

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 14 1985

date entered MAR 14 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Vernon Square - Columbus Square Historic District

and or common

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet

N/A not for publication

city, town Darien

N/A vicinity of

state Georgia

code 013

county McIntosh

code 191

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple owners (more than 50)

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number McIntosh County Courthouse

city, town Darien

state GA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Structures Field Survey:
McIntosh County has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1975 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta state GA

7. Description

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Vernon Square - Columbus Square Historic District consists of Darien's two intact early 19th-century wards which are laid out on a level, sandy bluff overlooking the Darien River. Each ward consists of a central square, flanking trust lots, and surrounding lots. Both wards are quartered by and surrounded by 100-foot wide streets. Fifty-foot wide streets running east-west separate trust lots from other blocks. Many of these streets retain their original sand surface.

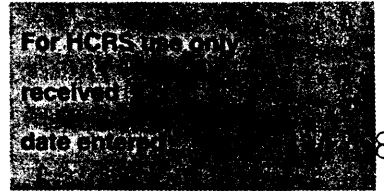
Historic architecture in the district consists of houses, five churches, and an armory (now city hall), all dating from the mid-19th through the early 20th century. Buildings sit on lots of varying sizes which are, for the most part, larger in the Vernon Square Ward than in the Columbus Square Ward. The buildings on corner lots tend to be oriented to the east or west, while those in the middle of each block face north or south. The great majority of historic buildings in the district are wood-framed with weatherboard siding and wood detailing. The exceptions are a tabby church, the brick armory, and a brick Colonial Revival house. Houses range from a variety of simple one-story vernacular cottages, including shotguns and double-pens, to substantial two-story residences. Styles and stylistic detailing in the district include Greek Revival, Gothic Revival (illustrated by three churches), Victorian Eclectic, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman/Bungalow. In general, the houses are rather modest local interpretations of these styles.

Landscaping in the district is informal. Throughout Columbus Square Ward, and particularly in Columbus Square, are scattered large numbers of mature live oak trees. In Vernon Square Ward, house lots are more extensively landscaped with hardwood trees, shubbery, and lawns. Vernon Square contains some of the trees planted in the 19th century when the square was more formally landscaped with shell paths.

Non-historic properties and intrusions in the district are limited to a few wood-framed houses less than fifty years old, several ranch houses, and commercial structures.

Boundary

The district boundary, outlined with a heavy black line on the enclosed maps, coincides in most places with the original (1805) platted area for Vernon and Columbus Wards. The district is surrounded by non-historic development.

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The Vernon Square - Columbus Square Historic District is located in Darien, McIntosh County, Georgia. It is an area centered on Vernon and Columbus Squares and bounded approximately by Market Street on the west, Fort King George Drive on the south, Rittenhouse Adams, East Boundary, and Madison Streets on the east, and Trumbull Street on the north.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Local history
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1805; mid-19th **Builder/Architect** Multiple

through early 20th century

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Vernon Square - Columbus Square Historic District is a late 19th - early 20th century residential neighborhood which historically contained the homes of Darien's white and black middle-class citizens. Its intact layout documents Darien's 1805 city plan which is highly significant for having been derived from Oglethorpe's plan for Savannah. The district is significant in terms of community planning and development, architecture, landscape architecture, and local history. These areas of significance support the district's eligibility for the National Register under Criteria A, B, and C.

Community Planning and Development

Although Darien's present built environment dates from the mid-19th century, the community has a long and complex history. It dates back to 1736 when a group of Scottish settlers established Fort Darien and "Oldtown" was laid out for them by General James Oglethorpe, the founder of Georgia. Perhaps because of the conflict between its excellent location for defense and trade (near the mouth of the Altamaha, one of Georgia's largest river systems) and its unhealthy climate, Darien's development has been very erratic. The original Scottish settlers dispersed to nearby plantations in the 1740s. In 1767 Darien was resurveyed by Lachlan McIntosh, and a new town commons, roughly equivalent to today's Vernon Square, was laid out. This settlement was virtually abandoned during the Revolutionary War. By the 1790s Darien began once again to develop, becoming a busy port in the first decades of the 19th century. In 1805 the city was resurveyed a second time by Thomas McCall, who had earlier served as State Surveyor General. It was incorporated as a town in 1816 and reincorporated as a city and designated county seat of McIntosh County in 1818. But prosperity was shortlived. Fierce competition from Savannah, which in 1833 was tied to Georgia's interior by railroad, combined with the Financial Panic of 1837 dealt a stunning blow to its trade. Darien once again became a backwater settlement which it remained until it was burned to the ground in 1863 during the Civil War. The current town dates from the late 1860s to the 1920s when the city developed as a major timber center, serving as a receiving, processing, and shipping point for massive amounts of timber rafted down the Altamaha.

The district's significance in terms of community planning and development lies with its 1805 city plan which served as the base for late 19th-century development in Darien. McCall's 1805 plan laid out twelve wards, each centered around a square flanked by trustee lots. This plan related back to Darien's two earlier plans developed by McIntosh and Oglethorpe and is one of the very few descendants of Oglethorpe's plan for the city of Savannah. The Vernon Square and Columbus Square wards are the only areas of Darien where the plan has survived intact.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Potterfield, Ty. "Historic District Information Form: Vernon and Columbus Square Historic District." August, 1983. On file at Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta. (Information based on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, Newspapers, plat maps, and a city survey.)

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Approximately 45 acres

Quadrangle name Darien, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	D	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>
E	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification The boundary, outlined with a heavy black line on the enclosed maps, is described and justified in Section 7.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Brooks, National Register Researcher

Historic Preservation Section

organization Georgia Department of Natural Resources date January 23, 1985

street & number 270 Washington St. S. W. telephone 404-656-2840

city or town Atlanta state Georgia 30334

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national X state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elizabeth A. Lyon

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1/30/85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 3-14-85

for
Keeper of the National Register

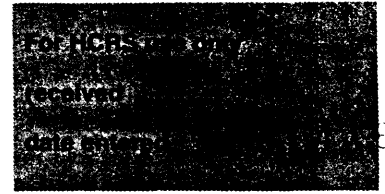
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Architecture

Architecturally, the district is significant for its collection of historic houses and churches which illustrates typical building materials, technology, and styles of the mid-19th through the early 20th century in coastal Georgia. The buildings reflect their construction by local carpenter/builders who adapted nationally popular styles to fit local budgets, materials, and tastes. The district contains examples of simple vernacular cottages with almost no detailing, including shotguns and double-pen structures which were built by and for Darien's working-class black population. More prevalent are one- and two-story houses with Greek Revival, Victorian Eclectic, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman/Bungalow styling and detailing built for Darien's middle-class citizens, both white and black. The Gothic Revival style is represented by two churches in the district. A third church built of tabby, an indigenous form of concrete, documents this important material which was used historically along the Georgia coast.

Landscape Architecture

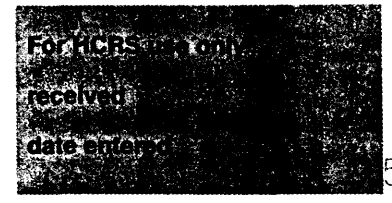
The district is significant in terms of landscaping for its informally landscaped squares and front yards which are typical of late 19th-early 20th century landscaping practices nationwide. Large hardwood trees including many live oaks, extensive shrubbery, and lawns are the principal historic landscaping features evident around the middle class houses which predominate in the Vernon Square Ward. Trees are heavily scattered throughout Columbus Square and its surrounding ward. Vernon Square, planked with shade trees and palmettos, retains some of its historic plant material. The more formal historic landscaping features including shell paths laid out in geometric patterns have disappeared. The historic landscape setting of the district is enhanced by the existence of many of the original sandy, unpaved streets.

Local History

In terms of local history, the district is significant for containing representative houses of Darien's white and black families who collectively contributed to the community which thrived as a center of the timber industry in the late 19th century. Among the white middle-class occupants of the district who lived in the Vernon Square Ward were persons involved with timber brokering, milling, and shipping. Among the black occupants of the Columbus Square Ward were a pharmacist who served as a doctor for the black community, a teacher, a minister, and a drayman. These black homeowners were part of an unusually large group of middle-class blacks in late 19th-century Darien which also included a number of prominent political leaders serving the community as sheriff, constable, judge, state senator and state representative. McIntosh County had a black state representative frequently from 1868 to 1907, a most unusual occurrence in Georgia history. Even the much larger group of working-class blacks, many of whom worked as stevedores and sawmill hands and some of whom lived in the more modest houses in the district, shared somewhat in Darien's late 19th-century prosperity.

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Archaeological Note

The archaeological potential of the Vernon Square - Columbus Square Historic District has not been specifically addressed in this structural nomination. The archaeological significance of this part of Darien was established through a Determination of Eligibility for the Darien Archaeological District (12-1-81). Darien's intact archaeological and structural resources are distributed in different patterns, as evidenced by the different boundaries for the two districts, although they overlap in the Vernon Square - Columbus Square area. For more information about Darien's archaeological potential, the 1981 Determination of Eligibility should be consulted.

VERNON SQUARE-COLUMBUS SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT
 Darien, McIntosh County, Georgia

DISTRICT SKETCH MAP

Source: Coastal Area Planning & Development Commission

Scale: 0 — 100'

North:

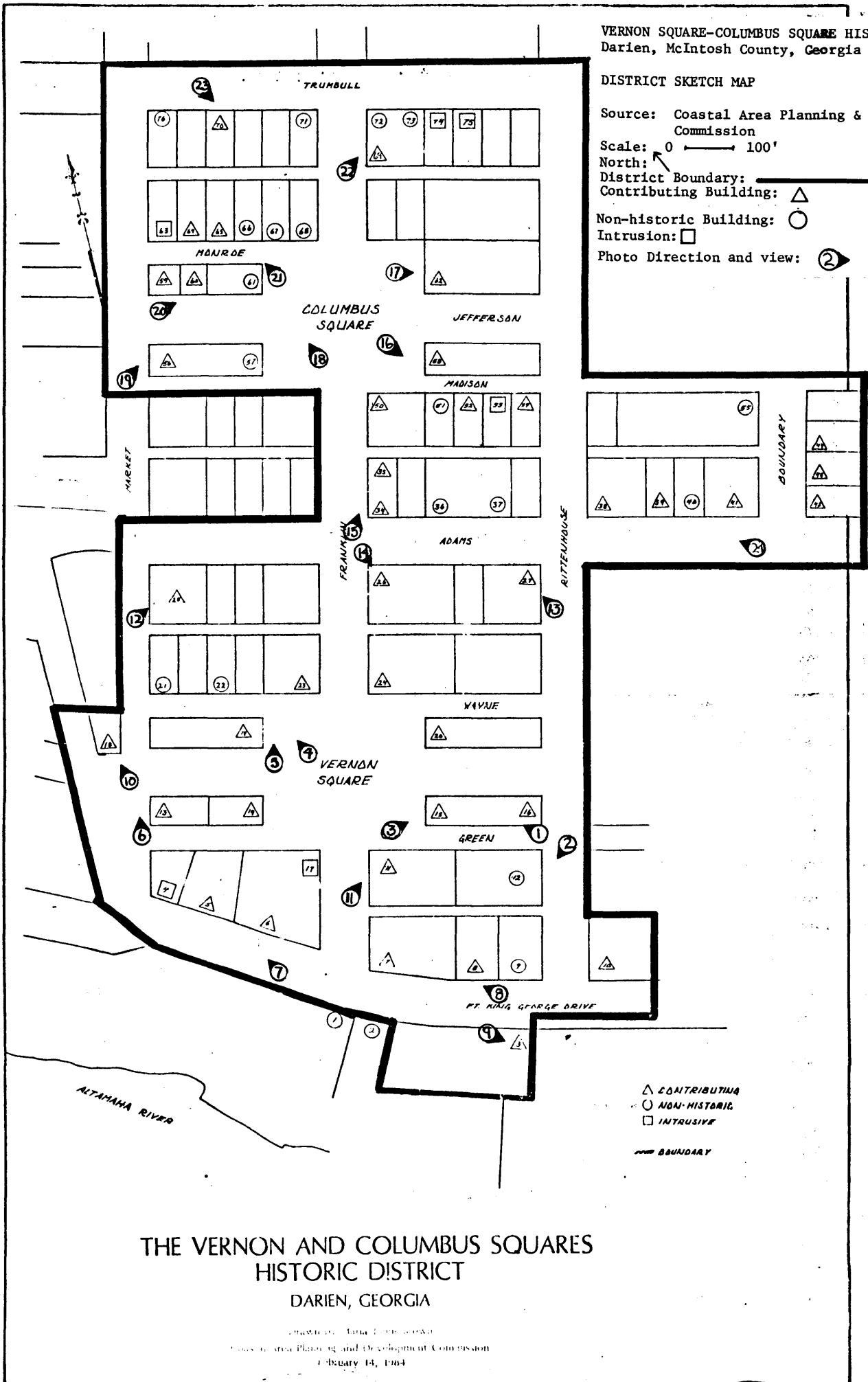
District Boundary:

Contributing Building:

Non-historic Building:

Intrusion:

Photo Direction and view:



THE VERNON AND COLUMBUS SQUARES
 HISTORIC DISTRICT
 DARIEN, GEORGIA

Drawn by: Anna Louise Brown
 Coastal Area Planning and Development Commission
 February 14, 1984