

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Boundary Amendment - Savannah Victorian District Item number

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I. Boundary Amendment to the Savannah Victorian District, Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia

II. Location: Properties to be added to the Savannah Victorian District are to the east of the existing district between Price Street and East Broad Street and to the west of the existing district between Montgomery Street and West Broad Street; like the existing district, these properties are bounded by Gwinnett Street to the north and by the alley between Anderson Street and Thirty-first Street to the south.

City: Savannah Congressional District: First - (Bo Ginn)
State: Georgia Code: 013 County: Chatham Code: 051

III. Type and Use: District
Public and Private Ownership
Occupied, work in progress
Accessible: unrestricted

Present Use: Commercial, Park, Private Residence, Religious, Transportation

IV. Ownership: Multiple Owners (more than 50 property owners in the amended area)

V. Legal Description: Clerk of the Superior Court
Chatham County Courthouse
Savannah, Georgia

VI. Representation in Existing Surveys:

Title: a) Victorian Area Survey
b) Historic Structures Field Survey Determined eligible? No
c) Historic American Building Survey
Date: a) 1974 Significance: Local, State and Federal
b) 1975
c) 1979

Depository: a) Historic Savannah Foundation, Inc.
b) Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
c) Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

City, State: a) Savannah, Ga. b) Atlanta, Ga. c) Washington, D.C.

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VII. Description: Condition: Good, Fair
Altered
Original Site

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This boundary amendment involves properties to the east and west of the established Savannah Victorian District. These properties have a character and appearance which is essentially the same as that of the district. These properties should have been included in the original district nomination. Professional oversight was apparently the reason for their exclusion.

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENT APPEARANCE

The areas to be amended to the Savannah Victorian District contain blocks of houses, a few commercial buildings, a library, and a park. The blocks are defined by a rigid gridiron street pattern. To the east, the blocks are long and bisected lengthwise by service lanes; to the west, the blocks are shorter, but similarly divided by alleys. Throughout these areas, the building lots are long and narrow. The houses on these lots are predominantly two-story, wood-frame, detached single-family structures dating from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, although a few buildings from as early as the 1870s are present. Styles are mainly late-nineteenth-century Victorian, turn-of-the-century Neoclassical, and early-twentieth-century period. Types range from large single-family residences to small shotgun cottages and include a few rowhouses. The commercial buildings include turn-of-the-century corner stores, like that at 502 East Henry Street, early-twentieth-century service stations, like that at 1300 East Broad Street, and more recent franchise outlets, especially along West Broad Street. The Carnegie Library at 537 East Henry Street is a brick building with Neoclassical and Prairie School design influences. Dixon Park, created in 1906, is a small neighborhood recreation ground along the eastern edge of the Extension. Street trees, stone curbing, brick sidewalks and shallow front yards constitute the landscaping found consistently throughout the Extension.

The eastern part of the amended area is almost exclusively residential. A few corner stores, the Carnegie Library, and Dixon Park are the only non-residential properties. Virtually none of the properties in this area are considered intrusive, although there are vacant lots in the northern half of this part of

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the Extension. The western part of the amended area contains a nearly equal number of commercial and residential properties, and some vacant lots as well. Moreover, a number of these commercial properties, especially along West Broad Street, are modern intrusions.

BOUNDARIES

The amended boundaries of the Savannah Victorian District conform to the 1870 city limits of Savannah. These city limits are historical reference points in the growth and development of Savannah. They contain a well-ordered gridiron street plan that is characteristic of this part of the city, which was laid out after Oglethorpe's original planning scheme had been abandoned. They also contain the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century residential architecture that characterizes this part of the city.

North of the amended Savannah Victorian District is the Savannah Historic District. To the east of East Broad Street is a mixed-use area of housing, commerce, industry, vacant lots, and the Seaboard Coast Line railroad tracks. To the west of West Broad Street is a public-housing project. South of the amended Savannah Victorian District is an extensive neighborhood of early- to mid-twentieth-century suburban residences that has a character and appearance that is distinctly different from either the Savannah Historic District or the Savannah Victorian District.

INTRUSIONS

There are virtually no intrusions in the east part of the amended area, although some vacant lots are present in the north half of this area. There are numerous intrusions in the west part of the amended area, however, especially along West Broad Street. These intrusions include modern commercial and office buildings, franchised food outlets, automobile service facilities, and churches. While these intrusions do not contribute architecturally to the character and appearance of the Extension, they do occupy land that is contained within the 1870 city limits, and these limits form the basis for this nomination. In order to adequately acknowledge the 1870 city limits, and the street plan and land-subdivision pattern contained within them, these periphery properties have been included. Intrusions are noted on the attached "property/sketch map."

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VIII.

Period: 1800-1899
 1900 --

Areas of Significance: Architecture
 Community Planning
 Landscape Architecture
 Local History

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The amended Savannah Victorian District, like the original Savannah Victorian District, is significant in terms of community planning and development, architecture, landscape architecture, and local history. The amended areas should have been included in the original Victorian District; professional oversight apparently was the reason for their omission.

The Amendment to the Savannah Victorian District, in effect, enlarges the Savannah Victorian District to coincide with the 1870 city limits; these limits can be seen clearly in the street and alley layout and in the pattern of land subdivision and development. The 1870 city limits are important historical reference points in the growth and development of Savannah and in the history of community planning because they circumscribe a part of the city laid out after Oglethorpe's original scheme for planning the city had been abandoned in favor of a more typical mid-nineteenth-century gridiron of streets, alleys, and blocks. Likewise, the uniform pattern of land subdivision is distinctly different from the hierarchical pattern that preceded it (as acknowledged by the Savannah Historic District to the north) and represents the more typical, less imaginative mid-nineteenth-century approach to urban land development. Furthermore, the amended Savannah Victorian District represents the all-important subdivision and development of the outlying farm lots set aside in Oglethorpe's original plan for the city. That these lands could be utilized for intensive residential development after the middle of the nineteenth century was partly due to the developmental constraints posed by the Savannah River to the north and wetlands to the east and west, and partly due to the southward extension of utilities and services such as water mains and the street railway. Demand for housing in this area was largely satisfied through the catalytic agent of businessmen who organized building and loan associations to provide middle-class families with the money to buy or build houses and with the opportunity to pay for them in installments. The fact that this part of the city was outside the city fire limits,

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thereby making possible the construction of cheaper wooden houses, also encouraged the rapid residential development of the area.

Within its well-ordered gridiron, the amended Savannah Victorian District contains a significant collection of representative late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century residential architecture. Styles are mainly late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century period; types range from large single-family residences to small shotguns and cottages. Although some of this architecture is high style and associated with local architects, such as the 1916 Edwardian house at 525 East Henry Street, designed by Percy Sugden, most of it was derived from pattern books and assembled by contractors. Chisled, sawn, and turned gingerbread, especially on front porches, is the hallmark of this more modest architecture. Also in evidence are important signs of changing architectural technology, from the oil lamp through gas to electricity, for example, or from the wood-burning fireplace through the coal grate to central furnaces. Wood-frame construction, used almost exclusively in this area, reflects the fact that this housing was located outside the city fire limits (masonry construction was required within the fire limits); it also attests to the demand for a large amount of housing for families of modest means. This architecture represents this period in the growth and development of Savannah and is consistent with, if not identical to, the architecture in the original Victorian District.

Street trees, brick sidewalks and stone curbs, and shallow front yards constitute significant works of late-nineteenth- and turn-of-the-century urban landscaping in the amended Savannah Victorian District. Savannah as a whole is noted for the richness of its public landscaping, especially its streetscapes, and these elements in this part of the city contribute to this overall character and appearance. Dixon Park, located along the eastern edge of the area, while not linked directly to Savannah's tradition of public squares, is nevertheless a significant example of an early-twentieth-century neighborhood public park in a part of the city that has few such spaces.

In terms of local history, the amended Savannah Victorian District, like the original Victorian District, is significant as the home of much of Savannah's burgeoning late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century middle- and lower-middle classes. The east-side blocks have additional significance in their association with Savannah's black community. Black professional families were among the first to live in this area. They were soon joined by working-class neighbors, many of whom worked at the nearby Plant Railroad yard. Descendants of these early families still reside in the neighborhood; family names include William A. Harris, a physician; P.E. Percy, a barber; J.W. Jamerson, a dentist; William J. Ayres, a contractor; F.F. Jones, a butcher, and W.W. McKelvey. Of note is the fact that white and black families lived on the same blocks in this

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area. The Carnegie Library, at 537 East Henry Street, is a major landmark in the black neighborhood. Constructed with Carnegie funds in 1913-1914, it became the home of the library service for black citizens started seven years earlier by the Colored Library Association. Dixon Park, dating from 1906, is the principal recreation ground in this neighborhood. (/

PRESERVATION ACTIVITY

There is considerable preservation activity in the areas amended to the Savannah Victorian District (and the Savannah Victorian District). The Savannah Landmark Rehabilitation Project, Inc., is engaged in a pioneering program to rehabilitate the existing housing in the area without destroying the historic character and appearance of the buildings and without displacing the low- and moderate-income homeowners and renters whose families have lived in the neighborhood for several generations. The Dixon Park Neighborhood Improvement Association is more specifically concerned with improving neighborhood conditions in and around Dixon Park; the Association's efforts are currently focused on re-landscaping Dixon Park and refurbishing the Carnegie Library. This nomination was initiated by the Savannah Landmark Rehabilitation Project, Inc.; the Dixon Park Neighborhood Improvement Association provided information about the Carnegie Library.

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IX. Bibliography

National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, "Savannah Victorian Historic District," prepared by Kristalia Stavrolakis and Beth Lattimore Reiter, dated September 4, 1974 (listed December 11, 1974).

Beth Lattimore Reiter, Draft of "Savannah Victorian Historic District Extension," National Register nomination, with cover letter dated December 28, 1979.

"Carnegie Library History," two-page typescript, no date, received from the Dixon Park Neighborhood Improvement Association (Savannah).

X. Geographic Information: Acreage: 190 acres (approximately (entire district, as amended))

Quad. Name: "Savannah Ga.- S.C."

Quad. Scale: 1:24,000

UTM References: A Zone 17 E490380 N3547840
B Zone 17 E490195 N3547270
C Zone 17 E491595 N3547470
D Zone 17 E491410 N3546890

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundaries of the amended Savannah Victorian District are identified by a heavy black line on the attached "property/sketch map" and explained in Section 7.

XI. Form Prepared By: Richard Cloues, architectural historian
Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of
Natural Resources
270 Washington Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

March 19, 1982

404/656-2840

XII. State Historic Preservation Office Certification:

Level of Significance: National

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Elizabeth A. Lyon, Chief, Historic Preservation Section

4/12/82
Date

Acting State Historic Preservation Office, 270 Washington St., SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

Entered in the
National Register 5/20/82
Melissa Byrum
for Atlanta H.H.S.

Boundary Amendment to the Savannah Victorian District Savannah, Chatham Co., Ga.

Amended Boundary of the district:

Original Boundary of the district:

Photograph and direction of view:

- LEGEND**
- Exceptional (1)
 - Excellent (2)
 - Notable (3)
 - Of Value to the Scene (4)
 - Omit/Intrusion (4)

- WARD KEY**
- 36 Lloyd
 - 37 Gue
 - 38 Gallie
 - 39 Cuthbert
 - 40 White
 - 41 Lee
 - 42 Waring
 - 43 Barry
 - 44 Cumming
 - 45 Reppard
 - 46 Falligant
 - 47 Lester
 - 48 Meldrim
 - 49 Wyly
 - 50 Elliott

Historical Significance

SITE PLAN
Based on Victorian District Map by Savannah-Chatham County Metropolitan Planning Commission (1978) updated by field survey (1980)

