OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

# JUL 1 5 2011 NAT. REGISTER C.: HISTORIC PLACES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

574

### 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).

| historic name Metter Downtown Historic District   |  |                                   |             |                           |                                     |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| other names/site number N/A   |  |                                   |             |                           |                                     |
| 2. Location   |  |                                   |             |                           |                                     |
| street & number Centered on Broad Street and Ro   | untree Street                                      |                                   |             |                           | not for publication                 |
| nity or town Mottor   |  |                                   |             |                           | vicinity                            |
| city or town <u>Metter</u><br>state Georgia code GA coun  | nty Candler  | code                              | 043         | 12.7.7.2                  | 30439                               |
|   | ity Candier  | code                              | 040         | Zip code                  | 30400                               |
| 3. State/Federal Agency Certification   |  |                                   |             |                           |                                     |
| As the designated authority under the National His  | toric Preservation                                 | Act, as ame                       | nded,       |                           |                                     |
| I hereby certify that this X nomination requirements properties in the National Register of requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.   | est for determina<br>of Historic Places            | tion of eligibili<br>and meets th | ty meet     | s the docu<br>dural and p | mentation standards<br>professional |
| In my opinion, the property X meets does be considered significant at the following level(s) o  | not meet the Nat<br>of significance:               | ional Registe                     | Criteria    | a. I recomi               | mend that this proper               |
| national statewidex_local   |  |                                   |             |                           |                                     |
| Mich and Come   |  |                                   | 12          | 011                       |                                     |
| Signature of certifying official/Title: Dr. David C. Crass/Historio   |  |                                   | 0-          |                           |                                     |
| eignetere of committing emotion the butter of ciacon motors   | c Preservation Division                            | n Director/Deput                  | y SHPO      | Date                      |                                     |
| Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural  |  | n Director/Deput                  | y SHPO      | Date                      |                                     |
|   |  | n Director/Deput                  | y SHPO      | Date                      |                                     |
| Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural  | Resources  |                                   | y SHPO      | Date                      |                                     |
| Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government.  In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the  | Resources  | eria.                             | y SHPO      | Date                      |                                     |
| Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government  | Resources  |                                   | y SHPO      | Date                      |                                     |
| Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government  In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the Signature of commenting official  | Resources  National Register crit                  | eria.<br>Date                     |             | Date                      |                                     |
| Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government  In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the Signature of commenting official  Title   | Resources  National Register crit                  | eria.                             |             | Date                      |                                     |
| Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government  In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the Signature of commenting official  Title  4. National Park Service Certification   | Resources  National Register crit                  | eria.<br>Date                     |             | Date                      |                                     |
| Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government  In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the Signature of commenting official  Title  4. National Park Service Certification   | Resources  National Register crit                  | eria.<br>Date                     |             | Date                      |                                     |
| Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government  In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the Signature of commenting official  Title  4. National Park Service Certification   | Resources  National Register crit  State or Federa | eria.<br>Date                     | or Tribal C |                           | ister                               |
| Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government  In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the Signature of commenting official  Title  4. National Park Service Certification  I hereby certify that this property is:  | Resources  National Register crit  State or Federa | Date agency/bureau                | or Tribal C | National Reg              | ister                               |
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(Expires 5/31/2012)

| Metter Downtown Historic Dis<br>Name of Property   | Candler County, Georgia County and State            |   |                                       |            |  |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|------------|--|
| 5. Classification  |   |   |                                       |            |  |
| Ownership of Property<br>(Check as many boxes as apply.)   | Category of Property<br>(Check only one box.)       |   | ources within Pr                      |            |  |
|  |   | Contributing  | Noncontributi                         | ng         |  |
| x private  | building(s)   | 43  | 12                                    | buildings  |  |
| x public - Local   | x district  | 1   | 0                                     | sites      |  |
| public - State   | site  | 0   | 0                                     | structures |  |
| public - Federal   | structure   | 0   | 0                                     | objects    |  |
|  | object  | 44  | 12                                    | Total      |  |
| Name of related multiple property is not part of   |   | listed in the Nat                                       | tributing resource<br>tional Register |            |  |
| 6. Function or Use   |   |   |                                       |            |  |
| Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)   |   | Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.) |                                       |            |  |
| COMMERCE/TRADE: busine   | COMMERCE/TRADE: business, professional,             |   |                                       |            |  |
| financial institution, departme  | financial institution, specialty store, restaurant, |   |                                       |            |  |
| store, restaurant, warehouse   |   | warehouse   |                                       |            |  |
| SOCIAL: meeting hall   | LANDSCAPE: park, parking lot                        |   |                                       |            |  |
| GOVERNMENT: post office,   | GOVERNMENT: post office, city hall, courthouse      |   |                                       |            |  |
| RELIGION: religious facility   | RELIGION: religious facility                        |   |                                       |            |  |
| RECREATION AND CULTUR  | RE: theater   | TRANSPORTATION: road-related                            |                                       |            |  |
| TRANSPORTATION: rail-rel   | ated, road-related                                  |   |                                       |            |  |
| 7. Description   |   |   |                                       |            |  |
| Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)                                     |   | Materials<br>(Enter categories fro                      | om instructions.)                     |            |  |
| LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate   |   | foundation: BRICK                                       |                                       |            |  |
| LATE 19 <sup>TH</sup> AND 20 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:<br>Classical Revival, Italian Renaissance |   | walls: BRICK  |                                       |            |  |
| LATE 19 <sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20 <sup>TH</sup>   | CENTURY   |   |                                       |            |  |
| AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:  | Commercial Style                                    | STONE   | : Marble                              |            |  |
| MODERN MOVEMENT: Inte  | ernational Style, Art                               |   |                                       |            |  |
| Deco   | roof: ASPHA   | LT  |                                       |            |  |

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Metter Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Candler County, Georgia
County and State

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

Metter is a small county seat in rural southeast Georgia. The Metter Downtown Historic District, in the middle of town, consists of the intact commercial and government center that developed beginning around the turn of the 20th century. Downtown streets are aligned in a uniform grid pattern on the level topography of the coastal plain. Broad Street is the major east-west corridor. It was initially split into north and south sections by the railroad, creating lots for businesses on both sides of the tracks. After the tracks were removed in the middle of the 20th century, the same pattern remained, with the city park and landscaped parking areas filling the space where the railroad once divided the street. Each block facing Broad Street contains between 10 and 15 business storefronts. Most are attached brick buildings, one or two stories in height, with flat roofs behind parapets. Decorative detailing is typically minimal, but there are a few late Victorian and classical motifs. The district also extends southward on Kennedy and Rountree streets to include more commercial and industrial buildings, as well as the Neo-Classical Revival-style Candler County Courthouse (1921), two churches predating 1930, and the U. S. Post Office (1960). Other important buildings in the district include the 1904 Metter Bank Company (now BB&T) with its marble façade, the Allied Building (1930), the Broad Street Market (c.1900), the Masonic Building (1916), the Dixie Theater (1930), and the Metter Depot. The wood-framed depot with board-and-batten siding was built in 1902, expanded in 1914, and moved a couple of blocks to its present location in the 1950s.

#### **Narrative Description**

The Metter Downtown Historic District is the center of a small rural town that developed beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The topography is flat, and vegetation is typical of the Georgia coastal plain. Small trees, such as crape myrtles and dogwoods, are common, along with various species of oak trees and shrubs such as azaleas. Metter has historically emphasized its healthy tree canopy as part of its civic identity, especially in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The district consists of a planned landscape that grew along the railroad line, along with associated commercial, religious, and government buildings. This nominated area comprises four blocks running east and west, and varies from one to three blocks running north and south on a slightly off-center grid. To the north and south of the district are residential areas, and to the east and west is non-historic commercial and industrial development.

The relationship of the former Central of Georgia Railroad to downtown Metter is illustrated in the city's first planning map drawn in 1899 by James Terrell Trapnell. By 1902 the railroad split Broad Street in half, with business lots located on both sides of the tracks. Typical lots were 30 feet wide by 125 feet deep. Each block had 11 of these lots, some of which were eventually combined in different configurations. Major streets were (and are) around 90 feet wide. Downtown blocks were also built with internal alleys that were 20 feet wide, running in two directions. After the railroad tracks were removed c.1950, the center of Broad Street was redesigned as a large median with a city park and landscaped parking areas where the tracks once cut through downtown. The gridiron pattern and street/alley layout remain the same. Because Metter did not originate as a county seat, there is no typical courthouse square, though the 1921 courthouse does command a large lot on Broad Street.

In addition to the railroad, another transportation route through Metter was known as the Woodpecker Route beginning in the 1920s. It followed Georgia State Route 121 (Lewis Street in the district), and was promoted as a tourist route between Augusta, Georgia, and Jacksonville, Florida. In 1922 the route through Metter was

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Metter Downtown Historic District Name of Property Candler County, Georgia
County and State

published in the Automobile Legal Association's *Automobile Green Book*. In 1947 a group of leaders from several communities revived the promotion of the highway as the Woodpecker Trail, which is a designation it still retains. While the street grid pre-dates the influx of the automobile, the downtown commercial area had a layout that could accommodate its use.

Most downtown buildings are one story in height, interspersed with just a few two-story buildings. Storefronts facing Broad Street tend to be attached with shared walls. Their facades directly abut the sidewalk. Most are faced in brick with flat roofs and parapet walls. A few storefronts have retained their recessed entryways and some simple ironwork, although many doors and display windows have been altered over the years. Decorative detailing is plain or nonexistent. Late Victorian-era design elements include corbelled brickwork, arched second-floor window openings, and asymmetrical facades. Classical motifs include simple pilasters, dentil molding on cornices, recessed panels near parapets, brackets along the roofline, flat arches with keystones, and symmetrical facades. Commercial buildings facing both sides of Broad Street can be seen in photographs 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 33. Examples of alleyways and warehouses behind these buildings are shown in photographs 21 and 22.

The east side of the district is dominated by the former Central of Georgia Railroad's freight and passenger depot (photograph 1). The depot was built in 1902, and moved about two blocks to its present location at Broad and Leroy streets in the 1950s. According to Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, the original location was along the then-active railroad line in the middle of Broad Street between Lewis and Rountree streets. (Despite what is shown on many maps, the correct name of the street is Rountree, not Roundtree.) The main tracks were south of the depot, with a siding on the north side. Platforms were on the north and east sides of the station. The building was expanded to its current size in 1914. The one-story frame building has board-and-batten siding, a gable roof with wide eaves, and separate interior spaces that accommodated passengers and freight. It is extremely intact on the interior and exterior to its historic appearance, and was rehabilitated in the 1990s for use by the city for meetings and events.

West of the depot, Broad Street is now divided in half by landscaped parking lots and a city park where the railroad tracks once ran (photographs 23 and 35). The park is seen in photographs 15 and 34. While this configuration dates to the early 1950s, it maintains the same layout of the commercial blocks facing Broad Street. The park includes trees planted in linear patterns in the 1950s and later, along with metal benches and a circular fountain with a metal depiction of a crane. Because its design was implemented by the Metter Garden Club during the period of significance for the district, the park is considered a contributing site.

The largest community landmark in Metter is the Candler County Courthouse (photograph 31), constructed in 1921. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 as part of the "County Courthouses in Georgia" thematic nomination. Located on about a one-acre lot facing north toward the city park, this Neo-Classical Revival building was designed by architect James J. Baldwin. It is a two-story rectangular building with a projecting Doric tetrastyle portico. The exterior is cream brick with brick quoins. A small domed clock tower rises from the center of the low-pitched hipped roof. The interior is a cross plan with a small rotunda. The original cost of \$125,000 was a large investment for a small county in 1921, and the building has survived with excellent integrity.

Two of the oldest buildings on Broad Street stand side-by-side on the south side. The two-story Metter Bank Company Building (now BB&T) was constructed in 1904, and is the only building in downtown that is faced in marble (photograph 28). It has a prominent corner location at Broad and Rountree streets. The oldest part of the building has five bays with a central door. A three-bay addition (date unknown) uses almost identical materials. The only major exterior alterations are replacement windows with fixed panes. Another two-story building, the current Broad Street Market, is next to the bank at 10 Broad Street (photograph 27). It was built c.1900 and first served as a drug store with a dental office above. The storefront is altered, but the brick façade still retains its three arched second-floor window openings.

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Metter Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Candler County, Georgia
County and State

On the north side of Broad Street is the 1916 former Masonic Lodge (photograph 6). This two-story brick building features an unusual parapet design with a flat-topped arch. The three-bay façade is topped with a square marble inset with a carved Masonic symbol. Marble is also used in pilasters, keystones, and on top of the corner piers. The second floor was historically used as a meeting hall and the first floor has housed a variety of businesses.

Also on the north side of Broad is the largest commercial building in Metter, the two-story Allied Building which takes up a major corner at Northeast Broad Street and North Lewis Street (photographs 3, 4, and 5). Constructed c.1930, it once had a service station at the corner. Metter's major retail store (Allied Department Store) once occupied much of the rest of the building. The two-story brick façade is divided by brick pilasters, and many of the storefronts and doors have original materials. The only major change is the infill of the corner service station with brick. This imposing edifice is a prominent contributing building in the district.

The former Dixie Theater stands on the corner of Northwest Broad Street and North Kennedy Street (photograph 12). It has a three-story center section flanked by one-story wings. The brick building is faced in stucco on the front with streamlined Art Deco detailing. While it is unclear how much the front has been altered, the form is intact, and the building still contributes to the district. The Dixie Theater was built as a movie house in 1930 to replace another theater of the same name about a block away that had been destroyed by fire. The building has recently housed offices, but there are plans to use it for events and performances.

There are a few stand-alone commercial buildings in the district, including a c.1930 former service station on Broad Street (photograph 24) and an Ace Hardware store built in 1944 according to tax records (photograph 25). A former residential bungalow at 21 North Kennedy Street is now used as a business office. The district includes several examples of mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century architecture, such as the one-story brick 1950s office building in photograph 13 and the day care center (1955) on the right in photograph 32 on the west side of the downtown. These two lots were developed after the railroad tracks were removed from Broad Street. The Metter Post Office (1960) on South Rountree Street is a good example of an International Style government building (photographs 17 and 18). The building is currently leased by the U. S. Postal Service.

Metter's downtown commercial area extends for one block south of Broad Street along Rountree Street, including one-story brick buildings such as the offices for the *Metter Advertiser* newspaper and City Hall (photographs 19 and 20). Along South Kennedy Street and South Rountree Street are two churches that sit back-to-back. The main sanctuaries of the Primitive Baptist Church (photograph 16) and the First (formerly Missionary) Baptist Church (photograph 30) were both extant by 1930, according to Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps. Both have classically inspired brick edifices with attached Sunday school wings that were added later.

Less than one-fourth of the buildings in the district are considered noncontributing. These include those that were constructed after the period of significance and those that have lost their integrity due to extensive changes or additions. The building at 59-63 Northeast Broad Street (photograph 7, center) is an example of a façade that was altered with a new roof overhang (false mansard) and new storefronts. City Hall and its neighbor to the left in photograph 19 have also had similar changes. Photograph 10 (left) shows a noncontributing building with several changes that obscured or removed the historic materials. The tallest building in photograph 11 is new infill. The funeral home in photograph 33 was built in the 1970s. A few other buildings were also either constructed too recently or have had major changes that make them noncontributing. Overall, however, the district retains good historic integrity.

Metter Downtown Historic District

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Candler County, Georgia

County and State Name of Property 8. Statement of Significance Applicable National Register Criteria Areas of Significance (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property (Enter categories from instructions.) for National Register listing.) Architecture Property is associated with events that have made a Commerce significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. Community Planning and Development Property is associated with the lives of persons Politics/Government significant in our past. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high Period of Significance artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack c.1899-1961 individual distinction. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. Significant Dates 1901 - Central of Georgia Railroad arrives. 1914 - Candler County is formed. 1921 - courthouse is completed. Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.) Significant Person Property is: (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.) N/A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. **Cultural Affiliation** removed from its original location. N/A a birthplace or grave. a cemetery. Architect/Builder a reconstructed building, object, or structure. Baldwin, James J. a commemorative property.

#### Period of Significance (justification)

within the past 50 years.

less than 50 years old or achieving significance

The period of significance for the Metter Downtown Historic District begins with the layout of the street grid c.1899, and ends at the historic period in 1961 when most of the land had been developed, and few new commercial buildings were being constructed.

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Candler County, Georgia
County and State

Metter Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Metter Downtown Historic District is nominated at the local level of significance under Criteria A and C as a good example of a downtown business district that served as the county seat and commercial center of Candler County. The town of Metter was a small agricultural crossroads until James Terrell Trapnell hired an engineer to plan and lay out the town in 1899. The Central of Georgia Railroad ran its first train through Metter in 1901. The region's economic prosperity derived from cotton, tobacco, and livestock. Metter provided a market and distribution point for these products. In the area of commerce, the Metter Downtown Historic District is significant for its role as the historic commercial center of Candler County. Typically the county seat filled this role, and provided for the day-to-day commercial needs of nearby rural residents, such as retail stores and offices and professional services. As the county seat, it is also significant in politics/government for the presence of buildings directly related to activities and events associated with local county government, such as the courthouse and administrative offices. Candler County was formed in 1914 from portions of three other counties. Its creation was largely due to a multi-year effort by a group of Metter citizens and the Metter Advertiser newspaper. The district is significant in community planning and development for its intact historic town plan. As described in Darlene Roth's Georgia Community Development and Morphology of Community Types, Metter fits the pattern of a "railroad strip" town where the tracks ran through the middle of town and the associated commercial development paralleled the tracks and was oriented toward them. This is the most common form of railroad town found in Georgia. Even after the tracks were removed, Metter has retained the same gridiron plan laid out in 1899. The district is also significant in architecture for its representative collection of commercial and government buildings that reflect design and construction traditions commonly found in Georgia towns in the early to mid-20th century.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Metter Downtown Historic District is significant in the area of <u>commerce</u> at the local level because as the central business district, it represents the town as the center of commerce in Candler County. The downtown was historically the primary location for the trading, buying, and selling of goods, services, and commodities on a local and countywide basis. The historic intact commercial buildings are representative of all types of commerce that contributed to the town's economy throughout its history. Initially much of the commerce related to the railroad line with its depot in the middle of downtown, allowing for commercial activities associated with both passengers and freight. Through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the economic focus changed from the trading of agricultural products to more diverse retail and service industries. The Metter Bank Company building (1904) anchors the prominent corner of Broad and Rountree streets, and is a good example of commercial architecture that still houses a bank on the first floor. The one- and two-story brick buildings along Broad Street represent the mercantile, professional, and banking businesses that were historically found in Georgia's cities. Automobile-related businesses, such as the c.1930 service station at Broad and Lewis streets, were built along the automobile route known as the Woodpecker Trail.

Commercial centers like Metter generally featured a range of retail stores (general merchandise, dry goods, groceries, drug stores, millenaries, apparel/clothing, service/gas stations), offices and professional services

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Metter Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Candler County, Georgia
County and State

(including banks, lawyers, doctors), wholesale establishments and warehouses (warehouses, offices), artisans, mechanics, and tradespeople (liveries, blacksmiths, automobile repair), entertainment and other services (bars and saloons, restaurants, theaters, hotels), and communications-related services (post office, telegraph office, telephone exchange, newspaper office/press).

Extant historic buildings in the Metter Downtown Historic District represent many of these historic commercial activities. One example is the large Allied Building, which was once occupied by a department store and corner service station. Another is the former Dixie Theater, which opened in its current location in 1930. The two-story Broad Street Market once housed a pharmacy and dental office. These and other historic buildings, along with the commercial activity they represent, reflect the economic development and prosperity of the community and its surrounding region, particularly after Metter became the county seat in 1914. The 1930 Sanborn map shows Broad Street lined with small retail businesses of all sorts, including three drug stores on one block. Of special note locally is the office of the *Metter Advertiser* newspaper on Rountree Street, which still functions in a historic building downtown.

The Metter Downtown Historic District is significant in the area of politics and government at the local level as the county seat of Candler County and because of the presence of buildings directly related to activities and events associated with county government. Metter became the county seat in 1914 when Candler County was established. Candler was formed from portions of Bulloch, Emanuel, and Tattnall counties, after several years of intense efforts by local citizens and the *Metter Advertiser* newspaper. In 1904 the state legislature had repealed the law limiting the number of counties in Georgia. In the following decade there was lobbying in several sections of the state for new counties. Some reasons for the pressure to create Candler County included the long travel distance from Metter to the Bulloch County seat of Statesboro, the newfound prosperity that the railroad brought to Metter, and the perception that the concerns of Metter residents were not being met in Statesboro.

Throughout much of Georgia's history, the county has been the most important and powerful form of local government. County governments made and enforced laws (through county commissioners, sheriffs, and judges), and provided essential public services including building and maintaining roads, water and sewer systems, and sometimes electrical and/or gas systems. They were responsible for administering important aspects of the legal system including courts, birth and death records, taxes, wills and probate, and property deeds. Through county school boards they provided for public education throughout the county. County commissioners, sheriffs, and judges traditionally are the most important local political figures. In Metter, county government is represented by the Candler County Courthouse (1921), completed seven years after the county was formed. While Metter's city hall is noncontributing due to alterations, it is also in the district. The 1960 post office (currently leased by the U.S. Postal Service) represents the role of the federal government in Metter.

The Metter Downtown Historic District is also significant in the area of <u>community planning and development</u> at the local level for its intact historic town plan. Just before 1900, James Terrell Trapnell hired an engineer to plan and lay out the new town. These early maps (drawn by a Mr. Anderson) showed divided streets lined with oak trees. The business section centered on the Central of Georgia Railroad tracks along a divided Broad Street. The plan included 21 blocks – 16 located north of the railroad tracks and five located to the south. Commercial lots were 30 feet wide by 125 feet deep, with larger residential lots on the outskirts. T-shaped alleys were incorporated into the downtown blocks. All streets were arranged in grid patterns, and many were named after pioneer settlers of the area. The idea was to combine agricultural commerce with the new railroad traffic that would stop at the depot planned for downtown.

Historian Darlene Roth evaluated several types of towns in Georgia Community Development and Morphology of Community Types. Metter is a "railroad strip" town where the tracks ran through the middle of town and the

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Metter Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Candler County, Georgia
County and State

associated commercial development paralleled the tracks and was oriented toward them. According to Roth, this is the most common form of railroad town found in Georgia. Metter experienced swift growth from the railroad, followed by a decline after the railroad line from Brewton to Metter was abandoned in 1938. Even after the downtown tracks were removed in the 1950s, Metter has retained the same gridiron plan laid out in 1899.

The Metter Downtown Historic District is significant in <u>architecture</u> at the local level for its good collection of relatively intact early to mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century (mostly commercial) buildings that represent prevailing design and construction traditions of small cities and towns in Georgia. Several periods of architecture are represented in the buildings in the district. Most dates of construction tend to reflect Metter's greatest period of growth and development between 1900 and 1940. While many buildings have no distinct style, design influences in the district include elements of late Victorian styles and classical influences. A few Italianate features such as cornice brackets and round-arched upper windows can be seen on Broad Street. There are also a couple of examples of streamlined Art Deco motifs and the International Style. An excellent example of the modernism of the early 1960s is the U. S. Post Office on Rountree Street.

Blocks of attached commercial buildings along Broad Street range in height from one to two stories, with only a handful of taller buildings anchoring the prominent locations. Character-defining features include party walls; simple rectangular forms; common setbacks fronting directly on the sidewalk; first-floor storefronts (some with large display windows), upper-floor windows (some with segmental or rounded arches) on the few two-story examples; parapet rooflines with cornices or recessed panels; and the use of architectural ornament primarily on the front walls. Good examples of larger buildings include the former Masonic Lodge (1916), the marble-faced Metter Bank Company (1904, now BB&T), the Broad Street Market building (c.1900), and the Allied Building (1930). The use of brick, both structurally and decoratively, also is characteristic of the way in which these kinds of commercial buildings were built during these periods in small Georgia cities. Corbelled brick cornices are visible on several smaller buildings along the north side of Broad Street.

The Metter Depot (1902) is a good example of sturdy utilitarian architecture with a design intended for the pragmatic use of space for passengers and freight. It was built by the Central of Georgia Railroad, and expanded in 1914. As the only wooden building downtown, it was similar to many late-19<sup>th</sup>-century depots, and also represented the optimism of new opportunities for the emerging town of Metter.

The Candler County Courthouse and the two downtown churches are each very different examples of the use of classical forms and details prior to 1930. The Metter Primitive Baptist Church has an unusual side-gabled form, while the Metter First Baptist Church was designed with a more typical front-gabled portico with massive columns. The courthouse is an architecturally significant community landmark built in 1921 using the Neo-Classical Revival design of architect James J. Baldwin (1888-1955). It is an excellent example of an elaborate brick courthouse that reflected the prosperity and pride of the new county seat. J. J. Baldwin was a South Carolina architect whose practice extended into North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, and Georgia. He designed at least seven other courthouses in Georgia during the decades of the 1910s and 1920s.

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| Metter Downtown Historic District |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Name of Property                  |  |

Candler County, Georgia
County and State

#### Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Note: The following is an edited and condensed version of the historical narrative prepared by Jon Herschell in April 2008 as part of the "Historic District Information Form" for the proposed Downtown Metter Historic District.

In the 1870s, what would become the town of Metter was an unnamed crossroads surrounded by agricultural land in Bulloch County. A schoolhouse was erected c.1878 for the children of farmers and others in the area. It was called Tilden Academy, and would later become Metter Grammar School. The nearest town with a post office was ten miles south in the town of Excelsior. Each week a local resident would make the 20-mile round trip by horse or mule to pick up the mail for the entire community. Residents petitioned to have a "star route" established with a number of small post offices along a route between Excelsior and Swainsboro (in Emanuel County). The local post office was to be located in the home of physician Dr. Dan Kennedy. The creation of a post office required that the community have a name. There are several accounts as to the origin of the name Metter, but the most common belief is that it involved a misunderstanding of the word "Meadow" by the U.S. Postal Service. The first known business in Metter was a mercantile establishment called L.D. Rountree and Company, opened in 1897 by L.D. Rountree of nearby Summit. Metter had not yet been formally laid out, and the only two buildings were the school and the principal's residence.

The groundwork was laid for the future prosperity of Metter with the coming of the Central of Georgia Railroad. Around 1898 the Brewton-Pineora Railroad was built from Brewton on the west to Pineora on the east. The Central of Georgia Railroad bought this line in 1901 and completed it. At this time the railroads were working on short "feeder" lines through the pine barrens to serve the timber industry. The first train to run through Metter, on the line between Brewton and Savannah, ran on June 9, 1901. The coming of the railroad enabled local products to be transferred to markets by means other than mule or oxen-drawn vehicles. The Metter Depot was constructed in 1902 and enlarged in 1914. The depot was in the middle of Broad Street, which was divided into north and south sections by the railroad tracks. (In the 1950s the depot would be moved to its present location two blocks to the east.)

Anticipating the railroad, Metter already had its first hotel in 1899. The Metter Hotel (later the McLean Hotel, no longer extant) was built and operated by the family of Dr. Dan Kennedy, a physician whose small office adjoined the hotel. That same year James Terrell Trapnell hired an engineer named Anderson to plan and lay out the city. Maps showed divided streets lined with oak trees. The community plan consisted of 21 blocks, 16 located north of the railroad tracks, and five to the south. Commercial lots measuring 30 feet wide by 125 feet deep fronted on the railroad tracks and North and South Broad streets. Residential lots were of two sizes — 75 by 155 feet and 60 by 155 feet. Twenty-foot-wide alleys separated the middle of the blocks. All streets were arranged in the grid pattern that survives today. Many streets were named for members of the Trapnell family and other pioneer settlers of Metter, and still retain those names.

The new village of Metter had an estimated population of almost 400 by 1900. Residents called for an election to determine whether or not to incorporate and to specify the boundaries of the town. The votes were in favor of incorporation. After the results were certified by the courts, an election of officers resulted in Algerine Trapnell sworn as mayor for a one-year term. City council members were Dan L. Kennedy, J. T. Trapnell, L. D. Rountree, Mack Mercer, and Charlie Mikell. The Georgia State Legislature issued the city a charter of incorporation in August 1903, and Dr. W. D. Kennedy was elected as the first mayor after official incorporation.

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Metter Downtown Historic District

Candler County, Georgia County and State

Name of Property

Several churches and fraternal groups began organizing around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Metter's Masonic order organized in 1901. The Missionary Baptist Church had a mission station in 1899 that became a congregation in 1900. The Primitive Baptist Church organized the same year. Metter had a Presbyterian church by 1902 and a Methodist church by 1903. (Most of these organizations and congregations are not in their original buildings.)

Metter's first bank, the Bank of Metter, was founded by 1904. It occupied one of the first two-story buildings on Broad Street that is still extant today. W. S. Witham from Atlanta organized the bank with a capital stock of \$15,000, and it prospered during its first years of operation. A second bank, the Citizens Bank, opened in 1910. Cotton was one of Metter's earliest cash crops. In the early 1900s Metter had a bonded warehouse and three cotton gins.

Tilden Academy became Metter Grammar School in the early 1900s, and the school term was changed from three months to six months. It had four teachers by 1905-1906. The building that would become Metter High School was built in 1921 for grades one through eleven. (It is outside the Metter Downtown Historic District, but was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.)

In 1904 the Bulloch Times reported, "hustling Metter, a town that is growing, wants to become a county seat." This movement for a new county was strongly opposed by Bulloch County, which would lose substantial land, tax revenue, and population (and therefore political power). Distance and poor roads isolated Metter from the surrounding county seats of Statesboro, Swainsboro, and Reidsville. Metter residents felt that they were entitled to better schools and other facilities that would come from forming a new county. Dr. W. D. Kennedy was behind Metter's first serious attempt in 1906. Leaders proposed the creation of "Georgia County" or "Dixie County," but these early efforts were unsuccessful.

Metter continued to grow, and by 1910 the U.S. Census listed the population as 408. Businesses and professionals operating that year were cited in directories as follows: nine general merchandise stores; one store each selling furniture, groceries, jewelry, and retail drugs; one livery stable; two blacksmiths; one hotel; three sawmills; one planing mill; two lumber companies; one turpentine operator; three physicians; one dentist; one lawyer; one undertaker; and two insurance agencies. Pharmacist George M. Bird opened Bird Drug Company in 1909. Jake M. Fine opened a merchandise store in 1911. As his business grew, he moved into larger buildings, and by 1918 he erected the building later known as Durden's Department Store.

The citizens of Metter intensified their attempts to win legislative support for a new county. In 1912 the weekly Metter Advertiser newspaper was founded and operated by the city government, with the stated goal of aiding the fight for the creation of a new county with Metter as the seat. Editor F. H. Sills made sure that in addition to gathering and reporting news, the newspaper had a notice in the top left corner of its masthead with the words "Wanted: A New County." The widow of Governor Allen D. Candler was enlisted to advocate before the state legislature regarding the proposed new county that would bear her late husband's name. Events such as barbecues became rallies to push the local agenda. In 1914 Metter finally prevailed, and Candler County was created by legislative act (and ratified by voters) from portions of Emanuel, Bulloch, and Tattnall counties. The Metter Advertiser was re-organized as a stock company, and continues to publish today.

Local businesses were thriving by the 1920s. Many, such as the flour mill and tobacco shop, processed and/or sold locally grown agricultural products. The Central Tobacco Warehouse opened in 1925 in an addition to a brick cotton warehouse. The selling season lasted four or five weeks, consistently auctioning off six to seven million pounds of tobacco at its peak. A livestock market, as well as poultry and egg markets,

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Metter Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Candler County, Georgia
County and State

also operated in Metter. As many as five grain elevators were open in the same decade. Modern conveniences such as a municipally owned electric light system (c.1916) and waterworks (1920), as well as Metter's location between Macon and Savannah, also helped commerce. In 1916, Masonic Lodge No. 435 constructed the building at 27 North Broad Street, with a meeting place upstairs and space for various businesses on the first floor.

The Metter Woman's Club and the city's street committee met in 1920 to discuss plans for a "City Beautiful" campaign. They focused on the central business district with plans for trees, cement sidewalks, miniature landscaped parks, and decorative iron lampposts. While not all the plans were implemented, tree plantings and other beautification projects did have some success over the years.

According to the U.S. Census, Metter had 908 people in 1920 and 1,424 in 1930. City limits extended threequarters of a mile from the Central of Georgia Railroad depot. The paving of 14 city blocks in the business and residential sections had been scheduled to start in 1929, but the 1930 Sanborn map still showed dirt streets. The beginning of the Great Depression probably delayed the projects.

Metter's movie house, the Dixie Theater, burned in 1930 and was rebuilt at another location on the same block. A large number of businesses continued to operate in downtown Metter in 1930. In addition to selling agricultural products, merchants operated newer concessions such as filling stations and automobile sales and service. Broad Street also had department stores, general merchandise stores, drug stores, banks, offices, a cleaning and pressing service, an auto repair shop, and other businesses. Along the alleys behind the stores were warehouses and grain storage buildings. In 1935 the Metter Banking Company re-organized as a state bank with the benefit of FDIC insurance. A few businesses closed during the Great Depression, but many stores in Metter survived in some form.

Efforts to form an electrical cooperative began in 1937. With the assistance of federal officials under the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), the region around Metter was served by the Excelsior Electric Membership Corporation beginning in 1938. According to an article in the *Metter Advertiser*, businesses operating in the late 1930s included Ideal Grocery, Eiseman Dry Goods, Watson's Grocery, two new liquor stores, Cooper's Café, Seals Furniture Company, Thomas Grocery, L. Albert Dry Goods, Farmers Hardware Company, Evans Jewelry Shop, Hendrix Motor Company, Thompson Dry Goods, Franklin Hardware Company, J.B. Parish Produce Market, Metter Wholesale Grocery, Metter Livestock Market, Hodges Hardware Company, R.G. Daniel Fertilizer Company, Dr. L.H. Darby, Jr. (dentist), several new service stations, and two new beauty shops.

In 1951 the Pineland Telephone Company was organized to merge several smaller telephone exchanges in Candler and Emanuel counties. Using an REA loan, the cooperative purchased and combined telephone exchanges in Midville, Adrian, Stillmore, and Metter. New facilities were built beginning in 1952.

Metter's population continued to increase, although much of the increase could be attributed to several extensions of the city limits. By 1976 Metter's boundaries reached south to Interstate 16. In 1940 the population was 1,823 and in 1980 it was 3,534. In the 2000s, downtown Metter has had some streetscape construction consisting of new sidewalks, crosswalks, lampposts, benches, and landscaping. Downtown beautification is still an important agenda item for the local Better Hometown Program, which uses the slogan "Everything's Better in Metter."

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Metter Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Candler County, Georgia
County and State

#### 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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(Expires 5/31/2012)

| Metter Do                                       | wntown Historic I  | District   |          |  | Candler County, Georgia         |
|---|--|--|----------|--|---------------------------------|
| Name of Pr                                      | operty   |  |          |  | County and State                |
| prelimi reques x previou previou design recorde | sted) usly listed in the Natio usly determined eligib ated a National Histor ed by Historic America ed by Historic America | individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been nal Register –Candler County Courthouse le by the National Register | <u>x</u> | ary location of add<br>State Historic Prese<br>Other State agency<br>Federal agency<br>Local government<br>University<br>Other<br>e of repository; | ervation Office                 |
|   | Resources Survey   | Number (if assigned): N/A  |          |  |                                 |
|   | of Property<br>lude previously listed  | Approximately 22 acres.  |          |  |                                 |
| (Note: TI                                       | tional UTM references  | s on a continuation sheet.)<br>references are in North American L  | Datum 19 | 027, in order to b   | e consistent with the submitted |
| 1 17  | 399930   | 3584940 3  | 17       | 400520   | 3584460                         |
| Zone  | Easting  | Northing   | Zone     | Easting  | Northing                        |
| 2 17  | 400570   | 3584870 4  | 17       | 399910   | 3584520                         |
| Zone  | Easting  | Northing   | Zone     | Easting  | Northing                        |

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

The National Register boundary is indicated with a heavy black line, drawn to scale, on the attached National Register map.

#### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the intact, contiguous, historic resources associated with the downtown commercial area of the city of Metter.

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Metter Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Candler County, Georgia
County and State

| 11. Form Prepared By   |                 |                |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| name/title Denise P. Messick, historian                                    |                 |                |
| organization Historic Preservation Division, GA Dept. of Natural Resources | date June 201   | 1              |
| street & number 254 Washington Street, Ground Level                        | _telephone (404 | ) 656-2840     |
| city or town Atlanta   | state GA        | zip code 30334 |
| e-mail Denise.Messick@dnr.state.ga.us                                      |                 |                |

#### 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.)

#### 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: Metter Downtown Historic District

City or Vicinity: Metter

County: Candler State: Georgia

Photographer: James R. Lockhart, Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources

Date Photographed: November 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 35. Metter Depot and eastern edge of district. Photographer facing northeast.
- 2 of 35. 200 block of Northeast Broad Street. Photographer facing north.
- 3 of 35. Northeast corner of Northeast Broad Street at North Lewis Street. Photographer facing north.
- 4 of 35. Northeast corner of Northeast Broad Street at North Lewis Street. Photographer facing northeast.
- 5 of 35. 10 North Lewis Street. Photographer facing northeast.

(Expires 5/31/2012)

## Candler County, Georgia Metter Downtown Historic District County and State Name of Property 6 of 35. Metter Lodge at 47 Northeast Broad Street. Photographer facing north. 7 of 35. 47-75 Northeast Broad Street. Photographer facing northeast. 8 of 35. 23-41 Northeast Broad Street. Photographer facing north. 9 of 35. Northeast corner of Northeast Broad Street and North Rountree Street. Photographer facing northeast. 10 of 35. North Rountree Street at northern edge of district. Photographer facing east. 11 of 35. 20-32 Northwest Broad Street. Photographer facing northeast. 12 of 35. Dixie Theatre at 44 Northwest Broad Street. Photographer facing northeast. 13 of 35. West Broad Street near Kennedy Street. Photographer facing northeast. 14 of 35. West Broad Street at western edge of district. Photographer facing northeast. 15 of 35. City Park at West Broad Street and North Kennedy Street. Photographer facing northeast. 16 of 35. Metter Primitive Baptist Church, South Kennedy Street. Photographer facing northwest. 17 of 35. U.S. Post Office, on South Rountree Street. Photographer facing east. 18 of 35. U.S. Post Office, on South Rountree Street. Photographer facing east. 19 of 35. Metter City Hall on South Rountree Street. Photographer facing northeast. 20 of 35. 3-15 South Rountree Street. Photographer facing northeast. 21 of 35. North/south alleyway between South Rountree Street and South Lewis Street. Photographer facing north. 22 of 35. East/west alleyway between South Rountree Street and South Lewis Street. Photographer facing east. 23 of 35. Median parking along Broad Street. Photographer facing east. 24 of 35. Southeast corner of Lewis Street at East Broad Street. Photographer facing east. 25 of 35. 200 block of East Broad Street. Photographer facing southwest. 26 of 35. 2-28 East Broad Street. Photographer facing southwest. 27 of 35. 10-18 East Broad Street. Photographer facing south. 28 of 35. 2 East Broad Street. Photographer facing south. 29 of 35. Southwest corner of East Broad Street and Rountree Street. Photographer facing southwest. 30 of 35. First Baptist Church, 50 South Rountree Street. Photographer facing southwest.

31 of 35. Candler County Courthouse, 35 West Broad Street. Photographer facing south

32 of 35. 11-17 North Kennedy Street. Photographer facing northwest.

(Expires 5/31/2012)

| Metter Downtown Historic District |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Name of Property                  |  |

Candler County, Georgia County and State

33 of 35. 200 block of West Broad Street. Photographer facing southwest.

34 of 35. City Park. Photographer facing west.

35 of 35. Broad Street parking median. Photographer facing west/southwest.

| Propert   | y Owner:         |           |          |  |  |
|---|------------------|-----------|----------|--|--|
| (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.) |                  |           |          |  |  |
| name  | Multiple owners. |           |          |  |  |
| street & number   |                  | telephone |          |  |  |
| city or to  | wn               | state     | zip code |  |  |

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

| REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION   |  |
|--|--|
| PROPERTY Metter Downtown Historic D NAME:  | istrict  |
| MULTIPLE<br>NAME:  |  |
| STATE & COUNTY: GEORGIA, Candler   |  |
| (  | TE OF PENDING LIST: 8/08/11<br>TE OF 45TH DAY: 8/30/11 |
| REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000578   |  |
| REASONS FOR REVIEW:  |  |
| APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAP<br>OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD:<br>REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAF                    | N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N                                |
| COMMENT WAIVER: N  |  |
| ACCEPTRETURNREJECT _   | 8.24.1/ DATE   |
| ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:  Entered in  The National Regist  of  Historic Places                                   | er   |
| RECOM./CRITERIA  |  |
| REVIEWER DISC  | IPLINE   |
| TELEPHONEDATE  |  |
| DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y  If a nomination is returned to the no nomination is no longer under conside | minating authority, the                                |



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 1 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 2 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 3 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 4 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 5 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 6 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 7 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 8 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 9 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 10 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 11 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 12 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 13 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 14 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 15 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 16 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 17 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 18 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 19 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 20 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 21 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 22 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 23 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 24 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 25 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 26 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 27 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 28 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 29 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 30 of 35



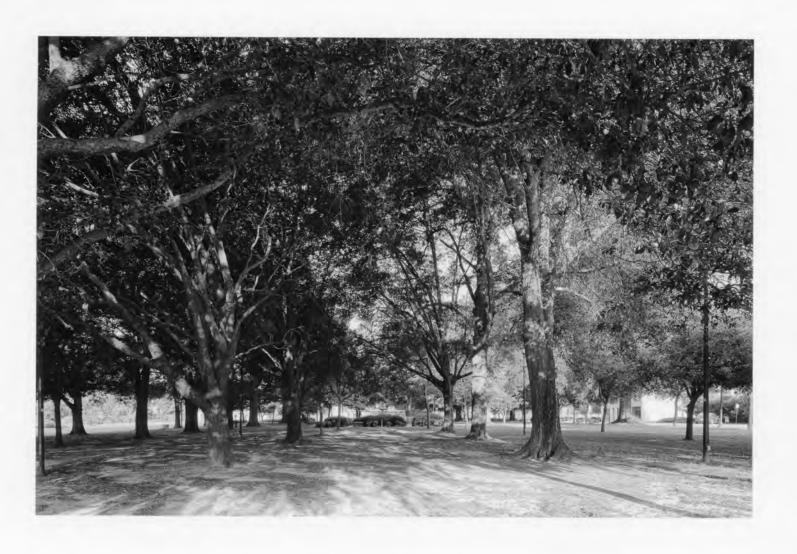
Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 31 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 32 of 35



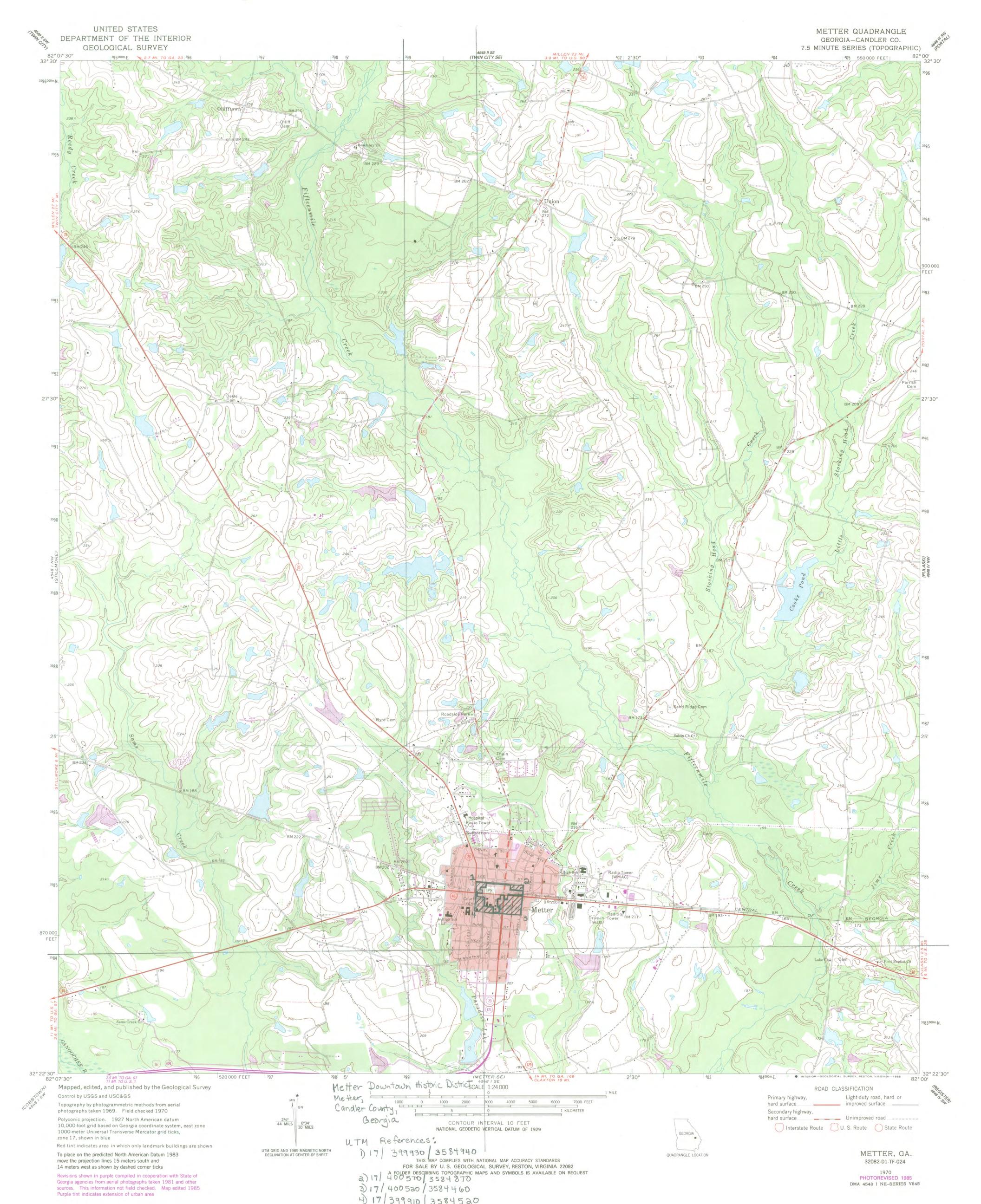
Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 33 of 35

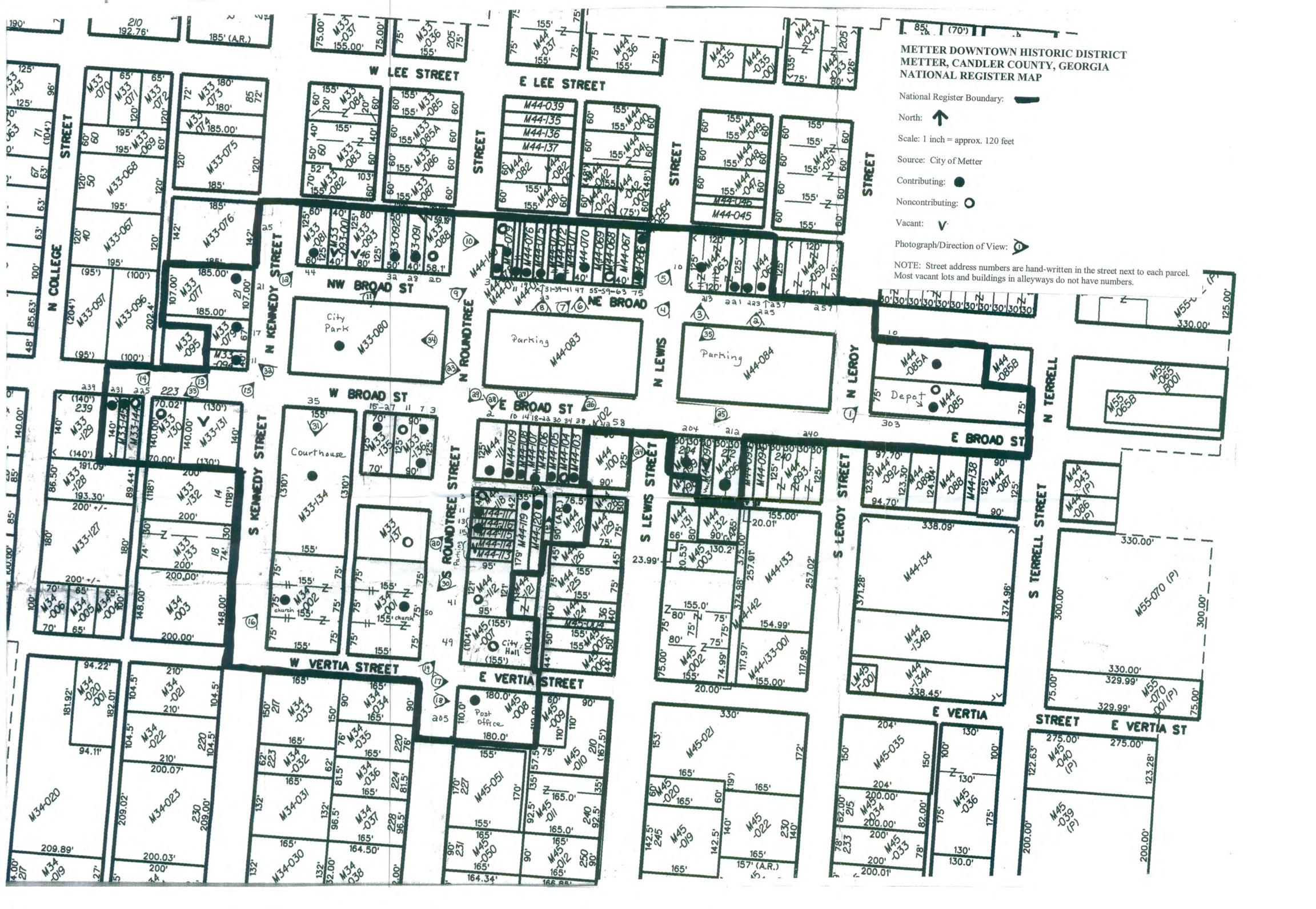


Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 34 of 35



Metter Downtown Historic District Candler County, Georgia Photograph 35 of 35









MARK WILLIAMS COMMISSIONER DR. DAVID CRASS DIVISION DIRECTOR

July 6, 2011

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:

Please find enclosed the following nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for your consideration:

Metter Downtown Historic District, Candler County, Georgia Hodgson, Asbury and Sallie, House, Rabun County, Georgia

Sincerely,

Gretchen Brock

National Register & Survey Program Manager

Historic Preservation Division

Enclosure