



**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.: 17-000072-HM

LOCATION: 322-324 East Broughton Street

DATE: February 2, 2017

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval to install a historical marker to recognize the history of the Berrien family and house at 322-324 East Broughton Street. The marker is proposed to be freestanding and located in the tree lawn along Habersham Street.

BACKGROUND:

The applicant originally proposed mounting the marker onto the building; however, during the meeting the public and the HSMC expressed concern about both original proposed locations on the façade of the Berrien House. The HSMC recommended making the marker freestanding in the tree lawn. After meeting with MPC staff, the Park & Tree Department Staff, and the Traffic Engineering Department staff on site, the applicant proposed a location in the tree lawn along Habersham Street.

Traffic Engineering and Park and Tree will be on site at the marker installation to determine its exact location, which will be between the existing stop sign at Habersham and Broughton Street and a tree on Habersham Street. They will also determine the most appropriate orientation for the marker at this time.

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.

The standard is met. The marker demonstrates the themes of Arts and Humanities, Civil and Institutional, Industry and Commerce, Military History, and Local History.

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

The applicant provided the following information regarding themes:

“Arts and Humanities: The Berrien House historical marker demonstrates the Arts and Humanities through John Macpherson Berrien’s professional and cultural accomplishments. Often referred to as “America’s Cicero” due to his skill as an orator, Berrien was the first president and one of the founders of the Georgia Historical Society in 1839. As a founder, Berrien helped establish the oldest continuously operating historical society in the south.

Civil and Institutional: The Berrien House historical marker demonstrates the Civil and Institutional theme through the accomplishments of Major John Berrien and John Macpherson. Major Berrien, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, served as the Collector of Customs under the Confederation government and state treasurer. Later he was appointed the Inspector of Revenue of the Port of Savannah by President George Washington. John Macpherson Berrien also led an active political life. Berrien served as judge, United States senator, and U.S. Attorney General. In 1844, the Berrien family hosted presidential candidate Henry Clay at their residence.

Industry and Commerce: Major John Berrien’s role as Inspector of Revenue of the Port of Savannah illustrates Berrien’s importance in the industry and commerce of the City of Savannah, the State of Georgia, and the early American Republic. As Inspector of Revenue, Berrien oversaw the inspection and collection of duties on ships and their cargo as they entered the Port of Savannah.

Military History: Major John Berrien's service to the Continental Army illustrates the theme of Military History. During the Revolutionary War, Berrien served at Valley Forge and fought in the Battle of Monmouth.

Local History: As referenced above, the Berrien House historical marker demonstrates both Major Berrien and John Macpherson Berrien's impact on the City of Savannah. The Berrien Family's contributions by holding multiple public offices at the local, state, and national level, as well as John Macpherson Berrien's involvement in the founding of the Georgia Historical Society illustrate the family's lasting impact on the city and state. With the recent exterior renovation of the Berrien House, the placement of a historical marker ensures that the family's history and impact on the city is accessible to visitors and residents alike for years to come."

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 standard is met. The marker demonstrates the themes of Arts and Humanities, Civil and Institutional, Industry and Commerce, Military History, and 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 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.

The standard is met. Staff is not aware of any other significant markers related to the Berrien family.

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

The standard is met. The marker includes information on the connection to the community.

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. The plaque commemorates Major John Berrien, who died in 1815 and John Macpherson Berrien who died in 1856.

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 marker is proposed to be located in the tree lawn along Habersham Street.

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. There are no other markers near the site.

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. Park and Tree will install the marker to insure no trees are damaged.

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

The standard is 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 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 building is not used for special events.

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 visible and accessible from a public right of way.

The standard is met. The marker would be easily visible from the sidewalk in either location.

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. There is not a high probability of significant archaeology.

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. No existing signage will be impacted.

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

The standard is met. Traffic Engineering will be on site during installation to approve the final site.

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 does not apply.

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.

The standard is met.

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.

A marker commemorating a place, such as a significant piece of architecture, should be located within 100 feet of the place or adjacent to the nearest public right-of-way.

The standard is met. The marker relates to the Berrien House, which is adjacent to the tree lawn.

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.*

The marker is being installed by the Georgia Historical Society. It will be the standard size, design, and material for Georgia Historical Society markers.

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.

The standard is met. The marker will be on a freestanding pole.

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

Staff requests additional information. The size of the text is not specified.

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

The standard is met.

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

The standard is met.

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.

The standard is met. The marker is considered permanent and designed accordingly.

***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 marker will read as follows:

The Berrien House, ca. 1791

Major John Berrien (1759-1815) was a Revolutionary War officer who served at Valley Forge and fought at the Battle of Monmouth. Berrien, a New Jersey native who moved to Georgia in 1775, was an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Georgia. President

George Washington appointed Berrien as Inspector of Revenue of the Port of Savannah in 1792. Berrien, who lived at this site, also served as alderman and state treasurer. His son, John Macpherson Berrien, "America's Cicero," lived here from 1822 until his death in 1856, having served as a US senator, Attorney General under Andrew Jackson, and first president of the Georgia Historical Society. Political ally Henry Clay stayed here during his 1844 presidential campaign. Andrew Berrien Jones, a descendent, began the restoration of the house in 2012.

*Erected by the Georgia Historical Society and National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century,
Adam Brinson I, Georgia*

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

The standard is met. The applicant completed research for and wrote the text.

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

The standard is met.

Text should avoid offensive, obscene, or inflammatory language.

The standard is met.

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.

Staff requests additional information. The size of the text is not specified. Additionally, staff requests that the sentence referencing the restoration be removed as this type of information is not usually included in markers.

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.*

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 standards are met. Georgia Historical Society will maintain the marker, so they are requesting the escrow payment be waived.

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:

Approval with the following conditions to be approved by staff:

1. Text sizes are specified;
2. The text is edited to exclude the renovation date;

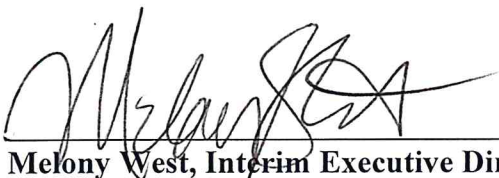
Because otherwise the marker meets the standards in the Markers, Monuments, and Public Art Master Plan and Guidelines for the City of Savannah.



Eli P. Karatassos, Chairman
Historic Site and Monument Commission

6.22.17

Date



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

6/6/17

Date



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

6/6/17

Date

EIH: sef