



CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**CHATHAM COUNTY-SAVANNAH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
CHATHAM COUNTY
LOCAL HISTORIC PROPERTY DESIGNATION**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PETITIONER: Elizabeth Arndt
FILE NUMBER: HD-0224-000451
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1253 Little Neck Road
PIN: 11026 02037Y
ZONING: R-A
STAFF REVIEWER: Caitlin Chamberlain
DATE: May 1, 2024

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The petitioner is requesting to designate the Jacob Fox Gould House as a local historic property. The property is located at 1253 Little Neck Road in unincorporated Chatham County.

DESIGNATION PROCESS:

The Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission was created in 2005. The MPC Historic Preservation Department staff recommendation for designation will be presented to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners for designation and adoption of a historic district ordinance. Presently, Chatham County has designated the New Ogeechee Missionary Baptist Church, Maridon (AKA: Eureka Club, Farr's Point), Pennyworth Island, Isle Of Hope Union Missionary Baptist Church, and the Pin Point Historic District.

The site was identified as a significant historic resource in the 1972 Historic Preservation Workbook, Coastal Georgia. At the time, it was referred to as the Georgia Fawcett Cottage, named for the owner at the time. It has also appeared in the 1993 Chatham County Historic Resource Survey, referred to as the Gould-Fawcett House. Various other resource listings refer to the property as R.H.Gould Homestead or House. Most recently, it is known as the Gould-Fawcett House. The current petition requests using the name Jacob Fox Gould House with the

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designation, as it reflects the original owner.

CONTEXT:

As noted in the application, The Jacob Gould Fox House is located in rural western Chatham County, GA, and it remains in its original location on 20 acres of land. In 1866, Jacob Fox Gould transferred 700 acres of his land to his son, Robert Henry Gould. The remaining 20 acres is undeveloped with a mix of open fields and wooded areas. Development remains fairly sparse for several miles. A short distance away is the Bethel Baptist Church and the Bethel Cemetery whose land was donated by descendants of the Gould family for the benefit of the Bethel Community. The Jacob Fox Gould House stands alone as the oldest building in the vicinity, with the majority of houses built circa 1950 or later.

BUILDING HISTORY:

The applicant provided a highly detailed report of the history of the building and the residents, including members of the Gould family, and the enslaved population whose unpaid labor accounted for the success of the Gould's rice plantation operations.

Jacob Fox Gould and his wife Ann Davies Gould took possession of the property in 1809 but the house is believed to date to circa 1830, with an earlier (now non-existent) house dating to the early 1800s. It was during the 1830s and 1840s that records show Gould was running a successful rice farming operation, and that he had acquired 750 acres of land. The 1840 census shows details that there were 5 family members living in the house, 15 family members working in agriculture and held 26 enslaved individuals.

Documentation shows that Gould was a slaveholder as early as 1810, where a noticed printed in the July 30, 1810 issue of the *Columbian Museum and Savannah Commercial Advertiser* describes a woman named Rinah, approximately 30 years old, who was brought to the Savannah Jail, stating she belonged to Jacob Gould and had fled the plantation several months prior. The 1860 Federal Census- Slave Schedules for Jacob Gould notes that there were 6 'slave houses' on the property, none of which survive. Other outbuildings formerly on the property included a detached rear kitchen/smokehouse and a blacksmith shop.

The house remained largely unchanged for over a century and stayed within the Gould family until 1916. At some point after the Civil War, the family stopped using the rear detached kitchen and installed an addition to the rear of the house that contained a room on one side, a porch on the other side, and a narrow central breezeway that led to a one-story enclosed building, containing a new kitchen and dining room.

In 1945, the property owner, Georgia Foster Fawcett, had the two deteriorated exterior brick chimneys rebuilt using the former brick pattern. Fawcett also added a rear porch which was later enclosed and turned into a galley kitchen. During the Fawcett era, interior changes were also

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made to modernize the living spaces. 6-over-6 windows were installed to signify the difference between the additions and the 6-over-9 windows of the original house.

The current owners installed a rear hyphen and addition in 1997, which is discernible from the original house, as seen in photos and floor plans provided by the petitioner.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The historic house is a wood frame antebellum cottage built in a vernacular interpretation of the Georgian style. Often referred to as a Tidewater South Raised Cottage, the hall-parlor timber framed one and a half story house is not uncommon for its time but is a rare surviving, intact example. The façade is symmetrical with a center door and four evenly spaced six-over-nine-pane windows, each with single-hung window sash along with two brick gable-end chimneys.

The submittal packet includes a much more detailed architectural description along with many photographs to provide a sufficient architectural description.

FINDINGS:

Per the Chatham County Historic Preservation Ordinance Section IV. C. 1. a-d. regarding *Recommendation and Designation of Historic Districts and Historic Properties*, the provision provides the following criteria for Designation:

C. Designation of a Historic Property

1. *Criteria for selection of historic properties. A historic property is a resource, including the adjacent area necessary for the proper appreciation or use thereof, deemed worthy of preservation by reason of value to the County of Chatham, the State of Georgia or region for one of the following reasons:*

Staff finds the historic resource meets criteria A, B, C, & D.

a. It is an outstanding example of a resource representative of its era;

b. It is one of the few remaining examples of a past architectural style;

The Criteria are met for A and B. The Jacob Fox Gould House, though it has undergone some 20th century changes, still retains its original form. The additions were done sensitively and since there is a hyphen connecting the two, the 1997 addition could be reversed and removed without damaging the original historic building.

The house is one of the few remaining examples of a Tidewater South Raised Cottage in the vicinity. In the direct context, the applicant notes that the other buildings date from the 1950s and later. Within this portion of Unincorporated Chatham County, there are only two other known surviving examples of this style: Wild Heron Plantation House and the Drouillard-Maupas House.

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These houses exemplify the character defining features of a one and a half story house with dormers on the attic story, end chimneys, and symmetrical Georgian facades.

c. It is a place or resource associated with an event or person of historical or cultural significance to the County of Chatham, State of Georgia, or the region; or

The Gould family, starting with Jacob and Ann, played an instrumental role in the founding of the Bethel community. Jacob Fox Gould was a Trustee of the Oglethorpe District tasked with documenting white children between the ages of 5 and 15 for the purposes of establishing a school in the area. The Gould family members were delegates to the Bethel Baptist Church Association meetings and donated the land of their family cemetery for the Bethel Cemetery. Gould descendants remained involved in the community. Carrie E. Gould taught children in a schoolhouse on the property for 9 years, and her husband, Robert Lee Gould was the County's first school bus driver in 1916.

Also associated with the property are the dozens of enslaved men, women, and children whose forced, unpaid labor allowed the Gould family to obtain their vast land holdings and maintain plantation operations. It is through this legacy that the above-mentioned contributions of the Gould family were possible.

d. It is the site of natural or aesthetic interest that is continuing to contribute to the cultural or historical development and heritage of the County of Chatham, State of Georgia or region.

The Jacob Fox Gould house is associated locally with the Bethel area's history, local vernacular building traditions and cultural heritage. The resource is architecturally, historically, and culturally significant to Chatham County and the State of Georgia.

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission recommend approval to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners for the historic property designation and listing on the Chatham County Register of Historic Places for the Jacob Fox Gould House, located at 1253 Little Neck Road, as requested because the building is a significant historic resource that meets the criteria for designation as outlined in the Chatham County Historic Preservation Ordinance.

MW:JM:CC