

(County Jails of Ben Hill, Berrien,
Brooks, and Turner Counties TR)

COUNTY: Turner (code 287)
GEORGIA ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC PROPERTIES SURVEY-INVENTORY FORM

NO. 4

I. IDENTIFICATION	PROPERTY NAME: Turner County Jail STREET ADDRESS: 200 College Street PRESENT OWNER: Turner County Commission J.E. Segó, Chairman CITY: Ashburn CURRENT USE: county jail U.S.G.S. QUADRANGLE Ashburn, GA	HISTORIC NAME: Turner County Jail CITY: Ashburn ✓ MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 191 STATE: Georgia ✓ ZIP CODE: 31714 ACREAGE: less than one acre U.T.M. REFERENCE: Z17/E248660/N3510940 V.B.D. OR TAX MAP NUMBER: A204-12-9 (southeast corner of lot only). This is all the land that is associated with the jail.
II. DESCRIPTION	ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT CONDITION: Early 20th century Romanesque style county jail on a rectangular plan, two stories on raised basement, low hipped roof, and one-story front porch; constructed of handmade, load-bearing brick, with flat, rough-hewn granite lintels; front (south) three-bay facade with square, pyramid-roofed tower on southwest, front doorway with transom light located in central one-story portico, and three sided bay on southeast corner. Central portico is supported by short coupled round posts set on four square brick piers with connecting balustrade. Elaborately corbeled entablature-like cornices. 5400 square feet in building, with dimensions of 44'x 46' (CONTD)	
III. HISTORY	ORIGINAL OWNER: Turner County ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Wagoner & Dobson, Montgomery, Alabama DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1906-1907 HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (FROM ORIGINS TO PRESENT): The Turner County jail was built in 1906 as the newly formed (1905) county's first jail. County records show the first order of business was issuing \$60,000 in bonds for a jail and courthouse. The jail was designed by Wagoner and Dobson of Montgomery, Alabama, and cost \$10,855. Mrs. Netta Shingler has described the last hanging in Turner County in 1914 as a "once-in-a-lifetime" community event, with Sheriff King, Deputy Sheriff O.B. Jarman, C.H. Bishop, School Superintendent, and J.B. Thrasher, Methodist minister present. A service was held, two hymns were sung by Miss Netta, D. Jacobs, the Public School Music Teacher, and Mrs. (CONTD)	ORIGINAL USE: county jail HISTORIC ACREAGE: unknown DATE(S) OF ALTERATIONS: 1950, 1976
IV. SIGNIFICANCE	N.R. AREA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, law, politics/ government LEVEL: local STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL): Architecturally, the jail is significant as the county's prime example of Romanesque style architecture. Its form, fire proof construction, materials, and setting are typical of county jails of this time. In terms of law, the jail is significant as a representation of county law enforcement as the county's only jail from 1907 to 1981. The gallows date from the time that executions were carried out by county government. In terms of politics/government, the structure is significant as one of the first two public buildings erected by Turner County, and as a part of a system that involved the use of prison labor for private enterprise, and later, county public works.	
V. SOURCES	FORM PREPARED BY: Haley Blanchard ADDRESS: 327 Savannah Ave Valdosta, Ga 31601 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS: Historic Structures Field Survey: Turner County, Georgia SOURCES OF INFORMATION: Minutes, County Purposes Turner County Court of Ordinary, Volume I (1906) Ray Wiley, deputy; Turner County Banner, 1906; History of Turner County; Wire-grass Farmer.	ORGANIZATION: South Georgia Area Planning and Development Commission TELEPHONE NUMBER: 912 247-3454 or 3494

II. Description...continued

with 16' x 18' section at rear of building. Double hung, sash windows, 2/2 lights. West entrance (to sheriff's office) is now main entrance to jail. Front part of jail (sheriff's living quarters) burned in 1950 and was rehabilitated by Ellerbee Construction Co. The only exterior alteration was painting in 1976. Jail was rewired in 1975. Interior features plate steel cells, corrugated arched metal ceilings, concrete floors, and 12 inch thick plastered brick walls. Metal stairs lead to the second floor, with 11 men's cells, one women's cell, and a steel stepped gallows platform with welded trap door. The first floor contains a small sheriff's office, two-room sheriff's living quarters, and a drunk tank. The original steam heating equipment, still in use, is in the basement. The jail is located on the same original city block as the courthouse, in the central business district of Ashburn, Georgia. There are no outbuildings.

III. History...continued

J.J. Story, a former teacher. ("If the prisoner heard us he made no sign but those conducting the service were overcome.") Ashburn, from its charter in 1896, had the nickname of "Holy City" because the merchants held prayer service each morning before opening their shops. Furthermore, they would not sell chewing tobacco, snuff, or liquor. The Turner County jail has continuously served as a prison since 1907, although it may soon be closed if not significantly altered to meet state fire code and life safety requirements.

TURNER COUNTY JAIL
Ashburn, Turner County, Georgia

Scale: 1" = 200'

Source: Turner County Tax Assessors Office,
tax map No. 204, Block 12, parcel 9

Date: c. 1981

Key: The nominated property is marked by a
heavy black line.

