



S A V A N N A H H I S T O R I C D I S T R I C T
B O A R D O F R E V I E W

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Petitioner: Kern Co., Danielle Edwards

MPC File No.: 25-002473-COA

Address: 225 West River Street

PIN: 20003 09005

Zoning: D-DBD

Staff Reviewer: Jonathan Mellon

Date: June 11, 2025

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval for alterations to the fenestration of the first floor of the front (River Street) elevation of the property located at 225 West River Street which would consist of the replacement of a window with a door and related work.

Per the applicant:

“Project Description:

Exterior upgrade to 225 W. River Street, right storefront window. Demo existing window ledge in preparation for new masonry stairs to match existing stairs. Replace existing front wood framed windows with a new custom-made wood framed double door that will match the existing double door (see attached elevations for details) from Savannah Millwork.”

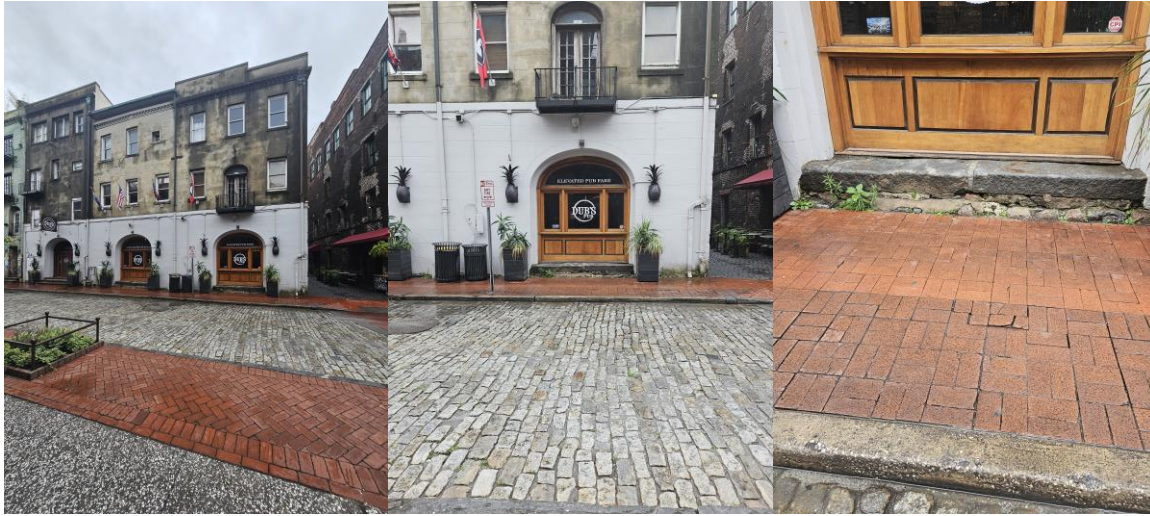
CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:

225 West River Street was constructed in 1820 / 1868 and is a contributing resource within the National Historic Landmark District and the local Savannah Downtown Historic District.

225 West River Street is made up of by three buildings (225-229), three and four-story masonry (stucco) buildings with first floor arched entrances with non-historic wood windows and doors, followed by punched openings with double-hung one-over-one non-historic windows, dentiled cornices, later alterations including changes to the fenestration pattern and introduction of a balcony, and are topped by flat roofs with parapets.

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The surrounding context includes contributing three, four and five-story masonry (brick and stucco) buildings as well as non-contributing buildings across River Street.



Staff Site Visit Photos – views of front (West River Street) elevation

A review of the Sanborn maps shows that the present location of the 1820 / 1868 buildings as having a commercial nature which reflected the character of the working waterfront in Savannah. The buildings on the south side of West River Street have remained, while those on the north side have since been demolished.

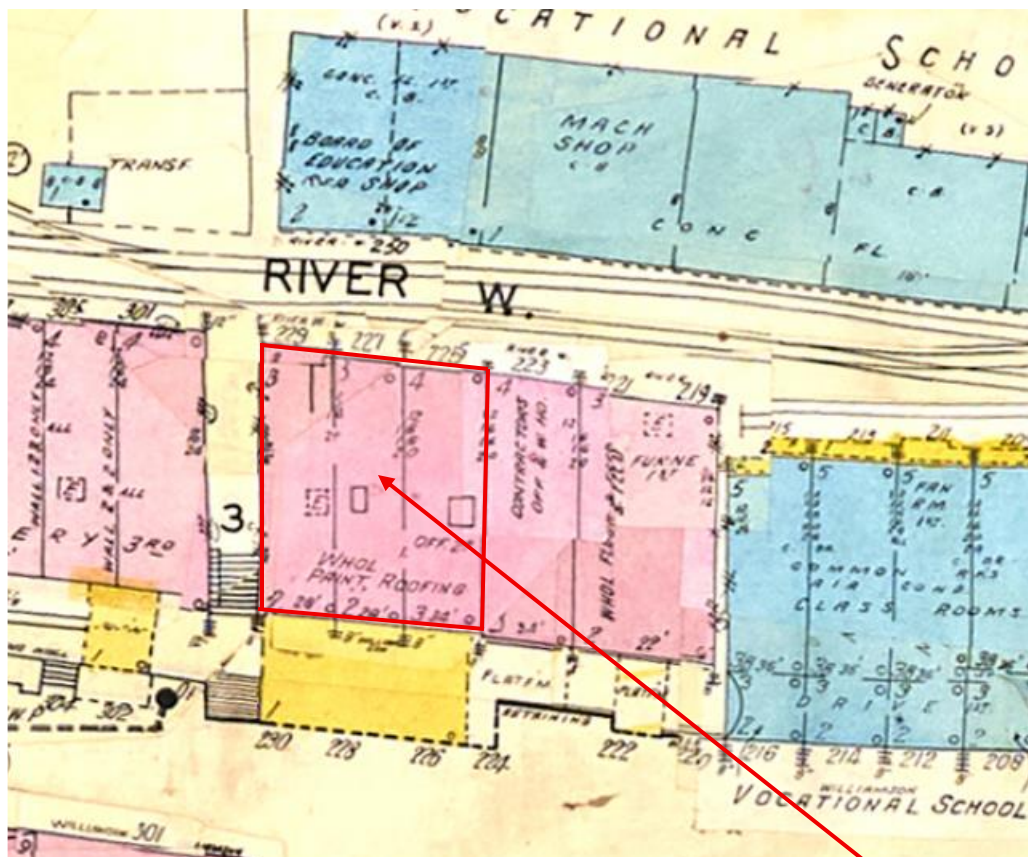


Figure 1 - 1916 Sanborn Map with paste-ins through 1953 showing 225 West River Street

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The more recent Sanborn map shows the loss of buildings on the north side of West River Street.

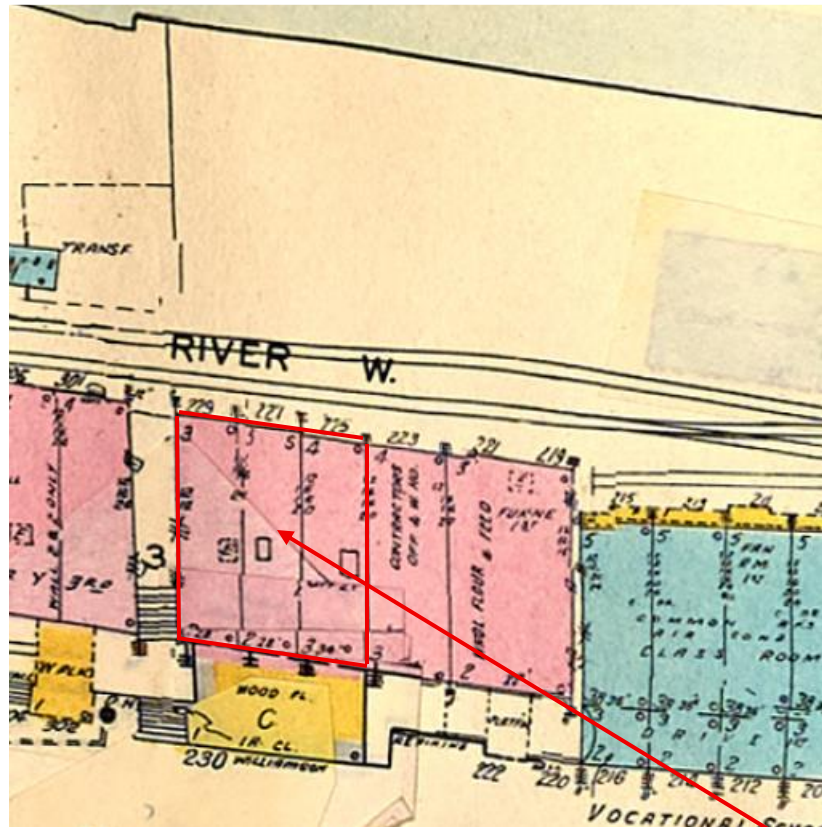


Figure 2 - 1955 Sanborn Map with paste-ins through 1973 showing 225 West River Street

FINDINGS:

The following standards from the Sec 7.8 - Savannah Downtown Historic District Ordinance apply:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation. Material changes to contributing resources and resources that are eligible for listing as contributing shall be evaluated by use of the current edition of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation as published by the U.S. Department of the Interior. In considering proposals for alterations to contributing resources, the documented original design of the resource may be considered.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards 2– Historic Character. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

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.

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.

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 standards are not met. The proposed scope of work would remove the masonry (granite) base \ ledge to allow for the installation of new masonry (brick) stairs to match those found on the other entrance. To meet the standard, the masonry (granite) base \ ledge should be retained in-place with a new set of stairs added. The proposed replacement of the non-historic wood window with a wood door would meet the standard.

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 potentially result in damage to the historic 1820 / 1868 buildings.

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 standard is not met. The proposed scope of work would remove the masonry (granite) base \ ledge to allow for the installation of new masonry (brick) stairs to match those found on the other entrance. To meet the standard, the masonry (granite) base \ ledge should be retained in-place with a new set of stairs added. The proposed replacement of the non-historic wood window with a wood door would meet the standard.

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 standard is not met. The proposed scope of work would remove the masonry (granite) base \ ledge to allow for the installation of new masonry (brick) stairs to match those found on the other entrance. To meet the standard, the masonry (granite) base \ ledge should be retained in-place with a new set of stairs added. The proposed replacement of the non-historic wood window with a wood door would meet the standard.

Visual Compatibility Criteria. *To maintain the special character of the Savannah Downtown Historic District as identified in the architectural survey and visual analysis, new construction and any material change in appearance shall be consistent with the standards, criteria and guidelines developed for the district. The applicable criteria below shall be used to assess new construction and material changes. These criteria shall not be the basis for appeal to any board, commission or administrator described in this Ordinance, or to the Mayor and Aldermen.*

Proportion of openings. *The relationship of the width of the windows to height of windows within a building or structure shall be visually compatible to the contributing buildings and structures to which the structure is visually related.*

The standard is met. The proposed scope of work would include alterations to the fenestration pattern of the first floor of the front (River Street) elevation with the non-historic window being turned into a door. The existing arched opening, which is a character-defining feature of the buildings, would be retained which would allow the buildings to continue to be visually compatible with the contributing buildings to which they are related along the River Street corridor.

Relationship of materials, texture and color. *The relationship of materials, texture and color of the facade of a building or structure shall be visually compatible with the predominate materials, textures, and colors used on contributing buildings and structures to which the structure is visually related.*

The standard is met. The proposed scope of work would include alterations to the fenestration pattern of the first floor of the front (River Street) elevation with the non-historic window being turned into a door. The proposed door would be made of wood and stained to match the other door and window that fill the openings on the first floors of the buildings. The proposed masonry stairs would be compatible, with the aforementioned notation that the masonry (granite) base \ ledge should be retained in-place in order to have the buildings to continue to be visually compatible with the contributing buildings to which they are related along the River Street corridor.

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

The standard is met. The proposed scope of work would include alterations to the fenestration pattern of the first floor of the front (River Street) elevation with the non-historic window being turned into a door. The existing arched opening, which is a character-defining feature of the buildings, would be retained which would allow the scale of the buildings to continue to be visually compatible with the contributing buildings to which they are related along the River Street corridor.

Savannah Downtown Historic District Design Standards. *The intent of these standards is to ensure appropriate new construction, additions, and alterations within the Savannah Downtown Historic District. They are not intended to promote copies of the architectural designs of the past, but to encourage contemporary designs that protect and complement existing contributing resources. They are further intended to protect the historic integrity of the contributing resources.*

The following design standards shall apply to new construction, additions, alterations to contributing and non-contributing buildings and structures, unless otherwise specified. Though certain building materials are prescribed herein, the Board may approve alternative materials that are not listed as prohibited upon a showing by the applicant that the material or product is visually compatible with historic building materials and has performed satisfactorily in the local climate.

For the purposes of evaluating the visual compatibility and design standards of exterior fenestration, where voids (windows, doors, and storefronts) in the exterior façade are

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substantially blocked by interior walls or built-in furniture, these may be considered part of the exterior wall if they are built within three feet of the exterior wall. For example, if an interior wall is built abutting the storefront, that interior wall is impacting the exterior design of the fenestration and may be subject to review by the Historic Board of Review.

Exterior walls, Alterations to contributing resources.

Exterior Walls, Materials.

Exterior walls shall be repaired with in-kind materials 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 materials and configuration shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original wall.

The standard is met. The proposed scope of work would include alterations to the fenestration pattern on the secondary side (Whitaker Street) elevation to the rear which would include the reopening of three areas in the masonry (stucco) façade. As part of the scope of work, the stucco façade would be repaired / restored with a new stucco sill added.

Exterior Walls, Prohibited Materials.

Materials that cause damage, obscure, or change the appearance to the underlying historic fabric are prohibited.

Vinyl siding, aluminum siding, rolled asphalt, precast concrete panels, fiber cement wood simulated horizontal lap siding, fiber cement panels, EIFS, T-111, ceramic-based coatings and sealers on siding.

The standard is met. The proposed scope of work would not include the use of any of the prohibited materials.

Exterior Walls, Finishes and Treatments.

Color changes to contributing resources shall be historically appropriate.

Ceramic based-coatings and sealers on wood siding shall not be permitted.

Cleaning, when undertaken, shall be so as not to damage historic fabric. Sandblasting and disc sanding shall not be permitted.

The standard is met. The proposed scope of work would not include any changes to the finishes or treatments of the stucco façade with the notable aforementioned exception of the proposed removal of the masonry (granite) base \ ledge.

Commercial Storefronts, Alterations to contributing resources.

Original storefronts 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 storefront shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original.

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

The standard is not met. The proposed scope of work would remove the masonry (granite) base \ ledge to allow for the installation of new masonry (brick) stairs to match those found on the other entrance. To meet the standard, the masonry (granite) base \ ledge should be retained in-place

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with a new set of stairs added. The proposed replacement of the non-historic wood window with a wood door would meet the standard.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the alterations to the fenestration of the first floor for the front (River Street) elevation of the property located at 225 West Liberty Street with the following condition because the work is otherwise visually compatible and meets the standards.

- 1. Retain the existing masonry (granite) base / ledge and add masonry stairs as needed to provide access to West River Street, with a final design coordinated and approved by staff prior to construction taking place.**

MW: JM

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.