

HISTORIC RESOURCES OF GREENSBORO, GREENE COUNTY, GEORGIA

HISTORIC DISTRICT #3

I. IDENTIFICATION

NAME OF DISTRICT: **North Street-East Street Historic District**
LOCATION: North, East, Greene, and Walnut Streets
CITY: Greensboro
COUNTY: Greene (code 133)
STATE: Georgia (code 013)
ZIP CODE: 30642
CLASSIFICATION: District
CURRENT USE(S): Residential
ACREAGE: 32
U.S.G.S. QUADRANGLE: Greensboro, Ga.
U.T.M. REFERENCES: (A) Z17 E297580 N3717820
(B) Z17 E298220 N3717010
(C) Z17 E297490 N3717090

II. DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION

General character, appearance, and historical development: The district is a small, compact neighborhood with mid-nineteenth to early twentieth-century dwellings. Houses within the district are one- to two-story frame dwellings representing a variety of architectural styles. There are several large-scale dwellings on North Street. The area appears to have been one of the later areas to develop in the community. The district began with single ownerships of entire blocks which were eventually sold as individual lots. Some of the houses within the district had large rear yards which formed small farming tracts. A few outbuildings survive to document this former use of the land.

Natural terrain, natural landmarks, geographic features: The terrain throughout the district is flat. There are no distinguishing natural landmarks or geographic features.

Various parts of the district: The district can be divided into two sections. One section on North Street contains the largest residences in the district. Yards in this area, especially at the corner of North and East, are more spacious with more definition in the plantings. The remainder of the district is typified by cottage-scale dwellings.

Pattern of land subdivision: The district has a gridiron street plan. The district literally encompasses the northeast corner of the 1786 town plan of Greensboro. Lots within the district have been divided into rectangular tracts of fairly uniform size. Lots on the north side of North Street and on the east side of East Street are divided into rectangular tracts of narrow proportions with large expanses in the rear yards.

Arrangement or placement of buildings: Houses are situated in the front-centers of their individual lots at uniform setbacks to the streets.

Architectural characteristics: The district is comprised primarily of one- and two-story Victorian-era dwellings varying in size from small cottages to more elaborate, almost estate-scale structures. Typical characteristics in the district include weatherboard siding, encircling front porches with all types of post and balustrade decoration--gingerbread trim, turned posts, or fine cutwork--and hipped or gabled roofs, many with roof dormers and/or decorative attic vents in gables. Styles represented in the district include Plain styles, Greek Revival, Victorian Eclectic, and Georgian Revival. There are only a few residences of Plantation Plain design within the district. Two examples are "Bellheart Manor" on Greene Street and the Fulton-Robinson House on East Street. Bellheart, named by its current owners for the bell and heart shapes found in the porch's balustrade, is a two-story, frame, I-type house with end chimneys and a one-story porch across the front facade. The Fulton-Robinson House is similar with its two-over-two arrangement and central hall plan. Victorian Eclectic cottages in the district are usually one-story dwellings with modest detailing. The single example of Greek Revival design is the Green Thompson House, located at the corner of Walnut and North and recently named "Recess" by its present owner, a retired school teacher. This is a small Greek Revival cottage with board-and-batten siding. The larger examples of Victorian Eclectic, such as the McCommons House and the John T. Boswell House, located at the junction of North and Walnut, are two-story houses with hipped roofs, pedimented gables facing the street with decorative attic vents, bay windows, and encircling porches. The Boswell House has a large collection of outbuildings, including two barns, two garages, a two-room servant house, brick storage house, and gazebo. Georgian Revival design is exemplified by the house at the corner of East and North with its symmetrical massing and hipped roof with hipped roof dormer. Almost all of the structures in the district have associated outbuildings, most of which are situated in rear yards. Most of these accessory structures are one-story frame gable-roofed garages with the gable facing the street. There are also a number of gazebos situated in front yards in the district.

Landscape characteristics: Landscape elements in the district include street trees, shrubs, grassed lawns, and pecan groves. Street trees, primarily oak, are continuous throughout the district. The pecan groves are typically found adjacent to the larger estate homes on North Street. The groves are primarily located in the rear yards, but a few trees extend into the front yards and tie these areas together. Other trees found in the district include magnolia and cedar. Shrubs are planted in a variety of arrangements--as foundation plantings around the dwellings, in linear arrangements along walks and drives, or in

floating beds within the front yards. Streetscape elements include granite curbing and sidewalks. In a few instances, such as the McCommons house, the sidewalk has been extended to the front door of the dwelling.

Archaeological potential: unknown

Anomalous Features: There is one atypical historic dwelling in the district. This structure is a two-story building with a stucco finish reminiscent of Spanish Colonial design. Windows are rectangular and placed in groups on the building. A battlement extends around the cornice of the structure. This structure is located on East Street near the railroad. It is the only example of such an early 20th-century house design in Greensboro.

CONDITION: Good--general condition of the district

CONTRIBUTING/NONCONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES:

Noncontributing properties (including both intrusions and non-historic properties) have been noted on the attached map of the district. The criteria for their notation is as follows: Intrusions are generally of one type. They are modern buildings that have been constructed since World War II. Due to their design, proportions, massing, siting, materials, and other features, they distract from the district and are in visual contrast to their surroundings. Non-historic structures have been built after the district's period of significance had passed. While these structures tend to blend into the district in terms of their design, proportions, massing, siting, materials, and other features, they do not contribute to the historic significance of the district. Intrusions within this district include three brick ranch-style dwellings. Non-historic structures include two frame dwellings which appear to have been built since World War II.

BOUNDARIES:

The district boundary encompasses the historic residential development on East, North, Greene and Walnut Streets. The railroad forms the northern boundary. All other boundaries relate to the rear property lines of the historic dwellings. The district is surrounded by vacant land on the east, the railroad and the cemetery on the north, non-historic development to the west, and non-historic commercial development to the south.

PHOTOGRAPHS: 55-70

III. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

DATES OF DEVELOPMENT: 1786 (plan); 1840-1920

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

In the early history of Greensboro, residential development appears to have been concentrated in areas to the west and south of the town center. This district literally encompasses the northeast corner of the 1786 town plan. Walnut and North Streets terminate and do not extend as called for in the 1812 update of the original plan. The Baptist and Presbyterians built a church known as the Union Church on the corner of East and North Street in about 1828. East Street was an early route to Union Point. The area contained in this district remained in large single tracts until late in the nineteenth century. One of the earliest structures in the district--the Fulton Robinson House, ca. 1840--was built along this early road. In the mid-1800s much of the land in this part of the district was owned by Judge Francis Cone and B. F. Greene. Judge Cone built his residence on the present site of the John T. Boswell House. James Burke was the owner of the entire block surrounded by East, North, Greene, and Walnut Streets. The house now known as Bellheart was built around 1850 in the center of the Greene Street side of this lot. The Greek Revival cottage, now known as Recess, was built soon after Bellheart at the corner of Walnut and Greene. The remainder of the block was subdivided and individual residences were built throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century. When the Monfort Greene House was built on East Street in 1895 on the land formerly owned by Cone and Greene, there were only two other houses on the block.

The late 1890s and early 1900s seem to have been a building boom for the district. Most of the large houses now located on North Street and the smaller Victorian cottages throughout the district were built during this period. The John T. Boswell House was built shortly after the turn of the century at the junction of North and Walnut Streets. The house was reportedly designed by an architect and was built on a portion of the district known as "Daisy Fields." This area was, as its name states, an open field filled with daisies. The Boswell House was located in the vicinity of the earlier Cone House, which had burned. Boswell was a farmer, merchant, and cotton buyer and a partner in the "Big Store." According to local informants, fragments of the earlier house can still be found on the property. Judge Cone is reputed to have had his office in the house now known as Recess on the corner of Walnut and Greene Streets. Following the fire to his residence, he apparently added the rear ell to that structure and lived and worked in the same building. Recess also served as a school prior to its use as a law office. Dr. Montcrief, a local dentist, also had an office in the structure at the corner of Greene and East Streets. This structure is shown on Sanborn fire insurance maps in 1885. In the 1920s and 1930s one of the large dwellings on East Street was used as a boarding house, known as the Colonial Terrace Hotel. An inspection of Sanborn maps from 1921 reveals that development in the district was complete by that year. The only difference today is that the lots containing the non-historic dwellings and

intrusions were unoccupied in 1921. Other changes to the district since historic times have included a change to residential uses for Dr. Montcrief's and Judge Cone's offices.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA: A, C

AREA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Community Planning, Agriculture

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1786 (plan); 1840-1920 (architecture)

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: local

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architecture. The district is important in architecture since the structures within the district represent nearly a century of domestic architectural styles, types, materials, and methods of construction, all of which characterize the historic residential architecture of smaller towns in Georgia, especially on the Piedmont. Styles represented in the district include the simple Plantation Plain designs, Greek Revival, Victorian Eclectic, and simple versions of Georgian Revival. An unusual early 20th-century house is the Spanish Colonial structure on East Street, an example of early 20th-century "period" design unique in Greensboro. Buildings in the district embody traditional Georgia buildings materials and they document the mid- to late 19th-century transition from handicraft to industrial production of building materials. They also document the mid-19th century shift from heavy timber framing to the "balloon" frame. The use of stucco as a finish material on the Spanish Colonial house is unique to Greensboro and reflects architectural influences from outside community traditions. Most of the buildings in the district were constructed by local craftsman who used local interpretations of national designs. A few architectural designs within the district can be attributed to professional architects. Many buildings, especially those dating from the early 19th century, were built using locally made or available building materials. The district also contains a wealth of historic outbuildings. There are several utilitarian groupings of outbuildings related to former farming operations. Other accessory structures, such as the many gazeboes, were for pleasure garden purposes.

Community Planning. This district is important in community planning since the district was founded and developed in accordance with the original town plan for Greensboro. The district encompasses the northeast corner of the original 1786 town plan. Walnut and North Streets do not extend as called for in the 1812 update of the original plan. This unique street configuration documents one quadrant of the original town plan. In doing so, it provides a sense of the scale and development

pattern envisioned by the community's founders. Elsewhere in Greensboro, the original plan, although still extant, has been extended. Characteristically, the original town plan was a regular gridiron of intersecting streets, with North and East Streets in this district constituting the limits of the planned area.

Agriculture. This district is significant in the agricultural history of Greensboro since many of the properties functioned as small town farmsteads. There are a number of outbuildings and large expanses of land at the rear of lots to document this former use of the property. For many years, Greensboro's economy was agriculturally based. Although most agricultural activity took place outside the city limits, in the large plantations in the county, some farming took place within the city limits. Most of this agricultural activity was limited to domestic or subsistence purposes. It characterizes the type of small-scale agricultural operations found historically in many small Georgia towns. Relatively few communities maintain evidence of this agricultural activity, however; growth and development has in most cases obliterated all signs. This district is significant in that historic tracts of land and relatively large groupings of historic agricultural outbuildings are present to document this aspect of the community's agricultural history.

CONTRIBUTING/NONCONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES:

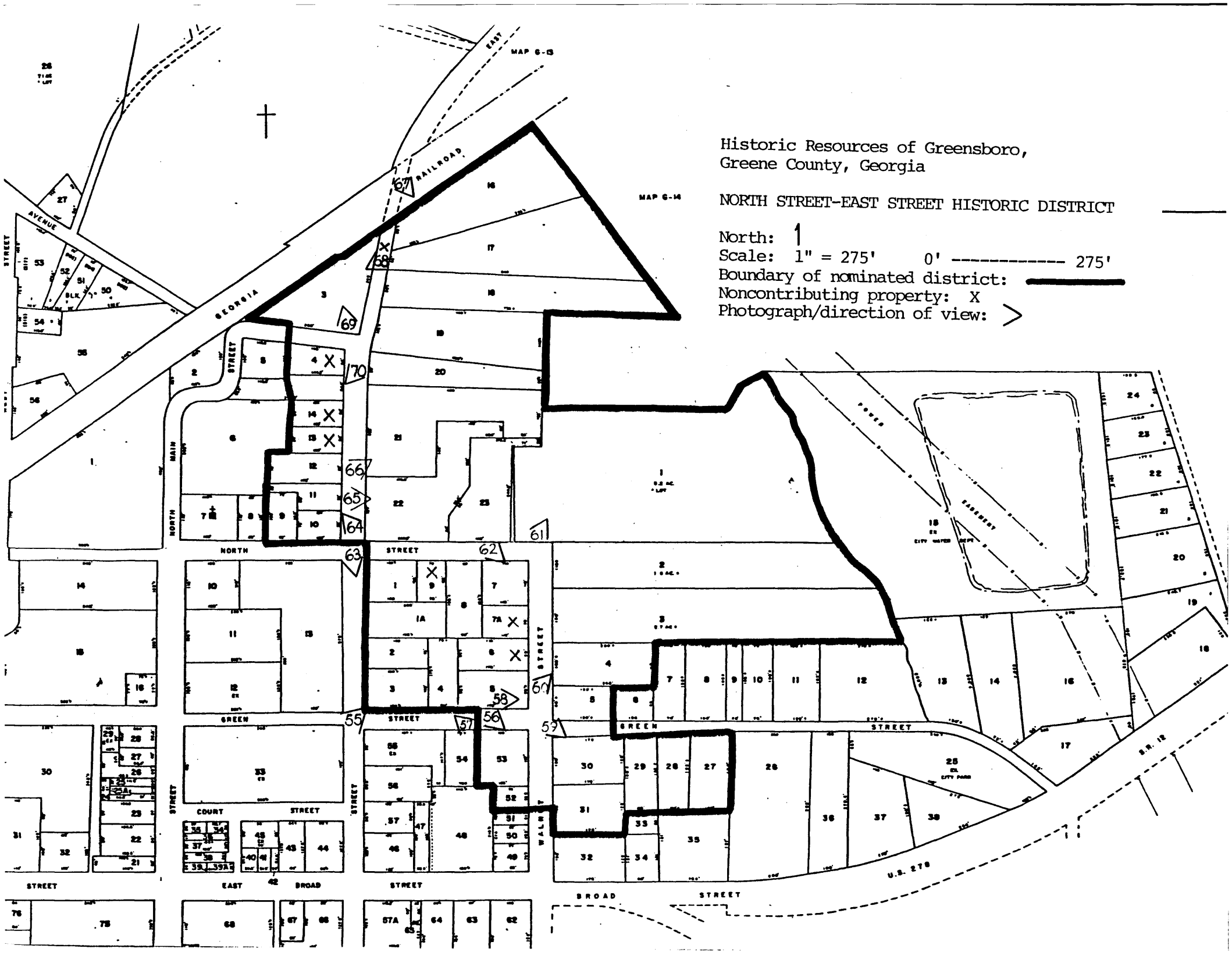
34 contributing buildings
6 noncontributing buildings
1 noncontributing structure (railroad overpass)
41 total resources

VII. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS: Historic Structures Field Survey: Greene County, Georgia (state-level survey)

BIBLIOGRAPHY: SEE Bibliography, Section 9, National Register Nomination Form

FORM PREPARED BY: SEE Form Prepared By, Section 11, National Register Nomination Form



Historic Resources of Greensboro,
Greene County, Georgia

NORTH STREET-EAST STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

North: ↑
 Scale: 1" = 275' 0' ----- 275'
 Boundary of nominated district: **—————**
 Noncontributing property: X
 Photograph/direction of view: >

MAP G-14

RAILROAD

GEORGIA

NORTH MAIN STREET

NORTH STREET

COURT STREET

EAST BROAD STREET

GREEN STREET

BROAD STREET

BROAD STREET

U.S. 278

18
CITY WATER

25
CITY PARK

1
0.2 AC.
L.P.

2
1 AC.

3
0.7 AC.

69

70

66

65

64

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