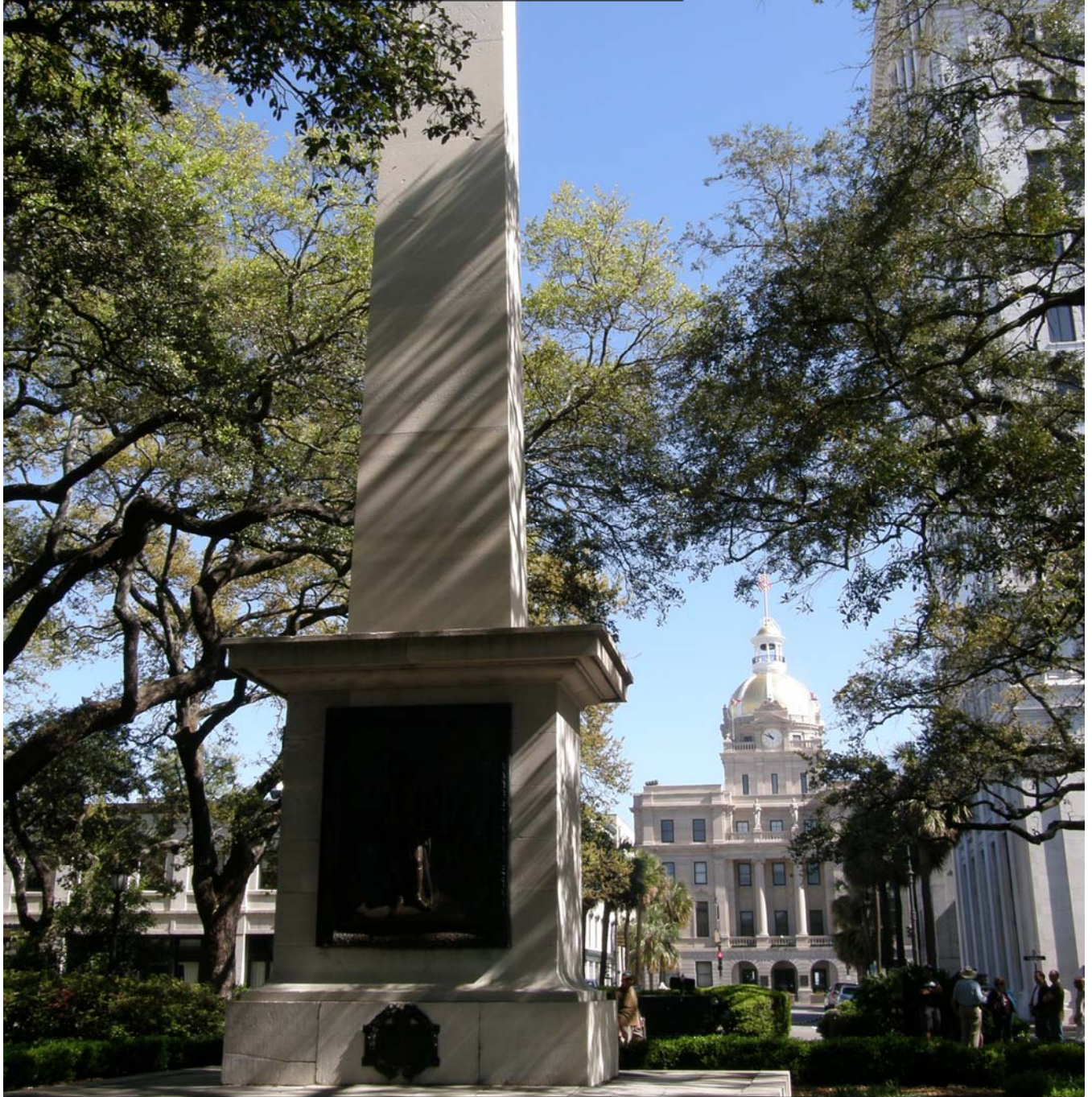


# Design Manual for the Savannah Historic District



The Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning  
Commission 2011

*This manual was produced by the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Department in November 2011 and is accessible from our website at [www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org). (Updated August, 2012)*

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# ABOUT THIS MANUAL AND HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This design manual was prepared to provide a user-friendly guide on applying the standards from the Savannah Historic Overlay District of the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance (**Figure ii.1**). It should be used in accordance with the Historic Overlay District of the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance (Sec. 8-3030) and the Material Treatment Guidelines for Rehabilitation in Savannah's Historic District. Sections of the Ordinance appear throughout this text, highlighted in gray boxes, however it does not replace any regulation or law.

**7. VISUAL COMPATIBILITY FACTORS** → Design Manual chapter relating to a section of the Historic District Ordinance.

**Section Seven: Visual Compatibility Factors**

Visual compatibility creates harmony between infill and existing structures within the Historic District.

New construction and existing buildings and structures and appurtenances in the historic district which are moved, reconstructed, materially altered, repaired or changed in color shall be visually compatible with structures, squares, and places to which they are visually related. → Sections of the Historic District Ordinance.

Eleven factors determine whether a structure is visually compatible with its surrounding structures:

- 1. Height.** The Historic District has a variety of building heights. To determine proper height for a new building the Historic District Height Map (**Figure 8.3**) was developed. New construction will be permitted to build the indicated number of stories on the map, provided the dimensional height is compatible. The height of the building's individual components must be visually compatible with the building height and with surrounding contributing structures (**Figure 7.1**).
- 2. Proportions of structures front facade.** To create a harmonious facade, building width and height should be proportional to one another and to contributing structures (**Figure 7.2**).
- 3. Proportion of openings.** Window opening should be proportionally related to and visually compatible with surrounding contributing structures. The openings of a structure should match in width and height with the portions of the building (**Figure 7.3**). → Text explaining sections of the Historic District Ordinance.

→ Images demonstrating the intent of the Historic District Ordinance.

**Figure 7.1:** Buildings with same number of stories at different scales.

**Figure 7.2:** Proportionate facade, height and width.

**Figure 7.3:** Proportionate openings along the facade.

Figure ii.1: Page 13 of this Design Manual.

A compilation of resources was used to gather and collect data provided in this manual to better communicate the intent and application of the ordinance. These include the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission; the City of Savannah; the Savannah Development and Renewal Authority; the Historic Preservation Plan produced by the City of Savannah and Housing Authority in 1966; the Historic District Report prepared by Christopher Chadbourne and Associates in 1990; consultants Sottile & Sottile and their work with the Historic District Revisions Committee in 2001, 2008-2009, including the Height Development Map Report produced in 2003, and the Savannah Historic District Resources Manual produced in June 2009.

This manual was developed to replace the 'Manual for Development in the Savannah Historic District' produced in 1997. This document was needed as the ordinance has evolved significantly since 1997 and technological advancements have allowed for enhanced graphics and mapping to assist in communicating the intent and application of the standards in the revised ordinance.

This manual is intended to provide a greater understanding of the Historic District Ordinance (Sec. 8-3030). Within this manual the terms "structures" and "buildings" are used interchangeably.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Section One: Introduction

The Savannah Historic Overlay District is a component of the zoning ordinance which acts to preserve the city's historic character, create a climate for continued investment and development, and assure that such development recognizes, protects and enhances Savannah's historic architectural heritage and city plan which are recognized worldwide as civic treasures (**Figure 1.1**).

The Historic District Board of Review applies standards that are adopted by the Mayor and Aldermen as a part of the zoning ordinance. Periodically, these standards are revised in order to keep the ordinance current.

This manual seeks to provide property owner and the development community with a greater understanding of the standards in the ordinance to bring predictability to the District. The standards are not copied in full but can be found on our website, [www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org). Excerpts of standards are included, where appropriate, and italicized within grey boxes.

Savannah has always been architecturally heterogeneous and the standards are not prescriptive with respect to historic styles. The standards recognize buildings designed in the existing historic styles of the city are likely to be compatible, but so too may buildings articulated in a contemporary or modern idiom. Rather than addressing specific architectural styles, these standards seek to facilitate buildings which are designed, detailed and constructed with care and consistency in accord with a material palette, compositional principles, and use of architectural elements consistent with the tradition of building in Savannah. Most important, its intent is to encourage private sector investment while protecting the unique and extraordinary qualities of one of the world's great cities.

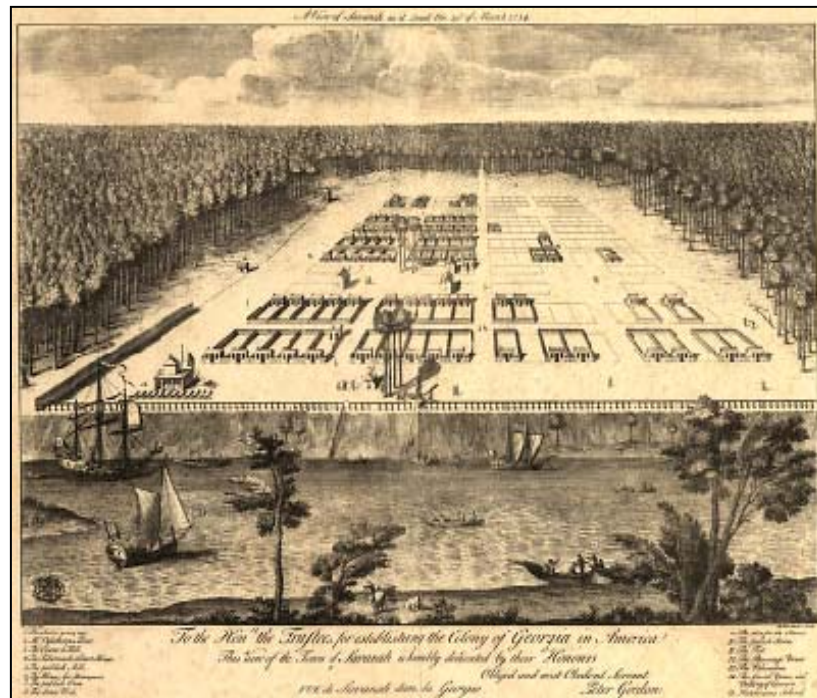


Figure 1.1: Peter Gordon Map- Savannah, 1734.

## 2. SAVANNAH CITY PLAN

### Section Two: Savannah City Plan

The character of Savannah is a direct result of its extraordinarily unique urban plan. The rhythm and scale of its small blocks are the primary influence on the built form. Laid out by James Edward Oglethorpe, the basic unit of the plan is the ward (**Figure 2.1**). The wards serve as a module that can be repeated to connect one another, forming a basic grid pattern. Wards are typically 675 feet in the north-south direction, and 555 to 675 feet in the east-west direction.

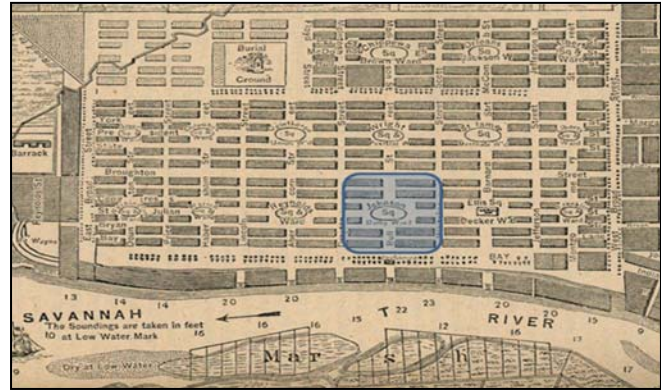


Figure 2.1: Historic illustrations of the city plan with a typical ward layout highlighted in blue.

The Historic District is comprised of a series of wards interconnected by boulevards, streets, and lanes (**Figure 2.2**). The central component of circulation is the public square. The wards are subdivided into eight blocks. The larger four blocks, located north and south of the square, are termed Tithing Blocks. The smaller four blocks, located east and west of the square are termed Trust Blocks and are bound on all sides by city streets.

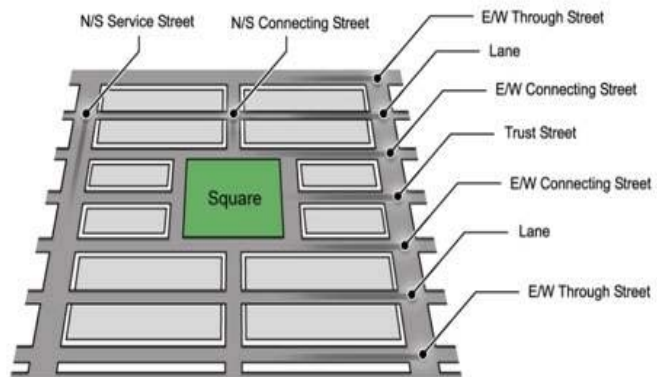


Figure 2.2: Street map.

The Trust and Tithing blocks dictated the development pattern within the city. Trust Blocks were historically used for civic buildings and later prominent homes, Tithing blocks were meant for residential development, generally with a 60 foot lot width. Structures located on Tithing blocks were serviced by east-west lanes from the rear. The 60 foot width lot became the standard building unit in the city (**Figure 2.3**). Trust buildings were built out to the width of the 60 feet and Tithing blocks were divided into variations of 60 and 30 feet; sometimes 15, 20, and 40 feet, or 60 and 120 feet depending upon the ward. The lot divisions resulted in a pattern of building types, most commonly the side hall plan or, on larger lots, the central hall plan. Buildings 30 feet or less in width almost always were divided into three bays and the masses of larger buildings were broken into 60 feet or less increments. Supremacy was given to facing onto the square, however on bounding streets, to the north and south of each ward (Bay, Broughton, Oglethorpe, Liberty, Jones and Gaston—termed east-west through streets ) development occurred fronting both sides of the street.

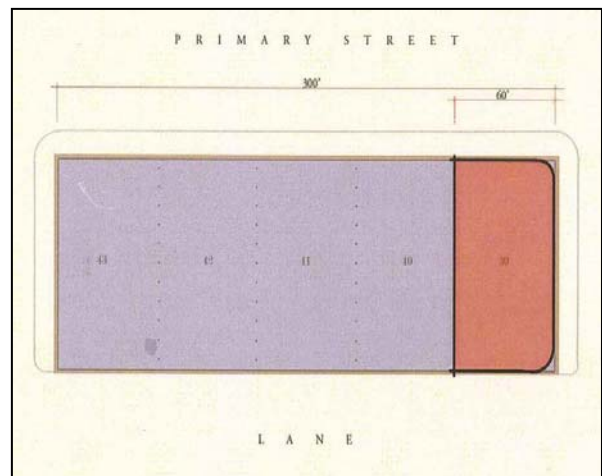


Figure 2.3: Tithing block with 60 foot lots. Sottile &



### 3. BUILDING CHARACTER AND ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

#### Section Three: Building Character and Architectural Elements

The genius of the Oglethorpe Plan lies not only in the grid, but also in its dimensions. The 90 foot deep lot emerged as ideal for nineteenth and twentieth century commercial and residential uses. It provided room for a 45 to 50 foot deep house, a 20 foot carriage house and a 20 to 25 foot courtyard (400 to 600 square feet in total area) between the two. Because the courtyard was such a desirable feature, buildings pushed forward to their property line to maximize space, creating a phenomenon in Savannah where private property encroaches upon the public space, resulting in entry stoops forward of the front property line (**Figure 3.1**).

Savannah differs from other historic cities, which often rely on a small palette of development patterns and street elevation types, because the power of Savannah's grid, its system of subdivision, its courtyards, and the lushness of vegetation on its streets and squares, both encourages and tolerates significant architectural diversity and richness. Each ward and square has an individual character established by its pattern of street elevations and continuity of materials (**Figures 3.2 and 3.3**).

The combination of the development pattern and dwelling type establishes the rhythm and proportion of buildings and are incorporated into the standards to assure continuity and diversity. Once building placement and height are established, the public face that a building presents to the street defines its architectural character -- the materials; applications and composition of building walls; wall openings (doors and windows); roofs; attached structures such as exterior stairs, porches, bay windows and balconies; and fences (**Figure 3.4**).



Figure 3.1: Savannah stoop.



Figure 3.2: Lafayette Square.



Figure 3.3: Ellis Square.



Figure 3.4: Savannah street façade.

## BUILDING CHARACTER AND ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

The Historic District has several building characteristics and architectural styles that contribute to the overall integrity of the district. Preserving the building characteristics and architectural character of a façade is of upmost importance as it frames the building's context and time. The pattern of development, dwelling type, composition, materials, and application have established a broad but clear set of characteristics which define the Historic District. It is a premise of these standards that historic precedent on any specific site can be used to allow for the reconstruction or alteration of a historic building. Additionally, the Secretary of the Interiors Standards have been incorporated to provide for the preservation of the exterior fabric within the district.

It is understood that the standards cannot consider or anticipate all of the possible circumstances that may arise. There might be buildings appropriate to Savannah's Historic District that do not conform to the standards. The Historic District ordinance sets forth a procedure for granting variances from the standards through the Zoning Board of Appeals, provided the variance is also reviewed by the Historic District Board of Review for compliance with the Visual Compatibility Factors.

Residential dwellings of the Historic District are either row houses (**Figure 3.5**), semi-attached dwellings (**Figure 3.6**), detached homes, or apartment complexes (**Figure 3.7**). These dwellings can come in all different types ranging from a one-story structure to a six-story mixed-use development.



Figure 3.5: Row houses, Jones Street.



Figure 3.6: Semi-attached dwelling, Houston Street.



Figure 3.7: Graham Apartments, State Street.



## 4. HISTORY OF DESIGN REVIEW

### Section Four: History of Design Review

Savannah adopted land use zoning in 1960, however there was no legal protection in place to guarantee property owners that their rehabilitation investment would be protected from incompatible neighboring development. The zoning code was largely suburban in character with setback, lot area and density requirements that were out-of-character with the urban row house development of downtown. In addition, most of the buildings were unrestored and their historic character was not immediately recognized.



Figure 4.1: City Market on Ellis Square. Demolished in 1955.

People had a hard time seeing the potential of a derelict structure as a restored historic site and many important buildings were lost to accommodate automobile uses (**Figure 4.1**).

Several important events helped change this alarming trend. In 1966, pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, designated the Oglethorpe Plan area of Savannah as a National Historic Landmark District. In 1968, Historic Savannah Foundation published its inventory of architecturally significant structures within the Historic District. That same year, a referendum was held to amend the Georgia Constitution to enable Savannah to adopt historic zoning and a review process whereby changes to historic structures and new development would be reviewed for compatibility under a set of standards.

The prototype for the standards was developed by the architectural firm of Muldawer and Patterson for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and was published as the *Historic Preservation Plan* in 1966. The following year, the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), The American Institute of Architects (AIA), and Historic Savannah Foundation (HSF) recommended an overlay district that would allow higher densities, no setbacks, and mixed-use development typical of an urban environment. Subsequently, in 1973, the Historic District ordinance, which included the Visual Compatibility Factors from the 1966 Preservation Plan, was adopted and the Historic District Board of Review was established to review projects within the district bounded by the Savannah River, Gwinnett Street, East Broad and Randolph Streets and West Boundary Street (**Figure 4.2**).



## HISTORY OF DESIGN REVIEW

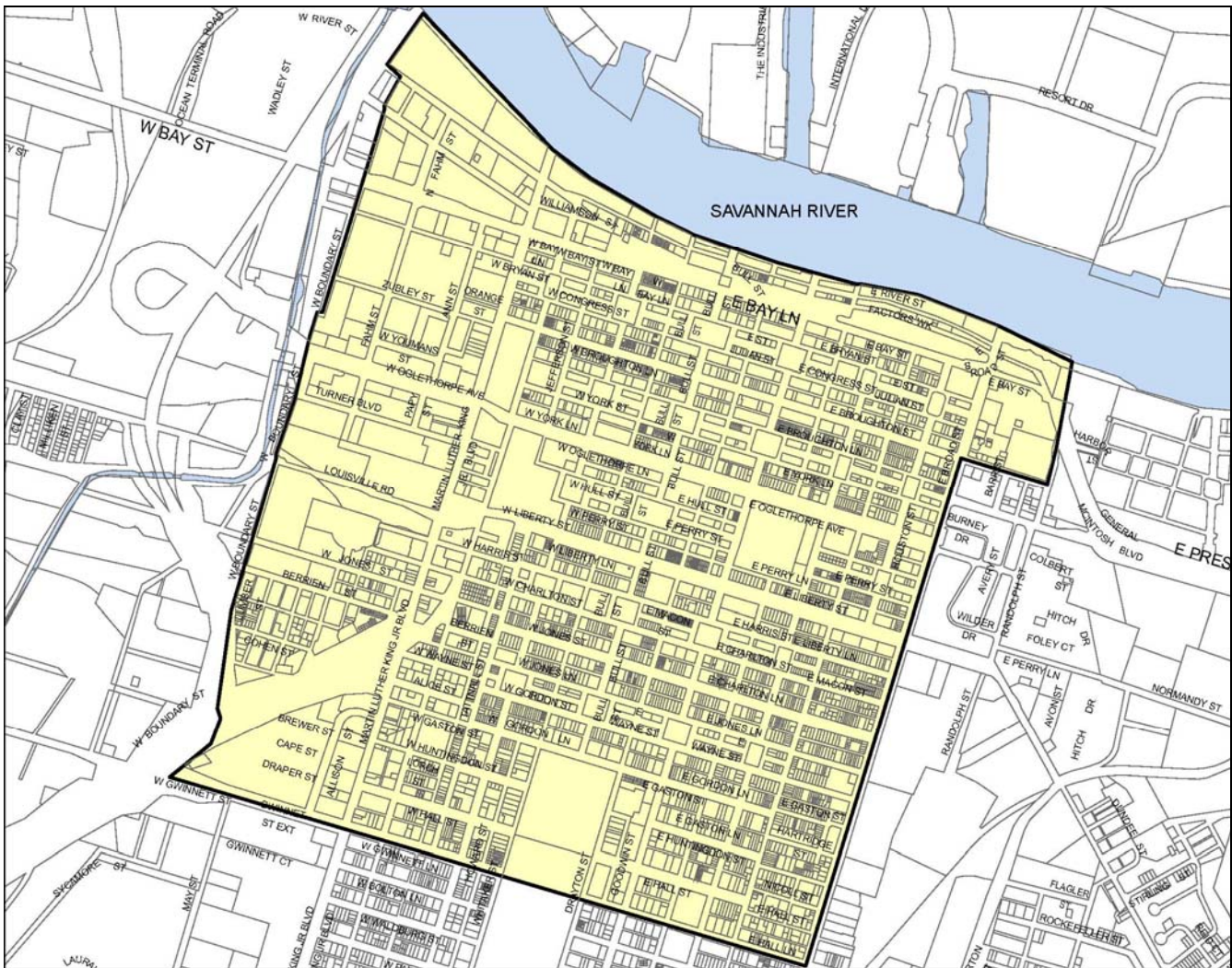


Figure 4.2: Savannah Historic Overlay District Boundary Map.

Over the years, the ordinance and the Historic Building Map, a supplemental document that identifies all building designated as historic in a single document, are amended to remain current. Procedures have also been reviewed and changed as needed. By 1990, continued demolition and inappropriate new construction prompted Historic Savannah Foundation to contract Christopher Chadbourne, a Boston-based consultant, to prepare new design standards for the City of Savannah. These were presented to the City in 1992 and the most extensive revisions to the Historic District ordinance were adopted in 1997. By 2001, a broad-based committee of citizens and MPC and City staff met to consider additional revisions to the ordinance including a more finely refined height map. The Mayor and Aldermen adopted these revisions in 2003. They incorporated a historic district height map and specific design standards for new construction.

## HISTORY OF DESIGN REVIEW

From 2003 to 2007, the City of Savannah, like much of the United States, experienced unprecedented growth and development in its downtown area. Large-scale development proposals continuously sought and were granted relief from the ordinance requirements to build taller and bigger buildings than the standards would allow, often resulting in buildings that were out of character with the historic context. In February 2008, the Historic District Revisions Committee with the assistance of Urban Design consultant Sottile & Sottile and staff convened to develop standards for compatible large-scale buildings. Resources included the Chadbourne Report and the Downtown Master Plan as well as data collection and analysis through the use of Savannah Area Geographic Information System (SAGIS), historic building surveys, and research. The result of this effort was an extensive set of standards for large-scale development and preservation of the Oglethorpe Plan Area that were adopted by the Mayor and Aldermen in December 2009 and incorporated into the zoning ordinance.

Just as the City has evolved (**Figures 4.3, 4.4, & 4.5**), the ordinance has been amended a number of times in response to the conditions of that time. Most ordinances, and in particular the zoning ordinance, are not static documents. They need, from time to time, to be amended to reflect changing community values, changing development trends, or to remove or clarify provisions which are ambiguous, unclear, or confusing.



Figure 4.3: Bull Street, ca. 1800s.



Figure 4.4: Bull Street, ca. 1930s.



Figure 4.5: Bull Street, 2011.



## 5. HISTORIC DISTRICT BOARD OF REVIEW PROCESS

### Section Five: Historic District Board of Review Process

#### STEP 1: Consultation with Historic Preservation Staff

Prior to making application for a formal review, we encourage you to schedule an appointment with Historic Preservation staff for an informal discussion of your proposed work. Contact the Historic Preservation Department at 912-651-1440 or visit our website at [www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org) to find staff contact information and to download an application.

#### STEP 2: Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)

In order to receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) an application for work to be completed must be submitted for review by the Historic District Board of Review. The Board meets on the second Wednesday of every month and applications for review must be submitted no less than 20 days prior to the meeting to provide public notice as required by the ordinance (**Figure 5.2**). Minor alterations, including paint color change, awnings, shutters, roof replacement, repointing, stucco repair, and repair to existing windows and doors may be reviewed by the Historic Preservation staff and can be submitted by the applicant at any time for review.



Figure 5.2: Proper sign posting.

In addition to the application, supporting documentation as outlined on the application checklist must be submitted to provide the Board and staff with a complete understanding of the proposed project. This **may** include the following materials but will vary depending on the scope of work:

- ☐ Description of proposed work
- ☐ Photographs of existing conditions
- ☐ Site Plan
- ☐ Elevations, sections and floor plans
- ☐ Materials and specifications including product and color samples for brick, mortar, roofing, brochures and specifications for windows and doors, paint color samples, awning fabric samples.

Historic Preservation staff can assist you with the details of these submissions. The completed application and supplemental materials required for a Certificate of Appropriateness must be submitted to:

Savannah Historic District Board of Review  
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC)  
110 East State Street  
Savannah, Georgia 31401



# HISTORIC DISTRICT BOARD OF REVIEW PROCESS

## STEP 3: Evaluation by the Historic District Board of Review and/or Historic Preservation Staff

For projects requiring review by the Board, Historic Preservation staff prepares a report of the project based on information submitted by the applicant and makes a recommendation to the Board based on the standards in the ordinance. The report and application including supporting documentation are posted on the MPC's website in advance of the meeting for review by the Board members, petitioner, and public.

The Board conducts a review of the proposed work, applying the standards provided in the Historic District Section (8-3030) of the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance.



Figure 5.2: HDBR meeting, July 13, 2011.

For minor repairs, including paint color, roof repair, awnings, stucco repairs, repointing, and shutters the Board, through the bylaws, has delegated to staff the authority to review the proposed work to staff and issue a COA.

## STEP 4: Rendering a Decision

For projects that are reviewed by Historic Preservation staff, a decision is rendered within ten days of submittal of a completed application. Applications submitted that do not meet the ordinance or are determined not to be visually compatible with the district will be placed on the next HDBR agenda for review by the Board.

The Board may:

- ☐ Approve your proposed work and issue a *Certificate of Appropriateness* (**Figure 5.3**); or
- ☐ Deny the proposed work because it is not consistent with the Historic District Section (8-3030) of the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance, or
- ☐ Continue the petition at the request of the applicant for revisions.

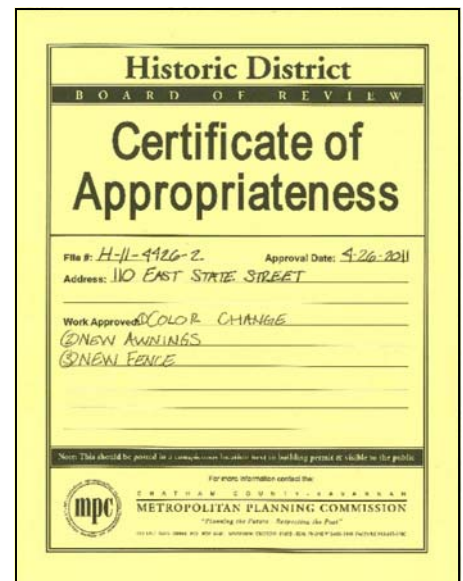


Figure 5.3: Example COA.

The Board is obligated to render a decision within forty-five (45) calendar days of receipt of a completed application, unless an extension or continuance has been agreed upon with the applicant.

## STEP 5: Decision

If the proposed work is approved, the Board or staff issues a *Certificate of Appropriateness* to the applicant and provides a copy to the City's Development Services Department.

## HISTORIC DISTRICT BOARD OF REVIEW PROCESS

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The *Certificate of Appropriateness* is effective for one year. Upon written request by the applicant, the Board or staff may grant a one-time 12-month extension provided that the original Certificate of Appropriateness has not expired at the time of the request, the site or building conditions have not changed on the subject property and/or adjacent properties and the ordinance has not changed.

### Denial

A *denial* shall be binding upon the Development Services Department, and no permit (where applicable) shall be issued. The *denial* will contain a written explanation by the HDRB of the reasons for denial and explain the applicant's right of resubmission or appeal.

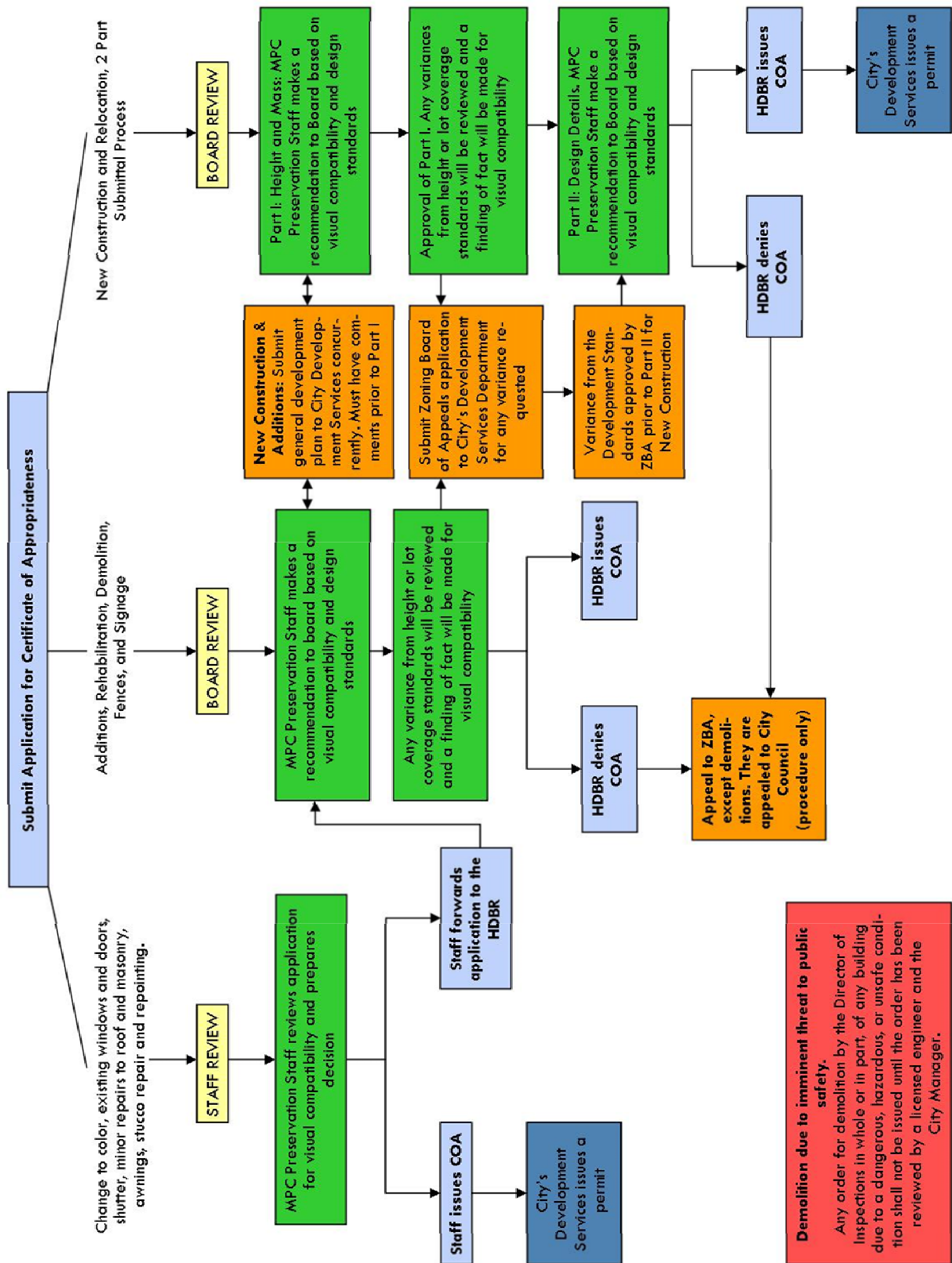
In the case of a *denial*, the applicant may do the following:

- ☐ Make modifications to the plans and submit a new application; or
- ☐ Appeal the decision to the Zoning Board of Appeals or Mayor and Aldermen in the case of demolition (appeal to be filed within 30 days after the decision is provided to the applicant); and
- ☐ If sustained by the Zoning Board of Appeals, appeal the decision to the Circuit Court having jurisdiction.

### Work Conducted Without Permit

When work has been conducted without a *Certificate of Appropriateness*, the property owner must submit an after-the-fact application for review. The property owner may be issued a Stop Work Order from the City's Development Services Department and may be subject to further litigation. If the work is not consistent with the Historic District standards, the HDRB may require the owner to restore the property to the prior condition before the inappropriate work was conducted, or to modify the work so that it qualifies for a *Certificate of Appropriateness*.

# HISTORIC DISTRICT BOARD OF REVIEW PROCESS





## 6. PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES

### Section Six: Preservation of Historic Structures

In order to preserve the integrity of the Historic District, widely accepted best preservation practices must be followed. In terms of historic preservation, integrity means how much of the original fabric of the structure still exists and the ability of a property to convey its significance. There are seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association that determine a property's ability to convey its historical significance. It is ideal to preserve or restore as much of the original material as possible; therefore, a series of standards and guidelines were developed to ensure the best possible methods are followed in preservation efforts. There are four categories of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: Preservation, Restoration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (**Figure 6.1**). The two most typically followed in Savannah are Preservation and Rehabilitation, the links of which are found below.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/index.htm>

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation

[http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/preserve/preserve\\_index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/preserve/preserve_index.htm)

*The ordinance requires that any historic structure, and any outbuildings, or any related auxiliary structure, visible from a public street or lane, including but not limited to walls, fences, light fixtures, steps, paving, sidewalks, and signs, may only be moved, reconstructed, altered, or maintained in a manner that will preserve the historical and exterior architectural features of these structures in a manner consistent with the current edition of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation published by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The visual compatibility factors and the design standards from the Historic District Section (8-3030) of the City of Savannah Zoning ordinance also apply.*

*Exterior architectural features may include the architectural style, scale, general design, and general arrangement of the exterior of the structure, including the kind and texture of the building material, the type and style of all roofs, windows, doors and signs. In considering proposals for the exterior alterations of historic structures in the historic district, the documented original design of the structure may be considered.*

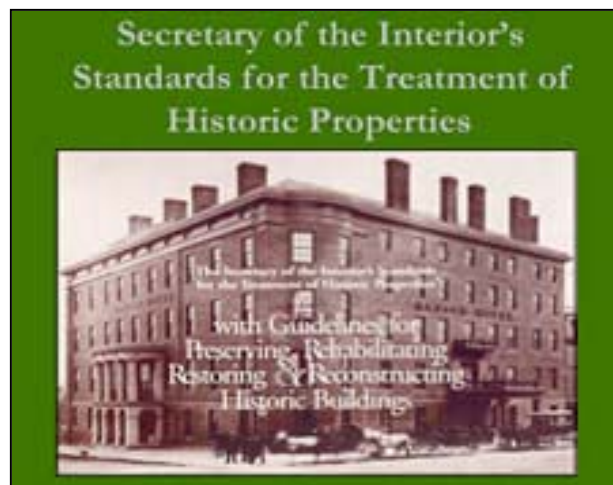


Figure 6.1 Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

## 7. VISUAL COMPATIBILITY FACTORS

### Section Seven: Visual Compatibility Factors

Visual compatibility creates harmony between infill and existing structures within the Historic District.

*New construction and existing buildings and structures and appurtenances in the historic district which are moved, reconstructed, materially altered, repaired or changed in color shall be visually compatible with structures, squares, and places to which they are visually related.*

Eleven factors determine whether a structure is visually compatible with its surrounding structures:

- 1. Height.** The Historic District has a variety of building heights. To determine proper height for a new building the Historic District Height Map (**Figure 8.3**) was developed. New construction will be permitted to build the indicated number of stories on the map, provided the dimensional height is compatible. The height of the building's individual components must be visually compatible with the building height and with surrounding contributing structures (**Figure 7.1**).
- 2. Proportions of structures front façade.** To create a harmonious façade, building width and height should be proportional to one another and to contributing structures (**Figure 7.2**).
- 3. Proportion of openings.** Window opening should be proportionally related to and visually compatible with surrounding contributing structures. The openings of a structure should match in width and height with the portions of the building (**Figure 7.3**).



Figure 7.1: Buildings with same number of stories at different scales .



Figure 7.2: Proportionate façade, height and width.



Figure 7.3: Proportionate openings along the façade.



## VISUAL COMPATIBILITY FACTORS

4. **Rhythm of solids to voids in front façades.** An evenly balanced amount of solid massing and open space on the façade of a structure should be visually compatible with the contributing structures within the block or ward (**Figure 7.4**).
5. **Rhythm of structures on streets.** An equal amount of space should be given to building mass and open space between adjacent structures that has historically existed. This means row houses shall be constructed on blocks with existing row houses, semi-attached dwellings with existing semi-attached dwellings and so forth (**Figure 7.5**).
6. **Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projection.** The type of entry should be visually compatible with contributing structures. If contributing porches project into the public right-of-way, new construction on the same block may have a porch that acts in a similar fashion. Walkways should remain how they were historically and the type of entry and porch projection should be influenced by the existing streetscape (**Figure 7.6**).
7. **Relationship of material, texture and color.** Materials, textures, and color of the façade of a structure should relate to the surrounding context. Wood clad structures are visually related to similar wood clad structures. Brick structures are visually related to other masonry structures, such as stucco (**Figure 7.7**).



Figure 7.4: Equal amounts of solid and voids.



Figure 7.5: New town house construction.



Figure 7.6: Visually compatible entrances.



Figure 7.7: Masonry structures.



## VISUAL COMPATIBILITY FACTORS

- 8. Roof shapes.** The shape of a roof should be visually compatible with contributing structures. Historic buildings should determine the predominate roof shape, such as hipped, gable, shed, gambrel, or mansard, on a block or ward, and new construction should provide a roof line and shape that is compatible with the historic roof line of the block or ward (**Figure 7.8**).
- 9. Walls of continuity.** Walls and fences should create a consistent enclosure along the street and should be consistent with the historic precedent of the ward or block (**Figure 7.9**).
- 10. Scale of a building.** The mass of the overall building and its individual components, columns, stairs, balconies, and additions, should be visually compatible with contributing structures to which it is visually related (**Figure 7.10**).
- 11. Directional expression of the front elevation.** The directional expression; vertical, horizontal or nondirectional; should be visually compatible with contributing structures within the block or ward. In blocks and wards, where buildings read horizontally in character, new construction will also read horizontally in character (**Figure 7.11**).



Figure 7.8: Gable roofs as predominate roof shape in this block.



Figure 7.9: Masonry fence creating a wall of continuity, defining the street edge and corner.



Figure 7.10: Harmoniously scaled building and components.



Figure 7.11: A horizontally divided structure.

## 8. DESIGN STANDARDS

### Section Eight: Design Standards

This section discusses specific aspects of the Oglethorpe Plan, buildings, materials and character. The following design standards apply to new construction, additions, and alterations to buildings and structures. To the maximum extent possible, these standards seek to retain the rhythm and scale of the district while taking into account the impacts of varying densities resulting from smaller unit sizes, varying floor heights resulting from contemporary construction practices, energy saving considerations, and the impact of the automobile. The requirements governing building placement, entrances and orientation, and on-site parking are intended to achieve compatible patterns of rhythm and scale.

The Historic District Board of Review may approve alternate materials if by the applicant demonstrates that the product is visually compatible with historic district building materials and has performed satisfactorily in the local climate.

#### (1) Streets and Lanes

The character of Savannah is a direct result of its extraordinarily unique urban plan. The rhythm and scale of its small blocks are the primary influences on its built form. In areas where the street plan has been preserved, the quality of human scale and economic diversity is greatest. In areas where streets and lanes have been closed, the scale and character of the City has been diminished (**Figure 8.1**). Patterns of small blocks and connected streets enhance pedestrian access, sight lines, traffic calming, on-street parking, mixed-uses and enhance economic vitality.



Figure 8.1: The Savannah Civic Center.

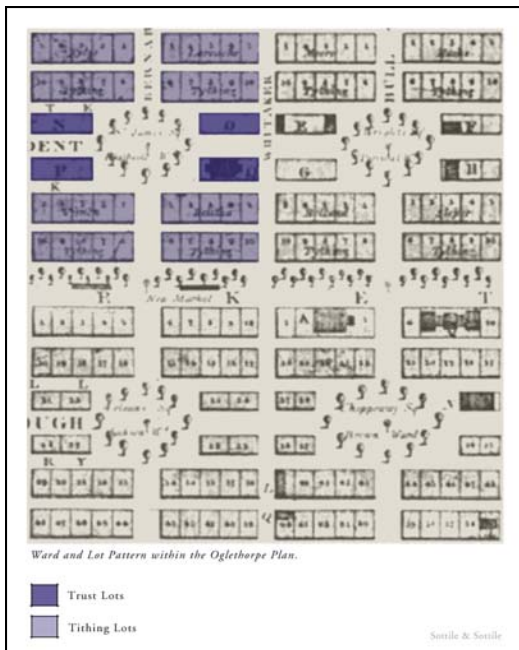


Figure 8.2: Oglethorpe Plan, Trust and Tithing blocks highlighted.

Savannah streets have a rhythm and scale derived from the original Oglethorpe subdivision of lots and blocks into 60 by 90 feet Tithing lots (arranged 4 or 5 to a block) and 60 x 180 feet Trust blocks (**Figure 8.2**). These original lots were further subdivided into 15, 20, 24, and 30 feet widths, and each lot size gave rise to the development of certain building plan and street elevation types. Blocks often contained more than one subdivided lot width, and thus more than one plan or street elevation type, thereby contributing to the diversity of the city.

*Development shall preserve or reconstruct the historic ward pattern of street and lanes within the Oglethorpe Plan Area bounded by the centerline of the following streets: Gaston Street on the South, Bay Street on the North, Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard on the West, and East Broad Street on the East (**Figure 8.3**).*

*Street and lanes shall not be bridged by development, except on Factor's Walk. Such bridges shall be for pedestrian use only. Factor's Walk bridges shall not be covered by a roof, awning or any other type of extension from a building.*



## DESIGN STANDARDS

Figure 8.3: Oglethorpe Plan Area outlined in green.



- Savannah Historic Overlay District
- Oglethorpe Plan Area
- Closed or Privately-Owned Street or Lane

1. Bay Lane, between Houston and East Broad
2. St. Julian Street, between Lincoln and Habersham
3. St. Julian Street, between Jefferson and Barnard
4. St. Julian Street, between Montgomery and Jefferson
5. President Street, between Whitaker and Bull
6. President Street, between Barnard and Whitaker
7. York Lane, between Barnard and Whitaker
8. President Street, between Jefferson and Montgomery
9. Montgomery Street, east side of former full Liberty Square
10. Broughton Lane, between MLK and Montgomery
11. State Street, between MLK and Montgomery
12. President Street, between MLK and Montgomery
13. York Street, between MLK and Montgomery
14. York Lane, between MLK and Montgomery
15. Oglethorpe Avenue re-route between Montgomery & MLK
16. Oglethorpe Lane, between Houston and Price

17. Oglethorpe Lane, between Price and Habersham
18. Oglethorpe Lane, between Barnard and Jefferson
19. Oglethorpe Lane, between Jefferson and Montgomery
20. Oglethorpe Lane, between MLK and Montgomery
21. Hull Street, between Montgomery and Jefferson
22. Montgomery Street, east side of former full Elbert Square
23. McDonough Street, between Montgomery and Jefferson
24. McDonough Street, between Jefferson and Barnard
25. Perry Street, between Montgomery and Jefferson
26. Perry Street, between Jefferson and Barnard
27. Jefferson Street, between Liberty and Hull
28. Perry Lane, between Montgomery and Jefferson
29. Perry Lane, between Jefferson and Barnard
30. Liberty Street re-route between Jefferson and MLK
31. Stone Street, (aligned with Liberty Lane), between Jefferson and MLK
32. Liberty Lane, between Lincoln and Abercorn
33. Macon Street, between Bull and Whitaker
34. Macon Street, between Whitaker and Barnard
35. Charlton Street, between Montgomery and MLK
36. Jones Street, between Montgomery and MLK
37. Berrien Street, between Montgomery and MLK
38. Wayne Street, between Abercorn and Drayton



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (2) Building Form

There is a subtle hierarchy of appropriate locations for different building forms within the Oglethorpe Plan area. The Trust blocks were established as places for public buildings and are the most important building sites within a ward. Buildings that front the square on corners or are on corners that serve as gateways to a ward also demand a higher architectural expression than those which assume a tertiary position mid-block or along north-south service streets. These subtle design demands define the character of the Historic District.

Building forms are used as a means of assuring visual harmony on a block. Multiple variables -- Trust or Tithing block location, courtyard, setbacks and lot coverage, height and street elevation -- establish the bulk, mass, and the placement of buildings within the district (**Figure 8.4**).

**Tithing Blocks:** A variety of dwelling types may exist within any given Tithing block in the Historic District. As long as the rules for height, setback, lot coverage and street elevation are met, any of the historic building dwelling types within that block may be used (**Figure 8.5**).

**Trust Lots:** Any dwelling unit type may be used on Trust lots, which front onto squares. If the lot fronts onto an east-west street, a detached building is permitted, but only on a lot 50 feet or wider and with a garden of at least 20 feet depth fronting the square (**Figure 8.6**).

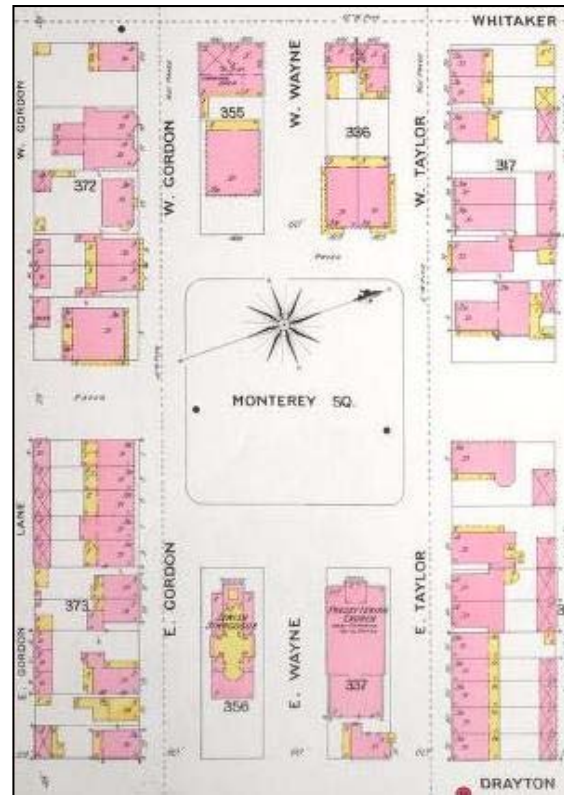


Figure 8.4: Oglethorpe Plan and building form around Monterey Square. 1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Available at <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/>



Figure 8.5: Jackson Ward Tithing block, Perry Street.



Figure 8.6: Trust lot, Kehoe House.

## DESIGN STANDARDS

**Dwelling Type:** Five different dwelling type exist based predominantly on the side hall (**Figure 8.7**) and central hall (**Figure 8.8**) models. These residential structures have different configurations: one, two and three stories; two or three stories plus a raised basement and exterior stairway to a parlor entry; or with a stoop (or, in Victorian houses, a porch), which lifted the entry 20 to 42 inches from the ground. While certain architectural styles generally correspond to a particular form (for example, most Victorian era structures are two-stories over a crawl space), there is almost always an exception. Contrarily, certain types, most notably two-story attached dwellings can be found in almost every architectural style.



Figure 8.7: Side hall entry.



Figure 8.8: Central hall entry.

The resi-

dential

**architecture of the Historic District is comprised of different building types, as follows:**

- Row Houses have party or lot line walls on two sides (**Figure 8.9**).



Figure 8.9: Row houses with party wall built to the lot line.



## DESIGN STANDARDS

- Semi-attached dwellings have a party or lot-line wall on one side (**Figure 8.10**).
- Detached homes do not share party or lot-line wall with any adjacent buildings (**Figures 8.11 and 8.12**).
- Apartment buildings are rare in the district. Most date from the first quarter of the 20th century. The contributing examples such as the Henrietta Apartments (307-311 Abercorn Street) and the DeRenne Apartments (24 East Liberty Street) understood the 60-foot rhythm or the plan (**Figure 8.13 and 8.15**).



Figure 8.10: Semi-attached dwelling.



Figure 8.11: Detached home with a lot equal to or less than 40 feet.



Figure 8.12: Detached home with a lot greater than 40 feet.



Figure 8.13:  
Henrietta  
Apartments.



Figure 8.15:  
DeRenne Apartments.





## DESIGN STANDARDS

### A. Stories

Stories can be measured and interpreted through a variety of exterior expressions (**Figures 8.17 & 8.18**). Maximum and minimum floor heights for stories may prevail in certain character areas. Standards from the Historic District Ordinances that further clarify building stories throughout the Historic District state:

*Buildings throughout the Historic District, which front a street, shall be at least two stories, except in the Beach Institute Character Area or for accessory buildings which front a lane.*

*Accessory buildings that front a lane shall be no taller than two stories.*

*A mezzanine shall not count as a story. Mezzanines [an intermediate level between the floor and ceiling of a story. Its aggregate floor area is not more than one-third of the area of the room or space in which it is located] are limited in area.*

*A basement that is entirely underground shall not count as a story.*

*A crawl space or partial basement that is four feet or less above grade shall not count as a story.*

*Non-habitable rooftop structures such as church spires; cupolas; chimneys; tanks and supports; parapet walls not over 4 feet high; and Mechanical or Access Structures [An enclosed, non-habitable structure above the roof of a building, other than a tank, tower, spire, dome cupola or bulkhead, occupying not more than one-third of the roof area. Mechanical access structures used solely to enclose stairways or elevator machinery, ventilation or air conditioning apparatus shall not count as a story] shall not be considered a story.*



Figure 8.17: Residential two-story building with exterior height expression and divisions.



Figure 8.18: Monumental/Institutional multi-story building with exterior height expression and divisions.



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### B. Residential Building Height

Within the Historic District, 82 percent of the residential housing stock is three-stories or less. Of those, one-story structures make up only five percent of the residential housing stock. 18 percent of the housing stock is taller than three stories. In analyzing the distribution of the various residential building heights the following observations can be made:

- *One-story buildings (Figure 8.19), with a few exceptions, can be found only north of Oglethorpe Avenue and in the Beach Institute neighborhood.*
- *Two-story structures (Figure 8.20) are found in every ward in the district.*
- *Two-story high stoop townhouses are found in every ward; however, in Davis Ward in the Beach Institute neighborhood, there is only one example.*
- *Three-story dwellings are found in every ward outside of the Beach Institute neighborhood.*
- *Three-story high stoop townhouses (Figure 8.21) are rarely found north of Oglethorpe Area with the exception of Anson Ward, and are most prevalent in Chatham, Monterey and Calhoun Wards north of Gaston Street. They are not found in the Beach Institute neighborhood.*



Figure 8.19: One-story cottage.



Figure 8.20: Two-story dwelling.



Figure 8.21: Four-story dwelling on Monterey Square.

*The exterior expression of the height of raised basements shall be not less than 6'-6" and not higher than 9'-6".*

*The exterior expression of the height of the first story, or the second story in the case of a raised basement shall be not less than 11 feet.*

*The exterior expression of the height of each story above the second shall not be less than 10 feet.*



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### C. Commercial Building Height

Commercial buildings in the Historic District come in a variety of heights and styles, depending upon their location and construction date. Typically they range from one-story to four-stories in height and occupy the full width of the lot. This section of the manual deals with height articulation between the floors, the height of each floor, the architectural articulation of height, and the visual expression of height on the building. Later sections of this manual expresses the appropriate design standards for storefronts.

Commercial buildings within the district share a number of commonalities which form the basis of architecture subdivision on commercial facades (**Figure 8.22**).

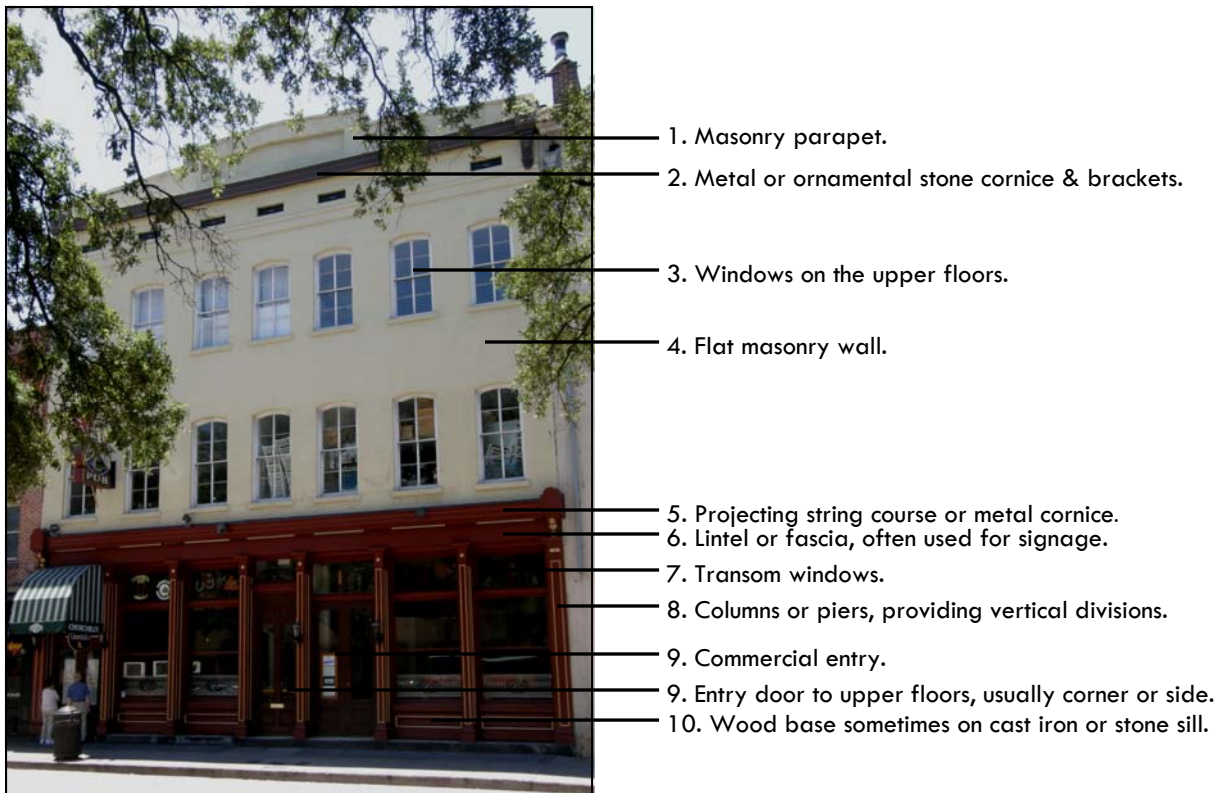


Figure 8.22: Commercial building, Bay Street.

*The first story of a retail building shall be designed as a storefront.*

*Subdivide the façade horizontally into base, middle, and top. The first story shall be separated from the upper stories by an architectural feature such as a string course (i.e. projecting horizontal band) or change in material. Such feature may be placed at the top of the second story when the first and second stories have the visual appearance of a unified exterior expression.*

*The height of the first story shall not be less than the exterior visual expression of the height of any single story above the first.*

*The exterior visual expression of the top story of buildings over three stories shall be distinctive from the stories below the top story.*

## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (4) Setbacks

Dwellings in the Historic District, with the exception of detached houses on lots greater than 40 feet (generally south of Gaston Street) tend to be closely spaced. In order to maintain this spacing on which much of the character of the district rests, new or expanded dwelling structures should occupy the following minimum percentage (**Figure 8.23**) of lot width along the front setback line as measured from side lot-line to side lot-line.

Row Dwellings	100%
Semi-Attached Dwellings	80%
Detached dwellings on lots equal to or less than 40 ft.	65%
Detached dwellings on lots greater than 40 ft.	50%
Apartment buildings	80%

Figure 8.23: Minimum percentage of lot width along the front setback line.

Maximum building lot coverage permitted in most sections of the Historic District is 75 percent of the parcel. Within the predominately commercial areas of the district, 100 percent building lot coverage is permitted. Maximum building lot coverage is determined by the base zoning of the specific property and is identified within the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance Development Standards.

## DESIGN STANDARDS

A front setback respectful of established patterns along a block front is one of the strongest ways to provide a sense of unity and harmony to a street. It is, therefore, a general provision of these standards that where there is an established front yard setback along a block front, it should be maintained. However, buildings in the district are commonly built to the lot line and encroach onto the public right-of-way (**Figure 8.24**).

The limited 60 foot width of Trust blocks combined with the need for a 20 foot deep parking space and a typical unit depth of 40 to 50 feet makes it impractical and undesirable to provide front setbacks where lots front east-west streets. Where lots front the squares or the north-south service streets, the setbacks should reflect adjacent historic development patterns.

*Front yards. There shall be no front yard setbacks except as follows:*

*i. On tithing lots where there is a historic setback along a particular block front, such setback shall be provided.*

*li. On a trust lot fronting a square, proposed buildings may establish a front yard setback not to exceed 20 feet (**Figure 8.25**).*

*Side yards. A side yard setback shall not be required.*



Figure 8.24: A building with no setback on a Tithing block, Monterey Square.



Figure 8.25: A typical setback on a Trust block within the Historic District, Lafayette Square.



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (5) Entrances and Doors

The number of addresses within a block is a direct measure of its vitality, human scale and pedestrian activity. Savannah's most walkable blocks feature multiple street addresses along their sidewalks. Streets in the Historic District should be animated with the presence of dwellings and shops and not lifeless processions of blank walls (**Figure 8.26**), parking lots, driveways and garage doors. Thus, entries should open directly onto streets.

Trust Lots facing squares play a pivotal role in defining the character of the squares. They must lend prestige to the square. While there are a handful of historic buildings on squares orienting to east-west streets (**Figure 8.27**), 95 percent front onto the square.



Figure 8.28: A wooden double entry way.



Figure 8.26: A building with no entrances along Bay Street, not a recommended treatment. Sottile & Sottile.



Figure 8.27: A row fronting onto Macon Street adjacent to Troup Square.

*A building on a trust lot facing a square shall locate its primary entrance to front the square. A building on a trust lot not facing a square shall located is primary entrance so that it fronts the same street as the other historic buildings on the same block. A building on a titling block shall locate its primary entrance to front the east-west street.....*

*Placement. Door frames shall be inset not less than three inches from the exterior surface of the façade of a building, excluding façades with wood siding.*

*Materials. Doors shall be made of wood (**Figure 8.28**), clad wood, glass, or steel.*

## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (6) Exterior Treatment

Exterior materials are important in defining the overall character of the district. Original materials should be retained to preserve the integrity of the district. Where repairs or replacement is warranted, it should match the original as closely as possible and not be substituted with a new modern material (i.e. dryvit, EIFS, or cementitious siding).

Typically, residential structures within the district are brick (**Figure 8.29**), true stucco (**Figure 8.30**), or wood clad (**Figure 8.31**). Commercial structures and monumental buildings are clad in brick, polished stone, glazed tile, terra cotta, and, in more modern examples, concrete. Use of these materials maintains the historic integrity of the district and helps provide compatible infill. A number of exterior surface materials are considered incompatible within the district, including: glass fiber reinforced concrete, Thinset imitation masonry, particle board, asphalt or wood shingles, vertical siding, aluminum or vinyl siding, fiber cement panels, or any similar flush mounted surface material.

Within each ward, different material treatments became the predominate and favored material depending upon the ward's date of development. For example, wood siding is common in the older ward and towards the south in the newer wards, masonry structures dominate.



Figure 8.29: Brick structure.



Figure 8.30: True stucco.



Figure 8.31: Wood cladding.



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (7) Windows, Shutters and Commercial Storefronts

#### A. Windows

Historic windows are important architectural elements of a building façade. Original windows should be retained to preserve the historic integrity of the building as they reflect original design intent, a period or style, and may reflect evolutions to the building.

Windows on new construction should be visually compatible with historic windows to which they are visually related. Within the Historic District, windows have the following characteristics:

- recessed from the exterior wall; they are not flush with the surface of the building (**Figure 8.32**);
- tend to align vertically on the front façade (**Figure 8.33**);
- tend to be arranged in a three or six bay rhythm (**Figure 8.33**);
- are taller than they are wide (**Figure 8.33**);
- are mostly double or triple hung (**Figure 8.34**);
- divided light sashes have true divided lights (**Figure 8.35**) and;
- mostly made of wood with some metal examples.



Figure 8.32: A recessed window.



Figure 8.33: Typical window arrangement in the Historic District.



Figure 8.34: Double-hung win-



Figure 8.35: True divided lights.



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### B. Shutters

Shutters were traditionally part of the window composition and performed important functions. They provided additional privacy and security along the street, protection from the environment and natural disasters such as heavy storms and hurricanes, shade in the warm summer months, and operable louvers to allow for ventilation while protecting the interior from the solar heat and harmful rays.

Louvered shutters are recommended for use in most instances in the Historic District (**Figure 8.36**). Originally, slats were movable to allow for ventilation and shade in the warm local climate. In many cases today, shutters are used only for decorative purposes, and as such, fixed slats may be approved if the proportions and detailing are correct and panels align with window sashes. In all cases the shutters must be hinged and operable and sized to fit the window opening in the closed position.

Solid paneled and board and batten shutters are only appropriate in certain instances (**Figures 8.37 & 8.38**). Colonial cottages are one example. Paneled shutters should not be substituted for louvered shutters on residential buildings.



Figure 8.36: Louvered shutters.



Figure 8.37: Solid panel



Figure 8.38: Board and batten shutters.



Figure 8.39: Shutter sized to fit

*Shutters shall be hinged and operable and sized to fit the window opening (**Figure 8.39**) The placement of the horizontal rail shall correspond to the location of the meeting rail of the window.*

*Shutters shall be constructed of durable wood. [PVC composite shutters have been approved by the board provided they meet the other standards]*

## DESIGN STANDARDS

### C. Commercial Storefronts

The principal commercial corridor or “main street” in Savannah has historically been located on Broughton Street (**Figure 8.40**). However, commercial structures also are located along primary corridors such as Bay Street, Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, and Bull Street and dotted throughout the rest of the district. Savannah’s Historic District is unique in that residential and commercial buildings live in harmony with one another, while they maintain a visual distinction from one another through varying uses of materials and application of architectural elements.

Masonry commercial structures in the Historic District date from three periods in the city’s commercial growth: early nineteenth-century, mid-nineteenth-century, and early twentieth-century. Each period addresses the following features uniquely: horizontal articulation -- the demarcation of base (storefront), middle, and top (cornice); vertical articulation -- the treatment of entries and corners and the introduction, or lack thereof, of bays; and architectural detail. While each period can be identified by the distinctive way in which it dealt with these attributes, the periods also share common characteristics. It is these commonalities that should be shared by new structures. They form the basis of the commercial design standards. Within that framework structures remain free to explore their own distinctive characteristics.

*Retail storefront area glazing shall be not less than 55 percent. Such glazing shall be transparent; provided however, black glass may be used in the sign area above the storefront window transoms. Storefront glazing shall extend from the sill or from an 18 to 24 inch base of contrasting material, to the lintel.*

*Storefronts shall be constructed of wood, cast iron, Carrera glass, aluminum, steel or copper as part of a glazed storefront system; bronze, wood, masonry, glazed brick or tile as a base for the storefront (**Figure 8.41**).*



Figure 8.40: Commercial Buildings along Broughton Street.



Figure 8.41: A wooden commercial storefront along Factors Walk.



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### Early Nineteenth-Century Buildings

Constructed for the most part between 1820 to 1855, these buildings feature regularly spaced structural masonry piers supporting a stone lintel upon which sits the upper floors (**Figure 8.42**). At the ground level or base, infill between the piers is recessed from the surface plane and is generally comprised of glass over an 18 to 24 inch tall wooden base. Windows in the upper floors are regularly spaced and modest in size with multiple panes of glass. Bases are the same height or taller than floors in the middle. Parapets are elaborated with stepped or decorative coursing. Piers, generally, but not always, are interrupted by the lintel and do not extend to the upper floors. One interesting and elegant exception is the Gibbons Block where the piers are expressed through to the top of the parapet, creating a repetitive pattern of 32 foot bays, thus assuring the vertical and incremental quality of the block in a fashion similar to that achieved by attached exterior stairs and wooden canopies on residential row house blocks.



Figure 8.42: Five Guy Burgers and Fries, originally built in 1852 for George Jones.

### Mid-Nineteenth Century and Victorian Structures

The Romantic tradition was reintroduced to American architecture during the Victorian period commencing in the 1840s. It began to appear in Savannah in the mid-1850s. Sophisticated machine technology permitted the manufacture and distribution of a diverse palate of mass-produced parts including cast iron and large sheets of plate glass. The storefront was transformed. Sheet metal was pressed into elaborate cornices. Windows became larger. Two-over-two and four-over-four sashes replaced the previous six-over-six form. Glazing represented as much as 30% of the upper floor's exterior appearance. The ground floor got taller, generally by two feet but occasionally more, and was taller than the upper floors. Windows took on ornamental moldings or lintels and often a curved top. The Germania Fire Company Building of 1871 bridges the styles of the latter part of the century. It reestablishes the pier and extends it to the upper floors, holds the spandrels flush with the piers, and recesses the glazing in the elaborated rectangles thus created. (**Figure 8.43**).



Figure 8.43: The Germania Fire Company Building.



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### Early Twentieth-Century Structures

Following the influential 1893 Chicago Exposition, the nation underwent a strong shift to the Classical Revival style. This shift in style was accompanied by corresponding advances in technology, primarily in the use of steel construction. The spans it permitted were reflected in the recessed windows and panels bridging between masonry piers which gave the buildings of the period both a sense of heightened verticality and a sense that the upper floor facade was now a collection of parts as opposed to the flat, planar surfaces of earlier nineteenth-century buildings (**Figure 8.44**). The verticality was heightened by the fact that between each pier the window bays were divided by vertical mullions that were wider than their horizontal counter parts. The horizontal lintel above storefronts remains an important part of the design, and in taller buildings stone was introduced as a base for brick buildings.

For the most part, this later period is represented in the classical institutions of Savannah and in taller buildings.

As storefront styles became increasingly modern, glass as a percentage of total facade increased markedly (**Figures 8.45 & 8.46**). In Savannah it did so less than in many other American cities. However, the use of glass and horizontal spans remain a commonality in Savannah's storefront architecture.



Figure 8.44: Savannah Bank and Trust Company Building, 1911.



Figure 8.45: Modern storefront glazing.



Figure 8.46: Retail glazing on Broughton Street.

## DESIGN STANDARDS

### Storefront Entrances

The location of storefront entrances is equally important as the design. In the nineteenth-century corner cut entries became extremely popular (**Figure 8.47**). The vast majority of storefronts on Broughton Street feature a recessed entry (**Figure 8.48**). Often decorative floor tiles or terrazzo signs were installed within these recesses. These elements are integral to the storefronts along Broughton Street and should be retained and encouraged on new infill.

*A building on Broughton Street shall locate its entrances at no greater intervals than 50 feet; provided, however, that for a corner entrance the interval to the next entrance may be increased to 60 feet.*

*Entrances fronting Broughton Street shall be recessed and centered within the storefront.*



Figure 8.47: Corner entry on Broughton and Whitaker Streets.



Figure 8.48: Recessed entry of Globe Shoe Company with terrazzo sign inlay.

## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (8) Awnings

Awnings are commonly used throughout the Historic District to provide shade and shelter at window and storefront openings. Correct placement of awnings, within architectural bays and not over character defining features, can help to enhance the openings (**Figure 8.49**) within a façade and reinforce the location of the vertical columns and horizontal cornice (**Figure 8.50**). Historically, almost all awnings were retractable so that they could be easily maintained and used only when needed.

Often commercial awnings can indicate the use of a building by featuring logos, the name of business, or the address.

In City Market, large metal awnings extended (**Figure 8.51**) into the public right-of-way to provide shade for merchants and traders who historically sold their goods in the market.



Figure 8.49: Awning over the principal entry.



Figure 8.50: Awnings between window bays.



Figure 8.51: Awnings in City Market.

*Awnings extending above the public right-of-way shall have a minimum vertical clearance of eight feet above the sidewalk.*

*Residential awnings shall be constructed of canvas, cloth or equivalent. Non-residential awnings shall be constructed of canvas, other equivalent cloth, metal, or glass.*

*Awnings shall be integrated structurally and architecturally into the design of the façade and not obscure the character-defining features of historic facade.*

*The following are prohibited: a single continuous awning that connects two buildings and back-lit or internally lit awnings.*



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (9) Roofs

Roofs in the Historic District tend to be simple. The majority of commercial and residential masonry buildings have flat roofs hidden behind simple parapets and cornices (**Figure 8.52**) or have modestly pitched and bracketed hip roofs (**Figure 8.53**). Gables exist primarily on wood clad residential buildings and run parallel to the street (**Figure 8.54**). Some roofs have dormers. Mansard roofs are confined to Victorian residential structures (**Figure 8.55**).



Figure 8.53: Hipped roof.



Figure 8.52: A parapet with a flat roof.



Figure 8.54: Gable roof.



Figure 8.55: Mansard roof.

## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (10) Balconies, Stairs, Stoops, Porticos, and Side Porches

Structures attached to the primary mass of a building, such as porticos, stoops, exterior stairs to parlor level entrances, etc. are an integral part of the richness of Savannah's residential and civic buildings. They provide depth, shadow, and human activity on the street.

Entrances to structures in the Historic District are predominantly approached via low stoops or exterior stairs leading to parlor level entrances. They are frequently covered by bracketed or column supported canopies. Row houses are encouraged to use canopied stoops or exterior stairs to break up their massing. The space under these stairs may or may not be filled in. Likewise, side porches, when utilized, contain most of the decorative features found on the front stoops (**Figure 8.56**).

Use of these elements is encouraged. Furthermore, railings provide an opportunity for the application of decorative contemporary craftwork in the Historic District.



Figure 8.56: Decorative stoop and balconies with complementary iron detailing.

### Decorative Details

Additionally, Savannah's architecture is rich in carefully crafted details, often integral to the overall design of the building. Contemporary artistic craftsmanship can enrich the visual texture of the city. Incorporation of the following kinds of details is encouraged:

- Cast iron decorative railings
- Downspouts such as the dolphin downspout (**Figure 8.57**)
- Etched and stained glass
- Moulded terracotta
- Lamp brackets
- Decorative vent covers
- Decorative tiles
- Corner quoining (**Figure 8.58**)



Figure 8.57: Dolphin Downspout.



Figure 8.58: Corner quoining.



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (11) Additions

Additions to historic buildings allow the current occupant to accommodate their needs that might not otherwise be met within the existing building. Additions help to show the evolution of structures over time (**Figure 8.59**) and can sometimes gain historical significance in their own right (**Figure 8.60**). It is important that additions be subordinate to the principal building and not obscure or remove significant character defining features.

*Additions on the front of historic buildings shall not be permitted.*

*Additions to historic buildings shall be located to the rear of the structure or the most inconspicuous side of the building. Additions to roofs shall not be visible from the front elevation. The addition shall be sited such that it is clearly an appendage and distinguishable from the existing main building*

*Designs for additions may be either contemporary or reference design motifs of the historic building.*



Figure 8.59: Compatible modern rear addition, York Street.



Figure 8.60: Tomochichi Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, an example where an addition has acquired historical significance. The southern end, constructed ca. 1895 was originally the U.S. Post Office. In 1930 the building was expanded north, across President Street to encompass the northern trust lot.



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (12) Fences, Trellises, and Walls

Fences and walls, and the gates that lead to the gardens beyond, play an important role in the Historic District. Fences may allow the viewer to see in, while establishing boundaries. Walls contribute to street front continuity, provide privacy in side or rear yards, and screen cars and other utilitarian uses by creating walls of continuity along the streetscape (**Figure 8.61**).

Fences within the Historic District are usually built along the lot line and are generally brick or a combination of brick and iron. On wooden structures, wood or dowel picket fences are common (**Figure 8.62**). As the City expanded, the later Victorian areas of the District have low copings often capped with decorative iron fencing (**Figures 8.63 & 8.64**). Fences within the Historic District do not extend beyond the front elevation of a building, except in the rare exception of buildings on Trust lots facing a square and the southern Victorian end of the district.

*The height of any fence, trellis, or wall shall not exceed 11 feet.*

*Walls and fences facing a public street shall be constructed of the material and color of the primary building; provided; however, iron fencing may be used with a masonry structure.*

*A masonry base shall be used with iron fencing.*

*Wood fences shall be painted or stained.*



Figure 8.61: A brick wall with vegetation.



Figure 8.62: A quirky wooden fence.



Figure 8.63: A low masonry coping with iron fencing.



Figure 8.64: Low masonry coping with iron fencing and security gate.

## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (13) Lanes and Carriage Houses

One of the features of the Oglethorpe Plan which has enabled it to gracefully adapt to the modern era of the automobile, is the system of lanes between the Tithing Blocks. Traditionally, carriage houses, servants quarters, and ancillary structures were located along lanes (**Figure 8.65**). These buildings have often been adaptively reused into garages on the first floor and apartments above to meet the current needs of the twenty-first century (**Figure 8.66**).

The Lanes are part of the scale and rhythm of the Historic District. Lanes are also the service alleys of the city providing areas for refuse and recycling pick up, utility access and fire equipment access, thus removing these visually incompatible services from the front face of the buildings and streets. Loss of lanes to land assemblage for large-scale development destroys the scale of the Historic District and thereby destroys its landmark character (**Figure 8.67**).

Likewise, the introduction of large-scale garage door openings or the loss of a carriage house altogether for a carport or surface parking destroys the scale and character of the lane. Structured parking on lanes should occur in the lower level of an existing carriage house or in a structure which maintains a two-story appearance.

Carriage houses were traditionally accessory to a main house in mass and scale. They were secondary to the main structure. They should not be subdivided from the main lot of record.



Figure 8.65: Historic lane with carriage houses.



Figure 8.66: Carriage house, adaptive reuse.



Figure 8.67: Chatham County Jail and Courthouse, encroachment into the lane and trust street.



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (14) Parking

Parking within the Historic District should respect the Oglethorpe Plan. Within the Historic District parking should be designed to create a minimal visual impact on the district while servicing the established automobile culture (**Figure 8.68**).

Access to parking shall be from lanes or north-south service streets. When a property does not front a lane or north-south service street, parking may be accessed from east-west connecting streets or trust streets.

Structured parking (**Figure 8.69**) within the first story of a building shall be setback a minimum of 30 feet from property lines along all public right-of-way (not including lanes).

Curb cuts shall be permitted only where access to a lane doesn't exist.

Curb cuts shall not exceed 20 feet in width.

Where intersected by a new driveway, the sidewalk shall serve as a continuous uninterrupted pathway across the driveway in materials, configuration, and height.

Asphalt strips or tabs shall not be permitted. Loose paving materials, such as crushed shell or gravel, shall not be permitted with 18 inches of the public-right-of-way.



Figure 8.68: Screened surface parking within the Historic District.

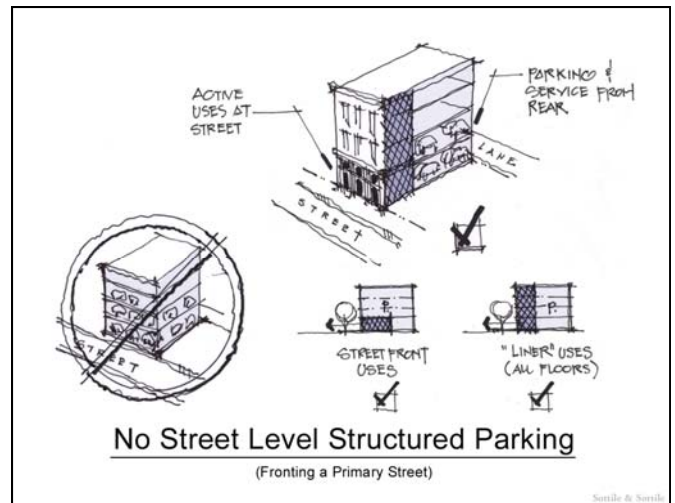


Figure 8.69: Structured parking with active uses on principal streets and parking and service access from the rear. Sottile & Sottile.



## DESIGN STANDARDS

### (15) Service Areas, Utilities and Mechanical Systems

Mechanical services, utility boxes, and trash and recycle bins are a reality of modern living and must be accommodated within the historic district. Service areas should be located within the building or on secondary facades; often the lane is the best location for these services (**Figure 8.70**). Consideration for these services should be part of the design process and can be an opportunity for creative screening techniques. Recesses in fences, with or without doors, have proven a satisfactory way to screen the City's large green trash containers along the lanes (**Figure 8.71**). Meter boxes do not need to be exposed as long as they are readily accessible to meter readers (**Figures 8.72 & 8.73**).

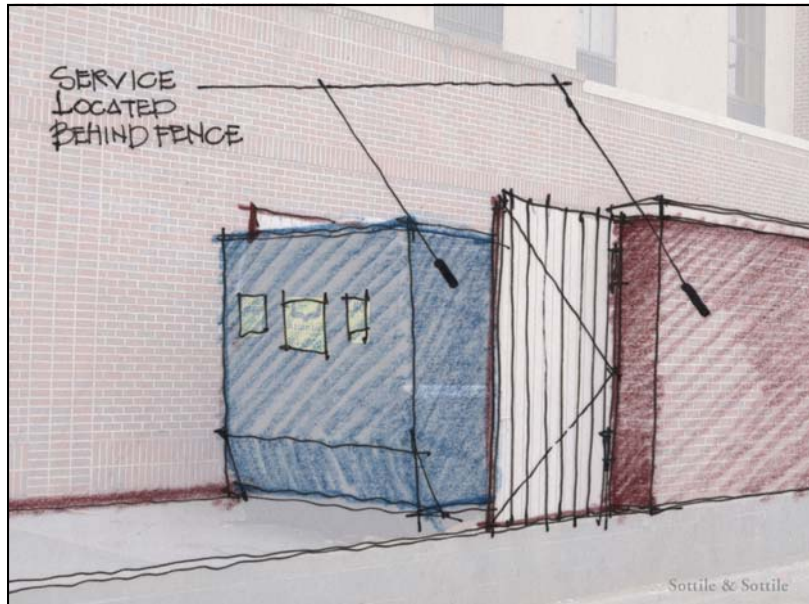


Figure 8.70: Service located in the lane and screened from view. Sottile & Sottile.



Figure 8.71: Screened trash receptacles.



Figure 8.72: Hidden meter with accessible screen.



Figure 8.73: Meter located in a fence recess.

## 9. LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

### Section Nine: Large-Scale Development

Large-scale development has the potential to have the greatest impact to the character of the Historic District because of its size and scale. When done appropriately, these buildings become landmarks and can be a catalyst for revitalization. When done inappropriately they can stagnate development and create dead-zones of inactivity, consuming entire blocks within the district. The standards seek to restore traditional massing to large-scale developments and tall buildings by subdividing those buildings horizontally into bases, middles and tops, and vertically into differentiated massing, while accentuating corners and entries.

#### The Primacy of 60-Foot Lot

A major intent of these provisions is to maintain the primacy of the 60-foot lot. Where development exceeds the 9,000 square foot threshold it must be broken into legible pieces through one of several devices. These devices include breaking the volume into multiple pieces (such as Massie School on Calhoun Square; **Figure 9.7**), the use of significantly different incremental façades on the same building, or creating asymmetrical volumetric compositions (such as the Chatham County Courthouse on Wright Square; **Figure 9.1**).

The 60-foot dimension of Trust and Tithing lots is reflected throughout the history of the City in its architecture. Civic institutions and Trust lot homes took on the 60-foot width of the Trust Blocks while Tithing blocks were subdivided into 30 and sometimes 15, 20, 40 or other divisors of 60 or 120-feet. Buildings 30-feet or less in width almost always were divided into three bays. Larger footprint buildings, like the old DeSoto Hotel and the Chatham County Courthouse on Wright Square, understood the primacy of this pattern and broke their massing into increments of 60-feet or less. All but one of the historic tall buildings of the city occupied either a single Tithing or Trust lot or broke their massing into multiple pieces as in the DeRenne Apartments. This unwritten rule was sacred.



Figure 9.1: Chatham County Courthouse, ca.1889.

*Large-Scale Development is defined as development whose combined ground floor footprint is equal to or greater than 9,000 square feet (**Figure 9.2**) within a single parcel and/or is greater than four-stories in residential zoning districts or is five-stories or greater in all other zoning districts. In the case of an addition to an existing building, the combined footprint and height of both the existing building and the addition located on the same parcel apply.*

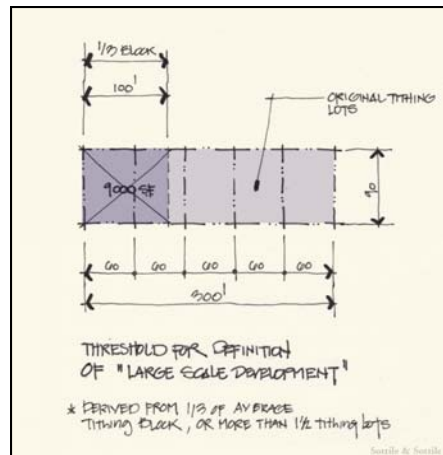


Figure 9.2 Threshold for large-scale development. Sottile & Sottile.



# LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

## (1) Footprint

It is a premise of these guidelines that new buildings should likewise respect the primacy of the historic lot subdivisions and the Oglethorpe Plan.

Today's office buildings, hotels, retail centers and apartment buildings often seek larger footprints. The consequence is that assemblage, not subdivision, is the rule and recent of buildings have been built that ignored the 60-foot module and are changing the scale of the City. At issue is not whether assemblage is allowed but whether buildings can be made that are good neighbors - that conform to the scale of their predecessors.



Figure 9.3: Federal Office Building, inappropriate large-scale development. Sottile & Sottile.

With the exception of 5 East Congress Street on Johnson Square (Figure 9.6), taller historic structures in the Historic District reflected the 60-foot titling lot subdivision of the Oglethorpe grid plan. They did so primarily by building within the 5,400 square foot floor plates prescribed by a Tithing lot. When they exceeded that lot area they resorted either to multiple volumes, distinct volumetric compositions or by presenting themselves as a collection of smaller buildings.

Some buildings are out of scale with the Historic District simply due to their size (Figure 9.3). An analysis of building footprints was undertaken to determine when buildings could no longer be compatible with the Oglethorpe Plan Area because of their size (Figure 9.4). This Study determined that half of a typical tithing block, or 13,500 square feet, was the maximum footprint for new infill to remain in scale and harmony in the Oglethorpe Plan (Figure 9.5).

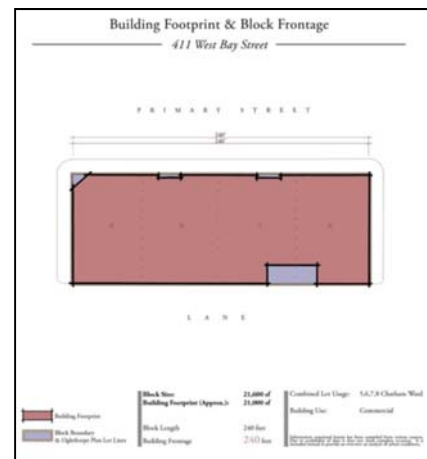


Figure 9.4: Building analysis, 411 W. Bay St. Sottile & Sottile.

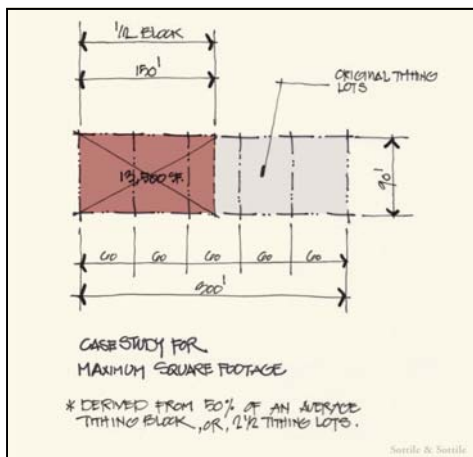


Figure 9.5: Maximum square footage for large-scale development. Sottile & Sottile.

*Building footprints shall not exceed 13,500 square feet within the Oglethorpe Plan Area. Multiple buildings with building footprints equal to or less than 13,500 square feet may be constructed for shared use(s).*

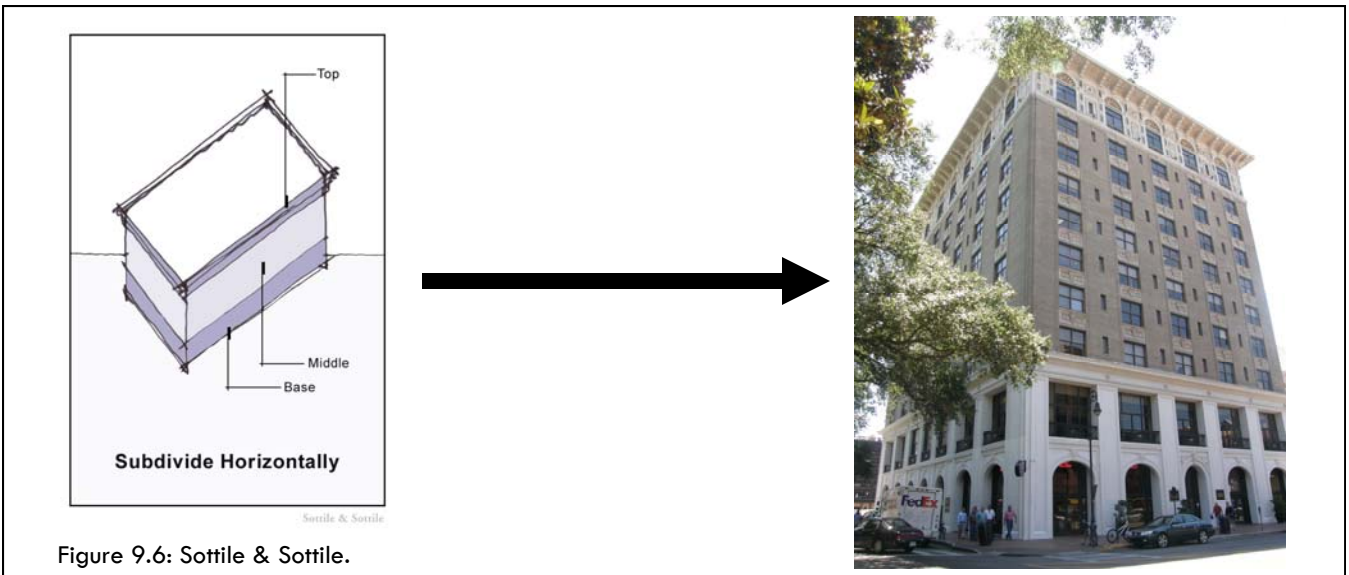


# LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

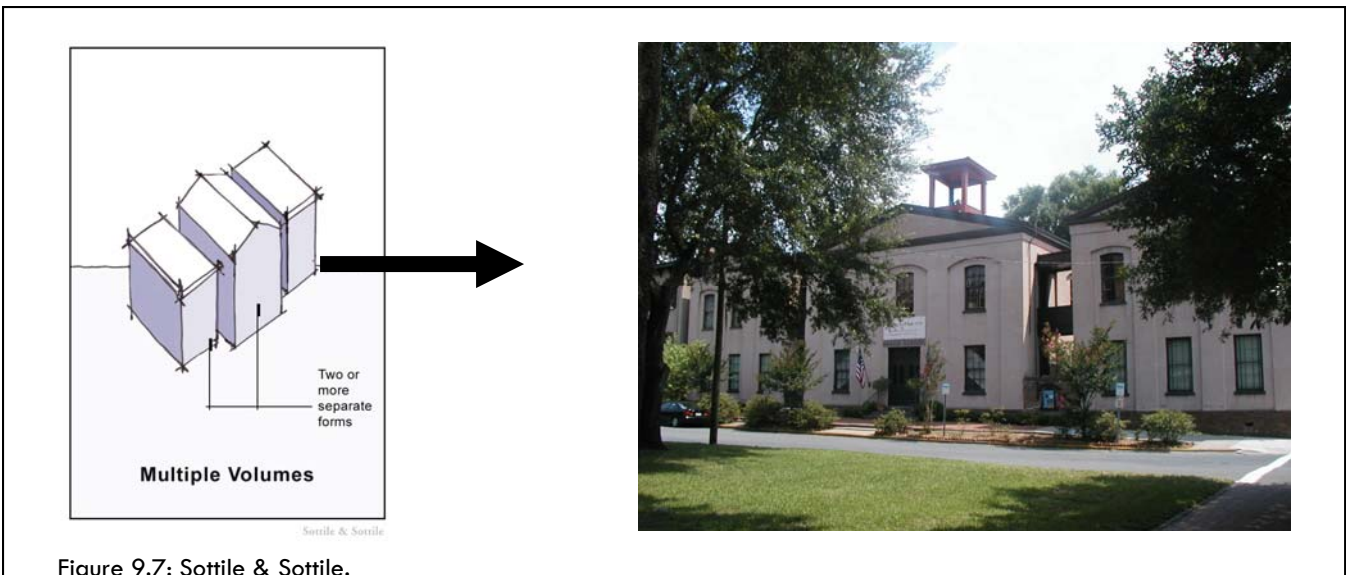
## (2) Massing

Large-scale development can be visually compatible within the historic district if its massing is designed to create a sense of variation within the building form. Refining the mass of a building prevents it from becoming too bulky and out of scale with the historic context. Historically, large-scale development in Savannah responded to its site by incorporating different massing techniques. These techniques have been analyzed and incorporated into the ordinance to achieve more compatible massing and scale. To comply with the ordinance, two of the following devices must be incorporated into any new large-scale development:

1. Subdivide the façade horizontally into a base, middle, and top using architectural features to create a sense of division (**Figure 9.6**).

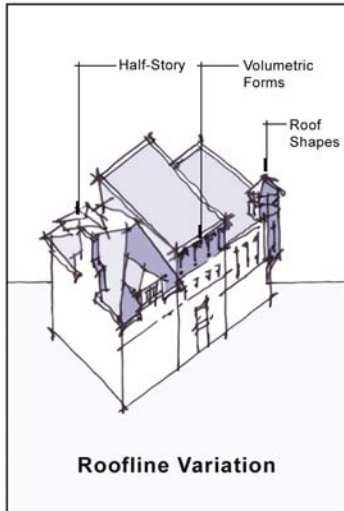


2. Using multiple detached volumes to break the building into separate structures, reducing the overall building footprint (**Figure 9.7**).



## LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

3. Variation in the roofline through change in volumetric forms, different shape of varying heights (**Figure 9.8**).



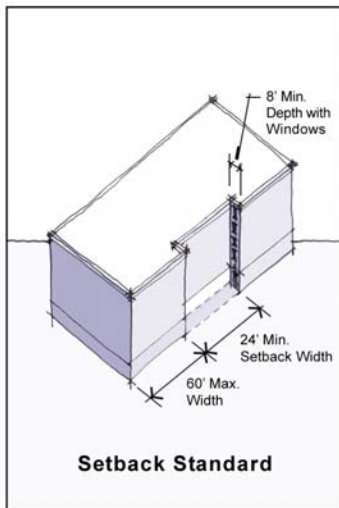
Sottile & Sottile



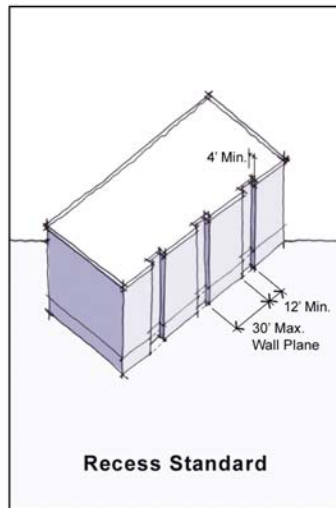
Figure 9.8: Sottile & Sottile.

4. Incorporation of setbacks within the façade (**Figure 9.9**).

5. Incorporation of recesses within the wall plane (**Figure 9.9**).



Sottile & Sottile



Sottile & Sottile



Figure 9.9: Sottile & Sottile.

Sottile & Sottile.



## LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

### (3) Height

There is not a long history of tall buildings in Savannah and not enough from any one period of history to establish a distinctive Savannah style. Savannah's stock of tall buildings maintain the horizontal articulation of base, intervening floors, and cornice and make some effort to celebrate the entrance (**Figure 9.10**). In addition, scale is adapted to the Savannah plan through division into multiple volumes distinctive bays and/or strong horizontal layering and asymmetrical massing.

With the exception of a very few tall buildings and a very few lower buildings, the Historic District is an area of two-to four-story buildings. The insertion of taller buildings into this broad, regularized, and internationally recognized framework is an act of great significance and one that should be both minimized and carefully considered. They should not "pop-up" here and there, whatever the social or economic rationale for their existence. Most of these uses can be accommodated in lower rise high-density schemes. Those uses that cannot, may locate in areas adjacent to or outside of the National Historic Landmark District or in specified locations. Additionally, high-rise apartment buildings are not a predominant building type in Savannah, although they do occur (**Figures 9.11 & 9.12**).



Figure 9.10: Historic Large Scale Development, 1895.



Figure 9.11: Drayton Arms Apartments, 1949-1951.



Figure 9.12: Chatham Apartments, 1951.



## LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

Large-scale development must consider the height of neighboring historic structures and be within the number of stories indicated on the Historic District Height Map (see, **Figure 8.7**). Additionally, they must follow the following provisions below to ensure visual compatibility within the Historic District:

### A. Residential Standards

In areas of the district that are more residential in nature, greater consistency in height is established by the existing historic structures. Preservation of this consistency in new development is vital to maintain the scale and integrity of these wards and the height provisions should be strictly adhered to. The height of large-scale development in residential zoning districts (districts with the letter “R” in the nomenclature) should be subordinate to the historic context and not exceed one-story above adjacent principal historic buildings. Roof line variations should occur every 60-feet to break the massing and reinforce the 60-foot lot premise. Within the more residential areas of the district, lanes are characterized by one-and two-story carriage houses and/or ancillary structures. To preserve this character defining element, the maximum height along the lane cannot exceed two stories within 20 feet of the lane and must occupy at least 50 percent of the lot width along the lane (**Figure 9.13**).

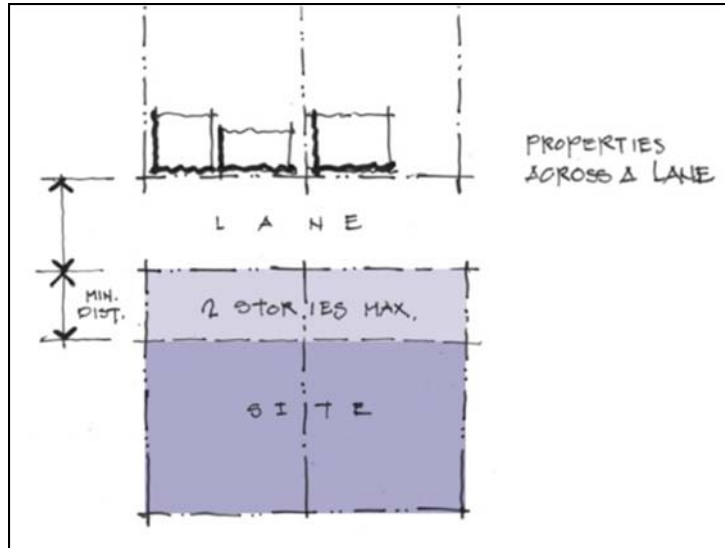


Figure 9.13: Maximum height on a lane. Sottile & Sottile.

To preserve this character defining element, the maximum height along the lane cannot exceed two stories within 20 feet of the lane and must occupy at least 50 percent of the lot width along the lane (**Figure 9.13**).

### B. Commercial Standards

In more commercial areas of the district a greater variation in height is established through historic development pattern. While the commercial areas of the district have greater variation in heights with two-story buildings next to eleven-story buildings (**Figure 9.14**), historically when buildings maintained long frontages along the street, variation was provided in the roofline through towers, cupolas, different shaped bays, variation in roofline, and dormers. As such, the height of a structure must adhere to the limits on the Historic District Height Map and roof line variation should occur ever 120 feet to break-up the massing and add architectural interest where the building meets the sky.



Figure 9.14: Variation in height.

## LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

### C. Additional Stories

In the downtown core because there are variations in height, it is possible to exceed the Historic District Height Map by one-story provided that the building provides an additional benefit to those who experience it (**Figure 9.15**). This also applies to sites along major boulevards, and Trust lots that front onto large open spaces and can absorb greater height and be compatible with the context. These provisions are provided below.

- i. An historic street or lane is restored and dedicated back to the City of Savannah as public right-of-way;
- ii. Affordable Housing, as defined and quantified by the City of Savannah, is provided within the development and so certified by the City Manager;
- iii. Multiple ground floor active uses (**Figure 9.16**); permitted in the base zoning district (including but not limited to retail, office, lobby, restaurant) span the length of the façade on all streets fronting elevations (not including lanes) and maintain individual primary exterior entrances.
- iv. Exterior building walls incorporate 100 percent modular masonry materials on all sides with the use of granite, marble, or other natural quarried stone over a minimum of 30 percent of all street fronting facades and roofs incorporate sustainable technologies such as green roofs, rooftop gardens, and solar roofs (including solar shingles, roof tiles, or membranes) over a minimum of 50 percent of roof area and so certified by the City Manager.



Figure 9.15: 102 W. Bay Street, new large-scale development with an additional story. Granted an additional story for restoring Factor's Walk.



Figure 9.16: 102 E. Liberty Street, multiple ground floor active uses on large-scale development. Sottile & Sottile.



## LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

### (4) Materials

The exterior materials of large-scale development can further break the massing and create a sense of human scale and belonging within the district. Historically, large-scale development used a variety of materials to create visual interest along the façade and provide human scale to large buildings (**Figure 9.16**). Noble materials such as limestone, granite, marble, and brick were often used to stand the test of time with details in the same material or with accents in sandstone, brownstone, metal (iron), or terracotta. Window groups, columns, and pilasters further accentuated the architectural character of a building (**Figure 9.17**). Ornamentation should be used to embellish the design of a building integral to the overall design (**Figure 9.18**), applied ornamentation and false decorative motifs should be avoided.

*Building walls on street fronting façades shall incorporate modular masonry materials in the form of brick, cast stone, stone, concrete formed or assembled as stone to achieve a human scale over a minimum of 75% of surface area (excluding windows, doors, and curtain walls). The remainder of wall surfaces may incorporate other materials.*

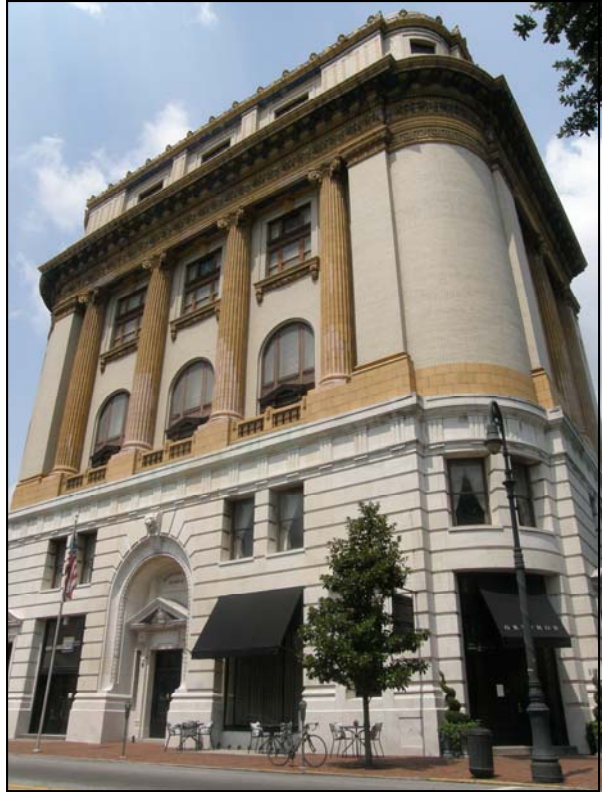


Figure 9.16: Scottish Rite Temple, 1912.



Figure 9.17: Window groups modular masonry along the base of 125 Bull



Figure 9.18: Architectural ornament on 15 Drayton Street, illus. in Figure 9.10.



## LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

### (5) Entrances

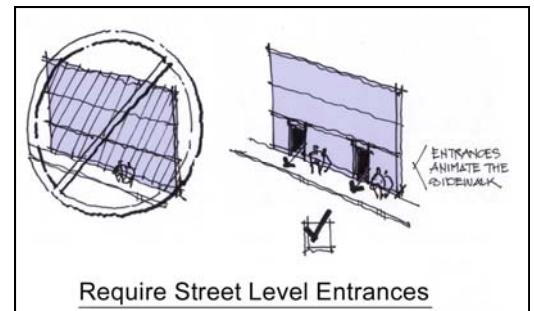
In Savannah, the most walkable and enjoyable blocks feature a number of primary entrances along the sidewalk (**Figure 9.19**). A primary entrance of a building is defined as having an individual street address, and they are important because primary entrances are a measure of a block's vitality, human scale, and pedestrian activity. In large-scale development, multiple primary entrances have the opportunity to engage the street and create a sense of human scale, typically found on blocks comprised of many smaller buildings (**Figure 9.20**). Large-scale development with few or no entrances on primary frontages diminishes the vitality and pedestrian activity of a block. By providing multiple individual addresses that engage the street in large-scale development, larger buildings can contribute to the activity on the sidewalk and can evolve to support different uses over time (**Figure 9.21**).



Figure 9.19: Gordon Row, 300 feet of continuous wall with 15 entrances on the second level and 15 entrance at the garden level. Sottile & Sottile.



Figure 9.20: Large-scale development with numerous primary entrances along the sidewalk.



Require Street Level Entrances

Figure 9.21: No street level entrances vs. street level entrances. Sottile & Sottile.

*A minimum of one primary entrance shall be provided for every 60 feet of street frontage, excluding lanes. Intervals between entrances shall not be less than 15 feet nor exceed 90 feet. On Trust Blocks, a minimum of one primary entrance shall be provided for every 100 feet of street frontage.*

*Buildings greater than four stories and less than 60 feet wide located on a corner titling lot abutting a north-south connecting street shall locate primary entrances on both the east-west and north-south streets unless a corner entrance is utilized. Buildings greater than 60 feet in width shall have an entrance located on the east-west street regardless of the location of any other entrances.*

## LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

### (6) Windows

The incorporation of windows on large-scale development communicates the building's interior activities with the street, enhancing pedestrian activity. A high-level of transparency at the street level should be incorporated into commercial and mixed-use buildings. Furthermore, the inset depth of a window contributes to the visual thickness of the wall and enhances the character of the building's materials (Figure 9.22).

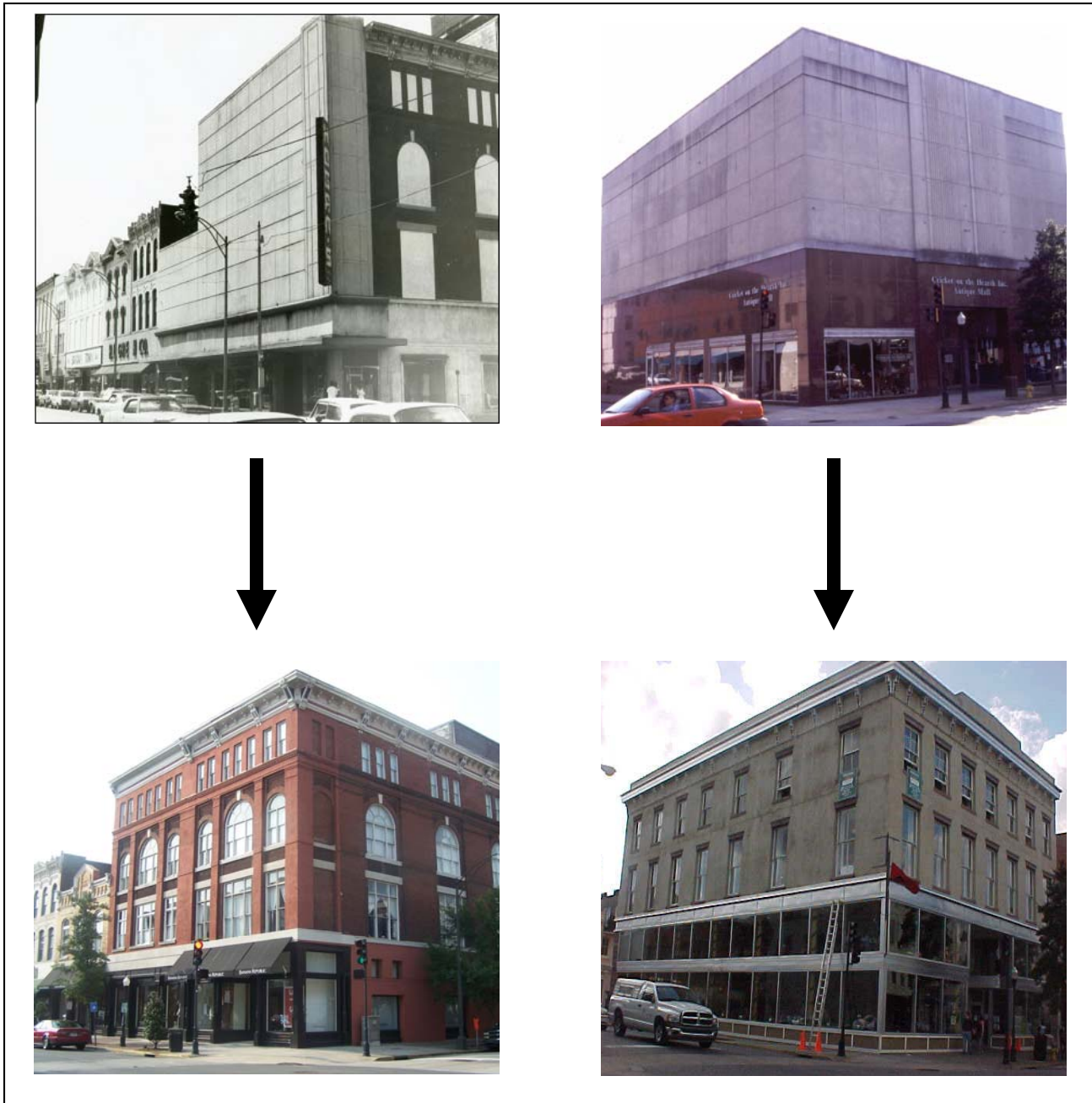


Figure 9.22 : Before and after photographs showing the importance and benefits of windows on large-scale development along Broughton Street.



## 10. MONUMENTAL BUILDINGS

### Section Ten: Monumental Buildings

Historically, monumental buildings have a special or unique form because of the nature of their use. Design standards may be too prescriptive and may not allow for the architectural nuances that give these landmark buildings their monumental quality. As such, these structures are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and should be visually compatible with the district. Examples include church sanctuaries and temples (**Figures 10.1 & 10.2**), governmental buildings schools or institutions of higher learning, theatres and museums (**Figure 10.3**).



Figure 10.1: B'nai Birth Synagogue, historic monumental construction.



Figure 10.2: St. John's the Baptist, historic monumental construction.



Figure 10.3: Jepson Center, Telfair Museums, new monumental construction.



# 11. CHARACTER AREAS

## Section Eleven: Character Areas

Within the Historic District there are several geographical areas that have unique and special qualities that contribute to the overall integrity of the Historic District. In addition to the Visual Compatibility Factors and Design Standards, special standards may apply to these areas to ensure preservation of the these unique pockets within the District.

### 1. Factors Walk & River Street

The boundaries of the Factors Walk Character Area and River Street are the Savannah River on the north, Bay Street on the south, West Boundary Street extended on the west and Randolph Street extended on the east.

Factors Walk and River Street (**Figure 11.1**) presents a building typology even more tightly defined (**Figures 11.3 & 11.4**) by precedent than does the Oglethorpe Plan area. There is no other interface between city and river like it in America, if not the world.

Nothing should threaten its integrity. Any demolition would be a significant loss. Likewise, the insertion of tall and or out-of-scale development in this area threatens its integrity both by singular action and by precedent for future actions.

Parcels between River Street and the Savannah River should not be developed so as to obscure the consistent and legible edge to the city made by buildings fronting the south side of the street. If structures are deemed necessary, such development should be consistent with historic precedents such as the eighteenth-century warehouses stood west of City Hall and for which historic photographs exist. No fences or walls other than those screening refuse and utilities should occur. A public walkway should exist along the river's edge.



Figure 11.1 River Street. Courtesy of Andrew J. Young



Figure 11.2: Factors walk.



Figure 11.3: Historic warehouses.



Figure 11.4: Historic ballast stone warehouse, ca. 1818.

## CHARACTER AREAS

### 2. Beach Institute

The Beach Institute Character Area is comprised of three wards bounded by Liberty, Gwinnett, East Broad and Price Streets. Originally, this land was a part of the privately owned garden lots of the Oglethorpe Plan. The hierarchical relationships of the lots around the squares, does not apply here. A series of small neighborhoods were developed by several owners and were named them Waynesville, Lewisville, Turnerville, Bryanville and the Mercer lands (now Bartow, Davis and Mercer Wards.) Long blocks of continuous east-west streets without the center open space of the squares were laid out. South of Jones Street, there are short one block north-south streets that further differ from the grid pattern of the Oglethorpe Plan.



Figure 11.4: One-story cottage.

The predominant residential street elevation type is the one-story cottage (**Figure 11.4**) over a crawl space (on piers) or a two-story house over a crawl space.



Figure 11.5: Cottages on the lane.

Building typology differs from the Historic District across Price Street in that instead of two-story carriage houses on lanes, the lane lots in the Beach Institute were often separate lots of record with one-story dwellings facing the lanes (**Figure 11.5**). The fact that some yards were cut off from the lanes led to the use of ground floor center passageways through paired buildings, an unusual feature found almost exclusively in the Beach Institute. Roofs are either gable running parallel to the street or have a low hip behind a cornice or parapet.

Historically, there was a strong African-American homeowner presence in this area. A large population of German immigrants were also represented.

These families often owned the corner groceries with living quarters above, which represents another building type that is more common in Beach Institute than in the other areas the Historic District.

An institutional presence is found along East Broad and Price Streets with brick as a building material along these north-south rights-of-way.



## CHARACTER AREAS

### 3. City Market

The boundaries of City Market are the parcels fronting St. Julian Street (**Figure 11.6**) from Montgomery Street on the west to Barnard Street on the east. Located on the former market site, the warehouses of City Market developed a unique character, a pedestrian walkway (**Figure 11.7**) housed between warehouses covered by long continuous awnings that provided shade for farmers and traders to shell their goods and wares (**Figure 11.8**). Today, City Market has become an entertainment and art epicenter for the City of Savannah.

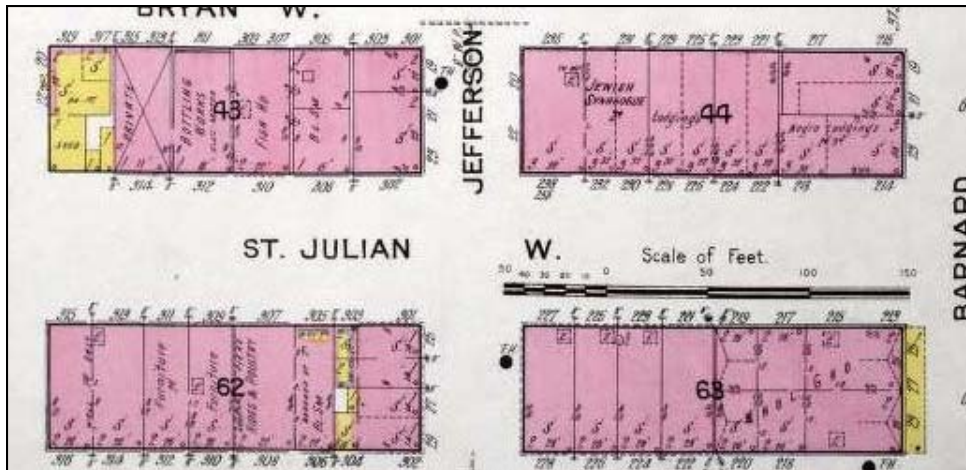


Figure 11.6: Parcels fronting onto St. Julian Street in City Market. 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Available at <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/sanborn/?Welcome>.



Figure 11.7: Pedestrian street in City Market.



Figure 11.8: An awning in City Market.



## CHARACTER AREAS

### 4. Forsyth Park

This district, bounding Forsyth Park (**Figure 11.8**) between Gaston and Gwinnett Streets, is comprised neither of Tithing nor Trust lots. It is an area of Victorian-era structures (**Figure 11.9**) developed from former garden lots in the late nineteenth-century. It is characterized by front garden setbacks (**Figure 11.10**), copings, and a richness of decorative detail atypical of town lots north of Gaston.

Barnard, Abercorn, and Habersham Street should be considered north-south connecting streets which preclude curb cuts, garages and surface parking lots greater than 60-feet in width. However, parcels without access to lanes or side streets may have curb cuts not to exceed 12-feet in width. Garages and parking spaces should occur, nevertheless, in the rear 25-five feet of the lot. Whitaker (**Figure 11.11**), Drayton and Gaston Streets, where they bound Forsyth Park, should preclude parking lots and parking structures altogether except between Gaston, Huntingdon, Drayton and Abercorn Streets, where existing lots could be converted to structured parking.



Figure 11.8: Forsyth Park



Figure 11.9: Victorian mansion facing Forsyth Park.



Figure 11.10: Front yard set back.



Figure 11.11: Detached dwellings on Whitaker St.

## 12. Signs

### Section Twelve: Signs

Signs are an important element in identifying a business; they direct, promote, and advertise the social activity of a building. Signage is often personal and a reflection of a business or trademark (**Figure 12.1**). Signage is transitory in nature and throughout history a variety of signage types and styles have been popular. The quality of the visual environment in Historic District should not be eroded by inappropriate franchise designs and signage. It has been demonstrated in historic and design conscious communities around the world that franchises can maintain their identity while working in a distinct context.

Three types of signs are generally found in Savannah:

1. Projecting Signs (**Figure 12.2**);
2. Fascia Signs (**Figure 12.3**);
3. Awning Signs, including under awning signs (**Figure 12.4**).



Figure 12.2: Projecting sign.



Figure 12.3: Fascia sign.



Figure 12.1: The distinctive signage of the Savannah Bee Company.



Figure 12.4: Awning and under awning signs.



## 13. Demolition & Relocation

### Section Thirteen: Demolition & Relocation

#### (1) Demolition

Demolition of historic structures is detrimental to the public interest and every alternative should be pursued prior to demolition (**Figure 13.1**). All requests for demolition within the Historic District must be submitted to the Board for review. The application for a Certificate of Appropriateness provides a checklist for all of the supplemental information required for the Board to make a decision regarding demolition. The Board cannot issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of a structure rated as historic until a Certificate of Appropriateness has been issued approving the replacement structure, except in the case of emergency demolition. A vacant lot is not preferable to a historic structure.



Figure 13.1: Demolition by neglect in the Historic District.

#### (2) Relocation in the Historic District

Relocation of historic structures should be considered a remedy of last resort. Relocation alters the historic context to which the building was originally sited and can destroy the historic integrity of a contributing property's location, setting, feeling, and historical association(s). However, there may be instances when relocation becomes preferred to demolition (**Figure 13.2**).



Figure 13.2: Relocation within the Historic District.

# Appendices

## I. Frequently Asked Question

### ***What is a Certificate of Appropriateness?***

A **Certificate of Appropriateness** (COA) is a permit that states that the proposed work meets the Criteria and Standards in the Historic District Section (8-3030) of the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance and is appropriate for the building and the Historic District. A COA is required for all requests for demolition, relocation, material change (including additions and alterations), new construction, awnings, signs, walls, fences or sidewalks within the historic district boundaries. The COA is required before construction can begin, even in cases where a building permit is not required.

### ***What can I do to the inside of my house?***

The Board does not regulate changes to the interior of a house or structure, **unless** the interior changes affect the exterior appearance. If the work you are doing on the interior will affect the exterior of the resource, such as closing up or removing a window or moving a doorway, you will have to apply for a COA and explain why the changes are being made to the exterior.

### ***Does the Board review what I do to the back of my house?***

The Board is required to review **all** exterior changes visible from public rights-of-way, including streets and lanes. The **entire** house, garage, any other structures on the property, contribute to the historic character of the District.

### ***How does the Board decide whether to approve my project?***

The Board is required to apply the Visual Compatibility Criteria and Design Standards from the Historic District Section (8-3030) of the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance. When reviewing projects that directly impact a historic structure, the Board is required to apply "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation" to determine if the proposed project is appropriate in the Historic District.

The Historic District Ordinance can be accessed from our website at:

<http://www.thempc.org>

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards can be found at:

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/index.htm>

### ***Are site or landscape features reviewed by the Board?***

Yes, by Ordinance, a Certificate of Appropriateness is required for fences, drive and walk ways. The Board does not review plants, gardens, or landscaping.

### ***Is my property designated as historic?***

All buildings within the Historic District boundaries as defined in the previous section are subject to review by the Historic District Board of Review; however, not all properties contribute to the historic integrity or period of significance of the District. There are over 1,300 contributing buildings in the Savannah Historic District. The Historic Building Map and list of those buildings can be accessed from the MPC website at [www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org) and is also available at our office (110 East State Street, Savannah, Georgia 31401).

### ***How old does my property have to be to be considered historic?***

Age is just one consideration when determining if a property is historic. Criteria are provided in the Historic District Section (8-3030) of the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance are used for evaluating properties in the Historic District. These criteria are based upon the National Park Service criteria for designating properties to the National Register of Historic Places. The ordinance requires that a historic resource be 50 years old or older. However, properties that have not reached fifty years of age may be eligible for designation if they are of exceptional importance as defined by the National Park Service. A historic resource should also retain historic integrity, which is conveyed through materials, design, workmanship, location, setting, feeling, and historical association(s).



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## II. Glossary of Terms

**Abutting Building.** A building on a parcel which shares a parcel line with the subject parcel, or is located on the same parcel.

**Accessory Building.** A detached building or structure which may include, but is not limited to, a garage, storage building, carriage house.

**Active Use.** For the purposes of this subsection, an active use is considered to be an allowed use under the zoning ordinance for a property that is open to and provides an activity or service for the public (i.e. restaurant, retail, office, gallery, lobby, etc...).

**Adjacency.** Abutting parcels, buildings, or buildings within the same parcel.

**Adverse Effect.** An effect on a historic property that diminishes the historic integrity of the property's location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, or association.

**Appurtenance.** Accessory object including, but not limited to, fences, light fixtures, signs, brackets, downspouts, and trellises.

**Apron.** A ramp providing access to a parking pad or building.

**Awning.** A lightweight, exterior roof-like shade that typically projects over a window or door, usually made of canvas or similar fabric on a metal frame, also may be wood, plastic or metal.

**Baluster.** One of several small columns or rods that supports a railing or balustrade.

**Base Zoning District Development Standards.** The development standards associated with the base zoning district which includes lot coverage percentage and setbacks (front, rear and side).

**Beach Institute Character Area.** A unique area within the Savannah National Historic Landmark district distinguished by its plan, architecture and historic ethnic diversity containing the greatest concentration of remaining one-story cottages. Originally part of privately owned garden lots, the area developed as a series of small neighborhood villages in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The area is used for recreational purposes including, but not limited to viewing or enjoying historic, archaeological, and scenic sites.

**Block.** A block is a rectangular space bounded on three sides by a street and on the forth by a street or lane and occupied by or intended for buildings.

**Block front.** A block front is the street fronting a block, excluding the lane frontage.

**Building Form.** The physical shape of a building resulting from its mass, height, and envelope.

**Carrera Glass.** A trade name for thick, solid-color structural glass cast in panels and used as a wall veneer. Vitrolite® is a name brand for this product.

**Central of Georgia National Historic Landmark District.** A 33.2 acre historic industrial site originally operated by the Central of Georgia Railroad, consisting of the motive power, cotton yard and industrial warehouses, passenger facilities and two brick viaducts. The district is bounded by Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard on the east, Jones Street on the south, West Boundary Street on the west, and Turner Street on the north. The area is used for recreational purposes including, but not limited to viewing or enjoying historic, archaeological, and scenic sites.

**Character Area.** Predefined areas with special character-defining features.

**Character-Defining Feature.** An element or elements of a building which convey its historical or architectural significance. These may include, but are not limited to, windows, window casings, doors, porch columns, handrails, scroll brackets, corner boards, rooflines, cornices, eaves, brackets, setbacks, height, form, and similar features.

**City Market Character Area.** A unique area within the Savannah National Historic Landmark District distinguished by commercial buildings associated with historical market functions. The area is used for recreational purposes including but not

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**Commercial building.** A building whose primary function is for business or retail use.

**Compatibility.** The positive relationship of alterations to existing buildings and designs for new construction to their environs; compatibility is measured by consistent application of accepted guidelines and standards defining the individual visual character of a specific area.

**Deck.** A structure without a roof directly attached to a principal building, which has an average elevation of 30 inches or greater from finished grade.

**Demolition by Neglect.** The consistent failure to maintain a structure that causes, or is a substantial contributing factor of, the deterioration of building materials to such an extent that the structure is no longer safe or renovation/restoration is no longer feasible, that ultimately leads to the need for physical demolition.

**Directional Character.** Structural shape, placement of openings, and architectural details that give a predominantly vertical, horizontal, or a non-directional character to the building's front façade. For example, a skyscraper would have a vertical character and a one-story ranch house would have a horizontal character.

**EIFS.** Exterior Insulation Finishing System.

**Economic Hardship.** The denial of all reasonable use or return on a piece of property by the application of regulation.

**Elevation.** An exterior façade of a building.

**Entrance.** See *Primary Entrances*.

**Exceptional Importance.** Structures of extraordinary importance because of an event or an entire category of resources so fragile that survivors of any age are unusual. The property is not required to be of national significance; the measure of a property's importance is within the historic context, whether the scale of that context is local, state, or national (National Park Service, National Register Bulletin).

**Executive Director.** The Executive Director of the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission.

**Exterior Expression.** Exterior building design features that visually define the number of stories.

**Façade.** Any exterior face of a building.

**Factors Walk Character Area.** A unique historic area within the Savannah National Historic Landmark District distinguished by its access to the Savannah River, parks and green space, proximity to commercial and shipping industry structures, historical structures, cobblestone rights-of-way, and pedestrian bridges. The area is used for recreational purposes including, but not limited to, fishing, boating, picnicking, nature study, and viewing or enjoying historic, archaeological, and scenic sites.

**Fronting.** Facing.

**Glazing.** The clear or translucent material through which light passes into a building; most often glass.

**Green Roof.** Also known as a roof garden. Vegetated roof surfaces that capture rainwater and return a portion of it back to the atmosphere via evaporation (U.S. Green Building Council).

**Height of building.** The vertical distance measured from the mean finished ground level adjoining the building to the highest point of the roof.

**Historic building.** Structures which possess identified historical or architectural merit of a degree warranting their preservation. A building which is classified as historic is identified on the City of Savannah's Historic Building Map, defined below.

**Historic Building Map.** A catalog of Historic Buildings in map form; a copy is attached to this ordinance and bearing the designation "Historic Building Map" with the signature and seal of the Clerk of Council, adopted and approved by the Mayor and Aldermen and made a part of the zoning map of the City of Savannah as an "overlay" thereon.



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**Historic District Height Map.** A map of the Historic District showing the maximum number permissible stories up to which buildings may be constructed in defined areas; a copy is attached to this ordinance and bearing the designation "Historic District Height Map" with the signature and seal of the Clerk of Council, adopted and approved by the Mayor and Aldermen and made a part of the zoning map of the City of Savannah as an "overlay" thereon.

**High Stoop.** An elevated entrance landing, typically nine feet (9') tall, accessed by stairs.

**Historic Fabric.** Original building materials of a historic building.

**Historic Setback.** The average setback of a group of historic buildings along a block front.

**Individual Buildings.** A building that meets the requirements for a stand-alone building by the building code. May be denoted by a fire wall, setback, and/or property line.

**In-kind Repairs.** Minor repairs that do not involve a change in material, placement, or design.

**Lane.** The service corridor subdividing a tithing block in Oglethorpe's original ward plan. See *Street Types*.

**Large scale development.** Development whose combined ground floor footprint is equal to or greater than 9,000 square feet within a single parcel and/or is greater than four-stories in 'R' zoning districts or is five-stories or greater in all other zoning districts. In the case of an addition to an existing building, the combined footprint and height of both the existing building and the addition located on the same parcel apply.

**Material Change.** A change that will affect the exterior architectural or environmental features of a building and may include any one or more of the following: A reconstruction or alteration of a size, shape or façade of a building including any of its architectural elements or details; Demolition of a building or portion of a building; Commencement of excavation for construction purposes; The introduction or change of signage on any building; The erection, alteration, restoration, or removal of any building or structure including walls, fences, steps, pavement or appurtenances.

**Mechanical or Access Structure.** An enclosed, non-habitable structure above the roof of a building, other than a tank, tower, spire, dome cupola or bulkhead, occupying not more than one-third of the roof area. Mechanical or access structures used solely to enclose stairways or elevator machinery, ventilation or air conditioning apparatus shall not count as a story.

**Meeting rail.** The horizontal portion of a double hung window where the upper and lower sash meet.

**Mezzanine.** An intermediate level between the floor and ceiling of a story. Its aggregate floor area is not more than one-third of the area of the room or space in which it is located.

**Monumental Building.** An institutional building such as a church, sanctuary, governmental building, school or institution of higher learning with the primary use as education, theater or museum, having special or unique form because of the nature of its use.

**Mullion.** The bar or divider that separates individual window frames within a series of paired (two) or grouped (three or more) window openings.

**Muntin.** The molding or bar that separates the individual panes of a multi-paned window sash.

**Non-historic.** A building or structure that does not add to the historic associations, historic architectural qualities, or archaeological values for which a property or area is significant because: it was not present during the period of significance, or does not relate to the documented significance of the property or area; due to alterations, disturbances, additions, or other changes, it no longer possesses historic integrity or is no longer capable of yielding important information about the period of significance; or it does not independently meet the National Register criteria for a contributing building.

**Oglethorpe Plan Area.** The original ward pattern of streets and lanes between Bay Street to the north, Gaston Street to the south, Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard to the west, and East Broad Street to the east.

**Oglethorpe Plan Ward.** A component of Oglethorpe's Plan for Savannah consisting of four tithing blocks (each containing ten tithing lots) and four trust blocks around a central square, with blocks divided by a series of streets and lanes. See *Street Types* for illustration.

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**Oriel.** A projection from the main wall of a building in the form of a bay window that starts above the ground level; may be supported by corbels, brackets, or an engaged column.

**Penthouse.** See *Mechanical or Access Structure* and/or *Story*.

**Portico.** A columned porch or stoop, especially at the main entrance to a building.

**Primary Entrance.** An entrance to a use that has or could have an individual street address. Service doors and emergency exits are not primary entrances.

**Pergola.** An arbor with a latticework roof.

**Raised basement.** The lowest story of a building raised an entire story above ground level.

**Retail structure.** A building housing a use engaged in retail trade and/or services.

**Roofline.** The exterior form created where the building meets the sky, generally at the roof.

**Roofline Variation.** A significant change in the upper outline of buildings indicated by dormers, towers, bays, or roof shape. A change in the parapet height alone does not constitute a roofline variation.

**Rooftop Garden.** See *Green Roof*.

**Savannah National Historic Landmark District (NHLD).** The Savannah NHLD includes General Oglethorpe's plan of wards, squares and garden lots. The boundaries are the Savannah River to the north, Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to the west, Gwinnett Street to the south, and East Broad Street on the east, including the area in the northeast quadrant known as Trustees Garden.

**Scale.** The relationship of the size of units of construction and architectural detail to the size of a human, and the relationship of building mass to adjacent buildings and open spaces. Scale refers both to the overall building form and individual components of the building.

**Secondary Façades.** Façades that do not front the primary street.

**Service Street.** The north-south street bounding the east and west edges of a ward, usually a one-way street. See *Street Types*.

**Shutter.** A hinged panel that covers a window or door opening in addition to the standard window or door; may be solid panels, louvers, or cutouts or slats for ventilation; located on the exterior or interior; and sized to fit the opening when closed.

**Sill.** The horizontal section that forms the base of a storefront. Also the projecting horizontal base of a window or door.

**Square.** Common public open space in the center of a ward, typically one acre in size.

**Steeple.** A tall structure usually having a small spire at the top and surmounting a church tower.

**Storefront.** The ground floor area of a retail building featuring large glass windows.

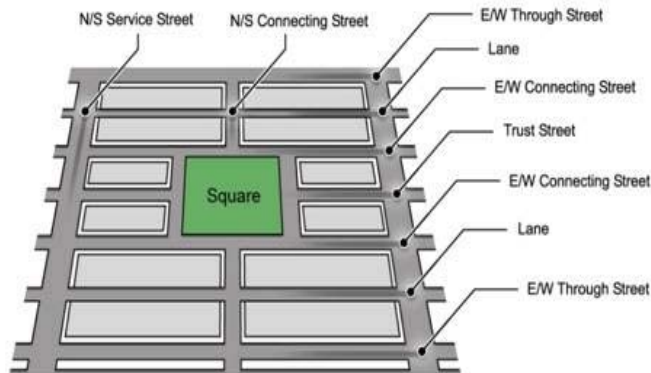
**Story.** That portion of a building, other than the basement, included between the surface of any floor and the surface of the next floor above it, or if there is no floor above it, then the space between the floor and the ceiling above the floor of such story.

A basement that is entirely underground; a crawl space or partial basement that is four feet or less above grade; and non-habitable rooftop structures such as church spires, cupolas, chimneys, tanks and supports, mechanical or access structures shall not count as a story



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**Street Types.** See illustration below.



**Stucco.** A type of exterior plaster; see *True Stucco*.

**Through Street.** See *Street Types*.

**Tithing block.** A component of Oglethorpe's Plan for Savannah. Tithing blocks are located on the north and south sides of a square and usually consist of two rows of five 60- by 90-foot lots, subdivided by a lane.

**Trellis.** Any screening device that has a foundation or is mounted to a wall, fence, building or structure.

**True Stucco.** Exterior plaster applied as a two- or three-part coating directly onto masonry. Historic stucco consisted primarily of hydrated or slaked lime, water and sand with straw or animal hair as a binder.

**Trust block.** A component of Oglethorpe's Plan for Savannah. Trust blocks are located on the east and west sides of a square. There are four trust blocks in each ward.

**Trust street.** A component of Oglethorpe's Plan for Savannah. Trust streets are the streets that separate the trust blocks. See *Street Types*.

**Visually Compatible.** See *Compatibility*.

**Visually Related.** The relationship between buildings, structures, squares and places within view of the subject property. Greater weight is placed upon adjacent historic buildings and structures.

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## III. Additional Resources

### National Organizations

National Trust for Historic Preservation  
1785 Massachusetts Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Tel. 800.944.6487  
<http://www.nationaltrust.org>

National Park Service  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C 20240  
Tel. 202.208.6843  
<http://www.nps.gov>

### Local Organizations

The Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission  
110 East State Street  
Savannah, GA 31401  
Tel. 912.651.1453 & 912.651.1456  
<http://www.thempc.org/>

Historic Savannah Foundation  
321 East York Street  
Savannah, GA 31401  
Tel. 912.233.7787  
<http://www.myhsf.org/>

Georgia Historical Society  
501 Whitaker Street  
Savannah, GA 31401  
Tel. 912.651.2125  
<http://www.georgiahistory.com/>

### Useful Websites

Historic Preservation Division of the GA Department of Natural Resources  
<http://gashpo.org/>

Savannah Development & Renewal Authority  
[www.sdra.net](http://www.sdra.net)

Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation  
[The Georgia Trust - The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation](http://www.georgiastatetrust.org/)

Savannah Area Geographic Information System  
[www.sagis.org](http://www.sagis.org)

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps  
<http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/sanborn/?Welcome>

City of Savannah  
<http://www.savannahga.gov/>