

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER/GEORGIA REGISTER NOMINATION

1. Name: Clarkesville Downtown Square Historic District

2. Location: The district is in the city of Clarkesville in Habersham County and runs along U.S. Route 441/23, locally known as Washington Street, and is roughly bounded by Jefferson, Morgan, Madison and Grant streets.

3a. Description: The Clarkesville Downtown Square Historic District encompasses the intact and contiguous historic commercial resources in the downtown city core along Washington Street, the main thoroughfare. The district is near the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the north central section of the Clarkesville corporate limits. Clarkesville was chartered in 1823 as the county seat for Habersham County, and elements of the original "Sparta" gridiron street plan are still visible today. Clarkesville experienced a period of significant growth during the first half of the twentieth century, and the majority of buildings within the district were constructed between 1901 and 1950. The district is primarily characterized by one- and two-story brick commercial buildings. While most of the commercial buildings have only elements of an architectural style or no style, the district does feature examples of the Romanesque Revival, Art Deco and Craftsman styles. Property types include retail, retail and office, service stations and a theater. Overall integrity of the district is high, apart from typical storefront alterations on commercial buildings. Buildings around the central square and along Washington Street are mostly contiguous to each other and have a zero setback from the street. Landscape features are minimal as buildings and parking fill the parcels. Noncontributing resources to the district include non-historic properties constructed outside the period of significance, properties that have been altered with new roof forms, and properties with non-historic materials obscuring the façade.

3b. Period of Significance: 1823-1970

3c. Acreage: Approximately 8.1 acres

3d. Boundary Explanation: The proposed boundaries include the intact and contiguous historic commercial resources in the city of Clarkesville's downtown core.

4a. National Register Criteria: A and C

4b. National Register Areas of Significance: Architecture, Commerce

4c. Statement of Significance: The Clarkesville Downtown Square Historic District is significant under Criterion A in the area of commerce as the historic commercial center for the city and Habersham County. The district's commercial resources are situated around the site of the original town square and development radiated off this central business core, as is typical in many of Georgia's county seats. A variety of wholesale and retail goods were available within the district, as well as professional services and business offices. As the location of the county seat of Habersham County since 1823, the original "Sparta" plan gridiron is still recognizable and resulted in the commercially focused core district. The Clarkesville Downtown Square Historic District is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture for its collection of architectural types and styles that represent the commercial development of Clarkesville from the late 19th century through the mid-20th century. Commercial types represented in the district include single and multiple retail, and retail and office with the majority being one- and two-story buildings. Styles represented include Romanesque Revival (Barron York Building), Art Deco (Habersham Theater) and Craftsman (Clarkesville Garage).

4d. Suggested Level of Significance: The Clarkesville Downtown Square Historic District is being nominated at the local level of significance for having a good collection of late 19th century through mid-20th century commercial types, representative examples of styles, and for its role as a commercial center in Habersham County.

4e. National Register Status: The Barron York Building, Church Furniture Store, Clarkesville Garage, Jackson Building, and Jackson Pharmacy were previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982, under the Historic Resources of Clarkesville Multiple Resource Area nomination.

5. Sponsor: The nomination is sponsored by the city of Clarkesville, and nomination materials were prepared by Ray, Ellis & LaBrie Consulting.