

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Historic Preservation Division

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Dewey City Listed in National Register

Good example of a planned subdivision established during an era of housing segregation.

ATLANTA (September 24, 2008) –Dewey City, located one mile west of the county courthouse in Thomasville, Thomas County, was listed in the National Register on August 28, 2008.

Thomasville Landmarks, Inc. prepared the nomination materials. The City of Thomasville sponsored the nomination.

The area now known as Dewey City was sparsely settled by whites in the early 19th century, but no aboveground resources survive from that time. Dewey City has a distinct identity as an African American neighborhood with clear boundaries defined within four historic plats. The first plat, known as the Quinn and Cochran Addition, was filed in 1899. Recorded in 1904 as the “Dewey City Subdivision,” it was likely named after Admiral George Dewey, hero of the Spanish-American War. Charles Bluett Quinn bought the land outside Thomasville to provide housing for blacks. Subsequent plats for the neighborhood were Homestead Park (1911), Pine Summit (1911), and Douglass Heights (1947).

The Dewey City historic district is significant in the areas of community planning and development and African American ethnic heritage as a good example of a planned subdivision established during an era of housing segregation. Migration from farms to jobs in Thomasville drew new residents. Periods of significant growth occurred in the 1920s and after World War II. Residents included laborers, domestics, yardmen, and railroad workers. This relatively intact neighborhood is laid out in roughly a gridiron pattern on flat land between creeks and is clearly delineated by industrial sites to the south and west, and parks and vacant

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land to the north. The National Register-listed Stevens Street Historic District, also a predominantly African American neighborhood, is to the east.

The Dewey City Historic District is significant in the area of architecture because it contains representative house types popular in working class neighborhoods in Georgia from the early to mid-20th century. House types represented in Dewey City include several common types found in working-class neighborhoods from the late 19th century to the present. Examples of gabled wing cottages, shotgun houses, pyramid cottages, side-gabled cottages, bungalows, American Small Houses, and ranch houses are all present. Most have few stylistic details, although some Craftsman elements are evident on bungalows. Yards are typically well kept and informal, with few plantings.

The district is significant in the area of education, because the neighborhood schools were highly regarded both for academics and athletic teams. Some families boarded their children in the neighborhood to attend the schools. In 1950 Douglass High School became the first African American school in the region to have a gym.

Non-residential properties include Mount Zion Primitive Baptist Church (circa 1949), St. James Primitive Baptist Church (1953), Beulah Hill Missionary Baptist Church (1959), a child-care facility, and the Douglass School campus with a mixture of historic and non-historic buildings. The district contains many mature trees and vacant wooded lots. Most of these vacant lots apparently never had houses, and served as side yards for neighboring properties. A state of Georgia historical marker on a vacant lot identifies the site of a transitory Civil War prison camp.

The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts worthy of preservation. According to Richard Cloues, deputy state historic preservation officer, listing in the National Register recognizes a property's significance and ensures that the property will be taken into account in the planning of federally funded or licensed projects. In addition, owners of National Register properties may be eligible for rehabilitation tax incentives.

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. For more information, call 404-656-2840 or visit their Web site at www.gashpo.org.

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