

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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



HARTWELL COMMERCIAL

Continuation sheet HISTORIC DISTRICT

Item number

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HARTWELL COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Name: Hartwell Commercial Historic District

Location:

Centered at the intersections of Forest Avenue, Carolina Street, Jackson Street, Franklin Street, Howell Street, Depot Street, and Alford Street (Railroad Street) in Hartwell, Hart County, Georgia.

Acreage: Approximately 14 acres

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of the Hartwell Commercial Historic District is identified and described by a heavy black line on the attached map. The boundary encompasses the intact historic commercial area of Hartwell. It includes the public square with its non-historic courthouse and historic landscape features. It does not include contemporary commercial development to the north, east, and west or historic residential areas to the south.

UTM Reference: (A) Z17 E322440 N3802980
(B) Z17 E322350 N3802490
(C) Z17 E321740 N3802600

Contributing/Non-contributing Resources:

Contributing buildings: 48
Non-contributing buildings: 19
Contributing landscape features: 1 (courthouse square) (note: district also includes 2 historically vacant lots)

Photograph Numbers: 1-15

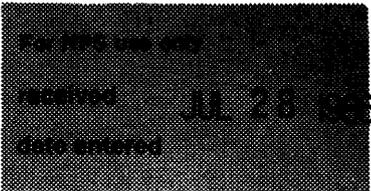
Description:

The Hartwell Commercial Historic District encompasses the historic commercial center of Hartwell. It is centrally located within the community's original gridiron plan. Principal streets intersect in this area to form a public square which now contains a non-historic courthouse; the square is included in the district due to the historic landscape features of the open green space encircled by water oak trees and elm trees. Architecturally, the district consists primarily of dense groupings of one- and two-story, late 19th- and early 20th-century brick buildings. Buildings are pushed forward to the sidewalks and form unbroken facades with the exception of a few narrow alleys. These buildings fill two sides of the public square (east and south);

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others front Depot Street to the south. Industrial uses to the south and west of Depot Street are located adjacent to the rail lines.

Buildings facing the public square are two-story brick structures with decorative features, windows with arched and hood moldings, metal cornices, brick stringcourses and corbelled cornices, and metal columns inscribed with "G. L. Mesker, Evansville, Indiana" and "Chattanooga, Tennessee." A Romanesque Revival-style structure located at the corner of Howell and Forest serves as a focal point of the district. This former bank building contains a brick and masonry facade, a cupola decorated with floral motifs, and large arched windows with radiating voussoirs. A metal water tower dating from before 1917 is located to the rear of the structures facing Forest Avenue. Buildings behind the square on Forest Avenue and Carolina streets extend to Depot Street. Two structures facing Forest on the east side of the street are also included in the district since these buildings date from the early history of the town center and comprised the only historic development of this block.

The most obvious intrusion in the district is a one-story brick building at the corner of Howell and Forest, which differs not only in scale and form but also in setback. The Economy Drugs on Howell Street is also an intrusion with its metal sheathing covering the former historic building. Non-contributing buildings in the district are identified on the district sketch map.

Buildings on Depot Street are primarily one-story brick structures which have similar but less ornate brick detailing than buildings on the square. One two-story building and a one-story structure to the east are built of molded concrete block. There are several non-historic but compatible brick buildings on Depot Street which relate in size and setback to the historic warehouses. Metal feed-storage bins in the industrial section to the south create a backdrop for Depot Street. A historic frame passenger depot and reconstructed frame platform are located at the intersection of Jackson Street and Alford Street in the extreme southern section of the district. The depot and platform are surrounded by historic brick and frame structures which housed former cotton-related industries.

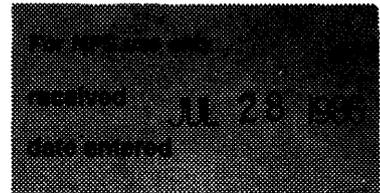
Statement of Significance: NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA A, C

Architecture. Architecturally, the Hartwell Commercial Historic District is significant for its collection of historic commercial buildings which define the historic character of Hartwell's town center. The buildings document the types, styles, building materials, and construction techniques prevalent in the commercial areas of small northeast Georgia towns in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Types represented include stores (many with second-floor office space), banks, warehouses, and a depot. Their close concentration along the streets with consistent setbacks and party walls is typical of small Georgia towns of the period. The majority are simple late-Victorian-style buildings with detailing consisting of brick corbeling, round- and segmental-arched window openings, and parapet roofs. The buildings are

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vernacular small-town interpretations of nationally prevalent styles. With the exception of one wood-framed and one concrete-block building, brick is the ubiquitous building material. Brick, stone, wood, pressed metal, cast iron, and plate glass are used for detailing. Of particular interest are a Romanesque Revival-inspired corner bank building detailed with rusticated stone and a corner turret and the Victorian Eclectic, wood-framed depot detailed with decorative shingles and elaborate brackets that support the widely overhanging roof. The contrast between the more highly detailed store and bank buildings around the courthouse square and the more modest buildings in the warehouse/wholesale area along Depot Street documents the relative attention historically paid to the detailing of these two types of structures.

Landscape Architecture. In terms of landscape architecture, the district is significant for its courthouse square, which provides a good example of the landscape practices typically associated with Georgia's turn-of-the-century county courthouse squares. In most cases, lawn and large shade trees (in Hartwell, water oaks and elms) are found in these squares. As at Hartwell, the open space and large trees of the landscaped squares provide a strong contrast to the tightly arranged, generally unlandscaped buildings which typically face the square on four sides.

Community Planning and Development. The Hartwell Commercial Historic District is significant in terms of community planning and development because it represents the growth of a commercial center in a town that was "planned" by virtue of the grid-iron street plan. The town center was sited at a prominent location on a high plateau and was situated exactly "on center" in the overall city plan. This plan is representative of Georgia county-seat town planning, with an open courthouse square situated in the center at the intersection of major roads. The roads were designed to be spacious avenues with the four streets bordering the public square laid out at 80-foot widths and all other streets in the town 60 feet wide. The district also illustrates the evolution of the town as it grew toward the railroad, added in 1879. The railroad was a catalyst for the warehouse and industrial growth in the southern section of the district.

Commerce. The Hartwell Commercial Historic District is significant in commerce since it has served as the commercial center since the creation of the town in 1856. General stores were the first to locate within the district. Following the establishment of the railroad in 1879, the Depot Street area, which served as a "cotton yard," was the location for agricultural-related businesses. The existing brick buildings are a replacement for the original frame buildings, several of which were destroyed by fire. In its history, the town center has included a variety of uses: hotels, lodge meeting halls, government functions, a school, residences, and retail, wholesale, and industrial concerns. Throughout its development, the Hartwell Commercial District has served as the commercial center for city residents and rural county residents.

Period of Significance: 1854-1930

Form Prepared By: See Section 11 of cover sheet.

HISTORIC RESOURCES OF HARTWELL
Hartwell, Hart County, Georgia

HARTWELL COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
District Sketch Map

North: ↑
Scale: 0' ——— 225'
District Boundary: **—————**
Non-historic Property: ∅
Intrusion: X
Vacant Lot: V
Photograph Number and Direction: ②

