

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER/GEORGIA REGISTER NOMINATION

1. Name: R. J. Taylor Memorial Hospital

2. Location: 161 Commerce Street, Hawkinsville, Pulaski County, Georgia

3a. Description: R. J. Taylor Memorial Hospital is prominently located at the intersection of Commerce Street and Golden Isles Parkway in downtown Hawkinsville, approximately one-half mile west of the Ocmulgee River. The hospital consists of the original building (built in 1938) and several major additions: the south wing (built in 1954, with additions in 1958 and 1962), east wing (built in 1954), and west wing (built in 1965). All parts of the building were designed by Dennis & Dennis, an architectural firm based in Macon, Georgia, and functioned as one entity with each addition directly connected to the 1938 main block. The original building is symmetrical with T-shaped wings extending to the east and west, a central two-story portico, a cupola, and simulated arcades connecting these original wings to the core. The building is clad in brick and has six-over-six and eight-over-eight windows throughout. With the exception of the 1965 west wing addition, the hospital reflects the Georgian Revival style. The two-story west wing has a flat roof, minimal ornamentation, and reflects a more modern design aesthetic. The original, main block is accessed through the "Memorial Room," so named and designed in memory of the hospital founder's father and grandfather. The Memorial Room features plastered walls and ceilings, chair rail and crown moldings, and coffered wood-paneled door jambs. On the second floor of the building's main block is the "Operations Room," which features historic tile on the floors and walls, a picture window to allow for additional light, and the original wooden door with circular window. The main block and south wing addition feature double-loaded corridors, as does the upper level of the east wing addition. During the recent rehabilitation, former doctors' offices and patient rooms throughout the hospital were altered to function as apartments. These alterations included the construction of new demising walls, kitchenettes and bathrooms, and the installation of modern appliances. However, many historic interior features and finishes such as plaster walls, historic windows, and original cased door openings were retained.

3b. Period of Significance: 1938-1976

3c. Acreage: 1.98 acres

3d. Boundary Explanation: The proposed boundary is the property's current legal boundary, which encompasses the remaining intact historic acreage associated with the hospital.

4a. National Register Criteria: A and C, Criteria Consideration G

4b. National Register Areas of Significance: Health/Medicine, Architecture

4c. Statement of Significance: R. J. Taylor Memorial Hospital is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of health/medicine as a good example of a private, nonprofit regional medical facility that served residents from multiple counties in central Georgia. Access to quality healthcare was limited in Georgia's rural counties following the Great Depression, and patrons, like local businessman Robert Jenks (R. J.) Taylor, played a major role in healthcare delivery by funding the development of hospitals. This hospital was the only available medical facility for the surrounding rural areas and provided general care for short-term and emergency needs, as was typical for community hospitals historically. R. J. Taylor Memorial Hospital also documents the many changes in the field of healthcare during the hospital's four decades of service to the community. These changes not only reflect the modernization of medical practice and treatment protocols, they also reflect changing attitudes regarding the treatment of African American patients, as the hospital transitioned from segregated doctor's offices and patient wards to a fully integrated facility in 1968. R. J. Taylor Memorial Hospital is also locally significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a good, intact example of a regional hospital built in the Georgian Revival style by the well-known Macon architectural firm of Dennis & Dennis. The firm was established in 1884 and designed numerous houses, churches, schools, and civic projects over the next 80 years. The R. J. Taylor Memorial Hospital retains many characteristic features of the Georgian Revival style, including elaborate door surrounds, classical portico with columns, cornice, gable returns, and a symmetrical building composition. The hospital also retains many historic exterior and interior materials, circulation patterns, and distinctive spaces, such as the Memorial Room, Operations Room, and Solarium.

4d. Suggested Level of Significance: The property is being nominated at the local level of significance as a representative example of a regional medical facility serving central Georgia's rural communities and exhibiting the Georgian Revival style in a landmark building of Hawkinsville.

4e. National Register Status: R. J. Taylor Memorial Hospital received final certification from the Georgia DNR Historic Preservation Division for the state tax credit and county property tax abatement programs on August 28, 2020.

5. Sponsor: The nomination is sponsored by TBG Residential, and nomination materials were prepared by Ray, Ellis & LaBrie Consulting.