

EVENTS PRESENTED BY
DOCOMOMO/US GEORGIA CHAPTER AND
HISTORIC SAVANNAH FOUNDATION

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DOCOMOMO US NATIONAL TOUR DAY 2011

MODERN SAVANNAH



WELCOME

DOCOMOMO/US, Georgia Chapter and Historic Savannah Foundation welcome you to our 2011 DOCOMOMO US National Tour Day event, Modern Savannah. We hope you enjoy this event. Let us know what you thought of the tour and reception.

Savannah possesses a great collection of Modern buildings and neighborhoods, as evidenced by the sampling of sites highlighted in this tour. However, this is often overshadowed by the city's rich history of architecture and planning that preceded the 20th century. We hope that this event will serve to highlight this work, and help foster a greater appreciation of **Savannah Modern**.

ABOUT THE TOUR

In addition to this program, you will receive a set of maps and a tour schedule. Please review these prior to starting the tour, and let a volunteer know if you have any questions or comments.

Note that properties listed as "open" on the schedule are only open during listed times, not for the entire tour. Please make an effort to arrive early to ensure plenty of time to explore each site.

Due to the nature of the sites, open properties, except for the Kennedy Pharmacy and public spaces included on the morning walking tour, are not accessible to wheelchair users.

THE RULES

- ✓ Always follow directions given by our hosts and guides.
- ✓ No smoking at any tour location on the tour – inside or outside.
- ✓ No food or drink allowed, unless provided as part of the tour.
- ✓ Toilet facilities are not available at private homes on the tour.
- ✓ No photography allowed inside homes.
- ✓ To protect flooring in each home, we ask that you wear provided protective booties or remove your shoes as you enter the home.
- ✓ Do not open doors, cabinets, or drawers – or enter rooms that are marked off limits.
- ✓ Be courteous and don't block driveways or sidewalks. You must park legally on public streets or as directed.
- ✓ Upon arrival, please wait for directions from docents before entering.
- ✓ Note that some homes include stairs and level changes, use care and follow your guide's directions before entering these areas. Tour participants are responsible for their own safety.
- ✓ Disruptive behavior = being asked to leave the tour immediately.

DOCOMOMO US, Georgia Chapter is a not-for-profit society promoting research, scholarship, and education concerning the Modern Movement, and the conservation of the buildings, landscape, and built environment of the Modern Movement. Membership in the Chapter is included when joining the national component of DOCOMOMO.

Learn more: www.docomomoga.org

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Historic Savannah Foundation is a non-profit historic preservation organization supported by a strong and dedicated membership. HSF was established in 1955 in order to save the 1820 Isaiah Davenport House from demolition. From this initial project, Historic Savannah Foundation launched a Revolving Fund, which has since saved more than 350 buildings and counting. The mission of Historic Savannah Foundation is to preserve and protect Savannah's heritage through advocacy, education and community involvement.

For more information, please visit www.myHSF.org



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The above individuals contributed the photographs included in this program unless noted otherwise.

BENEDICTINE MILITARY SCHOOL AND PRIORY

6502 Seawright Drive
1962-64
Juan Bertotto

The buildings and landscapes that make up the campus of Benedictine Military School and Priory represent the culmination of nearly 100 years of Benedictine presence in Georgia at the time of its dedication in 1964. A tour de force of modern architecture evoking references to some of the most iconic works of the master architects of the genre, this collection of buildings is regarded by Georgia's Historic Preservation Division as a "rare example of a complete modern campus with intact buildings and landscapes" and as an important and "exceptionally significant ... example of modern architecture in Georgia."

The buildings of the new Benedictine campus were designed by a young architect named Juan Carlos Bertotto – a native of Rosario, Argentina – who was instructed in the Bauhaus tradition while attending Georgia Tech's School of Architecture. Bertotto clearly drew inspiration from the landmark works of the Modernist architects he studied while he was a student at Ga. Tech: Frank Lloyd Wright, Ludwig Mies van Mies van der Rohe, Oscar Niemeyer, Marcel Breuer, and most especially, Eero Saarinen.

Bertotto and the Thomas, Driscoll, and Hutton team designed all of the buildings on the

campus in the New Formalist style of modern architecture that was en vogue at the time –



an architecture that incorporates the building forms of the past – classical precedents such as columns, highly stylized entablatures, and colonnades – with new forms made possible by advances in building technology – such as the newly discovered plastic-like qualities of concrete exhibited in the umbrella shell, waffle slab, and folded plates. All of the buildings on the campus are of steel frame and concrete block construction and feature flat roofs, terrazzo floors, and glass window walls. The use of a striated red brick as an exterior veneer is intended as a nod to the past and as a means of softening the machine aesthetic of glass, metal, and concrete prevalent elsewhere, while the cast concrete frieze along the cornice of the buildings – which resembles a modern style dentil course serves to further unify the buildings visually.

Bertotto's Priory Chapel (c1963-64) clearly references Eero Saarinen's iconic Kresge Chapel completed in 1955 at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts, appropriating the scale, form, and basic materials of the Kresge

chapel – as well as the reflecting pool or "moat" – while adding intervals of thin vertical windows embellished with austere Gothic buttressing and ornament. Bertotto also retained the enclosed walkway that Saarinen used to connect his chapel to a small office and library – although used here to connect the Priory Chapel to the Monastery – which also displays Gothic inspiration through its round headed, cantilevered windows, thin cast-concrete water spouts jutting through roof parapets, and heavy batten wood doors. The design is significant as it pre-dates liturgical changes in church architecture that would later be inspired by Vatican II, placing the Priory Chapel among the earliest examples of "pre-Conciliar" church architecture in the nation to feature a "centralized plan" (a deliberate design aspect certainly insisted upon by the liturgically progressive Benedictine monks).

Like his chapel, Bertotto also based the design for his contemporary monastery on historical precedent, utilizing that most basic of medieval forms – the monastic cloister – while expressing it in modernist terms. A traditional cloister – the central articulating feature of a monastery – is a rectangular open space surrounded by a continuous covered passage – or cloister walkway – with open arcades on the inner side that run along the walls of buildings, forming a quadrangle or garth. The cloister walk served to link and give access to all the main buildings and facilities of the complex. While the cloister is usually attached to the side of a church or cathedral, Bertotto's "contemporary cloister" is free-standing and appears to be based on

the monasteries of the Carthusian Order in which the monk's individual cells – unlike other monasteries – open directly from the cloister walk. Like the plan for the 12th Century Carthusian monastery – or “charter house” – at Clermont, France – depicted in a 19th century rendering by Viollet le Duc, the cells of Bertotto's monastery occupy three sides of the cloister while the refectory, chapter house, and other necessary “offices” occupy the remaining west side.



Bertotto drew his main inspiration for the Armory Gymnasium Building (c1963-64) from another of Eero Saarinen's works – the Milwaukee County War Memorial Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, retaining the essence of Saarinen's design by utilizing the basic form and structure of the formal entry section of his cruciform-shaped building. Bertotto raised the bulk of the building off the ground on reinforced concrete piers and eliminated load bearing walls to allow a “freeform façade” and open floor plan – a brick veneer curtain wall along the lower façade obscures what is essentially an open ground floor with a glassed-in rear elevation. The cantilevered superstructure – a key characteristic of Saarinen's design – is the most distinctive element of the Armory-Gymnasium, giving the façade an imposing monumentality while serving as a continuation of the concrete canopies that connect all of the buildings on the campus. Of all of the characteristics adapted from Saarinen's design, however, the symbolic function of the Armory-Gymnasium as both a utilitarian building and

as a memorial is perhaps the most significant. Inspired by Saarinen's War Memorial Center, Bertotto imbedded two granite memorial plaques – recovered from a c1946 WW II memorial at the original downtown location – directly in the center of the buildings façade. Like Saarinen's “living memorial” – which was said to “Honor the Dead by Serving the Living,” Bertotto memorial podium pavilion serves as a daily reminder to the assembled Corp of Cadets of the heroic sacrifice of the 30 Benedictine Cadets who gave their lives defending our country during World War II as well as serving as an ideal platform for special ceremonies and everyday functions.

Excerpted from Robert A. Ciucevich's article “Benedictine Military School & Priory: A Modernist Landmark on Savannah's Suburban Southside,” **RPPN Bulletin, Spring 2011**.

MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN DOWNTOWN SAVANNAH: C1950-1969



The completion of the International style Drayton Towers in 1950 signaled the arrival of modern architecture in Savannah's downtown commercial district. Although a few low and high rise commercial office towers and apartment buildings were constructed during the 1950s and early 1960s, the majority of commercial buildings built in Savannah during this time were built as infill along the major north-south corridors (Whitaker, Bull, and Drayton Streets) that connect the downtown business district and the growing suburbs south of Victory Drive. Most of these buildings are characterized as small scale, one-story, free standing suburban type commercial office buildings, are rectilinear in shape ("Miesian box") and reflect a more pure expression of the International style, and were typically built as branch offices for banks, savings and loan associations, and

insurance companies. (RC)

NOTABLE SITES INCLUDE:

Drayton Arms/Drayton Towers (c1950)

Drayton Street at Oglethorpe Avenue

Architect: William P. Bergen

Chatham Apartments (c1952)

609 Abercorn Street

Architect: Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolff

St. Joseph's School of Nursing and Dormitory Building (c1954)

aka "Madonna Hall"

Corner of Habersham and Taylor Streets

Architect: Unknown

First Federal Savings and Loan Association (c1961)

132 E. Broughton Street

Architect: Levy and Kiley

Georgia Dept. of Labor (c1962)

Drayton south of Liberty Street

Architect: unknown

Red Cross Building (c1959)

906 Drayton St. (Forsyth Park)

Architect: unknown

Carver State Bank (c1953)

1804 Habersham Street

Architect: unknown

Interstate Life and Accident Insurance Company District Office (c1957)

1015 Whitaker Street (Forsyth Park)

Architect: unknown

Interstate Life and Accident Insurance Branch Office (c1958)

1440 Victory Drive (Daffin Park)

Architect: unknown

United Insurance Co. of America (c1958)

2302 Bull Street

Architect: unknown

Life Insurance Company of GA (c1957)

1714 Bull Street

Architect: unknown

Life Insurance Company of GA (c1958)

2231 Victory Drive

Architect: unknown

United Brotherhood of Carpenters Hall/Retail & Office Building c1958

2222 Bull Street

Office Building (c1965-69)

144 Drayton St/104 Oglethorpe

WALKING TOUR OF DOWNTOWN SAVANNAH

D1

Kennedy Pharmacy

323 E. Broughton Street at Habersham Street

The small, freestanding building is positioned at the corner of East Broughton Street and Habersham Street as a unique survivor of a once-common commercial type. The commercial building has maintained one of the last wood storefronts in downtown Savannah, boasting the original chamfered columns, brackets, doors, and transoms. The substantially unaltered residential spaces on the second floor, together with the wealth of original materials that survive behind modern additions on the first floor, reinforce the building as an essential element in the evolution of Savannah's historic neighborhoods.

D2

Metro Developers Offices

120 Habersham Street and 400 E. President Street,
1963; 1971

This modest, unassuming modernist slab on the northeast trust lot of Columbia Square is defined by rhythmic structural support from square concrete posts connected by continuous lintels. This structural system holds

symmetrically arranged infill of modern tabby panels and glass in the center two bays flanked by modern Savannah grey panels and glass at the corners. Entrances to the two separate suites are located slightly off center on the Habersham and President Street facades. Wide base plantings echo the adjacent square and the low tabby parapet upper wall preserves and opens up the Savannah skyline. (DR)

D3

Townhouses

404-410 State Street

This is a generous interpretation of the traditional tithing lot row house, showing a remarkable meeting of tradition and innovation. Scaled to traditional townhouses, having a side-gable roofline, and being constructed of exposed brick, with almost standard Greek-Revival door details, this row nevertheless shows assertive scale in its brick divisions and parapets between units and revolutionary set back patio entrances with second story balconies. This is Reston, Va. come to Savannah. (DR)

BROUGHTON STREET IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Broughton Street gives rich evidence of its function as Savannah's principal corridor of commerce between the late nineteenth and mid twentieth centuries. Individually, most, perhaps all, of the street's buildings in the retail core are of local significance, but collectively they form one of the most intact representations of a sizable commercial district spanning that time period remaining in the state. If sensitively and appropriately rehabilitated, Broughton Street could be Georgia's premier Main Street.

Buildings constructed or extensively remodeled during the fifteen-year period after World War II comprise a very important component of this ensemble, for they provide vivid and engaging testimony of the efforts made locally and in comparable precincts coast to coast to improve the commercial core's competitiveness in an increasingly mobile and dispersed society. National chains such as J.C. Penney and F. W. Woolworth, major local retailers, smaller-scale independent merchants all participated in what collectively often was an extensive remaking of the commercial center. Their impact was especially great in modest-sized cities such as Savannah where the building of outlets beyond the core remained restricted mostly to convenience goods (foods, pharmaceuticals,

etc.) until the 1960s. In Savannah, the post-war period represents the culmination of development while downtown was the principal place of doing business. If this component of Broughton Street's legacy is allowed to vanish, a crucial part of its evolution and urban history will be forever lost. (RL)

D4

St. Vincent's Academy

207 E. Liberty Street

Mercy Convent (c1845), Charles Cluskey
Cathedral of St. John the Baptist (c1872-76), Francis Baldwin
Auditorium-Cafeteria (1953), Helfrich & Grantham
School Building and Court Yard (c1960), Thomas, Driscoll, and Hutton



Established in 1845, St. Vincent's Academy is the oldest Mercy school in the United States and among the oldest Catholic schools in the nation. The contemporary materials and Modernist aesthetic of the c1953/1960 campus located on the corner of Lincoln and Liberty Streets blend seamlessly with the ante-bellum grandeur of Charles Cluskey's c1845 Greek Revival style Mercy Convent and the towering c1876 French Gothic Revival style Cathedral of St. John the Baptist,

which dominates the entire block. A "contemporary cloister" – inspired by centuries of ecclesiastical tradition but built here with modern materials and expressed in Modernist terms, is formed by the two sides of a two and three story L-shaped, stucco and concrete academic building, the east elevation of the convent building, and a thick masonry wall along Liberty Street. Classrooms are accessed from the outside via multi-tiered concrete galleries that wrap-around the sides of the building and define the central courtyard, while large glass windows are protected from the elements by a simple but effective lattice brick screen that controls the flow of light into the building.

D5

Trustees Theatre/ former Weis Theatre

216 E. Broughton Street

1946

Tucker and Howell

Built of "completely fireproof construction" with one of the largest movie screens in the South and boasting adjustable air conditioning, the Weis Theatre was designed to be a "completely new and modern motion picture theater." Atlanta architects McKendree Tucker (1896-1972) and Albert Howell (1904-74) represented Georgia in Philip Johnson and Henry Russell Hitchcock's epochal 1932 International Style exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Tucker trained at

the Georgia Institute of Technology, and Howell was the son of Atlanta Constitution editor Clark Howell. As partners they built at least eight other theaters in Georgia besides the Weis as well as a number of Atlanta schools, and occasionally collaborated with sculptor Julian Harris. The Weis family also owned the Savannah Theater, Roxy Theater, and the East Side Theater in Savannah and the Bibb Theater in Macon. The Weiss closed in 1980 and SCAD reopened it as the Trustees Theatre serving college and community needs in 1998. (DR)



D6

Broughton Street Municipal Building/former First Federal Savings Bank

132 E. Broughton at Abercorn

1959-61

Levy and Kiley

The former First Federal Savings Bank, constructed in 1959 from designs prominent local firm of Levy & Kiley, stands among the largest and most prominent of Savannah's commercial buildings of the postwar era. Its

strong, sculptural forms equally distinctive color scheme indicate that this was conceived as a landmark for downtown – a proud declaration of it's company's position in the financial community and to the modernity of its practices. Among its most distinctive features were pairs of tiered movable louvers , which have since been removed. Compositionally, these imparted a monumental presence, without the slightest tie to classical precedent, while they also seemed to “float” independent of the wall, tied only to the structural columns that are revealed between the expanses of plate glass below. The louvers themselves appeared to be of a type pioneered earlier in that decade by the Los Angeles-based architect Richard Neutra, one of the international giants of modernism in the mid twentieth century. By adjusting automatically to the position of the sun, these elements maximized both views from and protection within the office floors. They also gave the building a kinetic quality, its aspect changing with the time of day and with weather conditions.

Ownership of the building by the City affords an ideal opportunity to be presented as an exemplar of the importance of this period in Savannah's commercial development. (RL)

D7

SCAD Jen Library

Former Levy's of Savannah Department Store

201-209 E. Broughton at Abercorn

1925, enlarged and remodeled 1954

Levy & Kiley

This design by Levy & Kiley is, like the others, crucial to the character of the Broughton and Abercorn intersection and to the eastern end of the former shopping district. About ten years following its purchase by a national ownership group, Allied Stores, Levy's was extensively enlarged and remodeled in 1954. Formed in 1928, Allied was among the pioneers of department store ownership groups (the precursors to the modern national department stores companies), with twenty emporia coast to coast.

Levy's was among Allied's few southern stores. The exterior design is quite distinctive. During the 1930s, natural lighting became eschewed by department store owners and some other retailers in favor of the ever more varied and subtle effects possible with artificial illumination. Improvements in air-conditioning technology, moreover, rendered the ventilating function of the windows unnecessary and indeed undesirable. Windows were retained above street level primarily out of the fear that customers would dislike the alternative, but after the war, the “windowless” department store became the nearly

universal standard. Levy's reflects that trend, but also incorporates a grouping of corner windows, accentuated with dark green tiles further emphasized their prominence. Compositionally, these groups bracketed the expanse of wall in between, which, with the canopy and vertical sign, gave the entire composition definition and scale. Levy's was more than a big box; it was a carefully articulated presence that anchored the eastern end of the shopping district.

As a group, the former department store, variety store, and bank – all designed within a few years of one another by the same architectural firm – afford not only an important concentration of modernist commercial architecture, they also underscore the range of possibilities for exterior composition – an encyclopedia in miniature, as it were, of the richness of expressive possibilities of the era.

The adaptation of Levy's to the Savannah College of Art and Design's library is a very positive development in terms of giving a large, previously vacant property an appropriate new use. However, remodeling of the ground floor, the changes in window framing above, and the removal of the tiles have robbed the building of much of its historic character. (RL)



D8

Former F. W. Woolworth Co. Variety Store

131 E. Broughton Street at Abercorn

1954

Levy & Kiley

Erected in 1954, from plans by Levy & Kiley, the former F. W. Woolworth variety store is a distinguished representative of the massive campaign undertaken by its owners and competitors in the field alike in city and town centers nationwide between the mid 1940s and mid 1950s. Through the 1920s, many, perhaps most, prewar Woolworth stores were adapted to existing buildings (as Savannah's Kress store was), with corporate signage and expansive display windows the most prominent feature. By the mid 1930s, Woolworth was constructing more buildings of its own, with ornate Art Deco exteriors, as part of a program that upgraded and expanded the range of merchandise to increase sales in an

ever more competitive atmosphere. This program culminated in the postwar decade, with stores routinely of several stories, even in small cities. In both appearance and merchandising strategies, Woolworth and other variety stores were emulating certain aspects of the department store in an effort to gain a greater share of the latter's market. Once variety store companies began to target shopping center locations rather than those downtown, the attention lavished on exterior and interiors appointments substantially diminished.

Savannah's Woolworth's thus represents the apex of the big, downtown variety store. Together with the former First Federal Savings Bank and former Levy's department store, it makes the intersection of Broughton and Abercorn streets an important and distinguished one in the business district. The removal of its vertical sign became and of its canopy in recent years is to be highly regretted. The large vertical sign became an important, integral feature of the fronts of major stores during the 1930s, as retailers became ever more aware of the need to attract passing motorist as well as pedestrians. Over the two following decades, this element became ever more important as a compositional device, key to the appearance of the entire front. The canopy also became a key feature of the establishments, during the postwar era especially, giving added emphasis to the dis-

play area and providing year around shelter for pedestrians. (RL)

D9

Garage

115 E. Congress at Drayton

This is as close as you can get to Mies van der Rohe in Savannah—a beautiful cage of I-beams rusted to a patina not that far from the bronze of the Seagram building, but much less appreciated. (DR)

D10

Globe Shoe Company

17 E. Broughton Street

1929

Levy & Clark

Architects Levy & Clark designed this building for the Globe Shoe Co. in 1929. The front possesses a highly individualistic interplay of display windows in a recessed front and translucent glazing above to form a cool, neutral backdrop for merchandise. Around and above this section are a delicately detailed frame and an attic zone of abstract ornament and glass block. These latter parts suggest the remodeling of earlier fabric, but seldom was it done with such imagination and in a way where it was once integral to the overall design and in contrast with the new infill. The recessed display area of Ace

Fashions, at 321 West Broughton Street, is especially handsome and of a kind that has become quite rare in American commercial districts. (RL)

D11

Former Lerner Shops Apparel Store

2 E. Broughton at Bull

1947

William Petty “Billy” Bergen

Constructed in 1946-1947, the former Lerner Shops building was the pioneer locally in modern retail design. By that time Lerner’s had risen to become a nationally prominent chain specializing in women’s and children’s apparel, boasting nearly two hundred outlets coast to coast. Prior to the war, the company was one of the path-breakers in the large-scale specialty chains that challenged department stores and independent specialty stores alike, and in the process helped revolutionize distribution practices in consumable goods.

Lerner’s was also in the forefront of applying innovative new design approaches to its stores. During the post-World War II period, Lerner Shops were among the most distinctive medium-sized establishments on many shopping streets nationwide. The Savannah store was no exception. This was the first example locally to have the upper walls cantilevered from their structural columns to permit an uninterrupted band of glazing at street

level, to have no windows above that level, and to be fully air-conditioned. A conspicuous presence was achieved through minimalist devices: solid and void, sheer wall and boldly projection canopy, offset by full-story letter-signs affixed to both fronts. (RL)

D12

SunTrust Bank Building

Former Trust Company Bank of Savannah

Broughton at Bull

1972-4

Cooper, Carry and Associates

The SunTrust Bank is perhaps the most dramatic insertions of 1970s fabric into downtown Savannah next to the Civic Center and the Marriott on Bay Street. Steel-framed and clad in red-orange textured brick with copper-tone glass, the SunTrust Bank Building was part of a broad urban renewal aimed at updating the urban fabric. Widely spaced piers and recessed first floor allow unusually openness on the ground level. Landscaping at the ground level and mezzanine provide an especially “green” feeling. Johnson Square itself, the oldest square in Savannah was updated in 1967 with new lighting and fountains.

SunTrust’s rear façade is actually a Broughton Street commercial front at ground level with parking for employees and customers above connected to a banking lobby facing Johnson Square and offices above. Ironically, this most modern design is actually a story of local success done well as the original business, then named Germania Bank was actually located on the same sites on Congress and Broughton in succession since 1904. (DR)

D13

Sea Island Bank/Lott + Barber Architects

Former Standard Oil Co. Inc. Office Building and Service Station

1924

W. E. Glassup

This is a stunning example of Renaissance Revival morphed onto a modern fireproof service station / 3-story and basement office building for a prominent downtown Savannah location. Terra cotta blocks mimic rusticated granite masonry with an elegantly bracketed cornice and metal sash window set in delicate spiral colonette decoration. The Savannah Morning News called it “substantial as well as attractive” upon its opening. While the City Beautiful was quickly being passed by for more modern expressions, this building, like City Hall, was a beacon of old-world taste and decorum. (DR)



D14

Savannah Blue Print

11 E. York Street

1955

Helfrich and Grantham

D15

Cowart Insurance Group

Former Morris and Morris Law Firm

139 Drayton Street at York Lane

1960s

This is the Savannah Lowcountry meeting Le Corbusier’s “machine made for living.” Joined to the rear of a nineteenth-century town house, this stark white windowless office building hovers on hefty H-beam columns infilled with Savannah grey brick trellis. A recessed bay cuts into the rectangular mass and connects ground level parking with second-story offices. Steel rods echoing the

H-beams act as banisters supporting exposed concrete tread steps. The interior features a central reception area with two short halls servicing storage spaces, offices and rest rooms. Every interior space originally featured a different finish of Dixie plywood, a historic local manufacturer, and many interior appointments remain untouched. A street level office on Drayton features a modernist interpretation of Flemish bond (stretcher course alternating with header / stretcher course with headers projecting out) in Savannah grey on the exterior and an exposed web-truss structure supporting second-story concrete slabs on the interior. Interestingly, this pristine modernism was a notable replacement for what had been a Kehoe Recap Tire Business, and the ground level of the Greek Revival townhouse adjacent had been a bar. (DR)

D16

Cora Bett Thomas Office

24 Oglethorpe Ave. at Drayton Street

This single-story structure exhibits a wide overhanging eave sheltering a continuous band of clerestory windows and features a surface texture ordered by a regular colonnade of brick piers set out from brick infill walls. Later alteration resulted in the current raised arched roof with large clerestory windows in center. (DR)

D17

Savannah Church of Christ/former office

102-106 Oglethorpe Ave. / 144 Drayton Street

This prominent set-back two-story block combines modern Savannah grey brick encased in a chunky rectangular mass. A central recessed entry on Oglethorpe features a steel banister supporting exposed concrete treads like 139 Drayton Street but the overall size of the structure and its orientation is more ambitious. The set back on Oglethorpe allows for off-street parking in front of three offices on the ground floor and two above. The side façade along Drayton is also set back to allow for parallel parking and features a dramatic projecting porch with cantilevered canopy and richly paneled double door. Walls frame this entrance with narrow two-story windows set in aluminum frames. The continuous eave of the building and the Drayton entry show a vertical striped molding like a modernist version of board and batten or perhaps a modillioned frieze. A continuous planter extends around the base integrating nature into the design. (DR)

D18

Watts and Watts, Attorney at Law Townhouse

Former Raskin Law Firm

114 East Oglethorpe

This is a remodeling of the eastern half of a three-story mid-nineteenth-century double house at 112-114 East Oglethorpe Ave. The plain brick walls of the 1850s original are retained with fenestration altered to form a dominant central three-bay composition with entrance below and three-bay vertically oriented windows on second and third floors. Modernist clarity is enhanced by the bright white walls and the vertical fins made of copper turned grey that frame the windows as well as by the dramatic cantilevered awning over the entrance with cylindrical lights along its edge. (DR)

D19

Savannah Association for the Blind

Former Georgia Department of Labor Employment Security Agency Building

214 Drayton Street

1962

This is a modest single-story rectangular block with subtle elegance. An eave the width of roof trusses and ceiling mechanical services projects with notable vertical metal fins over a recessed entry façade. Side red

brick walls extend out to edge of eave, while the recessed façade is a tan speckled brick in continuous stretcher bond. Evenly spaced vertical brick projections provide minimalist decoration on the façade, as does a plaque to Ben T. Huiet, Commissioner of Labor when the building was built. The symmetrical arrangement of two glazed entries join a continuous glass clerestory under the eave. There is generous parking in the rear. (DR)



D20

Savannah Theater, 1820

Remodeled/rebuilt 1950, Helfrich and Grantham

D21

Motorini Dealership

Former Texaco Gas Station

236 Drayton Street
1937

The current Motorini Dealership is a lovingly maintained example of Walter Dorwin Teague's Texaco Type "C" service station. Built by George Summerell in 1937, the station cost between ten and thirteen thousand dollars and was one of some ten thousand such designs across the country. Features include an office, two service bays, a car-wash bay, a storage room, men's and women's restrooms, and a canopy reaching from the office to the pump island. Standardized design provided familiarity to the traveling motorist. The stripped down modernism emphasized efficiency and progress. (DR)



D22

Drayton Tower Apartments

Former Drayton Arms Apartments

102 E. Liberty at Drayton
1951

William Petty "Billy" Bergen.

Opened in 1951, the Drayton Arms was one of Savannah's most conspicuous and uncompromising manifestations of modernism in the postwar era. The Savannah Morning News called it a "home for moderns." Twelve stories high, it ranked among the tallest buildings locally and gained additional prominence by being removed from the business district. Having eighteen apartments on each floor there were a total of 198 units with commercial spaces on three sides at the ground level. Reputedly it was the first fully air-conditioned building in the state, and utilized special heat

absorbing and glare-proof quarter-inch solex glass. The exterior composition of continuous bands of metal-frame windows alternating with bands of limestone was somewhat more typical of office buildings than apartment houses of the period. Note the canted east and west walls that tilt ten degrees off perpendicular. (RL, DR, and MB)

D23

DeRenne Apartments

1924

Henrik Wallin

8-story concrete and masonry building developed by Wymberly W. DeRenne, descendent of Noble Jones and owner of Wormsloe. (DR)

NEW FORMALISM IN SAVANNAH: 1961–1974

New Formalism – a new design approach in modern architecture that emerged during the late 1950s and early 1960s – briefly became the preferred style for major civic and public buildings in Savannah (as well as in other major cities in Georgia). Sometimes called “Neo Palladianism”, the style gained favor among the nation’s leading architects during the late 1950s as a rejection of – and alternative to – the rigid form of Modernism. New Formalism, simply put, is an architecture that combines the decorative elements and traditional methods of composition and design with the new materials and technologies incorporated in the International Style. The style represents another 20th Century effort to incorporate the building forms of the past with new forms made possible by advances in building technology. According to the architectural style guide developed by the Washington Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation in Olympia:

“New Formalist buildings embraced many Classical precedents such as building proportion and scale, classical columns, highly stylized entablatures, and colonnades. However, they also used the newly discovered plastic-like qualities of concrete to create new forms such as umbrella shells, waffle slabs, and folded plates.”

Although there are relatively few examples of New Formalist architecture in Savannah (less than two dozen), the examples that do exist are characteristically high profile, well known buildings built for prominent local, regional, and in some cases, national entities or organizations. Prominent, large scale examples in Savannah include the c1968 Desoto Hilton Hotel and Citizens & Southern National Bank Building, designed by the Atlanta firm of Aeck Associates, and the c1970 Savannah Civic Center – perhaps the city’s best example of New Formalism applied to a civic building – designed by the Savannah firm of Nowell and Ritzert. Built in 1961, the IBM Eastern Region Office, one of four office buildings in the southeastern United States designed by prominent Atlanta architect Richard Aeck for the IBM Corporation, is among Savannah’s earliest examples of the New Formalist style. (RC)

D24

Desoto Hilton

15 East Liberty Street at Bull Street
1965

Richard L. Aeck Associates



Impossible to accept for older Savannahians who knew its gracious predecessor, this building can be seen to represent progress out of demolition. The tallest building in Savannah, this 14-story hotel forms a mixed-use complex with an adjacent six-story office tower, and houses a 3-sub-story parking lot for 388 cars. Note the traditional detail of raised grade main floor, tall 28' ceilings. There are 264 Rooms originally advertized as containing icemakers, color televisions, iron-

ing boards, and hair dryers. The original waffle-slab cantilevered porte-cochere was recently replaced. (DR)

D25

SCAD Oglethorpe House Former Downtowner Inn

1965-85

D26

Ramada Inn Civic Center

1985-89

201 West Oglethorpe

1965; 1968

This six-story structure effortlessly blends the international trends of tall bold glass-walled structures at least partly elevated on pilotis, with charming historicism in its "Regency" styled iron railing decoration, Savannah grey brick and various gold and green details throughout. Also skillfully balanced is its downtown location immediately on Oglethorpe Ave. bringing traffic in from across the Talmadge Bridge. Originally featuring a pool and lounge as well as a gift shop, beauty salon and dining room, cocktail lounge (DR)

D27

Club SCAD gym Former Light Industrial

201 Barnard Street

One of the many, but increasingly dwindling light industrial buildings telling the story of West-side Savannah's automobile axis mainly along coastal Highway 17 that followed Montgomery through Savannah. (DR)



D28

Savannah Civic Center

103 West Oglethorpe

1970

Nowell and Ritzert

Proposed as early as 1951 when the preceding auditorium was seen to be out of date and not representative of Savannah, motions were made for a structure that would seat 5-10,000 people and have comfortable lounges, restrooms, and air conditioning like cities of comparable size. The Metropolitan Planning Commission issued a lengthy report

in 1962 commenting on the value of a new auditorium and convention center to tourism and industry. The present structure houses an arena with an underfloor freezing system for skating, a 2,566-seat auditorium/theater, ballroom, meeting rooms, and exhibition space providing facilities for conventions, a variety of sports such as basketball, boxing, or rodeos, and music shows large and small. Architecturally the New Formalist arcade contrasts grandness of space and modernity of reinforced concrete with historicist Savannah greys and cast iron, blending new and old. The most profound criticism of the Civic Center notes the loss of Elbert Square now cut by Montgomery Street at the west entrance to the building, and the loss of significant buildings facing Orleans Square, sacrificed for parking. (DR)

SELF-GUIDED TOUR: TRANSITION TO THE SUBURBAN

While a number of low-rise office and commercial buildings (such as Helfrich and Grantham's c1955 **Savannah Blue Print Building** at 11 E. York Street) as well as a few high rise commercial office towers and apartment buildings (such as Levy and Kiley's c1961 **First Federal Savings and Loan** at 123 E. Broughton Street and the c1952 **Chatham Apartments** at 609 Abercorn Street near Forsyth Park) were constructed during the 1950s and early 1960s in downtown Savannah, the majority of commercial buildings built in Savannah during this time were built as infill along the major north-south corridors (Whitaker, Bull, and Drayton Streets) that connect the downtown business district and the growing suburbs south of Victory Drive. Most of these buildings are characterized as small scale, one-story, free standing suburban type commercial office buildings, are rectilinear in shape ("Miesian box") and reflect a more pure expression of the International style, and were typically built as branch offices for banks, savings and loan associations, and insurance companies.

Several excellent religious, institutional, and educational buildings were built during this period in Savannah as well, including Philadelphia architect Harold E. Wagoner's c1957 "contemporary Gothic" **St. Paul's Evangelical**

Lutheran Church on the corner of Bull and 31st Streets in the Thomas Square Historic District, Bergen and Bergen's c1958 **Blessed Sacrament Catholic School** near the corner of Victory Drive and Waters Avenue and Atlanta architect Francis P. Smith's (of the firm Pringle and Smith) c1956 **First Presbyterian Church** at 520 Washington Avenue – both in the Ardsley Park- Chatham Crescent Historic District, and Bergen and Bergen's c1958 **63rd Street Fire Station** at the corner of Paulsen Street adjacent the c1957 **Medical Arts Center** on Savannah's burgeoning suburban Southside.



Designed by the Savannah firm of Thomas, Driscoll, and Hutton – Architects and Engineers, the c1957 **Medical Arts Center** - perhaps among the earliest medical office parks in the region, is also one of the first, if not the first, example of a planned, large scale

development of modern architecture in Savannah – a 10 acre campus of 30 Contemporary style, Eichler-inspired offices for doctors and dentists built in close vicinity to c1955 **Memorial Medical Center**, the first regional hospital in south Georgia located at the end of 63rd Street east of Waters Avenue. Subsequent development adjacent the original office park during the late 1950s and 1960s – including the c1959 **Medical Arts Shopping Center** on the corner of 63rd Street and Waters Avenue, the c1962 **Professional Plaza Shopping Center** at 5002 Paulsen Street, as well as numerous small and medium-sized medical and commercial office buildings, extended the growth of the area south to DeRenne Avenue, establishing the Medical Arts area as one of the best and most significant concentrations of Modern architecture found in Savannah today.

(RC)

T1

**Futures Outreach / Former Pest Control
Commercial Block**
1607 Skidaway Rd.

Hyper-cool—this is as good as modernism gets in Savannah with a bold symmetrical front featuring a wide glass-walled entry raised off the ground and accessed by hovering concrete steps. The entry is flanked by full-height tile panels set in aluminum frames. A skylight juts up from the flat roof with dramatic outward angled edge. Notable details include the cylindrical light fixtures and the bold reinforced concrete structure expressed in interior columns and side framing. (DR)

T2

Nicholas Wozniak House
1651 Skidaway Rd.
1956

This single-story three-bedroom ranch house features a classic long and low horizontal profile with dramatic use of cast stone and stucco. Cast stones of varying pastel colors form a continuous foundation wall around the base of the house while dramatically jutting angled diagonal posts support the entry porch and a car port. Individually textured and designed stucco panels decorate wall surfaces and serve as ornamental shutters. The same materials are used inside with the addition of exposed knotty pine paneling. (DR)

T3

Starbucks/former Bank

Skidaway and Victory

T4

Victory Shopping Plaza
Skidaway and Victory



T5

Seacrest Partners, LLC/former IBM Building,
Whitaker
1960
Aeck and Associates

"In the era when IBM's Savannah Office Building was designed by Aeck Associates, IBM was a demanding patron of industrial and architectural design. While somewhat modest in scale, I recall this one story concrete, brick and glass structure being enthusiastically received by the client as fully meeting its design ideals—qualifying the Firm for subsequent more prestigious commissions in Tampa and Greenville. "

Tony Aeck, Lord Aeck Sargent

T6

Insurance Bldg.
Whitaker St.

T7

Sears and Roebuck

Henry St. at Bull St.

1946

Shutze and Armistead

This was the first “suburban” location for the retailer after establishing itself on Broughton Street. Note significant off-street parking and dramatic Art-Moderne design with simple asymmetrical massing and an originally sleek windowless façade.

T8

Bull Street Baptist Church

Bull and Anderson

1927

Henrik Wallin and Arthur Comer of Savannah in association with N. Sargent Hamilton of Atlanta

Education Building, 1953, Ralph S. Thomas

T9

St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church

31st and Bull Streets

Note: 3 sections: Parish House, 1925, Levy, Clark, and Bergen; Church, 1955-57, Harold E. Wagoner; Haffner Social Hall, 1995. Note also: layered history, ornamental accretion, plan.

Without a doubt the finest modern church in Savannah, St. Paul’s features a richly layered history with the standout 1955 Harold E. Wagoner structure as just the centerpiece. Wagoner’s dynamically asymmetric steeple is a beacon by day or at night with electric light inverting the beauty of the stained glass. Tennessee Quartzite walls provide warmth and texture to the surface of the building as to the sidewalk outside. Cast bronze doors open between cast stone panels with every element both spare overall but rich with specific detail. Just off the narthex entry a side service hall has striking modernist stained glass set in diagonally positioned art-stone mullions. The nave is a superbly articulated space with a traditional stained glass used in a dramatic window wall around the main en-

trance, but then everything else is bold and geometrically incisive. Note the clarity of the clerestory lighting and the delicate angled edges of the apse. Admire the abstract



geometric pattern of wooden lattice screening organ horns or finer scaled details of the altar railing or even the altar candelabra made of polyester resin. Appreciate the subtle texture of the brick apse wall and the cross of aluminum. Recent enhancements include the decorative wooden frames around the nave posts with laser relief images in them. (DR)

NOTABLE SITES ALONG BULL STREET

Located south of 31st and north of Victory Drive, and even numbers are on East and Odd numbers are to the West.

T10

Savannah/Chatham Metropolitan Police Department Central Precinct Office,
1512 Bull St.

A single-story concrete-block building with asymmetrical face in brick and cast stone. (DR)

T11

Seimitsu Computer Center
1523 Bull St. at W. 32nd St.

This dramatic single-story flat-roofed commercial building features a three-part horizontal composition with concrete base, narrow void used as windows on front façade, and then a vertically oriented hardi-board with tin cap at eave. Understated accents come from cylindrical wall sconces framing the corner entry cut-away. A separate commercial addition featuring decorative brick header panels adjoins to the north. (DR)

T12

Dot Owens Realty
1702 Bull St. at E. 33rd St.

This modest single-story flat-roofed brick commercial building features a slight projecting roof overhang in front and an asymmetrical window wall. Diagonal planters on side walk complement planters between street

and sidewalk emphasizing integration of nature and modernist design. (DR)

T13

1714 Bull St.

Narrow single-story commercial building sharing lot width with side parking. A dramatic cut-away corner provides a diagonal porch finished in polished black granite tiles set off against rectangular cast stone panels. Rear extension features red brick veneer and horizontal cut-stone framed windows and service entries. (DR)

T14

1718 Bull St. at E. 34th St.

Perhaps the most suburban and sculpturally provocative of any building along Bull St., this dynamically asymmetrical composition features rectangular stucco masses interpenetrated by vertical and horizontally extended walls. Board-and-batten pine panels articulate the front façade and entrance. Although set back to accommodate parking, generous planters at the base of the building, and at waist height marking the entrance as well as a full yard with mature cypress tree to the side attest to the suburban ideal. (DR)

T15

Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department Offices
2115 Bull St. at W. 38th St.

This is an intricate modern craftsman. A pair of low gables jutting out at the ridge cap

hipped roofs extend out on all four sides over a continuous covered veranda creating a modern Creole house. A front colonnade supporting exposed rafters expresses a geometrical order echoed by vertical recesses in the brick façade, and by symmetrically matched windows and doors. Accents include cylindrical downlighting under eaves. (DR)

T16

City of Savannah Community Planning and Development / Community Services
2203 Abercorn St. at 38th St. (Note; slight detour East of Bull St. axis)

Massed as a series of squat mansard roofed pavilions, this single-story white brick building demonstrates many subtle decorative and spatial features. Spatially, the offset blocks energize the lot with diagonal depth and this effect is enhanced by molded concrete block screens framing the corners and sheltering continuous covered verandas.

Decoratively, the roman split-face white brick is set in running bond set off by slightly projecting pilasters providing rhythm and order. Screen panels feature carefully articulated block posts on either side, angled at one edge and slightly recessed on the other. One entry window still contains decorative iron screen panel with abstract rectangular pattern. Notable also the building is slightly elevated off the ground with a projecting cantilevered concrete walkway and this is echoed in the immediate landscaping around the building being elevated with a concrete curb

above lowered parking facing Abercorn and Drayton Streets. (DR)

T17

Industrial Technical Professional Employees AFL-CIO Local 4873

2218-2226 Bull St. at 39th St.

A large two-story commercial block with four storefronts under a broad projecting awning. Central entry provides access for upstairs offices and meeting spaces. Continuous horizontal fixed windows extend around front corners while framing a commemorative union symbol over entry. Circular concrete posts frame the building's edges and central entry bay. Front façade features pastel Roman split-faced bricks while rear uses standard pressed red clay bricks. The American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO Savannah Local #20 is at 2224 with Salon Red Robin at 2226 and Jazzy Cutz Barber Shop at 2218. (DR)

T18

Boyz II Men Barber Shop

2302 Bull St. at 39th St.

Boyz II Men is a coolly assertive formalist single-story horizontal block with walls of vertically oriented cast-stone panels, and continuous horizontal clerestory windows under a projecting eave with sharp upward angled edge. An asymmetrically placed porch projects to the front and features a Japanese screen-like arrangement of polished marble alternating with glass and aluminum frames. Stairs on either side of this zigzag

screen provide interior access. The strong horizontal lines are accentuated through panels on the front wall that extend beyond the sidewalls, and a planter box that extends out from the entry porch. Strong details include textured aluminum panels where there are no clerestory windows and hanging lights from eave projection. Boyz II Men refers to the side entrance as the front and the façade facing Bull as the rear—so the number of barber stations becomes “twelve in the front and five in the back.” (DR)

E Victory Dr./Hwy. 80

US Highway 80/Dixie Overland Highway/Victory Drive/ former Estill Drive

1927 (DR)

Savannah's connection to the automobile is well told through Victory Drive. Used as a race track for some of the earliest Grand Prix races in 1908, the citizens of Savannah rallied for a transcontinental highway beginning in 1914, when the Automobile Club of Savannah conceived of the Dixie Overland Highway, an east-west road that would cut through the southern states from Atlantic to Pacific, an ambitious project that would not be realized until 1927. A desire for a profound World War One memorial, led to the renaming of Estill Avenue as Victory Drive in 1919, and the designation of palms along its median as memorials. Highway 80's connection to Tybee came in 1929 when the road there was completed. (DR)



T19

Blessed Sacrament

E. 44th at Chatham Crescent

1958

Bergen and Bergen

Located in the Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent Historic District, the c1958 Blessed Sacrament School was designed by noted Modernist William Bergen in perhaps his best design, rivaling even his best-known work, the seminal Drayton Arms Apartments. The school is an outstanding example of structural formalism in which the reinforced concrete frame of the building modulates the eight classrooms along the south façade – articulating the function of the respective parts of the building while the vertical fins and horizontal overhangs serve the double purpose of screening the metal and glass window walls of the classrooms from the sun. In addition, the stout corner tower serves the double purpose of housing the stairwell as well as identifying the main entrance to the building. The brick and glass curtain wall rooftop vestibule – with its para-

bolic concrete shell canopy- is not solely ornamental, but is an added feature meant to facilitate expansion of the school through the addition of a third floor. (RC)

T20

Daffin Park

Victory Drive and Waters Ave
1906
John Nolen

This eighty-acre park follows progressive reform era ideals of purposeful athletic activities cast in City Beautiful planning. Tennis courts, athletic fields and a grand Oak allee complement Grayson Stadium built in 1941, seating 8,000 and serving the Savannah Sand Gnats, a minor league class-A team in the South Atlantic League. (DR)

T21

WSAV-TV

1430 East Victory Dr.
1958-1960
Vernon H. Nowell and Bergen & Bergen

Strong asymmetrical composition with two-story projecting entry mass set in front of single-story extension on one side and two-story mass on other. Cast stone panels sheath concrete posts framing Savannah grey brick walls. A glass entrance is set in aluminum-framed windows. Clerestory windows extend continuously along single-story wing. Monumental television transmission tower and dish provide suitable technological emphasis as backdrop while a manicured green lawn and shrubs provide a pleasant suburban entry and setting for a low company billboard. (DR)

T22

Johnny Harris Restaurant

1651 East Victory Dr.
1936; 1944-5, Cletus Bergen; c.1960;
c.1975

Dating originally to 1924, when he opened a Bar-B-Que Stand on Victory Drive and Bee Rd., Johnny Harris's current structure dates first to 1936, when he opened an elegant supper club with a dramatic octagonal domed dining room seating 275. A central light-house feature worked as heating and air—some of the earliest in any southern restaurant. After Johnny's death in 1942, long-time employee Kermit "Red" Donaldson took over and Cletus Bergen drew plans for more

storage, and a larger bar in 1944, and the additions have just kept coming. After Red's death in 1969, his wife Maude and son Phil took over with the help of a brother-in-law Norman Heidt. The Johnny Harris Bar-B-Que sauce is a local favorite with a tangy mustard based flavor. (DR)

T23

LeBey Ranch

63rd St. at Battey Dr.

T24

63rd Street Fire Station

63rd at Paulson Street
1958
Bergen and Bergen

During the 1950s the father and son team of Cletus and William Bergen designed four fire stations for the city of Savannah. The Contemporary style Fire Station No. 8 opened on Bee Road in 1955 and was described in the Savannah Fire Department's Annual Report as "a bungalow type station of the latest design (L. Spracher and M. Johnson, 2007)." The Bergen's used a very similar design for their Fire Station No. 1, which was built in 1958 adjacent the new Medical Arts Center on the corner of 63rd and Paulsen Street. The flared gable ends of the central block that houses two fire trucks compliments the suburban-residential character of area while echoing the Eichler-inspired offices located nearby. (RC)

T25

Medical Arts Center

Bound by 63rd, Paulson, Waters Ave.
1957

Thomas, Driscoll, and Hutton Architects and
Engineers



The Medical Arts Center is a 10-acre campus of 30 Contemporary-style, Eichler-inspired offices for doctors and dentists built near the c1955 Abreu and Robinson-designed Memorial Medical Center. The campus consists of a series of frame, one story buildings of post and beam construction arranged in a random order of one, two and three unit offices with each featuring low pitched gable roofs with flared ends, overhanging eaves, heavy exposed rafter beams, clerestory windows, brick veneer exteriors, and decorative wrought iron porch supports. Some of the

office units also feature textured pattern brick and board and batten detailing, lattice screen brick walls, and open gable ends enclosed with glass. The individual offices of the L-shaped duplex and T-shaped triplex

units are all designed to share a common, open covered patio that doubles as an entry porch as well as an exterior waiting room with built in benches and plantings. (RC)

EARLY RANCH HOUSE DEVELOPMENT IN SAVANNAH

During the late 1940s the first ranch houses in Savannah were built on the two or three-dozen lots that remained in Ardsley Park, Chatham Crescent, and Ardmore – Savannah's first 20th century suburbs. Common characteristics of these early ranch houses include metal casement windows and the use of vintage Savannah Grey brick for exterior cladding. It was during this time that contractors first began to use recycled Savannah Grey brick in new construction, accelerating the demolition of 19th century carriage houses in downtown Savannah.



FIRST RANCH SUBDIVISIONS

Among Savannah's first post World War II two residential developments, **Abercorn Park (c1949)**, **Lamara Heights (c1949)**, **Abercorn Heights (c1950)**, **Brookwood (c1950)**, and

Manor Estates (c1950) represent, collectively, one of the earliest and most significant concentrations of ranch houses in Savannah. Additionally, these subdivisions were precedent-setting in Savannah due to the implementation of contemporary development practices espoused by the FHA, marking a transition between pre-war development and the Cold War era subdivisions of the early 1950s. Although the traditional use of the grid pattern plan of streets and rear access lanes continued to be utilized, these new subdivisions offered a variety of larger lot sizes, houses were set back farther from the street (as a result of the increased lot depth) and sidewalks were dispensed with. In addition, the expanded width and depth of the lots were ideal for the sprawling design of the ranch house. The plans for all of these subdivisions were designed and executed by the Savannah firm of **Thomas & Hutton, Engineers** (later **Thomas, Driscoll & Hutton, Architects and Engineers**)

Lamara Heights (c1949) was the largest ("150 large wooded lots") and most significant subdivision development of the late 1940s in Savannah and was located in the heart of Savannah's post-war area of development along Abercorn Street north of DeRenne Avenue. The new subdivision was developed by the **Lamara Company** – the same group that developed **Abercorn Park** in early 1949 and would later develop **Magnolia Park**

(c1954). The Lamara Company was one of the first land developers in Savannah to more fully embrace FHA principles by taking a multiple use approach in planning residential subdivisions – as seen in their plan for **Lamara Heights** (below), which included land for a grammar school (**J.G. Smith Elementary School c1950 – Oscar M. Hansen, AIA**), a "suburban business district" – **Lamar Height Shopping Center (c1950)**, and later, in 1950, a multi-family, 30 acre development of duplex bungalows, the FHA approved **Lamara Apartments**, just south of Lamara Heights along DeRenne Avenue.



Along with **Abercorn Terrace (c1947)** and the **Nelson Apartments (c1950)**, the Lamara Apartments provided affordable housing for young, growing middle class families in a suburban environment.
(RC)

SAVANNAH'S FIRST MID-CENTURY SUBDIVISIONS



Fairway Oaks (c1950), Groveland (1950), Kensington Park (1951; above), and Magnolia Park (1953) were the first upscale subdivisions in Savannah to fully adopt the FHA's preferred pattern for subdivision development, offering large wooded lots of varying shapes and sizes set among a series of curvilinear streets. All four of these subdivisions border DeRenne Avenue on the north and are located adjacent one another between Abercorn Street and Skidaway Road. Each of these subdivisions shared many common characteristics and was marketed in a similar way. A brochure created by the Lamara Company for Magnolia Park could easily be used to describe any of these subdivisions:

"Magnolia Park Subdivision has been created to fulfill (the) demand ... for better type

homes which (have) large lots and plenty of trees (paraphrase). For the first time in many years, an area strategically located directly in the path of the city's growth has been selected, planned, and developed to provide large home sites, each studded with magnificent trees, conveniently located to schools, shopping centers, and public transportation." (RC)

MAGNOLIA PARK

From a brochure created by the Lamara Company for Magnolia Park:

"Magnolia Park Subdivision has been created to fulfill (the) demand... for better type homes which (have) large lots and plenty of trees (paraphrase). For the first time in many years, an area strategically located directly in the path of the city's growth has been selected, planned, and developed to provide large home sites, each studded with magnificent trees, conveniently located to schools, shopping centers, and public transportation."

M1

Stumpf Residence

5507 Woodland Dr. at Spalding
Magnolia Park, 1954

John Ahern, Architect

Martin Smith, Builder

Restoration/renovation: Design by Celestino Piralla, Contractor, and TC Construction



This multiple award-winning home was designed in 1954 by architect John Ahern.

The home was vacant for the last 2 years prior to purchase and had been owned by the same family for 54 years. The home's origi-

nal design had been slightly altered, but most original features were the same as when build in 1955.

The home had not received upgrades or any substantial maintenance over the years, and needed major attention. New work included installation of new energy efficient systems, new casework and fixtures, correction of structural deficiencies, and construction of a new office and library space adjacent to a new pool. All features were designed in keeping with the design and spirit of the original design. Furnishings and artwork were chosen to compliment the original design, as well.



The owners "love the clean style and great design" of their Modern home.
(Information provided by Homeowner; Photos: Celestino Piralla/ CSCP CONSULT)

M2

Ahern/Bell Residence

1526 Spalding
Magnolia Park



1526 Spalding Road was designed and built in 1956 by architect John Ahern as his personal home. Ahern served as the principal architect for the Lamara Company, which built many of Savannah's midcentury developments, including Magnolia Park, Kensington Park and Fairway Oaks. The architect lived in the home for only two years before moving to Charleston, where he founded a successful home building company that exists to this day.

Following Ahern's departure, a single family, the Vanordstroms, owned the home for more than 40 years. The husband and wife were from Los Angeles, and they were friends with several stars of the time, who visited them and spent the night in the home. Among the visitors was Telly Savalas and, according to neighbors, Marilyn Monroe.



The couple and subsequent owners took very good care of the home, and conducted no major renovations. It remains largely intact. The present owners, Bret and Adrienne Bell enjoy the wide-open spaces and indoor-outdoor concept of this mid-century gem. It's perfect for entertaining and keeping an easy

eye on the wanderings of their 7-month-old Hal.

(Information provided by Homeowner)

GORDONSTON

Gordonston was developed in the late 19th century and was indicative of the "picturesque" subdivisions of the era - like Druid Hills in Atlanta; these were the first upscale suburbs and featured curvilinear streets and names like Elm, Oak, Sycamore, etc. Picturesque subdivisions were the pre-cursor to the ubiquitous mid-century subdivisions that developed across the US during the 1950s - the FHA adopted the 19th/early 20th century subdivision plan of the picturesque subdivision as their preferred model.

The Stacy House is located adjacent to the Gordonston subdivision.

G1

Stacy/Callahan Residence

1711 East Gwinnett Street
1958

Jack Stacy

Architect Jack Stacy built the house in 1958 for his wife Matilde and their growing family. Having outgrown their home in Sylvan Terrace, they moved into the 'big house' on Gwinnett Street, with five children and expecting another.



The move to the Gordonston area allowed the Stacys room to grow, and they ultimately had 10 children in all. It also put them within walking distance of the Savannah Golf Club, where the whole family enjoyed taking to the links.

The Stacys lived in the house for 38 years after having built it on land they had purchased from the Oelschigs, another Savan-

nah family. The Oelschigs had maintained their plant nursery on the property and adjacent pieces that include present-day Gordonston Bungalows. Long ago, the plot was a part of old Fort Brown; munitions were housed there and it saw action during Sherman's infamous Siege of Savannah in 1864.



He also created an at-home office on the ground level in order to conduct his design work from home-- the bracket for his business shingle still hangs outside of the office door, in fact. With his office just downstairs, he was able to work from home and assist in sharing kid-related chores with his wife, who "just had to have a break once in a while". In fact, it is said that Jack fed his children breakfast every morning at the 9-foot long counter separating the kitchen and family room.

(Information provided by homeowner)

FAIRWAY OAKS-GREENVIEW HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Fairway Oaks-Greenview Historic District in Savannah was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on March 31, 2009. It is the first mid-20th-century suburban residential district to be listed in the National Register in Georgia and one of just a few in the nation.

The district consists of two contiguous and historically related suburban residential subdivisions and was a precedent-setting mid-20th-century suburban residential development in Savannah. The earlier and larger subdivision is Fairway Oaks; it was developed between 1950 and 1957. Development of the adjacent Greenview subdivision was begun in 1956 and continued into the early 1960s.

Fairway Oaks was the first mid-20th-century suburban residential development to feature the new-to-Savannah curvilinear street layout with cul-de-sacs. The development was also the first “up-scale” suburban development in the Savannah area to successfully capitalize on new ideas about “country” living in the suburbs and a “country-club” lifestyle fostered by proximity to a county park and golf course. In doing so, it broke with Savannah’s 200-year tradition of gridiron-plan development based on the 1733 Oglethorpe plan. The development’s high visibility and success set precedents for subsequent suburban developments. The neighborhood’s homeowner association, the Fairway Oaks Association, was one of the earliest such organizations in Savannah and Georgia.

The district contains what is believed to be one of the best collections of mid-20th-century houses in Savannah, including excellent and representative examples of American Small Houses, Ranch Houses, Split Levels, and two-story traditionals. The most prevalent architectural style is Colonial Revival; Modern and Contemporary styles are also present. Following national trends, Ranch Houses predominate, comprising nearly two-thirds of the housing stock. The district also contains important house designs by noted local and regional architects.

The district contains several important house designs by noted local and regional architects such as Mark Hampton of Tampa, FL, Carl Helfrich, Juan Carlos Bertotto, and John LeBey.



Architectural Review Magazine awarded the Weiss House, designed by internationally renowned architect Mark Garrison Hampton, FAIA, of Tampa, Florida, “outstanding design in steel construction” for 1959. Hampton is known throughout the nation and world as one of the principal practitioners of “Florida Modernism”, a regional style developed and popularized by a group of young, innovative

modern architects working on Florida’s Central Gulf Coast between 1941 and 1966 who are collectively known as the “Sarasota School of Architecture.” Hampton is known throughout the state of Florida and region for his designs of schools, churches, office and commercial buildings, and residences.

(RC)

Note that residences in this district are not open to the public for this tour.

F1

Weiss Residence

5606 Sweetbriar Circle
Mark Garrison Hampton, FAIA
1958

F2

Fleur-de-Lis Residence

5606 Sweetbriar Circle

F3

Residence

5714 Sweetbriar Circle

KENSINGTON PARK

John C. Wylly and Emanuel Javetz developed Kensington Park in 1950-51 from land that originally made up Kensington Farms (a section of the antebellum Kensington Plantation). Thomas and Hutton designed the subdivision master plan.



The first houses in the subdivision were speculatively built houses designed by architect Richard S. Thomas for McIntosh and Company. (RC)

Note that residences in this district are not open to the public for this tour.

K1

Residence

5552 Camelot

K2

Residence

5555 Camelot

MANOR ESTATES

ME1

Former Daniel L. Grantham Residence

111 Brandywine Road off Abercorn

Daniel L. Grantham

1956

The later half of the most modern corner in Savannah, Daniel L. Grantham designed his own residence as a seemingly modest flat-roofed ranch house with exposed brick walls at ends and center framing board and batten siding and a slightly recessed glass and wood entry bay and a side car port. The excitement comes as one approaches the entrance and notices a pool pass from exterior to interior, and the as one enters the bold open spaces of the interior. What was originally an L-shaped plan has been sympathetically added to form a U-plan allowing dramatic architectural vistas in every direction. (DR)

ABOUT HELFRICH AND GRANTHAM

During the early 1950s, Helfrich and Grantham was among the more prolific architectural firms in Savannah, contributing the designs for memorable buildings throughout downtown Savannah, including the c1955 Savannah Blue Print Building on York Street, c1953 auditorium/cafeteria for St. Vincent's Academy on Liberty Street, and the c1950 remodeling of the Savannah Theater on Chippewa Square, in addition to office buildings, bank branch offices, and several residences in its then nascent suburbs. Among the residences Hel-

frich and Grantham designed during this period are the Hunter/Harvey House at 109 Brandywine Road (c1950) in Manor Estates – which appears reminiscent of Frank Sinatra's Palm Beach residence, the c1947 "Twin Palms", and the somewhat "Contemporary-oriental" Kaminsky-Edel House (c1950) on 65th Street in Brookwood Annex. Daniel L. Grantham designed 111 Brandywine Road as his personal residence. (RC)

ME2

Former Phillip Hunter/Sim Harvey Residence

109 Brandywine Road off Abercorn,

1950

Carl Edward Helfrich and Daniel L. Grantham

Vying for the most extreme horizontal stretch of any Savannah ranch house, this premier Helfrich and Grantham composition features a powerful projecting eave over a subtly modulated front façade with a slightly projecting stucco bay, set-back walls of vertical board and batten, and a massive Tennessee quartzite chimney stack marking the slightly recessed entry. Varying lengths of clerestory ribbon windows slice high along walls and alternate with a larger window wall serving the kitchen. A terraced treatment of terrazzo floors define interior spatial arrangements, while wall-to-wall floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors embrace the large wooded lot and allow admiring views of the house's L-shaped plan. (DR)

LANE RESIDENCE

L1

Richard Lane House

Former Bob Kaminsky House

65th and Abercorn

1962

Carl Edward Helfrich



This house has it all. Sitting well back on its generous lot allows for a dramatic carport drive on busy Abercorn St., while the side entrance on 65th is set back at the rear of a Japanese- like landscape. The house itself elevates off the ground with a low-cantilevered main floor and wide eaves emphasize dramatic horizontal breadth. Uniform tan glazed brick walls set in running bond frame window walls featuring abstract geometric patterns. Numerous details enliven the design from Asian-inspired dragon door hardware, to inset art-stone sculptural reliefs reminiscent of Aztec calendars to freestanding metal screens and a notable cantilevered entrance pergola at the rear. The interior boasts a central courtyard open with sliding glass doors to all surrounding spaces. (DR)

MORE TO EXPLORE ON YOUR OWN

Oglethorpe Plaza

Boundary and West Oglethorpe Ave.

Named by Joseph Griffin, the director of the Housing Authority of Savannah, the “first planned industrial and commercial area in Savannah,” what was first referred to as Area 29 and then as Oglethorpe Plaze included the Greyhound bus station, the visitors’ center, the Econolodge Motel and the Howard Johnson’s Motor Hotel and Restaurant. The basic idea behind the revitalization of this area was to present an attractive face for the city to visitors coming across the newly completed Talmadge Bridge of 1954. (DR)

The Thunderbird Inn

611 West Oglethorpe Ave.
1964



One of the few examples of googie architecture in Savannah, the Thunderbird Inn stood as one of several mid-century commercial buildings greeting automobile travelers arriving from the newly completed Talmadge Bridge from South Carolina. The sleek cantilever extending from the main office, concrete block construction, and large glass panels set in aluminum frames brought technological innovations of the Modern Age to Savannah. The raised geometric design on the north façades closest to the street and the repetition of primary colored panels recalls contemporary trends in Modern art, such as the more adventurous work of Frank Lloyd Wright or even the prints of Andy Warhol.

The Thunderbird was built in 1964 by Stanly Fulghum, as part of a small regional chain, at a time when the number of motels in the US had reached a peak at sixty-one thousand. In the early decades of the automobile, cabin camps and cottage courts had provided accommodations for travelers. Grouped in increasingly standardized configurations, the motor courts were gradually connected in single-story buildings with a walkway along the front. The motor inn of the 1950s was a further development of the motel, often two to three stories focused on a central courtyard.

The Inn opened at a time when the number of rooms in motels was increasing, making it difficult for owners to afford the cost of construction. As start-up costs rose, the number of individually owned and operated motels fell and large chains began to take over. The Thunderbird’s location on Oglethorpe Avenue, a major route into town via Highway 17 and the Talmadge Bridge, and proximity to the Greyhound and Trailways Bus Station made it a successful venture. The development of Interstate 16 between 1966 and 1978, which drew traffic directly downtown, and the construction of numerous motels and motor lodges of a similar architecture character, including the very first Howard Johnson Motor Lodge, put the Thunderbird Inn at the center of a new type of architectural landscape characterized by the use of dramatic forms, eye-catching colors, and neon signs. While the Thunderbird continues to be a popular inn for Savannah’s tourists, the other mid-century motels nearby have become dorms for students of the Savannah College of Art and Design. (MCG and DR)

SCAD Turner Annex/former Howard Johnson’s Motor Lodge

224 W. Boundary St.
1960

During the postwar era, Howard Johnson became one of the nation’s leading franchisers of motels as part of a swiping transfor-

mation of the industry from small, independently owned establishments to much larger ones with more or less uniform attributes. The company began this aspect of its business in 1954 and boasted seventy-one outlets. The assurances of quality that had made its restaurants defining features of highway travel contributed much to the rapid rise of Howard Johnson's Motor Lodges. Constructed in the early 1960s, this downtown Savannah example embodies what had become standard characteristics in the type's fast-paced evolution. In contrast to configurations standard through the mid-to-late 1950s, this complex has its rooms opening off a central hall in paired, two-story buildings, set at right angles to one another, facing an enclosed court and swimming pool. Both the arrangement and the details of the design were developed to suggest a more relaxed, private, and luxurious setting than was generally associated with motels at that time. The other distinguishing component, which functioned as a corporate emblem, at once differentiating Howard Johnson's from other establishments, was the crossed A-frame lobby, finished with the orange-tile rood and cupola that conspicuously identified the restaurants.

While once ubiquitous, examples of Howard Johnson's from the period that have not experienced extensive modifications have become quite rare. This remains as a telling

example, prominently placed along a corridor that was once a primary north-south route for tourists. (RL) The very first Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge can still be seen on Ogeechee Rd. or Highway 17, the old coastal highway that predated Interstate 95—It is now a Budget Inn, located at approximately 3824 Ogeechee Rd./Highway 17. (RL with DR)

Former Greyhound Bus Depot

109 MLK, Jr. Blvd
1939

George D. Brown

The former Greyhound Bus Depot was constructed c. 1939 as part of a major building campaign by what had become the nation's overwhelmingly dominant highway passenger carrier. Greyhound's meteoric rise in the 1930s was spurred in large part by its capturing a huge rural and small-town trade not adequately served, or not served at all, by railroads. The bus depot emerged as a major gateway to cities nationwide, second only to the railroad station in its role as a portal.

The Savannah depot was one of many constructed for Greyhound in southern states during this expansive period. More than any other carrier, Greyhound sought to embody its important function in its buildings, making them not only visually distinctive, but symbols of the new era of mass transportation

the company helped create. Greyhound executives saw the depot as a veritable extension of their streamlined buses. Everything about these designs was to exude modernity, sleekness, efficiency, and cleanliness. Few other commercial buildings of the period were more exuberant displays of the intended function.

The architect of Savannah's Greyhound Depot was George D. Brown of Charleston, West Virginia, who along with the Louisville-based Wischmeyer, Arrasmith & Elstwick and New York-based Thomas Lamb, was responsible for most of these buildings east of the Mississippi. Brown's work for Greyhound was concentrated in the South. Along with Savannah, he designed depots in Atlanta (1938); Charleston, South Carolina (1938); Charleston, West Virginia (1936); Columbia, South Carolina (1939); and Spartanburg, South Carolina (1940), among other cities.

Savannah's depot has barely survived intact. While just a few years it served as an exemplary demonstration of how buildings can display their age gracefully while being adapted to competitive new uses, it is today only a haunting evocation of its former self. The only apparent major structural loss has been the vertical sign that rose as an extension of the canopy. The loss does not substantially detract, however, from the significance of the building as one of the city's best

examples of streamline modernism and one of the South's most intact examples of a bus depot from the pre-World War II years. (RL with DR)

Trailways Bus Depot

W. Oglethorpe Ave.
1964

SCAD Dyson/former Holiday Inn

Boundary St., 1962

Located directly across from Howard Johnson's in the shadow of the first Talmadge Bridge opened September 1, 1954

**SCAD Weston Houses/former Weston Motel;
Ramada Inn**

Boundary St.
1972

Former Georgia Visitor Center

1963



A classic googie octagonal structure with integral arched overhangs. Georgia's first visitor center opened in 1962 in Sylvania on U.S.301, and was only the second in the nation.

Former Savannah Pharmacy Co.



916 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
1965

Gene Maxwell

In the early twentieth century, the majority of the one hundred and seventy-seven black-owned businesses in Savannah downtown were found along West Broad Street, making it the heart of the African American community. Among these was the Savannah Pharmacy Co., designed in 1965 by local architect Gene Maxwell, as part of a program of urban renewal. Dr. Joseph Earl Fonvielle purchased the pharmacy with Dr. Walter 1915, making it Savannah's second oldest black-owned business. The Savannah Chapter of the NAACP was among its original tenants. Architecturally, the pharmacy is representative of blending of 1960s New Formalism with more popular commercial overtones. Large repeated hexagons framed patterned screens allowing light and air to pass into the second story walkway. Its boldly geometric silhouette set a mark for modernity on Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. (DR)

Randolph Brooks House

1234 Lawndale Drive, Greenview Subdivision

c1964

Juan Carlos Bertotto

Juan Bertotto designed the Contemporary style house at 1234 Lawndale Drive in 1964 for Randolph Brooks, Vice President of the Liberty National Bank and Trust. The L-shaped building features a low pitched roof with flared gables, overhanging eaves, open gable ends enclosed with glass, heavy exposed rafter beams, and a textured orange brick exterior that is accentuated with an intended over-application of mortar. A brick-walled courtyard on the southeast corner features palisade-like extensions that lend a militant air to the overall design. In addition to the campus of Benedictine Military School and Priory (c1963), Bertotto also designed the Chatham County Health Department (c1962) and the U.S. Army Reserve Center (c1961), both located on Eisenhower Drive. During the late 1980s and early 1990s Bertotto was a professor of architecture at the Savannah College of Art and Design. (RC)

LUNCH OPTIONS ON YOUR OWN

Please keep schedule in mind when making choices for lunch – and note that there are many options in the Medical Arts area, in addition those noted here.

DOWNTOWN

DeSoto Grille (buffet)

DeSoto Hilton

Crystal Beer Parlor

Opened 1933

301 W. Jones St. at Jefferson

Forsyth Park Café

Forsyth Park

MIDTOWN

Sammie Greens

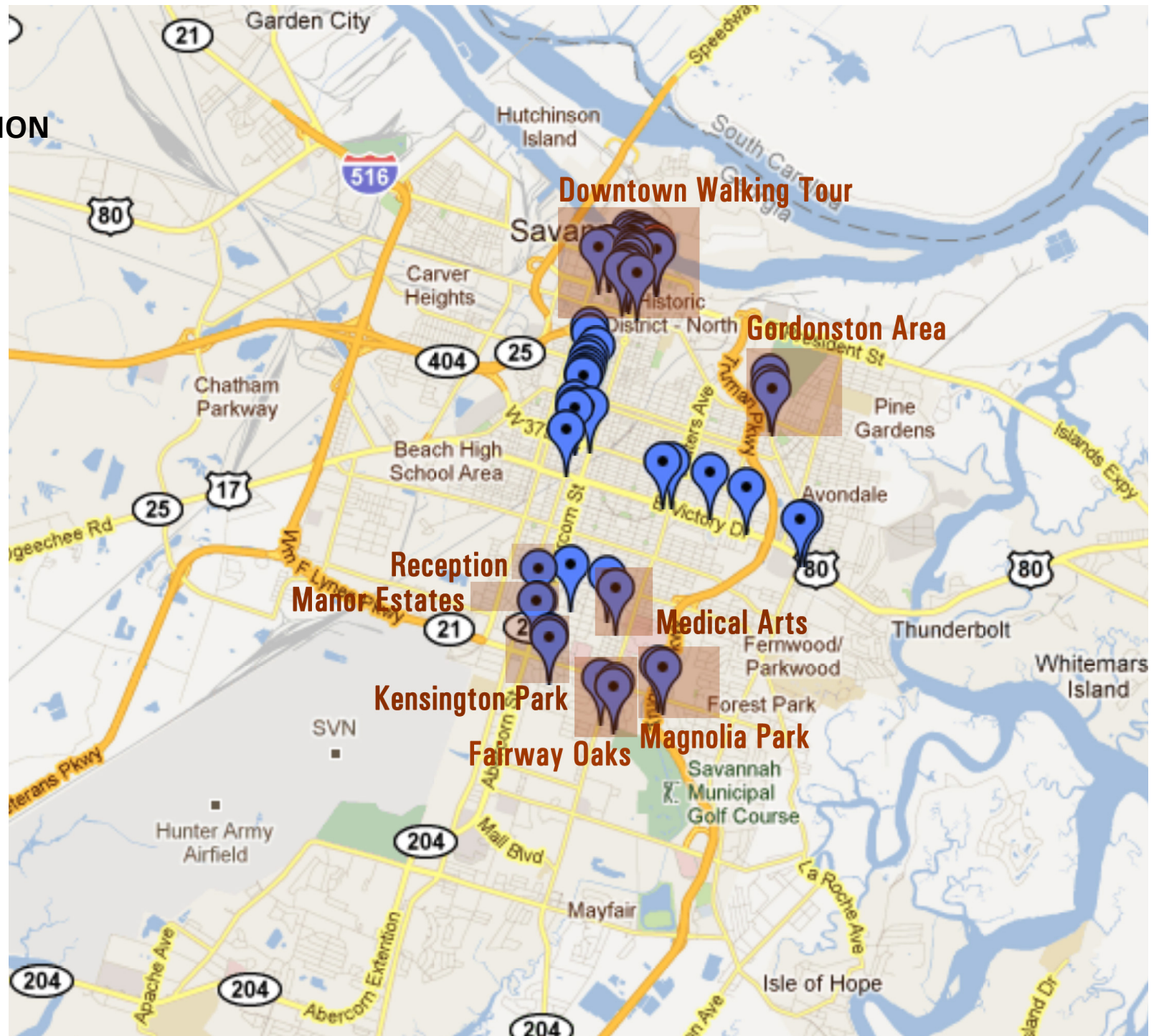
1710 Abercorn Street (between 33rd
and 34th Streets)

SOUTHSIDE/Medical Arts

Blue Turtle Bistro

5002 Paulsen St.

**ORIENTATION
MAP**

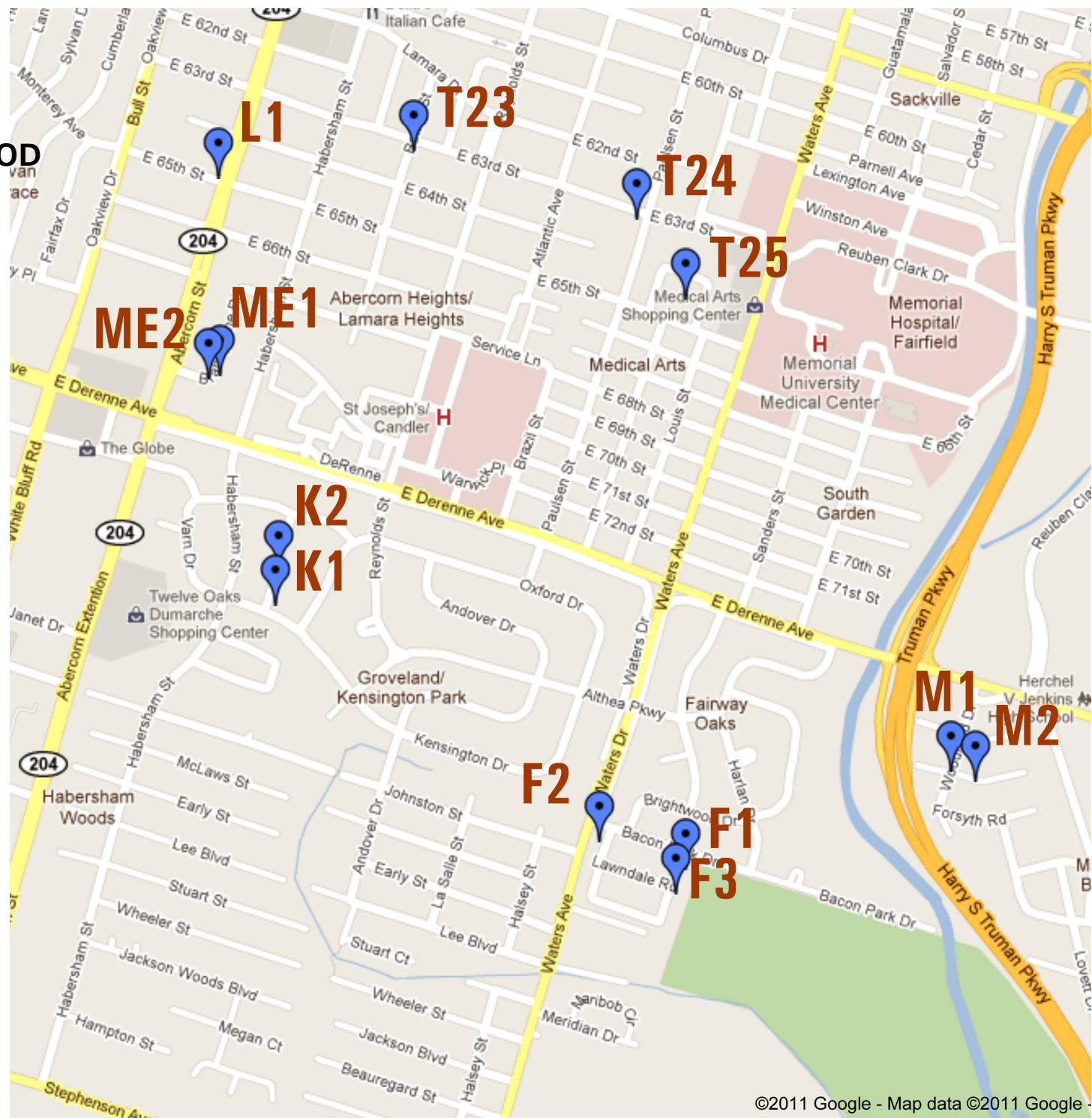


This map of Savannah, Georgia, illustrates a scavenger hunt route. The route is marked by 26 numbered pins: a red pin for 'D1 - Start Here' and 25 blue pins for 'D2' through 'D26'. The route begins in the downtown area near the Lucas Theatre for the Arts and winds through various streets, including W Bay St, E Bay St, W Liberty St, and E Liberty St. Key landmarks and squares such as Ellis Square, Telfair Square, Chippewa Square, and Lafayette Square are visible. The route concludes near the Savannah College of Art and Design. Major streets are highlighted in yellow, and the Savannah River is visible in the upper right corner.

TRANSITIONAL TOUR MAP



NEIGHBORHOOD TOUR MAP



**GORDONSTON
AREA
MAP**

