



HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

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Bowdon Historic District Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

ATLANTA (December 18, 2009) – The Bowdon Historic District, roughly centered along College Street (State Route 166) and Wedowee Street (State Route 100) in Bowdon, Carroll County, Georgia, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 9, 2009. The nomination materials were prepared by staff and an intern at the Three Rivers Regional Commission and the nomination was supported by the city of Bowdon.

In the early 19th century, the first settlers in the area that would become Bowdon named the town “Cerro Gordo” (large hill) after the site of a battle won by Carroll County troops during the Mexican-American War. In 1846 the residents sought the help of Alabama congressman Franklin Boudoin to help them establish a post office (the residents were under the belief that the area was in Alabama). In 1848 the community renamed itself Bowdon in honor of the congressman. Bowdon was incorporated in 1859 with a population of 100. After the Civil War, the community prospered with an agricultural-based economy and as the location of the 1857 Bowdon Collegiate Institute (no longer extant), the fifth college chartered in Georgia. In 1910 the Bowdon Railroad, an 18-mile Central of Georgia railroad branch, opened and brought freight and passenger rail transportation to the city. Bowdon became a center for textile manufacturing in the 1930s and 1950s and many houses in Bowdon were built during this time.

The district was listed in the National Register for its excellent examples of historic residential, commercial, industrial, and community landmark buildings representing the common architectural types and styles found throughout Georgia in the late 19th through the mid-20th century. Architectural styles include Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and English Vernacular Revival. House types include Queen Anne house, New South cottage, Georgian cottage, Georgian house, English cottage, gabled-wing cottage, bungalow, and American Small House. Commercial buildings in the district are located at the intersection of College and Wedowee streets and are generally one- and two-story brick buildings with decorative and corbeled brickwork. There are historic automobile-related buildings, including a historic gas station and auto dealership, in the district. Also within the district is the Sewell clothing plant complex, which was established in 1933 by brothers Warren, Robert, and Roy Sewell. The complex includes numerous one-story brick warehouse buildings built in the 1930s and 1940s associated with a clothing company, that along with the Sewell plant in nearby Bremen, became one of the ten largest manufacturers of men’s clothing in the country. Historic community landmark buildings include the 1909 Gothic Revival-style Methodist Episcopal Church South, the 1938 Methodist Protestant Church, the 1948 Moderne-style Bowdon City Hall, the 1930s agricultural shop and gymnasium on the non-historic high school campus, and the 1960 International-style United States Post Office. There are four historic cemeteries in the district.

Bowdon’s significance is derived not only from its architecture, but also from the role its central business district played in the town’s development and commerce. The historic central business district is reflective of the town’s role as a center of commerce in Carroll County and the surrounding area and as a major textile-manufacturing center during the mid-20th century. The district’s significance is also reflected in its development as a crossroads town. The town developed at a major crossroads with a rail line that postdated the development of the town.

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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