

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received OCT 1 1987

date entered NOV - 6 1987

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

1. Name

historic none

and or common Bainbridge Commercial Historic District

2. Location

street & number Water, Broughton, Troupe, West,
Broad, and Clark Streets N/A not for publication

city, town Bainbridge N/A vicinity of

state Georgia code 013 county Decatur code 087

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple (More than fifty)

street & number

city, town N/A vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Decatur County Courthouse

city, town Bainbridge state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Structures Field Survey:
title Bainbridge, Decatur Co., Georgia has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

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

city, town Atlanta state Georgia

7. Description

<u> </u> excellent	<u> </u> deteriorated	<u> </u> unaltered	<u> </u> original site
<u> X </u> good	<u> </u> ruins	<u> X </u> altered	<u> </u> moved
<u> </u> fair	<u> </u> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bainbridge Commercial Historic District occupies all or parts of 13 city blocks in the center of Bainbridge, the county seat of Decatur County, located in extreme southwest Georgia. The district is situated on flat land, just to the southeast of the Flint River, which bisects the city. The district comprises the historic commercial and civic downtown area of Bainbridge.

The street plan of the district conforms to the original grid plan used when the original 50-acre townsite was laid out in 1824. The original courthouse square, now Willis Park, lies at the center of the district. Although the town was founded well before the Civil War, there are no ante-bellum structures extant in the commercial district, with only the town plan surviving to recall the first half of the 19th century.

As the name of the district implies, the overwhelming majority of the buildings in the district were designed and constructed to serve various commercial purposes. Stores, banks, offices, and a hotel are all included in the district. The density of the district is typical of late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial districts; most of the buildings are from one to three stories high and are built with common masonry walls with little or no setback from the sidewalk. Several buildings were built of concrete block; others feature terra cotta. A number of buildings were stuccoed originally or during the historic period. Significantly, the only buildings in the district which were designed with setbacks and open space surrounding them are the Decatur County Courthouse, the former Bainbridge City Hall, now the Public Safety Building, and the former U.S. Post Office. One of the largest historic buildings in the district, the 1902 Bon Air Hotel, occupies most of the block north of Willis Park.

Stylistically, the buildings in the district range from simplified Italianate-style designs with segmentally arched windows and elaborate cornices to the classicism of the early 20th century and include examples of unadorned early 20th-century designs along with what might be called Victorian Eclectic. Perhaps the best of the Italianate-style buildings in the district is the large, two-story, painted brick structure at 126 North Broad Street. Although its original windows have been removed, the heavy hood moldings remain, along with an equally heavy corbeled cornice. By the first decade of this century, classicism had taken a firm hold of the district's architectural imagery. The E.J. Perry Building at 126 South Broad Street is one of the more distinctive examples, using two contrasting shades of brick to distinguish the double tier of pilasters from the wall surface. The temple-fronted design of the former First State National Bank at 101 South Broad Street is the most correctly classical of the buildings in the district, combining marble and terra-cotta in a very Beaux Arts manner. Significantly, this formal design has now been taken over by the city government, the building now serving as City Hall. Classicism of a more picturesque character was used on the design of the Decatur County Courthouse, completed in 1902, with its monumental entrance portico and adjoining clock tower.

The progressive movement in early 20th-century architecture can perhaps best be illustrated in the district by the Callahan Building, which occupies most of one side of the 200 block of South Broad. All relief ornament has been eliminated, with the facade decoration confined to patterns of light colored brick around the first floor shopfronts and the second floor windows. The second story is shaded by a massive canopy which would seem more appropriate on a large residence of the period than on a commercial building.

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The only historic greenspace in the district is Willis Park, the original county courthouse square, which was dedicated in 1904 in response to the completion of the present courthouse, which is situated just to the northwest of the park. The park contains the obligatory Civil War monument along with some fine live oaks and a nonhistoric gazebo.

Noncontributing properties in the district include several nonhistoric buildings as well as a number of historic buildings whose original character and appearance has been compromised by modern alterations, primarily new storefronts or front facades.

Boundary Description:

The boundary of the Bainbridge Commercial Historic District is drawn so as to include the maximum concentration of intact historic commercial buildings in the center of Bainbridge. To the north is a large concentration of nonhistoric commercial buildings, although some altered historic structures are also located there. Nonhistoric commercial development is also found to the west of the district. To the south and east of the district are the city's historic residential neighborhoods, which are being nominated separately as the Bainbridge Residential Historic District.

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 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1824(Plan), 1880-1930 **Builder/Architect** Several

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bainbridge Commercial Historic District is significant in the areas of architecture, commerce and community planning.

In terms of architecture, the district is significant for its collection of late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial and civic buildings. These buildings represent the important types of historic buildings characteristically found in the downtown areas of small south Georgia cities and towns, and they represent the range of historic commercial, professional, and governmental activities found in historic central business districts. The building materials and techniques used to construct these buildings-- primarily load-bearing masonry, brick, concrete block, cast iron, pressed metal, terra cotta, and stucco--also are characteristic of building materials and techniques found throughout Georgia and the nation during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Local variations of a variety of Victorian and early 20th-century architectural styles including the Italianate, Classical Revival, and Georgian Revival are well represented in the district along with some Commercial-style influences and some eclectic and rather plain-styled buildings. This range of styles and stylistic variations is typical of the historic commercial architecture in many small Georgia cities. Given the relative isolation of Bainbridge from major metropolitan areas and their architectural influence, there is a relatively high degree of sophistication in the designs of several of the more formal buildings in the district; the former First State National Bank with its ornate, columned-and-pedimented entrance is a good example. Another unusual building in the district is the historic City Hall/Public Safety Building, of which there are relatively few similar examples in the state.

In terms of community planning, the district is significant for its historic gridiron street pattern focusing on the original county courthouse square, now Willis Park, at its center. This plan, laid down when Bainbridge was first surveyed in 1824, has guided the growth and development of downtown Bainbridge for more than a century and a half. Its combination of gridded streets and a central courthouse square is characteristic of the layout of Georgia's civic and commercial towns which were planned and developed all across the state in the early to mid-19th century. This planning feature is responsible for much of the historic character and appearance of these communities. In Bainbridge, the legacy of this early 19th-century plan is most intact and most evident in the downtown area.

In terms of commerce, the district is significant for representing the continued growth and development of downtown Bainbridge as the local and regional commercial center from the 1880s to 1930. The city's location on the banks of the Flint River, which served as a major commercial route for southwest Georgia, as well as its rail connections made Bainbridge ideally suited for a position of commercial prominence in this part of the state. Contained within the district are buildings which housed the variety of commercial activities--including retailing, wholesaling, professional services, banking, hotel accommodations, and entertainment--that contributed to Bainbridge's commercial property.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Historic District Information Form: Bainbridge Commercial Historic District," prepared by Erick Montgomery, filed at the Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 10 (acreage estimator)

Quadrangle name Bainbridge, GA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	7	3	1	9	2	0	3	4	2	1	6	8	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

1	6	7	3	1	9	2	0	3	4	2	1	3	2	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

1	6	7	3	1	5	2	0	3	4	2	1	3	3	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

1	6	7	3	1	5	2	0	3	4	2	1	6	8	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Section 7. Boundary is described by a heavy black line on the attached district map.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John C. Ferguson, Architectural Historian; Richard Cloues, National Register Coordinator

organization Historic Preservation Section date September 16, 1987

street & number 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462 telephone (404) 656-2840

city or town Atlanta state Georgia

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elizabeth A. Lyon
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 9/17/87

For NPS use only

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

Amy Schlager date 11/6/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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National Register Criteria

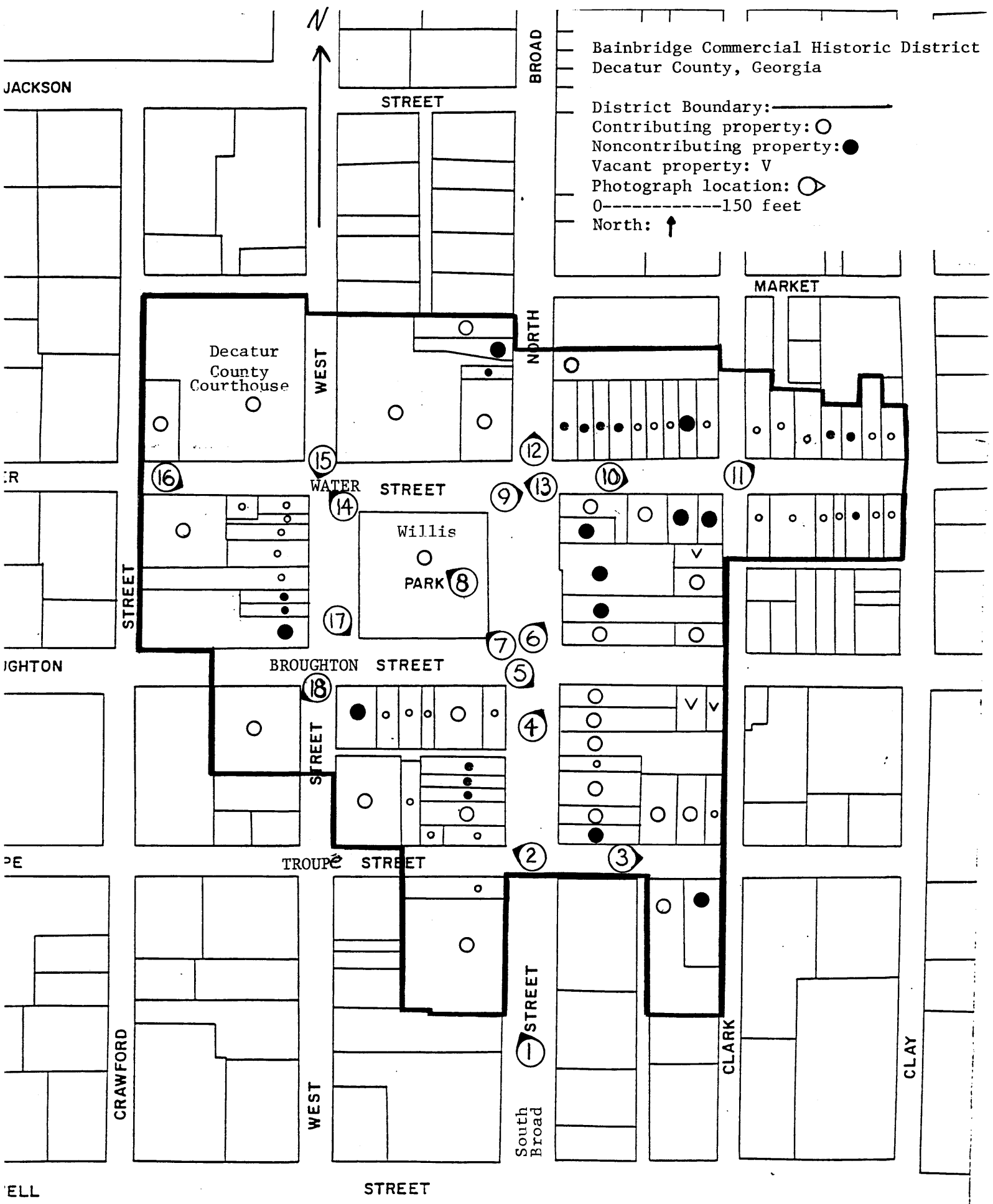
The district's historic architecture and its historic gridiron plan support National Register eligibility in terms of National Register Criteria C. The district's association with the commercial prominence of Bainbridge as both a local and regional trading center and its historic development as one of Georgia's planned county-seat towns supports National Register eligibility in terms of National Register Criteria A.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources

The Bainbridge Commercial Historic District contains 81 resources. Of these, 57 are contributing, including 56 buildings and one site, Willis Park. There are 24 noncontributing buildings in the district.

Bainbridge Commercial Historic District
Decatur County, Georgia

District Boundary: _____
Contributing property: ○
Noncontributing property: ●
Vacant property: V
Photograph location: ◐
0-----150 feet
North: ↑



Decatur
County
Courthouse

Willis
PARK

JACKSON

BROAD

MARKET

NORTH

WEST

WATER STREET

BROUGHTON STREET

TROUPE STREET

STREET

CRAWFORD

WEST

South
Broad
STREET

CLARK

CLAY

ER

IGHTON

PE

ELL

STREET