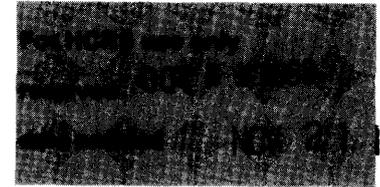


**United States Department of the Interior
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1980

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

1. Name

historic Norcross Historic District

and/or common Same

2. Location

Off U.S. 23

street & number [See continuation sheet.] _____ not for publication

city, town Norcross _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 9th - ~~Billy Evans~~

state Georgia code 013 county Gwinnett code 135

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"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<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 Gwinnett County Courthouse

city, town Lawrenceville state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Section,
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

city, town Atlanta state Georgia

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7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Norcross is a small community which straddles railroad tracks and the Peachtree Road in the central piedmont region of Georgia. Once a railroad stop in the hinterland, it is increasingly a suburb in the northeast Atlanta metropolitan area. The Norcross Historic District contains the contiguous architecturally and historically significant residential and commercial properties within the city of Norcross. These properties constitute the historic core of the city as it developed from its founding in 1870 through the early-twentieth century. They are arranged in a linear pattern along the railroad tracks and Peachtree Road, and they include a commercial and residential center plus residences and farmsteads to the northeast and southwest. These historic properties are immediately surrounded by modern suburban residential development and, to the south especially, contemporary commercial and office development along U.S. Highway 23. Beyond these developments to the north, east, and west is the relatively open countryside; to the south is Interstate Highway 85 with its attendant commercial, residential and industrial complexes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NORCROSS HISTORIC DISTRICT

The natural terrain in the Norcross area is that of the central Georgia piedmont. The topography consists of low, irregularly-shaped hills and valleys. There are no major bodies of water, watercourses, or floodplains in the immediate vicinity. The area is mostly wooded with oaks and southern pines, although there are some cleared fields and backyards. Running northeast-southwest through Norcross is the eastern United States continental divide, a ridge which divides the the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico watersheds. This low ridge is highlighted by the alignment of the Peachtree Road. Although almost all the land in the Norcross Historic District has been developed, it still retains its natural identity.

The city of Norcross and the Norcross Historic District are divided along a northeast-southwest line by the Peachtree Road, and the Southern Railroad tracks (originally the Richmond and Danville Railroad) closely followed its course. Both the road and the railroad run along the low ridge of the eastern United continental divide. The road and the railroad constitute the physical or developmental spine of the city of Norcross and the Norcross Historic District. The railroad cuts a 200-foot-wide swath through the center of town, and the Peachtree Road, running parallel to it, serves as the main residential and commercial street of the community. At the geographic center of the city, near the depot where

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Peachtree Road crosses the tracks, is the commercial and residential center of the community, and here an irregular gridiron of streets branches off the Peachtree Road/railroad track spine. Property lots in the downtown area vary in size and shape. To the northeast and southwest, residences are situated on generally long, narrow lots along either side of Peachtree Road and the railroad tracks. Occasional farmhouses are situated on larger, irregularly shaped lots.

The commercial center of Norcross is centrally located in the city and the historic district. Here, Peachtree Road intersects with Jones Street and Holcomb Bridge Road and crosses the railroad tracks. The commercial center consists of approximately two blocks of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century commercial buildings along the southeast side of Peachtree Road and the northeast side of Jones Street. These buildings are generally one- and two-story brickmasonry structures which share party walls. They line the side of Peachtree Road and Jones Street with virtually unbroken facades pushed uniformly forward to the sidewalk line. Brick is used decoratively as well as structurally in the form of piers, pilasters, stringcourses, parapet walls, corbelled cornices, and flat and segmental arched windows. Some of the brick facades have been painted and/or stuccoed, and some storefronts feature cast-iron columns. Some storefronts have been remodeled with aluminum and plate glass. A Neoclassical bank building featuring cut-stone detailing stands at the corner of Peachtree Road and Jones Street. An early-twentieth-century service station stands at the corner of Peachtree Road and Cemetery Street. The railroad depot stands by itself in the half-block of land between Peachtree Road and the railroad tracks across from the row of downtown commercial buildings; the depot is a long, low, early-twentieth-century wood-framed building with two-story bay office windows trackside and wide-bracketed eaves all around. Vacant land around the depot was once occupied by warehouses and other structures associated with railroad freighting. A tract of land north of the depot and across the railroad tracks is the site of the 1870 Brunswick hotel; only its gazebo remains. North of it is an entire city block devoted to a historic public park featuring stone entrance gates (erected in 1923), trees and lawn, and outdoor recreation facilities.

Around the commercial center of Norcross is a downtown residential area laid out in an irregular gridiron on either side of Peachtree Road and the railroad tracks. The residences in this area consist primarily of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century wood-frame structures. To the north is a mix of housing types and styles ranging from two-story weatherboard-and-shingle siding, chamfered bay windows, offset gables, and wrap-around porches, to simple one-story, gable-roofed, weatherboarded cottages. An exception is the 1907 Edward Buchanan house, at 98 Buchanan Street, a two-story, finely detailed French Provincial-period house fashioned from granite blocks. Another exception

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is the simple brick-and-stone Neoclassical public library at Buchanan Street and Peachtree Road. Both these structures front on the city park. Intrusions in this area are modern ranch-style houses. To the northeast of the commercial center, along the southeast side of Wingo Street, is a row of one-story, turn-of-the-century, wood-framed cottages featuring hipped and gabled roofs, offset gables, front porches, and simple wood detailing. Further east, in the vicinity of Lawrenceville, Academy, and Rakestraw streets, are early-twentieth-century houses, including modest period houses and Craftsman-style bungalows. A major intrusion in this area is the new post office on Lawrenceville Street just east of Jones Street. An exception to the rule of residential buildings in this area is the Summerour Cottonseed Gin complex, an early-twentieth-century group of wood-frame and corrugated-sheet-metal structures on a large tract of land between Wingo and Lawrenceville streets. To the southeast of the commercial center are modest one-story, wood-framed Victorian cottages with L- and T-shaped plans, gabled and hipped roofs, and front porches; detailing ranges from simple dimensioned lumber to ornate Eastlake porch balustrades and posts. Several of the houses in this part of the district are ranged around a historic athletic field. Two churches are also found in this part of town; both are wood-framed, with simple medieval massing and detailing, and one has been covered with aluminum siding. An intrusion in this area is a relocated and reconstructed log cabin situated northwest of the athletic field. Landscaping throughout this residential area around the commercial center consists of informally landscaped front yards featuring trees, shrubbery, flower gardens, and lawn. Concrete and stone retaining walls are used to stabilize sloping lots. Some street trees are present, but generally not in formal rows.

The northeastern part of the historic district consists of houses on either side of Peachtree Street between Buchanan Street downtown and a sharp bend in the road near the city limits that marks the extent of contiguous historic residential development. These houses, like others in the district, are primarily late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century wood-framed structures. They range from large Queen Anne, Victorian Eclectic, and Neoclassical residences to small turn-of-the-century cottages. The larger houses feature weatherboard-and-shingle siding, chamfered bay windows, offset gables, and wrap-around porches, some with integral gazeboes; details include Eastlake gable and porch ornamentation, Tuscan and Ionic columns, dentilled cornices, classical balustrades, and an occasional Craftsman porch. The smaller houses are simpler and their ornamentation, if any, is confined to the front porch. All the houses are situated on informally landscaped yards that feature trees, shrubbery, flower beds, and lawn. In addition, Peachtree Road in this part of the district is lined on either side with rows of street trees and shrubbery. Intrusions in this part of the district consist of modern ranch houses.

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The northeastern part of the Norcross Historic District also includes a large, late-Victorian Eclectic house located on a rise of ground southeast of the railroad tracks at the corner of Wingo and Born streets. Because of its architectural character and appearance and its elevated site, this house is environmentally as well as historically related to the residential properties along North Peachtree Road.

The southwestern part of the historic district is split into two halves by the railroad tracks. Residences front on Peachtree Road south of the railroad tracks and Thrasher Street north of the railroad tracks. These houses, like the others in the district, are primarily late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century wood-framed structures. They range from two-story Queen Anne, Victorian Eclectic, and Neoclassical residences to one-story, turn-of-the-century cottages. The larger houses feature weatherboard-and-shingle siding, chamfered bay windows, offset gables, and wrap-around porches; details include Eastlake gable and porch trim, Tuscan and Ionic columns, classical balustrades, and an occasional Craftsman porch. The smaller houses tend to be simpler and their ornamentation, if any, confined to the front porch. All these houses are set on informally landscaped yards that feature trees, shrubbery, flower beds, and lawn. Toward the southwestern end of the district are several farmhouses, at least one of which predates the founding of Norcross. Two small brick period houses, dating from between the World Wars, are paired along Peachtree Road just north of Lively Street; while non-historic, these houses maintain the streetscape along this part of the Peachtree Road. Intrusions in this part of the district are few and consist of modern ranch houses.

INTRUSIONS

Intrusions in the Norcross Historic District consist of residential and commercial properties that are generally less than fifty years old and that are incompatible in terms of overall arrangement, materials, details, and setting with the architecturally and historically significant properties in the district. A relocated and rebuilt log cabin northwest of the downtown athletic field is also classified as an intrusion. These intrusions are identified below and marked on the attached "property/sketch map" of the Norcross Historic District.

Academy Street, southeast side, between Rakestraw and Born streets -- contemporary brick ranch house on small lot (parcel number 97).

Barton Street, between 89 and 145 -- contemporary brick ranch house (parcel number 217).

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College Street, southeast side, across from Jones Street -- moved and reconstructed log cabin (parcel number 40).

57 College Street -- Gwinnett County Fire Station, one-story prefabricated metal building (parcel number 41).

56 Holcomb Bridge Road -- contemporary ranch house (parcel number 180A).

Holcomb Bridge Road, north side, between North Peachtree Street and South Barton Street -- contemporary ranch house (parcel number 140).

54 Jones Street -- contemporary one-story brick office building (parcel number 24, insert map of downtown area).

65 Lawrenceville Street -- post office, contemporary brick, metal and glass building fronted by large parking lot (parcel number 196).

19 Mitchell Street -- contemporary brick ranch house (parcel number 99A).

39 South Peachtree Street -- City Hall, contemporary one-story brick building with setback, party walls (parcel number 12, insert map of downtown area).

X South Peachtree Street (immediately southwest of City Hall, above) -- commercial building with artificial stone facade (parcel number 13, insert map of downtown area).

71-73 South Peachtree Street -- commercial building with contemporary stuccoed facade (parcel number 17, insert map of downtown area).

89 North Peachtree Street -- contemporary brick ranch house (parcel number 153).

170 North Peachtree Street -- several contemporary two-story brick apartment buildings (parcel number 160).

220 North Peachtree Street -- contemporary brick ranch house (parcel number 159).

254 North Peachtree Street -- contemporary brick ranch house (parcel number 45).

344 North Peachtree Street -- contemporary brick ranch house with Neoclassical portico (parcel number 142).

423 North Peachtree Street -- brick-and-wood ranch house (parcel number 11).

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579 North Peachtree Street -- one-story residence with fake-stone facade (parcel number 18).

582 North Peachtree Street -- contemporary brick ranch house (parcel number 33).

Rakestraw Street at Webb Drive -- concrete-block industrial building (parcel number 56).

11 Thrasher Street -- one-story brick-and-plate-glass veterinarian's office (parcel number 185).

270 Thrasher Street -- contemporary brick ranch house with portico (parcel number 97A).

BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the Norcross Historic District have been drawn to circumscribe the contiguous architecturally and historically significant residential and commercial properties within the city of Norcross. These properties constitute the historic core of the city as it developed from its founding in 1870 through the early-twentieth-century. They are immediately surrounded by modern suburban residential development which has almost completely filled in the once open spaces at the edge of the historic core and by contemporary commercial development along U.S. Highway 23 to the southeast. Beyond these intervening modern developments to the north, east and west is relatively open countryside which is gradually being subsumed by suburban subdivisions; to the south is Interstate Highway 85 with its attendant commercial, residential and industrial complexes.

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 checked="" 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)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1870 **Builder/Architect**

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Norcross Historic District is historically significant in terms of exploration and settlement, community planning and development, architecture, landscape architecture, and transportation. The Norcross Historic District lies along the eastern United States continental divide, which has historically served as a transportation route through this part of the country; Indian trails, stage-coach routes, wagon roads, railroads, and highways following this divide have contributed to the exploration and settlement of the territory and have left their marks upon the land. The district represents a town founded along a major new railroad line in the countryside during the second half of the nineteenth century; such towns are typical of the way in which much of the Georgia countryside was developed with small communities at this time. Architecture in the historic district is significant for its reflection of the historical development of Norcross as a railroad town and of the prevailing movements in American architecture during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as they were applied to small towns in Georgia. Several significant landscape architecture features are present in the Norcross Historic District, including the railroad right-of-way, an athletic field, a city park, and front yards and street trees, that contribute to the historic character and appearance of the district. The district is also significant in terms of transportation history for the way in which it shows how the railroad influenced the founding, growth, and development of the town.

EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT

The Norcross Historic District is situated along the eastern United States continental divide. This divide, which takes the form of a low ridge in the central piedmont part of Georgia, has played a significant role in the settlement and physical development of Norcross and the surrounding region. During the most recent prehistoric periods, the Creek and Cherokee Indians occupied this land, and the ridgeline was used as a major trail for trade, communication, and protection. After several treaties and the creation of Gwinnett County in 1818, early white settlers began moving into the territory and took over the trail for their own purposes. Two early American forts -- Fort Daniel (at Hog

[continued]

9. Major Bibliographical References

[See continuation sheet.]

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 180
 Quadrangle name Norcross, Ga.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<u>116</u>	<u>75180415</u>	<u>31761011010</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>116</u>	<u>751711910</u>	<u>31751791910</u>
E	<u>116</u>	<u>751711710</u>	<u>31751921810</u>
G			

B	<u>116</u>	<u>751851710</u>	<u>31751961615</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>116</u>	<u>751691010</u>	<u>31751821010</u>
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the Norcross Historic District is described by a heavy black line on the attached "property/sketch map" and is justified in Section 7.

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title a) Fraser Duke, President
 b) Richard Cloues, Architectural Historian
 organization a) Norcross Community Association
 b) Historic Preservation Sec., Ga. D.N.R. date June 11, 1980
 street & number a) 539 South Peachtree Street telephone a) 404/448-8822
 b) 270 Washington Street, S.W. telephone b) 404/656-2840
 city or town a) Norcross state Georgia
 b) Atlanta

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elizabeth A. Lyon
 Elizabeth A. Lyon date 9/24/80
 title Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>W. Ray Luce</u> Keeper of the National Register	date <u>11/21/80</u>
Attest: <u>W. D. Dine</u> Chief of Registration	date <u>11/20/80</u> 7

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Mountain) and Fort Peachtree (now known as Fort Gilmore) -- were connected by this route. By about 1840, this trail had evolved into a stagecoach route connecting South Carolina and Alabama through Georgia. In the vicinity of Norcross, farms and the small communities of Pickneyville and Flint Hill flourished. In 1870, this overland route was roughly paralleled by the tracks of the Richmond and Danville Railroad, which connected Atlanta to the Norcross vicinity and points beyond. With the coming of the railroad came the founding of numerous new communities, Norcross among them. Like many other railroad towns in Georgia, Norcross then assumed a linear shape along the transportation arteries. It also led to the demise of nearby rural hamlets (such as Pickneyville and Flint Hill) that had been bypassed by the railroad. Thus, Norcross, founded in the hinterland along a major historic transportation route, represents a way in which much of the Georgia countryside was settled with new small towns and cities in the second half of the nineteenth century. It also represents the way in which a prominent natural feature -- in this case, the eastern United States continental divide -- played a continuing role in the historic settlement pattern of a region.

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Norcross Historic District is significant in the history of community planning and development in Georgia because it is a town founded along a major new railroad line in the countryside during the second half of the nineteenth century. Such towns are typical of the way in which much of the countryside was developed with small communities during the second half of the nineteenth century as the railroad network spread across the state.

When the Richmond and Danville Railroad (now Southern) was completed from Atlanta to the Norcross vicinity in June of 1870, the tracks lay across a tract of land owned by John J. Thrasher. In October of that year, Thrasher created the community of Norcross at the end of the line. For several years Norcross was the northeastern terminus of the railroad; after the line was extended to Gainesville and beyond, Norcross remained an important passenger and freight stop for the vicinity. Railroad facilities, warehouses, and freight agencies were joined by retail goods-and-services outlets and hotels. Houses were built nearby to accommodate the new residents of Norcross, and along with the houses came churches, schools, a park, and an athletic field. Industry then took advantage of the developmental opportunities afforded by this track-side community; unfortunately, little of the historic local industrial development has survived. Not until the post-World War II period, with its construction of major highways southeast of Norcross, did this pattern of community development change significantly. Because the new highways bypassed the

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streets of Norcross, the historic core of this late-nineteenth-century railroad town has remained largely intact.

Norcross also assumed a physical shape or developmental form that is characteristic of many of the small towns founded along the railroad tracks during the second half of the nineteenth century in Georgia. This form is essentially linear, stretching along both sides of the railroad tracks. In Norcross, this linear form is reinforced by the presence of historic Peachtree Road, which runs roughly parallel to the railroad tracks through the community. To accommodate commercial and residential development in a compact way, an irregular gridiron street pattern did emerge at the center of town; this gridiron development is small in extent, however, and the community in general has taken on a linear shape along the broad swath of the railroad right-of-way. Other characteristic forms of late-nineteenth-century railroad towns in Georgia include the gridiron, centered around the railroad depot, and the cross-axial, formed where a new railroad line intersected a historic highway more or less at right angles. The linear form, like that of Norcross, is most typical of the new small towns established along the railroad tracks in the hinterland.

ARCHITECTURE

The Norcross Historic District is significant in terms of architectural history for its collection of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century buildings that reflects both the historical development of Norcross as a railroad town and the prevailing movements in American architecture as they were applied to small towns in Georgia.

Architecture in the Norcross Historic District consists primarily of residential and commercial buildings, with some industrial and institutional structures. With few exceptions, it spans the period from 1870 to the 1930s. Included are examples of Italianate, Victorian Eclectic, Queen Anne, Neoclassical, Craftsman, and Commercial styles; Greek Revival and Plain-style farmhouses, a French Provincial mansion, an early-twentieth-century depot, and early-twentieth-century-period houses round out the architectural representation. Little of this architecture is high style or academically correct; most constitutes typically vernacularized versions of prevailing national styles, sometimes up to date, sometimes a decade or so behind. The architecture is generally modest in scale, befitting its small-town context. Materials are almost exclusively brick and wood, used separately or together, with sparing use of stone and iron; again, this repertoire is in keeping with the overall character of the architecture.

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Detailing on the commercial buildings is simple and straightforward. On the residences, detailing is more elaborate, in consonance with the prevailing sentiment for the picturesque. Design and workmanship generally reflect the carpenter-builder tradition rather than the architect or master-craftsman traditions. There are numerous indications, especially in the floor plans, facade compositions, and ornamentation of residences, of high-style influence through the use of carpenters' manuals, builders' guides, and pattern books, although these have not been documented. The strongest evidence for this lies in the several large Victorian Eclectic houses within the district that share basic floor plans, arrangement, and details. Exceptions to this rule include the Edward Buchanan House on Buchanan Street, a finely detailed French Provincial period house crafted from granite blocks (befitting Mr. Buchanan's stature as a wealthy industrialist whose United Electrical Manufacturing Company produced the Nor-X, a 1907 electric automobile), and, to a lesser extent, the current Citizens & Southern Bank building on the corner of Peachtree Road and Jones Street, a fine local example in brick and stone of a small Neoclassical building. The Summerour Cottonseed Gin Company buildings on Lawrenceville Street, fabricated from frame and corrugated sheet metal, represent a purely utilitarian architectural tradition in the district. The railroad depot, built ca. 1910, is a standard early-twentieth-century depot design for Georgia. All of these qualities render the architecture of the Norcross Historic District representative of the late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century architecture in small railroad towns across Georgia. Much of its value lies in the way it demonstrates how the fashionable architectural styles of the time were translated into everyday terms by the local designers, builders, and residents of a small rural community.

Aside from its intrinsic merit, the architecture in the Norcross Historic District is significant for the way in which it helps create distinct environmental parts of the town. The identity of the downtown area, for example, is largely due to the character and appearance of the contiguous commercial buildings. Likewise, the residential extensions of the town are largely characterized by the way in which the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century houses relate to each other in terms of mass, siting, materials, and detail. This effective creation of environments, characteristic of small-town development of the period, is even more remarkable with the realization that it was not planned or hardly even managed but rather resulted from apparently shared sensibilities regarding the character and appearance of the town.

The architecture of the Norcross Historic District is also significant as a literal record of the history of the community. The railroad facilities, commercial architecture, and residences, all dating from 1870 to the 1930s, reflect that Norcross was founded in 1870 and developed during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as a new railroad town in a previously unsettled part of the

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countryside. Not until the coming of modern highways in the post-World War II period did this pattern of development change significantly, and this change is as clearly recorded by the modern architecture outside the district. Thus, the architecture of the Norcross Historic District preserves in a physical form the actual history of the community. As always, this architecture takes on additional significance over and above this physical record because it represents, through association, the lives of the people who lived in historic Norcross.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

The railroad right-of-way, which cuts a broad swath through the Norcross Historic District, constitutes a corridor of open space around which the community has developed. In addition to serving as the developmental spine of the city, this corridor contributes significantly to the overall character and appearance of the historic district. In this sense, it is the principal historic landscape features of the district. It is also a characteristic of late-nineteenth-century linear railroad towns in Georgia.

The athletic field, located between College and Bostic streets east of the commercial center of Norcross, is another significant landscape feature in the Norcross Historic District. Its open space has historically contributed to the character and appearance of this part of the district, and it serves as a "square" around which are ranged modest late-Victorian houses. It has also played a role in recreation and community life since the turn of the century. The survival of such a historic amenity so close to the downtown area is unusual in small Georgia towns.

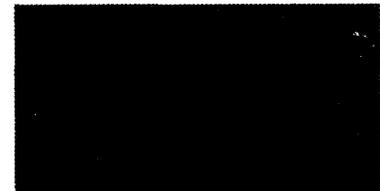
The city park is a third principal historic landscaped place in Norcross. Its design -- a square landscaped with trees, shrubbery, lawn, and stone entrance gates -- is typical of small-town parks and representative of early-twentieth-century practice. Along with the athletic field it has served as a historic outdoor social institution as well as recreation facility. It also serves as a landscaped "forecourt" for the late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century architecture -- including the Buchanan house and public library -- which borders it.

Street trees and front yards are also significant historic landscape features in the Norcross Historic District. They are significant primarily for the way in which they tie together the residential architecture to create distinct historic residential environments. This effect is achieved primarily by the continuously

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and informally landscaped front yards and, in places in the district (especially North Peachtree Road), by rows of street trees. It is typical of late-nineteenth-century landscaping practice in America. The district also contains good examples of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century residential-lot landscaping. Broad lawns with informally arranged trees and shrubs, stone and concrete walks, curbs, and driveways, and low retaining walls are all period characteristics. Like the architecture, the landscape architecture records in physical form the developmental history of the historic district.

TRANSPORTATION

The Norcross Historic District is significant in terms of transportation history because it demonstrates how the railroad influenced the founding and development of the community. The role played by the railroad in Norcross is typical of that played by the railroad in other small communities across the state.

Norcross is first and foremost a railroad town. Before the railroad was built through this part of the Georgia countryside, nearby Pickneyville was the center of social and economic activity for this part of the county. In 1870, when the Richmond and Danville Railroad was completed to the Norcross vicinity, it lay across land owned by John J. Thrasher, who in October of that year laid out the community of Norcross. Thus, Norcross owes its very existence to the coming of the railroad.

Initially, Norcross was the end of the line, although in later years the railroad was extended to Gainesville and beyond. Because Norcross was the terminus for several years, the railroad built a turntable and other railroad facilities in the city. The turntable especially made possible frequent train service between Norcross and Atlanta, and this rail service brought commuters, tourists, business, industry, and trade to the new town. The Airline Belle, a commuter train which operated successfully between Norcross and Atlanta from 1878 to 1932, is perhaps the best example of this rail service. Houses, stores, offices, warehouses, hotels, and small factories were built in Norcross to accommodate this increase in social and economic activity. Thus, the growth and development of Norcross, as well as its founding, are directly attributable to the presence of the railroad.

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PRESERVATION ACTIVITY

In July of 1979, the Norcross Community Association was formed. One of its major goals was to work with the state historic preservation office in preparing a National Register district nomination for Norcross. Another goal was to cooperate with the Norcross Business Association in formulating plans for the revitalization of downtown Norcross; a preservation architect has been retained to provide professional guidance. An Association logo representing Norcross' historic relationship with the railroad has also been designed. On April 18th and 19th of this year, the Association sponsored a first Norcross Heritage Festival, which featured a tour of homes and historic buildings.

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(This material is available locally through the Norcross Community Association.)

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STREET AND NUMBER: Within the city limits of Norcross, generally along either side of Peachtree Road and Thrasher Street, and including all or parts of Jones Street, Buchanan Street, Park Drive, Holcomb Bridge Road, Wingo Street, Born Street, Lawrenceville Street, Rakestraw Street, Academy Street, College Street, Cemetery Street, Bostic Street, and Lively Street.