlin Chamberlain, Director of Historic Preservation & Urban Design**  
**Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission**

**November 6, 2025**  
**Date**