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 Savannah Georgia NHL Historic District

AND/OR COMMON
same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Savannah	_ VICINITY OF	001

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Georgia	13	Chatham	051

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
X DISTRICT	_PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	_AGRICULTURE	X MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	_PRIVATE	_UNOCCUPIED	X COMMERCIAL	X PARK
_STRUCTURE	X BOTH	X WORK IN PROGRESS	X EDUCATIONAL	X PRIVATE RESIDENCE
_SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	X ENTERTAINMENT	X RELIGIOUS
_OBJECT	_IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	X GOVERNMENT	_SCIENTIFIC
	_BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	_INDUSTRIAL	_TRANSPORTATION
		X NO	_MILITARY	_OTHER.

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
numerous, public and private

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN		STATE
mostly Savannah	_ VICINITY OF	Georgia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court

STREET & NUMBER
Record Room 101, P.O. Box 10094

CITY, TOWN	STATE
Wright Square, Savannah	Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE
various buildings at various dates   X FEDERAL _STATE _COUNTY _LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congre

CITY, TOWN	STATE
Washington	D.C

7 DESCRIPTION

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

It is an exceptionally difficult challenge to convey, through a written document, the meaning of an essentially spatial experience like the Savannah National Historic Landmarks District. In many other cases, an urban district can be grasped, to some extent, through a description of its architectural components or an explication of the important historical associations identified with the area. While Savannah does posess a number of very distinguished buildings, and while it has certainly played its role in the events of American history, the real meaning of this area lies in something else. It lies in the wholeness of the place, in the rational nature of the rhythmic placement of streets, buildings, and open areas, and it lies in the great variety of spatial experience throughout the fabric of the district.

The essence of Savannah may be said to revolve around the character of her squares. Each of them is unique and assumes the tone and accents of the ward which surrounds it, this individual identity being expressed in the monuments, statues, and buildings around the square. Heathcote Ward for instance can be identified with visual arts, since it holds the city's most important picture gallery, the Telfair Academy on Telfair Square, and noble architecture, both the Academy and the Trinity Methodist Church. Now numbering more than twenty, the example of the original four squares laid out by Oglethorpe near the Savannah River was faithfully followed until the political and economic disaster of the Civil War.

Savannah is laid out with its streets lying directly North-South and East-West, with development having begun near the river at the North and progressing southward, and with a framework composed of four major elements:

1. The Ward: This is the basic element which was repeated over twenty times from Oglethorpe's 1732 beginning, until the Civil War. A ward is composed of its streets and three important units: the square, the tythings, and the trust lots.

.   The Square: This is the core of the ward, around which are gathered both public and private buildings. Most of the squares were landscaped in the nineteenth century after having been barren, muddy patches in the eighteenth. Many are now fitted out with monuments, sculpture, fountains, and garden structures like gazebos and bandstands.

    The Trust Lots: At the eastern and western end of each square are two "trust lots," reserved for the public buildings of the colony and of the city. Although all four of the trust lots are not always used in each of the squares, most of them are, supporting the churches, synagogues, museums, courts, and so on.

    ⁄things: At the northern and southern sides of each square are four tythings, reserved for private homes, two tythings to each side. Each tything was divided into ten house lots, thereby providing living accomodations for forty families on a square.

▉8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

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

SPECIFIC DATES	BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The pre-Civil War section of Savannah Georgia, now commemorated in the Savannah National Historic Landmark District, stands practically alone as a city of historic importance that has grown in an orderly way upon a distinctive city plan, incorporating many urban amenities with high-quality architecture. The essence of the system lies in the wards and squares of Savannah, modules established in the early eighteenth century by the colony's English founder, James Oglethorpe, and then continued by the townsmen for a hundred and twenty years. Although adversely affected by both serious fires and a pair of damaging wars, Savannah survives today as an essentially nineteenth century collection of buildings, built upon Oglethorpe's eighteenth century plan, a truly superlative urban environment.
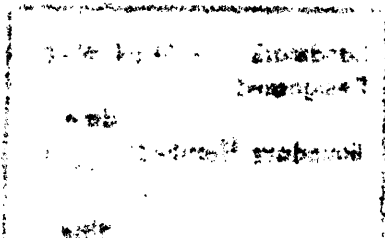
⑨ MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Foundation for Historic Savannah, Historic Savannah (Savannah, 1968).
Savannah Chamber of Commerce, Sojourn in Savannah (Savannah, 1970).
Ships of the Sea Museum, Savannah Revisited, A Pictorial History (University of
    Georgia Press, 1969).

⑩ GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ___c. 1300___

UTM REFERENCES

A |1,7| |4|9,0|9,4,0| |3,5|4,9|5,8,0| B |1,7| |4|9,2|4,6,0| |3,5|4,9|0,4,0|
   ZONE EASTING   NORTHING   ZONE EASTING   NORTHING
C |1,7| |4|9,1|5,8,0| |3,5|4,7|4,8,0| D |1,7| |4|9,0|3,8,0| |3,5|4,7|8,2,0|

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the National Landmark District has extended since Savannah's desig-
nation in 1966, from the Savannah River on the north, to Gwinnett Street on the
south, while East and West Broad Streets have formed the east and west boundaries.

The city of Savannah, through the Historic Savannah Foundation Inc., has been one
of the most knowledgable of overseers of its heritage, and has put together a (cont'd)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

⑪ FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
    James Dillon, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION   DATE
    National Historic Landmarks, OAHP

STREET & NUMBER   TELEPHONE
    1100 L Street   N.W.

CITY OR TOWN   STATE
    Washington   D.C.

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 ((NATIONAL HISTORIC

                            LANDMARKS))

TITLE   DATE

Landmark
Designated:

FOR NPS USE ONLY
    I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

                                        DATE

Boundary Certified:

    DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: DATE

    KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER (NATIONAL HISTORIC
                          LANDMARKS),
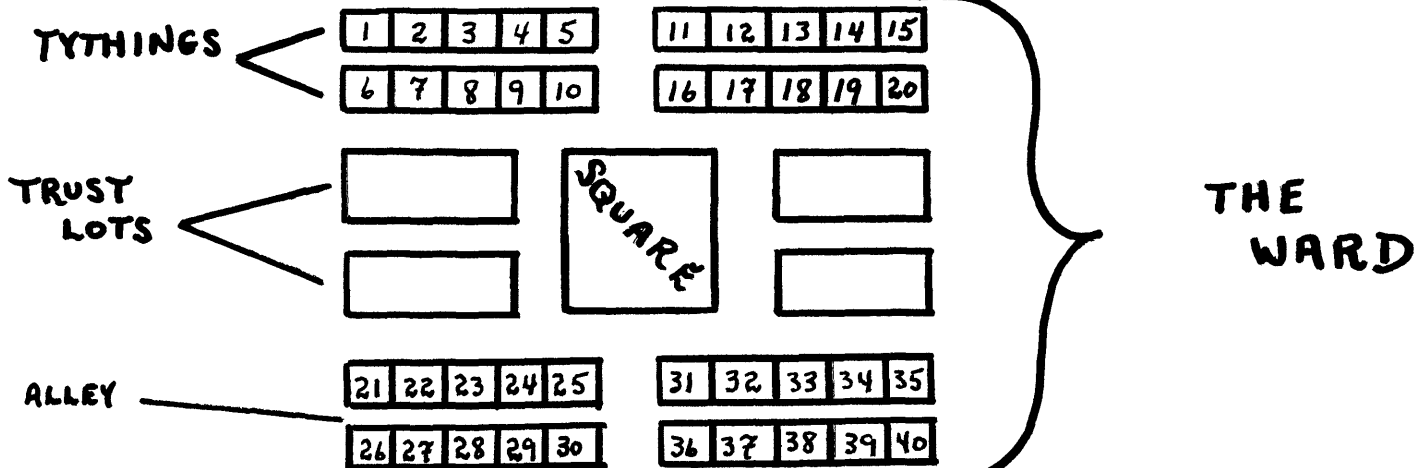
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TYTHINGS

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |

| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |

TRUST LOTS

SQUARE

THE WARD

ALLEY

| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |

| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

| 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 |

| 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |

Oglethorpe's plan dramatically reflected Georgia's precarious position as a
military outpost between Carolina to the north and the Indians and Spanish
to the south. Oglethorpe organized his town to face emergencies just as any
good field commander would plan temporary encampments to preserve order, con-
trol and discipline among his troops. The plan of Savannah's first ward had
been textbook procedure for two hundred years, and Oglethorpe, a great soldier,
was undoubtedly familiar with the classical principles of fortress construction
and campsite planning that had been developed by European military architects
and tacticians since the Renaissance. Each ward was run by a Constable to whom
four Tythingmen reported for the welfare and good conduct of the families of
each tything. Ten men in each tything were ready to bear arms, and until other
colonists arrived, they would take turns standing watch every fourth night. In
case of attack, farm animals and colonists from outside the walls could take
refuge in the squares, where more than a century later General Sherman would
bivouac the Union troops occupying Savannah during the Civil War.[1]

The passage above clearly reflects the defensive nature of the early days of the
colony. In fact, it can reasonably be argued that the difficult early years of
the colony were a direct result of this pre-occupation. Despite downright cordial
relations with the local Indians, elaborate restrictions were enforced to ensure
a hearty militia; rum was prohibited, slaves were prohibited since they might revolt
behind a battle line, and only men doing military service were allowed to own land.
General Oglethorpe, founder of the colony in 1732, ruled like a despot, and the
colony's population dwindled from 5,000 in 1737, to just 500 souls in 1742. By 1751,
the trustees had to surrender their charter to the King, at which point the fortunes
of the colony turned around and began to prosper.

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[1]Ships of the Sea Museum, Savannah Revisited, A Pictorial History (University
of Georgia Press, 1969), p. 24.

Form No. 10-300a
(Rev. 10-74)

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Savannah Georgia NHL
CONTINUATION SHEET Historic District ITEM NUMBER 7   PAGE 3

If the squares were organized for defensive purposes in the eighteenth century, and became social centers in the nineteenth, they have become inviting oases in the tedious urban desert of the twentieth. Volumes can and have been written about old Savannah, attempting to dissect and analyze the scale, the materials, and above all, the serene human quality of these streetscapes which combine to form one of America's most outstanding successes in planning and growth.

Among the more important architectural structures in the district, one should name the Owens-Thomas House (Regency style, 1816-19), the Davenport House (Federal, 1820), the Independent Presbyterian Church (neo-classical, 1817-19, very much after the work of James Gibbs), the Scarbrough House (Regency, 1818), the Habersham, or "Pink" House (neo-classical, 1789), the Low House (Italian Villa, 1847-48), the Green-Meldrim House (Gothic Revival, 1856), Gordon Row (urban row houses, 1854), Scudders Row (urban row houses, 1852), Christ Episcopal Church (Greek-revival, c. 1838), the United States Customs House (Greek-revival, 1847-1850), Factors Row (Commercial, 19th century), Gibbons Range (Commercial, c. 1837), and the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist (Gothic-revival, 1872-79, 1890). These are just some of the fine old buildings which enrich the urban environment of old Savannah.

While serious fires and demolition have terminated the lives of most of Savannah's eighteenth century buildings, there do remain enough to suggest the earliest character of the city. It is the following century however whose buildings are most character-istic of Savannah. Houses, public buildings, and commercial works, were done in virtually all of the variety of styles typical of that century. The delicate grace of the Federal period is sprinkled throughout the city, and in a work like John Holden Greene's Independent Presbyterian Church, one has one of the country's most important Gibbs-type churches of the period, which at the same time reveals an awareness of Sir John Soane, in its oval-domed central columned space.

William Jay is considered by many to be the most notable of the architects to have worked in Savannah during the early part of the century, and he seems to have been largely responsible for the Regency style buildings introduced there. Particularly in his Owens-Thomas House, the Telfair House, and the Scarbrough House, he brought the attempt to incorporate the neo-classical variety of shapes popularized by Soane, to America. The 1818-19 Owens-Thomas House is his most assured work, using polygons, curved walls, columniated spaces, and a double-durved stair, to excellent effect.

A little later in the century, about 1840, Savannah joined "the battle of the styles", which so typifies the nineteenth century. By 1847-48, it had a charming Greek-revival work called the Low House by New York architect John Norris, who combined a typical plan with knowledgable classical detail. Norris also built the U.S. Custom House, c. 1852, a Greek-revival building of real distinction.

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It was at this time that Savannah also saw the spread of Italian Villa houses, and a few Gothic-revival buildings. The city skyline is largely low-rise, and is enlivened by the spires of a number of the gothic church buildings.

The commercial structures of Savannah, particularly near the waterfront, are one of the city's greatest assets. Shortly after the Civil War, Savannah made a quick economic recovery, due to a great demand for cotton, from New York and Lancashire. To the ante-bellum development of Factors Row, Stoddard's Range, and Cluskey's Embankment Stores, one of the finest commerical building groups in the country, was added in 1887, the centerpiece of these buildings devoted to the cottom trade, the Savannah Cotton Exchange, completing the group. Constructed on the bluff overlooking the Savannah River, these buildings create a handsome transition between the city and the river. Ballast stones were used here to construct a retaining wall, and to pave the ramp to the river, while a system of iron bridges spans Factors Walk, along which the factors inspected and bid on the cotton.

Condition

Old Savannah is not by any means perfect. It has intrusions into the continuity and spatial patterns of the plan. It has gasoline stations, gaping parking lots, crude commercial adaptations of fine old buildings, and an occasional building badly placed or out of scale with the rest. On the whole though, a great deal more is left of the best of Savannah's unique fabric of streetscapes, than is not, so that the occasional tear in the material is just another chore for the now-vigilant local guardians to recognize and repair.

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comprehensive inventory of its distinguished environment. Although the professional survey study they commissioned, originally did not consider structures any further south than Gaston Street, the whole area of the National Landmark District has now been surveyed as well, and is included in the exemplary published inventory report, Historic Savannah.

Additionally, that study has included one area not included in the National Landmark District, i.e. the so-called Trustees' Garden area at the northeastern edge of the district. Aside from its association with the earliest days of the colony, the city of Savannah holds a particular pride for this section of the city where in 1948, after an extended period of neglect, a restoration program was begun which then led the way to a tremendous effort to restore the larger old area of Savannah.

Besides the recent history though, there are good reasons why Trustees' Garden should now be included in the National Landmark District. It was set aside by Oglethorpe himself in his original plan for Savannah, as an experimental farm of approximately ten acres. Laid out along the lines of Chelsea Botanic Gardens in London, the garden was immediately planted with seeds and plants donated to the colony from many parts of Europe and the Carribean Islands. In addition to fruit trees, spices, and herbs, there was included a packet of seeds which gave rise, ultimately, to the great cotton empire that supported the economy of the South for decades to come. White mulberry trees were also planted here in an attempt to establish silk as an export of the colony.

While the experimental farm faltered early in the life of the Georgia Colony, the area does represent an important part of Oglethorpe's original concept for the city.

In 1759, Fort Savannah was built here, later renamed Fort Wayne, and rebuilt in 1813. Soon after, Fort Wayne was abandoned, and in 1848 the whole Trustees Garden area was acquired by the Savannah Gas Company and developed as a manufacturing plant. The area steadily declined to a slum until 1948.

Two houses in the Trustees' Garden area are of particular interest: The so-called "Pirate's House," associated with Blackbeard the pirate and other buccaneers, and the Herb House, c. 1734, which may be the oldest house in Georgia.

The boundary of the National Landmark District therefore is as follows: the Savannah River on the north, West Broad Street on the west, Gwinnett Street and Forsyth Park on the south, and East Broad Street and Trustees' Garden on the East.

Trustees' Garden is connected to East Broad Street by Bay Street (the north east-west connector) and East Broughton Street (the south east-west connector). The eastern side of Trustees' Garden is made up by Reynolds Street which runs north as far as the edge

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of the wall of Fort Wayne, which continues north to Bay Street. A 25-foot drop-off to East Bay Street marks this edge of the garden.

The area of the National Landmark District is approximately 2 square miles (c. 1300 acres), including within its boundary, over 1100 historic buildings. This area is shaded in red on the accompanying U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute series map, SAVANNAH QUAD.

River

II

I

II

I

I

II

II
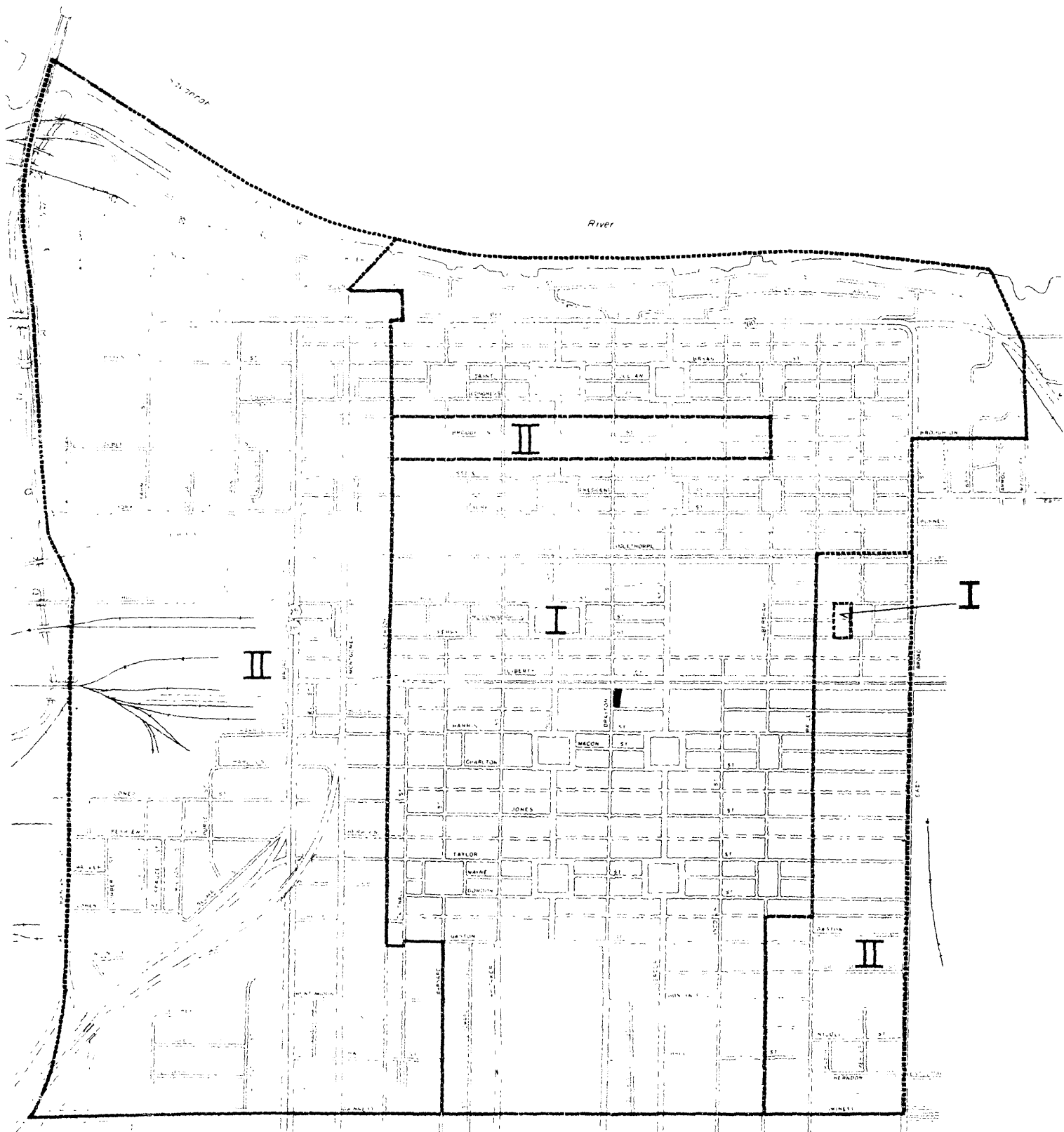
locating 101 E. Liberty St.

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

HISTORIC DISTRICT

ZONING ORDINANCE MAP

NORTH