

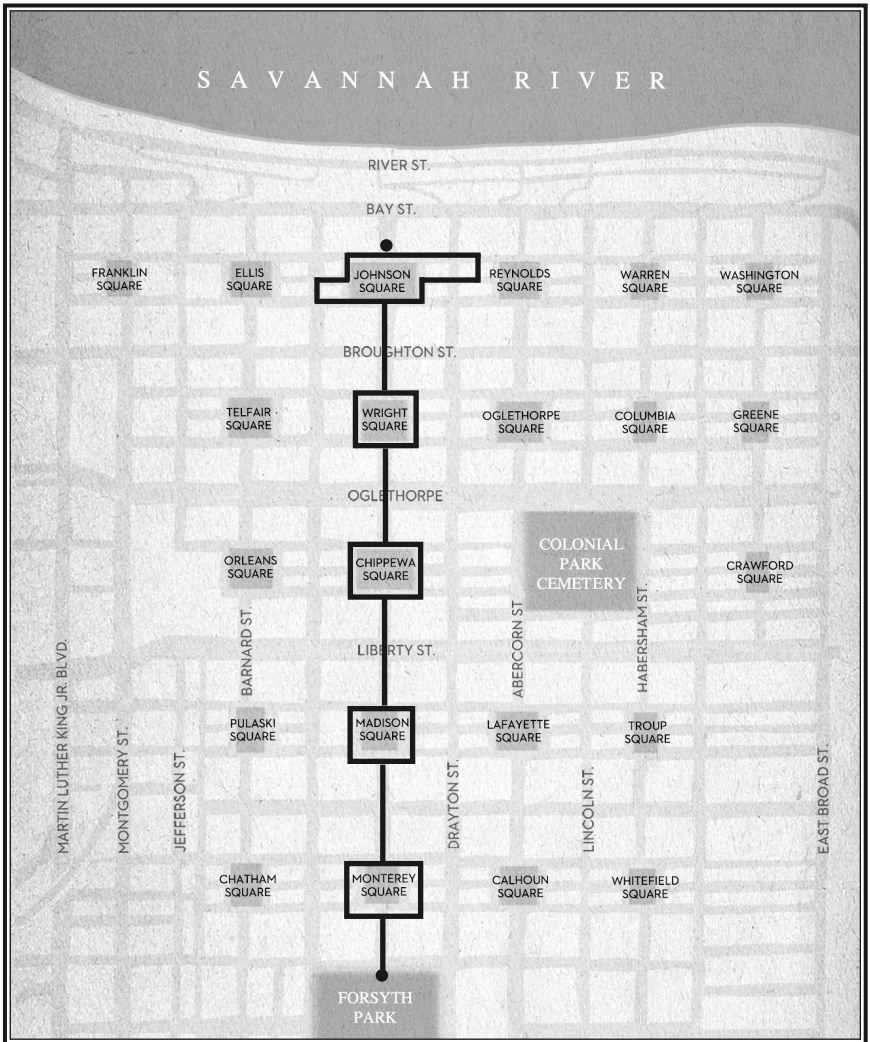


{ ARCHITECTURE }

ARCHITECTURE OF THE 1800s

Johnson Square to Forsyth Park

This tour starts in Johnson Square—Savannah’s “First Square” at Bull and Bryan streets—and proceeds south for approximately one mile. The walk ends at Forsyth Park, often called the “Big Park,” which is bordered by Gaston, Drayton and Whitaker streets, and Park Avenue.



Savannah's Historic District is filled with both an elegant and eclectic mix of several architectural styles, many of which have roots in England as well as in ancient Greece and Italy. Even James Edward Oglethorpe's original city plan features elements of style that came straight from Europe.

Depending on the period and what was in vogue, the builders and architects who drew plans for some of Savannah's cosmopolitan residences and well-known buildings reached back in time and borrowed features from structures such as the Greek Parthenon, the Roman Coliseum and the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris.

Savannah's architectural timeline includes these styles:

Colonial, 1733 to 1820. These plain, wooden structures usually have steep, pitched roofs with a pair of chimneys on either end. Sadly, a series of fires destroyed most of the early frame houses. Historians aren't certain why Oglethorpe decided to plan the city around squares. Some say the "square" design made the colony easier to defend, and that Oglethorpe borrowed the idea from the layout of old Roman military camps. Others theorize that an English architect friend may have influenced Oglethorpe. Another theory says Oglethorpe borrowed the plan from one used for the city of Peking, China. Whatever the reason, the city plan is quite unique and easy to navigate, especially on foot.

In colonial days, the space limitations of Oglethorpe's town plan and the availability of building materials restricted the size of early homes. The 30-by-90-foot lots laid out by Oglethorpe could only accommodate small frame houses, simple in style. Some of these early cottages had a gabled roof in the front with a flat shed-type roof in the back. Peter Gordon's 1734 drawing of Savannah shows the first cottages, with high fences on the side and rear. Walls were insulated with straw or marsh grass and roofs were covered with tarred shingles or palmetto leaves. Windows probably were closed with wooden shutters. Unfortunately, the original wooden structures were lost by fires that plagued the city in the early years. A 1796 blaze destroyed 229 houses and 146 out buildings.

Georgian, 1735 to 1790. Builders and architects overlapped Colo-

nial and Georgian, which reflects the English Palladian Revival. Doorways usually are framed with columns or pilasters and eaves are decorated with bracketed moldings or lintels, which are horizontal beam-like elements placed across an entranceway. The roof of a Georgian building may be hipped or gambrel and windows usually are topped with arches, stone lintels or carvings.

Federal or Neoclassical Period, 1790 to 1820. This style is known for balance and symmetry. Doorways usually are decorated with fanlights and sidelights, and windows are larger than before and are framed in recessed arches. Also typical of this style are wrought-iron railings with delicate medallions and scrolling. Entrance doors usually are six-panels with transoms.

Regency, 1811 to 1830. Named for the regency of King George of England, the Regency style features classical exteriors as well as Greek and Roman elements such as columns, and iron supports (on the south portico, or porch, of the house).

Greek Revival, 1820 to 1860. A simple, clean look based on ancient Greek temples, the use of columns supporting a triangular pediment and building materials resembling marble are typical of Greek Revival.

Gothic Revival, 1840 to 1890. This style, with its pointed arches, buttresses and spires, is reminiscent of the Gothic architecture of the Middle Ages in Europe and England.

Romanesque Revival, 1840 to 1900. This style features massive brick or stone buildings designed with Roman arches, turrets and various window sizes and placements. The Romanesque style was introduced to England by invaders from Normandy.

Italianate, 1840 to 1890. Introduced to the United States from England, Italianate architecture can be traced to ancient Rome and has characteristics that include small porch columns, wide eaves with roof brackets, and arched doors and windows.

Second Empire, 1852 to 1870. This style borrowed its name from Napoleon III whose reign was called the Second Empire. Characteristics include high mansard roofs, which have two pitches: upper part is flat, lower part has steep pitch.

Folk Victorian, 1870 to 1910. Porches with spindle work or flat, jigsaw cut trim are typical of this style. Houses are square and symmetrical in shape with brackets under the eaves. Several of these homes are located near Washington Square.

Victorian Eclectic, 1870 to 1900. Structures that are highly decorative and exhibit a combination of details from the Queen Anne, Gothic and Italianate styles are considered Victorian Eclectic.

Sullivanese and Tall Building, 1890 to 1920. Multi-storied buildings, such as the Manger Building on Johnson Square feature ornamental patterns with geometrical and plant motifs.

Beaux Arts Classicism, 1900 to 1920. The use of arches, domes, columns and statuary come together in this style of architecture.

Neo-Classicism, 1900 to 1920. The return of the simplicity of the classic Greek style was brought forth during these years.

When looking at the city's historic district today, it is difficult to fathom that, at one time, even the stately mansions were crumbling and turning into tenements. Numerous buildings were demolished – including several designed by renowned architect William Jay – to make way for those structures thought to be bigger and better. Other historic buildings in disrepair were torn down so builders and contractors could use the precious grey bricks for other purposes.

The banner years for preservation in the city were 1954-55 when the grandmother of the city's efforts – the Historic Savannah Foundation Inc. – was formed after the circa 1870 City Market was torn down and the early 19th century-era Isaiah Davenport House was threatened with demolition. Since then, HSF has saved hundreds of buildings destined for dates with the wrecking ball.

Construction of City Hall began in 1903 on the site of the old City Exchange building.



Start your tour

Begin the architecture tour at the intersection of Bull and Bryan streets. Look north to Savannah's City Hall, designed in the Italianate style by architect Hyman W. Witcover and constructed between 1903 and 1906. Some authorities describe the architecture as Beaux Arts (French for fine arts) because of the typical characteristics of that style, including the rusticated first story, the arched and pedimented doors, the statuary and sculpture. The style was based on ideas taught at École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and is reflected in many public buildings constructed between 1885 and 1920.

City Hall was built on the site of the old City Exchange, the city's first major building dating to 1799 (*See Commerce, pg. 91*). Demolition of the City Exchange was not without controversy. The Georgia Soci-

ety of the Colonial Dames of America protested the building's destruction saying that the Exchange was "a silent witness of many notable events in the history of Savannah." Nevertheless, the building was razed and City Hall took its place. Building materials included rusticated stone, Georgia granite and limestone. The two columns over the building's entrance weigh 11 tons each. The two statues are each 10 feet tall and represent art and commerce. Before construction of the building began, the architect's rendering showed four Roman chariots drawn by three horses standing just below the dome. To cut costs, however, the chariots were trimmed from the plan. During the 1980s, the dome, which originally was copper, was gilded with gold.

In addition to designing City Hall, Witcover is credited with the Chatham Armory at the corner of Bull Street and Park Avenue, the Knights of Pythias Castle Hall on Telfair Square (demolished), the old Jewish Educational Alliance on Barnard Street, the Scottish Rite Temple at the corner of Bull and Charlton streets, the former Congregation B'nai B'rith Jacob synagogue on Montgomery Street and the Bull Street Public Library. He was the first president of the Savannah Society of Architects and was appointed by the governor to the State Board of Examiners for Architects.

The history of the buildings bordering the five Bull Street squares can be appreciated fully by standing in the center of each, beginning with **Johnson Square**, which was named for the first governor of South Carolina who assisted Oglethorpe and his colonists when they arrived in Savannah. With the help of another South Carolinian – Col. William Bull – Oglethorpe decided that each square would be a public area surrounded by houses, stores and two "trust" lots on either side of the square reserved for the use of the trustees – hence the name – who set aside the land for public buildings, such as churches.

Between 1820 and 1839 few structures were built because of poor economic times. In 1833 Sara Hathaway from New York City had this to say about her visit to the city:

"Savannah is a lovely city; not made so by architectural beauty, for there are very few fine houses here. What constitutes its beauty is the manner in which the city is laid out."



Christ Church

While strolling along Bull Street on tour #1, don't forget to look up, down, and all around to see the architectural details on the buildings.

22 Bull Street, 1907, Bank of America building. As is tradition in Savannah, many locals still refer to a building by its former name. For example, the Bank of America building on Johnson Square's north-east trust lot is often called The C&S Bank building because, for decades, the elegant granite structure was home to The Citizens & Southern Bank. In Oglethorpe's day, this lot was the location of the public store and later was occupied by the William Jay-designed Bank of the State of Georgia, which was demolished to make way for the C&S Bank. With its simple Greek columns and few moldings, the present building is typical of **Federal or Neo-Classicism** architecture.

28 Bull Street, 1838. Oglethorpe's vision of putting a trust lot on each square for a house of worship holds true for **Christ Episcopal Church**, on Johnson Square's southeast trust lot. Although its congregation was established in 1733, the church building wasn't started until 1740 and not completed until 1750. That building burned during the city's 1796 fire and was rebuilt but damaged by the gale of 1804. The present structure was designed by planter and amateur architect James Hamilton Couper in the Greek Revival

style of architecture that was sweeping the nation at the time. Bricks for Christ Church were shipped from Philadelphia and later were clad with stucco. The large windows on the church were ordered from New York. The building was finished in 1838. The stone steps and landings are accented with heavy cast-iron railings. The building has a gable roof and a bell cast in 1819 by Paul Revere and Sons of Boston.

7 E. Congress Street, 1912, the Manger building. The towering building on the southeast corner of Bull and Congress streets was the work of New York architect and hotel specialist W.L. Stoddard and constructed in 1912 in the Tall Building or Sullivanesque design – a multi-storied building style that reflects the inspiration of Chicago architect Louis Sullivan, who used intricate ornamental patterns involving geometrical and plant motifs. Sullivanesque and Tall Building design was popular between 1890 and 1920. Initially, the 10-story building was the Hotel Savannah, which had 200 rooms with another 100 rooms in a 1921 addition.

The building later was known as the Manger Hotel and in recent years has been an office building. The first floor has arched entrances that match the top floor arches. Exaggerated cornices (the horizontal decorative crown of the building) and the belt course (a horizontal band of masonry extending horizontally across the building's façade) call attention to horizontal and vertical relationships, typical of this type of architecture.

Southwest corner of Congress and Bull streets. Until 1975 when they were demolished, two other “skyscrapers” overlooked Johnson Square. The Germania Bank, built in 1904 and the Whitney Hotel (originally the Hicks Hotel) constructed in 1915 were designed by (City Hall architect) Witcover.

27 Bull Street, 1912. The imposing granite structure first known as Chatham Bank resembles a bank vault, which seems appropriate for a building that, through the years, has housed many financial institutions.

Northwest corner of Bull and Bryan streets. From 1839 until 1956 when it was torn down, the Pulaski Hotel was a major influence on the ambience of Johnson Square. American Presidents and other celebrities were entertained at the Pulaski, which was demolished to make way for a buffet-style restaurant. Ironically, **Bay Lane, which is between Bryan and Bay streets** was the site of Savannah's largest slave market.

2-6 E. Bryan Street, 1911, Savannah Bank and Trust Company building. One of the city's first and few skyscrapers – the former Savannah Bank and Trust Company building, was completed in 1911 and, like the Manger hotel across the square, its style is typical of Tall Building architecture. These tall buildings were made possible because of the development of steel frames. The Savannah Bank building was designed by Mowbray & Uffinger and has three distinct sections: the base, shaft and capital. The base consists of the wide-windowed office space and is horizontal in appearance. The shaft includes the next eight vertical floors. The capital consists of the top four floors with the cornice that creates a second horizontal appearance.

24-26 E. Bryan Street, 1824, Hamilton House. This structure was built by Amos Scudder and is the oldest building remaining near Johnson Square. This house was in the vicinity of one of Savannah's largest slave markets.

Walk farther east on Bryan Street to **15 Drayton Street, 1895, Propes Hall.** The 5 1/2-floor structure on the northwest corner of Bryan and Drayton streets was designed by Atlanta architect Gottfrid L. Norrman who is credited with several outstanding Atlanta buildings, including the Edward Peters House, which was restored by SCAD and renamed Ivy Hall. In Savannah, he also designed Henry Street School, Anderson Street School and Barnard Street School, all now owned by SCAD. The Citizens Bank was built in the Sullivanesque style, using steel construction. The ground floor of the building is rusticated stone, while the intermediate floors are arranged in vertical bands enhanced with terra cotta, spandrels (the spaces between an arch and its rectangular enclosure) and four porthole windows. The building later was home to the Savannah Fire In-



The Hamilton House

insurance Co., Western Union and a law firm. It is now owned by SCAD, which renovated it in 1997 and opened it as Propes Hall.

Walk east on Bryan Street to **Reynolds Square**.

“Savannah appeared like a poor city in ruins. There is not half a dozen good buildings in the whole city and not one elegant one.”

– Herman Stebbins, October 1815.

When Stebbins visited Savannah in 1815 he apparently missed seeing **The Pink House at 23 Abercorn Street**, a stucco-over-red-brick structure that was built in 1789. It supposedly acquired its nickname because the brick bled through the stucco and turned it a

The Pink House, open for lunch: Tues. to Sat; dinner, Mon. to Sun., 5 - 10:30 p.m.



The Pink House

pinkish color. The structure, which is now a restaurant, was built in the **Georgian** style of architecture as a home for early cotton factor, James Habersham Jr.

Prior to 1817 when British-born architect William Jay arrived in Savannah, most buildings and homes were constructed by master builders who perused books for plans. By and large most circa-1800 buildings were designed by carpenters, masons or amateurs. A few years later, Jay was joined by several other prominent architects, many of whom were recruited to design some of the historic district's most outstanding buildings.

In the early 1800s the Bolton family (sister and brother-in law of Jay) lived in the Pink House. Between 1812 and 1865, the house was home to the Planter's Bank and First Bank of Georgia. In 1865 it was the headquarters of Union General Zebulon York. The Georgian style was in vogue from 1735 to 1790 and overlapped with Colonial. Georgian reflects the English Palladian Revival, inspired by the designs of 16th-century Italian architect Andrea Palladio. Doorways usually are framed with columns or pilasters (flat columns) and eaves

are decorated with bracketed moldings or lintels (horizontal beam-like elements placed across an entranceway). The roof of a Georgian building may be hipped or gambrel and windows usually are topped with arches, stone lintels or carvings.

The gable roof of The Pink House has end parapets (the wall-like barriers at the edge of the roof), two end chimneys, quoins (masonry block at the corner of a wall) and a Palladian window over the entrance. A Palladian window has a central light with a semicircular arch over it and usually is bordered by pilasters. The paneled entrance door is flanked by a pair of fluted Doric columns. The structure was remodeled and enlarged in 1812 with the pediments over the windows added circa mid-1800s.

27 Abercorn Street, 1813. Also facing Reynolds Square is the **Oliver Sturgis House**, named for one of the planners and promoters of the *S.S. Savannah*, the first steamship to cross the Atlantic Ocean. The third floor of the late-Georgian or Federal-style townhouse was added after 1835. The entrance is topped by an elliptical fanlight.

The tour continues west on St. Julian Street back to Johnson Square and goes south on Bull Street. Look up at Christ Church to see the Corinthian columns and pilasters that flank the building's tall, narrow side windows.

While walking south on Bull, notice the lane behind the Manger building. Lanes (referred to as alleys in other cities) were included in Oglethorpe's original plan to eliminate the need for driveways. (Nowadays they hide garbage cans and refuse, and allow access for emergency vehicles.) Additionally, lanes served as a way for slaves to enter their quarters or congregate with other slaves. Lanes are named for the street south of their location. For example: The lane behind the Manger building is called Broughton Lane.

1 W. Broughton Street, 1855. The building on the southwest corner was constructed for W.B. Hodgson and his wife, who was a member of Savannah's prominent Telfair family. The building was first remodeled in 1913 and has been redone several times since then.

Continue to walk south to **Wright Square**.

122 Bull Street, 1879. The first **Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension** was built c. 1843-44 but was damaged by fire. The current building, combines the **Norman and Gothic-Revival** architectural style, and was designed by George B. Clarke and dedicated in April 1879.

124 Bull Street, 1889. The buff-colored stucco “**Old Chatham County Courthouse**” was designed by William Gibbons Preston of Boston in the Richardson Romanesque Revival style with a semi-circular Roman arch. The building’s front wall has a foliated border with sculptural terra cotta ornamentation. Preston also built the Cotton Exchange on East Bay Street as well as several other notable buildings on this tour.

Facing Wright Square on **Bull Street between York and State streets** is the **United States Federal Building** designed by supervising architect William Aiken and built in the 1890s (*See Art & Culture, pg. 122*). The huge building was constructed of Georgia marble on a granite base and adorned with terra cotta carvings depicting plants and faces. With its arched windows and doors, the building is an example of **Romanesque Revival** architecture, which was in vogue between 1840 and 1900. This style features massive brick or stone buildings designed with Roman arches, turrets and various window sizes and placements. The Romanesque style was introduced to England by invaders from Normandy. Interiors of Romanesque buildings usually have arches, massive staircases and carvings. The building was enlarged in 1931 in the Renaissance Revival style.

Walk further south to **136-140, Bull Street, 1890.** This red-brick building with its curved walls and arches on the southeast corner of Bull and York streets was designed by noted architect Alfred S. Eichberg in the Romanesque Revival style. Originally from New York, Eichberg moved to Atlanta and went into business with established architect, Calvin Fay. During the 1880s the firm of Fay and Eichberg designed several small buildings for the International Cotton Exposition in Atlanta, and obtained major commissions in Atlanta and Savannah. Among these were the Telfair Hospital (facing the south



end of Forsyth Park) and the Central of Georgia Railway building (now called Eichberg Hall). Eichberg moved to Savannah and began a solo practice after Fay's health began to decline. He became a leading Savannah architect and one of the few Jewish architects practicing in the South. In 1894 he hired Hyman Witcover, who later designed City Hall.

(left) *Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension;*
(right) *U.S. Federal Courthouse*

After walking through a couple of Savannah's squares, it is easy to see why Savannah was described this way in 1856 by a correspondent in the 1856 *Southern Cultivator*:

"The whole city was a perfect Rosary – every wall and trellis, pillar and garden nook, being covered and glorified with all the finest varieties of the 'Queen of Flowers' and the whole are redolent as the 'spicy gales of Araby.'"

Proceed south on Bull Street, which is lined with shops, includ-

Open for tours
most days;
check website
for exact times
and dates,
[juliettegordon-
lowbirthplace.o
rg](http://juliettegordon-lowbirthplace.org)

ing the gift store for the **Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace** (the Wayne-Gordon Mansion). **10 E. Oglethorpe Ave., 1821**. The Federal/Regency style **Wayne-Gordon Mansion** at the northeast corner of Bull Street and Oglethorpe Avenue, was believed to have been designed by William Jay or an architect influenced by Jay (*See Art & Culture, pg. 126*).

Jay was connected to Savannah because his sister had married a member of a prominent local family. Several members of his family were stone masons in England, which is where he studied Greek architecture and landscaping. In Savannah, Jay introduced cast-iron balconies and railings. He also was fond of the fan-lighted doorway. Buildings designed by Jay have much in common – front facades, symmetry, a central entrance porch and brick walls covered with scored stucco.

At the Wayne-Gordon mansion a double stairway leads to the columned portico (porch.) The top floor was added in 1886. The house was built for James Moore Wayne, a lawyer who became a U.S. Supreme Court Justice. Later, the structure became the childhood home of Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low. In 1965, the house was named the city's first National Historic Landmark. Often called, "the birthplace," the museum house is owned and operated by the Girl Scouts of America. A Victorian garden is behind the iron fence on the east side of the house.

Toward the end of the Colonial period gardens were laid out in patterns and devoted exclusively to ornamental plants. As the Savannah plan developed some of the major streets were built to permit medians with trees, most streets were bordered with trees and trees were planted in squares. As a result, Savannah was transformed into a veritable garden.

By 1810 squares were landscaped and decorated with sculpture and fountains, and enclosed by fences. Spacious side yards can be seen at the Wayne-Gordon Mansion on Oglethorpe Avenue at Bull Street, at 202 E. Taylor Street and 202 E. Jones Street Originally, the front third of the side garden was ornamental while the back was used for utilitarian purposes, such as hanging laundry.

4 W. Oglethorpe Avenue, 1839. The Greek-Revival building at the

*Independent
Presbyterian
Church*



northwest corner of Bull Street and Oglethorpe Avenue was enlarged in 1867 and is called the **Ward-Anderson House**.

207 Bull Street, 1891. Independent Presbyterian Church, on the southwest corner of Bull and Oglethorpe, was rebuilt in 1891 on the site of the first church that burned. The first church was designed by John Holden Greene and modeled after London's St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church. Granite for the 1891 church was shipped to Savannah

*Independent
Presbyterian
Church holds a
house tour each
year before
Christmas. Check
their schedule for
tour dates.*

from Massachusetts. The Federal-style structure was built under the supervision of architect William G. Preston and has wooden trim and a slate roof. The Gibbes-type steeple has a granite tower, a wooden belfry and an octagonal spire. The Roman Doric portico has classical entablature (the section between the top of the columns and the roof) and tympanum fan in relief (the semi-circular decorative wall surface over the entrance).

208 Bull Street, 1908. Designed in the **Beaux-Arts Classical** style, the building is owned by the Chatham County Board of Education and once was known as Chatham Junior High School. The intricate sculpture at the top of the building is credited to John Walz.

Chippewa Square was laid out in 1815.

222 Bull Street, 1820. During its heyday, the **Savannah Theatre**, designed by William Jay, was described as enjoying “the reputation of being the best adapted for its purpose of any between Baltimore and New Orleans.” The building has been altered many times and does not resemble the structure designed by Jay.

223 Bull Street, 1833. Across the square from the Savannah Theatre is the **First Baptist Church**, which was built in the Greek Revival style on the site of the first church. The front of the building is in the temple form with a Corinthian portico. The wide windows are arched below a gable roof. Remodeling took place in 1922.

14 W. Hull Street, 1896. This house, designed by Henry Urban and built for Honora Foley, has been an historic inn for more than 30 years.

18 and 20 W. Hull Street, 1857-1858. This house was constructed by and for John and Ephraim Scudder, sons of Amos Scudder who came to Savannah from New Jersey to help build the second Christ Church. John Scudder opened a brick factory and helped build houses designed by Jay. John Scudder’s sons followed in his footsteps.



*(above) First Baptist Church;
(below) 17 W.
McDonough*

17 W. McDonough Street, c. 1844. This building is attributed to architect Charles Cluskey who designed it for Daniel Philbrick and Moses Eastman. The Greek Revival structure, now home to a law firm, is often called the **Eastman-Hull-Stoddard-Barrow House** because of its various owners through the years. The third floor was added in 1911. Noted architect Cluskey, who was born in Ireland and moved to New York City, came to Savannah in 1829 when he was 23. His initial visit was brief because of the yellow fever epidemic that spread throughout the coastal area. Cluskey moved to the interior of the state for about 10 years, during which he designed the old Governor's Mansion in Milledgeville, among other structures. Cluskey returned to Savannah in the late 1830s and is believed to have designed the Hermitage Plantation (now demolished) on the outskirts of the city.

In 1839 he drew up plans for Francis Sorrel's Grecian villa on Madison Square. Cluskey also is credited with designing the Sisters of Mercy Convent on Liberty and Abercorn streets. It is believed that he left Savannah in 1847 for Washington, D.C., after his design for the local United States Custom House was rejected. In Washington Cluskey offered suggestions for improving both the White House and the Capitol.

The iron fence in front of the Eastman-Hull-Stoddard-Barrow House features medallion portraits of statesmen and authors, and came from another downtown home—the Wetter mansion, which was demolished in 1950. (Other sections of the fence are found on other downtown properties.) Cast-iron décor arrived in Savannah in the late 1790s but wasn't used as much until after an 1820 fire in the downtown area when homeowners were encouraged to build with fireproof materials, such as iron rafters and floor joists. That particular fire broke out in a stable off Bryan Street and traveled to City Market where flames ignited gunpowder causing the blaze, literally, to spread like wildfire. Hundreds of Savannahians lost their homes and belongings during that disastrous moment in the city's history.

15 W. Perry Street, 1867. It is believed that noted architect John Norris designed this **Italianate** house for John Stoddard, a Massachusetts planter. It was built by William Hunter and later

owned by Confederate General Alexander Robert Lawton, who became president of the American Bar Association after the Civil War. The square shape of the house is typical of the Italianate style, which was popular from 1840 to 1890 and was introduced to the United States from England.

Norris has been described as Savannah's most important architect of the 1850s and came here in 1848 to supervise construction of his design of the U.S. Custom House on Bay Street. While here, he introduced new styles of architecture, including the Tower-of-the-Winds portico on the Custom House. Among his other famous projects were the Green-Meldrim Mansion on Madison Square, Mercer House on Monterey Square and the Andrew Low House on Lafayette Square.



*Decorative
dolphin down-
spout*



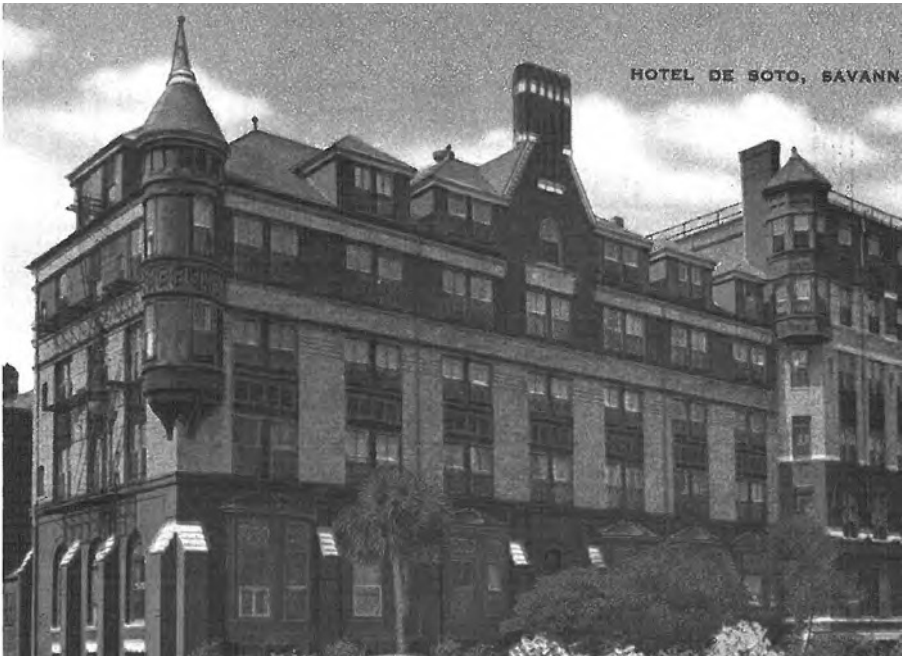
307 Bull Street

3 W. Perry Street, 1831. This house was built as a simple, gable-roofed frame dwelling with a side hall plan. A later owner, Dr. James J. Waring, who became mayor of Savannah, added six rooms and doubled the size of the house in 1839. An 1874 remodeling transformed it into the Renaissance Revival style. The dolphin-decorated iron waterspout can be found on several downtown homes, including the Davenport House on Columbia Square.

Walk south on Bull one block to **4 W. Liberty Street, 1879.** With its mansard roof, the house at the northwest corner of Bull and Liberty streets is typical of **Second Empire** architecture, which borrowed its name from Napoleon III whose reign was called the Second Empire.

2-4 E. Liberty Street, 1856. The house on the northeast corner of Bull and Liberty streets was built for bank president Charles F. Mills.

1-3 W. Liberty Street, 1849. The **Fay/Padelford House** on the southwest corner of Liberty and Bull streets is a stucco-over-brick



structure attributed to John Norris. It was built for Joseph Fay who sold it to Edward Padelford in 1853. Ownership again changed hands in 1871 when George DeRenne purchased the property. DeRenne, in turn, donated it to the Georgia Hussars, a military group organized by Oglethorpe to patrol and protect the colony from the Spaniards and Indians. The Hussars are still an active unit of the Georgia Army National Guard. The Fay/Padelford House is now the headquarters of the Knights of Columbus.

A postcard image of the original Hotel DeSoto

15 E. Liberty Street, mid-1960s. The contemporary **Hilton DeSoto Hotel** on the southeast corner of Bull and Liberty streets, was built on the former site of the **Hotel DeSoto**, a fabulous example of the Romanesque-Revival style. The original hotel was designed by William G. Preston (who designed the old Chatham County Courthouse and the Savannah Volunteer Guards Armory, among other Savannah structures.) With its red-brick barrel shaped towers and turrets, the “old” DeSoto opened with a lavish ball on New Year’s Eve 1888 and was demolished in the mid-1960s.



The Sorrel-Weed House

307-309 Bull Street, 1897. This unusual looking storefront building was built for the Georgia Hussars in the **High Victorian Eclectic** style – popular from 1870 to 1900 – and later was home to an automobile dealership. The Middle Eastern style is somewhat out of the ordinary.

The Sorrel-Weed House, daily tours: 10 s.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Madison Square was laid out in 1837.

6 W. Harris Street, 1841. Sorrel -Weed House, built for Francis Sorrel, is lauded by architects as an outstanding example of the



Greek-Revival style (*See Art & Culture, pg. 141*). The portico, or porch, has elliptical arches, Doric columns and a sweeping double stairway. The Sorrel-Weed house is one of architect Cluskey's most famous houses. The Sorrel-Weed House was designated a state landmark in 1953 and was the first house in Georgia to have the honor. The house is also a National Trust Historic Landmark.

Green Meldrim Mansion

326 Bull Street, 1843. The home above E. Shaver Books was built for **Eliza Jewett**, a prominent woman in antebellum Savannah. It was constructed of brick covered with stucco (*See Art & Culture, pg. 139*).

14 W. Macon Street, 1853-1861. Across the square from the Eliza Jewett house is the Gothic Revival structure known as the **Green-Meldrim Mansion**, which was Union Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's headquarters from December 1864 to February 1865 (*See Art & Culture, pg. 141*). The house was designed by architect Norris for wealthy English cotton merchant Charles Green and was the most

Green Meldrim Mansion, tours available Tues. to Sat., 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.



*Doorway facing
the garden of the
Green-Meldrim
Mansion*

expensive 19th century house built in Savannah. Green and his family enjoyed a lavish lifestyle with their fine china and silver in their mansion overlooking Madison Square. The ornate house had indoor plumbing and was reputed to be the first house in the city illuminated with gas lighting.

Judge Peter Meldrim was a later owner – hence the name Green-Meldrim Mansion. Unlike most Gothic Revival buildings, this mostly rectangular shaped house has regularly spaced windows and a flat roof. But its roof parapets, its iron porches and fencing, structural buttresses, as well as its oriel windows (bay windows that project from



*St. John's
Episcopal Church*

the walls and are supported by brackets) are typically Gothic Revival. A story in an 1861 edition of the *London Times* described the mansion as having a “New York Fifth Avenue character.” The entrance, which is on the south side of the building (closest to the church) consists of paired arched doors with arched sidelights, all set within a recessed Tudor arch. Three sets of doors at the entrance include a pair of wooden doors with arched panels, a center pair of sliding glass

Savannah Volunteer Guards Armory, now SCAD's Preston Hall



panels, and a third pair of sliding and louvered doors.

The woodwork on the main floor is carved black walnut and the elaborate crown moldings or cornices are stucco-duro. The marble mantles in the double drawing rooms are Carrara marble. Other original items in these rooms are the matching chandeliers and the mirrors in gold leaf frames which were brought from Austria.

Originally, the rear wing was the carriage house with servants' rooms, the kitchen and stables. The house was sold to St. John's Episcopal Church in 1943 and is a National Historic Landmark.

329 Bull Street, St. John's Episcopal Church, 1849. The church was designed by Calvin Otis of Buffalo, NY and built in the typical

Gothic style with its arched windows and buttresses. The church was consecrated on May 7th, 1853. A west annex added in 1881 houses the chapel on the ground floor, the church office on the second floor and choir rooms on the third floor. The church has a 47-bell carillon and stained glass windows that depict the life of Christ.

341 Bull Street, 1912. The tall **Masonic Hall/Scottish Rite Temple** overlooking Madison Square was designed by City Hall architect Witcover who was a Mason. The building is reinforced concrete with a terra-cotta overlay and has a curving corner, an elaborate cornice and ornamental pilasters in the midsection. Emblems of Freemasonry are found in the ornate doorway and on the sides of the building. Solomon's Drug Store leased the ground floor when the building was completed. The drug store was acquired by SCAD and is now the Gryphon Tea Room.

340-344 Bull Street, 1892. With its turrets, towers, wrought iron, brick arches and terra cotta designs, **The Savannah Volunteer Guards Armory** on the southeast corner of Bull and Charlton streets is an outstanding example of Romanesque Revival style (*See Art & Culture, pg. 143*). It was designed by architect William Gibbons Preston (the old Chatham County Courthouse, the Cotton Exchange, etc.). A drawing of the building was on the cover of the Jan. 14, 1893 issue of *American Architecture and Building News*. The cannons at the entrance date from around 1812 and were rescued from what was left of the foundation of the Volunteer Guards previous armory at Whitaker and President streets. The building was acquired by SCAD in 1979, refurbished and renamed Preston Hall.

The May Poetter Gallery is open Mon. - Fri., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Walk south on Bull to **2-4 E. Jones Street, 1853.** The home on the northeast corner of Bull and Jones streets is attributed to John Norris (note the Norris-characteristic wrought iron) and was built for Alexander Smets, vice counsel for France in Savannah. The balcony is a wonderful example of cast-iron décor. The house was purchased by the Harmonie Club (a social club) in 1883 and changed hands several more years before it became part of SCAD.

*Congregation
Mickve Israel*



1 W. Jones Street, 1849. The home on the southeast corner of Bull and Jones streets was built for banker Israel K. Tefft, who also was a founding member of the Georgia Historical Society.

Walk south to **Monterey Square**, which was laid out in 1847.

4 W. Taylor Street, 1852 with additions in 1896. Built for railroad executive Nicholas Cruger.

10 W. Taylor St., 1852. For many years the ground floor of this house was a physician's office. In fact, from the 1930s to the 1970s most of Savannah's doctors and dentists worked out of offices in the historic district. The ironwork was added several years after the house was built.



The Mercer House

2 E. Taylor Street, 1880. The Italianate-style house on the northeast corner of Bull and Taylor streets was built for railroad executive James Comer who had the distinction of hosting Jefferson Davis when he visited the city in 1886. Typical of the Italianate style are the segmental arches, molded lintels, and wide eaves supported by decorative brackets. The two-story piazza on the east side of the house overlooks a side garden. The carriage house probably was built in 1852.

10 E. Taylor Street, 1872. The **William Hunter House** has side balconies that overlook a spacious garden and a swimming pool added in recent years.

12-14 E. Taylor Street, 1869; remodeled, 1895. Built for Daniel J. Purse and Daniel Thomas. The mansard roof and various window sizes are typical of the Second Empire style of architecture. The owners operate an antique print and map shop on the ground floor.

20 E. Gordon Street, 1876-1878. **Congregation Mickve Israel** is the only purely Gothic Revival synagogue in the United States and home to the third oldest Jewish congregation in the country (*See Art & Culture, pg. 146*). The building was designed by New York architect

Congregation Mickve Israel, tours available weekdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 2 to 4 p.m.

*Townhomes
on Monterey
Square*



Henry G. Harrison and has typical Gothic buttresses and towers. The octagonal onion dome over the belfry roof, however, has a decidedly Eastern look. The brick with stucco building has a three-bay front with a central entrance tower and a Gothic porch with a large, pointed window over it.

423-25 Bull Street, 1858. These twin houses were built for Presbyterian minister Charles Rogers, who also was a wealthy rice planter and major slave holder. These homes have one of the downtown district's most outstanding examples of ornamental ironwork and are taller versions of houses built in the 1840s on the west side of Gramercy Park in New York City.

429 Bull Street, 1860–1869. Known as **Mercer House** for its first owner, this Italianate mansion was designed by John Norris and built for Hugh Mercer, a Virginia banker (See *Art & Culture*, pg. 146). Construction of the house was interrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War. In fact, Union soldiers used materials from the building site to build shelters in Monterey Square. The house has stone steps, a banded stone base, and a front door framed by elaborate Corinthian columns. The low-pitched hipped roof has wide eaves supported by decorative brackets. A three-tiered porch runs across the back of the house. The tall, pedimented, arched windows, arched doors, and cast-iron trim also are typical of Italianate style.

The Mercer House is open Mon. – Sat., 10:30 a.m. to 4:10 p.m.; Sun, 12 to 4 p.m.

7–9 W. Gordon Street, 1884. These houses were designed by architect Augustus Schwaab, who is credited with designing the now-defunct City Market on Ellis Square. Several years ago number 9 was featured on the television show, “This Old House.”

3 W. Gordon Street, c. 1860–69. The Civil War delayed construction on this house designed for successful merchant **Noble Hardee**. Originally a double house, the building later was converted to a single family unit. The iron balconies were an addition to the original structure. What other effects did the Civil War have on Savannah? Apparently the city became somewhat of a ghost town after the Civil War. Those who had not fled the city were paying exorbitant prices for groceries and clothing. Women formed sewing circles that met at homes throughout the city and refused to walk under the American flag (See *Social Life*, pg. 52).

1–9 E. Gordon Street, 1852–53, “Scudder’s Row.” Amos Scudder built these row homes, as well as the Savannah Theatre, designed by William Jay. Row houses made their debut in Savannah during the 1850s. Typically, row houses are three stories over a basement with a flat roof. Basements are higher than normal because streets were unpaved and could be dusty or muddy.

Mary Morrison, in the book *Historic Savannah*, says the antebellum years – during which these row houses were built – “from the late 1830s until the Civil War, were a golden age for Savannah architecture.”



A postcard of
The Armstrong
Mansion when
it was a junior
college.

“The greatest impression made by this period on the city was the erection of numerous row and paired houses, which represented the dominant architectural trend of the era.”

Walk south on Bull Street to **443-451 Bull Street, Armstrong Mansion, built 1917**. With its ornamental ironwork, this expansive granite and glazed-brick mansion is typical of the Italianate architectural style, although some describe it as Beaux Arts. Often called Armstrong House, the structure was designed by Henrik Wallin and constructed of white brick with limestone trim by contractor Olaf Otto for shipping executive George F. Armstrong. As a residence, this opulent house had two libraries, a music room, a solarium, a miniature ballroom and a billiard room. After Armstrong’s death, his widow donated the property to the city of Savannah. In 1935 the mansion opened as part of Armstrong Junior College. It is now home to a law firm.

450 Bull Street, 1857. Designed by architect Norris and built for British Ambassador Edward Molyneux, this Classic Revival brick structure later was the home of Confederate General Henry Jackson. Notice how the attic windows are camouflaged by the frieze. The private Oglethorpe Club purchased the building in 1912.



Forsyth Park, 1851. Forsyth Park, often called the “Big Park” by longtime Savannahians, was laid out in the early 1850s when larger parks were in vogue (See *Art & Culture*, pg. 147). The park actually had been created in the 1840s when William Hodgson donated 10 acres to the city. *Forsyth Fountain*

Hodgson was from the Washington, D.C. area but had met Savannahian Mary Telfair while visiting Paris. They were married in London in 1842 and returned to Savannah where Hodgson took over the supervision of the Telfair plantations. Hodgson, who was quite the scholar, joined the Georgia Historical Society and was made a curator in 1845.

The park made possible by Hodgson was expanded and named for Georgia Gov. John Forsyth who donated the additional 20 acres, known as the parade grounds. In the late 1800s various local volunteer militia groups could be seen drilling in the park while children and youngsters played nearby. On Sundays and on holidays families would stroll through the park after church and, perhaps, have a picnic under the trees or admire the grand fountain and the statuary.

During the Civil War, Union troops camped in the park after Savannah surrendered to Gen. William T. Sherman. At first the park was enclosed by a wooden fence, but later was surrounded by an ornate railing to keep livestock from roaming through the area. For many years, two decorative concrete sitting sphinxes guarded the Gaston Street entrance.