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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Byron Historic District
other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number Boulevard, Main, Church, and Academy Streets
city, town Byron (n/a) vicinity of
county Peach code GA 225
state Georgia code GA zip code 31008

(n/a) not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property

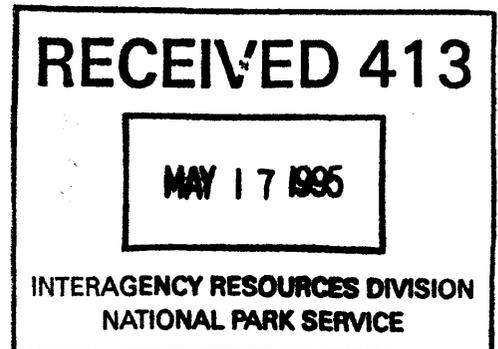
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property:

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	57	23
sites	0	0
structures	1	0
objects	0	0
total	58	23

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: n/a

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a



4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Mark R. Edwards

Signature of certifying official

5/09/95
Date

Mark R. Edwards
State Historic Preservation Officer,
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Edson H. Beall

6/30/95

() determined eligible for the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

() determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

for

Signature, Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC: single dwelling
COMMERCE: specialty store
COMMERCE: warehouse
TRANSPORTATION: rail-related
RELIGION: religious facility
SOCIAL: meeting hall
GOVERNMENT: correctional facility
GOVERNMENT: post office

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC: single dwelling
COMMERCE: specialty store
COMMERCE: warehouse
COMMERCE: restaurant
RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum
RELIGION: religious facility
SOCIAL: meeting hall
GOVERNMENT: correctional facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival
LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate
LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne
OTHER: Folk Victorian
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVAL: Classical Revival
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVAL: Tudor Revival
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Craftsman
OTHER: 20th Century Commercial
OTHER: Functional

Materials:

foundation brick; concrete
walls wood; brick; concrete
roof asphalt; metal
other n/a

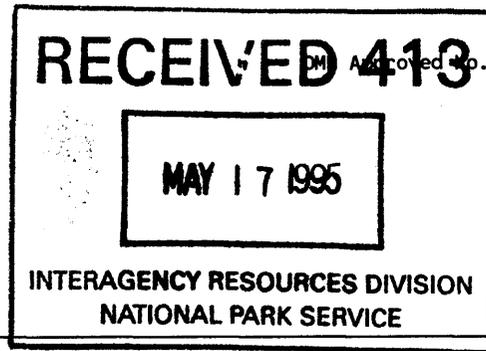
Description of present and historic physical appearance:

Byron, Georgia is located in Middle Georgia about fifteen miles south of Macon on Interstate 75. The Byron Historic District consists of the intact commercial and residential buildings that make up the historic core of Byron. The town of Byron developed along the railroad, and the rail line runs through the middle of the district with both commercial and residential development along either side (photo #1). The historic commercial area is at the center of the district at the major intersection of the rail line and Main Street. Byron is an example of a cross-rail plan town, meaning it developed

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around the intersection of the railroad and a major road which was then the Old Fort Valley Road and now Main Street (Georgia Highway 42).

The district can be divided into three sections: the commercial area at the intersection of the tracks and Main Street (photo #2); the houses along the tracks on East and West Heritage from Main Street to Boy Scout Camp Road (photo #3); and the residential areas that surround these other two sections and include Church, Academy, Howard, Jackson, and Main Streets, and the Old Fort Valley Road (GA Hwy 42) (photo #4). This last and larger section, which encompasses streets both east and west of the tracks, includes the most non-historic structures.

The historic residential areas of Byron surround the commercial center and contain a good collection of the types and styles of houses built in small Georgia towns from the mid-19th to mid-20th century. These include Queen Anne, New South, Georgian, gabled ell, and bungalow types (photos #5-#7). Stylistic influences include Greek Revival/Italianate combinations, Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, several large and excellent examples of Neoclassical Revival, English Vernacular Revival, and Craftsman (photos #8 and #9).

The large majority of houses are wood-framed, with a few having brick veneer (photo #10). The architecture of the residential sections is generally understated, as typically found in small rural communities (photo #11). The Victorian influence is predominant with the classical and Craftsman influences represented (photos #12).

The two oldest houses in the district are the 1867 Richardson-Collins House and the c.1870 Ebenezer Jackson House (photos #13 and #14). These two buildings are Georgian cottages with Victorian decoration which was added around the turn of the century.

Several Neoclassical Revival houses dominate Byron's residential architecture. Two of these structures, the Aultman-Holtzclaw House on Main Street and the Warren-McCary House on West Heritage, exemplify their style, with monumental columns and full front balconies, as well as other classical ornamentation (photos #15 and #16). The Peavy-Vinson-Clark House on West Heritage is a Queen Anne-type house with Neoclassical Revival details including a monumental portico with fluted Corinthian columns. At the corner of East Heritage and Academy is another house with Neoclassical features, such as composite columns, two-story portico, and dentils (photo #17).

The buildings within the commercial area, at the junction of the railroad and Main Street, include the recently rehabilitated wood-framed depot constructed c.1900, warehouses, and a number of

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commercial buildings (photo #18). The commercial buildings are both attached and freestanding brick and cast-concrete block buildings that were constructed in the early 20th century. Some of the commercial buildings along the railroad are warehouses once used to store local agricultural products to be shipped by rail (photos #19 and #20).

The commercial buildings are mostly masonry and extremely simple with little or no decorative brick or applied decoration. Few changes have occurred to the storefronts, which have large display windows. Two notable commercial buildings are the Woodman of the World building on Main Street and the Lord Byron Restaurant and antique store at the crossing of GA Hwy 42 and Heritage. The Woodmen of the World building was built in c.1920 for the Farmers Bank and the headquarters for this fraternal organization (photo #21). It was later used as an office building and post office. The Lord Byron building was originally a drugstore (photo #22). Built in 1915 of cast-concrete block, it is a local landmark.

Community landmark buildings in the district include a historic church building and a small, one-story brick jail. The c.1880 Old Methodist Church is a small wood-framed building with classical detailing and a recessed porch (photo #23). The one-story, brick jail is now vacant and the local historical society is planning to rehabilitate it for use as its headquarters (photo #24).

Although, non-historic the 1950s school building is on the site of the old Byron School which was torn down for this newer building (photo #25). Also noncontributing, the Methodist Church education building is a portion of the 1922 brick building designed by M. M. Marshall and built by H. J. Peavy (photo #26). The 1922 building burned and the remains were incorporated into an education building when the 1967 Methodist church was built. The other noncontributing buildings in the district include buildings not yet fifty-years old or buildings which have been altered extensively.

Byron sits on one of the highest points in Middle Georgia; however, the district is a level area with no major changes in topography. The houses generally have medium to large grassed lawns and informal landscaping including mature trees and shrubs (photo #27). There are no curbs or sidewalks in the district (photo #28).

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): (n/a) N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture
Commerce
Community Planning and Development
Transportation

Period of Significance:

1867-1942

Significant Dates:

1874 - Byron was incorporated

Significant Person(s):

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

M. M. Marshall - 1922 Methodist Church

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Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Byron Historic District is a small town with residential, commercial, community, and governmental buildings. The district represents the historic commercial and residential center of the city of Byron. The district is significant in architecture, community planning, development, and transportation.

The district is significant in architecture for its historic commercial, residential, and community buildings constructed from c.1867 into the 1940s. The residential buildings are an excellent collection of the styles and types of houses constructed from the 1870s into the 1940s in a small Georgia town. The commercial buildings are good and intact examples of the types of commerce-related buildings that were built in the early 20th century. The community landmark buildings are typical of the types of religious, and governmental facilities constructed in small Georgia communities.

The residential buildings represent the styles and types of houses popular in mid-19th- to early 20th-century Georgia. In Byron, the house types include Queen Anne, New South, Georgian, gabled ell, and bungalow. The stylistic influences include Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, Craftsman, Neoclassical Revival, Colonial Revival, and English Vernacular Revival. All of the above have been identified as important Georgia styles and types in Georgia's Living Places: Historical Houses in their Landscaped Setting.

The commercial buildings are typical of the types of masonry buildings constructed in small Georgia towns for commercial use. These buildings are one- to two-story attached masonry and cast-concrete block buildings and one-story freestanding masonry buildings with little or no stylistic detailing. The warehouses in the district represent functional architecture which was built for utilitarian purposes and not for beauty.

The district is also significant for its community landmark buildings which include the old brick jail and the Old Methodist Church building. These freestanding buildings are good examples of the type of landmark buildings that were constructed in a small Georgia town. The depot is an excellent example of a small-town, "combination" freight and passenger depot.

The district is significant in commerce for its historic central business district that served the commercial needs of Byron and surrounding areas. This commercial activity is represented by the

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remaining historic commercial buildings. The commerce-related buildings include an old bank, drugstore, business and professional offices, post office, and retail stores, agricultural-related warehouses, and the c.1900 railroad depot.

The district is significant in community planning and development for its representation of the development of the small railroad community of Byron. It is also significant as a good example of a railroad community with an intact cross-rail type town plan that also features elements of a railroad strip plan with development along the railroad and parallel roads. Byron began to develop around 1860 at the intersection of the rail line of the Southwestern Railroad and the Old Fort Valley Road now Main Street/Georgia Highway 42 with the streets running parallel and perpendicular to the rail lines. The historic commercial area is at the center of the district at the intersection of Main Street and the railroad tracks. The community grew up along both sides of the rail line, as the railroad was the commercial lifeline of the town. Byron was incorporated in 1874.

The district is significant in transportation for the very important role of the railroad in the town's existence and development. The Southwestern Railroad came through the area in 1843, and the community began to develop around 1860. Byron became a center for shipping local agricultural products to market by rail. Cotton was the major crop shipped during the early 20th century; peaches became the major crop later. The town's transportation history is represented by the presence of the rail lines, depot, and the commercial buildings directly related to the commercial activity that revolved around the railroad.

National Register Criteria

The Byron Historic District is eligible under Criterion C for its good and intact examples of buildings representing architectural styles and types built from 1867 to 1942. The District is eligible under Criterion A for its significance in the commercial, developmental, and transportation history of Byron.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

n/a

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Period of significance (justification)

The date of construction for the earliest resource in the district is 1867 and 1942 marks the fifty-year cut-off for historical significance when documentation for the nomination was compiled.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The contributing resources were built within the period of significance and retain their integrity. The one contributing structure is the historic water tank in the southwestern portion of the district. The noncontributing resources were built after the period of significance or have been extensively altered.

Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)

NOTE: The following history was prepared by Adriane Wood, Historic District Information Form, April 21, 1992. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

In 1843, the rail lines had been completed through the area of Houston County now known as Byron. At that time, however, the area was referred to as Bateman, after a prominent local farming family. In the 1850s, a flag stop was established which was known as "one and one-half station" and later called "Jackson Station" after Nimrod Jackson, who owned the wood-rack for the wood burning train engines.

Nimrod Jackson was one of the original settlers to the area, and at one time owned quite a bit of land in this section of Houston County. Family history states that Nimrod bought a great deal of land from Creek Chief McIntosh for a cow and a calf on the day the chief was killed, May 1, 1825. Jackson sold some of the Creek land to people around Fort Valley.

Because of the railroad, more and more people moved into the area. By 1860, the area at the intersection of the Old Fort Valley road and the railroad tracks was being developed. Houses and businesses began to be built along the tracks, forming a community. Schools and churches were built to provide for the spiritual and educational needs of the settlers. The first post office was established in the town before 1870, possibly as early as 1860.

During and before the time that Byron was being founded, and beginning to grow, other nearby towns were already established and experiencing growth. Fort Valley, fourteen miles away, was chartered in 1856,

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although it had been in existence for about thirty years. Perry, in Houston County south of Byron, had been chartered in 1824 and was the first "official" town in Houston County.

Byron was incorporated in 1847 by the state legislature and granted a charter. Townspeople wanted to name the town "Richardsonville" after local doctor and subsequent first mayor Dr. C. H. Richardson, but Dr. Richardson suggested the name of Byron after the English poet. At this time, Byron was part of Houston County. Peach County was not formed until 1924 out of lands from Houston and Macon counties, becoming Georgia's 161st county. The county was named after its leading cash crop.

Much of Byron's history revolves around the railroad. In the 19th century, cotton was shipped from Byron by rail to market. In the late 19th century, around 1870, Samuel Rumph of Marshallville, Macon County, established the Elberta Peach, and the peach industry began to overtake cotton. Eventually, the peach culture became the primary agriculture in the county. Thousands of loads of peaches were shipped from the Byron station to markets around the world, and it is said that as many forty-five refrigerated box cars of peaches were shipped on any day. In 1887, 20,000 peach trees were to be planted within a 2-mile radius of Byron.

Historic residential resource in Byron date from c.1870 to 1941. The majority of the structures date from the last decade of the 19th century through the 1920s. The two houses thought to be the oldest in town were both built c.1870: the Richardson-Collins House (1867) and the Ebenezer Jackson House. These two structures are Georgian cottages with Victorian decoration.

The Richardson-Collins House is the more elaborate of the two. It faces the railroad on West Heritage, and was built by Dr. C. H. Richardson, Byron's first mayor, for his son C. H. Richardson, Jr. The house sits on one of the larger lots in the district. In 1890, the house was enlarged with the addition of a side room and kitchen and dining room at the rear. It was at this time that the Victorian decoration was applied to what probably was a Greek Revival cottage.

The Ebenezer Jackson house is on GA 42, the Old Fort Valley Road. It was built c.1870 by Jackson, son of Ebenezer Jackson for his daughter, but at some point he and his family lived in the house. The house has remained in the Jackson family since its construction. The original thirty-plus acres for this house backed up to and along the tracks, however, the house faces GA 42, rather than the tracks. Around the turn of the century, three rooms were added to the rear of the house. It was possibly at that time that the Victorian decoration was added.

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During the early years of the 20th century, Byron was a quiet, rural Georgia community, with an economy based largely on agriculture, primarily the peach industry. To deal with the locally grown products which were shipped by rail from Byron on an almost daily basis, warehouse were built along the railroad tracks between 1900 and 1910. Most of the larger buildings in the downtown commercial area were built between about 1915 and 1930, including: the Farmer's Bank Building (now Woodmen of the World), built in the early 1920s; the drugstore, built c.1915; the original Methodist Church sanctuary now standing to the right of the current sanctuary, built in 1922; and the Byron High School, now demolished, was built in 1920.

This was a time of prosperity for Byron. The pecan industry was beginning to make an economic impact. The peach industry continued to flourish, and in 1922, the first of four annual peach festival was held.

By the end of the 1920s, however, Byron, like all of the country, began to feel the impact of the Depression. The bank closed, and commerce and building slowed to a crawl. In spite of the Depression, agriculture continued to support Byron and help the residents through the lean years.

During World War II, troop and freight trains came through Byron on a daily basis as part of the war. Passenger travel on the trains reached its zenith during this time as well, with people travelling because of and in spite of the war. As it had in the past, the railroad continued to play a major part in Byron's daily life.

It was during this time that Robins Air Force Base was built, bringing people, new jobs and construction boom not only to Byron but the whole of Middle Georgia. In the 1950s, the Byron city limit was expanded from the original one-half mile from the depot to one mile. This enabled the city to take in the predominantly black neighborhood Toomerville and to extend the city's water lines into that area. The Toomerville area is outside the district boundaries of this nomination.

During the 1920s and 1930s, there ^{were} ~~was~~ as many as eighteen passenger trains daily coming through Byron, including the "Flamingo," the "Dixie Flyer," and the "Southland." Usually these trains stopped only if passengers needed to board or get off. Train traffic was so heavy from Byron to Fort Valley, where the line split for Columbus and Albany, that the Byron depot was one of the first to have installed the Centralized Traffic Control system. This CTC was a method of directing trains by more efficient signal indications and making use of the side tracks along the route. It was the second system in the United States in which the agent controlled the movement of trains on

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a 24-hour basis. Norfolk Southern now operates on these lines which still go through Byron on a daily basis, although now they do not stop.

Historic commercial structures are located along the railroad tracks at the intersection of Main Street and Heritage. Several warehouses and workers' housing associated with the railroad remain. The commercial structures primarily date from the late 19th and early 20th century.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Wood, Adriane. Byron Historic District, "Historic Property Information Form, April 21, 1992. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, with supplemental information.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A

- () 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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- (X) State historic preservation office
- () Other State Agency
- () Federal agency
- () Local government
- () University
- () Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

n/a

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 67 acres

UTM References

A) Zone 17 Easting 241210 Northing 3616690
B) Zone 17 Easting 241660 Northing 3616480
C) Zone 17 Easting 241170 Northing 3615560
D) Zone 17 Easting 240650 Northing 3615920

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries are indicated with a heavy black line drawn to scale on the enclosed tax map.

Boundary Justification

The Byron Historic District includes the contiguous, intact, historic resources associated with the city of Byron, including the commercial downtown, residential buildings, and several community landmark buildings.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Leslie N. Sharp, National Register Consultant
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** April 6, 1995

(OHP form version 12-08-93)

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Photographs

Name of Property: Byron Historic District
City or Vicinity: Byron
County: Peach
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: June 1993

Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 28: East Heritage Boulevard; photographer facing southwest.
- 2 of 28: West Heritage Boulevard, and railroad corridor; photographer facing west-southwest.
- 3 of 28: Corner of West Heritage Boulevard and Howard Street; photographer facing southwest.
- 4 of 28: Corner of Old Fort Valley Road and Jackson Street; photographer facing south.
- 5 of 28: Corner of Academy and Church Street; photographer facing southeast.
- 6 of 28: Boy Scout Road; photographer facing west-southwest.
- 7 of 28: West Heritage Boulevard; photographer facing west.
- 8 of 28: Howard Street; photographer facing northeast.
- 9 of 28: Corner of East Heritage and Old Macon Road; photographer facing east.
- 10 of 28: Corner of East Heritage Boulevard and Vinson Street; photographer facing southeast.
- 11 of 28: Church Street; photographer facing southeast.
- 12 of 28: Corner of East Heritage Boulevard and First Street; photographer facing east.
- 13 of 28: Corner of Pecan Street and West Heritage Boulevard; photographer facing west.

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Photographs

- 14 of 28: Old Fort Valley Road; photographer facing southeast.
- 15 of 28: Main Street; photographer facing west.
- 16 of 28: West Heritage Boulevard; photographer facing west.
- 17 of 28: Corner of East Heritage Boulevard and Academy Street; photographer facing east.
- 18 of 28: Depot, looking east on Main Street; photographer facing east.
- 19 of 28: Warehouse; photographer facing south.
- 20 of 28: Warehouse; photographer facing northeast.
- 21 of 28: Main Street; photographer facing west.
- 22 of 28: Corner of Main Street and West Heritage Boulevard; photographer facing west.
- 23 of 28: Old Methodist Church on Church Street; photographer facing east.
- 24 of 28: Old Jail; photographer facing east.
- 25 of 28: School; photographer facing east.
- 26 of 28: Methodist Church, corner of Main Street and West Heritage Boulevard; photographer facing west.
- 27 of 28: Howard Street; photographer facing northeast.
- 28 of 28: Corner of Old Fort Valley Road and Jackson Street; photographer facing east.