

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **AUG 7 1985**

date entered **SEP 5 1985**

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

1. Name

historic _____

and/or common Royston Commercial Historic District

2. Location

street & number Primarily along Church Street and Railroad Street N/A not for publication
in Royston business District

city, town Royston N/A vicinity of _____

state Georgia code 013 county Franklin code 119

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 type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Owners (less than 50)

street & number _____

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Franklin County Courthouse

city, town Carnesville state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local _____

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Royston Commercial Historic District encompasses the intact portion of the historic commercial center of Royston. The area is located between Church Street on the west, the principal commercial street in town, and the Southern Railroad tracks on the east. Both these traffic arteries run north and south through town, Church Street on high level ground and the railroad at a slightly lower elevation. They are intersected by Depot Street and Hartwell Street which run east and west. The area is laid out with a gridiron plan modified only at its north edge where Bowersville Street enters town at an angle from the northeast. A wide railroad right-of-way forms a park-like open space along the tracks. Lots are small, narrow, and rectangular. Buildings date from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The majority are one- and two-story brick structures with party walls. Exceptions include a wood-framed depot and a brick lumber company building in the railroad right-of-way; a free-standing brick building at the north end of the district that once housed a printing business; and a wood-framed store and historic concrete-block post office situated amidst the concentration of brick stores. Buildings are modest late Victorian and Early 20th Century Commercial-style structures with eclectic detailing drawn from the Gothic, Romanesque, Classical Revival, and Craftsman styles. The most common design features include brick corbeled cornices, decorative roofline brackets, sign plates, trabeated and arched windows, recessed doorways, and large display windows with columns and/or large transoms. Buildings of particular note include the Dorough Building (Carter Hardware), an extremely intact late Victorian structure with a fine corbeled cornice, an intact metal storefront, and a completely intact interior including a pressed metal ceiling and the P.C. Scarborough Building, a finely-detailed, early Ford dealership with a tiled pent roof supported by prominent brackets. Most of the storefronts and interiors in the district have been altered but a few, including the Dorough Building, retain original detailing in these areas.

There is little landscaping in the district. The overall landscape character is of a small urban streetscape with little planting. The railroad right-of-way along the east edge of the district provides an open space that contrasts with the densely built-up character of the rest of the district. Between Depot Street and Hartwell Street, the right-of-way is used as a small park and is landscaped with grass, a row of large oaks, and an evergreen. A few recently constructed buildings, several buildings that have been altered to the extent their historic character has been obliterated, and several that might possibly be returned to their historic appearance constitute the non-contributing properties in the district.

Boundary

The boundary, outlined with a heavy black line on the enclosed maps, is drawn to include the intact, contiguous, historic structures in Royston's historic commercial center. The district is surrounded by newer commercial development on all sides, in some places mixed with historic residential structures.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	1875–1935	Builder/Architect	Multiple
----------------	-----------	-------------------	----------

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Royston Commercial Historic District is historically significant in terms of community planning and development, transportation, architecture, and commerce. These areas of significance support National Register eligibility under National Register Criteria A, B, and C.

Community Planning and Development and Transportation

In terms of community planning and development and transportation, Royston is significant as a good example in northeast Georgia of a town laid out and developed by a private individual in conjunction with the arrival of the railroad. W. A. Royston began buying land in what is now Royston in 1855. While continuing to acquire acreage in the vicinity, he settled on two acres where he built a house and store. Soon the post office from nearby Franklin Springs was relocated at his store and renamed "Royston". The real impetus for the hamlet's development did not come until the 1870s with the plans for the construction of the Elberton Air Line Railroad which was to pass through the area. In 1874, Royston guaranteed the location of the line on his land by transferring a 200-foot-wide easement through it to the railroad. Most probably at this time he had the town laid out with its present gridiron plan (this plan cannot be found but is referred to in deeds, etc.). From 1875 to his death in 1891, Royston sold thirty lots in his new town. According to local sources, the town was incorporated in 1879. In 1890 it was reincorporated by Georgia law. The town developed quickly after the arrival of the railroad into a prosperous cotton marketing center which continued to grow into the early 20th century. Its population went from 127 in 1880 to 579 in 1900 and 1,681 in 1920. Contributing to Royston's continued prosperity was its location on a major highway which by 1925 had evolved into the Bankhead Highway, one of Georgia's earliest designated interstate routes. The railroad depot and two early automobile facilities remain to document the town's important associations with the railroad and the state's early highway system.

Royston is also significant in terms of community planning and development as an example of a small Georgia town that developed with the assistance of planning techniques. In 1905, the town charter was repealed, and the "City of Royston" was chartered with extended corporate limits. One item in the charter established a system for issuing building permits. In 1913, the Royston Board of Trade was created, a combination Chamber of Commerce, industrial authority, and city planning commission the aim of which was "to promote the best interest of the city and to develop trade expansion; to promote the town as a residential and manufacturing center; to secure industrial plants; to encourage permanent road building; to stimulate cooperation between town and county districts; and to formulate plans for civic improvements." Civic improvements which soon followed included electricity in 1913 and a water system in 1920. The community took another innovative step in 1938 by empowering the city through state enabling legislation to enact planning and zoning laws. Royston was the only community

9. Major Bibliographical References

Jaeger, Dale. "Historic District Information Form: Town of Royston!"
 March, 1984. On file at Historic Preservation Section Georgia Dept.
 of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately 6 acres

Quadrangle name Royston, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7
---	---

3	0	5	8	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	7	9	5	9	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

B

1	7
---	---

3	0	5	8	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	7	9	5	5	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

C

1	7
---	---

3	0	5	6	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	7	9	5	6	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

D

1	7
---	---

3	0	5	6	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	7	9	5	8	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

E

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

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

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	(1) Carolyn Brooks, National Register Researcher (2) Dale Jaeger		
organization	(1) Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources (2) Jaeger and Associates	date	7-12-85
street & number	(1) 270 Washington Street SW (2) P.O. Box 1526, 625 Green Street	telephone	404/656-2840 404/536-4610
city or town	(1) Atlanta (2) Gainesville	state	Georgia (1) 30334 (2) 30503

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 7/22/85

For NPS use only

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

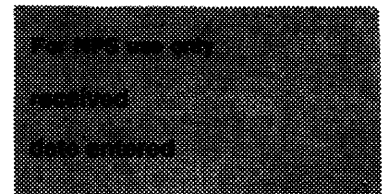
for Melissa Byers **Entered in the** 9/5/85
 Keeper of the National Register **National Register** date

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration _____

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 2

in Franklin County or neighboring Hart County to take such a step. Although the decline in the cotton market in the 1920s affected Royston, its impact seems to have been less severe here than in the surrounding area. Royston appears to have rebounded, possibly as a result of the efforts of its innovative Board of Trade which managed to generate industrial expansion during the 1920s. Royston's slow, steady growth, which continues to the present, is in marked contrast to Franklin County's other communities which have continually lost population since the 1920s.

Architecture

Architecturally, the Royston Commercial Historic District is significant for its representative examples of small-town commercial architecture of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its one-and two-story brick buildings, its wood-framed depot, and its concrete-block post office document typical building materials, technology, types and styles found in small northeast Georgia towns of this period. Good examples are provided of a wide variety of commercial building types including store buildings, banks, a post office, a depot, a printing office, filling stations, and an automobile showroom. These buildings provide good examples of modest Victorian and Early 20th Century Commercial style buildings detailed with Gothic, Romanesque, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman elements. Typical period details such as pointed, round, and segmentally arched windows, stone sills, lintels, and string courses, corbeled brick and pressed metal cornices, pent roofs, sign plates, pilasters, and storefronts with metal columns and transom windows are well represented. Of particular note is the Dorough Building (Carter Hardware), a two-story, late Victorian store building that's almost completely intact on both the exterior and interior. The structures in Royston are the work of locally trained builders who adapted nationally popular styles of the period based on their design abilities and the tastes and budgets of their clients. C. D. Griffin, Will Phillips, the Wooten Brothers, and J. R. Queen are all craftsmen known to have constructed commercial buildings in Royston and, in some instances, in the nearby towns of Lavonia and Hartwell. An almost ubiquitous design feature in Royston's commercial buildings - the corbeled cornice - was executed differently by each of these builders and served as the signature of each one.

Commerce

In terms of commerce, the district is important as the historic retail, service, marketing, and shipping center for Royston and the surrounding countryside. The origins of the town relate to the railroad which provided shipping facilities for the area's agricultural products, particularly cotton. The district's layout with its gridded street plan densely lined with one-and two-story brick buildings has been identified as an important characteristic of small Georgia cities founded and developed for commercial purposes.

ROYSTON COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
Royston, Franklin County, Georgia


DISTRICT MAP


Source: City of Royston map

Date: 1959


Scale: 1" : 100'

North: →

District Boundary: 

Non-historic Building: 

Intrusion: X

False Facade: 


Vacant Lot: 

Photo Direction and Number: 