



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

PETITIONER: Georgia Historical Society
Elyse Butler, Membership and Outreach Associate
501 Whitaker Street
Savannah, Georgia 31401

FILE No.: 18-000076-HM

LOCATION: 130 West Gordon Street

DATE: February 1, 2018

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval for a historic marker honoring Louis B. Toomer. The marker is proposed to be located in Chatham Square near the existing sundial.

FINDINGS:

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

The petitioner provided the following information for the marker themes:

Civic and Institutional: The Louis B. Toomer historical marker demonstrates the Civic and Institutional theme through the accomplishments of Mr. Toomer as the nation's Register of the Treasury. Appointed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Mr. Toomer held this post from 1953-1956. Furthermore, Mr. Toomer was known for his support of the Republican party, served as chairman of the Chatham County GOP organization, and was a three-time delegate to the GOP convention.

Industry and Commerce: An influential figure in the African-American business community. Toomer established both banking and real estate businesses within Chatham County. Toomer's establishments provided an alternative to the segregated banking and real estate businesses. Georgia Savings and Realty Corporation, which was founded in 1927 by Toomer, is still in the operation as Carver State Bank and serving Chatham County.

Local History: Grandson of the co-founder of *The Savannah Tribune*, Louis B. Toomer helped shape the African-American business community with the creation of Georgia Savings and Realty Corporation. Now known as Carver State Bank, the African-American owned business has been serving the Savannah area for over 90 years. Toomer, like his grandfather, was a staunch supporter of the Republican party and served as chairman of Chatham County's GOP organization. To recognize Toomer's accomplishments to Savannah, the state, and nation, a

bronze sundial was erected in Chatham Square in 1964. It reads “In Memory of Louis Burke Toomer Register of the U.S. Treasury 1953-1956 Founder and president of The Carver State Bank 1947-1961.”

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 standard is met. The proposed themes for the marker are Civic and Institutional, Industry and Commerce, 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 themes focus on Toomer’s role in the local GOP as well as his role in creating what is now known as Carver State Bank.

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 standards are met. A sundial exists in Chatham Square near the proposed location of the marker, but the marker will add to the explanation of the monument.

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 themes reflect Toomer's wide variety of connects in the community, include local politics, the African-American community, and the business 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. Toomer died in 1961.

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

The standard is met.

The marker is proposed to be located in Chatham Square nearing the existing sundial honoring Toomer.

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 only other object located in the park is the sundial. The marker will be located along the pathway that leads to the sundial and will not cause overcrowding.

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 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 standards are 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 marker will not disrupt any 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 easily accessible to pedestrians and the physically challenged (excluding marker sites).

The standard is met. The marker is proposed to be adjacent to a sidewalk.

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 proposed site should be easy to maintain.

The installation of the object should enhance the space and character of the surrounding 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 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 standards are met. The site is located on the interior of the square and will not require alterations of sidewalks or traffic lights.

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 intent of the standards is met. The marker is proposed to be located near a sundial that also honors Toomer.

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. 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 standards are met. The marker is proposed to be freestanding and is the standard GHS marker style and materials.

The following is the proposed marker text:

Louis B. Toomer: Founder of the Carver State Bank

Louis Burke Toomer, African-American leader, local bank founder, and realtor, was born in Savannah in 1897. Raised and educated locally, Toomer established the Georgia Savings and Realty Corporation on February 23, 1927, in the historic black business district on West Broad Street. During segregation, the company provided banking, investment, and insurance services for blacks who were not always allowed access to white banking establishments. In 1947, the name of the corporation changed to The Carver Savings Bank, and it was converted to a State-supervised savings bank. It became Carver State Bank in 1962. A staunch Republican who served as a delegate at three GOP conventions, Toomer was appointed Register of the Treasury (1953-1956) by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Toomer died in 1961 and a bronze sundial was erected in his honor in 1964 in Chatham Square.

Erected by the Georgia Historical Society and the Carver State Bank

***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 are met. The Georgia Historical Society researched and wrote the text for the marker. Staff does request that state-supervised is not capitalized.

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 standard is met. The marker will be funded by the Georgia Historical Society.

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 intent of the standard is met. The applicant requested the escrow fee be waived and will maintain and repair the marker themselves.

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:

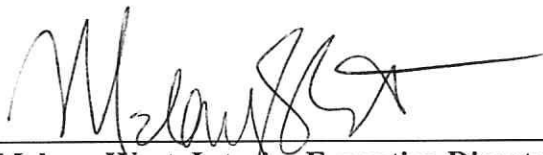
Recommend approval to City Council for a marker in Chatham Square with the condition the text is modified as requested, because otherwise the marker meets the standards.



Eli P. Karatassos, Chairman
Historic Site and Monument Commission

2-15-18

Date



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

2-7-18

Date



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

2/16/18

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Historic District: Savannah Historic District

File #: 18-000076-HM Approval Date: 02/01/2018

Address: 130 West Gordon Street

Work Approved:

Historic Marker

Note: This should be posted in a conspicuous location next to the building permit & visible to the public.



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NEXT STEPS

You have received a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior work within an Historic District ...
what are the next steps?

You may need a building permit.

Contact the City of Savannah Development Services Department at 912-651-6530 to determine if a building permit is required. If a building permit is required, we will need to stamp your permit plans.

Please submit three sets of permit plans to the Historic Preservation Department of the MPC for a stamp. Two sets of plans will be returned to the applicant to include with the building permit application; the third set will be retained for MPC records.

You may need an encroachment permit.

If your project encroaches into the public right-of-way, you will also need an encroachment permit. Contact the City of Savannah Real Property Department at 912-651-6524 to determine if an encroachment permit is required.

You may need to build a Sample Panel.

Sample panels are required for some new construction projects. If your COA decision states that a sample panel is a condition of the approval, see the Sample Panel Policy for instructions. A copy of the policy is included with your decision and can be found on the MPC's website at: <http://www.thempc.org/Dept/Shd>

You will need a final inspection.

When your project is complete, you must schedule a final COA inspection with the Historic Preservation Department to ensure work was done per the approval. For questions, contact the Historic Preservation Department at 912.651.1440 or historic@thempc.org.