



S A V A N N A H   H I S T O R I C   D I S T R I C T  
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**REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

**Petitioner:** Patrick Shay

**MPC File No.:** 26-000078-COA

**Address:** 225 East President Street

**PIN:** 20015 01003

**Zoning:** D-CBD

**Staff Reviewer:** Caitlin Chamberlain

**Date:** February 11, 2026

**NATURE OF REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting approval for a rehabilitation and alterations proposal to replace an unintentionally collapsed staircase at south side of the building located at 225 East President Street. The scope of work includes:

- Salvaging and restoring the historic brownstone coping
- A restored bluestone porch landing
- Refurbishing historic ornamental railings to be reinstalled
- Rebuilding stairs

**CONTEXT/SURROUNDING AREA:**

The property at 225 East President Street was built in 1855 and is a contributing resource within the Savannah National Historic Landmark District and the Savannah Downtown Historic District.

According to the Building Data Sheet from 1970, the property now known as 225 East President Street was originally a duplex built for the estates of William Washington Gordon and George W. Anderson. The northern portion of the house had a street address on President Street was at one time the home of Judge William Law, an eminent lawyer and jurist. The southern portion of the house was the home of General Alexander R. Lawton, also a lawyer and American Charge d'affaires to the Court of Vienna.

The property has undergone a variety of changes and alterations since 1855. The Georgia Survey Record Card from 1995 notes some dates of alterations of the property including:

- C.1884- addition to rear of house
- 1892- altered house erected piazza on sides

- C.1916- flats on site
- C.1954- store located in basement
- C.1983- condemned
- C.1986- townhouses renovated into a 16-unit Inn to include: interior alterations, addition of elevator/stair tower with connecting porches, courtyard and exterior restoration, in addition another alteration included a paved parking lot with wall.

The 1884 Sanborn Map shows the four-story brick duplex configuration of the structure. Both sides appear to have a three-story brick rear section. In 1888, the three-story rear portion showed a wood frame area. By 1898 the Sanborn Map shows a different configuration on the rear where there is a one-story central frame area with a basement, flanked by brick abutments on either side.

Along the trust lot there were several other buildings that no longer exist, and the addresses appear to have changed over time due to that (aside from the citywide renumbering in the late 1800s). Thus, 225 East President Street is a more contemporary address. The duplex on what looks like the rear of the lot (if the front portion is considered closest to Oglethorpe Square), which is adjacent to Lincoln Street is the building referred to in the Sanborn Maps. Additionally, Koch's Bird's Eye View of Savannah Map from 1891 shows the building with a two-story brick enclosure rather than an open porch.

Presently, the building is slated to reopen as the Sabal House, though it had served as the President's Quarters hotel since 1987. There was a previous approval to build an adjacent structure to expand the hotel on what is currently the parking lot: New Construction, Parts I&II 20-002646-COA. The area is surrounded by a mix of other historic duplexes, a 1920s apartment complex, The Owens-Thomas House and the 17Hundred90 Inn and Restaurant.

## **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.*

Materials that were salvaged after the collapse will be placed back as they were, including the character defining handrails and brownstone stairs. The standard is met.

***Secretary of the Interior's Standards 5– Distinctive Features.*** *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*

The standard is met to the extent that it can be with the salvaged materials in the rebuild. The intent of this project is to put the staircase back ‘as it was, where it was.’

***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.*

New stucco will be included in the materials for the rebuild. This is acceptable as it will be a true stucco color matched to the rest of the stucco on the historic house. The handrails will be reinstalled and given a fresh coat of black paint (no color change). There are several photographs showing the house with the staircase intact to ensure a proper rebuild occurs.

***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.*

***Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projection.*** *The relationship of entrances, porch projections, and walkways to buildings or structures shall be visually compatible with the contributing buildings and structures to which they are visually related.*

The standard is met. The staircase is being reinstalled how it was prior to the collapse. A historic restoration of this type is visually compatible with the historic building itself and the consistent placement of stairs around the building, as well as other contributing resources in the vicinity.

***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 salvageable historic materials are being reused where possible and were already visually compatible as they were. The inclusion of the base of the stairs being built and covered with true stucco meets the standard, as it will be redone based on the photos from before the collapse, maintaining the visual compatibility that existed already. The stucco color match will be Sherwin Williams 9101 Tres Naturale, a warm beige that matches the rest of the stucco around the building. Then the handrails will be painted to match the existing black, with Sherwin Williams 7069 Iron Ore.

***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 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.*

***Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Porticos, Exterior Stairs and Decks - Alterations to contributing resources.***

*Porches 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 porch materials and configuration shall be of the same materials and configuration as the original.*

Due to the collapse that occurred during the approved construction work onsite, some elements like the stucco will need to be replaced. However, the brownstone steps, the bluestone landing pavers and the metal handrail were salvaged and will be reused. The applicant also proposes to reinforce the staircase by rebuilding with CMU and steel reinforcing bars to help stabilize the staircase for long term durability. This is a means and methods area that the COA does not have purview over, but staff mentions it to explain that this will help keep the configuration of the porch intact.

Staff Report - Certificate of Appropriateness  
MPC File No. 26-000078-COA  
225 E. President St.  
February 11, 2026

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

**Approve the request to reconstruct the collapsed staircase at 225 East President Street as requested because the work is visually compatible and meets the standards.**

**MW: CC**

**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.**