

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



890

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Pine Gardens Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Beech St., Capitol St., & Goebel Ave.

N/A	not for publication
N/A	vicinity

city or town Savannah

state Georgia code GA county Chatham code 051 zip code 31404

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility 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  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

David C. Crass 11 SEPT. 2014  
Signature of certifying official/Title: Dr. David C. Crass/Historic Preservation Division Director/Deputy SHPO Date

Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

for Edson H. Ball 11.5.14  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Pine Gardens Historic District  
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 County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
 (Check only one box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
487	39	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
487	39	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling
- GOVERNMENT/fire station
- EDUCATION/school
- RELIGION/religious facility

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling
- GOVERNMENT/fire station
- EDUCATION/education-related
- RELIGION/religious facility
- COMMERCE/specialty store
- COMMERCE/restaurant

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

- OTHER: American Small House
- NO STYLE

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

- foundation: brick, concrete block
- walls: asbestos siding
- aluminum siding
- roof: asphalt (shingles)
- other:

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

The Pine Gardens Historic District is a residential development located on level land along President Street in northeast Savannah. Developed between 1942 and 1954, the neighborhood was initially constructed for defense workers in the ship-building industry during World War II. Pine Gardens' rectangular grid of streets includes approximately 500 houses set on lots that measure one-sixth of an acre. The small frame houses, built between 1942 and 1952, comprise mostly three variations of the American Small House: a symmetrical house with a front entrance; an asymmetrical house with a front entrance; and a side entrance house with a recessed entrance. The four- and five-room houses, which were built for skilled and unskilled workers, line the long, straight streets with even setbacks. The houses are raised on continuous brick foundations and covered with asbestos or aluminum siding. The shallow-pitched side-gable roofs have minimal or no overhanging eaves. Many houses were built with prefabricated framing sections. Most houses include front porches and some have large, picture windows. The historic district also includes the Savannah Fire Station No. 9 (1944), the modern Church of the Nazarene (1954), and the modern Eli Whitney School (1953).

The majority of buildings within Pine Gardens are in good to fair condition. They have integrity of location, design, and setting, and most have integrity of materials and workmanship. With the demolition of several nearby defense-housing projects and the closure of Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation shipyard to the north of President Street, some of the feeling and association of the district has been lost, but the large number of intact resources within Pine Gardens and the cohesive nature of the existing neighborhood add to these aspects of integrity.

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### Narrative Description

*The following description was written by E.G. Daves Rossell, Ph.D., with Shannon Honl, Lisa Lorang, Katie Purcell, Charles Varner, Mark Carstens, and Steven A. Melcer, and edited by Laura Beth Ingle, Architectural Historian, Historic Preservation Division, "Pine Gardens," Historic District Information Form, September 13, 2012. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.*

Pine Gardens Historic District is a cohesive residential community located in northeast Savannah, approximately three miles east of downtown, on the southeast Georgia coast. The district is made up of the original Pine Gardens subdivision, which began in 1942 and was largely complete by 1943, and the Pine Gardens Annex, which was platted in 1950 and largely completed by 1952. In addition to the houses within the boundaries of the district, there are also several public buildings – a fire station, a church, and a school – which were all completed by 1954. The neighborhood was developed to provide up-to-date and affordable housing for defense workers at the Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation during World War II and for returning soldiers after the war ended.

The community sits on a flat bluff with minimal change in topography. Slopes provide drainage to the north of the district into the Savannah River, and east into marshland off of the Wilmington River. No prominent natural landmarks exist within its boundaries, although the community does owe its existence to the proximity of the Savannah River, just a few hundred yards to the north. The river and its quick access to the Atlantic Ocean provided an ideal location for shipbuilding facilities and the deep water manufacturing facilities needed for the war effort, and naturally, it was also ideal to house workers in close proximity to those facilities.

Pine Gardens consists of a grid of uniform rectangular blocks with their long sides running east-west. Houses in both Pine Gardens and Pine Gardens Annex sit on lots measuring approximately 60 feet by 100 feet and face north or south to their respective streets. Streets in Pine Gardens are 50 feet wide, while the streets of Pine Gardens Annex are slightly larger, at 60 feet wide. The rear of lots abut one another in Pine Gardens, while in Pine Gardens Annex, the rear of lots are separated by back lanes or alleys, as done throughout much of Savannah. The neighborhood plan is laid out approximately parallel to the Savannah River. This axis has influenced several east-west traffic arteries just to the north of the neighborhood, including current-day President Street Extension.

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Approximately 500 relatively uniform, single-family houses sit in regular lines, positioned in the center of small rectangular lots with front lawns, mature shrubs and trees, and miscellaneous outbuildings in the rear. These single-story houses are either four- or five-room plans originally serving unskilled or skilled laborers. The neighborhood was densely developed to accommodate as many shipyard workers and, later, returning soldiers as possible. The setback of each house begins either at the edge of the front porch or at the house itself if there is no front porch. This modest variation provides for subtle variety along the street fronts (photographs 8 and 24).

This wartime tract housing is variously referred to as a Minimal Traditional house, Depression-era cottage, War Years cottage, or Victory cottage, but it is primarily identified as the American Small House in Georgia. The American Small House is a small, unadorned, economical house which became popular during the mid-1930s in response to desperate economic times and a distressed housing market. It is based on a four-room plan (living room, kitchen, and two bedrooms, along with a bathroom and closets). Extra features like a porch, garage, or attic bedrooms could be added to the basic plan; however, these were features were very rare in the Pine Gardens model. The form of the basic house was a simple rectangular box, usually with a tight side-gabled roof. The house type was invented by a unique consortium of private interests, non-profit organizations, professional and trade associations, college and university extension services, and federal government agencies (in particular, the newly formed Federal Housing Administration). The goal was to develop a "template" for an affordable single-family house based on national design, engineering, and construction standards that could be adopted and adapted by private-sector homebuilders and backed financially by the new FHA mortgage guarantees.

In 1941, the Housing Authority of Savannah was authorized by the Federal government to build houses for civilian workers and families who were helping the national defense program, which included Savannah's shipbuilders. The simple designs of the Pine Gardens houses reflect the economics, material shortages, and technological advancements of the era. In order to meet price restrictions and maximize production, square footages and over-all scale was reduced from pre-war house types. To increase spatial efficiency and trim down costs, basements, second stories, additional bathrooms and formal dining rooms were eliminated; window and door sizes were standardized; exterior walls were reduced to four; and plumbing walls were created for ease of construction. Due to economic and design constraints, few exterior customizations were available and therefore a repetitive rhythm of uniform mass and scale developed within the neighborhood.

The exteriors of Pine Gardens houses feature a low-pitched side-gable roof, minimal overhanging eaves, and either a central entry with projecting gabled porch, or side entry into the gable end. A fair number of houses have cross gables accentuating front porches, and few examples of hipped roofs are seen in the Pine Gardens Annex. Construction techniques of the period relied heavily on technological advancements, and many of the houses feature prefabricated framing elements as a solution to more efficient on-site assembly. The construction method is wooden balloon-frame on brick piers with ventilated brick skirting. Exterior sheathing features wood-grain, textured asbestos shingles on walls and asphalt shingles on the roof. Windows are typically six-over-six, or eight-over-eight, sash windows and feature decorative board shutters.

House plans were originally differentiated for unskilled or skilled workers and varied from either four or five-rooms. A standard plan included a living room, eat-in kitchen, bathroom, and one or two bedrooms. There are slight variations within the massing and plan that can be categorized into three main house plans.

The first plan is the *front-entry, symmetrical house*. This house plan is two rooms deep and two rooms wide with a central front entry. A subtle variation of this design offers a large picture window in the living room space and the standard six-over-six, sash window on the other side of the front door (photograph 2, in the foreground at 2111 Beech Street). This slightly larger picture window is an element utilized in the houses built closer to the 1950s and alludes to characteristics standard in the developing Ranch house. A subtype of the front-entry, symmetrical house is the *front-porch-entry, symmetrical house* (photograph 10). This house plan maintains the same symmetry and floor plan, with the massing addition of either an open or enclosed, protruding front porch as part of the entry sequence.

The second plan is the *front-entry, asymmetrical house*. This house plan is two rooms deep by either two or three rooms wide. The front entrance is either at the very end of the front façade in examples that are either two or three rooms wide (photograph 7) or sandwiched between the second and third front room (photograph 11).

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The third plan is the *side-entry house*. This house plan is two rooms deep by either two or three rooms wide. The differentiating feature of this design is the location of the entrance, which is found on the side of the house (photograph 5). Houses of this design are entered from one of the gable ends through either a full or half-width, open or enclosed porch. Often this side-entry house still has a decorative roof gable on the front façade, where a front entrance would typically be located (photograph 12).

When the development of Pine Gardens Annex began in 1950, these three main house plans were utilized again. This led to little differentiation in the houses of Pine Gardens and those in Pine Gardens Annex. Notable differences seen in Pine Gardens Annex are hipped roofs on some houses, a slight variation in the brick skirting, and a few rare examples of full exterior brick cladding.

In the years immediately following the war, the houses were nearly 100 percent owner-occupied. Initially, all the houses in Pine Gardens were rented to employees of the Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation. After World War II ended, all of the houses were sold to individual owners or other interested buyers. In the ensuing years, demographics changed and more houses became occupied by renters. In a 1995 study, the City of Savannah determined that 33 percent of the houses were renter-occupied, and this percentage has increased since 1995.

Although primarily residential, Pine Gardens also has public, religious, and commercial buildings located within its boundaries. A fire station is located in the southwest corner of the intersection at Capitol Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. The Church of the Nazarene, is immediately west of the fire station on Capitol Street. Eli Whitney School is found, in the opposite corner of the neighborhood, in Pine Gardens Annex at Beech Street and Laura Avenue. A commercial center is found at the southern edge of Pine Gardens, occupying most of a block along Capitol Street between Pennsylvania and Nevada avenues; however this center has been significantly modified and no longer retains enough integrity to contribute to the district.

#### **Pine Gardens Firehouse / Savannah Fire Station #9 (1943 Capitol Street)**

Located on the southwest corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Capitol Street, the Pine Gardens Firehouse was built in 1944. Savannah's mayor and aldermen proposed its construction as Project No. GA 9-264, and the firehouse was built with the intention of serving the neighborhoods of Pine Gardens, Deptford Place, Josiah Tattnall Homes, and Twickenham. Designed by Morton H. Levy, prominent Savannah architect, the single-story gabled structure faces north and features two large rolling doors in segmentally-arched openings allowing access for fire engines (photograph 15). The building is modern in construction and traditional in appearance. Concrete block walls rise to a parapet on the front and rear elevations and are trimmed with cast concrete at the parapet cap. Cast concrete also accentuates the building's nine-light bull's eye windows in the front and rear gables and the lintels over each engine door. Six-over-six sash windows line the east, south, and west elevations and are finished with cast concrete lintels and sills. The main engine room is flanked on the west side by a single-room addition for mechanical services. There are entrances on Pennsylvania Avenue near the front of the building, at the rear of the station, and at the rear of the flanking mechanical room. Pine Gardens Firehouse is a contributing building in the district.

#### **Church of the Nazarene (1939 Capitol Street)**

The New Life International Church of the Nazarene was built in 1954 and consists of a large front-gabled concrete-block building with brick veneer cladding (photograph 14). A single set of double doors are centered beneath a large back-lit, brushed aluminum cross. The cross projects from a center wall panel of split-faced, random-laid ashlar Tennessee quartzite. The front gable projects out at the ridge line creating a subtly increasing overhang at the main entry. The front-facing fascia board curves down at each eave, lending a modern look to this fairly traditional building. The brick throughout the building is running bond, and on the front façade it features a series of continuous vertical mortar joints echoing the verticals of the center entrance bay. Set back from the street like the surrounding residences, the church's front lawn is framed by a low concrete-block wall with same Tennessee quartzite facing found in the central panel of the front façade. The east and west elevations are divided into five bays defined by engaged brick columns. Each bay is further defined by five stacked, metal-frame, awning windows. A rear two-story cross wing provides space for auxiliary offices and services. The Church of the Nazarene is a contributing building in the district.

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### **Eli Whitney School (2 Laura Avenue)**

The Eli Whitney School opened in September 1953 to accommodate the first wave of school-age children from the baby-boom generation. Martha Keber's *Ebb and Flow: Life and Community in Eastern Savannah* identifies Eli Whitney as the first public school in Savannah to accommodate physically handicapped students, and it later was notable as a school for developmentally handicapped children. It is located in the block bounded by Laura Avenue, New Mexico, Capitol, and Beech streets.

The school is a good example of an Early Modern Public School, as defined by Georgia's statewide schools context *Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971*. It is a single-story concrete block and steel structure with brick veneer on its exterior (photograph 1). It appears to feature design principles pioneered by the Atlanta architectural firm of Stevens and Wilkinson such as a single-story, "finger" plan, which provides a more open floor plan and a less massive structure than previous standard school types.

The school is comprised of three historic classroom wings; a historic cafeteria wing; and a non-historic building. The classroom wings are rectangular in plan and feature double-loaded corridors connected by covered walkways, with large open courts between each wing. The square-shaped cafeteria wing is also connected via a covered walkway extending from the east side of the central classroom. Projecting masses to the north, or front, of the school complex likely held the administrative offices and an auditorium. The school's flat roof, minimal ornamentation, and large bays, which once held metal awning windows, are distinctive of the Early Modern Public School type. The bays of awning windows have been infilled with smaller windows and air conditioning units, but the historic window openings are evident on each elevation. Extensive renovations and additions were made in the 1990s, including a large two-story, gabled addition extending from the center of the southernmost classroom wing and a one-story, brick building on the northeast corner of the school property. The Eli Whitney School closed in 2003 and has since been used by the school system for auxiliary functions. Eli Whitney School is a contributing building in the district; however, the later one-story brick building on the property is non-contributing, as noted on the National Register Map.

### **Landscape features**

Large landscape features interspersed throughout the entire district include live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*), southern magnolias, and mature pines, of either the longleaf or slash variety. Individual residences feature a wide range of domestic landscaping usually including an open lawn, medium-size shrubs, and some ornamental plantings. Prominent plants throughout the neighborhood include crepe myrtles, camellias, oleanders, palmettos, Savannah holly, wax myrtles, azaleas, pecan trees, hydrangeas, and Elaeagnus.

The main streets of Pine Gardens are paved and feature curbs, but no sidewalks. Utility lanes or alleys running east-west along the backside of properties in the Pine Gardens Annex are unpaved. The leafy residential grid of streets (and rear lanes in Pine Gardens Annex) provide for some privacy among the compact neighborhood layout. Many chain link fences are found throughout the neighborhood.

### **Noncontributing Resources**

Of the 525 buildings within the boundaries of Pine Gardens, only 39 are non-contributing resources. The majority of these non-contributing resources are houses, which either have been significantly altered and no longer retain historic integrity or represent modern infill. Examples of houses that have been extensively modified include: 1932 Beech Street, 2028 Beech Street, and 2217 Hawthorne Street. The house at 1932 Beech Street was built in 1940; however, a front addition dating to 1987 features over-sized windows, a flat roof, and a cinderblock foundation. At 2028 Beech Street, a texturized exterior finish and a front patio covered by a shed roof with arched supports have been added to the house (photograph 29, second house on the right). The 1950s house at 2217 Hawthorne Street was renovated in 2003 with a large front addition, which features brick cladding, new fenestration, and an inset front entrance. The alterations described in these three examples are out of keeping with historic patterns and make these, and other houses with similar changes, no longer recognizable as typical Pine Gardens houses.

A minimal amount of modern infill is also present within Pine Gardens. Examples include the houses at 1 Nevada Street and 2041 Beech Street, built in 2004 and 2003, respectively. Both are one-story, single-family houses with vinyl siding. Their linear floor plans, as well as the garage at 1 Nevada Street and the hipped roof at 2041 Beech Street, are not aligned with the type and style of the surrounding historic houses.

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The main commercial area and several commercial buildings on the fringes of the neighborhood are also non-contributing resources. The main commercial area, historically known as the Penn Store, was built in 1943 and covers approximately half of one neighborhood block. It fronts on Capitol Street, which was formerly East Liberty, and is bound by Pennsylvania Avenue and Greenwood Street. The commercial area, built as part of the planned community, was one of the first automobile shopping plazas in Savannah. However, it has been significantly altered over time and no longer retains historic integrity. The shopping plaza consists of a U-shaped, flat-roofed, concrete-block building and has ample parking on all sides (photograph 17). Upon completion, it held five stores, which were described in an August 27, 1943 *Savannah Morning News* article as "two super and three small." This original configuration is difficult to discern, as many changes have been made to the building. Infilled or obscured features include: symmetrically arranged, floor-to-ceiling multi-pane windows, a four-bay recessed entrance with large inset windows, and bands of transom windows consisting of three horizontal panes spaced evenly around the buildings. The addition of a false Mansard roof to the Capitol Street and Pennsylvania Avenue facades further obscures the building and reduces its integrity.

Additional buildings within the main commercial-area block and modern infill along Beech Street are also non-contributing resources to the district.

Riverside Baptist Church, located at the intersection of Capitol Street and Causton Bluff Road, is another non-contributing resource within Pine Gardens. The church is comprised of three attached buildings: a large front-gabled sanctuary built in 1987; a smaller front-gabled nursery built in 1953, which once served as the sanctuary; and a two-story rectangular building built in 1955 that connects to the rear of the two other buildings. The 1987 sanctuary is topped with a thin ornamental steeple and has a wide central bay faced in a stone veneer which contains two sets of double doors. Despite the church's original build date of 1955, the non-historic sanctuary is the focal point of the property and coupled with the loss of historic windows in the 1953 and 1955 buildings, makes this a non-contributing resource.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Architecture
- Community Planning and Development
- Politics/Government

**Period of Significance**

1942-1954

**Significant Dates**

- 1942 – construction of first houses in Pine Gardens
- 1950 – construction of first houses in Pine Gardens Annex
- 1953 – Eli Whitney School opens

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

- Levy, Morton H.
- Jocobi Homes, Inc.
- Modern Builders of Augusta, Inc.
- McMahon, E.J.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance, 1942-1954, encompasses the two periods of development of the Pine Gardens neighborhood. This period also marks the end of major construction within the neighborhood.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A



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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation was established in 1942 on a 96-acre site along the Savannah River east of downtown Savannah. As one of only 18 Liberty ship manufacturers in the United States, Southeastern operated from 1942 to 1945 and, by war's end, produced 88 Liberty ships and 18 C-1-type ships. The shipyard employed 15,000 workers at any given time, including women and African Americans. Pine Gardens was developed by the consortium Pine Gardens, Inc. to provide housing for the civilian shipyard workers. After the war, Pine Gardens Annex was developed adjacent to the original subdivision to provide much-needed housing for returning veterans. Pine Gardens and Pine Gardens Annex cover 105 acres and contain approximately 500 houses. Construction of the small, frame houses began in 1942 and was complete a decade later. Pine Gardens included a shopping plaza, fire department, churches, and, later, a school all completed by 1954. After the war, many residents purchased their houses in Pine Gardens.

The Pine Gardens Historic District is significant in the area of architecture because it includes excellent examples of the American Small House, a type of house, which was popular in the 1930s and 1940s in Georgia and catered to the material shortages of World War II. Pine Gardens is significant in the area of community planning and development because constructing housing for workers was an integral part of the production of war materiel and because its gridiron plan and small, frame houses enabled Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation (SSC) to efficiently house 500 (white) workers and their families in close proximity to the shipyard. Pine Gardens is significant in the area of politics/government because it represents large-scale mobilization during World War II, which included the construction of military installations and the communities that housed the civilian defense workers, in accordance with President Roosevelt's Executive Order 8632, Coordinating National Defense Housing, issued in 1941.

Pine Gardens is significant at the state level of significance because it is one of the largest and most intact concentrations of World War II defense industry houses in Georgia.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

In the area of architecture, Pine Gardens is significant at the state level for its collection of American Small Houses. The American Small House is a house type found widely in Georgia that represents a national response to the need for affordable housing in the early part of the twentieth century. The Georgia Historic Preservation Division has defined this house type based on studies and research of houses built in great numbers across the state from the 1930s to 1960s, which focused on the small, single-family house. Pine Gardens is an excellent example of small, single-family, defense housing built specifically for the civilian defense industry workers in Georgia.

The American Small House type is a small, unadorned, economical house based on a four-room plan. The basic form of the American Small House is a rectangular box, usually with a side-gabled roof. Houses typically include a living room, kitchen, and two bedrooms, along with a bathroom and closets. Occasionally extra features such as a porch were added.

Popularized to help provide housing for economically distressed families during the Great Depression, the American Small House also provided war-related housing during World War II and helped meet the unprecedented nationwide demand for new single-family housing following the war, as is seen in Pine Gardens. During the late 1940s and into the 1950s, a slightly larger version, in Georgia commonly called the Extended American Small House, appeared; this version contained larger rooms and often provided for a designated dining area between the enlarged living room and kitchen. By the mid-1950s, the American Small House was eclipsed by versions of the new Ranch House. American Small Houses were built across Georgia through the mid-1950s in larger cities, smaller towns, and rural areas.

Within Pine Gardens, this house type represents a model for single-family detached housing serving shipyard employees and later, returning war veterans. The houses of Pine Gardens continue to be strong representatives of their type with most houses retaining a high degree of integrity and a minimal amount of modern infill. The cohesive nature of this neighborhood, composed almost entirely of the American Small House type, makes it a significant resource in the state.

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There is no known architect for the houses of Pine Gardens; however there is one known architect-designed public building. The Pine Gardens Firehouse was designed by prominent Savannah architect, Morton H. Levy. Levy, a graduate of Georgia School of Technology, shared a practice with William B. Clarke and Cletus W. Bergen. Their firm, Levy, Clarke & Bergen designed private and public buildings across the South.

In the area of community planning and development, Pine Gardens is significant at the state level as an excellent example of a working-class neighborhood designed to efficiently house workers, who were integral to the war effort. It is the largest known, intact collection of defense housing built by a private developer for the civilian defense industry workers in Georgia. Pine Gardens was designed with spacious individual lots, a cohesive but varied settlement pattern, and incorporation of a shopping plaza, a fire station, and churches. As the president of Savannah Shipyards, Inc., stated in a May 7, 1941 article in the *Savannah Morning News*, "Our idea is to build a village that will not only be a model for Savannah, but for the entire country."

The first design for shipyard-worker housing in the area included curvilinear streets, parks, and footpaths, as was popular in the design of suburbs at the time. However, this layout was eventually used on a different defense housing project, and Pine Gardens utilized a more efficient and inexpensive gridiron pattern to allow for the placement of the maximum number of houses. One general critique of gridiron layouts was the uniformity of housing and use of narrow lots that limited fresh air and sunlight. To avoid the potential for monotony in the large neighborhood built on a tight budget, planners allowed for considerable diversity in distributing different house designs and varied setbacks of houses and front porches. In addition, placing each house near the center of the lot allowed for yard and garden space on all sides.

Pine Gardens' incorporation of a shopping plaza, fire station, churches, and a school exhibits the idea of an insular suburban packaged development, where needed amenities were found within the neighborhood. The shopping plaza catered to automobiles and featured ample parking on all sides. It was one of the first commercial centers of this type in Savannah, and a good early example of such suburban development in the nation as a whole. Following the construction of Pine Gardens' auto-centered commercial area, Savannah saw many such developments across the city and into the suburbs.

In the area of politics/government, Pine Gardens is significant at the state level as an excellent example of how the U.S. government guided development of communities during a national emergency and war. Pine Gardens was developed as a necessary ancillary to Liberty ship production at Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation, providing housing to the civilian workers needed to aid the defense industry during World War II.

During the war the U.S. government asked citizens, en masse, to ration food and materials needed for military supplies; to contribute as much as they could monetarily through bonds and fundraising drives; and to work in factories building war materiel, aircraft, tanks, and ships. For many people, working for the defense industry required moving to a new city or state. In Savannah, for example, as the shipbuilding industry grew, nearly 12,000 workers were expected to arrive in the city. The U.S. government determined low-cost housing must be provided to these civilians, who were coming to work on short notice and for an undefined time.

President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8632, on January 11, 1941, and with this directive he ordered coordination of defense housing across the county. Roosevelt called for the preparation of defense-worker housing ahead of anticipated needs, either through the use of existing accommodations or new construction. However, the need for housing was already present or increasing throughout much of the country, and as a result, the Federal Public Housing Authority engaged in a flurry of building activity across the country and in Savannah.

Pine Gardens is a representation of the war effort within Georgia. World War II was a defining struggle in establishing America's identity, not only on the home front but throughout the world. A total of 46,766 employees--as many as 15,000 at a time--put some 700,000 hours into producing each of the 88 Liberty ships built at the Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation.

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**Developmental history/historic context:**

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**Liberty ships and Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation**

Before the United States entered the Second World War, there was an elevated urgency in the defense industry. In a press conference on September 8, 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared a limited national emergency and called for "the strengthening of our national defense within the limits of peacetime authorizations," or essentially increasing the size of the military to be closer aligned with the maximum peacetime sizes.

In addition to increasing troop sizes, the defense industry also increased supply levels and began to build a fleet of ships, known as Liberty ships, for delivery of those supplies to deployed military units. Liberty ships were mass-produced cargo ships, which measured over 400 feet in length and could be quickly and inexpensively constructed. Just a little over two years after the declaration of a limited national emergency, Roosevelt declared September 26, 1941 as Liberty Fleet Day. The day commemorated the launch of the first Liberty ship, the Patrick Henry, in Baltimore, Maryland. Roosevelt noted it as "a memorable day in the history of American shipbuilding- a memorable day in the emergency defense of the Nation," and he went on to state, "While we are proud of what we are doing, this is certainly no time to be content. We must build more cargo ships and still more cargo ships- and we must speed the program until we achieve a launching each day, then two ships a day..."

Savannah was primed to help fulfill President Roosevelt's vision. Prior to the declaration of the inaugural Liberty Fleet Day, plans were in place to make Savannah one of the 18 Liberty ship building sites in the country. In April 1941, Savannah Shipyards, Inc. contracted with the Savannah Port Authority. Savannah Shipyards, Inc., which was headed by W.R. Crowley, began construction in May 1941 on what was planned to be a ten-way shipyard, or a yard with ten slipways/ramps equipped with scaffolding to aide in ship construction.

In November 1941, the United States Maritime Commission contracted Savannah Shipyards, Inc. to construct 12 Liberty ships for \$1.5 million apiece. However, the contract required the company to complete its facilities in 60 days, recruit a full staff, and show a working capital of \$750,000 within 30 days. Failure to fulfill this contract combined with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and the subsequent American declaration of war, resulted in the Commission taking over the shipyard on January 3, 1942. Daniel Construction Company of Savannah finished construction of the shipyard buildings, and Serrine & Company finished the design and construction of what was eventually a six-way shipyard.

A new company, Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation (SSC) was formed to manage the yard, and it was headed by William H. Smith, former executive officer of Todd Shipbuilding Corporation, the leading shipbuilding firm in the country. The management contract obligated SSC to manufacture various shipping vessels, including 36 Liberty ships by 1943, and to engage in real estate ventures as needed to supply housing for the shipyard's employees.

Altogether, the shipyard site covered 96 acres and held 65 buildings with more than half a million square feet of floor space. Some eight miles of railroad track within the shipyard served five locomotives and 69 flatcars, which were often delivering the 30,000 parts needed for each ship. There were 13 gantry cranes capable of lifting 70 tons, and 21 locomotive cranes.

From early 1942 until late 1945, SSC constructed and launched 106 vessels, including 88 Liberty ships. Each of the 88 Liberty ship launchings was a significant local event, with local officials attending, society figures officiating, and the newspaper generating articles. The first Liberty ship launched by SSC was the SS *James Oglethorpe* on November 20, 1942 and the last was the SS *Thomas W. Murray* on September 15, 1945. SSC Liberty ship names honored famous American politicians, and professionals, emphasizing Georgians, but their construction testified to the hard work, talent, and ingenuity of a massive workforce. During its time in Savannah, SSC employed a total of 46,766 workers with as many

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as 15,000 at any one time. The SSC adopted a three-shift day in 1943. It curtailed Sunday work in 1944 and switched to a 54-hour work week as a replacement.

With a large workforce under extreme wartime pressure, employee morale was critical. Nationally, President Roosevelt set up the Office of War Information in June 1942 to keep support of the war effort as strong as possible. While the Office of War produced films and radio broadcasts as well as pamphlets and articles for a national audience, the SSC's Industrial Relations Division published *The Sou'Easter*, a semi-monthly newsletter focused on local activities, from March 1943 to November 1945. The newsletter painted a positive and invigorating image of the daily activities and opportunities related to the shipyard. Newsworthy items included interesting facts, such as: the company cafeteria served some 3,000 cups of coffee and 150 dozen eggs every day; on Thanksgiving, employees ate 1,200 pounds of turkey; and 16,000 pounds of ice went into water coolers. The newsletter also published notice of recreational activities including a company band, two employee orchestras, baseball teams for colored and white men, basketball for men and women, golf tournaments, and lunch-time entertainment programs. A typical notice advertised "Athletic Association Dance and Fish Fry, July 16 [1943]" and stated it would be held at the Shriners' Country Club, required reservations for rationing of food, but there was no charge as long as you were a member, and that you could join at the Fire Station—"Bring your wife, husband, or a reasonable facsimile as they say over the radio."

Other means of entertainment were also employed to boost morale. Shipyard beauty contests connected women to their counterparts across the country, as local winners would be entered to compete nationally, and these contests presented a respite from the grinding industrial work. Along similar lines, it was not surprising that women were usually given the symbolic task of christening the boats.

All Americans were expected to contribute what they could to support the war effort. Two million dollars was raised in the sixth and seventh War Loan Drives of 1944 and 1945. At SSC, on average employees contributed more than 10 percent of their pay through payroll deduction. In April 1943, SSC employees set out to raise \$25,000 for the Red Cross, and by March 1945, they had raised \$26,966. Other fundraising efforts included the Community Chest, which had raised \$10,000 by 1944. In an average week, the Bond department sold 3,768 \$25-bonds, 287 \$50 bonds, and 90 \$100 bonds, totaling \$117,550.

In addition to these fundraising initiatives and morale boosters, the SSC employees were hard at work. In July 1943, *The Sou'Easter* announced that "More than a mile of ships has been delivered to the U.S. Maritime Commission by Southeastern," and then noted that it will take 3,000 miles to bridge the Atlantic Ocean. Such anecdotal praise and inspiration was backed up by official notice.

The SSC won many awards and honors, the first of which was a Maritime "M" award on September 2, 1943. A September 3, 1943 *Savannah Morning News* article reported the "M" was issued "for outstanding production achievements in merchant ship construction." Additional honors include the addition of two gold stars to the "M" pennant on December 18, 1943, and the Maritime Merit Eagle Pennant on December 23, 1944. SSC delivered more ships than any of the other five southern shipyards in 1943, and set a new national shipyard record on February 17, 1945 with the launching of the AV1 hull 1 "Check Knot" after only 49 days.

### **Women at Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation, Rosie the Riveter/Wendy the Welder**

As elsewhere in the country during the war effort, women played a critical role as workers at the Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation. Although they were not hired in great numbers in the earliest days of production at SSC, by 1943, 2,000 of the 13,000 workers onsite were women. According to the *Encyclopedia of American Economic History*, the "Rosie the Riveter" movement increased the number of working American women to 20 million by 1944, a 57 percent increase from 1940.

First hired to serve in traditional roles as receptionists and secretaries, the women of Savannah quickly showed their willingness and ability to fulfill tasks such as crane operating, pipefitting, and the single largest and most important task – welding. While Rosie the Riveter was the most famous icon of women's place in the defense industry, at SSC as in any place that built Liberty ships, it was "Wendy the Welder." Welding replaced riveting for cargo shipbuilding because it could be learned more quickly and it used less steel, as much as 600 tons less in a 10,000-ton ship. A typical Liberty ship required over a hundred miles of welding and cutting, and the SSC Welding School trained 6,000 welders.

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This newly significant group of female workers performed 18 different tasks at SSC, including welding, sheet metal working, and copper-smithing; and according to an April 15, 1943 issue of *The Sou'Easter*, it was assumed to be "just a matter of time" before they began work on the hulls, "a masculine domain." National statistics of female workers were more modest, with women performing just 4 percent of skilled industrial labor at sites outside of the SSC. The women of SSC clearly exhibited their readiness and capability in a formerly male world.

Women also helped morale by providing a delicate blend of much needed glamour at the same time as they reinforced a sense of domestic stability as described in Susan Hartmann's *The Home Front and Beyond*. However, there was a definite line of sexuality that could not be crossed as Mildred Gay, a member of the Women's Counselor office, expressed in a poster that was reproduced and posted throughout the shipyard. The poster displayed two images, one captioned "Dressed for Work" with an image of a classic Rosie the Riveter wearing a flannel shirt, overalls, and a bandana in her hair, and one that warned "Dressed, but not for work," with an image of woman wearing a tight blouse and pants with jewelry and long, flowing hair walking in front of a series of men's heads. Potentially profligate beauty was definitely not encouraged.

The careful balancing act of beauty and responsibility was perhaps best shown in the two-page spread "Shipbuilders Like Tattnall Homes" in *The Sou'Easter* of April 15, 1943. A collage of images shows the unlikely household of Mr. and Mrs. Chester White and J. B. Patterson, wartime housemates at 2415 East Jones Street. Detailed shots show the lady of the house alternately sprucing herself up at a stylish vanity in her bedroom, and drying dishes in the well-appointed kitchen. The men of the house are shown enjoying a snack before dinner, some family conversation, and petting two bird dogs on the front porch. The impression indicates some privation, with the unusual shared household, but also very moral and patriotic accommodation. Chester White is quoted as commenting, it was "One of the most comfortable places I've ever lived," suggesting the benefit of stable domestic life in producing good work. As Karen Anderson in her *Wartime Women* and Maureen Honey in her *Creating Rosie the Riveter* explain, this underscored a paradoxical development in wartime and postwar gender roles. While women were contributing more outside the home in non-traditional roles, such feminist changes were accepted as long as traditional gender role divisions were upheld.

The war effort permanently changed women's place in the workforce. Such involvement of women was even more influential because it included more married women than single women, and more women over the age of 35 than under the age of 35. This affected the physical makeup of the community. As cafes and laundries and domestic service were emptying of women who sought higher wages and better working conditions, so too was there a push for daycare facilities and schools. And the overall trend of women working did not end with the end of the war. While women as a whole largely remained in the workforce, married women continued to lead the way for the first time in history during peacetime.

### **Savannah's Defense Housing**

The massive influx of workers in Savannah mirrored developments occurring at industrial sites across the nation and required an unprecedented housing strategy. President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8632 Coordinating National Defense Housing on January 11, 1941. This effectively pulled together all federal housing initiatives dating back to 1937 and enlarged them to include:

- a) planning, constructing, or operating defense housing facilities;
- b) granting loans or subsidies for public housing purposes;
- c) encouraging or assisting the financing or construction of private housing; and
- d) conducting surveys or analyses of housing conditions and housing markets.

A new coordinator oversaw the mandate from a new division, the Division of Defense Housing Coordination, in the Office for Emergency Management of the Executive Office of the President. According to the executive order, the new Coordinator of Defense Housing was tasked to "anticipate the need for housing in localities in which persons are engaged, or are to be engaged, in national defense activities; analyze reported defense housing needs..." and "formulate and recommend to the President coordinated defense housing programs with the objective of avoiding shortages, delays..." This was an especially overwhelming task considering housing shortages were already being reported by the time the Coordinator of Defense Housing took office.

Hoping to avoid a housing shortage in Savannah, multiple housing options were being discussed in the city before extensive shipbuilding activity even began. In May 1941, Savannah Shipyards, Inc. announced plans to build 500 houses for its workers on the east side of the city, and one month later, preliminary approval was given to the Savannah Machine

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and Foundry Company shipyard's plans to house 600 workers on the west side of town. Several low-cost housing projects were completed by July 1941, but these provided nowhere near the number of housing units required for the planned defense projects.

In March 1942, the Homes Registration Office in Savannah estimated that an influx of as many as 12,000 defense workers were expected in Savannah by the fall of 1942 and encouraged property owners to remodel and convert houses to apartments. Several months later, the same office urged all residents with spare rooms or apartments to list their rooms for rent with the registration office at the Chamber of Commerce to avoid a shortage in housing. However, authorities acknowledged that perhaps only a quarter of all workers could be accommodated through such efforts.

Savannah officials were making concerted efforts, such as this, to avoid a housing shortage and the "undesirable features affecting health and general morale" that typically came with the installation of emergency trailer camps, according to an April 8, 1942 article in the *Savannah Morning News*. The next day, April 9<sup>th</sup>, the paper reported that the Savannah City Council had issued a resolution requesting the Housing Authority of Savannah to petition "the proper federal agency for the purpose of acquiring the needed federal defense housing."

At this time, Savannah Mayor Thomas Gamble also asked the United States Conference of Mayors for guidance on what type of housing other cities were building for defense workers. Per an article in the *Savannah Morning News*, the mayor received a response letter from the Acting Executive Director of the Conference of Mayors on April 17<sup>th</sup> and learned that the Federal Public Housing Authority (FPHA) recommended "the construction of 1,750 demountable housing units by the FPHA and 2,058 permanent family dwelling units through private enterprise." Further, the letter advised:

At the present time the federal government is practically out of the business of building permanent housing units and frankly, I cannot see how private enterprise under present priority and construction restrictions will be able to build anywhere near this number of permanent units. From all reports we have recently received, it appears that by far the greater stress at the present time is being put on temporary units for the housing of defense workers.

In response, several months later the Housing Authority of Savannah announced a significant defense housing initiative with a definitive timeline. On July 1, 1942, Chairman Fred Wessels announced that the Daniel Construction Company of Greenville and Birmingham was awarded a contract of \$3,116,349 to construct 900 shipyard housing units to be completed by November. These units would be comprised of: Josiah Tattnell Homes, with 750 single-story units of between three and six rooms, and Moses Rogers Grove, with 150 two-story multi-family blocks containing six units apiece. Slight delays in construction caused these 900 units to be open in January 1943. An additional 850 units at Deptford Place opened in September 1943.

All of these housing units were meant to be impermanent and were designed to house defense-related workers quickly and on a short-term basis for the duration of the war. Josiah Tattnell Homes, which was later Savannah Gardens and then Strathmore Estates, sat to the south of Pine Gardens and consisted of one-story balloon-frame duplex and quadriplex apartments. Moses Rogers Grove, which was later Riverside Gardens, sat on the north side of President Street and consisted of two-story balloon-frame apartment buildings arranged around a U-shaped court. Deptford Place adjoined Josiah Tattnell Homes and Pine Gardens to the east, and consisted of single-story, cinder-block row houses.

Even this did not satisfy demand. According to a July 31, 1942 article in *Savannah Morning News*, the chair of Savannah's Home Registration Office and the manager of the Chamber of Commerce traveled to Atlanta in late July to meet with federal housing authorities only to be presented with a "number of reports" which showed a probable shortage of 2,700 units by the end of December. Current construction would not solve the problem, and completing 400 units a month would only provide a partial solution.

With approval of new Pine Gardens subdivision plans in August 1942 and the acquisition of lands by Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation a month later, the pressure for defense housing in Savannah was lessened, but only very slightly. In December 1942, plans for more housing were being discussed, and affordable housing would continue to be an issue throughout the war.

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The urgent need for housing was expressed in a notice in the March 1943 issue of *The Sou'Easter*, which read "The applications are being filled in the order of their necessity with the families now living under desperate conditions being attended to first." Another brief advertisement in the February 1945 want ads section of *The Sou'Easter* noted "Room to rent to man on second shift," suggesting some doubling up of housing even late into the war effort.

Two other companies in the Savannah area also produced ships for the U.S. military during World War II. These were Savannah Machine & Foundry Company and McEvoy Shipbuilding Corporation, located in Port Wentworth, inland along the Savannah River. Two additional war housing neighborhoods provided housing for workers at those shipyards. These housing units were Cherokee Homes, completed in February 1943, and Augustine Park, completed in April 1943.

Notably, none of these neighborhoods exist today, except Pine Gardens. Josiah Tattnall Homes was demolished in several phases, between 2010 and 2013, although one duplex building was left in place and restored to represent the defense housing project.

### **Pine Gardens Subdivision and Annex**

**Pine Gardens** is comprised of three tracts of land, historically known as Twickenham Annex, the Rowland tract, and the Brewton-Hill tract. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, these tracts were part of a 2,500 acre-plantation originally named Turckenham and owned by Miles Brewton of Charleston, South Carolina. The property operated as a rice plantation, served as the site for early cotton cultivation, and provided an embarkation point for ferries crossing the Savannah River.

In 1885, a portion of these lands attracted the attention of Captain D. G. Purse, a director of the Central of Georgia Railway, who with his associate, John C. Rowland, sought to purchase land as a right-of-way for a railroad to Tybee Island. After the purchase of lands, the two men created the Savannah and Tybee Railroad. Construction of the railroad began on August 8, 1886, and it was in operation by 1888. However, higher-than-expected expenses led to sale of the railroad to the Central of Georgia. Although this spur of the railroad stopped operations in 1933, its rail line remained in place and marked the northern edge of Pine Gardens, paralleling Beech Street.

The twentieth century brought increased industrial development to the area. Notably, the waterfronts of neighboring Causton's Bluff and Deptford plantations, served as the construction sites for World War I-era ships starting in 1918. Later that year, responding to the increased need for petroleum products, Standard Oil and the Texas Company also purchased nearby waterfront acreage.

The initiative to create Pine Gardens began in May 1941. Charged with manufacturing Liberty ships for the war effort and providing housing for the shipbuilding employees, the first contracted shipbuilding company, Savannah Shipyards, Inc., purchased three tracts of land totaling 105 acres on which to build 500 homes for workers as early as May 1941. According to a May 7, 1941 *Savannah Morning News* article, the lands were located one-third of a mile from the Savannah Shipyards property on the Savannah River, and included Twickenham Annex, containing 25 acres; a portion of the Rowland tract, containing about 28 acres; and 52 acres of the Brewton-Hill tract. The company president, W.R. Crowley, conceived the development as having up-to-date and attractive housing with hardwood floors throughout, linoleum in kitchens and bathrooms, painted plaster ceilings and coal circulating heaters and gas hot water heaters and kitchen ranges. The houses would sit on ample lots with room for gardens, with city water and sewage, as well as a commercial center, school, firehouse, a recreation center, and a park. Crowley planned slightly different housing for skilled workers versus unskilled workers. Skilled workers would have a larger house, which Crowley estimated would "cost about \$4,000 and rent for \$22.87 a month," or perhaps the cost would be as much as "\$4,500 or \$5,000," which he estimated could "still be carried for less than \$30 a month – approximately \$28.26." Unskilled workers homes would cost from \$3,000 to \$3,500 resulting in payments of "approximately \$20.18 per month." All monthly rents would include principal, interest, and insurance.

Benjamin Moscowitz of the New York architectural firm deYoung & Moscowitz submitted plans for shipyard housing to the Savannah City Planning Board on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1941, but these plans were initially rejected due to proposed curve in Pennsylvania Avenue, the neighborhood's main north-south thoroughfare. Just over a week later, on June 18<sup>th</sup>, the *Savannah Morning News* reported that "site plans for the construction of a 425-dwelling housing project for workers to be employed at the Savannah Shipyards, Inc., were approved," and that each dwelling would have either five or six rooms and be set on a 6,500 square foot lot. News reports went on to say that "the layout of the development is quite attractive"

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and that "a combined system of parks and paths will greatly lessen traffic hazards and add much to the beauty of the area" and all streets would be asphalted and that there was space allotted for a school. Despite approval of Moscovitz's plans and President Roosevelt's July 2<sup>nd</sup> authorization for immediate construction of 150 low-cost dwellings for shipyard workers in Savannah, construction did not begin.

In fact, actual progress on Pine Gardens occurred relatively slowly amid the chaotic and frenzied development of several types of housing in the surrounding area and the change in shipyard management. A year after the elaborate plans envisaged by W.R. Crowley and drawn up by Benjamin Moscovitz were approved by the planning board, there had been no movement toward construction. In July 1942, the location was re-designated as the location for Josiah Tattnall Homes, a federally-funded temporary housing project. Josiah Tattnall Homes utilized the curvilinear plan created by Moscovitz but rather than individual houses, the project contained duplexes, triplexes, and quadriplexes.

When the Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation took over shipyard operations in early 1942, it facilitated the creation of a private corporation, known as Pine Gardens Inc., to develop employee housing. On August 10, 1942, a judge in Savannah's Superior Court granted a charter requested by Pine Gardens, Inc., making it an official entity. Pine Gardens, Inc. estimated that total expenditures for its planned housing development would exceed \$250,000.

A few weeks later, on August 29, 1942, the *Savannah Morning News* reported that plans for the Pine Gardens subdivision had been approved by the Chatham County Commission and building could begin. However, these finalized plans were not Moscovitz's design. The heightened pressure for defense housing resulted in Pine Gardens following the generous ideals of permanent single-family houses, but in a notably simpler and more expedient fashion. Rather than the innovative curvilinear plan proposed by Benjamin Moscovitz (and used for Josiah Tattnall Homes), there was instead a grid of uniform rectangular blocks. There is no record of who finalized the layout of the neighborhood, but the blocks follow the pattern established in the 1902 plat for Brewton Hill Plantation that preceded it. The plan parallels the Central of Georgia Railway right-of-way, and generally follows the orientation of Savannah's downtown, although discontinuous with it.

Referred to as an emergency housing project, Pine Gardens' initial boundaries were reported as the Central of Georgia Railway tracks to the north, Causton Bluff plantation to the east, Twickenham Terrace to the south, and the Savannah Golf Club to the west. These are essentially the district boundaries today. Actual deeds indicating acquisition of land in the sum of approximately \$40,000 were filed in Savannah's Superior Court on September 19, 1942, thus allowing construction to begin.

Initial construction concentrated in the southern edge of the neighborhood in the 2100 blocks of three east-west streets Liberty Street (now Capitol Street), Greenwood Street, and Forest Street (now Utah Street). The August 29<sup>th</sup> *Savannah Morning News* article stated that plans were to start with 100 units, and eventually complete 400 units.

Evidently, officials of Pine Gardens, Inc. wanted to keep a close watch on the progress of the neighborhood. Savannah directories list a Pine Gardens, Inc. office near the intersection of Greenwood Street and Nevada Street beginning in 1942. The office continued at this location until 1950, after which its listing disappears.

Pine Gardens, Inc. implemented Crowley's plan for a firehouse and a commercial center set into a large parking lot within the neighborhood. The commercial center was one of the first automobile shopping plazas of its kind in Savannah, and with placement at the southern edge of the neighborhood, it could also conveniently be accessed by the residents of the Josiah Tattnall Homes. The shopping plaza was an early excellent example of suburban packaged development; although, interestingly, it did have a twin in the commercial center developed simultaneously for Cherokee Homes, in west Savannah. It is notable that the anchor tenant, Colonial Stores, was a chain, reflecting the increasing uniformity of place that the very nature of a packaged suburb reflects.

The Colonial Stores grocery in Pine Gardens, which was one of five locations for the chain within Savannah, is no longer in operation and the interior has been reconfigured for multiple commercial uses. The 1950 Savannah City Directory identifies Colonial Stores as part of the "Pennsylvania Store Building," or Penn Store for short, for its location along Pennsylvania Avenue. Modernistic in its original appearance, the commercial center was constructed of concrete block and had a four-bay recessed entrance. Portions of the recessed entry have been infilled, some doors and windows appear to have been blocked off, and an extension of the rear or north wing appears to have been added, possibly in the historic period. Little historic material is left to identify the shopping plaza.



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The Penn Store held a variety of businesses over the years that include: Pine Gardens Barber and Beauty shops, Pine Gardens Confections, The Penn Club bar, Penn Radio Shop Repairs, Hollingsworth Jewelers, Broadwater Luncheonette, Whipkeys Drugs, and a U.S. Post Office.

East of Penn Store but still within the block are buildings that once served as a package store, Collin's Grocery, and Burke's Fuel. Smith's Garage is still in business at 2044 Capitol Street, where Burke's Fuel was located.

While some neighborhood amenities from Crowley and Moscowitz's plans, such as the firehouse and commercial center, were maintained, others were lost. In addition to the curvilinear streets, most notably Pine Gardens did not include the planned recreation center and park. Perhaps this was due to focus on central, open greenspace that was part of of Moscowitz's curvilinear scheme, and the relatively increased pressure for housing by 1942.

Also, in lieu of the neighborhood school that had originally been planned, children in Pine Gardens attended the Moore Avenue Elementary School on Skidaway Road. Part of Gordonston, a Savannah neighborhood planned in 1927 and now a National Register-listed Historic District, the school was designed in 1942 and built by the government as part of the defense program. The school is well outside the Pine Gardens boundaries and not part of the insular neighborhood design envisioned by Crowley and Moscowitz.

In 1945, at the conclusion of the war, the individual houses in Pine Gardens were sold. In 1950, an adjacent block of land to the north and east of Pine Gardens was surveyed for the property owner, William H. Whitehead. Subsequently this area was developed as Pine Gardens Annex, a 40-acre subdivision bounded to the north by the Central of Georgia Railway right-of-way, to the east by Liberty Street (now Capitol Street), to the south by Causton Bluff Road, and to the west by Pine Gardens. Interestingly, Pine Gardens Annex also includes the first lots just to the west of Alabama Street (now Nevada Street). A slight variation in the standard rectangular lots of Pine Gardens is visible through a diagonal lot line running along the western side of parcels on the west side of Nevada Street.

**Pine Gardens Annex** was developed by Whitehead, a two-time president of the Savannah Real Estate Board, in the two years following his purchase of the property on August 12, 1950 from Charles P. Rowland, exc. et. al. This 40-acre subdivision followed the pattern of Pine Gardens almost identically, with only slight variation in the brick skirting of individual houses, the use of hipped roofs on some houses, the increase in street width to 60 feet from Pine Garden's 50 feet, and the inclusion of 20-foot rear lanes as seen elsewhere in Savannah.

Pine Gardens Annex was anchored by Eli Whitney Elementary School, which opened in September 1953. Faced with the increase in students as a result of the baby boom, the Savannah Board of Public Education leased the disused Southeastern Shipyard administration building in 1949, and then purchased the 6.2-acre property for the school from Whitehead on July 16, 1951. After opening in 1953, Whitney added classrooms in the later 1950s to satisfy growing demand, and the school distinguished itself by providing the first public school facilities in Savannah for physically handicapped youngsters. Attention shifted to mentally challenged students in the 1960s.

Perhaps not coincidentally, Riverside Baptist Church also opened in September 1953. While the exact naming of the church is not known, deed records indicate that as of February 24, 1953 the property was owned by the Board of Deacons of the First Baptist Church. It was sold less than a year later, on January 22, 1954, to the Board of Trustees of the Riverside Baptist Church. The church has grown dramatically over the years, and a 1987 sanctuary now dominates the front façade.

The earliest development in Pine Gardens Annex occurred in the first lots west of what is now Nevada Street, and then spread east of Nevada Street and south of the school site. Individual residential lots in Pine Gardens Annex were overwhelmingly purchased and developed by three building companies: Jocobi Homes, Inc., with approximately four dozen; Modern Builders of Augusta, Inc., with approximately two dozen; and E. J. McMahon with less than a dozen. Most lots were purchased in 1951, although some sales took place as early as November and December 1950, and a small number of lots were not purchased until 1952.

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Of those properties with records of transactions after development, a typical pattern for Jacobi Homes would be a subsequent sale after four months to an individual, with a debt deed around \$7000. A typical pattern for the Modern Builders of Augusta would usually be a six to nine month period of time between purchase and resale, with a debt deed around \$7000. A typical pattern for E. J. McMahon would range from six months at the quickest turn-around to 15 months at the longest for time between purchase and resale. Real estate advertisements in the classified section of the *Savannah Morning News* on June 3, 1951 boasted "New and attractive four rooms and bath bungalows. No down payment necessary for GI's."

The development of Pine Gardens Annex fits into a pattern of increasingly automobile-reliant, suburban development on the periphery of the City of Savannah. Although much of the eastern edge of Savannah was platted before the mid-century, the intensification of automobile-based development increased with the infill of previously undeveloped pockets, and construction of many new commercial and residential areas further south along Pennsylvania Avenue.

Through the mid-1970s, typical ownership in Pine Gardens and Pine Gardens Annex consisted of stable, and in some cases extended working-class home ownership. Savannah City Directories from 1950 listed Pine Gardens residents as: members of the United States Army, carpenters, electricians, a trainman, and a city policeman, among many others, and most of whom were married. Directories indicate changes in ownership every five to ten years for some properties. But overall, between 1950 and 1975, there were many long-term residents, and a sense of rootedness and investment in the neighborhood is apparent. A review of Savannah City Directory entries for Pine Gardens Annex reveals similar findings. The 1955 Savannah City Directory indicates residence by a brakeman with the Atlantic Coastline Railroad, a sewing manager with Union Bag, a glazier with Artcraft Mirror and Glass Works, a foreman with Stanley and Aycock Construction, and a shipping clerk with Wilson and Company, among many others. Over 20 years, between 1955 and 1975, a similar longevity of residence is apparent with solid working-class character. By the mid-1990s, residency had shifted from homeowners to renters with a City of Savannah survey determining nearly one-third of Pine Gardens residents were renters.

Despite clear concern that retention of temporary war dwellings could lead to slums within the city, only the 850-unit Deptford Place was demolished not long after the end of the war. The 750-unit Josiah Tattnall Homes became a large low-rent apartment complex as early as 1955, as did the 150-unit Moses Rogers Grove. These housing projects have since been demolished and only Pine Gardens survives as a testament to the defense housing projects in Savannah.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Savannah saw many changes as there was exponential growth of multiple industries; creation of several major highways, including Interstate 95; and development of the first area mall and an adjacent mixed-use commercial and residential project. Reliance on automobiles continued to increase as the city spread outward. The success of the early auto-center shopping plaza in Pine Gardens was likely proof to later developers that such a commercial center would thrive in the city and possibly spurred widespread use of the model.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Pine Gardens Historic District  
Name of Property

Chatham County, Georgia  
County and State

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** approx. 105 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**  
**Datum if other than WGS84:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                                 |                                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. <b>Latitude:</b> 32.070325 N | <b>Longitude:</b> -81.059156 W |
| 2. <b>Latitude:</b> 32.067272 N | <b>Longitude:</b> -81.048967 W |
| 3. <b>Latitude:</b> 32.064806 N | <b>Longitude:</b> -81.050406 W |
| 4. <b>Latitude:</b> 32.065086 N | <b>Longitude:</b> -81.051558 W |
| 5. <b>Latitude:</b> 32.063219 N | <b>Longitude:</b> -81.052278 W |
| 6. <b>Latitude:</b> 32.065564 N | <b>Longitude:</b> -81.061203W  |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundary is indicated with a heavy black line on the attached National Register map, drawn to scale.

The boundary for the Pine Gardens Historic District includes East President Street to the north, Capitol Street to the east and south, and Goebel Avenue to the west. These boundaries include the original plat of Pine Gardens developed in the 1940s, as well as the historic addition of Pine Gardens Annex developed in the 1950s.

The boundary bumps out to the south along Capitol Street at Pennsylvania Avenue to include Savannah Fire Station #9 and the Church of Nazarene. Although technically outside of the neighborhood's original boundaries, both were built to serve Pine Gardens' residents, and therefore included within the historic district.

Pine Gardens Historic District  
Name of Property

Chatham County, Georgia  
County and State

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The historic district boundary includes the original plat for Pine Gardens, as laid out and developed by Pine Gardens, Inc., which served the Southeastern Shipbuilding Corporation in its construction of Liberty ships during WWII, and the Pine Gardens Annex, which served the influx of returning veterans following the war's end.

The area outside the boundary differs from the historic district because of Pine Gardens' and Pine Gardens Annex's very recognizable and uniform appearance of modest American Small Houses laid out on a grid. Outside the boundary are vacant expanses, industrial sites, apartment complexes, a large high school, commercial areas, and a neighborhood with houses of diverse age, type, and style, set in varying orientation to the streets and to each other.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Laura Beth Ingle/Architectural Historian  
organization Historic Preservation Division, GA Dept. of Natural Resources date September 11, 2014  
street & number 254 Washington Street, Ground Level telephone (404) 656-2840  
city or town Atlanta state GA zip code 30334  
e-mail laurabeth.ingle@dnr.state.ga.us

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

---

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Pine Gardens Historic District

City or Vicinity: Savannah

County: Chatham

State: Georgia

Photographer: Charlie Miller, Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources

Date Photographed: March 21, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 29. Eli Whitney School, 2 Laura Avenue; photographer facing west

Pine Gardens Historic District

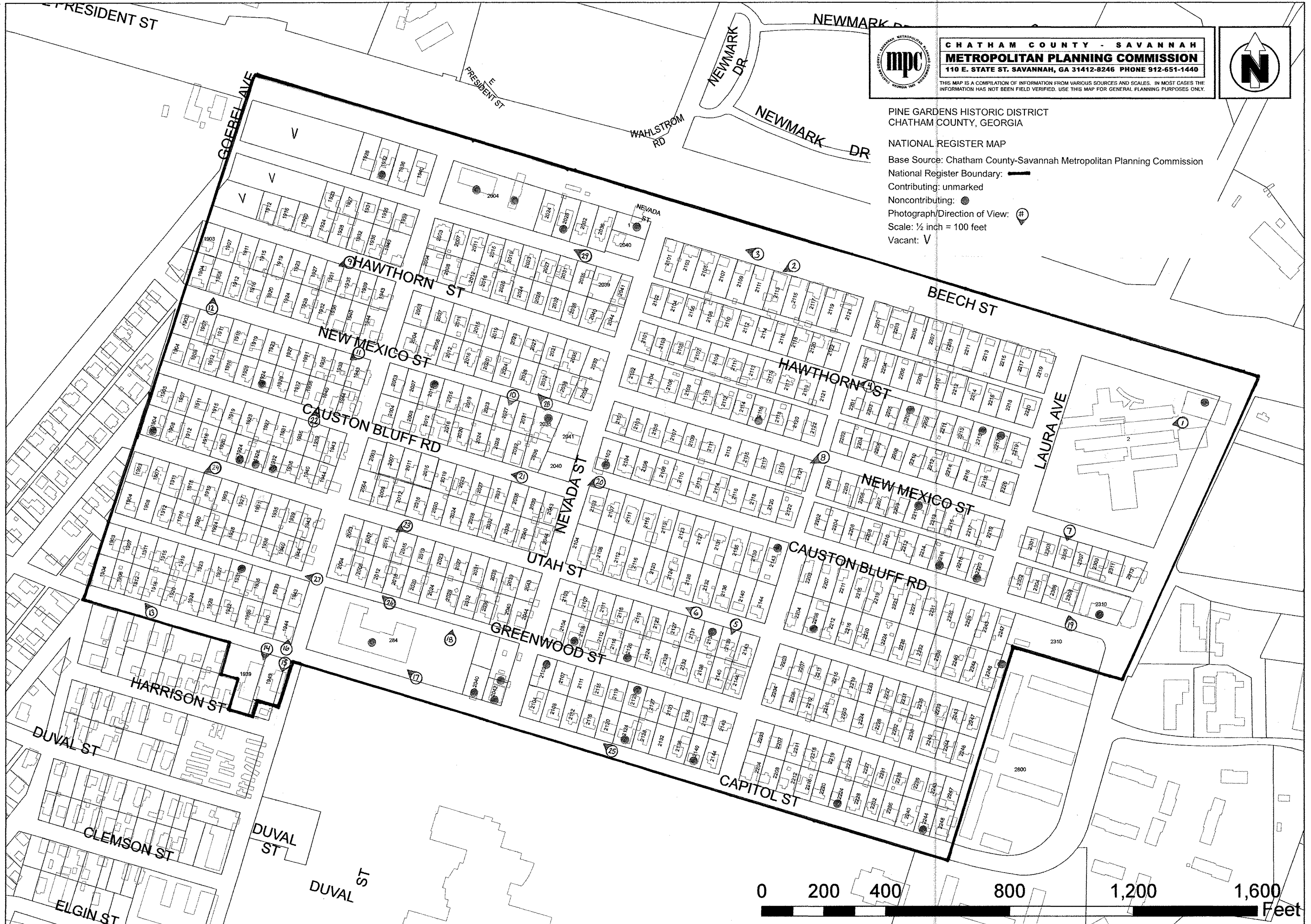
Chatham County, Georgia  
County and State

Name of Property

- 2 of 29. Beech Street, west of Oregon Street; photographer facing southwest
- 3 of 29. Beech Street, west of Oregon Street; photographer facing west
- 4 of 29. Hawthorn Street at Oregon Street; photographer facing west
- 5 of 29. 2139 Utah Street; photographer facing south
- 6 of 29. Utah Street, west of Oregon Street; photographer facing west
- 7 of 29. 2305 New Mexico Street; photographer facing south
- 8 of 29. New Mexico Street at Oregon Street; photographer facing southwest
- 9 of 29. Hawthorn Street, west of Pennsylvania Avenue; photographer facing southwest
- 10 of 29. 2027 New Mexico Street; photographer facing south
- 11 of 29. 1939 New Mexico Street; photographer facing southwest
- 12 of 29. 1908 New Mexico Street; photographer facing north
- 13 of 29. Capitol Street, west of Pennsylvania Avenue; photographer facing northwest
- 14 of 29. Church of the Nazarene, 1939 Capitol Street; photographer facing south
- 15 of 29. Pine Gardens Firehouse, 1943 Capitol Street; photographer facing south
- 16 of 29. 1944 Capitol Street; photographer facing north
- 17 of 29. Penn Store, 284 Pennsylvania Avenue; photographer facing northwest
- 18 of 29. Greenwood Street, west of Nevada Street; photographer facing north
- 19 of 29. 2308 Causton Bluff Road; photographer facing north
- 20 of 29. Causton Bluff Road at Nevada Street; photographer facing southwest
- 21 of 29. Causton Bluff Road, west of Nevada Street; photographer facing west
- 22 of 29. 1936 Causton Bluff Road; photographer facing north
- 23 of 29. Utah Street, west of Nevada Street; photographer facing southwest
- 24 of 29. Utah Street, west of Pennsylvania Avenue; photographer facing southwest
- 25 of 29. Capitol Street, west of Oregon Street; photographer facing northwest
- 26 of 29. Greenwood Street, east of Pennsylvania Avenue; photographer facing northwest
- 27 of 29. Greenwood Street at Pennsylvania Avenue; photographer facing west
- 28 of 29. New Mexico Street, west of Nevada Street; photographer facing northwest
- 29 of 29. Beech Street, west of Nevada Street; photographer facing northwest

# Pine Gardens Historic District, Chatham County, Georgia

Prepared by Ellen Harris and Casey Smith  
June 14, 2011



CHATHAM COUNTY - SAVANNAH  
**METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION**  
110 E. STATE ST. SAVANNAH, GA 31412-8246 PHONE 912-651-1440



PINE GARDENS HISTORIC DISTRICT  
CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA

NATIONAL REGISTER MAP

Base Source: Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

National Register Boundary: —

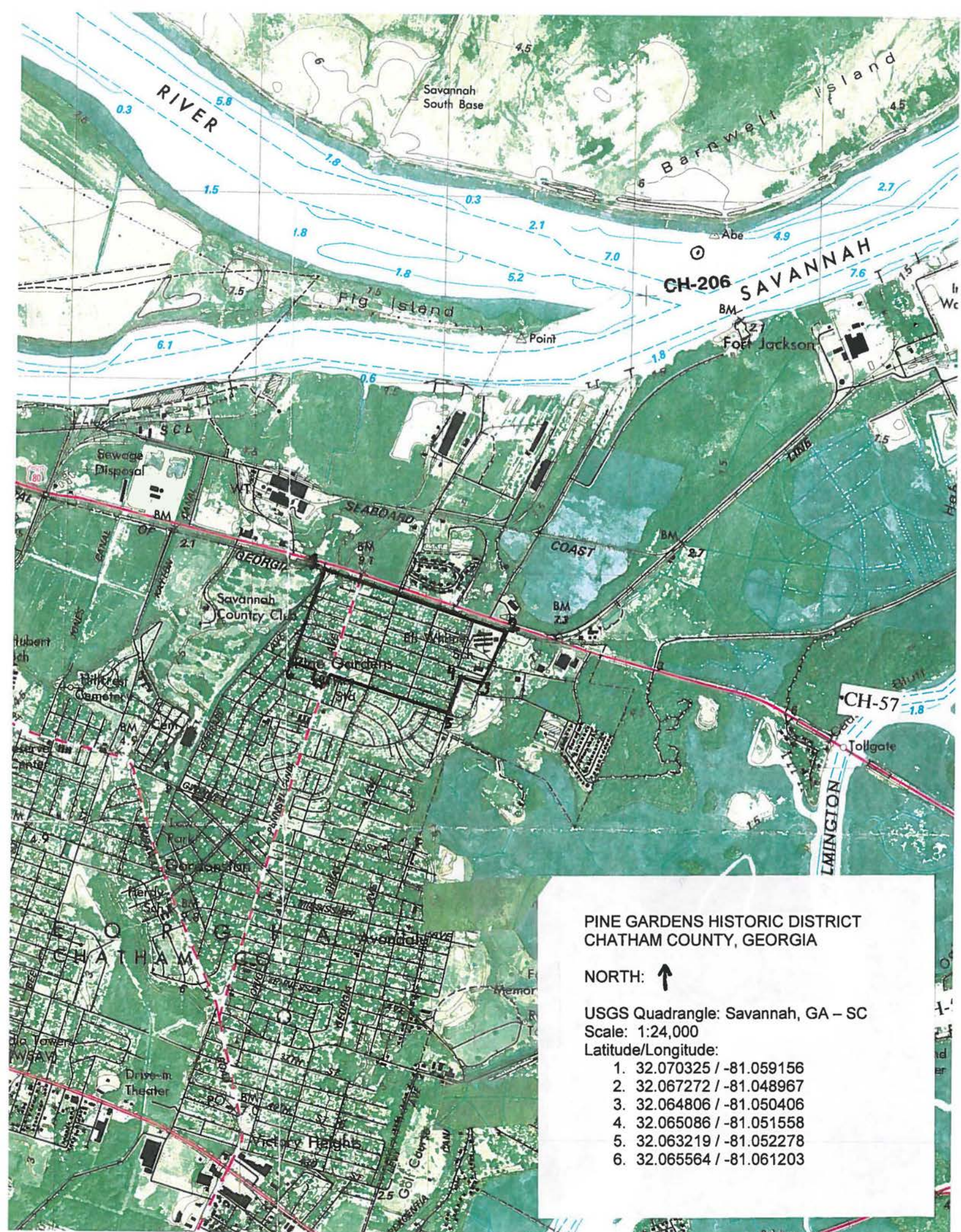
Contributing: unmarked

Noncontributing: ●

Photograph/Direction of View: #

Scale: 1/2 inch = 100 feet

vacant: V



**PINE GARDENS HISTORIC DISTRICT  
CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA**

**NORTH:** ↑

**USGS Quadrangle:** Savannah, GA – SC

**Scale:** 1:24,000

**Latitude/Longitude:**

1. 32.070325 / -81.059156
2. 32.067272 / -81.048967
3. 32.064806 / -81.050406
4. 32.065086 / -81.051558
5. 32.063219 / -81.052278
6. 32.065564 / -81.061203



















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SPEED LIMIT 25

DEAD END





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Pine Gardens Historic District  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: GEORGIA, Chatham

DATE RECEIVED: 9/19/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/05/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000890

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 11.5.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION**

MARK WILLIAMS  
COMMISSIONER

DR. DAVID CR,  
DIVISION DIRECTOR

September 15, 2014

J. Paul Loether  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W. 8th floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005



Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Pine Gardens Historic District, Chatham County, Georgia** to the National Register of Historic Places.

- Disk of National Register of Historic Places nomination form and maps as a pdf
- Disk with digital photo images
- Physical signature page
- Original USGS topographic map(s)
- Sketch map(s)/attachment(s)
- Correspondence
- Other:

COMMENTS:

- Please insure that this nomination is reviewed
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do  do not  constitute a majority of property owners.
- Special considerations:

Sincerely,

Lynn Speno  
National Register Specialist

Enclosures