

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER/GEORGIA REGISTER NOMINATION

1. Name: Magnolia Park Historic District

2. Location: Within the city of limits of Savannah in Chatham County and approximately four miles south of city hall. The neighborhood is roughly bounded by DeRenne Avenue to the north, Latimer Street, Lovett Drive, and Broadmoor Circle to the east, Bona Bella Avenue to the south, and Harry S. Truman Parkway to the west.

3a. Description: The Magnolia Park Historic District is a post-World War II residential neighborhood, platted in several phases between 1952 and 1968, located south of downtown Savannah. The first two phases of the subdivision – Magnolia Park No. 1 and No. 2, were laid out in 1952 and 1953, respectively. The street plan in these two phases is contiguous and includes wide, curvilinear roads and rear lanes. In 1956, Magnolia Court and Magnolia Park No. 4 were laid out in a similar fashion, but without rear lanes, southeast of the earlier phases of the subdivision and include a park with a pool and pool house built in 1959. Between 1964 and 1968, Magnolia Park No. 3 was laid out west of Woodland Drive; however, most houses from this phase of development were demolished in the early 2000s to make way for Truman Parkway. Houses of Magnolia Park were constructed between 1952 to 1968 and mostly reflect the ranch house type in a variety of styles and subtypes. These styles include Colonial Revival, Plain, and Contemporary. The Magnolia Park ranch houses vary from long linear and L-shaped subtypes to smaller compact, courtyard, and bungalow subtypes. Most are wood framed with brick veneer, but some are a mix of brick and wood cladding. A few houses are clad in Savannah Grey brick and a number feature decorative breeze blocks. Most houses have low-pitched hip or gable roofs, chimneys, and picture windows. The neighborhood also includes a few American Small Houses and later examples of two-story and split-level houses. The houses are laid out with uniform setbacks from the street and include driveways, front lawns and a variety of ornamental plantings. Most also include an integral garage or carport. A small park along DeRenne Avenue, at the original entrance of Magnolia Park No. 2, has a stylized, pergola-like bus stop with subdivision signage. The district retains a high degree of all seven aspects of historic integrity.

3b. Period of Significance: 1952-1968

3c. Acreage: approx. 94 acres

3d. Boundary Explanation: The proposed boundary includes the five platted areas historically associated with the Magnolia Park development.

4a. National Register Criteria: A and C

4b. National Register Areas of Significance: Community Planning & Development and Architecture

4c. Statement of Significance: The Magnolia Park Historic District is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture because the district contains one of the most diverse and intact collections of mid-20th century houses in Savannah. It includes ranch houses in a variety of subtypes, split-level houses, two-story houses, and a few American Small Houses, with ranch houses being, by far, the most prevalent house type in the neighborhood. Houses primarily exhibit the Colonial Revival, Contemporary, and Plain styles, as defined in the statewide context *The Ranch House in Georgia: Guidelines for Evaluation*. Quite a few of these houses were designed by well-known local architects, and the neighborhood was selected as a location to showcase the “Trade Secrets House of 1953,” which is a model home in Magnolia Park No. 2 that was designed by some of the nation’s leading architects as a composite of their ideals for contemporary living and reproduced in 116 cities across the country. The district is also significant under Criterion A in the area of community planning & development because it is an early Savannah suburb developed for upper-middle class homeowners outside of what were the city limits at the time. Developed by the Lamara Company in five stages over a decade and a half, Magnolia Park features curvilinear streets and 196 wooded house lots of various shapes and sizes. This neighborhood capitalized on new ideas about “country living” in the suburbs and in doing so, was among the earliest developments in the city to break with Savannah’s 200 year-tradition of the grid-iron plan based on the 1733 Oglethorpe Plan and to adopt the major elements of the Federal Housing Administration’s preferred patterns of subdivision development, such as winding streets, isolation from major thoroughfares, and minimized entry into the neighborhood.

4d. Suggested Level of Significance: The Magnolia Park Historic District is being nominated at the local level as an excellent example of an intact mid-20th century neighborhood in Savannah with representative house types and style of the period.

5. Sponsor: The nomination is sponsored by the Magnolia Park Neighborhood Association, and nomination materials were prepared by Quatrefoil Historic Preservation Consulting.