



S A V A N N A H - C H A T H A M C O U N T Y
HISTORIC SITE & MONUMENT COMMISSION

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room
February 2, 2017 4:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

FEBRUARY 2, 2017 HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

HDRB Members Present: Eli Karatassos, Chair
Thomas Gensheimer, Vice-Chair
Dolores Engle
Dr. Nicholas Henry
Ryan Madson
Kristopher Monroe

MPC Staff Present: Ellen Harris, Director of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation
Sara Farr, Historic Preservation Planner
Mary E. Mitchell, Administrative Assistant

I. Call to Order and Welcome

1. [Order and Welcome](#)

Mr. Karatassos called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. He outlined the role of the Historic Site and Monument Commission.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

2. [Approval of January 5, 2017 Meeting Minutes](#)

Attachment: [January 5, 2017 Minutes.pdf](#)

Board Action:

Approval of January 5, 2017 Meeting Minutes. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Thomas Gensheimer

Second: Dolores Engle

Dolores Engle	- Aye
Thomas Gensheimer	- Aye
Dr. Nicholas Henry	- Aye
Eli Karatassos	- Aye
Ryan Madson	- Not Present
Kristopher Monroe	- Aye

III. Regular Agenda

3. Petition of Georgia Historical Society | 17-000072-HM | 322-324 East Broughton Street | Historical Marker

Attachment: [Staff Recommendation.pdf](#)

Attachment: [AERIAL MAP.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Submittal Package.pdf](#)

Ms. Elyse Butler and **Mr. David Kelly** were present on behalf of the petition.

Ms. Sara Farr gave the staff report. The applicant is requesting approval to install a historical marker to recognize the history of the Berrien family and house at 322-324 East Broughton Street. The marker is proposed to be mounted on the façade of the building. Two possible locations are proposed: one facing Broughton Street and one facing Habersham Street. The marker will be located on the building façade for both options.

Ms. Farr stated that as required in the Master Plan and Guidelines, written notice was sent to all property owners, and the neighborhood association, within 200 feet of the subject property. A sign was posted on the property fifteen days prior to the meeting. No comments were received from the public. The marker will be installed by Historic Preservation Consulting using masonry-appropriate fasteners. The text for a marker, monument or work of art is considered part of the overall design concept. Placement of the text, font type and size, etc. should be included with the final design drawings. The marker will read as follows:

The Berrien House, ca. 1791

Major John Berrien (1759-1815) was a Revolutionary War officer who served at Valley Forge and fought at the Battle of Monmouth. Berrien, a New Jersey native who moved to Georgia in 1775, was an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Georgia. President George Washington appointed Berrien as Inspector of Revenue of the Port of Savannah in 1792. Berrien, who lived at this site, also served as alderman and state treasurer. His son, John Macpherson Berrien, "America's Cicero," lived here from 1822 until his death in 1856, having served as a US senator, Attorney General under Andrew Jackson, and first president of the Georgia Historical Society. Political ally Henry Clay stayed here during his 1844 presidential campaign. Andrew Berrien Jones, a descendent, began the restoration of the house in 2012.

Erected by the Georgia Historical Society and National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century, Adam Brinson I, Georgia

Ms. Farr reported that staff recommends to approve the proposed marker at 322-324 East Broughton Street with the condition that the text sizes are specified, because otherwise the marker meets the standards in the Markers, Monuments, and Public Art Master Plan and Guidelines for the City of Savannah. The staff additionally recommends the Broughton Street location, because this is the primary façade of the building.

PETITIONERS COMMENTS

Ms. Butler said the finish on the marker will be a standard finish by the foundry. It will be the standard black with silver letterings.

Ms. Engle asked if this will be clear finish.

Ms. Butler answered that the finish is not clear, but is washable.

Mr. Karatassos asked Ms. Butler what was her preference area to place the marker.

Ms. Butler answered Broughton Street as she believes it would be better visually seen at this location. They are in agreement with the staff's recommendation to place the marker on Broughton Street.

Mr. David Kelly said he has been working on this project for almost ten years. They are now finishing the inside. They have had all kinds of discoveries with the wallpaper. It will be approximately another two years before the project is finished. The owners are excited about going forward. About a year ago, Historic Savannah Foundation was looking for a Savannah wallpaper to put in the foyer of the Davenport House. They were aware that the Berrien House had a bunch of historic wallpapers. Therefore, they came to them looking for a sample. One of the wallpapers they had was an 1820 sample. They found another paper that was dated as far back as 1800. This paper is being reprinted.

Mr. Kelly said they are excited about this project. They are going in a new direction and are excited about the marker. They are happy to get everybody involved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Daniel Carey of the Historic Savannah Foundation (HSF) said they are supportive of the restoration of the Berrien House, They have been involved in this project for almost two decades. They hold an easement on the property. They have a legal right and responsibility to review any exterior modifications to the building. The Georgia Historical Society, David Kelly, the owners, and the Historic Savannah Foundation are working closely together. Mr. Carey said the HSF has some concerns about the marker, the placement, etc.

Mr. Carey said when the HSF learned about the proposed marker, their first question was why this is not a traditional free-standing marker that would be placed in the tree lawn, in the right-of-way. They believe the marker should be two-sided and would be more visible as you would see it coming and going. Why are they attaching the marker to the building? He is aware that there is a reason the way the marker is placed at the Jen Library in the Azalea Room. He is pleased about this marker as it was a compromise to be placed there.

Mr. Carey said, however, with the marker being discussed today, why not put it in the tree lawn along Habersham Street. This is the primary travel route for the trolleys. You can read the marker from the trolley and a lot of pedestrian traffic is along here on Habersham Street. There is not a lot of east west traffic pedestrian travel along Broughton Street. Therefore, HSF does not believe that the suggested placement along Broughton Street is an ideal placement.

Mr. Carey said the text is a little troubling; he has talked with Mr. Kelly and Mr. Jones about the text. He said the line that reads "Andrew Berrien Jones, a descendent, began the restoration of the house in 2012." He explained that this is unfinished work that has not been completed. It is immaterial when it begun. What is important is when it is finished. Therefore, it seems premature that they are putting up a marker. The HSF advocates putting the maker up when the building is restored. The exterior has been restored, but the building is just a shell. The HSF would be thrilled to be a part of this and, perhaps, underwrite the expense of the marker after the building is finished. This seems to be the appropriate time to install the marker.

Mr. Karatassos explained that in the Jen Library issue, the Commission discussed greatly about where to erect this marker. The City did not want it placed along Broughton Street. The side street issue came up. Several meetings were held discussing the area to place this marker, it was a compromising matter. Mr. Karatassos said he prefers to see a two-sided marker in the tree lawn where both sides would be seen. Therefore, he agrees with the HSF.

Mr. Carey said when the markers become old enough, they become historic and, therefore, are a part of the landscape. The markers really draw peoples' attention in a positive way. They will pause and read the markers. He said in his email to Mr. Jones, he asked him if he would be open to the idea of a two-sided marker. The HSF does not give awards to projects that are half finished, but things that are completely finished.

Ms. Butler stated that street signs are here and a lot of different things are happening here. They prefer a free standing pole.

Mr. Karatassos asked the petitioner what was their thoughts on placing the marker at the completion of the project.

Ms. Butler said the historical marker was applied for. They put the markers up in six months to one year. This marker is not being considered an award, but a historical telling of the building site. They appreciate all the work that is being done on the Berrien house, but this is about the Berrien family. Therefore, they prefer to get the maker erected. They can change the last sentence. Mr. Jones just wanted to let the people know that the history in this house will continue.

Mr. Monroe asked if there is a reason that this project cannot be delayed.

Ms. Butler answered yes. It needs to be finished in a year. They are open to suggestions and they can change the last sentence. In order to maintain the rest of the state's markers, they have to adhere to the timeline. A certain amount of markers are approved each year. This marker was in the last cycle which was scheduled to be finished this year.

Mr. Gensheimer asked staff if there is a precedence for placing markers on the building as opposed to it being placed in a tree lawn.

Ms. Harris explained that the Historic Site and Monument Commission approved a marker last year on the Jen Library. This is the only one. Broughton Street is a complicated street. In the past they have discouraged free standing marker poles on Broughton Street because of how busy it is with pedestrians and automobiles. Therefore, they came up with the concept of putting the marker on the building. Ms. Harris said in this regard, she believes it has been successful.

Mr. Madson said pertaining to the marker in the Jen Library in the Azalea Room, the HSMC asked that the marker be double-sided. Therefore, where the marker is placed now may not be the permanent location.

Dr. Henry agreed with the HSF. The marker should be free standing.

Mr. Carey said the HSF wants to be a part of the solution. He said if they were going to be a part of the solution to delay the marker, they certainly want to be a part of the solution to pay for the marker. They, too, want Mr. Jones to be recognized. But, the tricky part for the HSF is the 2012 date. The reference could be stated as "began the restoration in 2012 and it continues [for at least two more years]".

Mr. Karatassos said the HSMC would like to see a payment plan that is inclusive of funds from the Historic Savannah Foundation.

Board Action:

The Savannah Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby approve the marker to be placed in the tree lawn on Habersham Street, free standing doubled-sided with the conditions that the text be the appropriate size as recommended by staff and the 2012 language be changed. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Dolores Engle
Second: Dr. Nicholas Henry
Dolores Engle - Aye
Thomas Gensheimer - Aye
Dr. Nicholas Henry - Aye
Eli Karatassos - Aye
Ryan Madson - Aye

Kristopher Monroe

- Aye

IV. Other Business

4. [Commissioner Items](#)

5. [Next Meeting - Thursday, March 2, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. in the Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room, MPC, 112 E. State Street](#)

V. Adjournment

6. [Adjourned](#)

There being no further business to come before the Historic Site and Monument Commission, Mr. Karatassos adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris, Director
Urban Planning and Historic Preservation

EIH:mem

The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting summary minutes which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.