

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

OCT 03 1988

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 Griffin Commercial Historic District
other names/site number same

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Central Alley, Sixth, Taylor, and N/A not for publication
city, town Griffin Eighth Street vicinity
state Georgia code GA county Spalding code GA255 zip code 30223

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>93</u>	<u>26</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>96</u>	<u>26</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. N/A See continuation sheet.

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Signature of certifying official Elizabeth A. Lyon 9/28/88
Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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 and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Amy Schlager 11/16/88

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

GOVERNMENT/city hall

RELIGION/religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

GOVERNMENT/city hall

RELIGION/religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Commercial Style

Classical Revival

Art Deco

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

stone

roof asphalt

other cast iron

terra cotta

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Griffin Commercial Historic District consists of the intact concentration of historic development in Griffin's central business district. The historic district encompasses approximately eight blocks focusing on the main north-south artery of Hill Street and the major intersecting streets of Broadway, Broad, Solomon, and Taylor. This commercial area retains the original grid street pattern of rectangular blocks laid out in 1840. A system of alleys provides interior access through the blocks. Hill and Solomon Streets are divided by landscaped medians and cross at a high point in the hilly terrain that is a focal point of the commercial area. The Central of Georgia (formerly Macon and Western) Railroad from Forsyth to Atlanta traverses the district on the north side along low, level ground. The major concentration of historic commercial development focused along Hill Street south of the railroad rather than along Broadway as was first envisioned. The district has developed almost continuously from its founding to the present.

The majority of buildings within the district are the attached commercial-building type typically built in small cities from the mid-19th to the early 20th century. Also included in the area are industrial and warehouse buildings, government buildings, and churches with accompanying parsonages. The concentration of attached commercial structures forms the district core, while the other types of structures are found around the district edges and tend to be free standing. The commercial buildings are of brick construction, one to four stories in height, set flush with the sidewalk, and with the common front facade features of building cornice, upper double-hung windows, storefront cornice, and transparent storefronts with transoms, large display windows, entrances and bulkheads. As is typical for this type of commercial structure, storefront modernizations have been made on many of Griffin's commercial buildings, yet a large majority retain the decorative details that define their upper facades, and some original storefronts remain. Common facade details include corbeled brick cornices, brick piers, pressed metal cornices, arched windows with metal and brick hoods, and cast-iron columns. The district's commercial buildings provide a good example of the range of small-town commercial design prominent from the mid 19th to the early 20th century. The 19th-century Italianate and Victorian commercial stylistic influences and the 20th-century Neoclassical and Art Deco influences are all found in the commercial area.

Several "landmark" commercial buildings stand out because of their large size and notable stylistic features. The 1892 Opera House/Odd Fellows Hall is a prominent three-story, brick structure with stone details that is Romanesque in

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design. The Griffin Hotel was built around 1910 from plans by Atlanta architect Haralson Bleckley and is a two-story, U-shaped, brick building no longer used as a hotel. The 1929 Montgomery Ward building is a good example of the 1920s combination of Neoclassical elements with Art Deco materials and patterns. The five-story, brick, Professional Building--Griffin's "skyscraper"-- was constructed in 1929 as well, and two 1920s two-story, brick service stations are also in the district.

Government buildings in the district are represented by the former Post Office, and City Hall, and a municipal services building. The former Post Office was built in 1910 by plans from the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of the Supervising Architect; it is a brick and granite building with Neoclassical portico and cornice. The Colonial Revival City Hall and Fire Station also dates from 1910, and is the second building in the district designed by Bleckley. The Municipal Water, Light, and Sewer Department Building is a one-story, buff-colored brick building with modest details built in 1915.

Three historic black churches exist within the district, and two of these have accompanying, detached houses that serve as church parsonages. The churches are similar in design--all are of brick with square corner towers, a steeple, pointed-arch windows and entrances, and decorative stained glass. The buildings are examples of the late Gothic Revival trend in religious architecture in the early 20th century. The parsonages accompanying St. Philip and Heck AME are frame, turn-of-the-century houses with Victorian gable and porch details.

The industrial and warehouse buildings in the district are located along the railroad and in the blocks along Eighth Street. They are typical rectangular brick structures with segmentally arched windows and corbeled brick cornices. A steel-truss bridge constructed in 1906 and widened in 1958 with concrete foundations extends over the railroad tracks at 6th Street.

The dominant landscape elements in the district are the street medians along the major arteries of Hill and Solomon Streets. The medians are grassed and planted with large oak trees and shrubs. Other street trees are planted in various locations along the sidewalks. Hexagonal sidewalk pavers remain in many places throughout the district and are laid in a variety of patterns and colors. Granite curbing also still exists along the edge of some streets.

Noncontributing properties within the district boundaries include a few nonhistoric buildings constructed after the period of significance but that blend with the remainder of the district, three modern buildings that are considered architecturally intrusive, and commercial buildings that meet the district's age requirements but have extensively altered or covered front facades.

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) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
architecture
commerce
community planning and development
landscape architecture
transportation

Period of Significance
1840-1938

Significant Dates
1842
1851
1895

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Haralson Bleckley
US Treasury Department Supervising Architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Statement of Significance

The Griffin Commercial Historic District is the historic central business district in the small, central Georgia city of Griffin. The district was laid out in 1840 with the founding of the town and has continued to develop up to the present. It is significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, community planning and development, landscape architecture, and transportation. These areas of significance support National Register eligibility under National Register Criteria A and C.

In terms of architecture, the district is significant for its concentration of attached commercial buildings, freestanding governmental and religious buildings, and railroad-related industrial and warehouse structures that together make up the city's historic downtown business district. The attached, one- to four-story, brick, commercial buildings form the core of the district and are concentrated along the major streets of Hill, Solomon, Taylor, and Broad. In the 1860s, commercial development began to be focused along Hill Street, and brick commercial buildings began to be constructed. These commercial buildings are an excellent representation of the evolution of small-town commercial architecture from the mid-19th to the early 20th century. Their design follows the pattern of the small-town commercial building type with a first-floor storefront and upper-floor office or storage space distinguished by rows of windows and topped with a cornice. The upper facade is generally emphasized by stylistic features that range from simple cornices to elaborate cornice, window, and storefront details. Stylistic influences range from the Italianate and Victorian Commercial of the 19th century to the Neoclassical and Art Deco of the early 20th century. The five-story Professional Building has been considered as Griffin's skyscraper. Other prominent commercial buildings such as the Opera House/Odd Fellows Hall and the Griffin Hotel represent important commercial and civic enterprises found in the downtown business district.

The former Post Office, the City Hall and Fire Station, and the municipal Water, Light, and Sewer Department Building are freestanding buildings located on the edges of the commercial core that represent governmental administration
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and services in the city. The Neoclassical former Post Office and the Colonial Revival City Hall and Fire Station are examples of monumental buildings in small Georgia cities inspired by these early 20th-century architectural trends. Griffin became the county seat of Spalding County when the county was formed in 1851. The first county courthouse was erected in 1859 at the corner of Broad and Fifth Streets, and its adjoining jail was built by 1900. By 1915 a new courthouse had been built on the corner of Solomon and Sixth Streets, and the old courthouse was used entirely as a county jail. The 1915 courthouse burned in 1984 and was replaced with a new structure. The old courthouse/jail is located outside of the district boundaries.

The industrial and warehouse buildings within the district represent the important role of the railroad in the city's commercial growth. The transportation services provided by the railroad allowed for a large variety of manufacturing and warehousing enterprises. The warehouses and former manufacturing facilities that exist in the district are good examples of the very straightforward, brick, warehouse-type structure with rows of windows, large entrance openings, and simple details. The large number and concentration of these structures that still survive today is relatively unusual for a city the size of Griffin. These buildings are located along the railroad on Broad and Broadway Streets and on the interior of the adjacent blocks along Eighth Street. However, neither the freight nor passenger depots that served the railroad lines are extant.

Three remaining historic black churches constructed ca. 1900 are representative of the presence of religious institutions that is typical in downtown business districts in many Georgia communities. The structures are significant examples of a modest church building type made up of a rectangular sanctuary with square tower accenting the front facade. All three churches utilize the pointed-arch windows and entrances and the decorative stained glass of the early 20th-century Gothic Revival trend in religious architecture. Two of the churches have adjacent late-Victorian houses that serve as parsonages, an unusual feature for downtown churches. These religious institutions have been an important part of downtown Griffin in the early 20th century.

In terms of commerce, the district is significant as the historic business center that served the city of Griffin and Spalding County. Griffin was established as the county seat in 1851 and has always been the largest city in the county. Its downtown has been the major commercial center for the entire county. Commercial development in the district included retail, service, and industrial enterprises. Retail and service establishments were located along the main thoroughfares of the city and are represented today by the attached commercial buildings that line Hill, Solomon, Taylor, and Broad Streets. Due to its placement on the railroad line, the town was a major cotton market in the 19th century and supported many other industrial and manufacturing interests as well, such as a chair factory, lumber company, bottling works, and flour mill. These interests are today represented by the large number of warehouses and industrial structures

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still existing within the district.

In terms of community planning and development, the district is significant for the formal town plan laid out at the town's founding and for the informal evolution of development that took place as the town grew. General Lewis Lawrence Griffin, the first president of the Monroe Railroad and Banking Company, is credited as being the founder of Griffin. General Griffin's vision was for his railroad to be the link that would connect the lines that ran from Chattanooga to Atlanta and from Macon to Savannah and that would provide a transportation network between the Atlantic coast and Tennessee and Alabama. He felt that the point where these lines crossed would be the site of a major city, and this location was chosen for the city of Griffin. The original town plan was designed by General Griffin and surveyed and laid out by a railroad engineer in 1840. The plan was a grid pattern and included streets set at north-south and east-west orientation; a Broadway, 230 feet wide, extending through the center of the plan, set aside as the location for the railroad and intended to be the major commercial avenue; and a courthouse square facing the Broadway in the center of the plan. However, the more informal evolution of the town shifted the focus of the original plan to the high point in the terrain at the intersection of Solomon and Hill Streets south of the Broadway and the railroad. This central focus was reinforced by the addition of landscaped medians on both Solomon and Hill Streets in 1895, by the placement at the intersection of these two streets of a community landmark building--the 1892 Opera House/Odd Fellows Hall--and by the east-west and north-south division of street names at this point. The grid town plan was the type of plan used almost exclusively for Georgia's cities and towns of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and particularly for the state-chartered cities and courthouse towns. Griffin's plan survives as an excellent example of this plan type from 1840. The features that make up the plan are still intact. The north-south and east-west oriented streets form square blocks that are subdivided by alleys. The orientation of the plan to the railroad is evident in the spacing of Broad and Broadway Streets. The courthouse square that was planned to be at the plan's center lost its central status when development focused farther west on Hill Street south of the railroad. This lack of focus on the courthouse square makes Griffin's plan unusual for a city that is a county seat. The landscaped medians added in the 1890s to the two major streets are a significant feature found in few small Georgia cities.

In terms of landscape architecture, the district is significant for its important streetscape elements. The intact street medians on Solomon and Hill dating from the 1890s are a planning and landscape feature that give these streets a dramatic appearance. The medians provide a park-like setting in downtown, as well as strengthening the central focus of the commercial area. Part of a landscaping trend around the turn of the 20th century, they are, nevertheless, an unusual feature for a small Georgia city such as Griffin. Another important streetscape feature is hexagonal sidewalk pavers in a variety of colors and patterns. Few downtown areas in Georgia retain such an intact collection of this historic paving material.

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In terms of transportation, the district is significant for the very important role the railroad played in the city's development, and also for the influence of the automobile on the area. The projected placement of railroad lines was the determining factor for the decision to found the city at its particular location in 1840. The grid pattern of the town plan incorporated the railroad line as one of its major components. And, most importantly, the railroad and its transportation services allowed for the commercial development of the downtown area. The commercial area of Griffin has manufactured, stored, and transported a large variety of goods throughout its history. This commercial activity associated with the railroad is documented by the warehouses and industrial buildings that still exist within the district. The presence of the automobile and its 20th-century impact on the downtown area is represented two 1920s gas stations and the early 20th-century steel-truss and concrete bridge that spans over the railroad tracks at Sixth Street.

National Register Criteria

The Griffin Commercial Historic District is eligible under National Register Criterion A for its associations with the founding and commercial development of the city's central business district. The district is eligible under National Register Criterion C for its intact concentration of historic commercial, governmental, religious, and industrial buildings and structures that together make up the city's downtown.

Criteria Consideration A

The three religious structures within the historic district are significant as integral parts of the downtown business district. They represent the presence of religious institutions in central business districts that is typical in many Georgia cities. The churches are also significant architecturally as examples of a modest church building type with rectangular sanctuary and front-facade towers designed in an early 20th-century Gothic Revival style.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for the district is 1840 to 1938. Development in Griffin began in 1840 when the town was founded and laid out to take advantage of the railroad. This central business district continued to develop up to the present day, so that the end of the period of significance will be the 50-year cut-off date of 1938.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Jaeger, Dale. Historic Property Information Form, December 15, 1986.
On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department
of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, with supplemental information.

See continuation sheet

- Previous documentation on file (NPS): 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:
- State historic preservation office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property approximately 28 acres

UTM References

A	1 6	7 5 4	7 0 0	3 6	8 1	8 1 0
	Zone	Easting		Northing		
C	1 6	7 5 4	6 7 0	3 6	8 2	2 9 0

B	1 6	7 5 5	1 2 5	3 6	8 1	8 1 0
	Zone	Easting		Northing		
D	1 6	7 5 5	1 3 0	3 6	8 2	2 9 0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The district boundary encompasses approximately eight blocks in Griffin's central business district and is generally drawn along portions of Central Alley and Broadway, Broad, Sixth, Solomon, Hill Taylor, and Eighth Streets. The boundary is drawn to scale on the enclosed map.

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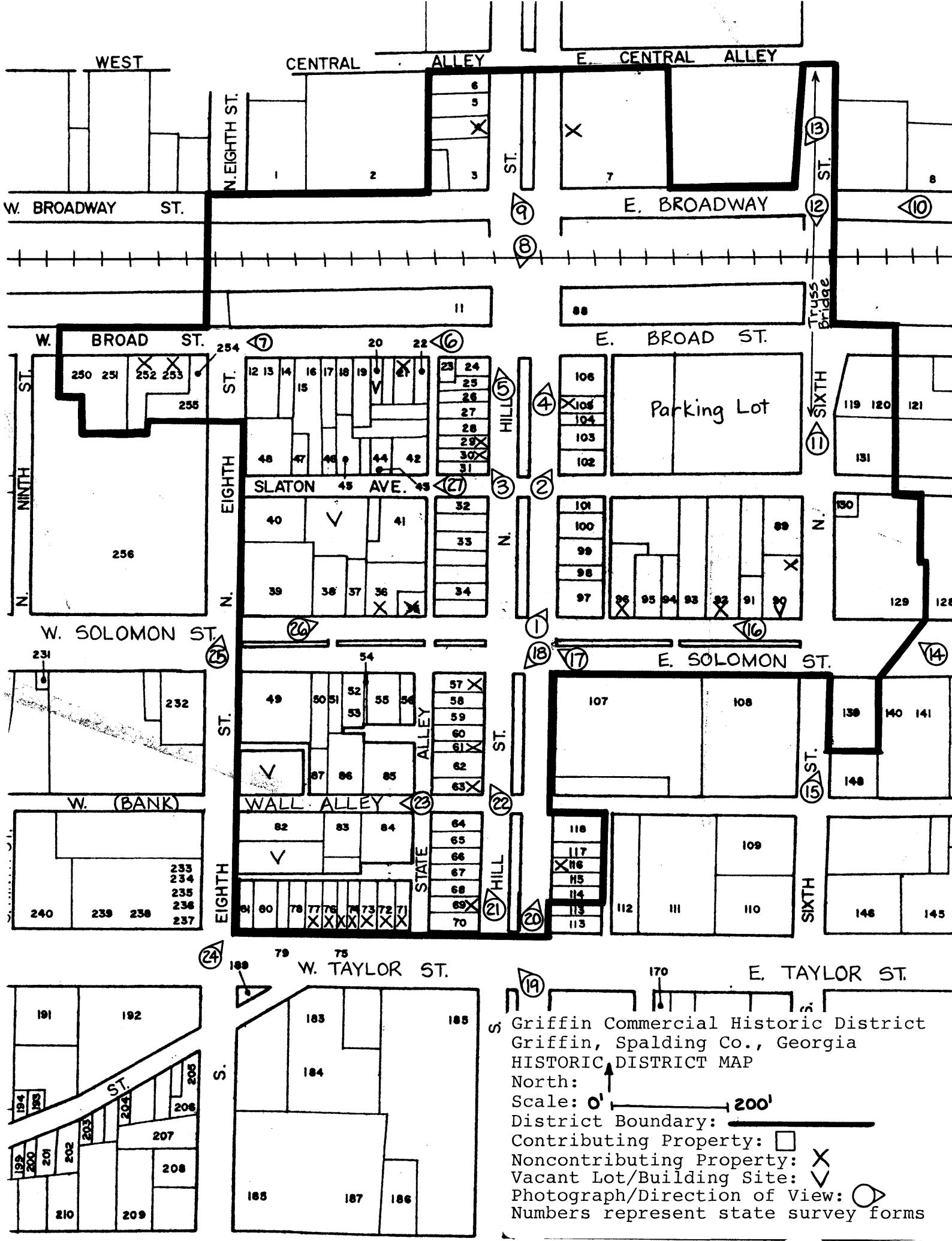
Boundary Justification

The district boundary encompasses the concentration of intact historic development in Griffin's central business district.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Debra A. Curtis, Architectural Historian</u>	date	<u>September 28, 1988</u>
organization	<u>Historic Preservation Section</u>	telephone	<u>404/656-2840</u>
street & number	<u>205 Butler Street, SE Suite 1462</u>	state	<u>Georgia</u>
city or town	<u>Atlanta,</u>	zip code	<u>30334</u>



Griffin Commercial Historic District
 Griffin, Spalding Co., Georgia
 HISTORIC DISTRICT MAP
 North: ↑
 Scale: 0' ————— 200'
 District Boundary: —————
 Contributing Property: □
 Noncontributing Property: X
 Vacant Lot/Building Site: V
 Photograph/Direction of View: ⊙
 Numbers represent state survey forms