

Final Report

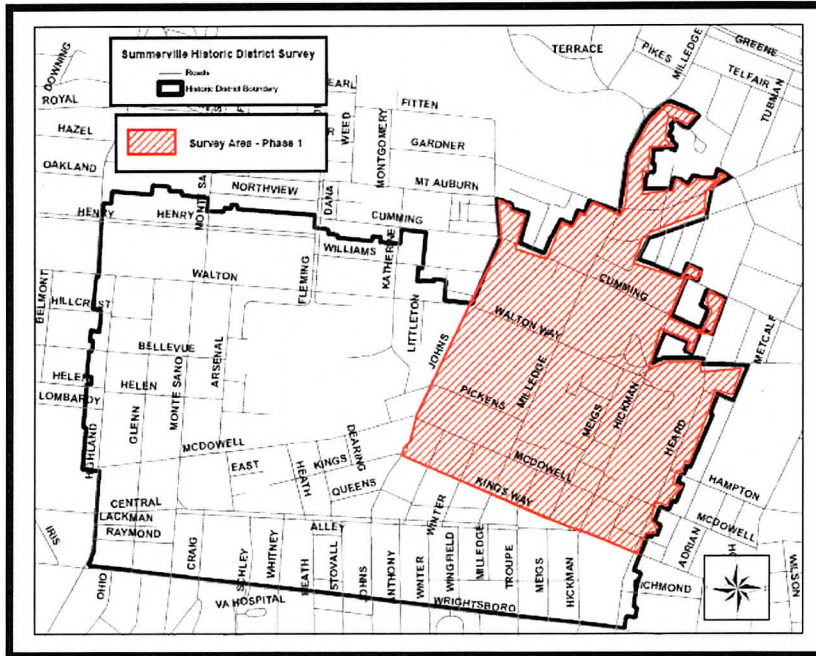
Historic Resources Survey: Summerville Historic District, Phase 1

Historic Augusta, Inc., Augusta, Georgia

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Project Description



The Summerville Historic Resources Survey, Phase 1, is funded through a Historic Preservation Fund grant. These grants are provided annually through the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service and administered by the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The project was sponsored by the Augusta-Richmond County Planning and Zoning Department, and the survey was conducted by Historic Augusta, Inc., in Augusta, Georgia. Robyn Anderson, Preservation Services Director,

was the primary surveyor and was assisted by volunteers Elizabeth McGee, Clayton Anderson, and Kelley Stroup.

A total of 424 resources were documented in Phase 1 of the Summerville Historic Resource Survey. This is the first of a three phased survey of the neighborhood. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980, the Summerville Historic District contains approximately 1,500 properties. Phase 1 boundaries are Kings Way on the south, Heard Avenue on the east, Johns Road on the west, and a jagged boundary on the north which includes portions of Cumming Road, Gardner Street, and Milledge Road.

This historic resources survey has been financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior or the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products or consultants constitute endorsement or recommendation by these agencies. This program received Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U. S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender or disability in its federally-assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office for Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20240.

Objective of Historic Resources Survey

The completion of the Historic Resources Survey is an essential tool for documenting historic resources within the boundaries of the neighborhood. A comprehensive inventory of existing buildings has not been completed prior to the survey. The inventory will be significant for future planning within the neighborhood, particularly with the merging of Augusta State University with Georgia Health Sciences University and the use of the Summerville Campus in the heart of the neighborhood. This survey will also be useful for local historic district management and creation of an updated set of neighborhood design guidelines. After the completion of the survey, information collected will assist the neighborhood association and Augusta-Richmond County to re-examine the district boundaries for possible expansion of the local district and amendment of the National Register district since buildings built after 1930 have acquired significance.

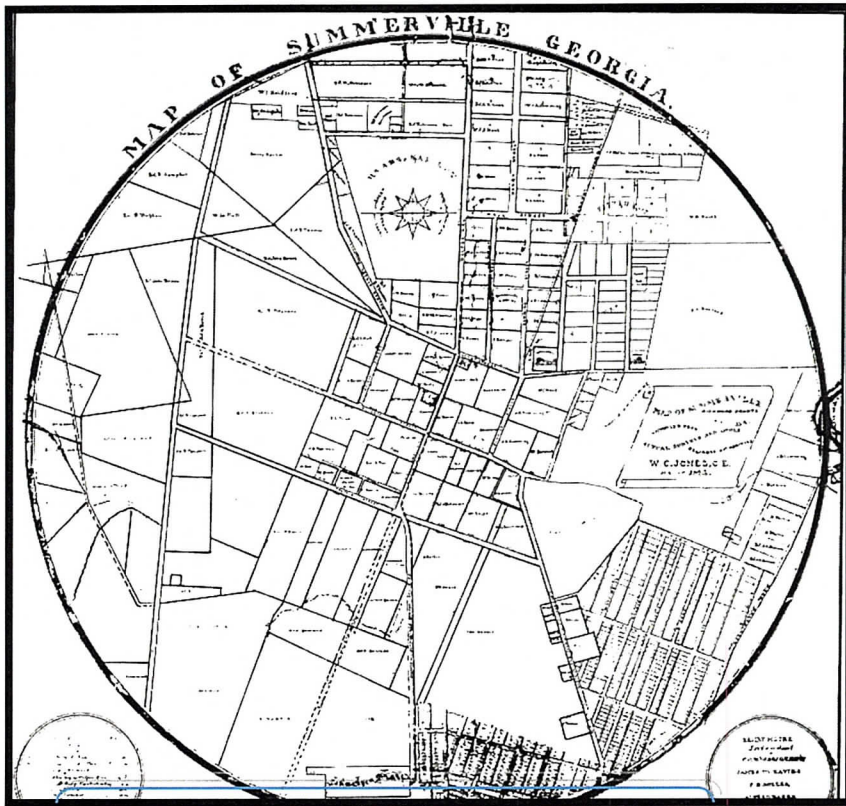
Methodology

Phase 1 of the Historic Resources Survey was complete accordance with the *Historic Resources Survey Manual for the State of Georgia* and *National Register Bulletin #24: Guidelines for Local Surveys*.

Listed below are the deliverables and the scope of work completed for Phase 1:

1. **Data Gathering** – existing research on the historic development of the community, including the existing National Register nomination, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, local histories and other relevant documents were gathered.
2. **Historic Context** – after gathering information from both the community and existing research, a historic context statement was drafted to help identify the important questions about the district that would need to be addressed through the field survey.
3. **Field Survey** – the field survey was conducted with the help of volunteers from Historic Augusta, Inc.
4. **Process Survey Data** – all field data was initially cataloged into an Excel Spreadsheet in order to best organize the information. The information and photographs gathered were then uploaded into Georgia's Natural, Archaeological, Historic Resource GIS NAHRGIS database.
5. **Public Meeting** – a public meeting is scheduled to be held in early August 2011 and will update the neighborhood association and residents as to the results of the Historic Resources Survey of the Summerville Neighborhood.
6. **Survey Report** – this report along with the GNAHRGIS data acts as the final deliverable for the Historic Resources Survey of the Summerville Historic District Phase 1.

History of the Summerville Neighborhood



1874 map of the Summerville drawn by W. C. Jones.

1790s to mark thirty-two lots ranging in size from two and one half acres to as large as ten and three-fourths acres. The village of Summerville was incorporated in 1861 and originally included all the area that was within a one mile radius of Gould's Corner, the intersection of Walton Way and Milledge Road. Initially, early residents of the village sought refuge from summer diseases such as malaria. During the Civil War, the Augusta Arsenal, now part of the Augusta State University campus, provided protection for the neighborhood. Beginning in the 1880s, Summerville became a highly desirable location for wealthy Augustans and seasonal wealthy Northerners. The moderate temperatures during the winter provided relief from the frigid weather of the north, and Summerville became a winter destination. As a result, many high style and elegant houses were constructed in a wide variety of architectural styles. There

Augusta, Georgia, was founded by James Oglethorpe in 1735. Augusta was a significant trading post due to the location along the fall line of the Savannah River. Richmond County was named in honor of the Duke of Richmond in 1777 when the parish government was replaced by a county government. Prominent figures of Augusta who called the area of Summerville home include George Walton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence who died in 1804, and John Milledge, a future governor of Georgia. It was George Walton who was the first to build his summer

retreat here on a 250 acre tract. Surveyor Levin Wailes was commissioned by Walton in the



921 Heard Avenue is an example of an American Small House.

were also two large hotels constructed located along Walton Way, the Partridge Inn, built 1892, and the BonAir Hotel, built 1889. The Partridge Inn remains in operation as a hotel while the BonAir has been developed into affordable apartment spaces. The Augusta Country Club was founded on the northern boundary of the neighborhood in 1899.

A major development for Summerville was the creation of an electric trolley system which connected Monte Santo Avenue to downtown in the late 19th century. D. B. Dyer was responsible for this state-of-the-art transportation, which encouraged the growth of residential construction. Summerville was annexed by the city of Augusta in 1912 and at this time many street names were changed in Summerville to avoid confusion with streets in downtown Augusta. The neighborhood transitioned into having full-time residents rather than seasonal travelers beginning in the early twentieth century. The majority of the buildings documented in the survey area were built between 1910 and 1940. Prominent businessmen and authors such as William Gilmore Simms and Berry Fleming were residents of this affluent neighborhood. Augusta College was founded in 1926 as a junior college of the Richmond County School System and became a four-year college in 1967 as part of the State Board of Regents. Walton Way became a major corridor into the medical district and commercial business district. The Summerville Neighborhood Association was founded in 1976 and was instrumental in sponsoring the National Register of Historic Places nomination. Today, the neighborhood is also designated as a Local Historic District. The recent merger of Augusta State University with Georgia Health Sciences University and the forthcoming strategic planning is expected to have a positive impact on the neighborhood and its historic resources.

Phase 1 Survey Results



Salubrity Hall, 2256 Cumming Road, is an example of an English Vernacular Revival style house and is one of the largest private residences in the neighborhood.

An informal windshield survey was completed in 1976 and 1979 in order to identify structures that retained their historical integrity and the neighborhood was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. This Historic Resources Survey Phase 1 area is part of the 1980 National Register district. The National Register nomination is on file at the **Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia** Department of Natural Resources. Preservation projects in the neighborhood have primarily been rehabilitations and

renovations by private homeowners, some of which have been certified rehabilitations for the state tax credits. The Summerville Local Historic District was established in 1994, two years after the Augusta Preservation Ordinance was enacted. Design guidelines for the neighborhood were published in 1996.

A total of 424 buildings were surveyed in Phase 1 and 234 (55%) of those retain their historic integrity. The Summerville Historic District is a residential neighborhood; consequently, most of the buildings within the survey area are residential houses that retained sufficient integrity to convey the historic, architectural, community planning and development of the district.



The Church of the Good Shepherd, 2230 Walton Way, is one of three churches in the survey area.

A majority of buildings in the Phase 1 survey area are mostly large, high style houses with large gardens in the core of the area along Walton Way, Johns Road, Milledge Road, Cumming Road, and Pickens Road. These homes have had little alterations, due in part to the inclusion in the local historic district which requires Certificates of Appropriateness for exterior alterations and additions. Hickman Road and Heard Avenue have more modest homes although there are many two-story houses.

There are also commercial structures located in the Phase 1 area of this historic resources survey and one

cemetery. There are 7 buildings that are categorized as office building, 1 hotel, 1 former hotel that is now apartments, and 3 active churches. There are 13 non-historic vacant lots that are part of a modern cul-de-sac subdivision.

There are 177 buildings in this phase which were found to be non-historic meaning that these buildings are less than 50 years old. A large number of non-historic properties are found on the northern boundary of the district including Montrose Court and Bourne Place. The southern survey area included several cul-de-sacs, such as Townvue Court and Summer Ridge Drive, that have townhomes and condominiums built in the 1980s. In addition, some non-historic office buildings have been constructed on Walton Way near Richmond Academy High School. Central Avenue, located in the southern area of the Phase 1 survey, also has heavy modern redevelopment. Central Avenue is also a major corridor within the neighborhood and has several non-historic resources, most of which will be surveyed at a future date. In the Phase 1 survey area, 202 properties (86%) are owner occupied.

<u>Resources</u>	<u>Phase 1</u>
Retain Historic Integrity	234
Do Not Retain Historic Integrity	177
Vacant Lots	13

The residential buildings mostly consisted of small to large one-and-two-story houses. The Georgian house-type was the most frequently identified house type, followed by the Bungalow and the American Small House. The majority of the buildings documented in this survey area were built between 1910 and 1940 and there were 8 properties built between 1800 and 1850 and 25 built from 1860-1890.

Architectural Analysis

Phase 1 of the Historic Resource Survey of the Summerville Historic District recorded the 19th to early 20th -century residential neighborhood, identified by the house type and architectural style. The first houses in Summerville date to c.1800 and were the “sand hill” cottages, which is a vernacular form found in Summerville and Richmond County, Georgia. The Sand Hill cottage is defined as a one-and-one-half story wood frame cottage placed on raised brick basements. This was the dominant house type until the 1850s.

The house type frequently reflected the lot size. Long and narrow lots had 1 story cottages, wide and shallower lots had either a bungalow or an American Small House.

Large lots with deep setbacks from the public roads have high style, large 2 story houses typically with a circular driveway and landscaped yards. The following table records the house types found in the first phase of this survey.



The BonAir Hotel, 2101 Walton Way, built in 1889, it is an example of the Italian Renaissance style.

<u>House Type</u>	<u>Phase 1</u>
Georgian	61
bungalow	30
American Small House	29
Queen Anne house	20
American Four Square	18
Gabled Wing House	14
Gabled wing cottage	9
Ranch House	7
Sand Hills Cottage	3
Georgian Cottage	3
Places of Accommodation (Hotels)	2

As indicated above, the Phase 1 area included two places of accommodation, The Partridge Inn and the BonAir Hotel. In addition, 3 historic churches and 1 non-historic church was documented, and several non-historic commercial buildings along Walton Way, Central Avenue, and Kings Way. The Summerville Cemetery located at the corner of Johns Road and Cumming Road was not documented as part of the Phase 1 survey but was observed during the field reconnaissance.

During the field reconnaissance, the buildings were clustered together according to architectural type throughout the area. The following table records the architectural styles identified in the survey area:

<u>Architectural Style</u>	<u>Phase 1</u>
Colonial Revival	43
Craftsman	37
Italian Renaissance Revival	12
Folk Victorian	10
Queen Anne	9
English Vernacular	7
Federal	6
Mediterranean Revival	5
Neoclassical	5
Art Deco	2
Italianate	2
Greek Revival	2
Prairie	1
Dutch Colonial Revival	1
Second Empire	1
Early Classical Revival	1
Shingle	1

The landscape of the survey area was varied depending on the location of the resources within the neighborhood. Much of the southern area, which has smaller lots and early 20th century houses, include casual yards. The larger houses found along Walton Way, Cumming Road, and Milledge Road included substantial acreage and in a few cases did have formally planned yards with landscaping. Many of the homes were set far back from the public right of way, making photographic documentation difficult. Many homes featured circular driveways and parking located behind the homes. Local design guidelines call for all parking to be to the rear or side of the homes, as parking pads located in the front of the property are widely prohibited and proposed alterations are reviewed by the Augusta-Richmond County Historic Preservation Commission. The streets in the Phase 1 survey area are mostly 30 to 40 feet wide. There are no alley ways documented in the Phase 1 survey area. There are sidewalks present in the phase 1 survey area and are typically found on only one side of the street. There is no historic sidewalk materials documented within this survey area.

National Register of Historic Places Eligibility

Overall, the character and integrity of the Summerville Historic District Historic Resources Survey area for Phase 1 is intact. Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places remains intact. When the city of Augusta revised their Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1992, the Historic Preservation Commission was established and Summerville became a locally designated historic district in 1994. The boundaries of the local district are approximately the same as the National Register District boundaries. The overlaying of this local district has likely assisted with the retention of original historic features of the houses.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the Phase 1 survey, it is recommended that the Summerville National Register district boundaries be reexamined in order to include buildings which have achieved historic significance since 1930. It is also recommended that the boundaries of the National Register District and the Local Historic District be the same in order to cut down on confusion regarding applications for Certificate of Appropriateness. The design guidelines for the neighborhood that were completed in 1996 should be revised in order to address buildings that would now be considered historic and have retained their character and integrity. Updating of the National Register district will allow for homeowners and business owners to take advantage of the Certified Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits and guide future development in the neighborhood, particularly involving Augusta State University.