

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

| |
|-------------------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |
| RECEIVED |
| DATE ENTERED |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC THE TELFAIR ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 121 Barnard Street on Telfair Square
CITY, TOWN Savannah
STATE Georgia
VICINITY OF
CODE
COUNTY Chatham
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT First
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME The Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, Allen McNab, Director
STREET & NUMBER 121 Barnard Street
CITY, TOWN Savannah
STATE Georgia
VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Chatham County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER Bull Street at Wright Square
CITY, TOWN Savannah
STATE Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic Savannah Architectural Survey
DATE
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS 119 Habersham Street
CITY, TOWN Savannah
STATE Georgia
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Many distinctive features of Jay's architectural style appear in Telfair's exterior. As in most of his designs, the major emphasis is on the entrance portico with stairs at either end. He used the composite order for the columns and surmounted them with an entablature that continues from the portico as a high stringcourse around the building.

Throughout the home, classic elements derived from both Greek and Roman sources are masterfully applied. On the first floor of Telfair to the left is an octagonal salon and a round-ended dining room. Channeled ceiling of the salon is of particular interest, and the imported English Regency chandelier is original with the home.

From the exterior the house seems to conform to a balanced plan, with a large entrance hall flanked by symmetrical rooms of equal size. But in spite of the external symmetry of his houses, Jay creatively took full advantage of the available space in his interiors to make rooms of varying shapes and sizes. On the first floor of Telfair, for example, there are an octagonal drawing room and a round-ended dining room on the left which is handsome. The dining room displays a number of Savannah portraits; the dining table is unique--a circular extendable table; and the marble mantels, like those in the drawing room, are the work of John Frazee.

On the right of the entry is a long drawing room, gracefully rounded at both ends, with windows which formerly overlooked a garden to the west, and niches in the east wall. The rooms have projecting door and window trim, strong profiled base moldings and plaster ceiling cornices in classic motif. Much of the furnishings are Telfair family pieces.

The center portion of the building, known as the Rotunda and the Cast Room, was added to the Telfair mansion in 1883 when extensive repairs were made to convert the use of the building. In 1885 the West Wing (originally built as a carriage house and stables) was rebuilt as a home for the director. This wing now contains the private libraries of the Telfair and Hodgson families, and is a showplace of exceptionally fine Adam woodwork.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1818-1820, 1880's BUILDER/ARCHITECT William Jay and Carl N. Brandt

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Academy designed by William Jay is the oldest museum in the southeast and is admired architecturally as well as for its superb collection of period furniture. A family town house, it remained in the Telfair family until 1875 when Mary Telfair, sister of Alexander Telfair, bequeathed the home and its furnishings to the Georgia Historical Society to be opened to the public as a museum.

The Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences opened as a free art museum in 1886. The Telfair mansion, which forms the front part of the museum, is one of four surviving buildings in Savannah designed by William Jay, a young English architect. It was built in 1818 for Alexander Telfair, son of Edward Telfair, a revolutionary patriot and twice Governor of Georgia. It occupies the site of Government House, the residence of the royal Governor of Georgia from 1760 to the end of the Revolutionary War.

The formal opening in 1886 was attended by Jefferson Davis, ex-president of the Confederacy. In 1920 the Georgia Historical Society resigned its trust to a corporation chartered as the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, Inc.

The house was remodelled and enlarged in the last quarter of the 19th century. Savannah documents indicate the extension was the work of Carl N. Brandt. The extension added certain elements to the original plan which was approximately sixty feet, six inches by sixty-four feet. The addition gave an overall dimension of one hundred and sixty-eight in length including a three story addition on the rear of its "Trust lot" that faces on Telfair Square. The remodelling also included the addition of an attic story, replacing a wooden stairway with a marble one, blocking off certain windows, and placing five gigantic Renaissance-style statues representing Culture at the entrance.

Portraits of Savannahians, painted at home and elsewhere, are preserved by many of the city's old families, and many have become a part of the Telfair collection. Until about 1900 the emphasis of the collection, apart from the early portraits, had been on German salon paintings. Shortly after this time the American painter Gari Melchers became, to all intents and purposes, purchasing agent for the Academy. The strength of the collection today lies in the paintings that, over the next twenty-five years, he either bought, caused to have purchased, or gave to Telfair. The collection started by Melchers has continued to grow through a steady program for acquisitions. It is considered by many authorities the best of its kind for this period, and the Colonial and Federal portraits are extremely

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Nichols, Frederick D. The Early Architecture of Georgia, University of North Carolina Press, 1957.

Historic Savannah Foundation Inc. Historic Savannah, 1968.

American Guide Series, Savannah, Federal Writers Project in Georgia, WPA 1937.

Van Brunt, Henry, selected essays of. Architecture and Society. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

A | 17 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 3 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 0 |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B | | | | | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D | | | | | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

| | | | |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

1/29/76

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, N.W.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington, D.C.

STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ____

STATE ____

LOCAL ____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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CONTINUATION SHEET Telfair Academy ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

fine. The merit and importance of the collection is not indicated by its size.

Part of the original structure is incorporated in the larger museum building, along with many of its original furnishings. West Wing Telfair is a tight little area housing valuable works. Contained here are personal libraries of the Telfair family, the Gibbons, the Haigs and the collection of William Brown Hodgson primarily concerned with the history and languages of the people of North Africa. Here are rare botanical, architectural and medical books.

Rare loan documents and libraries are often exhibited in this building; such as the De Renne collection of hand-written journals of Georgia's first colonists. Installed in the West Wing is exceptionally fine Adam work, a gift of Mr. Thomas P. Saffold in memory of his great grand-father, Mr. William Presstman Hunter (1799-1869), which was removed from the family home at Abercorn and Congress Streets before it was demolished.

The Telfair Academy today is primarily a museum enclosing the house-museum. It is Savannah's major art museum.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Telfair Academy ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

ALL that certain lot, tract or parcel of land located in Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia, known as Lot N, Heathcote Ward. Said lot is rectangular in shape and has a Northern boundary of One Hundred Eighty (180') feet on State Street; and Eastern boundary of Sixty (60') feet on Barnard Street; a Southern boundary of One Hundred Eighty (180') feet on President Street; and a Western boundary of Sixty (60') feet on Jefferson Street. Said lot and improvements thereon, known as The Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, are designated as 121 Barnard Street on present numbering system in Savannah, Georgia.