

HISTORIC RESOURCES OF GREENSBORO, GREENE COUNTY, GEORGIA

HISTORIC DISTRICT #4

I. IDENTIFICATION

NAME OF DISTRICT: **South Walnut Street Historic District**
LOCATION: South Walnut, East South, and East Broad Streets
CITY: Greensboro
COUNTY: Greene (code 133)
STATE: Georgia (code 013)
CLASSIFICATION: District
CURRENT USE(S): Residential
ACREAGE: 12
U.S.G.S. QUADRANGLE: Greensboro, Ga.
U.T.M. REFERENCES: (A) Z17 E297820 N3717005
(B) Z17 E297790 N3716560
(C) Z17 E297500 N3716600
(D) Z17 E297560 N3717040

II. DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION

General character, appearance, and historical development: This historic district is a relatively small, L-shaped area comprised of early nineteenth- to early twentieth-century houses. Houses are situated primarily on South Walnut Street and form a linear pattern. This pattern reflects the historical relationship of this district with an early transportation route.

Natural terrain, natural landmarks, geographic features: The highest point within the district is at the intersection of South Walnut Street and South Street. The terrain remains fairly flat at this high elevation which extends to the west on South Street. There is a fairly severe incline from Broad Street to this high point and a moderate incline from the southern end of Walnut Street to this high point.

Various parts of the district: The district is uniform and does not divide itself into distinct parts.

Pattern of land subdivision: The district is divided into rectangular tracts in fairly uniform sizes. The lot at the corner of South and Walnut is larger than the typical lots in the district. Overall, the district is organized around a single north-south street which forms a part of the community's larger gridiron street pattern.

Arrangement or placement of buildings: Houses are sited in the front-centers of their lots at identical setbacks to the road.

Architectural characteristics: The district is characterized by one- and two-story wood-frame dwellings sheathed in weatherboard.

Common features include hipped and gabled roofs, roof dormers, bracketed eaves, shed-front porches which in some cases encircle the buildings, modest gingerbread trim on porches, decorative attic vents, and stained-glass windows. An unusual detail is the pressed-metal ceiling on the porch of the residence at the corner of South and Walnut Streets. Architectural styles in the district represent Plantation Plain, Greek Revival, Victorian Eclectic, and Georgian Revival. The frame two-story structure at the southern end of the district has an original section of Plantation Plain design. The Walker-Williams House in the higher elevation of the district is a two-over-two house with a small entrance porch of Greek Revival influences. The S. A. Torbert House, a one-story frame residence located north of the Walker-Williams House, is of Georgian Revival styling. Typical features of this style found in this residence include its symmetrical arrangement, hipped roof with flat deck, and projecting pedimented entrance porch. Other Georgian Revival-influenced houses within the district feature the distinct hipped-roof dormer. Victorian Eclectic designs are the most numerous in the district. The grouping of three such houses on Main Street provides a typical example of groupings throughout the district.

Landscape characteristics: The district is defined by landscape features, primarily street trees. Most are planted in the grassy space between the street and sidewalk, except on the north side of South Street, where the trees form typical linear street-tree patterns in the front yards of the houses. Oaks are the predominant plant material but a few elms have also been used. On Walnut Street, street tree plantings literally document the historic development. The large oaks on the east side relate to the historic architecture and the newer dogwood planting on the west side relate to the 1940s vintage of the adjoining development. Curbing throughout the district is granite. There are sidewalks in the district north of Bush Street. One exception to this statement is the absence of a sidewalk in front of 202 Walnut Street. As a substitute, long rectangular pieces of granite have been placed in the landscape as stepping stones. South of Bush Street the streetscape on Walnut becomes more informal. Private plantings in the district include informal groupings of trees and shrubs, foundation shrubbery, and grassed lawns. There is a limited use of walls, placed in the landscape to accommodate the slightly rolling terrain. One is found along Main and another wall is located on South Street.

Archaeological potential: unknown

Anomalous features: none

CONDITION: Good

CONTRIBUTING/NONCONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES:

Noncontributing properties (including both intrusions and non-historic properties) have been noted on the attached map of the district. The criteria for their notation is as follows: Intrusions are generally of one type. They are modern buildings that have been constructed since World War II. Due to their design, proportions, massing, siting, materials, and other features, they distract from the district and are in visual contrast to their surroundings. Non-historic structures have been built after the district's period of significance had passed. While these structures tend to blend into the district in terms of their design, proportions, massing, siting, materials, and other features, they do not contribute to the historic significance of the district. There are no intrusions within this district. There are two non-historic dwellings. Both are located on South Walnut Street. They are constructed of wood and are in scale with the surrounding development.

BOUNDARIES:

The district boundaries, shown on the attached map, encompass the concentration of historic residential development on South Walnut Street and contiguous portions of Main and South Streets. The district is surrounded by non-historic development with commercial structures on the north and west and residential structures to the south and east.

PHOTOGRAPHS: 46-54

III. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

DATES OF DEVELOPMENT: 1786 (plan); 1830-1937 (architecture)

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

South Walnut Street was the eastern boundary for Greensboro's the original 1786 town plan. In the update of the plan in 1812, both sides of Walnut were included with the rear lots forming the plan's eastern boundary. Walnut Street was originally the road to Sparta. It appears that as the community grew, residential development expanded along existing streets. Walnut Street/Sparta Road provided such an opportunity. One of the earliest houses within the district is located at its southern end. This original plantation plan dwelling, ca. 1830, would have been built more as a country home than a city dwelling. At its construction, it is certain that this area was fairly isolated from the community. A later dwelling built in a location closer to town was the Walker-Williams House. This structure, which is situated on one of the more desirable locations in the district due to its high elevation, flat topography, and terminus location from South Street, was built in 1849 by Dr. John Williams. Williams is listed in the county history as one of four practicing physicians in Greensboro in the

mid-1800s. He also owned and operated a drug store in the town center. The Park-Moore-Taylor House was also built on Walnut Street at about the same time period as the Walker House. This house was built by the widow of Richard Park, who had owned large areas of farmland, numerous slaves, and Park's Mill on the Oconee River, a cotton manufacturing plant. The Park house was apparently associated with a large tract of land. When sold to W. D. Taylor in 1918, the property extended east to Siloam Road. W. D. Taylor operated a dairy on this land. The second story of the Park-Moore-Taylor House burned in 1924.

The district appears to have developed with urban and rural characteristics. Around the turn of the century, many of the Victorian Eclectic residences were built and their arrangement developed into typical urban style housing patterns. The rear yards and property on the west side of Walnut Street (outside the district) remained farmland. Former and current residents remember wheat fields across from the residences on Walnut Street. Development within the district was complete by the mid-1930s.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA: A, C

AREA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Community Planning

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1786 (plan); 1830-1937 (architecture)

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: local

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architecture. The district is important in architecture since the structures within the district represent a century of domestic architectural styles, types, materials, and methods of construction, all of which characterize the historic residential architecture of smaller towns in Georgia, especially on the Piedmont. Buildings within the district include styles ranging from simple Plantation Plain designs through Greek Revival to Victorian Eclectic and Georgian Revival. Buildings in the district embody traditional Georgia buildings materials and they document the mid- to late 19th-century transition from handicraft to industrial production of building materials. They also document the mid-19th century shift from heavy timber framing to the "balloon" frame. Most of the buildings in the district were constructed by local craftsman who used interpretations of national designs. Many buildings, especially those dating from the early 19th century, were built using locally made or available building materials including brick and wood.

Community Planning. In terms of community planning, this district is significant for the way it demonstrates a typical pattern of residential development found in many small Georgia

towns. Part of Greensboro's originally platted area, the district occupied outlying territory. Little development would have taken place in this area had it not been for the fact that South Walnut Street was also the Sparta Road. Along this road were developed a few country homes and farms. During the latter half of the 19th century, these large tracts of land were subdivided and developed into the existing historic, in-town residential neighborhood. This pattern of development, incremental and unplanned in character but organized along an outlying road, is typical of much historic development in the outlying areas of many Georgia towns and contrasts with the more regular, planned development at the cores of these communities.

This district also may be significant in terms of social history. The district appears to be important as a residential neighborhood containing the homes of some of Greensboro's community leaders. A list of residents from this district includes some of the more influential people in the development of this city. The district has been the home of doctors, lawyers, merchants, and ministers. In particular, the district contains the Dr. John E. Walker House. The Walker House is important in local history since it was later occupied by four editors of the Greensboro paper--J. C. Williams, Cranston Williams, and Carey Williams, Sr., and Carey Williams, Jr. However, additional documentation and evaluation is needed to support National Register eligibility under this area of significance.

CONTRIBUTING/NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES:

16 contributing buildings
2 noncontributing buildings
18 total resources

VII. SOURCES OF INFORMATION


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

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

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

Historic Resources of Greensboro,
Greene County, Georgia

SOUTH WALNUT STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

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

MAP 6-B

