

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER/GEORGIA REGISTER NOMINATION

Name: F. W. Woolworth Co. Store – Savannah

Location: 129 Broughton Street; Savannah, Chatham County

Description: The F. W. Woolworth Co. Store is a three-story rectangular commercial building occupying the prominent southwest corner of Abercorn and Broughton Streets in the heart of Savannah’s downtown commercial district. The building is located within the Savannah National Historic Landmark District, designated in 1966, and is currently considered a non-contributing resource due to its date of construction outside the period of significance. Constructed in 1954 in the International Style, the building features common architectural elements of the style, including banded windows, smooth and flat exterior surfaces with minimal detail and ornamentation, and a flat roof. Although the building no longer functions as a Woolworth store, it continues to feature commercial uses along the ground floor and remains a significant and well-known anchor structure along the Broughton Street corridor. It maintains a high degree of historic integrity, retaining many exterior features and materials, and a majority of original interior layout and finishes.

Acreage & Boundary Explanation: current legal boundary and historic boundary on which the store was constructed.

Period of Significance: The period of significance extends from the date of construction in 1954 through 1964, marking the passage of the Civil Rights Act.

NR Criterion & Areas of Significance: The F. W. Woolworth Co. Store is significant under Criterion A: social history/civil rights

Statement of Significance: The F. W. Woolworth Co. Store is significant for its contribution to social history/civil rights for its association with the Modern Civil Rights Movement (1954-1964) and the effort to integrate public accommodations in Savannah. A sit-in by four Black college students at the Whites-only dining counter inside Woolworth’s store in Greensboro, North Carolina on February 1, 1960 sparked a movement of sit-ins and store boycotts throughout the South, including Woolworth’s store at 129 E. Broughton Street, Savannah. Along with several other Broughton Street stores, the Savannah Woolworth’s store was a focus of successful economic boycotts and sit-in protests during the Savannah Protest Movement that led to the wholesale desegregation of retail businesses, including the elimination of segregated customer facilities and ending discriminatory employment practices. In fact, Savannah was the first city in Georgia to desegregate all its public and private facilities by October 1, 1963, months ahead of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Suggested Level of Significance: Local

Sponsor: The nomination is sponsored by Frank Glaser. Nomination materials were prepared by Sarah Ward and Becki Harkness, Sarah Ward, Architecture + Preservation, LLC.

