

Proposed Text:

Title: Oglethorpe Lane Building

Wetter House & Savannah Female Orphan Asylum

On the corner of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard (formerly West Broad Street) and West Oglethorpe Avenue (formerly South Broad Street) once stood the Wetter House, which is considered an example of the best in Savannah architecture for its time, with highly decorated interior and exterior components. The original home was built in 1822 by Anthony Barclay and then acquired by Margaret Telfair, who transferred it via will in 1859 to her granddaughter, Sarah A.C. Telfair. Sarah Telfair was married to Augustus Wetter, a German-born Civil Engineer, Savannah Alderman, and Director of the Bank of South Georgia. Between 1853 and 1861, Wetter extensively remodeled the home, including the addition of elaborate cast-iron exterior balconies cast by the Wood and Perot Foundry of Philadelphia at a cost of \$100,000. The balconies' balustrades featured cast iron medallions featuring the profiles of classical authors, poets, and statesmen. In 1891, the Wetter House was sold to the Savannah Female Orphan Asylum following the financial decline and death of Augustus Wetter in 1882. The home remained in possession of the Savannah Female Orphan Asylum until 1950, when the property was purchased by Dearing Chevrolet and demolished except for the lane building. The Wetter House iron work was repurposed at other sites around the city, including the fence around the terra cotta Red Lion Fountain in front of the Savannah Cotton Exchange and as ornamental railings for the building located at the corner of Whitaker and McDonough streets.

Oglethorpe Lane Building

The lane building was likely constructed between 1888 and 1889. It is a one-story brick structure that was built along and incorporated the existing garden wall on the south side of the property. The orphanage used the enclosed garden behind the home as a children's play area, and the building was most likely used during this era for storage. The lane building is constructed of Savannah grey brick and what is suspected to be Bermuda stone in the remnant of the southern garden wall. The building was later added on to and used as an office for Dearing Chevrolet until 1986. In later years, the lane building was used as Savannah EMS Station No. 1. In 2001, the entire property was purchased by Chatham Area Transit and then sold to the City of Savannah in 2011.

Elbert Ward

In 2018, construction began on the Otis S. Johnson, Ph.D. Cultural Arts Center, and the lane building was preserved in its existing state as the last 19th-century structure in all of Elbert Ward. Elbert Ward was established in 1801, carved from the Town Common set

aside in Savannah's town plan by General James Oglethorpe as public land for grazing animals. Prior to the settlement of Savannah by the English colonists, this land was undeveloped, and the region was inhabited by members of the Creek Nation. As Elbert Ward was developed, it was characterized by residential construction. Elbert Ward and its central square fell victim to 20th-century modernization and progress, first as Federal Highway 17 cut through the center in the 1930s and then when Urban Renewal cleared the entire eastern half of the ward in the 1960s for the construction of the Savannah Civic Center. Today, the lane building serves as an example of the supporting structures that once filled Savannah's utilitarian service lanes, as well as a reminder of the history that has been lost in Elbert Ward.



Front of the Wetter House

Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator, and Augustus Wetter. *Wetter House*, 425 Oglethorpe Street, Savannah, Chatham County, GA. Georgia Savannah Chatham County, 1933. Documentation Compiled After. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress.



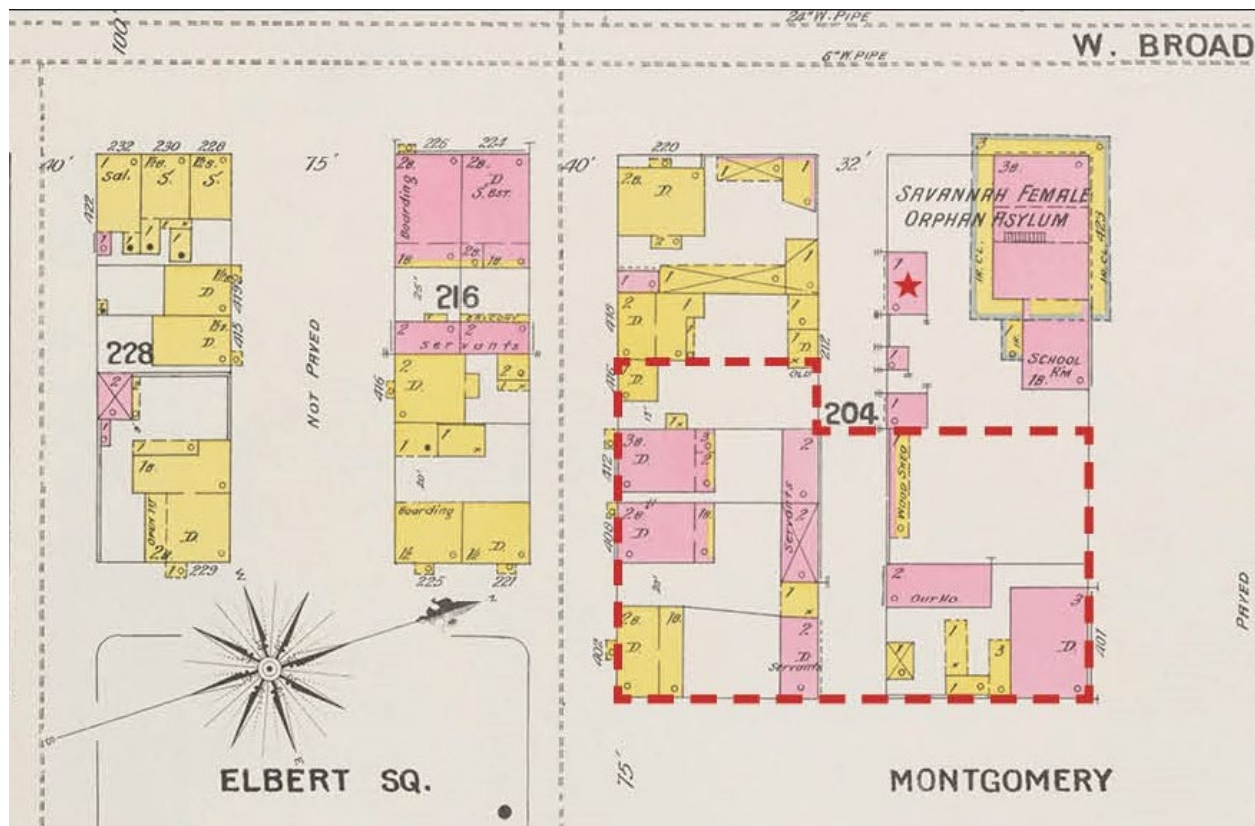
Wetter House Cast Iron

Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator, and Augustus Wedder. *Wetter House*, 425 Oglethorpe Street, Savannah, Chatham County, GA. Georgia Savannah Chatham County, 1933. Documentation Compiled After. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress.



Wetter House Playground

Foltz Photography Studio (Savannah, GA). *Wetter House, Savannah, GA*. Photograph. Savannah: 1948. From Georgia Historical Society: GHS 1360-PH-08-23-04, Cordray-Foltz Photography Studio Photographs. Retrieved from the Georgia Historical Society.



Sanborn-Perris Map Company. "Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898 / published by the Sanborn-Perris Map Company Limited." 1898. University of Georgia Libraries Map Collection, Athens, GA. Retrieved from the Digital Library of Georgia.



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Current site of the Otis S. Johnson, Ph.D. Cultural Arts Center