

SNOW VALLEY RESIDENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Name: Snow Valley Residential Historic District, Phenix City, Russell County
Alabama

Location:

~~In west Girard~~ on 11th and 12th Streets. *at 10th Ave.*

Acreage: Approximately 7.5

Verbal Boundary Description:

This district is located on a dead end street, 12th Street, off 10th Avenue and includes both sides of the dirt road. See line on attached scale tax map.

<u>UTM:</u>	A.	16	687300	3593940	G.	16	687090	3593860
	B.	16	687360	3593910	H.	16	687210	3593940
	C.	16	687370	3593790				
	D.	16	687300	3593790				
	E.	16	687140	3593770				
	F.	16	687100	3593770				

Description:

The Snow Valley Residential Historic District is the second of the two intact Victorian residential neighborhoods left in Girard. There are ten significant houses along this dirt road that are late 19th century. All the houses are detached, single-family residences, ^{most} with ornamental gingerbread bargeboards and turned porch columns. The intrusions are a 1950 house and storage shed. Since this area is a rental section and on a one-car wide dirt road, no landscaping has been done.

Significance:

Architecture. The houses in the Snow Valley Residential Historic District are architecturally significant for their elaborate gingerbread. The homes have few alterations. Some of the older houses have their original paint colors intact. This street is one of the two remaining examples of the Victorian neighborhood in Phenix City.

Local History. The Snow Valley Residential Historic District is significant to the Local History of Phenix City as an example of evolutionary growth within the city. Sixteen central acres were owned until 1883 by Henry C. Herman, a middle-aged Bavarian gardener who lived with his daughters and young Alabama wife in the only house on the fenced-in tract. The Girard settlement lots were numbered seven, eight, seventeen, and eighteen. Indebted to two loan companies, Herman sold all but two acres of his farm in 1883, and an early generation of houses were built in Snow Valley not long after. Apparently these were scattered well apart on multi-acre lots. Farming continued on the land outside the yards. As late as 1910 there was a cornfield in the district. The Hermans opened a tobacco shop and manufactured cigars, leaving the district at an undetermined date. As Girard expanded, the large settlement lots were subdivided. At least two of the extant houses in the district date from the 1880's, three or four others from before 1900. In 1906, Harry Bockman, a Girard contractor who later built St. Patrick's Church and houses on both sides of the river, erected two almost identical late Victorian houses at the east end of the district. This was the beginning of filling in the almost vacant eastern block of the district. Bockman lived in one house and rented the others. In 1910 Ben Cook built a store-residence on the corner across from Bockman, and by 1920 eight

shotgun rental houses, all of crude construction, had been built in the cornfield west of Bockman's house and across the street. Of these, only the one across the street remains. The small store building on the corner of Eleventh Avenue and Twelfth Street was built in 1922 by George Sanders. After the other store closed, Sanders lived in the earlier house directly across Eleventh Avenue. The finest house in the district, said to be the old Cannon home, was once on the Sanders store lot, but was moved diagonally across the intersection to its present site sometime prior to 1914. Except for a small 1950's house in the western block, and a shed where the shotguns once stood, the houses all pre-date 1922. None of them has been irreversibly compromised by renovations - indeed, they have been altered very little. The shot gun houses were rented to black tenants from their beginnings, until they deteriorated in recent years. Remembered as good neighbors living in the shotguns for decades were two coal truck drivers and a gas company employee. Other residents of the shotgun houses were more transient. The larger houses in the Snow Valley Historic District were occupied about 1920 by a merchant, a plant foreman, a textile mill mechanic, a contractor, an iron worker, and a railroad engineer.

STRUCTURES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SNOW VALLEY RESIDENTIAL
HISTORIC DISTRICT

1. Cook-Sapp House (1000 12th Street): 1910; Victorian Cottage with attached store wing; one-story, wood frame, hip roof; altered porch with square solid wood posts.
2. Bockman-Mathis House (1001 12th Street): 1906; Victorian Cottage; one-story, gable roof with boxed return eaves; turned posts and gingerbread; carved door surrounds and transom; wood frame.
3. Basic shotgun house (1002 12th Street): c. 1910; Shotgun; one-story, wood frame with unpainted wood siding; gable roof; overhanging porch with pipe posts; notable for complete absence of ornamental features.
4. Bockman House (1003 12th Street): 1906; Victorian Cottage; one-story, wood frame, gable roof with boxed return eaves; turned posts and gingerbread with brackets and pendants; carved door surrounds and transom; mirror image of 3 above except for trim details, which are a little more elaborate.
5. Unoccupied house (1004 12th Street): c. 1900; Victorian Cottage; small, one-story, wood frame, hip roof, asbestos siding; square solid wooden posts. ✓
7. Rental house (1006 12th Street): c. 1895; Victorian Cottage; one-story, wood frame, gable roof with pediments and ornamental bargeboard; turned posts and gingerbread of a complex kind, including heavy brackets, turnings, pendants, and lyre cutouts; transom.
8. George Sander's Store (1009 12th Street): 1922; small neighborhood store building; one-story, wood frame; gable roof, square solid wood porch posts, shed porch; seems to have been made from pre-1900 salvage materials, vacant.
9. Goins House (1010 12th Street): c. 1895; Victorian Cottage; one-story, wood frame, hip roof; ionic columns; carved ornamental door surrounds, transom.
10. House (1100 12th Street): c. 1895; Victorian Cottage; one-story, wood frame, gable roof with return eaves, ornamental bargeboard, carved attic vents; turned porch posts with carved brackets, cutout gingerbread, and spool and dowel work; turned pilasters; rope-patterned ornamental door surround and transom.
11. House (1101 12th Street): c. 1885; Greek Revival Cottage with Victorian elements; one-story, wood frame, hip roof; solid wood porch posts beveled to suggest columns; four floor-length front windows; carved door surround; left one-third of porch enclosed but original woodwork retained as trim.
13. Tolbert House (1109 12th Street): c. 1885; Greek Revival Cottage with Victorian elements; one-story, wood frame, hip roof; solid wood porch posts beveled to suggest columns; unusual stencil-like cutout boards in place of gingerbread; carved door surround; concrete porch with modified rail and post bases.

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14. Windham-Walker-Griffith House (1112 11th St.): c. 1885; One-story Victorian cottage, wood frame, full-width front porch with turned posts and gingerbread trim; gabled roof with front projecting gable.

STRUCTURES WHICH DO NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SNOW VALLEY RESIDENTIAL
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6. Metal shed (1007 12th Street): c. 1970; post and sheet-metal, open-front storage shed used to store construction material and equipment.
12. House (1103 12th Street): c. 1960; one-story, wood frame, aluminum siding, low gable roof, stoop porch; non-contributing.

INCLUSIVE STREET NUMBERS FOR THE SNOW VALLEY RESIDENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

12th Street - odd 1001-1111

even 1000-1100

11th Street - even 1112

Contributing

Non-Contributing



SNOW VALLEY RESIDENTIAL
HISTORIC DISTRICT

SCALE 0 75 150 225

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