

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



533

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 Kensington Park-Groveland Historic District
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded DeRenne and Waters avenues and Abercorn and Johnston streets. not for publication
city or town Savannah vicinity
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 X 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 X 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 X local

Signature of certifying official/Title Dr. David C. Crass/Historic Preservation Division Director/Deputy SHPO Date 8 JUL 2014

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): _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

8/30/14
Date of Action

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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	
386	16	buildings
3	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
390	16	Total

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
LANDSCAPE: park

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling
LANDSCAPE: park

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)
LATE 19th AND Early 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:
Colonial Revival
MODERN MOVEMENT: Ranch
OTHER: Contemporary Style
OTHER: Split-Level House
OTHER: American Small House

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)
 foundation: brick; concrete
 walls: brick; wood; asbestos

 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

Kensington Park-Groveland is a post-World War II residential neighborhood located along DeRenne Avenue, south of downtown Savannah. Kensington Park was laid out in 1950 and the smaller adjacent Groveland neighborhood was planned that same year. The plan of streets in both neighborhoods is contiguous and includes wide, curvilinear roads, some lined with live oaks. Portions of Althea Parkway include a landscaped median and Reynolds Circle includes a small park. In addition, both developments include recreational parks, with the one in Kensington Park, including a pool and bathhouse, built in 1960. The combined neighborhood, which was constructed from 1950 to 1968, contains mostly Ranch houses in a variety of styles and types. These include the Colonial Revival style and the Contemporary style, which is reminiscent of Eichler houses that were popular on the West Coast. The Kensington Park-Groveland Ranch houses, which appear similar in both developments, vary from long linear and L-shaped houses to smaller compact, courtyard, and bungalow-type Ranch houses. Most are wood-framed with brick veneer, some clad in Savannah Grey brick. Most of the Ranch houses include low-pitched hip or gable roofs, garages or carports, and picture windows. The neighborhood also includes several American Small Houses from its earliest period of development and later examples of Split-Level houses. The houses are laid out with uniform setbacks from the street and include front lawns and a variety of ornamental plantings. The district retains a high degree of integrity.

Narrative Description

The following was written by Robert Ciucevich, Quatrefoil Consulting, with editing by HPD staff from the draft November 9, 2012 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, which is on file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

The Kensington Park-Groveland Historic District is located in the city of Savannah, on the southeast Georgia coast, approximately three miles south of downtown, in a suburban area of the city that developed in the mid-to-late 20th century. Kensington Park and Groveland are contiguous, but discrete single-family residential subdivisions, developed during the 1950s and early 1960s that display similar architectural and landscape characteristics as well as a common developmental history. Similar to the nearby 1920s and 1930s developments of Ardmore, Chatham Terrace, and Lee-Olin Heights neighborhoods, Kensington Park-Groveland was intended to be a moderately exclusive, restricted suburban development catering to Savannah's young middle- and upper-middle classes.

When Kensington Park and Groveland were laid out in 1950, the land south of DeRenne Avenue was woods and farmland located outside the city limits. The land was flat and suited to residential development. Savannah's city limits had been expanded south to DeRenne Avenue that same year. Although not developed by the same real estate interests, the subdivision plans for Kensington Park and the adjacent Fairway Oaks (National Register listed in 2009) mesh seamlessly and share several characteristics as they were both designed by the Savannah engineering firm of Thomas and Hutton. The platting and landscape for the Kensington Park-Groveland district is counted as one contributing site.

Most of the houses in the district are generally sited in the center of each lot and are of similar setback. In Kensington Park and Groveland, as in most mid-20th century subdivisions, there are no rear access lanes – rear access lanes had been dispensed with in order to maximize the size of the backyards and to increase privacy. More than half of the houses in the district feature integral or attached garages/carports or attached garage/carport wings. A moderate density of housing is generally consistent throughout the district, although houses are sited closer together on the smaller lots that line DeRenne and Waters drives.

Some of the first Ranch houses in the city were built in the mid-20th century on infill lots in Ardsley Park, Chatham Crescent, and Ardmore. A common characteristic of many of these early Ranch houses is the use of Savannah Grey brick as a veneer. This practice was carried over to the new, exclusive subdivisions that were developed in Savannah during the 1950s. As a result, a large number of houses in the Kensington Park-Groveland district – mostly, but not exclusively Ranch houses – feature Savannah Grey brick exteriors. Many of these houses are larger and more substantial than others in the district, are often located on large corner lots, and display a heightened attention to details, such as the house

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at 115 E. 73rd Street and the houses at 5501 Waters Drive and 12 Althea Parkway. However, there are some examples of Savannah Grey brick used in smaller, less ostentatious Ranch houses within the district. Examples include 221 Kensington Drive, 351 Oxford Drive, and 112 Andover Drive.

The common use of Savannah Grey brick as a premium building material for houses in upscale residential developments coincided with the introduction of the Ranch house in Savannah during the late 1940s. Savannah Grey bricks had been made at Henry McAlpin's Hermitage Plantation on the Savannah River just outside of Savannah. McAlpin had a brick works and iron foundry on the plantation. Most of the bricks manufactured in Savannah came from the Hermitage and were used in the reconstruction of Savannah after the fire of 1820. During the mid-20th century, the carriage houses along the lanes downtown, as well as whole rows of townhouses, were demolished for the bricks, as they had become a sought-after veneer for upscale suburban houses throughout Savannah.

Kensington Park

Framed by Oakdale (now Habersham Woods) subdivision on the south, Groveland on the west, Waters Avenue on the east, and DeRenne Avenue on the north, curvilinear streets were carved out of a wooded tract. DeRenne Drive was built parallel to DeRenne Avenue to serve as a neighborhood access road to home sites fronting DeRenne Avenue, a busy public thoroughfare. Existing mature oak and pine trees were retained in the median separating the two roads and azaleas were planted to provide a visual buffer. On the east, Waters Drive was built as an access road between the neighborhood and Waters Avenue (photograph 39). Althea Parkway, the formal entrance to the subdivision off Waters Avenue, features a landscaped median with a wrought-iron subdivision sign (photograph 40), as well as a pair of Savannah Grey brick and granite subdivision signs at its intersection with Waters Avenue. Secondary entrances from DeRenne Avenue at Reynolds and Paulsen streets also feature Savannah Grey brick and granite subdivision markers. There is a small circle, Reynolds Circle, located off the southwest side of Reynolds Street. Within the circle is an unnamed oval-shaped pocket park with a naturalistic landscape. All of Kensington Parks' 294 building lots vary in size and shape.

Groveland

Framed by Oakdale (now Habersham Woods) subdivision on the south, Kensington Park on the east, DeRenne Avenue on the north, and undeveloped land (now commercial strip development along Abercorn Street) on the west, streets were carved out of the wooded tract that is now Groveland. DeRenne Drive was built along DeRenne Avenue to serve as a neighborhood access road to home sites fronting DeRenne Avenue, a busy public thoroughfare (photograph 38). Habersham Street is the main entrance to the subdivision. All of Groveland's 107 building lots vary in size and shape.

Streets in each subdivision were paved in stages as construction progressed south from DeRenne Avenue. Althea Parkway, DeRenne Drive, and the eastern section of Oxford Drive were all paved when Kensington Park was opened in 1950, as this was the first section of the subdivision to be developed. Most streets in Groveland were paved after 1956 following the extension of Abercorn Street south of DeRenne Avenue. The planting of oak trees along many of the streets augmented the natural wooded landscape of the lots in each subdivision.

Community Parks

Groveland Community Park was established by the Groveland Men's Club in 1955 on a 1.5-acre tract bordering 74th Street (photographs 26 and 27). A community house was constructed on the site in 1958. The Groveland Men's and Groveland Garden clubs are no longer in existence and the park and community house are today owned by the Savannah Jaycees Foundation. Kensington Community Park was established by the Kensington Park Association in 1956 on a 4.5-acre tract located at the end of Althea Parkway south of Kensington Drive (photograph 19). A swimming pool and bathhouse were constructed on the site in 1960. The pool and pool house are now owned by a private interest. Each of the two recreational parks within the district is counted as a contributing site; the bath/clubhouses are counted as contributing buildings; and the pool is a contributing object.

Types and Styles

Comprised of houses generally constructed between 1950 and 1960, Kensington Park and Groveland feature one of the earliest and best collections of mid-20th century domestic architecture in Savannah, representing a number of the architectural styles and types commonly built in middle- to upper-middle-class neighborhoods in Georgia at this time.

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House types, as identified in the statewide context, *Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in their Landscaped Settings*, relate to the overall form, plan, or layout plus the height. The style refers to decoration or ornament, as well as to the design of the overall form.

Stylistic influences in the district include Colonial Revival and Contemporary. Among the house types are Ranch, American Small House, and Split Level. Most houses within the district are one-story in height, are of balloon frame construction, and feature brick veneer exterior. Most houses feature 6/6 and 8/8 wood windows, although metal casement windows (aluminum and steel) are found on some of the early Ranch houses in the district.

The more substantial, high-style residences are located in the more secluded southern portion of the district along Oxford, Camelot, Andover, and Kensington drives. Although not confirmed, several of these residences appear to be architect designed.

Styles

Very few houses in the district are indicative of any one academic style. When present, **Colonial Revival** is the most common. Late period examples of the style within the district often feature side-gable roofs; sidelights; 6/6, 8/8, and 12/12 wood windows; three-sided bay windows; and hyphen-garage wings. Full height, floor-to-ceiling windows along façade porches, as well as decorative wrought-iron railings and porch supports, are also common. Most of the Colonial Revival-style houses in the district are linear Ranch houses – such as the houses at 211 Andover Drive and 1511 Waters Drive. A majority of examples within the district are minimal expressions of the style and often feature one element as the only style characteristic.

Almost equally well represented and having a prominent place in the district are several **Contemporary**-style houses. Originating in California and the Southwest during the 1930s and 1940s, the Contemporary style stripped away all historical and picturesque design references and retained traditional house forms, usually with broad, low, gabled and hip roofs. Unlike its modern counterpart, the International style, the Contemporary style generally embodied traditional building materials such as wood, brick, and stucco rather than new industrial materials. Good examples of the Contemporary style in the district are the Ranch houses at 5545 Camelot Drive (photograph 14) and 7 Reynolds Circle (photograph 32) with their broad front-facing gable roofs (often referred to as an "Eichler" style house after the California developer Joseph Eichler who first commissioned the style in the early 1950s). Shed-roof iterations of the Contemporary style are located at 204 Andover Drive and 22 Althea Parkway (photograph 34). A Split Level version of the style is at 5407 Reynolds Street. The house at 213 Oxford Drive (photograph 28) is an exceptional example of the California Contemporary-style Ranch house with its broad, low-pitched gable roof with exposed beams, Oriental-styled flared eaves, and integrated courtyard.

Several Contemporary-style Ranch houses in the district are of the same type and share the same basic form as the earlier, more traditional examples, yet feature clean-cut styling and the absence of historical motifs, metal-and-glass curtain walls, and bands of sliding, glass, clerestory windows, such as the examples at 216 Oxford Drive and 227 E. DeRenne Drive.

Types

Like most domestic architecture of the mid-20th century, a majority of houses in the district display more of an emphasis on building form and type than style. House types represented in the district include the American Small House, the Ranch house, the Split Level, and a few two-story houses. The Ranch-type house is by far the predominant house type in the district, as over 90% of the houses in the district are of this type.

The 20th-century Ranch house was invented in the mid-1930s by California architects and gained popularity during the 1940s to become the dominant house type throughout the country during the 1950s and 1960s. The sprawling design of the Ranch house, which generally was oriented lengthwise across the width of its lot, was perfectly suited for the large lots that were offered in the new housing developments of 1950s suburbia such as Kensington Park and Groveland. These houses are one-story houses featuring low-pitched hip or side-gable roofs, moderately overhanging boxed eaves, paired and triple windows, picture windows, sliding-glass doors, large chimneys, and integral carports and garages.

There are many good examples of the Ranch-type house in Kensington Park and Groveland, ranging from more involved examples that typically feature Savannah Grey brick exteriors and decorative wrought-iron detailing to more basic

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examples that are commonly found in practically every mid-20th-century subdivision across the country. As in other places, the majority of the Ranch houses in Kensington Park and Groveland belong to the vast "middle ground" of Ranch houses in Savannah and Georgia.

Both Kensington Park and Groveland contain at least one example of each of the **eight subtypes** identified in the statewide context, *The Ranch House in Georgia: Guidelines for Evaluation*. The **Compact** Ranch house subtype is described as a small, simply massed Ranch house that is barely rectangular, almost square, such as the examples at 5419 Reynolds Street and 343 Oxford Drive.

Perhaps the most numerous of the subtypes identified in the district, the **Linear** Ranch House is similar to the Compact Ranch House but longer and therefore, clearly rectangular in shape, such as the examples at 5401 Waters Drive, 12 Althea Parkway, 350 Kensington Drive, and 115 E. 73rd Street.

There are also several examples of the **Linear-with-Clusters** Ranch house in the district, such as the houses at 301 E. DeRenne Drive, 134 Varn Drive, 308 Oxford Drive, 304 Kensington Drive, and 109 E. 73rd Street. The house at 5553 Camelot Drive, a substantial and exceptional example of the Contemporary style, is also one of the best examples of the Linear-with-Clusters Ranch House in the district. The long, linear form of the house together with the overall "T" shape identifies this Ranch house as belonging to the Linear-with-Clusters subtype – the "cluster" of bedrooms at one end of the house project off the façade and rear of the building, articulating its shape.

Characteristic of the **Courtyard** Ranch House subtype, the example at 301 Kensington Drive features two gabled façade wings that embrace a courtyard and integral porch in the center. More numerous in the district is the "truncated courtyard" iteration of the Courtyard Ranch house, such as the examples at 320 Kensington Drive and 132 Andover Drive.

Half-Courtyard or **L-shaped** Ranch houses are relatively rare within the district. This subtype features a "half-courtyard" formed by the intersection of two wings of the house, such as the red brick examples at 303 and 308 Kensington Drive, as well as the Contemporary-style example at 255 Kensington Drive.

301 Oxford Drive is an example of the **Rambling** Ranch House subtype – a long, low, Ranch house that "rambles" all over its lot in a seemingly formless way, yet usually according to a logic of setbacks and offsets. Like most fully developed iterations, this example features three distinct setbacks – an identifying characteristic of the subtype. Other examples in the district are 250 Varn Drive, 344 Kensington Drive, 109 Andover Drive, and 122 Andover Drive.

The houses at 5532 Habersham Street in Groveland and 267 E. DeRenne Drive in Kensington Park are good examples of **Bungalow** Ranch Houses – an early, less numerous iteration of Ranch house that is characterized by a nearly square plan, which is often as deep as, or deeper than, it is wide.

The V-shaped house at 264 Varn Drive is the only example of an **Alphabet** Ranch house found in the district. Alphabet Ranch Houses are relatively rare and are defined by their unorthodox forms that usually resemble a letter of the alphabet.

The **Split-Level** house type is represented in the district by only about a half-dozen examples, most dating from the mid-1950s (photographs 4 and 10). The Split-Level house often displays the horizontal lines, low-pitched roof, and overhanging eaves of its contemporary, the Ranch house, but it consists of two sections with three floor levels. The levels include a one-story section, with family living areas (living, dining, and kitchen areas), generally at or near ground level, and a second section with two floors, generally containing bedrooms and bathrooms in the upper section, and a garage, recreation room, or additional bedrooms in the lower section, a half-floor down from the living section. Often thought of as a derivative of the Ranch house, the Split Level developed concurrently with, but largely independently of, the Ranch. Although it reached its greatest popularity in the mid-to-late 1950s, nationally and in Georgia, the Split Level can be traced back through the 1930s, with mass-marketed versions being offered by companies such as Sears, Roebuck and Co. and with custom designs being developed by prominent architects including Frank Lloyd Wright, to its apparent origins in California in the early 20th century with precedent-setting multi-level houses designed for steeply sloping lots by Frank Lloyd Wright. In Georgia, the earliest documented Split-Level house is a 1940 example in the Peachtree Park neighborhood in Atlanta. Most examples date from the mid-1950s into the 1960s. An early example in the district is 261 E. DeRenne Drive – a compact, red brick Split-Level house with metal casement windows on the mid level and glass jalousie windows in the upper level. Built in 1951, this house is the only example in Groveland. In Kensington Park, the houses at 6 Althea Parkway and 314 Kensington Drive (photograph 10) are good examples of the type found within the district. Like many examples in the district, both of these examples display vague Colonial Revival stylistic references – a

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common characteristic of the type. The house at 300 Kensington Drive, however, is the best example of the Split Level in the district and one of the best examples of the Contemporary style. The architect is unknown. The building displays a sleek, modern design that accentuates the low horizontality of the Ranch house while employing the low-pitched roof and widely overhanging eaves of the Prairie style. Other features include a red brick veneer exterior, bands of horizontal 2/2 wood windows, a distinctive two-tier entry porch with a large, multi-light, aluminum-frame window over the door, and brick screen wall with a vertical row of square openings intended to emit light. The Contemporary-style Split-Level house at 5407 Reynolds Street is similar to 300 Kensington Drive apart from its Savannah Grey brick exterior.

Despite its popularity during the mid-20th century, there are less than a dozen examples of the **American Small House** type in the district. The type was developed as an economical and practical alternative to larger, more traditional housing types and gained popularity during the late 1930s to become the dominant house type throughout the country including Georgia. The American Small Houses within the district are small, one-story, balloon-framed, clapboard and brick-veneered houses with low-pitched, side-gable roofs such as the example at 5410 Habersham Street (1953), which also features a projecting gable in the façade, another common characteristic. Most of these houses in the district were built in the early 1950s.

There are a few **two-story houses** in the district. This conforms to a trend in Georgia and elsewhere in the country where one-story and Split-Level houses predominated during the mid-20th century. The two-story house at 217 Oxford Drive (1958), which displays some Contemporary-style elements at the entrance, resembles a Split-Level house but lacks the requisite three levels of floors. This house may also be classified as a "stacked" Ranch house as it features a long, narrow first floor devoted to family space and service-related functions (integral garage) and a truncated second floor intended for bedrooms.

Noncontributing Resources

The Kensington Park-Groveland Historic District has retained its integrity through both the landscape and the houses. Of the 401 houses in the district, only 16 are non-contributing. These include houses built after the period of significance and a few houses that have lost their integrity through major alterations. Examples of noncontributing houses include 344 Althea Parkway, 237 Kensington Drive, 206 Varn Drive, 5525 Camelot Drive, and 135 E. DeRenne Drive.

Setting and Surroundings

The areas surrounding the Kensington Park-Groveland Historic District contain concentrations of historic resources. East of the district, directly across Waters Road, is the National Register-listed Fairway Oaks-Groveland Historic District, a mid-20th century subdivision. North of the district, directly across DeRenne Avenue is the Medical Arts Center area, the Candler Hospital, the St. Joseph's/Candler Medical Office Park, and c.1950 Manor Estates Subdivision. South of Kensington Park-Groveland is Groveland Circle (late 1960s/early 1970s), the 1950-1960s Habersham Woods subdivision, and the 1950s Oakdale subdivision.

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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

Period of Significance

1950 - 1968

Significant Dates

1950 – Kensington Park & Groveland established

1955 – Kensington Park Association and Groveland Men's Club established

1955 - Groveland Community Park established

1956 – Kensington Community Park established

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Altman, George G. (builder)

Armstrong, Hugh (builder)

Boykin, Ed (builder)

Nowell, Vernon H. (architect)

Thomas, Richard S. (architect)

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Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance, 1950-1968, encompasses the continuous period of development of this mid-century residential suburb. House types and styles are consistent throughout this period and represent prevailing designs in Savannah and Georgia. The period of significance ends in 1968 when 98% of the available lots had been built on and the suburb was essentially fully developed.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Kensington Park-Groveland Historic District is significant as one of the first residential subdivisions built in Savannah after World War II. The Kensington Park-Groveland Historic District is significant in the area of architecture because the district contains one of the best collections of mid-20th-century houses in Savannah. The district includes American Small Houses, Split-Level houses, and Ranch houses, which are the most prevalent house type in the neighborhood. They were built primarily in the Colonial Revival and Contemporary styles. The district is significant in the area of community planning and development because it is one of the first Savannah suburbs developed for upper-middle-class homeowners outside the city limits. Its plan, laid out in 1950, featured curvilinear streets, cul-de-sacs, and 294 house lots. The smaller Groveland development, also laid out in 1950, included curvilinear streets and 107 house lots. These neighborhoods capitalized on new ideas about "country" living in the suburbs and in doing so, broke Savannah's 200-year tradition of the gridiron plan based on the 1733 Oglethorpe plan. Kensington Park and Groveland were among a string of residential suburbs developed on the south side of the city along DeRenne Avenue, including Fairway Oaks, the first suburb in Savannah. The historic district is also significant for its early homeowners' associations, which were social organizations dedicated to improving the quality of life in the neighborhood. The Kensington Park Association and the Groveland Men's Club were established in 1955. These groups sought to lower the speed limit on DeRenne Avenue, petition for natural gas, and, in Kensington Park, construct a pool and bathhouse. The Kensington Park Garden Club (1953) and the Groveland Garden Club (1954) were women's clubs organized around the beautification of the neighborhood.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The following was written by Robert Ciucevich, Quatrefoil Consulting, with editing by HPD staff from the draft November 9, 2012 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, which is on file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

The Kensington Park-Groveland Historic District is significant at the local level under Criterion C in architecture for its good intact collection of residential types and styles, as identified in two statewide contexts: *Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings* and in *The Ranch House in Georgia: Guidelines for Evaluation*. Comprised of houses generally constructed between 1950 and 1968, Kensington Park and Groveland feature one of the best collections of mid-20th-century domestic architecture in Savannah, representing a variety of architectural styles and house types built in middle- to upper-middle-class neighborhoods in Savannah. Excellent examples of mid-century architectural styles include Colonial Revival and Contemporary-style houses. The house types represented are excellent examples of the Ranch house, the Split Level, the American Small House, and the mid-20th-century two-story house. These house types and styles predominated in Georgia during the middle of the 20th century. Most houses within the district are one story in height, are of balloon-frame construction, and feature a brick-veneer exterior. A distinctive common characteristic of many houses built in Kensington Park and Groveland is the use of Savannah Grey bricks as a premium veneer brick utilized by local contractors throughout Savannah in the construction of upscale housing during the late 1950s. Many houses feature 6/6 and 8/8 double-hung wood windows – especially those with Colonial Revival designs, although metal sash and casement windows are common for Ranch houses and Split-Level houses in the district, especially but not exclusively, for those designed in the Contemporary style or in no architectural style.

The district is also significant in architecture for its houses designed by well-known local architects. Richard S. Thomas, AIA, a prominent local architect, designed several model tract houses for McIntosh and Company as part of their "Kensington Park Homes" development of 1950, which was concentrated along the 300 block of DeRenne and Oxford

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drives in Kensington Park. The house at 327 E. DeRenne Drive – with its clean lines, low pitched roof, and metal casement windows, is a good example of the Linear-with-Clusters Ranch house that Thomas designed as one of the “more functional and modern” house models for the development. The model tract houses at 321 and 323 E. DeRenne Avenue – with their side-gable roofs, gable wings, and similar but differing floor plans – are simple Linear Ranch type houses. Thomas is well known for his 1950s modern designs of commercial, school, and religious buildings, which include the Konter Grocery Store, an addition to the Richard Arnold, Jr. High School, and the Bull Street Baptist Church Educational Building, but is perhaps best known for the tract housing he designed during the 1950s and 1960s. Local developers and contractors built his plans in numerous subdivisions throughout Savannah. Vernon H. Nowell, a prominent local architect and resident of Groveland, designed the Contemporary-style house at 253 Varn Drive as his personal residence. Built in 1954, the house features a low-pitched gable roof with exposed beams, sliding-sash clerestory windows, decorative cast-concrete-block porch wall, and open floorplan is indicative of the Contemporary-style Ranch house. Nowell is best known for his late 1950s and early 1960s modern designs of religious and public buildings in Savannah. These include the WSAV TV and Radio Station (as an associate of the seminal Savannah firm of Bergen & Bergen), Grace Methodist Church, and Memorial Baptist Church, and later the Savannah Civic Center as a partner of the firm Nowell and Ritzert.

Developed in 1950, Kensington Park and Groveland are significant at the local level under Criterion A in community planning and development as being among the first residential developments in Savannah to break with the traditional “pre-war” mode of planning and to adopt all of the elements of the Federal Housing Administration’s preferred pattern of subdivision development. Rather than continuing the standard grid pattern of landscaped streets and uniform lot sizes used in early 20th –century suburban Savannah developments such as Ardsley Park, Chatham Crescent, Ardmore, and Lee-Olin Heights, Kensington Park-Groveland featured large wooded lots of varying shapes and sizes set among a series of curvilinear streets. The location of the subdivision outside the Savannah city limits, and near the public golf course at Bacon Park, provided the illusion of country club living.

Although a few small, postwar residential developments in Savannah employed the limited use of curvilinear streets in their plans, (for example, the c.1949 Lamara Heights Subdivision and the c.1950 Lamara and Nelson apartment complexes to the north of DeRenne Avenue), Kensington Park and Groveland were among the first modern, upscale, single-family subdivisions in Savannah to adopt all of the elements of the modern mid-20th –century preferred pattern for subdivision development. This subdivision pattern traces its roots to the mid-19th century, although it did not become widespread until the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In Georgia, Atlanta’s Druid Hills, initially planned by Frederick Law Olmsted, was one of the first large-scale “picturesque” subdivisions in the state. The first golf course subdivisions also follow this pattern and have continued to do so to this day. Brookhaven, in north Atlanta, developed starting in the 1910s, was one of the first golf course subdivisions in the Southeast to employ this pattern. (Both Druid Hills and Brookhaven are listed in the National Register.) During the 1930s, the newly formed Federal Housing Administration (FHA) adopted the pattern and many of its characteristics, including the curvilinear street plan, cul-de-sacs, irregularly shaped lots, and isolation from major thoroughfares, as the preferred subdivision pattern (as opposed to the traditional grid pattern of development). This “official” action in turn spawned many new developments all across the country, first with the American Small House and then Ranch-type houses. It appears that the Savannah real estate community was initially slow to adopt the FHA’s model subdivision pattern as practically all of the new residential developments built during the city’s late 1940s building boom continued the pre-war grid plan. The one exception appears to have been the Forrest Hills subdivision, north of DeRenne Avenue and east of the Casey Canal, a neighborhood of American Small Houses that was developed starting in 1947 with a curvilinear plan. Fairway Oaks, starting in 1950, was Savannah’s first upscale subdivision, featuring the new and larger mid-century Ranch, Split Level, and two-story houses, to adopt the FHA’s subdivision model. It was quickly followed by nearby Kensington Park (1950), Groveland (1950), and Magnolia Park (c.1953). All four of these mid-century subdivisions border DeRenne Avenue on the north and are located adjacent to one another between Abercorn Street and Skidaway Road. While all of these subdivisions were developed to take advantage of their respective proximity to Bacon Park, Fairway Oaks is the only one of the four that adjoins the public golf course.

Fully built out by the mid-1960s, Kensington Park-Groveland was considered among the most modern communities of its era and was home to some of the most significant business and civic leaders of 1950s and 1960s Savannah. Kensington Park and Groveland are also significant for the Kensington Park Association and Groveland Men’s Club, non-profit neighborhood organizations founded for improving the quality of life in the newly established suburban communities. Early, privately funded civic improvements included a neighborhood park with community house established by the Groveland Men’s Club and a neighborhood park with community pool and bathhouse by the Kensington Park Association during the mid-to-late 1950s. Established in 1955, the Kensington Park Association and the Groveland Men’s Club were

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among the earliest such organizations in Georgia and appear to have been among the first such neighborhood associations in Savannah. It was a harbinger of the many similar homeowners' or civic organizations that were to be subsequently established in other new suburban communities, especially after the early 1960s.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

The following was written by Bob Ciucevich, Quatrefoil Consulting, with minimal editing by HPD staff from the draft November 9, 2012 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, which is on file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia. The introductory paragraph about Savannah's historic development is from the "Fairway Oaks-Groveland Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" (National Register listed in 2009).

Savannah's historic development up to the middle of the 20th century is reflected to a large degree by some of its existing National Register historic districts that span the time from the founding of the city by James Oglethorpe in 1733 through its early 20th-century suburban development. The 18th- and early 19th-century periods are represented by the Savannah Historic District (National Register and National Historic Landmark, 1966) that extends from the Savannah River south to Gwinnett Street in the middle of Forsyth Park. The city's growth during the second half of the 19th-century is represented by the Savannah Victorian District (National Register, 1974) that extends from the southern boundary of the Savannah Historic District to West Anderson Street. Turn-of-the-century development is embodied in the Thomas Square Streetcar Historic District (National Register, 1997) extending from the southern boundary of the Savannah Victorian Historic District to Victory Drive. Savannah's early 20th-century suburban development is manifest in the Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent Historic District (National Register, 1985) and the adjacent Daffin Park/Parkside Historic District (National Register, 1999) that span from Victory Drive south to approximately 51st Street. Between 51st Street and DeRenne Avenue is a 20-block area of mixed, small-scale, early to mid-20th-century residential and commercial developments, culminating in mid-20th-century to early 21st-century commercial and institutional developments along the north side of DeRenne Avenue. South of DeRenne Avenue and north of the Eisenhower Parkway, between Abercorn Street on the west and the Casey Canal on the east, is a large area of mid-20th-century residential development. It is in this area that the Kensington Park-Groveland Historic District is located.

Before the beginning of World War II, the last significant residential developments in Savannah were Ardmere, Gould Estates, and Lee-Olin Heights. In 1945 these subdivisions made up Savannah's southernmost suburbs and were situated just inside the city limits, some distance north of the future location of the Kensington Park-Groveland suburb. Like most residential real estate developments, these subdivisions continued the traditional grid pattern plan that had been used in Savannah. Most of the houses in these developments were typical of pre-World War II America, consisting of bungalows, English Cottage, and American Small House types with Craftsman, Tudor, and Colonial Revival styles predominating.

Following the end of World War II, Savannah, like many communities throughout the nation, was faced with a severe housing shortage. Aided by the technical guidance and home-mortgage guarantees of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), Savannah entered into a two-decades-long building boom that resulted in the establishment of several new subdivisions on the south and east sides of the city, and the subsequent expansion of the city limits from 60th Street to DeRenne Avenue on the south and from Bee Road and the Casey Canal to Skidaway Road on the east. Influenced by national trends, the Savannah real estate community started to break with traditional local development patterns during this time and began adopting more contemporary practices, marking a transition between pre-war development and the Cold War-era subdivisions of the early 1950s. Although residential subdivision developments continued the use of the grid pattern plan of streets and rear access lanes, building lots offered during this time were generally larger and wider, houses were set farther back on lots, and the construction of sidewalks was largely discontinued.

Abercorn Park, located on 60th Street and developed in 1949, was one of the first subdivisions to offer larger lots. According to an article in the *Savannah Morning News* that announced the opening of the subdivision ("Abercorn Park Subdivision is Opening Today," March 20, 1949), the subdivision "starts east from Bull Street, crosses Abercorn and extends 2/3 of the way to Habersham Street." A key feature of the development was the larger size of the lots:

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The (sic) realtors have departed from the 60-foot frontage which is traditional with Savannah's real estate, and are restricting Abercorn Park's land packages to 70-foot and 90-foot frontages with a depth of 120 feet.

The article went on to state that all of "the houses will each be individual in architecture and will be built to FHA specifications."

Although the development was small – consisting of only 34 home sites – it was significant as it helped set several precedents. It offered a variety of larger lot sizes, houses were set back farther from the street (as a result of the increased lot depth) and sidewalks were dispensed with. In addition, the expanded width and depth of the lots were ideal for the sprawling form of the new Ranch type house. By 1950 two similar small subdivisions were established along Abercorn Street immediately south of Abercorn Park – Abercorn Heights and Manor Estates – which continued this innovative but small-scale pattern of development on both sides of Abercorn Street from 61st Street to DeRenne Avenue. As a result, this area constitutes one of the earliest concentrations of Ranch houses in Savannah.

Lamara Heights, also developed in 1949, was the largest (150 large wooded lots) and most significant subdivision development of the late 1940s. Located between 60th Street and 65th Street on the north and south, and Reynolds and Habersham Streets on the east and west (respectively), the subdivision was located in the heart of Savannah's immediate postwar area of development. The new subdivision was developed by the Lamara Company. Formed in 1949 by C.H. Mason, Jr., J.J. Raders, Jr., and William Lattimore – the same group who were developing the nearby Abercorn Park – the Lamara Company was organized to "undertake land development and simultaneously pursue an active construction program." According to a *Savannah Morning News* article that announced the opening of the subdivision ("Woodmere Tract Sold; Lamara Heights Will be Developed in Area," November 13, 1949), Lamara Heights was the "largest subdivision development in 10 years" and made available "the much needed home sites for Savannah's extension." Although the company intended the development to be "in keeping with the pre-war planning of Savannah's residential developments," the developers adopted the same pattern of development (larger lots, deeper setback, no sidewalks) for Lamara Heights as they had used in Abercorn Park earlier that year while taking their concept for a modern residential subdivision a step farther. As reported in the *Savannah Morning News*:

A portion of the new subdivision was deeded to the city for a grammar school and park area ... in addition to educational facilities, a suburban business district will be created at the northwestern end of the new subdivision.

As a result, J.G. Smith Elementary School (c.1950) was established in the upper northwest corner of the development, while Lamara Heights Shopping Center (c.1950) – now Habersham Village – was built between 61st and 63rd streets, essentially creating a commercial corridor along this section of Habersham Street. The Lamara Company was one of the first land developers in Savannah to embrace FHA principles by taking a multiple-use approach in planning residential subdivisions and perhaps the first to tie in the now ubiquitous suburban shopping center into a residential subdivision plan.

In 1950 the Lamara Company added a multiple family dimension to their multi-use development through the establishment of the FHA-approved Lamara Apartments, a large multi-unit, 30-acre complex of duplex bungalows located on the corner of DeRenne Avenue and Habersham Street, immediately south of Lamara Heights. Along with the Abercorn Terrace Apartments (c.1947, located next to the Lamara Heights Shopping Center) and the Nelson Apartments (c.1950, adjacent Lamara Apartments along DeRenne Avenue), the Lamara Apartments provided affordable housing for young, growing middle-class families within a convenient and small-scale suburban environment. According to a *Savannah Morning News* article that announced the new development ("150-Unit Housing Project Planned: Second Big Development Announced for South End," March 2, 1950), the Lamara Apartments featured the "first three-bedroom apartments in Georgia" to be authorized for construction by the FHA. The article points out that "the complex will feature at least five playgrounds" and "will be located within a few blocks of the new school being constructed on Lamara Drive (J.G. Smith Elementary School in Lamara Heights). The article goes on to state that "each bungalow will have a spacious yard and a porch" and that "the three-bedroom units are designed especially to meet the urgent needs of large families." The article also points out the reason for the urgency behind providing this new housing:

The development will be situated only eight tenths of a mile from Hunter Field, which will soon become an Air Force base.

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Savannah's postwar expansion coincided with the advent of the Cold War era and the birth of the "military industrial complex." Locally, the military build up that resulted from our nation's struggle against the Soviet Union and its communist allies led to the establishment of a permanent military installation at Hunter Field in 1951. Hunter Air Force Base became the home of the 38th Air Division of the Strategic Air Command (SAC), which was made up of the 2nd (assigned 1951) and 308th (assigned 1952) bomb wings. The initial establishment of the base in 1951 brought a compliment of 4,600 officers and airmen and their families to Savannah, as well as civilian defense workers whose skills were needed to help with the day-to-day operations of the facility. This number increased to 7,000 with the addition of a second bomb wing (the 308th) in 1952. Because of its close proximity to the base, as well as to schools and shopping, the Lamara and Nelson apartments provided ideal and convenient housing alternatives for military families living off base and newly relocated civilian defense workers. Abercorn Terrace Apartments, with its one- and two-bedroom townhouses, was particularly popular with single officers stationed at the base.

After 1950 Savannah's real estate developers accepted a new standard for residential development that broke with the traditional pre-war mode of planning that had for the most part been employed up to this point. Rather than continuing the standard grid pattern of landscaped streets and uniform lot sizes, Savannah's developers fully adopted the FHA's preferred pattern for subdivision development and began offering new subdivisions that featured large wooded lots of varying shapes and sizes set among a network of curvilinear streets. This subdivision pattern traces its roots to the mid-19th century, although it did not become widespread throughout the country until the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In Georgia, Atlanta's Druid Hills, which was initially planned by Frederick Law Olmsted, was one of the first "picturesque" subdivisions in the state. The first golf-course subdivisions also followed this pattern and have continued to do so to this day. Brookhaven, in north Atlanta, developed starting in the 1910s, was one of the first golf-course subdivisions in the Southeast to employ this pattern. During the 1930s, the Federal Housing Administration adopted the pattern and many of its characteristics as the preferred subdivision pattern (as opposed to the traditional grid pattern), which spawned many new developments with first the American Small House and then Ranch houses. It appears that the Savannah real-estate community was initially slow to adopt the FHA's model subdivision pattern as practically all of the new residential developments built during the late 1940s building boom were a continuation of the pre-war grid plan. A few postwar developments – Lamara Heights, Lamara Apartments, Nelson Apartments – employed the limited use of curvilinear streets in their plans. One exception was Forrest Hills subdivision, a neighborhood of American Small Houses developed in 1947 and marketed to the lower-income range of single-family homebuyers. Located on the northwest corner of Skidaway Road and DeRenne Avenue within the city limits, Forrest Hills appears to be the first example in Savannah of a subdivision utilizing the FHA's approved subdivision pattern.

Fairway Oaks (c.1950), Groveland (1950), Kensington Park (1950), and Magnolia Park (1953) were the first "upscale" subdivisions in Savannah to adopt the FHA's subdivision model. All four of these subdivisions border DeRenne Avenue on the north and are located adjacent to one another between Abercorn Street and Skidaway Road. In addition to proximity and geographic location, these subdivisions shared other similarities, evidenced by sales and promotional literature, as they were developed to "fulfill a widespread demand for large wooded home sites in a suburban setting" in which "each building site has been planned for the maximum scenic effect in its outlook on the winding streets." They combined the relatively new FHA model subdivision plans (curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs, isolated from major thoroughfares, and irregularly shaped lots) with the new mid-century house types including the Ranch and Split-Level houses. Each of these subdivisions shared many common characteristics and was marketed in a similar way. A brochure created by the Lamara Company for Magnolia Park could easily be used to describe any of these subdivisions:

Magnolia Park Subdivision has been created to fulfill (the) demand ... *for better type homes which (have) large lots and plenty of trees (paraphrase)*. For the first time in many years, an area strategically located directly in the path of the city's growth has been selected, planned, and developed to provide large homesites, each studded with magnificent trees, conveniently located to schools, shopping centers, and public transportation.

Of these subdivisions, Fairway Oaks was the first and the most exclusive, and featured some of the best-appointed houses displaying the very latest in modern domestic design to be found in suburban Savannah during the early to mid-1950s. It was the first subdivision developed south of DeRenne Avenue and was the earliest upscale subdivision in Savannah to feature large wooded lots of varying shapes and sizes set along curvilinear streets. Developed only a few

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months later, Kensington Park and Groveland are both very similar to Fairway Oaks having similar subdivision plans and characteristics as well as houses of comparable design and quality.

Before Kensington Park and Groveland were laid out in 1950, the land south of DeRenne Avenue was woods and farmland located outside the city limits (Savannah's city limits were expanded south to DeRenne Avenue in 1950). Kensington Park was established on the former site of Kensington Farm while Groveland was established from a portion of original acreage belonging to Poplar Grove Plantation.

Kensington Farm was a late 19th/early 20th century farm located on the west side of Waters Avenue at its intersection with DeRenne Avenue. Several period records, such as the c.1864 *Lloyd's Topographical Map of Georgia*, indicate that this land was once part of an antebellum plantation of the same name. In 1888, one-third of the plantation's remaining acreage, referred to in courthouse records as "North Kensington" as it was the northernmost section of the overall L-shaped tract, was sold to Louis Witte who developed the land into a residential subdivision, which he named "Kensington."

Kensington Subdivision was among the new speculative, grid-pattern communities that were established during this time on outlying farmland south of Victory Drive following the completion of the City and Suburban street railroad in 1871 that connected Savannah to the Isle of Hope and other summer resort communities in Chatham County. A sales ad for a comparable development named "Sackville," which appeared in the June 14, 1890 edition of the *Savannah Morning News*, contained a location map providing directions to this new subdivision in which Kensington is clearly depicted. The remaining two-thirds of Kensington Plantation, a rectangular tract which consisted of 122 acres and was known by that time as Kensington Farms, was located immediately south of Kensington Subdivision on the opposite side of the road now known as DeRenne Avenue. While it is likely that Kensington Farm continued to be used for agricultural purposes through the first decades of the 20th century, the extension of Savannah's city limits south to 52nd Street in 1910 accelerated the transition of land usage in the area from farmland to prime real estate for residential and commercial development. As part of this trend, a second residential subdivision, South Gardens (originally called Lowden Heights), was established opposite Kensington on the northeast corner of DeRenne and Waters avenues in 1921. Perhaps because of the escalating value of the land, J. Palmer Browne, the owner of Kensington Farm, sold the east half of the tract to Frank J. Garbutt in 1923, most likely as an investment. Development of the area for residential purposes continued during the early 1930s with the establishment of Oakdale in 1933, a very large subdivision located on the west side of Waters Avenue just below Kensington Farms forming its southern border. None of these early subdivisions were very successful, however, as only a few dozen houses – mostly small bungalows and cottages, were built in the developments during the 1920s and 1930s, with the majority of the construction occurring in South Gardens.

By the end of World War II, the construction of several FHA approved and financed housing developments – particularly the c.1941 Ridgewood Subdivision, c.1942 Ridgewood Annex, and c.1947 Ridgewood Extension along Reynolds Street south of Columbus Drive, spurred land development even further south and accelerated speculation in the area. Likely sensing an opportunity, Ernest C. and Mamie E. Bull purchased the east and west halves of Kensington Farm from the estates of A.A. Ainsworth and J. Palmer Browne in 1944 and 1945, respectively. Following the rapid development of the area south of Columbus Avenue and the subsequent extension of the city limits to DeRenne Avenue in 1950, they sold the tract to real estate developers John C. Wylly and Emanuel Javetz who immediately made plans to develop the property into a residential subdivision named Kensington Park. The engineering firm of Thomas and Hutton, the same firm that laid out the adjacent Fairway Oaks Subdivision, were commissioned to design the plan, which was completed in April of 1950. Framed by DeRenne Avenue on the north, Waters Avenue on the east, Oakdale Subdivision on the south, and the nascent Groveland Subdivision on the west, Kensington Parks' five curvilinear streets and two linear access roads were carved out of the wooded tract shortly thereafter, yielding 294 building sites.

Groveland

At about the same time that plans were being made to develop the former Kensington Farm tract, plans were also being made to develop the southern portion of the former Poplar Grove Plantation, which was located on the western border of the nascent Kensington Park Subdivision. Poplar Grove was a large antebellum plantation that belonged to the DeRenne family – one of Georgia's oldest and wealthiest families. Along with Wormsloe, the c.1736 tidewater plantation of ancestor and founding colonist Noble Jones, Poplar Grove made up a significant part of the family's considerable 19th- and early 20th-century land holdings in the Savannah area. During the 1830s and 1840s, cotton was the principal cash crop at both Poplar Grove and Wormsloe. After gaining possession of his inheritance in 1849, George Wymberley Jones (G.W.J.) DeRenne abandoned the cultivation of cotton at Poplar Grove and instead concentrated on the production of provision

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crops such as corn, peas, potatoes, and watermelons for sale, as well as for consumption by his slaves. Timber was cut and sheep were raised at Poplar Grove during this period as well. In 1857 G.W.J. DeRenne decided to "abandon Poplar Grove" as a working plantation – partially due to its "proximity to town," but also to concentrate all of his resources and efforts on fully developing Wormsloe. The Poplar Grove slaves were brought to Wormsloe at this time and the tract was put out to rent by DeRenne and his subsequent heirs for the remainder of the 19th century.

According to William Bragg in his biography *DeRenne: Three Generations of a Georgia Family*, the county opened several roads in and around the vicinity of Poplar Grove during the late 1880s. It was understood, particularly by the DeRenne heirs, that the plantation was "destined to be engulfed by the southward expansion of the city of Savannah." One of these roads was Jones Avenue (near present-day 61st Street) – an east-west road that ran close to the center of the tract between White Bluff and Waters roads. In 1907 "the development potential of Poplar Grove was greatly increased" when DeRenne Avenue was constructed through the southern portion of the tract, linking Middle Ground Road to the west with Waters Road to the east. As Bragg notes in his book *DeRenne*, the construction of this new avenue enclosed most of the old plantation lands within a rectangle that included Estill Avenue (renamed Victory Drive in 1923) as its northern border.

As illustrated by John W. Howard's c.1910 *Map of the City of Savannah and Vicinity* and Victor G. Schreck's c.1930 *Map of Chatham County, Georgia Showing the Location of Properties, Public Roads, Etc.*, the northern third of this rectangle would become the major focus of development during the 1910s and 1920s. The exclusive suburbs of Ardsley Park and Chatham Crescent south of Estill Avenue (Victory Drive) were developed in 1910 and the smaller development of Ardmore, south of 52nd Street, in 1925. Risky business ventures coupled with the national financial crisis of the late 1920s forced Wymberley Wormsloe DeRenne, grandson of G.W.J. DeRenne, to make arrangements to sell his portion of Poplar Grove, which he held jointly with his siblings. In 1928 a survey and partition of the old plantation, the remaining acreage being clearly depicted on Schreck's c.1930 *Map of Chatham County, Georgia*, was completed and the subdivided parcels were put up for sale (Map Book 2, Folio 166).

Between 1932 and 1936, Robert T. and Emma L. Carlyle purchased two tracts totaling 85 acres from W.W. DeRenne that made up the northern two-thirds of Lot A-2 of the subdivision of the Poplar Grove tract. The tract was bounded on the north by DeRenne Avenue, on the west by White Bluff Road (which becomes Bull Street north of DeRenne Avenue), and by Kensington Farm on the east. Likely sensing an opportunity, Julius Kahn purchased the 85-acre portion of Lot A-2 from Robert Carlyle in 1947 and, following the rapid development of the area south of Columbus Avenue and the subsequent extension of the city limits to DeRenne Avenue in 1950, sold the tract to real estate developer and general contractor Frank A. Tarantino who immediately made plans to develop the property into a residential subdivision that he named Groveland. Unlike Kensington Park, which was designed and laid out all at once, Groveland was surveyed and laid out in four phases between May 1950 and May 1956. Framed by DeRenne Avenue on the north, commercial lots along Abercorn Street on the west, an unrealized portion of Oakdale Subdivision (now Habersham Woods) on the south, and the nascent Kensington Park Subdivision on the east, Groveland's four curvilinear streets and one linear access road were carved out of the wooded tract shortly thereafter, yielding 107 building sites.

In addition to their curvilinear plans and lush wooded building lots, both Kensington Park and Groveland benefited from their close proximity to the municipal golf course and other amenities associated with what is now known as Bacon Park. Since the early 20th century, Chatham County government had established several parks and sports complexes along or near Waters Avenue, a principal north-south corridor that predated the extension of Abercorn Street past 54th Street – the southernmost city limits c.1925. In 1927 Municipal Stadium (partially destroyed in 1940 by a devastating hurricane, rebuilt in 1941, and renamed William L. Grayson Stadium) was constructed on the eastern end of Daffin Park (c.1907). In 1926 the Municipal Golf Links, originally an 18-hole, par-72 course, was constructed on a portion of the county work farm. Designed by renowned golf course-architect Donald Ross, the golf course later became part of the Robert T. Fechner Recreational Area constructed by the CCC in 1937. The park was expanded over the course of several years and later renamed Bacon Park after Oliver T. Bacon, a Chatham County Commissioner.

Like the other subdivisions located south of DeRenne Avenue, Kensington Park and Groveland were developed to take advantage of their respective proximity to Bacon Park and the golf course. The developers anticipated the demand for an upscale suburban development that was both accessible to the downtown business district, yet still exclusive, and that was set within a picturesque environment, yet modern in design. The location of Kensington Park and Groveland outside the Savannah city limits provided the illusion of country living while the location near the municipal golf course provided an exclusive country club atmosphere.

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The natural beauty of the land, with its many old growth trees and unspoiled woods, the modern subdivision design offered by the developers, and the proximity to the golf course and park amenities made Kensington Park and Groveland very attractive to the young, upwardly mobile, middle-class in this new era of prosperity and domestic consumerism. While several of Savannah's up and coming leaders – lawyers, doctors, engineers, and businessmen, built substantial homes in Groveland and Kensington Park, both developments were also popular with the new type of young "modern couples" that emerged during this era in which both husband and wife worked, with the woman of the house either working part-time or within one of the limited number of professions open to women at that time.

Most of the houses in Kensington Park and Groveland were built by an assortment of construction companies and independent contractors who purchased lots directly from the original developers. In May of 1950, the Chatham Construction Company, owned and operated by Groveland developer Frank A. Tarantino and Frank M. Papy, Jr., purchased the bulk of the lots associated with the first subdivision of Groveland located along DeRenne Drive, Habersham Street, and a small portion of 74th Street (now Varn Drive east of Habersham). The May 7, 1950 edition of the *Savannah Morning News* carried the following ad heralding the new development:

Announcing **GROVELAND SUBDIVISION** ... South Side DERENNE AVE. AT HABERSHAM ST.
Choice Residential Sites – F.H.A. Approved – Drive Out Today. CHATHAM CONSTRUCTION CO.
Representative On Site Or See Your Local Real Estate Agent.

During this same time McIntosh and Company, Inc. purchased "Block 1" in Kensington Park – a range of lots along the south side of DeRenne Drive and the north side of Oxford Drive located between Reynolds and Paulsen streets, and was the first to begin development in either subdivision, partially completing four demonstration houses by early October 1950. The October 12, 1950 edition of the *Savannah Morning News* published an article entitled "4 Kensington Park Homes Open Sunday" that included the following details about the company's new development:

McIntosh and Co., Inc, developers of Kensington Park Homes, announced yesterday that four houses will be open for inspection by the public at 3:30 Sunday. Twenty-five of the three bedroom homes are being built in Kensington Park subdivision on the south side of DeRenne Avenue, just west of Waters Ave.

The houses are all three-bedroom bungalows, designed by Ralph S. Thomas, A.I.A. All floor plans feature large storage rooms incorporated in the plan. Exteriors give a wide choice of traditional Cape Cod and more functional types with casement windows, hip roofs, and other modern features.

All lots are 75' x 150', or larger, and will be graded and landscaped by the builders. All streets in the subdivision are to be paved, and contracts have been let and work is already in progress on the streets in which the McIntosh homes are built.

Several of the homes have been sold prior to completion, and will be ready for occupancy by their owner (sic) soon, and all houses will be completed and ready for occupancy before Christmas.

On the day of the open house, the *Savannah Morning News* carried the following ad heralding the new development:

ANNOUNCING A New Era in Savannah Living ... Paved Streets – Beautiful Lots.
KENSINGTON PARK HOMES ... DeRenne Avenue – Just West of Waters Avenue
These Beautiful New Three Bedroom HOMES (all to be completed before Christmas)
Open for Inspection Today, October 15th, 3:30 P.M.
McIntosh and Company, Inc. ... Builders – Developers – Brokers

In addition to the descriptive text, the ad also included a streetscape rendering, by architect Richard S. Thomas, of the four demonstration houses along the 300 block of DeRenne Drive. Following his work with McIntosh and Company, Thomas enjoyed a very successful collaboration with local building contractor John Ahern – a leading housing developer in Savannah during the 1950s and 1960s. Thomas provided several tract-house designs for Ahern as well as other leading contractors in numerous period subdivisions such as Magnolia Park (1953), Sylvan Terrace (c.1954), and Windsor Forrest (c.1955), among others.

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Additional ads for Kensington Park Homes appeared in Thursday editions of the *Savannah Morning News* – which included an enhanced real estate section, throughout the next several weeks. Text from some of these ads included the following:

KENSINGTON PARK HOMES ... 3 bedrooms, living room and dining room, large storage room, large screened porch, hardwood floors, insulated, weather-stripped. Excellent GI financing.
- SMN October 22, 1950

Kensington Park Homes ... Big Three-Bedroom Bungalows, 75' X 150' lots, paved streets ...
- SMN October 29, 1950

Although none of these houses could truly be described as "bungalows" – as they are more accurately identified as Ranch or American Small House types, the houses built by McIntosh and Company during this time were smaller and of a more modest character than the more substantial custom-built type of houses that would later be built within the subdivision. Most of the early houses built in Kensington Park and Groveland were well built tract houses that were reasonably priced to cater to young middle-class families. Like Fairway Oaks, this type of affordable housing was built in the northern part of the development closer to and along DeRenne Avenue.

Construction within both subdivisions was slow initially, resulting in a combined total of 18 houses constructed by the end of 1951 – six in Groveland and 12 in Kensington Park. With the establishment of nearby Hunter Air Force Base in 1951, and the arrival of a second bomb wing in 1952, construction within Kensington Park increased dramatically with 46 houses being completed by the end of 1953. While construction levels in Groveland remained modest during this same period – with only six houses constructed by the end of 1953, both subdivisions saw increases during 1954 with 15 houses completed in Groveland and 74 houses completed in Kensington Park. Given the close proximity to the air base and affordability of the earlier houses being offered, it is hardly surprising that nearly a dozen Air Force families had settled in Kensington Park by this time, with additional military families following suit in both subdivisions during subsequent years.

During this time, the real estate section of the *Savannah Morning News* began carrying several ads advertising houses for sale in Groveland and Kensington Park. Many of these ads highlighted the numerous amenities and quality materials included in the construction of the homes, the larger size of the lots within the subdivisions, as well as the growing reputation of the developments as being among the more select new sections in the city:

KENSINGTON PARK – Beautiful brick bungalow on a very large lot. Three bedrooms or 2 bedrooms and a knotty pine den. Double closets with sliding doors, 2 baths, shower and tub, ceramic tile. Large living room with marble mantel. Modern heating and cooling plant. Kitchen with abundant space and cabinets, breakfast nook, large screened porch. Garage. Call for appointment to inspect this modern, comfortable, and attractive home. THOS. C. HELMLY – SMN October 10, 1954

GROVELAND SUBDIVISION – This brand new brick bungalow has living room, dining area, kitchen, three bedrooms, and tiled bath. Maple floors throughout, attic insulated, and windows weather-stripped, floor furnace. Front porch with concrete floor. Lots of closets and large kitchen with breakfast space.
– SMN May 11, 1952

2 CHARMING WORK-SAVER VALUES – Just Being Completed in Kensington Park

Any young mother would be delighted with the step-saving design of these wonderful bungalows at 114 AND 116 ATLANTIC CIRCLE. Everything from the ingenious floor plan to the many handy closets saves steps and labor, yet there is abundant room for carefree and joyous living for Mom, Pop, and all of the kids. The centrally located entrance foyer allows you to enter either the living or sleeping quarters. A beautiful marble fireplace enhances the loveliness of the spacious living room. The full size dining room is only a step or two from a kitchen designed to take every bit of drudgery out of housework. The kitchen

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has lots of custom built cabinets with adjustable shelves, an exhaust fan, space for your freezer, washing machine connections plus breakfast nook and pantry. One of the three bedrooms is paneled and could be used as a den or it could be ideal for a boy's room. Each home has two colored ceramic tile baths, heating system with ducts to each room, attic fan, insulated attic. By making your choice of these homes now you will be able to select your paint colors, linoleum, and formica for your counter tops. Kensington Park is one of the nicest subdivisions of the city and all of the people situated therein are property owners. The neighborhood is perfect if you have small children as the homes are located on large lots giving the children ample playing space and the traffic is not heavy enough to cause you worry.

Price - \$18,000. Let us show you how easy it is to acquire one of these loans through an F.H.A., G.I. or conventional loan. ROBINSON REALTY COMPANY Realty & Insurance
- SMN April 25, 1954

Whether a custom built or tract house as represented in the examples above, sales ads for newly built houses in both subdivisions often included a reference to one amenity – paved streets, that set it apart from the earlier and more exclusive Fairway Oaks:

ON PAVED ATLANTIC CIRCLE in KENSINGTON PARK – ONLY TWO HOMES LEFT OUT OF SIX

Don't miss these brick homes. Spacious living room, wonderful bedrooms with adequate closets, roomy kitchens, and many extra features you have to see to believe. Open for inspection this Afternoon and Evening. Built by SPILLIARDS CONSTRUCTION CO. – **McDougal Realty**
– SMN April 19, 1953

While houses in Fairway Oaks exhibited a higher quality of materials on average and were more substantial than that of neighboring developments (initially, at least), there was no modern sewerage system or paved roads in the development until 1956 as it was not a county requirement when the subdivision was approved in 1950. As suggested in sales ads of the period, it appears that streets in both Groveland and Kensington Park were paved in stages with the most developed streets being completed first. Althea Drive – the formal entrance to Kensington Park, DeRenne Drive, Oxford Drive, and the northern section of Atlantic Circle (now Andover Drive) had all been paved by 1954.

Construction in both subdivisions reached a high point during the mid-1950s when 60 houses were completed in Groveland (representing a little more than half of the entire development) and 97 houses were completed in Kensington Park (34% of houses in the development) by the end of 1956. Several of the houses constructed in Groveland during this time were built by local building contractor and Groveland resident Ed Boykin who lived with his wife Juanita at 5507 Varn Drive – one of 15 houses constructed by Boykin and his crew along Varn Drive and E. 73rd Street in 1955 and 1956. In addition to smaller, mid-range residences like the red brick Linear Ranch house at 5537 Varn Drive, Boykin also built more upscale homes such as the substantial, Savannah Grey brick-veneered Linear Ranch house at 115 E. 73rd Street.

Several of the more substantial, upscale houses were also being built within the district by this time as well. This included "The Williamsburg" model Ranch house located at 3 Reynolds Circle in Kensington Park built in 1955 by the Hugh Armstrong Contracting Co., described here in a sales ad printed in the January 18, 1958 edition of the *Savannah Morning News*:

3 REYNOLDS CIRCLE, Kensington Park – Rarely does such a fine home come on the market. Beautiful Savannah grey brick, traditional design and nestled on a large high lot with fenced backyard. Consists of entrance foyer, very large living room with fireplace; large dining room; kitchen with separate breakfast room; 3 large bedrooms and 2 ceramic tiled baths. And a paneled den with

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fireplace, built in TV niche, cabinets, and bookshelves. Too many extras to mention. Shown by apt. only. Owner transferred. Immediate possession. **Richardson Realty Company**

When first built, 3 Reynolds Circle was the home of Jimmie S. & Thomas C. Owen, a superintendent at the Union Bag Corporation. Hugh Armstrong's "The Williamsburg" model Ranch house was built in several other period subdivisions in Savannah such as Paradise Park (c.1957) – the site of the 1957 Parade of Homes. "The Williamsburg" was one of the featured model homes at the event as depicted in an ad that appeared in the September 15, 1957 edition of the *Savannah Morning News*.

The Spilliard's Construction Company was another major developer within the district during this period. They built a number of homes in Kensington Park, including 234, 238, 331, and 333 Kensington Drive. A large ad for these homes was placed in the May 5, 1956 edition of the *Savannah Morning News* under the tagline "Styled to please a lady's eye with the Superior Construction that men buy." In addition to the landscaped lawn, the ad listed the numerous amenities that were built standard into each house, such as: winter and summer air-conditioning; oil-fired furnace; hardwood floors; plaster walls; washing machine connections, ample storage, and lights in every closet. 238 Kensington Drive was the smallest of the three houses at 1,800 square feet – it featured two bedrooms and two baths and was listed at \$18,500. 234, 331, and 333 Kensington Drive featured three bedrooms and two full baths with over 2,200 square feet of living space. Each of these upscale houses were listed for sale at \$23,500 and featured high-end extras like a "Muzicom System", "knotty pine paneled den" (234 Kensington Drive), and "California Redwood Family Room with ... Italian Marble Fireplace" (331 Kensington Drive).

Groveland Men's Club and the Kensington Park Association

The genesis of the modern subdivision during the late 1940s and early 1950s also brought about the establishment of the first modern homeowners' associations. Established in 1951, the Fairway Oaks Association was among the first of these new community groups in Savannah and appears to be among the first in Georgia. Like the Fairway Oaks Association, the Groveland Men's Club and the Kensington Park Association were established during the mid-1950s for improving the quality of life in each of their newly established suburban communities. Contemporaneous with the establishment of the male dominated community association was the women's equivalent – the "garden club." The Kensington Park and Groveland Garden clubs, which actually pre-date both of their male-run counterparts, were also established to enhance the social life of the community. In addition to serving as an opportunity for socializing with neighbors, the garden clubs generally focused their activities on community landscape improvements as well as on enhancing private gardens and yards.

The Kensington Park Association was organized in 1955. According to an article in the January 29, 1955 edition of the *Savannah Morning News* entitled "Tyson to Head Kensington Association," over 100 residents of Kensington Park attended the association's organizational meeting held at the Bona Bella Country Club on the evening of January 28, 1955. William V. Tyson, Jr., a vice president with the Empire Oil Company, who lived at 315 E. DeRenne Drive, was elected president; William N. Jones, an officer of Mercer Insurance Company of 135 Andover Drive, was elected vice president; W.R. McCullough, a pilot with the USAF, residing at 317 E. DeRenne Drive, was elected secretary; and Joseph Meyer, a "book keeper" residing at 323 Oxford Drive, was elected treasurer. According to the article, the decision to petition the Chatham County commissioners to lower the speed limit on DeRenne Avenue and to petition the Savannah Gas Company for a natural gas pipeline were among the new association's first order of business.

The Kensington Park Garden Club was organized in 1953. According to an article in the March 1, 1953 edition of the *Savannah Morning News*, entitled "Mrs. McCollough Heads New Garden Club," the club's organizational meeting was held at 315 E. DeRenne Drive – the home of Mrs. William V. Tyson, Jr. The article indicated that Mrs. Irelle McCullough, a bookkeeper who resided at 317 E. DeRenne Drive with her husband Willard a USAF pilot, was elected president. Mrs. Yvonne K. Tyson, wife of William V. Tyson, Jr., a vice-president of Empire Oil Company, was elected vice-president. Mrs. Virginia G. Mattson, who resided at 313 E. DeRenne Drive with her husband Arnold – a chemist with the U.S. Public Health Service, was elected secretary. Mrs. Myriel Newman, a bookkeeper at Belk's Department Store residing at 309 E. DeRenne Drive with her husband, Delmos – a clerk with the Seaborne Airline Railroad, was elected treasurer. Mrs.

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Beulah M. Roberts, who resided at 311 E. DeRenne Drive with her husband Joseph – a clerk with the Atlantic Coastline Railroad, was elected parliamentarian. In addition to electing officers, the newly formed club decided to meet the first Monday of each month.

After its first organization meeting, the principal item of business for the Kensington Park Association was the establishment of a community park and community building in which to hold its meetings and for social gatherings. In 1956 a community park – Kensington Park – was established on a 4.5-acre site on the south side of the subdivision at the end of Althea Parkway. In 1960 a community pool and bathhouse were constructed in the park for the use of Kensington Park residents.

The Groveland Garden Club was organized in 1954. According to an article in the March 18 *Savannah Morning News*, the new club was "organized by Mrs. George Johnson, executive director of the Sears Garden Center, at the home of Mrs. W.R. Griffin on Grove (now Camelot) Drive." Mrs. Dorothy Griffin, who resided at 5550 Grove Drive with her husband William – a chiropractor and owner of Griffin Chiropractic Clinic, was elected president. Mrs. W.Z. McDonald was elected vice-president. Mrs. Jane Furchgott, who resided at 5514 Varn Drive with her husband Charles – vice-president of Rosolia's, Inc., was elected secretary. Mrs. Anna James, who resided at 125 DeRenne Drive with her husband John – owner and operator of the custom house brokerage firm John S. James Co, was elected treasurer. In addition to electing officers, the club decided to meet the first Tuesday of each month.

The Groveland Men's Club was organized in 1955. Much of what is known about the Groveland Men's Club and Garden Club is derived from two surviving 1956 editions of the *Groveland News* – a community newsletter put together jointly by the men's and women's clubs. These newsletters provide interesting insights into the lives of the original residents of Groveland and detail firsthand what civic and social life was like in 1950s suburbia.

Of the two surviving issues of the *Groveland News*, the August 1956 edition is the earliest. The byline of the newsletter indicates that the edition was only the second to be issued (Volume I – No.2). Many of the articles in the newsletter – which cover a range of subjects from community improvements to birth announcements, are informative and at times whimsical. The first page appears to be reserved for announcements and important updates on community improvements, such as the paving of streets ("WE WONDER: When Abercorn will be paved past DeRenne? ... Mr. Tarantino says he cannot pave 73rd and 74th Streets until Abercorn is paved"); the laying of gas lines ("PLENTY OF GAS: Natural gas lines have been run throughout the subdivision of Groveland. It is now available to all residents."), improved subdivision markers ("ENTRANCE MARKERS: Some criticism has been registered about the entrance markers to Groveland" ... We "hope to improve these markers in the near future and place a new one at Abercorn Street."), the appointment of new officers ("NEW OFFICERS: A committee of five will be appointed at the next Men's Club meeting to submit a slate of officers ... at which point they will be voted upon."), and meeting announcements ("NEXT MEETING: The next meeting of the Groveland Men's Club, Inc. will be held at the Park, Friday evening, August 10th, at 8 o'clock. ... All Groveland Men are cordially invited.").

The second page of the newsletter, which closely resembles the society pages found in the local newspapers of the period, appears reserved for announcements regarding the personal lives of Groveland residents. Listed under the heading "Items of Interest" were: birth announcements ("Mr. and Mrs. Fred Stephens have a daughter, born June 16"); home improvements ("Herb Butler has finished his screened porch. He did most of the work himself ..."); wedding anniversaries (Gardner and Cecelia Hale celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary August 2nd); new jobs (Vernon Nowell "has become an associate of the AIA and joined the firm of Bergen and Bergen, architects. Congratulations Vernon!"); and almost any piece of news related to a resident of Groveland was listed in bullet point fashion. One announcement – which appeared on the front page of the newsletter, was of a more sobering nature. Entitled "A Member Leaving," the article announced the transfer of USAF pilot Ralph Jackson and his family to "French Morocco for a couple of years" – a stark reminder of the realities of the Cold War era. Jackson, a SAC pilot stationed at nearby Hunter Air Field, had been transferred to a SAC forward operating base in North Africa positioned to give B52 bombers a first strike capability against the Soviet Union.

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The second surviving edition of the *Groveland News*, dated December 1956, features a Christmas-themed cover bearing the seasonal pronouncement "The Groveland Men's Club Wishes You and Yours A Very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year." This edition – the sixth, appears more organized and structured. The front page features a synopsis of the November meetings of both the Men's and Garden clubs, while the second page continues to feature the social section "Items of Interest." The committee chairmen for the Groveland Men's Club are listed on the front page of the newsletter along with their respective duties (attendance and membership, park and recreation, etc.) in order to make it easier for residents to contact association representatives with their comments and concerns. Also included on the front page is an essay by Dorothy Griffin entitled "The Groveland Spirit" which provides an insight into the important role that the early homeowners associations played in shaping their respective communities:

Of all the many subdivisions which have sprung up the past six years, I think Groveland is most outstanding, and the most discussed because of a community spirit existing here. It is a spirit which has had an (sic) humble beginning, carefully nurtured and cultivated by the Men's and Women's Clubs until it has achieved proportions undreamed of by the early settlers of Groveland.

This spirit has brought about many wonderful things; the park, the ever increasing facilities of the park, beautification of the community and the harmony among the occupants.

In addition to all of the accomplishments listed in the essay, one of the first actions of the Groveland Men's Club was the establishment of the community park on the south side of East 74th Street (now Atlas Street) in 1955. Groveland Park, like Kensington Park, was the social and recreational nucleus of the community – a common ground where neighbors could come to picnic, play ball, and enjoy each other's company. As related on the front page of the newsletter, one of the big topics at the November meeting of the Groveland Men's Club was the proposed construction of a community house in Groveland Park. President Frank Edwards – a general manager of Atlantic Paper Co. who resided at 135 Varn Drive with his wife Trudy, made the suggestion that membership dues be lowered dramatically to encourage participation in the club's planned building fund drive. The proposed funding plan called for a contribution from each man in Groveland not to exceed \$100. In 1958 the Groveland Community House was completed in the southwest corner of the community park.

By 1957 over 90% of the lots in both subdivisions had been built on and by 1960 both developments had been largely built out. One of the last sections of the district was developed by builder George G. Altman between 1960 and 1968. During this time, Altman built a row of seven houses along the south side of Kensington Drive on the lots adjacent to the Kensington Community Park. An ad for the first house Altman completed, as well as for the rest of the small development, appeared in the May 7, 1960 edition of the *Savannah Morning News* under the heading "You Know the Difference Between ... Sterling and Silverplate, and You'll (sic) know Kensington Park is for You!" Altman's ad describes Kensington Park as spreading:

... gracefully over many acres. Every home is close to an open recreation area and special extra-safe play areas have been set aside for youngsters.

Although the ad announced an open house for 233 Kensington Drive scheduled for later that day, a rendering and floor plan that accompanied the ad depicted the yet-to-be-built house at 239 Kensington Drive. A caption below the rendering – apparently also intended as a reference to the built model home at 233 Kensington Drive as well, describes the planned 239 Kensington Drive as:

A truly gracious home. One of seven to be built by George G. Altman in Kensington Park. All brick, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms (with formica vanities), living room with fireplace, dining area, family kitchen, central air conditioning, hard wood floors, inside planter and skylights. Located on spacious 75 X 160-foot completely landscaped grounds with garage or carport.

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Completed in 1968, 253 Kensington Drive was the last of the houses Altman constructed in this small development. The house – a rear-facing Courtyard Ranch house overlooking the community park, also appears to be the last house built in the district during the 1960s.

Although it was not developed as a part of either subdivision, the completion of a new synagogue (outside of the district) for Congregation B'Nai B'Rith Jacob at the end of E. 74th Street in 1962 had a profound impact on the development of the area, particularly in the establishment of the Jewish community as a whole within Groveland and Kensington Park as well as the newer developing residential suburbs in the surrounding area. The synagogue - an outstanding example of the International style reminiscent of the restrained modernism of Edward Durrell Stone, features an austere white brick exterior and distinctive pre-cast, concrete, sun screen along the length of its Abercorn Street façade. When this Orthodox Jewish congregation outgrew its c.1909 building on Montgomery Street in downtown Savannah during the 1950s, they elected to relocate to a section of Savannah's suburban Southside already populated by a concentration of Savannah's Jewish community. This was due in part to the re-location in 1955 of the Jewish Educational Alliance (JEA) from downtown to a new facility along Abercorn Street near its intersection with DeRenne Avenue.

Designed c.1952 by modern architect Henry Levy of the prolific Savannah architectural firm of Levy & Kiley, the completion of the new JEA building served as a catalyst for the Jewish community to settle in adjacent, newly developed residential subdivisions such as Manor Estate, Lamara Heights, and Sylvan Terrace, but also in the other new developments south of DeRenne Avenue, such as Fairway Oaks, Kensington Park, and Groveland. In 1958 Congregation B'Nai B'Rith Jacob purchased a two-acre tract of land along Abercorn Street between E. 74th and 73rd (now Atlas) streets, bordering Groveland Subdivision on the east. While several Jewish families already resided in Kensington Park and Groveland by this time, members of the Orthodox Jewish B'Nai B'Rith Jacob began to move to the area en masse leading up to and following the completion of their new synagogue in 1962. Proximity to the synagogue is important in Orthodox Judaism as congregation members are prohibited from operating a vehicle on the Sabbath and therefore, residing in a home located within walking distance to the sanctuary is a paramount consideration. While many members of the congregation purchased existing houses in Groveland and Kensington Park during this time, others contributed to the accelerated development of the c.1965 Habersham Woods subdivision located to the immediate south of Kensington Park-Groveland.

Architecturally significant houses built for Jewish families (in general) within the district include the Rosenweig house at 213 Oxford Drive – an outstanding Contemporary-style "California" Ranch house, the Movsovitze house at 5522 Camelot Drive – a substantial Contemporary-style Linear-with-Clusters Ranch house, and the Garfunkel house at 201 Oxford Drive – a substantial Colonial Revival-style Linear Ranch house.

Although Abercorn Street and DeRenne and Waters avenues became increasingly dense with commercial development during the 1970s and 1980s, Kensington Park and Groveland remained popular (and surprisingly secluded) with the emerging young professional class as well as its original and longtime residents who were nearing retirement. Lack of interest and a declining membership led to the dissolution of both the Groveland Men's and Garden clubs by the mid-1980s. As a result, the Groveland Community House and Park were sold to the Savannah Jaycees Foundation in 1986. The Kensington Park Garden Club had also been dissolved by this time since its function and membership had been largely absorbed by the Kensington Park Association, which now openly welcome women among their membership as equal partners in community leadership. During the 2000s, residents of Groveland were invited to join the Kensington Park Association, which now represents the interests of both subdivision communities.

In recent years the Kensington Park Association – together with the Fairway Oaks Association, have actively and vocally objected to a proposed widening of DeRenne Avenue for which plans indicate the condemnation of properties and demolition of more than 100 residences along the south side of the corridor between Abercorn Street and the Truman Parkway, including properties along DeRenne Drive in Groveland, Kensington Park, Fairway Oaks, and Magnolia Park.

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The following context about Home Associations in Savannah and in Georgia was written by Richard Cloues as part of the Fairway Oaks-Groveland Historic District (National Register listed in 2009).

As stated above, the Kensington Park-Groveland Historic District is significant in terms of community planning and development for the Kensington Park Association and the Groveland Men's Club, non-profit neighborhood organizations founded for improving the quality of life in the newly established suburban community. Early privately funded civic improvements included a neighborhood park in 1955 with "community house" in 1958 for Groveland and a neighborhood park in 1956 and pool with bathhouse in 1960. Established in 1955, the Kensington Park Association and Groveland Men's Club were among the earliest such organizations in Georgia and appear to have been among the first such suburban homeowner's associations in Savannah (the earlier Fairway Oaks Association – established in 1951, appears to have been the first homeowner's association in Savannah). As such, they were harbingers of the many similar "homes" or civic organizations that were to be established in other new suburban communities, especially after the early 1960s. Contemporaneous with the community association was the Kensington Park Garden and Groveland Garden clubs, established in 1953 and 1954, respectively. They too were intended to enhance social life in the new community and make community improvements. However, unlike the Kensington Park Association and Groveland Men's Club, whose leadership, at least in the early years, was made up of only men, the garden clubs were organized and run by women. Their activities focused on community landscape improvements as well as enhancing private gardens and yards.

Neighborhood associations like the Kensington Park Association and Groveland Men's Club have a long history in the United States. However, they did not become numerous, particularly in middle-class residential development, until the mid-20th century.

Private homeowner associations in upper-class residential developments in the United States date back to at least 1831 with the development of the Gramercy Park neighborhood in New York City where homeowners also owned and controlled access to the neighborhood's small signature park. Another similar early example, dating from 1844, is Louisburg Square in Boston. San Francisco saw the rise of "homestead associations" in the 1870s and 1880s, but these were intended as ways to subdivide land and sell lots rather than to improve upon the quality of life in established neighborhoods. Roland Park in Baltimore, an upper-class streetcar suburb established in 1891 with later expansions designed by the Olmsted Brothers, was one of the first American suburbs to establish a homeowners association based on the increasingly common practice of restrictive deed covenants. Through the purchase of lots, homeowners not only were legally constrained as to how they could use the property and what they could build on it but also became members of a homeowners association that could legally enforce the covenants. As similar situation prevailed in Kensington, in Great Neck, on Long Island, New York, an upper-class suburb established during the first decade of the 20th century that featured a mandatory homeowners association as well as restrictive covenants attached to property deeds. At this same time, in Forest Hills Gardens in the Queens borough of New York City, originally a middle-class suburb planned and developed by the Russell Sage Foundation, the homeowners association owned the community's streets as well as its parks and could legally enforce the protective covenants on private residential lots. Similar "private street" or "gated" suburbs were developed in St. Louis. On the west coast, Palos Verdes Estates outside Los Angeles was developed during the 1920s. It featured a "homes association" created by its developer that was given many of the responsibilities ordinarily assumed by local governments until the City of Palos Verdes was incorporated in 1940. The national renowned planned community in Radburn, New Jersey, established in 1929, relied on a mandatory homes association known as the "Radburn Association" to make civic improvements, maintain "public" parks, and enforce development covenants.

During the 1930s and 1940s, with the Great Depression and World War II, the establishment of new homes associations waned with the decline in residential construction across much of the country. With the revival of homebuilding and new subdivision development following World War II, homes associations began springing up all across the country, in middle-class suburbs as well as upper-class neighborhoods, but they remained relatively rare throughout the 1950s. Evan McKenzie in *Privatopia* reports that as late as 1962 there were fewer than 500 such associations in the entire country. By the end of the 1960s, however, their number had increased to approximately 10,000 nationwide. By 1975 their number had doubled to 20,000, and by 1980 the number had doubled again to more than 50,000. The precipitating factor in the mid-century growth of homeowners associations (or "homes associations" as they were often called) was a 1963 policy decision by the Federal Housing Administration to promote homes associations in planned unit subdivisions subject to its home mortgage guarantees – under the belief that houses in developments with such associations would more reliably

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maintain their property values. The Federal Housing Administration announced its new policy at the National Association of Home Builders' 1963 annual convention where it also distributed its 64-page *Planned Unit Development with a Homes Association* brochure that extolled the advantages of mandatory homeowners associations. The next year, to help implement this new policy, the Urban Land Institute published its 422-page Technical Bulletin 50 ("TB50"), *The Homes Association Handbook*, which further promoted the formation of homeowners associations. Agencies participating in the publication of this bulletin included the Federal Housing Administration, the National Association of Home Builders, the Veterans Administration, and the Urban Renewal Administration. The bulletin also included data from a survey of the nearly 500 homeowner associations in the country at that time supporting the contention that the quality of life was enhanced, property values were preserved, and public land-use planning was supported in suburban residential developments with homeowners associations.

No comprehensive history of homes associations in Georgia is known to exist. However, a sampling of available information suggests that there were very few in existence prior to World War II and that the Kensington Park Association and the Groveland Men's Club in Savannah were among the earliest formally chartered postwar homeowners associations in the state.

The oldest known homes association in Georgia is the Druid Hills Civic Association. Druid Hills was Atlanta's most prestigious suburb at the turn of the 20th century. It had been developed according to plans first drawn by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., in the 1890s and then revised and expanded by his successor firm, the Olmsted Brothers, in the first decades of the 20th century. The Druid Hills Civic Association was founded in 1938 as a way of maintaining the quality of life in this turn-of-the-century Atlanta suburb. Almost at the same time (c.1939), in the early 20th-century Brookwood Hills subdivision off Peachtree Street in Atlanta, the Brookwood Hills Civic Association was formed, with a similar mission. The Fairway Oaks Association in Savannah, organized in 1951, is the next known homes association to have been established in Georgia and the first in a post-World War II automobile-related suburb. Shortly thereafter, back in the Atlanta metropolitan area, the Leafmore-Creek Park Hills Civic Association was founded sometime after 1952, but prior to 1956, in a developing suburban area along Clairmont Road in western DeKalb County. The Kensington Park Association and Groveland Men's Club, both organized in 1955, are the next known homes associations to be established. In 1956 the Piedmont Heights Civic Association was created after the construction of Interstate 85 brought new commercial development into this mid-century suburban area along Piedmont Road in northeast Atlanta. At about the same time, in nearby Clairmont Heights, a postwar suburb along Clairmont Road in western DeKalb County, the Clairmont Heights Evening Garden Club was established and apparently served as the neighborhood association until the formation of the Clairmont Heights Civic Association, a less-well-documented "civic club" known to have been in existence in the early 1960s. Largely impressionistic information suggests that the now nearly ubiquitous neighborhood associations found in many of the suburbs in the Atlanta metropolitan area were established following the Federal Housing Administration's 1963 policy of encouraging homes associations in new suburban developments.

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Stabile, Donald. *Community Associations: The Emergence and Acceptance of a Quiet Innovation in Housing*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000.

Sullivan, Patrick, Mary Beth Reed, Tracy Fedor [and Richard Cloues]. *The Ranch House in Georgia: Guidelines for Evaluation*. Atlanta, GA: 2011.

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 approximately 160 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

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

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 32.027855 | Longitude: -81.108074 |
| 2. Latitude: 32.024360 | Longitude: -81.094945 |
| 3. Latitude: 32.019383 | Longitude: -81.096867 |
| 4. Latitude: 32.022499 | Longitude: -81.110128 |

Kensington Park-Groveland Historic District
Name of Property

Chatham County, Georgia
County and State

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

The boundary of the district is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached National Register map, which is drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all the historic residential properties, perimeter drives with medians and planting strips, and community parks historically associated with the Kensington Park-Groveland subdivisions.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lynn Speno, National Register Specialist
organization Historic Preservation Division, GA Dept. of Natural Resources date June 2014
street & number 254 Washington Street, Ground Level telephone (404) 656-2840
city or town Atlanta state GA zip code 30334
e-mail lynn.speno@dnr.state.ga.us

name/title Robert Ciucevich
organization Quatrefoil Consulting date _____
street & number 22 West Bryan Street #139 telephone (912) 547-1940
city or town Savannah state GA zip code 31401
e-mail racquatrefoil@aol.com

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.)

Kensington Park-Groveland Historic District
Name of Property

Chatham County, Georgia
County and State

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: Kensington Park-Groveland Historic District

City or Vicinity: Savannah County: Chatham State: Georgia

Photographer: Charlie Miller

Date Photographed: March 22, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

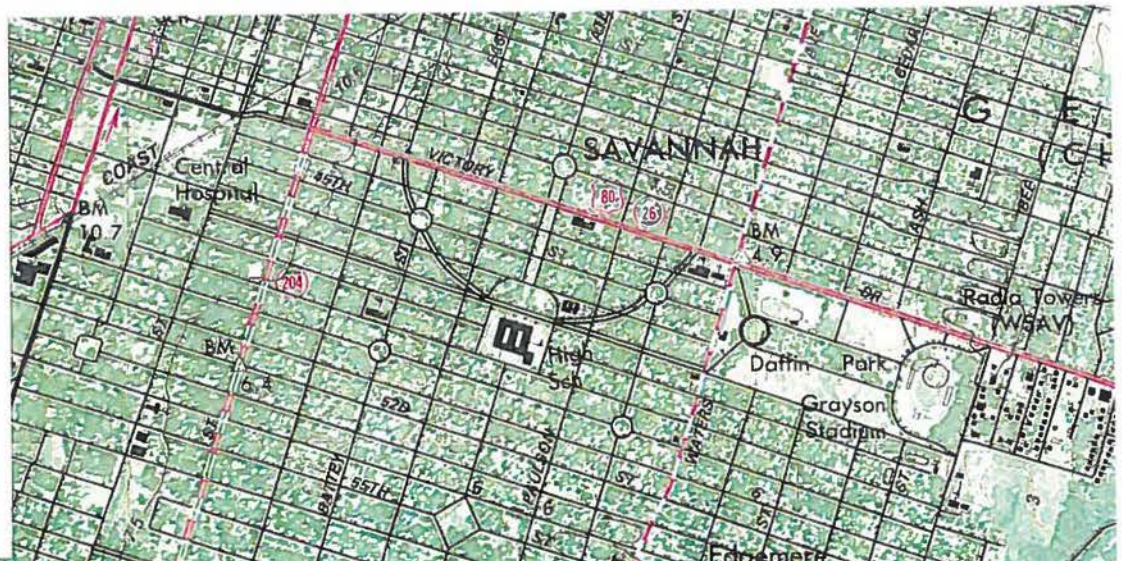
- 1 of 40. 228 Varn Drive; photographer is facing east.
- 2 of 40. 234 Varn Drive; photographer is facing north.
- 3 of 40. 306-308 Oxford Drive; photographer is facing northeast.
- 4 of 40. 5407 Reynolds Street; photographer is facing west.
- 5 of 40. 328 Oxford Drive; photographer is facing north.
- 6 of 40. 332 Oxford Drive; photographer is facing north.
- 7 of 40. Oxford Drive; photographer is facing north.
- 8 of 40. Althea Parkway; photographer is facing northwest.
- 9 of 40. 339 Kensington Drive; photographer is facing southeast.
- 10 of 40. 314 Kensington Drive; photographer is facing northeast.
- 11 of 40. Kensington Drive; photographer is facing northwest.
- 12 of 40. 5555 Camelot Drive; photographer is facing west.
- 13 of 40. 5552 Camelot Drive; photographer is facing east.
- 14 of 40. 5545 Camelot Drive; photographer is facing west.
- 15 of 40. 5528 Camelot Drive; photographer is facing north.
- 16 of 40. 5528 Habersham Street; photographer is facing east.
- 17 of 40. 5532 Habersham Street; photographer is facing east.
- 18 of 40. 5504 Varn Drive; photographer is facing east.
- 19 of 40. Kensington Park; photographer is facing southeast.
- 20 of 40. 253 Varn Drive; photographer is facing south.
- 21 of 40. 333 Oxford Drive; photographer is facing south.
- 22 of 40. 337 Oxford Drive (left); photographer is facing south.
- 23 of 40. 231 Kensington Drive; photographer is facing south.
- 24 of 40. Varn Drive; photographer is facing southeast.
- 25 of 40. 5541 Varn Drive; photographer is facing southwest.
- 26 of 40. Groveland Park; photographer is facing north.
- 27 of 40. Groveland Park; photographer is facing south.
- 28 of 40. 213 Oxford Drive; photographer is facing northwest.
- 29 of 40. Reynolds Circle; photographer is facing southeast.
- 30 of 40. Reynolds Circle; photographer is facing northeast.
- 31 of 40. Reynolds Street; photographer is facing southeast.
- 32 of 40. 7 Reynolds Circle; photographer is facing southwest.
- 33 of 40. Andover Drive; photographer is facing northwest.
- 34 of 40. 22-26 Althea Parkway; photographer is facing northeast.
- 35 of 40. Andover Drive; photographer is facing west.
- 36 of 40. 237-231 Andover Drive; photographer is facing north.
- 37 of 40. DeRenne Drive; photographer is facing southeast.
- 38 of 40. DeRenne Drive; photographer is facing southeast.
- 39 of 40. Waters Drive; photographer is facing south.
- 40 of 40. Althea Parkway; photographer is facing west.

**Kensington Park-Groveland
Historic District
Chatham County, Georgia**

1. 32.027855 -81.108074
2. 32.024360 -81.094945
3. 32.019383 -81.096867
4. 32.022499 -81.110128

Scale: 1:24000 USGS

Quad: Savannah, GA- SC

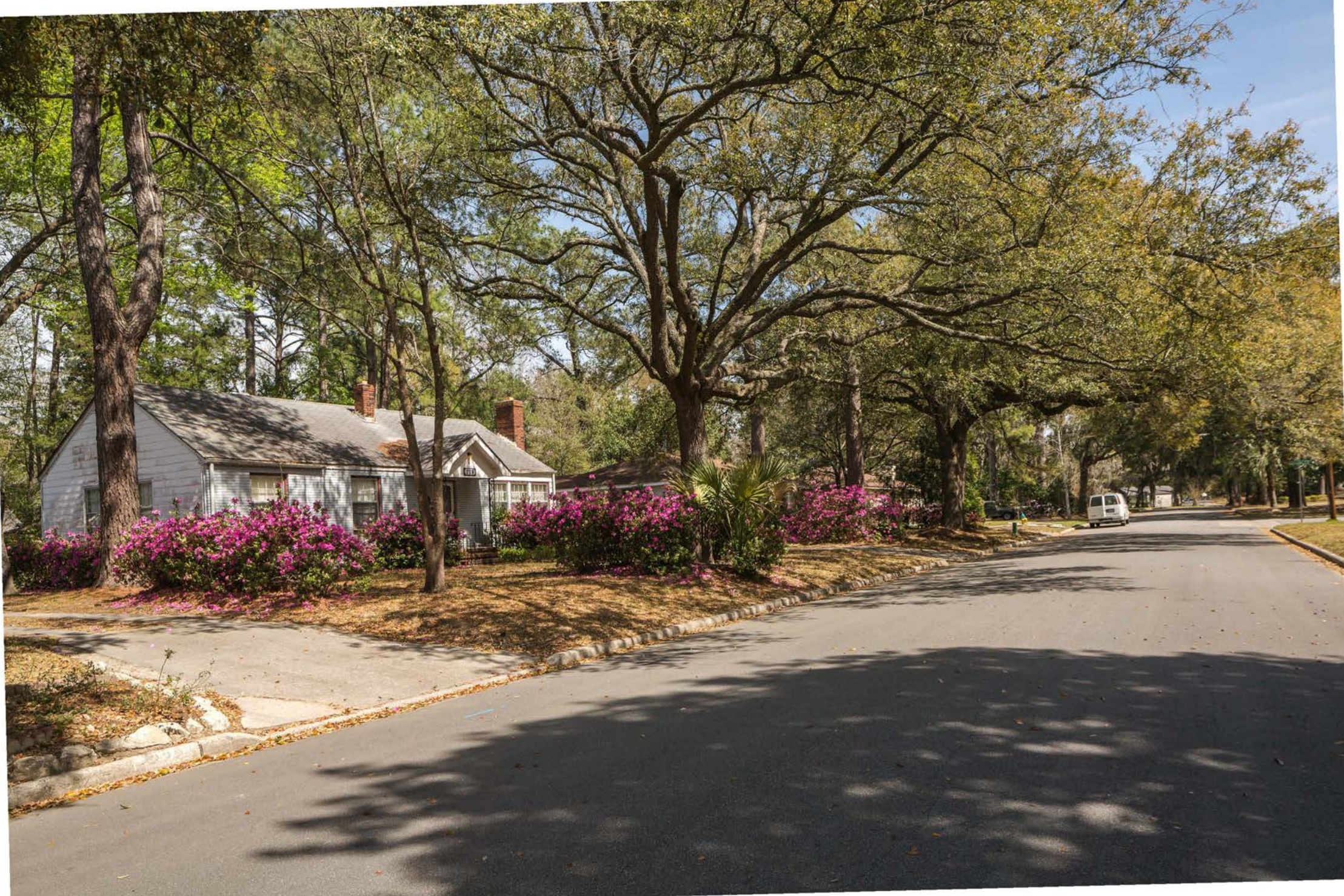


07 30" '89 830 000 FEET (GA) '91 '92 5' ISLE OF HOPE 37

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, USCE, and Georgia Geodetic Survey















332





















5528





























SLOW DOWN
You are
Making me look bad



Hospital Employees
CAUTION APPEALS
We're glad to help. Call us.
SLOW DOWN

STOP

















40



KENSINGTON
PARK

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Kensington Park--Groveland Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: GEORGIA, Chatham

DATE RECEIVED: 7/14/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/15/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/02/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/30/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000533

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 8/30/14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

well done nomination for a post WWII residential neighborhood. AOS. Architecture + CP+D. POS. 1950-1968 local level.

RECOM./CRITERIA AOC
REVIEWER W. J. [Signature] DISCIPLINE [Signature]
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 8/30/14

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

July 14, 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 **Kensington Park-Groveland 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