



**SAVANNAH-CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT  
COMMISSION  
HISTORICAL MARKER RECOMMENDATION**

**PETITIONER:** Jane Pressly  
The Savannah Town Committee  
The National Society of the Colonial Dames  
329 Abercorn Street  
Savannah, GA 31401

**FILE No.:** 18-001015-HM

**LOCATION:** 27 Abercorn Street

**DATE:** April 4, 2018

**NATURE OF REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting approval for a monument at 27 Abercorn Street. The Savannah Town Committee of The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America is requesting to reinstall the previously existing marker honoring John Wesley in front of the Sturgis House, which was originally the third monument or marker the Dames installed in Savannah. The marker was originally installed in 1903 but was removed sometime in the past 10 years. The plaque was stolen prior to granite's removal, though the date is unknown. The marker is proposed to be reinstalled with a new plaque in the same location. A specification for the new plaque design and material will be provided at a later date.

**FINDINGS:**

The following standards from the Historic Site and Monument Commission Guidelines for Markers, Monuments and Public Art apply:

***Established Themes for Markers and Monuments.** Existing markers and monuments in Savannah fall into one of more of the following established theme categories. Some of the categories overlap and many markers and monuments embody several themes.*

***Arts and Humanities.** Includes art, architecture, music, theater, literature, education, etc.*

***Science and Engineering.** Includes technology, inventions, medical, communications, etc.*

***Civil and Institutional.***

***Social and Humanitarian.***

***Industry and Commerce.** Includes economics, agriculture, transportation, etc.*

***Politics and Government.***

***Military History.** Includes people, places, or events.*

***Religious History.** Includes people, places, or events.*

***Maritime History.***

***Colonial History.***

***Local History.*** Includes folklore and/or local heroes.  
***Cultural and Ethnic History.***  
***Education.***

***Evaluating Themes for Markers and Monuments.*** New markers and monuments commemorate and honor people, places, and/or events.

***Proposed themes should fall into one or more of the following categories.***

***Arts and Humanities.*** Includes art, architecture, music, theater, literature, education, etc.

***Science and Engineering.*** Includes technology, inventions, medical, communications, etc.

***Civil and Institutional.***

***Social and Humanitarian.***

***Industry and Commerce.*** Includes economics, agriculture, transportation, etc.

***Politics and Government.***

***Military History.*** Includes people, places, or events.

***Religious History.*** Includes people, places, or events.

***Maritime History.***

***Colonial History.***

***Local History.*** Includes folklore and/or local heroes.

***Cultural and Ethnic History.***

***Education.***

The standards are met. The marker falls into the following them categories: civic and institutional, religious history, local history.

***The proposed theme should have documented significant, clear and direct local relevance to the history and development of Chatham County. The local focus should be the predominant theme of the monument.***

***The level of significance should be high enough to warrant a public presence.***

***The person, place or event commemorated should not have been sufficiently commemorated elsewhere in the County. The theme should be distinct and original, and not be duplicated in other existing markers or monuments.***

***The theme should reflect a larger connection to the community as a whole, and not only to one distinct group.***

***Commemorated events should have enduring historical significance and have occurred over fifty years ago.***

*Commemorated persons should have enduring historical significance and have been dead at least twenty-five years. Living persons should not be commemorated.*

*There should be significant documented evidence (written or oral) of the commemorated event, person, or place.*

The standards are met. This marker previously existed in the proposed location and also honored John Wesley, though the exact language could not be located for the plaque. The plaque also includes the history of the monument as well as the person it honors.

*Evaluating Sites for Markers, Monuments, or Public Art. Certain factors should be taken into consideration when evaluating whether a site is the appropriate location for a marker, monument or public art [hereto referred to as “object” to indicate the inclusion of all three types]. These factors include:*

*The installation of an object should not cause overcrowding of the site, if there are existing objects. Objects should be sited far enough away from other objects as to allow the visitor proper appreciation of each individually.*

The standard is met.

*The proposed object should not damage or disturb existing established vegetation on the site including low tree limbs, or significant tree roots.*

*The proposed object should not require the removal or alteration of existing above or below ground utilities.*

The standards are met.

*The proposed site should be large enough to accommodate an object, and should not encroach on other existing object sites, buildings, or designated green space.*

The standard is met. The marker is proposed to be located on the same site it was previously, and there are not any other nearby objects it would encroach on.

*The proposed site should not be utilized for special events (such as sports, festivals, ceremonies, etc) on a regular basis which an object would disrupt.*

*The proposed site should not be prone to frequent automobile accidents which could damage the proposed object.*

The standards are met.

*The proposed site should be easily accessible to pedestrians and the physically challenged (excluding marker sites).*

*The proposed site should be visible and accessible from a public right of way.*

The standards are met. The site is located adjacent to the sidewalk and is easily visible from the public right of way.

*The proposed site should have adequate parking nearby (excluding marker sites).*

The standard is met.

*The proposed site should not have a high probability of significant archaeology unless an archaeological study is part of the proposal.*

*The proposed site should be easy to maintain.*

The standards are met.

*The installation of the object should enhance the space and character of the surrounding neighborhood.*

The standard is met. The marker is being reinstalled in its former location, so it reflects the history of the neighborhood.

*The installation of the object should not require the alteration or removal of existing signage (traffic, street, etc).*

*The installation of the object should not significantly affect automobile traffic sight lines.*

*The installation of the object should enhance the design of the overall site.*

The standards are met, though staff does request Park & Tree and Traffic Engineering approve the location.

*The installation of the object should not require the removal or alteration of existing sidewalks, unless it is part of a comprehensive redesign for the entire site (which is generally discouraged).*

The standard is met.

***Site in Relation to Theme for Markers or Monuments.*** *The relationship between site and theme for a marker or monument is critical in determining the appropriate site for a particular theme.*

**Marker.** *A marker should be erected in as close proximity to the site to which it is related as possible and be clearly visible from a public right-of-way.*

*Markers commemorating a person should be sited where that person was born, lived, died, or performed some act of enduring significance or adjacent to the nearest public right-of-way.*

The standard is met. The marker honors John Wesley and is located near his parsonage.

**Design.** *The design of a marker, monument, or public work of art should be of the highest quality and caliber, and enhance public space. In order to promote the high standards the City of Savannah has historically enjoyed in its markers, monuments, and public art, the following guidelines should be observed.*

**Markers.** *Markers may be mounted on a freestanding pole, wall-mounted, or embedded in the ground. As the primary purpose is to inform the public about an event, place or person, the aesthetic significance of a marker is generally minimal.*

*Markers not erected through the GHS's marker program shall not bear the GHS or state seal.*

The standard is met. The marker's plaque will not bear the GHS or state seal.

*Except the marker title, the marker text should be not more than 1" in height, and not less than 1/2".*

Staff requests the text meets this criteria.

*Marker text should be created in a manner that, to the extent possible, prevents fading and erosion.*

*Markers should be made of an enduring, non-corroding material.*

*Markers should be considered permanent and designed accordingly. Temporary markers may be considered provided they serve an educational function, are made of a material designed to last for the proposed life of the marker, and a plan for removal or replacement of the marker at the end of the temporary period is submitted.*

Staff requests additional information about the material and design of the plaque, which is proposed to be permanent. A material such as bronze would be appropriate.

*Text.* *The text for a marker, monument or work of art is considered part of the overall design concept. Placement of the text, font type and size, etc. should be included with the final design drawings.*

The following text is proposed:

John Wesley  
Founder of Methodism  
Minister of the Church of England  
in Georgia 1736-1737  
Lived and prayed at the parsonage  
And garden at this site

The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America  
In the State of Georgia  
Installed 1903 Replaced 2018

*Text should be well-researched and based on historically accurate, documented facts.*

*The text should accurately and effectively convey to the reader the desired message.*

*Quotations should be noted accordingly and permission from the appropriate authority received.*

*Text should avoid offensive, obscene, or inflammatory language.*

*Donor names may be included provided the names are in an identical but smaller font than the rest of the text and that no slogans or corporate logos are included.*

The text content is provided and meets the standards; however, staff does request a final design drawing of the plaque for approval. Staff does request that In be capitalized to match the format of the rest of the plaque text.

***Funding.***

***Budget.*** *The Mayor and Aldermen do not fund new markers, monuments, or works of art. The applicant is fully responsible for funding the design, construction, installation, and any necessary landscaping, paving, or lighting involved with a new marker, monument, or work of art.*

***The applicant must provide a realistic budget in Part II Final Design and Funding.*** *The budget should be based on cost estimates provided by the manufacturer, artist, installer and/or contractor, as appropriate. The budget should include funding goals and deadlines. Should funding goals and deadlines fail to be met, the HSMC may, at its sole discretion, reconsider the application. The applicant must be capable of raising the necessary*

*funding. Construction of the monument or installation of the work of art will not begin until all of the funding has been secured.*

The standard is met. There will not be a Part II as the marker is existing and being placed on its previous site. The applicant is funding the marker.

***Escrow Payment.** All markers, monuments and public art erected on public property become the property of the Mayor and Aldermen. The Mayor and Aldermen assume responsibility for the future maintenance and upkeep of the marker, monument or artwork. Therefore, an initial Escrow Payment is required of the applicant subsequent to approval of the application. The Mayor and Aldermen, or their designee, will determine the appropriate Escrow Payment and will notify the applicant. The Escrow Payment must be paid prior to construction/installation of the monument or public art. Any marker, monument or artwork erected on private property is the responsibility of the property owner.*

The applicant must provide an escrow payment.

**Public Notice:** As required in the Master Plan and Guidelines, written notice was sent to all property owners, and the neighborhood association, within 200 feet of the subject property. A sign was posted on the property fifteen days prior to the meeting. No comments were received from the public.  
from the public.




**RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL:**

**Approve the proposed installation of the marker at 27 Abercorn Street with a new plaque with the following conditions to be provided for staff approval:**

1. A final rendering of the new plaque and text is provided;
2. The plaque material is provided and is a durable material such as bronze;
3. The text is revised as requested;
4. The applicant provides an escrow payment;

Because otherwise the marker meets the standards.

  
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Dr. Nicholas Henry, Chairman  
Historic Site and Monument Commission

4/13/18  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Melony West, Interim Executive Director  
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

4/6/18  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ellen I. Harris, Director of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation  
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

4/6/18  
Date

EIH: sef