

Building at 6 and 7 Public Square in Bowman Listed in the National Register

ATLANTA (October 15, 2009) – The Building at 6 and 7 Public Square in Bowman, Elbert County was listed in the National Register on September 24, 2009. The property owner sponsored the nomination and prepared the nomination materials.

In the late 1870s, Thomas Jefferson Bowman purchased and later subdivided lots along the Elberton Airline railroad in what came to be called Bowman. By 1879 two stores and a well were established around the public square. Later in the 19th century, Baptist and Methodist churches and several schools were constructed. Bowman was incorporated in 1907 and the town flourished in the first decades of the 20th century. Early businesses in Bowman included a brickyard, gin, shoe and harness shop, blacksmith, lumberyard, bank, drugstore, grocery, and telephone company.

The Building at 6 and 7 Public Square was completed in 1908. The double storefront served as a post office on one side and a jewelry store on the other. The post office moved across the street in the 1950s. In 2008, the building was rehabilitated for continued use as a commercial building. It is significant in the area of commerce because it housed numerous commercial enterprises from the time of its construction in 1908 through the middle of the 20th century.

The Building at 6 and 7 Public Square in Bowman is significant in the area of architecture because it is an excellent representative example of commercial buildings that were constructed in small towns throughout Georgia in the first decades of the 20th century. In Bowman, most of the commercial buildings on the square were built in the early 1900s with brick walls and storefronts supported by cast-iron columns to allow larger display windows. Their entablatures are ornamented with brick corbels, panels, and basket-weave patterns.

The Building at 6 and 7 Public Square is a one-story brick commercial building. It features a double storefront with side-by-side businesses that share a common wall. Cast-iron columns support the brick façade and allow large expanses of glass in the doors, transoms, and display windows. The brickwork along the sides and across the parapet includes stringcourses, decorative panels, and recessed squares. The interior plan for each building features a large finished space in front for commercial activity and smaller rooms in back. In 2008 the property owner received federal tax credits, the state property tax abatement, and the state income tax credit for a certified rehabilitation of the building. The interior commercial spaces have been retained and historic features, such as doors and windows, and the pressed-metal ceiling, have been repaired or replaced with in-kind material.

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The National Register of Historic Places is our country's official list of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts worthy of preservation. The National Register provides formal recognition of a property's architectural, historical or archaeological significance. It also identifies historic properties for planning purposes and insures that these properties will be considered in the planning of state or federally assisted projects. National Register listing encourages preservation of historic properties through public awareness, federal and state tax incentives, and grants. Listing in the National Register does not place obligations or restrictions on the use, treatment, transfer, or disposition of private property.

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources serves as Georgia's state historic preservation office. Their mission is to promote the preservation and use of historic places for a better Georgia. HPD's programs include archaeology protection and education, environmental review, grants, historic resource surveys, tax incentives, the National Register of Historic Places, community planning and technical assistance.

The mission of the Department of Natural Resources is to sustain, enhance, protect and conserve Georgia's natural, historic and cultural resources for present and future generations, while recognizing the importance of promoting the development of commerce and industry that utilize sound environmental practices.

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