

BROUGHTON MUNICIPAL BUILDING

The City of Savannah's Broughton Municipal Building (BMB), located in the heart of Savannah's National Historic Landmark District at Broughton and Abercorn streets, has a rich history dating back to the late 1700's. The Broughton Municipal Building is situated on Lot 6, Third Tything, Reynolds Ward. Reynolds Ward, named for Captain John Reynolds, the first Royal Governor of Georgia, was one of the original six wards laid out according to General James Edward Oglethorpe's plan for Savannah. The property was granted by the English Crown to Isaac La Roche and William Bradley, Jr. in the 1760s and subsequently changed ownership several times over the next two centuries. It was briefly owned in the 1840s by William Washington Gordon, former mayor of Savannah (1834-1836), founding president of the Central of Georgia Railroad, and grandfather of Juliette Gordon Low (founder of the Girl Scouts).

During the late 19th century and early 20th century, the lot was occupied by a variety of businesses, including a livery stable, laundry and café. In 1913, the Odeon Theatre was constructed and occupied the lot until 1948. The Odeon hosted plays, sing-alongs and silent movies, accompanied by a live organist. After undergoing renovation, the building was occupied by the State Theatre from 1950-1958. After surviving both World Wars, the theatre was torn down in 1959 to make way for a new high rise financial institution.

Levy and Kiley Architects designed a six-story, modern office building as the new home of First Federal Savings & Loan Association. The building, anchored on the busy intersection of Broughton and Abercorn streets, opened in 1961 and continuously operated as a bank, despite several name changes, until 1989 when the Great Southern Federal Savings Bank was forced to close due to bankruptcy.

On August 16, 1991, the Mayor and Alderman of Savannah purchased the building and converted the bank to a municipal annex, providing much needed space for the growing local government. Currently, the Broughton Municipal Building is the most visited City building, home to several City departments, including Human Resources, Information Technology, Auditing, Utility Services, Revenue, and its newest member the City's 311 Call Center.

Source:

Galovic, Amy. "Lot 6, Third Tything, Reynolds Ward, Savannah, Georgia" (unpublished manuscript). Savannah College of Art & Design, HIPR 706 Research & Survey, Fall 2002. Savannah Local Reference Files: Buildings-Broughton Municipal Building. City of Savannah, Research Library & Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.