

WAGNER HEIGHTS

HABS No. GA-2276

Bounded by Wheaton Street on the South, Hillcrest Cemetery  
on the North, Adair Street on the West, Catholic Cemetery on the East  
Savannah  
Chatham County  
Georgia

HABS  
GA-2276

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Southeast Region  
Department of the Interior  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### WAGNER HEIGHTS

HABS No. GA-2276

Location: The Wagner Heights neighborhood is bounded by Wheaton Street on the south, Hillcrest Cemetery on the north, Adair Street on the west and the Catholic Cemetery on the east in Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia.

USGS Savannah 7.5' Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates general for the area:  
Zone 17, Northing 3,546,200, Easting 493,040

Significance: The Wagner Height neighborhood is historically significant due to the history of its development as demonstrated by its architecture. It represents an example of early twentieth century urban residential development.

PART I: PHYSICAL SETTING OF THE WAGNER HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD

The Wagner Heights neighborhood is located in Savannah, Georgia. The neighborhood is located on former agricultural lands, south of the Savannah River and east of the original town of Savannah. The area, located on a slight knoll thirty feet above sea level, is primarily flat and sparsely vegetated. The area north of the neighborhood is occupied by Hillcrest Cemetery, and vacant marshy fields formerly cultivated. Historic and modern residential and commercial development lie south of the neighborhood on Wheaton Street.

PART II: HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WAGNER HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD

The individual historic residences within the Wagner Heights neighborhood are examples of historic architectural resources found in early twentieth century residential neighborhoods in Savannah and other urban areas in the United States. Piecemeal residential development occurred in other areas within Savannah and typifies modern subdivision development. The resources within these neighborhoods represent disparate time periods and styles and are not unified by a common developer, contractor or artisan. This type of development followed in the wake of the early planned suburbs emerging in U.S. cities (c. 1880s until World War I) which focused on urban housing in pastoral or park-like setting, largely for the emerging middle-class urban homeowner. In areas similar to Wagner Heights, developers subdivided housing lots and built homes close together, creating irregular housing patterns with a mixture of old and newer housing styles, often geared towards working class buyers. The Wagner Heights neighborhood typifies this type of growth and exhibits varied housing styles, lot sizes and changing class status.

The Wagner Heights residences are examples of early twentieth century residential architecture in Savannah, spanning the period 1912 to 1935. The Wagner Heights neighborhood is situated on land originally owned by the Wagner and Mastick families, who presumably operated plantations. The George Wagner's Sons Company operated a greenhouse operation in the area of Henrietta Street within the current neighborhood as late as 1916. In 1912, Carl Mendel of Mendel Real Estate Company requested a survey of the property located north of Thunderbolt Road (currently Wheaton Street) and south of the Hillcrest Cemetery. This survey subsequently subdivided the majority of the property into uniform housing lots measuring thirty feet by one hundred feet. The original streets, Wagner, Mastick, Adair,

Helmken, and Henrietta incorporated the names of the original property owners and their heirs. The 1912 street layout did not include Richardson Street, the only east-west cross street within the neighborhood.

The Mendel Real Estate Company held extensive real estate property in Savannah in the early twentieth century, including several emerging residential subdivisions. By 1914, City Investment Company of Savannah and other individuals began street improvements, lighting, laying sewer lines, and presumably constructing houses within the neighborhood. The City Investment Company primarily owned property on the east side of the neighborhood at this time.

Housing styles vary greatly in the Wagner Heights neighborhood in period, craftsmanship, and integrity, pointing to the fluctuating pattern of growth within the neighborhood. The Mendel Real Estate Company subdivided and sold several lots beginning in 1914 to Harry Gunther. By 1916, five identical houses were constructed on those lots. It is likely that the subsequent development of the area followed this pattern.

#### PART III: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WAGNER HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD

Six streets comprise the Wagner Heights neighborhood; five run in a north-south direction and one bisects these about midway in an east-west direction. House styles and types vary within the subdivision, ranging from two story American Foursquares to bungalows with and without Craftsman features. The houses are situated on small lots which are fronted with sidewalks. Landscaping includes mature hardwoods as well as foundation shrubbery.

#### PART IV: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Chatham County Land and Tax Records. On file in the Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah, Georgia.

#### PART V: PROJECT INFORMATION

Historic American Buildings Survey documentation completed as a mitigation stipulated in the Section 106 documentation for Georgia Department of Transportation Project NH-171-1(2), Chatham County; P.I. No. 521680 (the proposed Harry S Truman Parkway).

Prepared by: Gail Anne D'Avino

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HABS No. GA-2276 (page 4)

Title: Transportation Planner II  
Affiliation: Georgia Department of Transportation  
Office of Environment and Location  
3993 Aviation Circle  
Atlanta, Georgia 30336  
(404) 699-4415  
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