



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

PETITIONER: Georgia Historical Society
Elyse Butler, Membership and Outreach Associate
104 West Gaston Street
Savannah, Georgia 31401

FILE No.: 18-005994-HM

LOCATION: Lafayette Square

DATE: December 6, 2018

NATURE OF REQUEST: The petitioner is requesting approval to erect a historical marker commemorating Mary Musgrove to be located in Lafayette Square. This marker is proposed in partnership with the National Society of the Colonial Dames in the State of Georgia.

FINDINGS:

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

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

The proposed theme of the marker falls into both Colonial and Local History. The petitioner states that, “in the most basic sense, the period in which Mary Musgrove lived is the colonial period. Through Musgrove’s skill as interpreter between James Oglethorpe and Tomochichi, the founding of Georgia was relatively peaceful and immensely successful. She played an integral role in that success. Furthermore, the historical marker relates the trade networks of the colonial era, through reference to her trading post and land politics as illustrated through the land claims made by Musgrove and Creek Indians... The impact of Mary Musgroves’ significance expands beyond her services as interpreter to Oglethorpe, thus aiding in the creation of not only the City of Savannah but also the establishment of the colony of Georgia. As an interpreter, businesswoman, landowner, and Creek Indian, Mary Musgrove is studied by students in the 2nd and 8th grade throughout the state and is one of the most-studied- and most important- women in Georgia history. Unlike Oglethorpe and Tomochichi, to an extent, there is a lack of information available about Musgrove specifically and Native Americans in general in a central, accessible location in downtown Savannah.”

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 standard is met.

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

The standard is met.

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.

In Chatham County, there is one historical marker dedicated to Mary Musgrove and two markers which mention her. The marker dedicated to her, entitled “Indian Trading Post: Home of Mary Musgrove,” is on Highway 17 on the land of the Savannah Sugar Refining Company, approximately one mile from her home. It was erected in 1961. The two markers which mention her include the Landing of Oglethorpe and the Colonists marker on Bay Street and the Tomo-Chi-Chi Grave Marker in Wright Square. The proposed marker is distinct from the other markers in that it relays biographical information of Musgrove and expands the narrative beyond her role as an interpreter, highlighting her roles as businesswoman and landowner.

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

The standard is met.

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

The standard is met.

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

The standard is met.

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 proposed site is in the southwest quadrant of Lafayette Square. There are currently no markers within Lafayette Square. The nearest marker is in front of St John the Baptist Cathedral,

on private property. The center of Lafayette Square is home to the Semiquincentenary Fountain. The fountain was erected in 1983 in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the colony of Georgia and was spearheaded and funded by the Colonial Dames of America in Georgia.

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

The standard is met. Coordinate with the City's Greenspace Department on the exact site location.

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

The standard is met. Coordinate with the City's Development Services Department on the exact location.

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 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 standard is met.

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

The standard is met.

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

The standard is met.

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

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 standard is met.

The proposed site should be easy to maintain.

The standard is met.

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

The standard is met.

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

The standard is met.

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

The standard is met.

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

The standard is met.

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.

If periodic memorial services are likely, the site should be able to accommodate them without causing undue disruption to the neighborhood, plantings, etc.

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 marker commemorates a person but is not located at a site specifically associated with Mary Musgrove. However, Musgrove's significance to Savannah transcends any particular site as her significance is much farther reaching. Staff contends that the proposed site in an important and highly visible and visited square is appropriate.

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 on a freestanding pole should be the standard Georgia Historical Society (GHS) Marker style: two-sided, cast aluminum with a 30" x 42" plate size. The shape should match the GHS marker shape. The marker should have a black background with white, silver or gold text. Temporary markers may be other shapes, sizes, and colors.

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

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.

The standards are met. The proposed marker is the standard GHS design.

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.*

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.

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 standards for the text are met. See below.

Mary Musgrove

Mary Musgrove was the daughter of an English trader and a Creek Indian mother. In 1717 she and her husband, John, established Cowpens trading post near the Savannah River which became the center of 18th century English-Indian trade for deer hides. After the colony's founding in 1733, Musgrove became principle interpreter between Yamacraw Chieftain Tomochici and Gen. Oglethorpe. Serving as Oglethorpe's interpreter for ten years, she helped foster peace between the British and the Creeks. For her assistance she received financial compensation, political prestige, and lands from the Creeks making her the wealthiest Georgia landowner in the 1700s. The Georgia colony refused to grant Musgrove's property rights to the Creek lands of St. Catherines, Sapelo, and Ossabaw Islands. After much dispute, Musgrove received the English title to St. Catherines Island in 1760, where she died c.1765.

Erected by the Georgia Historical Society and the National Society of the Colonial Dames in the State of Georgia

Staff recommends that "principle" in the fourth line be revised to "principal."

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.*

Funding has been fully secured from 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 petitioner requests that the escrow payment be waived as GHS shall remain responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the marker.

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.


RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL:

The HSMC recommends approval of the proposed marker with the following conditions because the marker is otherwise consistent with the Master Plan and Guidelines:

1. Revise “principle” in the fourth line to “principal.”
2. Coordinate with all appropriate City departments on the exact location within the southwest quadrant of the square.



Dr. Nicholas Henry, Chairman
Historic Site and Monument Commission
Date 12/12/18



Melanie Wilson, Executive Director
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission
Date 12/13/18



Ellen I. Harris, Director of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission
Date 12/11/18