PHOTOGRAPHS, SKETCH PLANS AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA FOR THE SPRINGFIELD/S&O CANAL FLOODGATES, CITY OF SAVANNAH, CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA

CHICORA RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 181
Springfield/S&O Canal Floodgate
North of Oglethorpe Street and east of Canal Street
Savannah
Chatham County
Georgia

PHOTOGRAPHS, SKETCH PLANS, AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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TOWN OR VICINITY
Savannah
ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE
Georgia
COUNTY
Chatham
TOWN OR VICINITY
Savannah

HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME)
Springfield/Savannah-Ogeechee Canal Tidal Floodgate (City of Savannah, 1995)

SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE
Springfield Canal Floodgates

COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES)
North of Oglethorpe Street and east of Canal Street in the Springfield Canal, City of Savannah, Georgia

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE)
ca. 1930 (oral history, City of Savannah)

ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE)
Not known, thought to be WPA project

SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE)
This structure was designed to control interior flooding associated with the Savannah-Ogeechee (S&O) Canal once it was no longer used for barge and ship traffic. It operates by allowing interior drainage to pass through the gates during the twice a day low tides, but prevents tidal flow further inland. The structure is thought to have been built as a WPA construction project, although only limited historical research (largely within the City's archives) has been conducted.

STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE)

MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEM)
The side walls are cast-in-place concrete with steel reinforcement rods. The concrete has abundant rounded quartz pebble aggregate. The gates and integral hinges are cast brass/bronze with concrete poured around them. The gate structure exhibits a cold joint against the side walls, suggesting that it was cast-in-place, or moved into subsequently and locked in position using the steel band and bolts. The gates themselves are wood with a rubber seal around the edges. There appears to be a concrete base south of the gates, although no such base could be found to the north.

SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE)
See attached sketch plans

EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE
Gates are unusual in that they are wood and not cast iron or aluminum. Construction of side walls with addition of gate section also seems unusual.

INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE
Not applicable

MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES
Steel I-beams were added to span the two side walls, likely with a timber deck, possibly later coated with approximately 2-inches of asphalt. These were added by chipping out notches in the side walls, locating the beams, and infilling around them with concrete. Subsequently these I-beams were cut out. The structure has also been modified by the addition of a sloping concrete retaining wall for the canal. Three of the four gates have been altered by the addition of steel cable used by city workers to manually open the gates from the cross walk when logs or other debris are caught in the gates. No dates are available for any of these alterations or repairs.

PRESENT CONDITION AND USE
The structure is currently in good condition with only minor erosion and damage to the side walls, and a stress crack along the west side wall. The structure is still in use to control interior flooding and prevent tidal flow up the canal.

OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE
Sketch plans, large format black and white photography, and color transparencies were compiled for this structure by Chicora Foundation in 1995 at the request of Thomas and Hutton Engineers.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.)
Site determined eligible for inclusion on the National Register and MOA prepared with ACHP, Army Corps of Engineers, and Georgia State Historic Preservation Office in 1995.

COMPILER, AFFILIATION
Michael Trinkley, Chicora Foundation, Inc., Columbia, SC

DATE
December 19, 1995
TAKEN FROM SITE PLANS PROVIDED BY THOMAS & HUTTON ENGINEERS, SAVANNAH, GA.

SITE PLAN
LOCK PLAN VIEW

NOTE!
CONCRETE CORNER
HAS ERODED

1/8" = 1'-0"

DRAWN BY: BILL DAVIES
SOUTH ELEVATION (FROM BRIDGE) 1/8" = 1'-0"
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INDEX TO BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS

SPRINGFIELD/S&O CANAL FLOODGATES
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Sam Jones, Columbia, S.C. Photographer December 18, 1995

1 Oblique view of north elevation of gates from the west bank of the canal,
taken as the tide was dropping (view is to the southeast)

2 Near frontal view of the north elevation of gates from the east bank of the
canal, taken as the tide was dropping (view is to the southwest)

3 Oblique view of the south elevation of gates from the east bank of the canal,
taken as the tide was approaching its lowest point (view is to the northeast)

4 Close-up view of the eastern side-wall from the gate platform, showing I-beams
additions and iron band (view is to the east)

5 View of the south elevation of the gates from the Oglethorpe Street bridge,
showing the canal in its overall context (view is to the north)

6 Close-up view of the western two gates from the west bank of the canal,
taken at dead low tide (view is to the southeast)

REMARKS:

A good view of the north elevation was not possible since the tide did not drop sufficiently low to allow
entry into the canal during the photo shoot. On this day, even at low tide, the water north of the gates was
ranged from 4½ to over 6 feet in depth, with an irregular bottom. Obstructions in the canal also prevented
moving further northward. The water to the south of the gates was at least 4½ to 5 feet in depth.
Consequently, the north elevation was shot from the east and west banks and the south elevation was shot
from the Oglethorpe Street bridge. The view of the north elevation from the eastern bank is compromised
by the presence of a fence and a large pipe crossing the canal.
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SEE INDEX TO B&W PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTION

VIEW # 5
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SPRINGFIELD/S&O CANAL FLOODGATE, 1995
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VIEW # 6
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Michael Trinkley, Columbia, S.C. Photographer December 18, 1995

Fujichrome (E-6 Processing):
1 Setting up to photograph the eastern side wall (view to the east)
2 Oblique view of the north elevation from the west bank showing the floodgates at low tide (view to the southeast)
3 Closeup of the western two floodgates from the west bank at low tide (view to the southeast)
4 Closeup of the eastern side wall showing iron band and I-beams (view to the east)
5 Oblique view of the south elevation from the east bank showing the structure at low tide (view to the northwest)
6 Bill Davies taking measurements for sketch plans, showing the eastern side wall (view to the south)

REMARKS:
Archaeological Investigations
Historical Research
Preservation
Education
Interpretation
Heritage Marketing
Museum Support Programs

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