

Prepared for The City of Ahira, Georgia
By The Georgia Institute of Technology
February 1995

Ahira, Georgia
Historic District

Design Guidelines

APPENDIX A:

Urban Design Goals: Historic District

Hahira is located in North Lowndes County and was incorporated into a City on October 2, 1891, receiving the approval of the Assembly of Georgia. Hahira has two major state roads that cross at the center of town (State Highway 7 or U.S. Highway 41 and State Highway 122) and they establish the dominant development patterns of the City. The Norfolk-Southern Railway that transverses Hahira on a north-south axis paralleling U.S. Highway 41 constitutes another important feature of the City's historic environment. These three elements together represent critical features in the historic district that command special design consideration. It is from this background that the Urban Design Guidelines have been generated.

1. Avoid demolishing buildings that contribute to the historic character of the district. With emphasis on rehabilitating commercial and civic buildings in the central business district. Consider ways to preserve agricultural elements such as the tobacco warehouses or grain storage structures which represent important aspects of the City's history.
2. Build on the existing character of the historic district. Give special attention to Church Street, Main Street and the Railroad Corridor and the adjacent buildings. Maintaining the strength of the street "wall" in the CBD.
3. Respect the boundary between the commercial areas and the surrounding neighborhoods. With special consideration for "buffer" landscape zones between conflicting land uses.
4. Respect the architectural character of the historic district when designing new buildings adjacent to the district.
5. Encourage changes that will improve the historic district for pedestrian use. Including maintaining sidewalks and controlling traffic.
6. Consider development of open space and parks to be used by pedestrians in the district. Placing emphasis on prominent locations along Church Street, Main Street, and the Railroad Corridor.
7. Strengthen the definition of the entrances and boundaries of the historic district. Possibilities include special civic signs and/or landscaping where opportunities exist.
8. Emphasize important civic buildings in the historic district. City Hall and The Chamber of Commerce buildings represent unique possibilities.
9. Maintain the emphasis on attractive and well maintained landscaping within the district.
10. Respect the existing physical street patterns and lot orientation of the historic district.

Design Guidelines for New Construction:

New construction or building additions within the historic district fall into one of four categories: 1: commercial, 2: institutional, 3: transitional, 4: residential. These categorical zones are drawn on the historic district map and defined on the design guideline sheets. Each zone within the historic district has specific guidelines for design, and once the zone is determined, design and construction should adhere to the specific guidelines of that zone. Refer to the historic district map and design guideline sheets to determine zone and appropriate design considerations.

The purpose of the design guidelines for new construction and additions is to assist in the design and construction of contemporary buildings that will be located on undeveloped land located within the historic district, or additions that will be added to historic buildings. Each category describes a typical building type within the historic district that requires special attention. All types of new construction should be reviewed to determine the appropriateness, compatibility, and impact of the proposed work on the existing historic building and district.

It is important for the design of new buildings or additions to respect the historic context in which they will be located. The historic character of the district is derived from the collective elements of properties in the district: buildings, streets, sidewalks, and landscaping. The character of specific properties is derived from the form, details, materials, and landscaping of the specific building.

The important concern in each zone is that new buildings or additions relate in terms of: height/width, setback/spacing, massing, placement, materials, and landscaping of the adjacent buildings within the historic district. The design of new buildings should be influenced by the character of the district and should include not only the building, but also the site design and landscape treatment.

New construction or additions should not be of such type, size, or design as to detract from the historic character of the area in which it is located, nor should it alter, damage, or destroy significant site or streetscape elements located within the district or on the property.

The guidelines are designed to "guide" decisions, not dictate them. The issues represented within the guidelines themselves are only a set of principles and recommendations and are not intended to be a set of strictly followed laws. The Architectural Review Board should adhere to the intent of the guidelines and interpret them generally. The purpose is not to be overly specific nor intended to encourage copying or mimicking particular historic styles, but to provide a general design framework for new construction. The zoning ordinance provides more specific regulations and property owners should consult both the zoning ordinance and the subdivision ordinance of the City before undertaking any building projects within these districts.

Appendix: D

Design Guidelines for Building Rehabilitation:

The guidelines outlined are based on The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. These guidelines first developed in 1979, have been expanded and refined, most recently in 1990. They are used by the National Park Service to determine if the rehabilitation of a historic building has been undertaken in a manner sensitive to its historic integrity. By nature these guidelines are very broad since they apply to the rehabilitation of any contributing building in any historic district.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features of architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

General References:

The National Park Service
Preservation Assistance Division
Technical Preservation Services
P.O. Box 37127
Washington D.C. 20013-7127
(202) 343-9573

The National Trust for Historic
Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 673-4000

State:

The Department of Natural Resources
Office of Historic Preservation
205 Butler Street, S.E.
Suite 1462
Atlanta, GA 30334
(404) 656-2840

South Georgia Regional Development
Center
327 West Savannah Avenue
Valdosta, GA 31603
(912) 333-5277

Local:

City of Habira
City Hall
Habira, GA 31632

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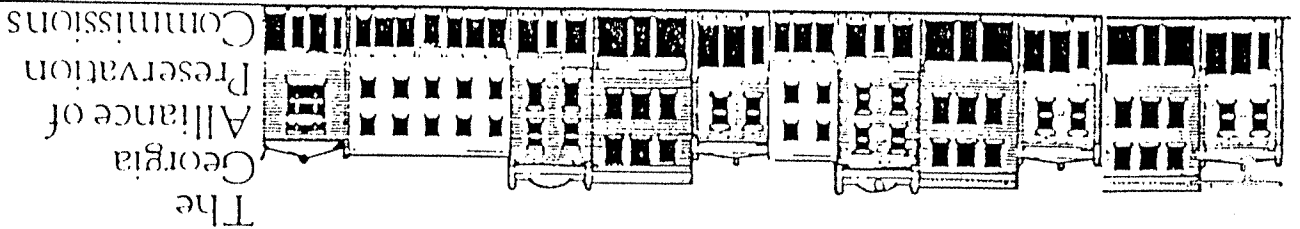
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What it means to adopt a preservation ordinance

A preservation ordinance:

1. provides a municipal policy for the protection of historic properties
2. establishes an objective and democratic process for designating historic properties
3. protects the integrity of designated historic properties with a design review requirement
4. authorizes design guidelines for new development within historic districts to ensure that it is not destructive to the area's historic character
5. stabilizes declining neighborhoods and protects and enhances property values.

A preservation ordinance DOES NOT:

1. require permission to paint your house or review color selection
2. require that historic properties be opened for tours
3. restrict sale of property
4. require improvements, changes or restoration of your property
5. require approval of interior changes or alterations
6. prevent new construction within historic areas
7. require approval for ordinary repair or maintenance

Four Essential Components of Success in Establishing Local Historic Districts

- 1.) You must be covered on the ISSUES and address them appropriately and adequately.
- 2.) You must have the NUMBERS: a majority in support.
- 3.) You must have positive, or at least objective, PRESS coverage.
- 4.) You must have POLITICAL CONNECTIONS, or at least some feel for decision-makers' views so you know how to lobby them.

*NUMBERS are *sine qua non*. They are essential.

*Decision-makers pay more attention to the PRESS than property owners or planning staff. *Addressing the ISSUES convincingly helps to get the numbers and the press on your side. *But the DECISION-MAKING POLITICIANS don't base their decisions on the issues: they simply use the issues to justify the way they vote, which is actually based on the degree of support or opposition they perceive and public opinion portrayed by the press.

Addressing the ISSUES convincingly can help get the numbers of supporters needed but you need to be aware of how answering QUESTIONS plays out in the process.

There are two main categories of "questioners" of historic district issues: 1.) the unconvinced but conceivable:

a.) fence sitters- property owners who are either not fully informed, have been misinformed by opponents, or misunderstand what they've heard about other districts: They raise questions which can answered persuasively.

Fence-sitters also include members of decision-making and governing bodies - their decisions are based on the numbers, degree of support, perception of fairness and attention paid to due process. Among their concerns are lawsuits and getting rejected. They are often developers or realtors themselves and don't want to step on the toes of their colleagues and supporters. Therefore they must be convinced that the proposal is not anti-development, and could facilitate compatible development.

2.) the unconvincible:

a.) true opponents who are against the historic district concept in

principle because they see it as a violation of property rights. "I bought it, paid for it, it's mine, and you can't tell me what to do with it." They have had a bad experience with or don't believe in any government intervention. (These opponents include private property owners as well as decision-making members of the local government.) They raise questions as obstructions to be finessed by proponents.

b.) property owners who have personal conflicts with and personal grudges against supporters of the proposal and resent any newcomers or the "younger set." (not to be overlooked nor their vehemence underestimated). Be careful of the self-righteous, "I know what's best for your land better than you do attitude." This attitude can also be interpreted as "I don't trust your judgment."

c.) those who are followers and have loyalty to friends who are opponents. (This works both ways - it happens on the proponents' side also.)

Summary of Strategy to Manage Opposition to Local Historic District Designation

1.) Best way to handle opposition is through a series of community-wide open meetings, where everyone has a chance to speak or ask questions. Invite different speakers to each: NCDAH-SHPD, professional planners from your own and other jurisdictions, professional moderators.

2.) Keep detailed and accurate records of opponents' opportunities to speak and challenge, because they will deny that they were properly and adequately informed or that due process was accorded them.

3.) Community meetings provide opportunities to:

a.) know the opposition's claims and charges before they are presented at public hearings; therefore, allowing the opportunity to formulate responses ahead of time.

b.) to persuade the unconvinced

c.) to refine your own arguments and perspectives

4.) Therefore, welcome opposition's questions, keep the to the "high road" in your responses and don't become entrapped in a futile argument that makes you appear defensive or condescending. You will then come across as very rational and reasonable, and your plan well-conceived. By contrast, irate opponents unwilling to listen to reason will appear irrational.

5.) Invite the press to get to the bottom of the pros and cons of the issues. Ask a reporter to do an investigative report.

6.) Use public hearings to showcase your respectful attitude toward the opposition, but don't chase their rhetorical questions or accusations. Use hearings to make the case for historic preservation and the merits of the proposed district, and let the opposition carp in their pantings. Then you will have the necessary components to win what is a political contest that will not ultimately be decided on bona fide historic preservation issues.

CITIES AND COUNTIES WITH HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCES

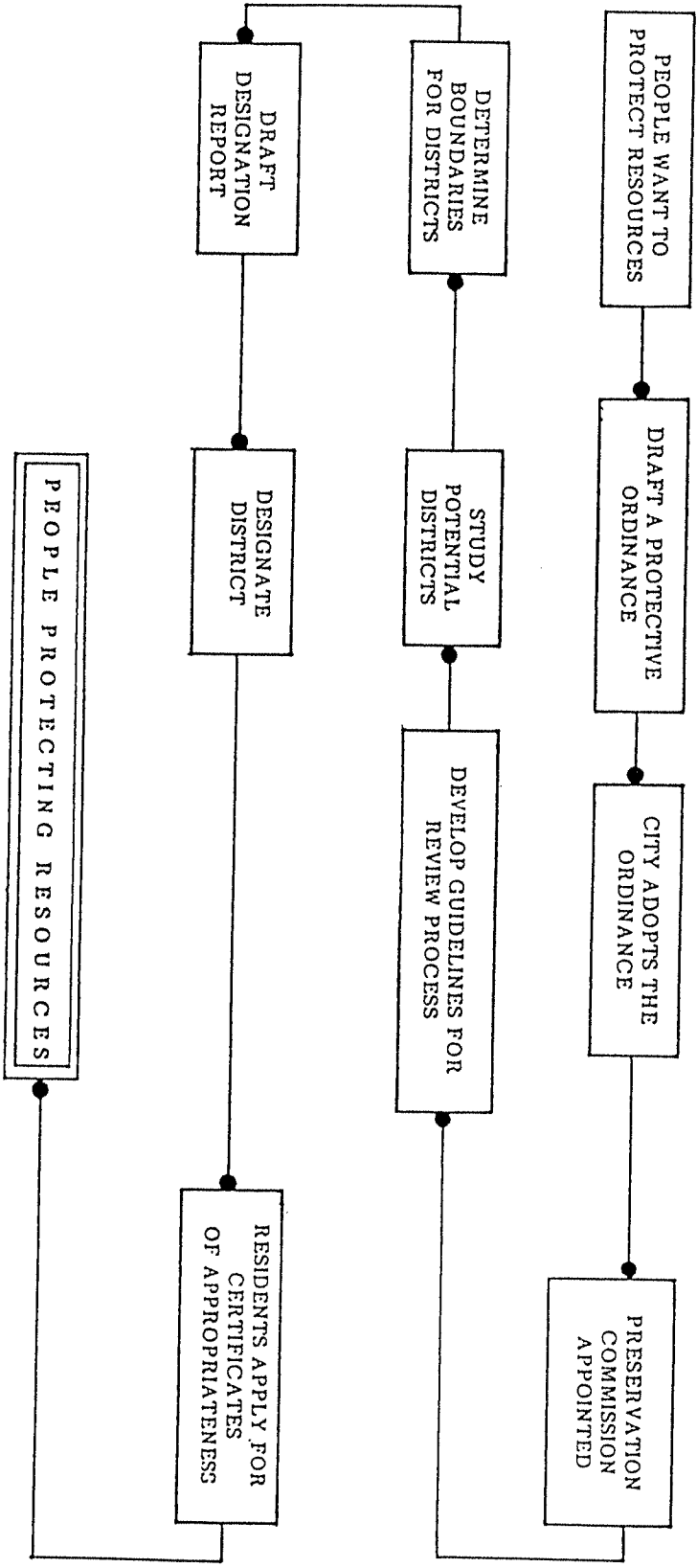
October 1994

<p>Lexington* 35. Lincolnton 36. Ludowici 37. Macon 38. Madison* 39. Marietta 40. Marshallville* 41. McDonough 42. McDuffie County 43. McIntosh County 44. Milledgeville* 45. Monroe* 46. Monticello* 47. Moreland 48. Moultrie* 49. Oxford 50. Plains* 51. Reidsville 52. Richmond County* 53. Rome 54. Roopville 55. Roswell* 56. Savannah 57. Social Circle 58. St. Marys* 59. Stone Mountain 60. Thomaston* 61. Thomasville* 62. Tifton* 63. Troup County* 64. Valdosta* 65. Waycross 66. Wayne County (Joint HPC) 67. West Point* 68. Winder* 69.</p>	<p>Albany-Dougherty 1. Americus 2. Ashburn* 3. Athens-Clarke County* 4. Atlanta* 5. Augusta* 6. Avondale Estates* 7. Bowdon 8. Carrollton* 9. Cedartown* 10. Cobb County* 11. Colquitt 12. Columbus* 13. Conyers* 14. Dahlonega 15. Dalton* 16. Darien* 17. Decatur* 18. DeKalb County 19. Dublin 20. Eatonton 21. Elberton* 22. Euhannee 23. Fitzgerald* 24. Fort Oglethorpe* 25. Fort Valley 26. Grantville* 27. Hartwell* 28. Hard County* 29. Hogansville* 30. Jackson 31. Jefferson* 32. Jones County 33. Kennesaw 34.</p>
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* INDICATES CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (39)
** CLG STATUS PENDING

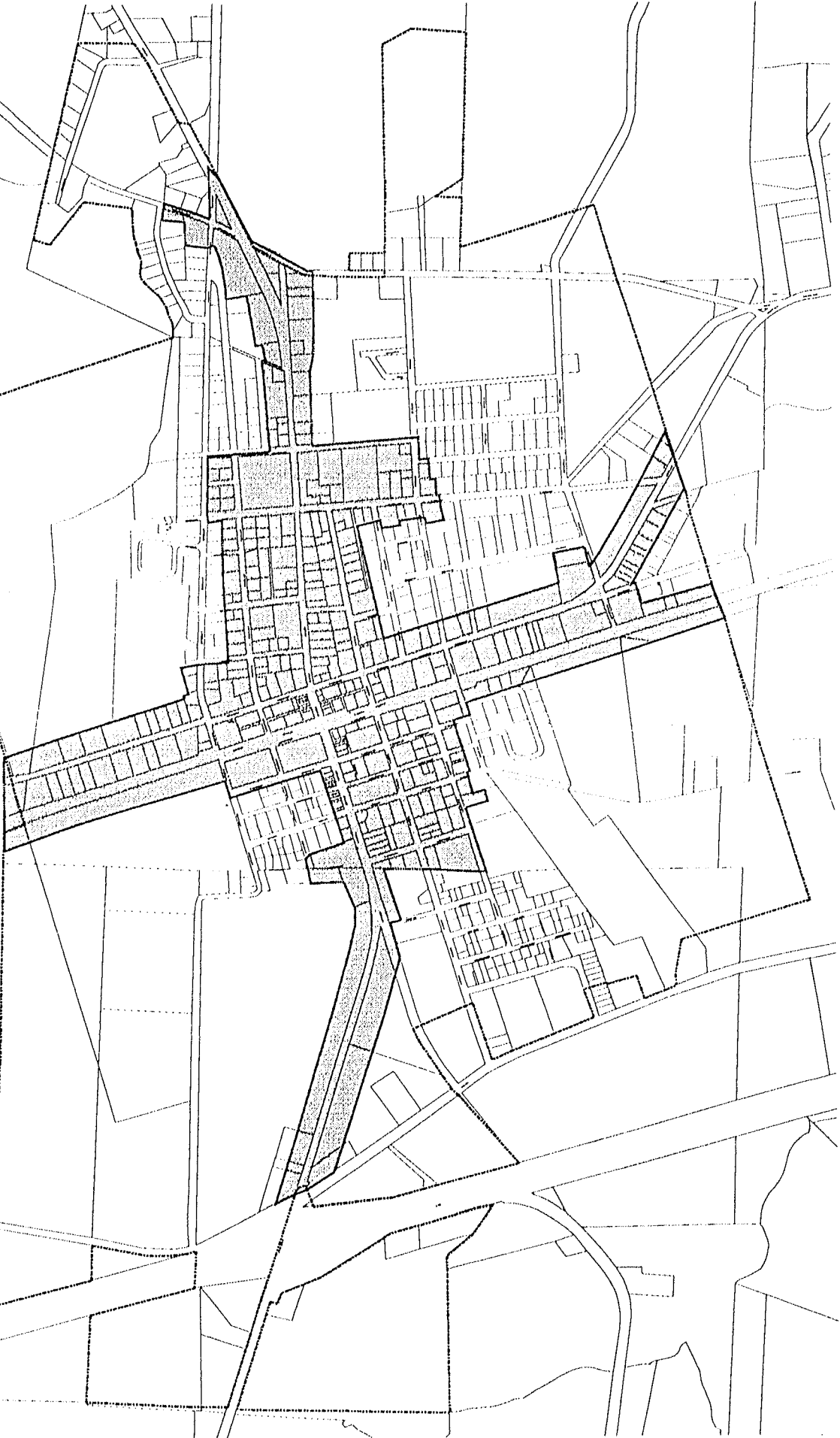
GEORGIA ALLIANCE OF PRESERVATION COMMISSIONS

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT THE NEIGHBORHOOD? - OR - HOW DO ORDINANCES WORK?



PROPOSED - REDIRECTED

City of Hahira
Historic Preservation District



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 Jacksonville, Florida
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