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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Shingler Heights Historic District  
other names/site number n/a

**2. Location**

street & number Along North Main Street (U.S. Hwy. 41) between  
Murray and Hill Avenues  
city, town Ashburn (n/a) vicinity of  
county Turner code GA 287  
state Georgia code GA zip code 31714

(n/a) not for publication

**3. Classification**

**Ownership of Property:**

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

**Category of Property**

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property:**

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	15	2
sites	3	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	18	2

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Signature of certifying official

9/24/92  
Date

Elizabeth A. Lyon  
State Historic Preservation Officer,  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

In my opinion, the property ( ) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the  
National Register

- () entered in the National Register Henry M. Rapsley 11/12/92
- ( ) determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) see continuation sheet

for \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Keeper of the National Register Date

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## **6. Function or Use**

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### **Historic Functions:**

DOMESTIC; single dwelling  
RELIGION; religious facility

### **Current Functions:**

DOMESTIC; single dwelling  
RELIGION; religious facility

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## **7. Description**

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### **Architectural Classification:**

Colonial Revival  
Classical Revival  
Queen Anne  
Craftsman  
Tudor Revival  
Other: Folk Victorian

### **Materials:**

**foundation** brick  
**walls** weatherboard  
**roof** asphalt  
**other** brick, wood, terra cotta

### **Description of present and historic physical appearance:**

Shingler Heights is composed of approximately five blocks of residential buildings and one institutional building located north of Ashburn's historic commercial core. The district developed in a linear pattern along U. S. Highway 41 and the northwest-southeast course of the Georgia Southern and Florida Railroad (presently Southern Railway). Shingler Heights consisted of the residences of some of Ashburn's most prominent families, in particular the James Simon Shingler and John Samuel Betts families. It contains the largest and most high-style residential buildings found within the city. Development of this district began in 1895 and continued until 1937 when the final historic dwellings were constructed.

The district contains a total of fifteen historic structures, and all but three properties are found in the district's southern portion. As a general rule, properties located in the district's northern portion were constructed on very large lots of several acres of land. Structures located to the south were constructed on smaller lots. These lots within the district's southern portion are smaller than their northern neighbors, but are larger than lots found in the remainder of the city.

The district is comprised of one- to two-and-one-half story wood-frame and masonry structures. Houses are constructed in Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, Neoclassical Revival, Craftsman, and English Vernacular

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Revival (Tudor Revival) architectural styles. Gabled or hipped roofs, pedimented porticos, and wraparound porches are found throughout the district. Outbuildings are found throughout the district as well and tend to be located behind the houses near the rear of their lots. These outbuildings include barns, greenhouses, and garages.

The Ashburn First United Methodist Church is the district's only nonresidential building and is constructed in the Colonial Revival style. It is located at the southernmost end of the district.

All but four of the buildings within the district were designed by Peter E. Dennis of Dennis and Dennis, a Macon architectural firm.

Development in the district began in 1895 with the construction of J. S. Shingler's house, "Sparrow's Nest" (photos 6,7,8). The Queen Anne-style "Sparrow's Nest" is the district's most elaborate Victorian structure and was designed by Peter Dennis. Irregularly shaped, but symmetrical in plan, it stands two-and-one-half stories tall and features decorative bargeboards, spindled balustrades, and shingled gables. An attached greenhouse, built to the building's south, is original to the dwelling. A picket fence which originally encircled the house was removed in 1920 and replaced with the existing masonry fence.

John Betts was the other major property owner in the area that was to become Shingler Heights. The Betts House (photo 12, on right) was constructed in 1897 and, like "Sparrow's Nest", was also designed by Peter Dennis. The house is a two-story, wood-framed, Queen Anne-style structure.

The Shingler House (photo 9), located to the west of "Sparrow's Nest" represents the Neoclassical Revival period. Constructed in 1908, the building features a multi-hipped, red tile roof, exposed rafters, and monumental portico. The porte cochere was enclosed in 1914 when a sun room was added. 500 N. Main (photo 2, on left), located in the southern portion of the district, is also constructed in the Neoclassical Revival style. The building's design includes a monumental portico with Corinthian columns and an entrance with leaded glass transom and sidelights.

"The House by the Road" (photo 10), constructed in 1919, 423 N. Main (photo 13), and 110 Hudson Avenue represent the Craftsman architectural style. "The House by the Road", located immediately to the south of the Shingler House, features a rectangular plan, gable roof line dormer, and decorative eave brackets. 423 N. Main echoes the rectangular plan and incorporates a shed dormer and a scaled version of a porte cochere into its overall design. Exposed rafters and rusticated concrete block porch posts are the decorative features

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found on 110 Hudson Avenue. This dwelling is the district's only example of board-and-batten construction.

The remainder of the district is comprised of small to large Victorian and early 20th-century dwellings. 427, 425, and 600 N. Main Street retain original spindled balustrades, decorative gables, and irregular floor plans. 421 N. Main assumes larger proportions with its two-story floor plan, one-story wraparound porch and second-floor balcony.

First Methodist Church (photo 1), located on N. Main in the district's southern end, is constructed in the Colonial Revival style. The building stands three stories tall and features a bell tower with pyramidal roof, projecting pedimented central pavilion, and double doorways framed with scrolled brackets. In 1907, trustees from First Methodist purchased land for the church from J. S. Shingler's brother Thomas John Shingler, whose house is located next door (photo 2, on right), for \$2,100. The sanctuary was constructed on the crest of a man-made hill in 1917. Fill dirt was brought from the county to form the hill by J. S. Shingler who desired that the church be visible throughout the community. As was the majority of the district, the First Methodist Church was designed by Peter E. Dennis.

Landscaping in Shingler Heights is informal and includes large areas of lawn, shrubbery, and fully mature trees. The northern portion of the district contains a large pond and three sizable pecan groves. One particular grove, located immediately to the south of "The House by the Road", was used from c.1900-1930 as a city park. As land for the park had been donated by J. S. and William Shingler, the grove was known as "Shingler Park." The land reverted to the family, and the park was closed to the public in 1930 when the city ceased maintaining the property.

Noncontributing buildings within the district are those that are not yet 50 years old. The district boundaries include the properties along North Main Street that are associated with Shingler Heights and exclude nonhistoric residential buildings to the south and east. Much of the area to the west and north is undeveloped.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:**

nationally     statewide     locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

A     B     C     D

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):**     N/A

A     B     C     D     E     F     G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

Architecture  
Community Planning and Development  
Landscape Architecture  
Agriculture  
Industry  
Politics/Government

**Period of Significance:**

1895-1937

**Significant Dates:**

1895 - construction of J. S. Shingler's house  
1897 - construction of J. S. Betts' house  
1917 - construction of First Methodist Church

**Significant Person(s):**

Shingler, James Simon  
Betts, John Samuel

**Cultural Affiliation:**

n/a

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

Dennis, Peter E.

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**Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:**

**Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)**

The Shingler Heights Historic District is a small, linear residential neighborhood that developed from 1895 to 1937 as an upper-class area where two of Ashburn's most prominent families built their homes. It is significant in architecture, community planning and development, landscape architecture, agriculture, industry, and politics/government. These areas of significance support National Register eligibility under Criteria A, B, and C.

The district is significant in architecture for its historic residential buildings and community religious building that are typical of an upper class neighborhood in a small, south Georgia city. Many of the houses are good examples of the kind of large and stylistically conscious houses constructed in small towns by prominent, wealthy citizens. The houses within the district were constructed from 1895 to 1937 and represent house styles and types that were popular during this period. These include the Queen Anne and Folk Victorian styles of the late 19th century and the Neoclassical Revival, Craftsman, and English Vernacular Revival of the early 20th century. The community religious building is a good example of early 20th century church architecture in a small town. Constructed in 1917, the church building is a large rectangular brick structure designed in the Colonial Revival style.

The district also derives architectural significance from the work of architect Peter E. Dennis (1854-1929). Dennis designed all but four of the buildings within the district, including the church. Dennis was the principal of the well-known Macon, Georgia architectural firm of Dennis and Dennis. The firm designed many commercial, institutional, and residential buildings in Macon, Cuthbert, and Albany, Georgia as well as in Ashburn.

The district is significant in community planning and development as a linear pattern of residential development along a major north-south thoroughfare and the railroad just north of the central business district, where some of Ashburn's leading citizens chose to build their houses. This area developed separately from the larger residential area of Ashburn Heights/Hudson-College Avenue just to the east. It provided an undeveloped area where the Shingler and Betts families owned large pieces of land and built large houses set in large landscaped yards, as well as room for outbuildings, several pecan groves, and a small pond. One of the pecan groves was used by the city as a park from c.1900-1930 and was known as Shingler Park.

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The district is significant in landscape architecture for its pattern of large lots with informally landscaped yards, pecan groves, and a pond. This type of residential landscaping, known in Georgia as "New South" landscaping, was characteristic of small-town neighborhood landscaping in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Chief characteristics of New South landscaping are its informal, almost casual quality and its great variety of landscape features. Soft, curvilinear lines and contours rather than hard geometric edges mark the various landscaped areas. Most features, particularly trees and shrubbery, are blended together for overall effect, although the occasional specimen plant or landscape object may be highlighted. Carpets of grass create broad lawns that tie together various landscape elements. Within towns and cities, the New South landscape produced the landscape form of the residential neighborhood from the composite of individually landscaped yards and community landscaping activities. Shingler Heights contains good examples of both distinct individually landscaped yards and the composite landscape of the residential neighborhood.

The district is significant in agriculture, industry, and politics/government for its associations with James Simon Shingler and John Samuel Betts, two of Ashburn's most prominent citizens. Both Shingler and Betts were leaders in Ashburn's major agricultural and industrial enterprises and actively involved in local and state politics. The Shingler Heights Historic District contains the homes of both of these prominent men.

John Samuel Betts (1848-1918) owned and operated the saw mill that brought the city of Ashburn into existence. The mill was established in 1880 on the site that would become Ashburn's central business district. It was a large operation and was the community's major industry and largest employer. In 1891 Betts became the city's first mayor. He also served as a member of the Ashburn School Board. In 1893 he constructed one of the first commercial buildings in the downtown area, a two-story commissary building. The Betts mill operated until 1925, when Betts then moved the mill operation to Greenville, Florida, and became involved in selling Turner County real estate. Betts owned property in the Shingler Heights area, and in 1897 commissioned Peter E. Dennis to design a large Queen Anne-style house for him in the neighborhood.

James Simon Shingler (1859-1943) arrived in Ashburn in 1888 and began the city's second major industry - naval stores production. Shingler's company soon was one of the largest turpentine distillers in the state. Shingler served in a number of capacities in many businesses in Ashburn and the surrounding south Georgia area, including president of Ashburn Cottonseed Oil Mills, Shingler Mercantile, Turner County Bank, First National Bank in Bainbridge, and

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the Bank of Donaldsonville. He was also director of the Ashburn Bank and the Fourth National Bank of Jacksonville, Florida. He constructed a commercial building downtown c.1896 to serve his mercantile business. In 1905 Shingler chaired the executive committee which lobbied for the creation of Turner County and was instrumental in the creation of Seminole County in southwest Georgia. He served as an alderman for the city for 18 years, and chaired the city's public school Board of Trustees. In 1910 he was elected to the Georgia Senate. Shingler was also the owner of the largest individually owned farm in Turner County - 23,000 acres. On this farm, he introduced Duroc Jersey and Hereford cattle to this wiregrass area of the state, and cultivated tomatoes, asparagus, and honeydew melons. He was the first to ship honeydew melons from south Georgia to northern markets. He also began the county's pecan industry by planting the pecan groves in Shingler Heights. Shingler owned the majority of property in the area that came to be known as Shingler Heights and in 1895 commissioned his close friend Peter E. Dennis to design his large, Queen Anne-style house there. Over the years he sold and donated many parcels of land within Shingler Heights to family members, where they too built their houses, and around 1900 he donated land to the city to be used as a park. Shingler was also an author and in 1901 wrote the book Lightning Flashes and Thunderbolts, a compilation of sermons by the nationally known Methodist evangelist Rev. Sam Jones. Shingler was a prominent member of the First Methodist Church and was responsible for siting the church building on a raised dirt mound so that it would be visible throughout the community.

**National Register Criteria**

The Shingler Heights Historic District is eligible under Criterion A for its historic development as an upper-class residential area where two of Ashburn's most prominent families built their homes from 1895 to 1937. The district is eligible under Criterion B for its associations with James Simon Shingler and John Samuel Betts, two of Ashburn's most prominent citizens who were actively responsible for much of the city's growth and development. The district contains the residences of both Mr. Shingler and Mr. Betts. The district is eligible under Criterion C for its historic residential architecture that is typical of an upper-class neighborhood in a small, south Georgia city, and for its historic church building. It is also eligible for its linear pattern of development and New South landscaping.

**Criteria Considerations (if applicable)**

n/a

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**Period of significance (justification)**

The period of significance is 1895 to 1937. 1895 is the date of construction of the earliest house in the district. 1937 is the date of construction of the last house built within the district that is 50 years old or older.

**Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)**

Contributing resources within the district are those that were constructed between 1895 and 1937. Noncontributing resources within the district are those that are not yet 50 years old.

**Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)**

Turner County, Georgia was established on August 18, 1905 when the Georgia General Assembly approved the formation of a new South Georgia county. Turner County was taken from portions of Irwin, Wilcox, Dooly, and Worth Counties. The General Assembly approved naming the county for Henry Gray Turner, a former State Supreme Court Justice and legislator.

Turner County contained a number of villages, settlements whose economies were based upon small grist and saw mill operations. The city of Ashburn was also a mill-based community, but the city was located along the railroad and developed more quickly than did her sister cities. As a result, Ashburn was designated county seat. In earlier times the settlement had been known as Troupville Crossroads, the name having derived from Troupville Road, a thoroughfare which intersected the city on a northeast course. But as the settlement's saw mill and naval stores industries developed, the community's name was changed to Marion. In 1890 the name was changed a third and final time when local leaders chose to honor W. W. Ashburn who, in 1890, purchased a portion of the future town site from J. T. Hambrick for \$10.

White settlement of South Georgia began in the early 1820s. Historically, this portion of the state had been occupied by members of the Creek nation. Although land occupied by the Creeks was ceded to the United States in 1835, isolated conflicts between the Indians and white settlers continued until the 1850s. Permanent white settlement did not occur until the late 19th century. Growth was spurred by railroad development and the activity generated by timber and naval stores industries.

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In 1888 the Georgia Southern and Florida Railroad constructed a north-south rail line connecting the cities of Jacksonville, Florida and Macon, Georgia. It was in November of that year that the tracks met in Ashburn. The influence the railroad held over Wiregrass Georgia is best measured in terms of population. In 1890 Ashburn's population numbered 403 persons. By 1900 her inhabitants totalled 1,301. Persons living outside the city's corporate limits totalled 1,724. The Georgia Southern and Florida's advocacy of South Georgia continued when the company advertised transporting saw mill equipment into the region at no cost. The offer was improved when the railroad provided saw mill operators with free siding.

Ashburn's townsite was first surveyed in January, 1889 by the G. S. & F. Railroad. Known as the "Patton Survey", the city's twenty-block grid pattern was divided in its center by the northwesterly course of the G. S. & F. roadbed. Property located to the east and west of the roadbed was divided into four rectangular blocks. A system of intersecting streets and alleys continued the pattern for five blocks along the roadbed's length.

The city was resurveyed in July 1898 when architect Peter E. Dennis of Macon, Georgia enlarged upon the original survey. The Dennis Survey encompassed fifty-two blocks of varying size and incorporated the area's earliest road, Troupville Road (North Street), into the land use pattern. Troupville Road bore due north, and its inclusion created a non-aligned pattern of streets and alleys. Streets were named for local leaders (James Simon Shingler, John Samuel Betts), Civil War military figures (Joseph Wheeler, Robert E. Lee), and presidents of the United States (James Monroe, George Washington). Street width varied, with measurements running between 46 to 80 feet. The latter was used only in the commercial and industrial areas, along the north-south courses of Railroad and Mill Streets between College and Madison Avenues.

The J. S. Betts saw mill brought the city of Ashburn into existence. Established by John Samuel Betts (1848-1918) and John West Evans (1844-1904) in 1880, the mill site occupied what was later to become three full blocks of Ashburn's commercial area. The mill was Ashburn's best known industry and largest employer. By 1896 the mill employed two hundred persons and produced 70,000 feet of merchantable lumber per day. The mill owned twenty miles of railroad, two locomotives, and nine boilers whose aggregate steaming capacity approached 550 horsepower. Beginning c.1890, the mill operated a "variety works" where doors, sashes, blinds, mouldings, and other specialty items were manufactured. This was an important addition as the majority of regional mills were usually "rough cut" concerns operating a single sawing line with machinery powered by a low horsepower steam engine. These mills contrasted sharply with Betts

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Mill who advertised having enough timber to last twenty years. In 1891 John S. Betts became Ashburn's first mayor. He also served as a member of the Ashburn School Board.

The amount of activity generated by the Betts Mill and the presence of the railroad drew a second major industry to Ashburn. In 1888, James Simon Shingler (1859-1943) arrived from Eastman, Georgia. He with his partner, Charles D. Baldwin, began naval stores production and were soon among the largest distillers in the state. Through the influence exerted by J. S. Shingler, John Betts, and John Evans, Ashburn grew from an isolated saw mill village into a community which sought schools, trade, and additional businesses.

The Shinglers' interest and activities were not limited to naval stores production. In 1905 J. S. Shingler chaired the Executive Committee which lobbied for the creation of Turner County. He became president of the Ashburn Oil Mills, a firm which produced cottonseed oil, president of Shingler Merchantile, president of the Turner County Bank, director of the Ashburn Bank, director of the Fourth National Bank in Jacksonville, Florida and president of both the First National Bank of Bainbridge and Bank of Donaldsonville. Shingler and his brother Thomas John Shingler held business interests in Donaldsonville and Bainbridge, Georgia. Both were instrumental in the creation of southwest Georgia's Seminole County.

J. S. Shingler was the owner of Red Pebble Farm, the largest individually owned farm in Turner County. Managed by Shingler's son Clinton, the farm encompassed 23,000 acres and employed sixty-five plows. It was on this site that the Shinglers introduced Duroc Jerseys and Hereford cattle to Wiregrass Georgia. Tomatoes and asparagus were also cultivated here. Honeydew melons were also raised and shipped from South Georgia to northern markets for the first time. The Shinglers began Turner County's pecan industry when they planted three sizeable groves in the northern end of Shingler Heights.

J. S. Shingler was interested in the community's welfare. With the completion of his home "Sparrow's Nest" in 1895, J. S. Shingler made his former home, a one-room log house located to the north of "Sparrow's Nest", available to the community as a school known as the Shingler School. Classes were held there for approximately three years before the house was moved in 1898 to a site located on Madison Street.

For eighteen years J. S. Shingler served as an alderman for the City of Ashburn. He also chaired Ashburn's Public School Board of Trustees. In 1910 he was elected without opposition by the tenth Senatorial District to a term in the Georgia State Senate. Shingler authored Lightning Flashes and Thunderbolts, a book which comprised a

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series of sermons delivered by nationally known Methodist evangelist Reverend Sam Jones in Savannah in 1901.

Ashburn was easily Turner County's largest city. The city's commercial development began in 1888, and in 1893 J. S. Betts constructed a two-story masonry commissary building on the southeast corner of Washington and Main Streets. The July 10, 1896 issue of the Tifton Gazette reported that the commissary trade approached a half million dollars annually. Shingler and Joe Lawrence, editor of Ashburn's Wiregrass Farmer, followed suit in c.1896 when they constructed a similar building on the northeast corner of Washington and Main. By 1889 Ashburn could boast seven stores, a hotel, a livery stable, school and church buildings, trade shops, and depot. Four years later in 1893, Ashburn's commercial ventures would include postal, telegraph, and freight services.

Commercial and industrial development centered along both sides of the railroad, and in 1889 blocks lining the right-of-way were subdivided into distinctly commercial lots (50' x 100'). Land reserved for residential use was crowded away from the margin of the railroad line. By 1900, Ashburn's commercial and industrial core solidly paralleled the railroad with little commercial development occurring on adjoining streets. By this time one- and two-story masonry storefronts were beginning to dominate Ashburn's Main Street. Frame, one-story commercial buildings were common although they tended to be located along both sides of Gordon Street south of College Avenue.

Development of Ashburn's Shingler Heights began in 1895 when J. S. Shingler contracted with Peter E. Dennis, Macon-based architect and friend of Shingler, to design and construct his home, "Sparrow's Nest". Shingler owned the vast majority of property within the district. John Betts, the district's only other original property owner, began construction of his home, also designed by Dennis, at 421 N. Main in 1897.

In the early years of the 20th century, Shingler began selling and donating parcels of land within the district to family members who then constructed homes on their lots. The "Shingler House" was built for Clyde Shingler McKenzie, daughter of J. S. Shingler, in 1908. "The House by the Road" was constructed in 1919 by Peter E. Dennis for Robert Royal Shingler, one of J. S. Shingler's sons. The house was opened by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Royal Shingler in 1926 as a guest house and restaurant. As a guest house, the building contained eight bedrooms and could accommodate up to sixteen guests. The dining room could comfortably seat twenty-five. "The House by the Road" was cited by the Duncan Hines travel guide as "such a delightful place, you will want to return again." This establishment was closed in the late

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1960s following the death of Mr. Shingler and the opening of Interstate Highway 75.

In 1907, trustees from the First Methodist Church purchased land for the church from Shingler's brother, Thomas John Shingler, for \$2,100. The existing sanctuary was constructed on the crest of a man-made hill in 1917 by Peter Dennis. Fill dirt was brought in from the county by Shingler to form the hill, who desired that the church be visible throughout the community.

Shingler Heights contains a large pond and three sizable pecan groves. One particular grove, located immediately to the south of the "House by the Road", was used from c.1900-1930 as a city park. As land for the park had been donated by J. S. and William Shingler, the grove was known as "Shingler Park". The land reverted to the family and the park was closed to the public in 1930 when the city ceased maintaining the property.

Development of the district continued until 1937. All but four of the historic buildings within the district were designed by Peter Dennis. Shingler Heights officially became a part of the city in 1898 when Dennis resurveyed the original townsite and incorporated adjoining land into the existing system of streets and alleys.

Peter E. Dennis (1854-1929) was a Macon-based architect who constructed many of Ashburn's commercial and residential buildings. He attended the University of Georgia from 1871-72 and then trained in the office of Algernon Blair of Macon. Dennis left Blair in 1884 and opened his own Macon-based architectural firm. Dennis and J. S. Shingler were close personal friends, and in 1895 Dennis designed Shingler's home, "Sparrow's Nest." Other commissions soon followed. In late 1895 Dennis designed the home of John West Evans. Two years later, in 1897, he constructed the John Samuel Betts house. The Turner County Courthouse (1907), the Ashburn Bank (1906), and the Gulf Line Railway Depot (1911) were all Dennis-designed buildings. In 1898 Dennis was hired by the city to conduct the city's second survey and platting. Ashburn's dependency upon Dennis continued into the early years of the 20th century. Dennis was to return frequently to Ashburn where he altered buildings he had earlier designed. The Shingler Mercantile, constructed by Dennis in 1896 (demolished c.1979) was renovated by the architect in 1912. The Turner County Bank building was also constructed and later altered by Dennis.

The industrialization of Wiregrass Georgia during the 1890s was impressive by any measure. Cordele gained a sash and blind factory, a shoe factory, and ice manufacturing plant. Tifton began a canning plant in 1893, a cigar factory in 1895, and was expecting a new ice

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factory and new cotton mill in 1899. Ashburn was not to be left behind.

In 1906, the Turner County Publishing Company was chartered. With a capital stock of \$5,000, the company was empowered to print books, a weekly newspaper, and to undertake a "general printing and bookbinding business." That same year saw the organization of the Ashburn Bottling Works, a company whose purpose was to "manufacture soft drinks, ...to bottle and sell same, including cider of all kinds and vinegar...." In 1907 the city issued bonds to help finance electric lights, a waterworks, and public schools. It was also in 1907 that the Ashburn Telephone Company was chartered. The Flint River and Gulf Railway Company was established in 1906 when the J. S. Betts Company agreed to build the section of line which ran from Ashburn to Sylvester. C. A. Alford of Sylvester agreed to finance the project from Sylvester to Bainbridge. On April 2, 1906 through-passenger and freight services were available from Washington, D. C. or Atlanta to Bainbridge, Georgia.

Local leaders such as J. S. Shingler, John S. Betts, and John W. Evans were often the persons fostering new industry. Just as they had developed timber and naval stores industries in the late 19th century, their interests diversified in the early years of the 20th century. With the closing of Betts Mill in 1925, the J. S. Betts Company established a saw mill in Greenville, Florida and turned its attention to the sale of Turner County real estate. Shingler's interest in turpentine continued, but his interests also came to include agriculture and cotton production.

By 1930 Ashburn's population reached 11,936. Due to extensive timbering the county's economy was no longer dependent upon timber or naval stores industries, but was based primarily upon cotton production. The advent of the boll weevil in 1921 and the closing of Betts Mill in 1925 crippled Turner County's economy. The economic hardship experienced by Turner County was reflected in the slowing of retail sales and a virtual halt in construction.

In the mid-1920s, George Betts, brother of John Betts, and Joe Lawrence began advocating diversified farming practices. Their plan, known as the "Cow, Hog and Hen" program, brought national attention to Turner County and helped area farmers regain financial security.

Turner County has participated in a number of federally sponsored programs and was supportive of both the first and second World Wars. The May 9, 1918 issue of the Wiregrass Farmer and Stockman reported that the people of Turner County had purchased \$150,050 in war bonds, a figure which exceeded the county's goal by \$38,750. During the 1930s the city participated in a public works program when city

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**Section 8**

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officials requested help in building library space and in organizing a recreational center. Public works funding and labor were also used in 1936 when sewage lines were laid in Ashburn Heights. A German POW camp was established in the county in 1943. The camp housed 250 prisoners and was manned by sixty-five U. S. servicemen. During their internment, prisoners worked for area farmers and in the turpentine industry. The camp was closed in 1946 with the conclusion of the war.

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**9. Major Bibliographic References**

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Tinker, Nancy and George Overby. Historic District Information Form, June, 1986. On file at the Office of Historic Preservation, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, with supplemental information.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) N/A

- ( ) preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ( ) previously listed in the National Register
- ( ) previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ( ) designated a National Historic Landmark
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- (x) State historic preservation office
- ( ) Other State Agency
- ( ) Federal agency
- ( ) Local government
- ( ) University
- ( ) Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

n/a

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** Approximately 90 acres.

**UTM References**

- A) Zone 17 Easting 247685 Northing 3511790
- B) Zone 17 Easting 248450 Northing 3512090
- C) Zone 17 Easting 248395 Northing 3510780

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The district boundary encompasses approximately five blocks of historic residential development in an area north of Ashburn's central business district and focused on North Main Street and the railroad. The boundary generally follows Hill Avenue on the north, North Street on the east, Westend Avenue on the south, and property lines on the west.

**Boundary Justification**

The district boundary encompasses the contiguous intact historic residential development that makes up the Shingler Heights residential neighborhood. The boundary excludes nonhistoric residential buildings to the south and east.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**name/title** Debbie Curtis, Architectural Historian  
**organization** Office of Historic Preservation, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**street & number** 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334  
**telephone** (404) 656-2840 **date** July 31, 1992

(HPS form version 10-29-91)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

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**Name of Property:** Shingler Heights Historic District  
**City or Vicinity:** Ashburn  
**County:** Turner  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** March 1991

**Description of Photograph(s):**

- 1 of 14: Ashburn First United Methodist Church, North Main Street at Church Avenue; photographer facing northeast.
- 2 of 14: Thomas John Shingler House (brother of J. S. Shingler) on right, North Main Street at Hudson Avenue; photographer facing north.
- 3 of 14: North Main Street between Hudson and James Avenues; photographer facing north.
- 4 of 14: North Main Street between James and Shingler Avenues; photographer facing north.
- 5 of 14: Pecan grove at Sparrow's Nest, North Main Street between Shingler and Hill Avenues; photographer facing north.
- 6 of 14: Sparrow's Nest, home of James Simon Shingler, North Main Street between Shingler and Hill Avenues; photographer facing east.
- 7 of 14: Sparrow's Nest in landscaped setting, North Main Street between Shingler and Hill Avenues; photographer facing southeast.
- 8 of 14: Sparrow's Nest, front gate of 1920 fence, North Main Street between Shingler and Hill Avenues; photographer facing northeast.
- 9 of 14: Clyde Shingler McKenzie House (daughter of J. S. Shingler), west side of North Main Street; photographer facing west.
- 10 of 14: "The House by the Road", Robert Royal Shingler House (son of J. S. Shingler), west side of North Main Street; photographer facing southwest.
- 11 of 14: Pecan grove at "The House by the Road", formerly Shingler Park, west side of North Main Street; photographer facing west.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

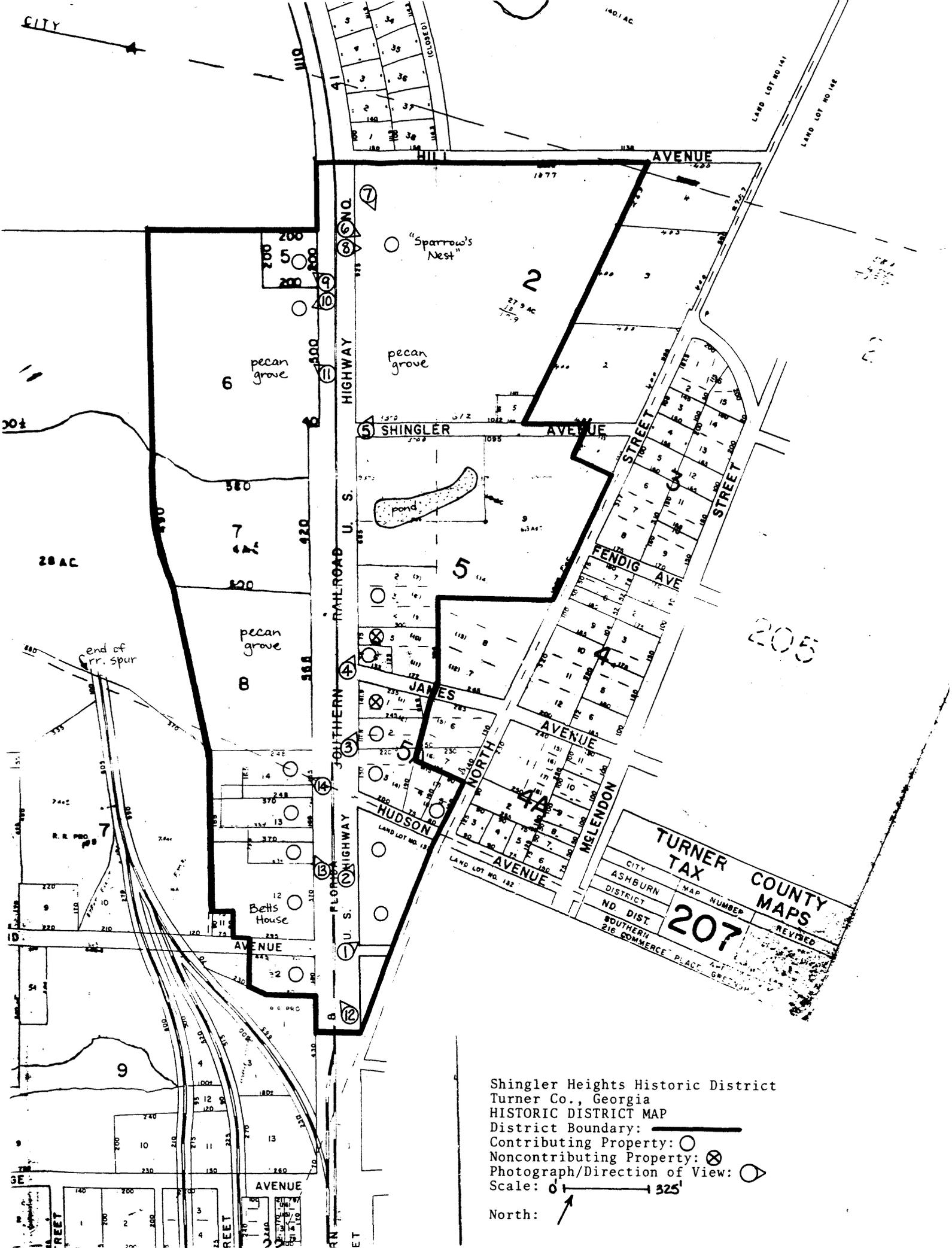
**Photographs**

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12 of 14: John Samuel Betts House on right, North Main Street at Westend Avenue; photographer facing northwest.

13 of 14: West side of North Main Street; photographer facing northwest.

14 of 14: West side of North Main Street; photographer facing west.



**TURNER COUNTY TAX MAPS**

CITY	ASHBURN	MAP NUMBER	207
DISTRICT	NO. DIST	SOUTHERN	216 COMMERCE PLACE GREENSBORO

REVISED

Shingler Heights Historic District  
 Turner Co., Georgia  
 HISTORIC DISTRICT MAP  
 District Boundary: **\_\_\_\_\_**  
 Contributing Property: ○  
 Noncontributing Property: ⊗  
 Photograph/Direction of View: ⊙  
 Scale: 0' ————— 325'  
 North: ↑