

SAVANNAH'S WAVING GIRL MONUMENT

PROPOSED RELOCATION ON THE SAVANNAH RIVER



"Her immortality stems from her friendly greeting to passing ships, a welcome to strangers entering the port and a farewell to wave them safely onward."

— Inscription on Savannah's Waving Girl Monument —

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DISTRICT
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

SPRING 2019

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PROPELLER CLUB OF THE UNITED STATES

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PORT OF SAVANNAH
EST. 1933



The International
Propeller Club
of the United States

May 2, 2019

Historic Site and Monument Commission
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission
110 East State Street
Savannah, GA 31401

Dear Members of the Commission,

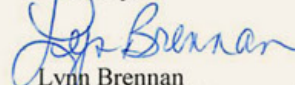
On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Port of Savannah Chapter of the Propeller Club of the United States, thank you for your consideration of the request to relocate The Waving Girl monument from the east end of Savannah's River Street to a more prominent location proposed at the transition to the new section of the River Walk being constructed concurrently with the Plant Riverside redevelopment project.

Many of you know the story of Florence Martus, a woman who dedicated her life to greeting the ships and sailors visiting the Port of Savannah for more than four decades. The story of the waving girl has endured through generations of sailors around the world, and in 1972 The Waving Girl monument was commissioned and erected on River Street to continue Florence's mission to ensure that Savannah welcome the ships and sailors making port of call here. For many years it served that purpose well, but physical changes to the east end of River Street in the form of new walkways, park space, trees, and additional landscaping have made it very difficult to see the monument from the Savannah River. Many of our maritime visitors receive only a glimpse of the monument that was meant to be seen from a distance on the approach.

For years, the Propeller Club - Port of Savannah, as the steward of the monument, has explored options for elevating or relocating the monument to return it to its original intention. The proposed location on the new western River Walk will both elevate the monument and place it at the edge of the Savannah River, at the bend in the shipping channel that leads into the Port of Savannah. This will allow the monument to be highly visible to ships both entering and leaving the port, and it affords magnificent long views up and down the channel.

The Propeller Club has worked closely with the designers and engineers of the new River Walk to develop a plan that will return The Waving Girl to prominence on the Savannah River. We endorse this plan and respectfully ask that you support the petition for relocation before your Commission.

Sincerely,


Lynn Brennan
President

Port of Savannah

PO Box 9480

Savannah, GA 31412

SAVANNAH' WAVING GIRL MONUMENT

DESCRIPTION & THEME

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED MONUMENT

The commemorative monument of Florence Martus, Savannah's Waving Girl, is currently located in a small open park space at the east end of River Street. The current site, where the monument has been located since 1972, has undergone physical changes over the years, most notably the addition of the River Walk and growth of large canopy trees, that have obscured views of monument from the Savannah River. Visibility from passing ships being the primary goal of the monument, the Port of Savannah Chapter of the Propeller Club of the United States, as stewards of the monument, proposes to relocate the sculpture to a more prominent location on the new western extension of the Savannah River Walk, within the National Historic Landmark District.

In its new location, the monument, which consists of a bronze sculpture of Florence Martus and her collie dog atop a raised black marble base, will be oriented toward the Savannah River channel so that the monument can be seen by ships approaching and leaving the Port of Savannah as originally intended. The new location will allow the monument to sit approximately 95 feet closer to the Savannah River channel, with no visual obstructions. Situated at the bend in the Savannah River channel, the new location will provide sweeping views of the monument from up and down the river.

The current text engraved in the sides of the black marble slab that makes up the base of the monument will remain unchanged. The text commemorates Florence Martus, and acknowledges the sculptor and the sponsors of the monument.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Chapter 4 of the *Markers, Monuments, and Public Art Master Plan and Guidelines for the City of Savannah*, there are no Special Considerations listed for the proposed site.

TIMEFRAME FOR FABRICATION & CONSTRUCTION

The monument will be moved in the summer of 2019. The relocation will be timed to be completed with the new River Walk and park at West River Street, which is scheduled to be opened in Fall of 2019.

PROJECT FUNDING

The monument is already built and does not require funding. The relocation will be accomplished through the donation of services from various project partners and Propeller Club members.

MAINTENANCE

The monument is constructed of highly durable materials that require very little maintenance, including cast bronze and marble. The current stewards of the monument, the Propeller Club of the United States - Port of Savannah, will continue in its role of preserving and maintaining the monument. Due to the nature of the materials, maintenance is rarely required, and is done on an as-needed basis.

MONUMENT THEME: MARITIME AND LOCAL HISTORY

While the reason that Florence Martus took up the task of greeting arriving ships from her small cottage on Elba Island at the mouth of the Savannah River channel is a mystery, she became a legend among generations of sailors visiting Savannah. From 1887 to 1931, Florence greeted arriving ships with a handkerchief by day and a lantern by night. Sailors from around the world spread her story and came to watch for her greeting when making port of call in Savannah. Very few people in Savannah ever met her, due to her isolation on Elba Island, but she became a local legend over the years. It is believed that she did not miss a single ship in 44 years, as many as 50,000 ships during her lifetime.

Her local fame was so great that when she passed away in 1943, she became the namesake for a WWII Liberty Ship that was constructed in the Savannah shipyards, the S.S. Florence Martus, which was eventually retired in Baltimore. The monument on River Street was erected in 1972 to commemorate her dedication to the ships and sailors over her lifetime, as well as her service to the Elba Island Lighthouse, which she assisted her brother in maintaining.

RELEVANCE TO THE COMMUNITY

The Port of Savannah is Savannah's link to the rest of the world. Known as the Hostess City of the South, Savannah has always been a welcome port for sailors from around the globe, and Florence Martus served as an ambassador of that spirit of welcoming for which Savannah has been known for close to half a century.

Returning Savannah's Waving Girl monument to a place of prominence along the Savannah River, to once again greet arriving ships is emblematic of Savannah's spirit and a reminder of the values of our community. As Savannah continues to grow into one of the largest, most successful ports in the United States, the history of Florence Martus serves to bring a focus to the city's maritime history and the importance of its role in growing and shaping the City of Savannah.

ENHANCING THE SPACE AND SURROUNDINGS

In its new location the monument will once again become a visual focal point for the community. The Savannah River Walk extension, currently under construction, sits approximately 20 feet further into the Savannah River than the existing river walk, creating a prominent elevated plaza space at the transition. The monument will become a physical guide point for residents and visitors moving up and down the river walk, as well as a marker for ships entering and leaving the Port of Savannah.



The addition of the 1996 River Walk extension, new park space, and the growth of surrounding trees has progressively obscured the Waving Girl monument from the Savannah River over the last few decades. The primary function of the monument, to greet ships and sailors arriving and leaving the Port of Savannah, has become unrecognizable, with only a narrow window where passing ships can see the sculpture.

Existing Monument Location on East River Street



Sottile & Sottile, 2018

Savannah's Waving Girl Monument



Savannah's Waving Girl Monument; *Proposed Relocation*



Sottile & Sottile, 2018

Savannah's Waving Girl Monument



Savannah's Waving Girl Monument; *Proposed Relocation*



NORTH SIDE (FRONT)



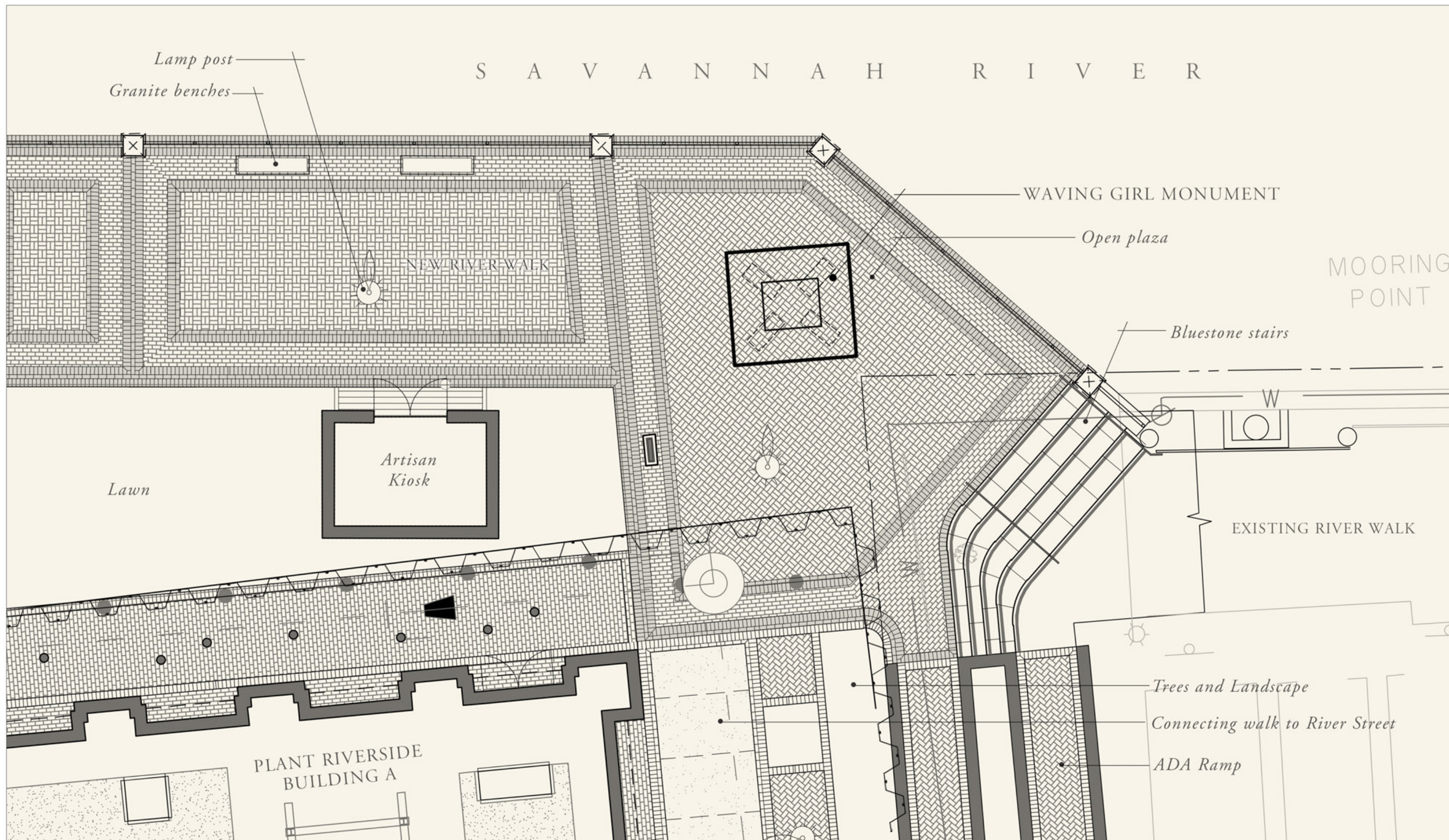
SOUTH SIDE (REAR)



EAST SIDE



WEST SIDE



Detail of River Walk point with proposed monument location.



Monument Location

Aerial view of sculpture location at the transition from the existing River Walk.



View west from monument location at the transition from the existing River Walk.



View east from monument location at the transition from the existing River Walk.