

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER/GEORGIA REGISTER NOMINATION

1. Name: East Atlanta Historic District

2. Location: Within the city of limits of Atlanta, and immediately east of those limits in unincorporated DeKalb County. It is approximately 3.6 miles east of Atlanta city hall. The neighborhood is roughly bounded by Interstate 20 to the north and east, various residential streets to the south, and Moreland Avenue to the west.

3a. Description: The East Atlanta Historic District is a large and diverse neighborhood of single-family houses, apartments, commercial buildings, schools, churches, gas stations, a park, and a cemetery that straddles the eastern boundary of the city of Atlanta, and the western boundary of unincorporated DeKalb County. Its diverse historic resources and piecemeal development patterns reflect the area's evolution from rural area, to Atlanta streetcar suburb, to urban automobile-oriented neighborhood. Its terrain includes a combination of rolling hills and flat land with many mature trees. The neighborhood is anchored by the East Atlanta Village, a commercial area that developed beginning at the intersection of the neighborhood's two primary commercial thoroughfares, Flat Shoals and Glenwood avenues, in the northwest corner of the district. One- and two-story attached and detached commercial buildings, constructed largely of brick and concrete block, are concentrated in a roughly seven-block area extending in all directions from this intersection. Most storefronts are utilitarian in design with minimal detailing, but there are prominent examples of some architectural styles including the Spanish Colonial Revival, Stripped Classical, and Jacobethan Revival. There is some noncontributing multi-story infill fronting Glenwood Avenue. The commercial core is surrounded by residential development representing common late 19th to mid-20th-century house types and styles. Bungalows (1920s), American Small Houses (1940s), and ranch houses (1950s-1960s) are three of the more prevalent types. Stylistic influences also vary widely, ranging from Queen Anne to Craftsman to English Vernacular Revival to Plain Style ranch house, and many others. The oldest residential development (c.1900-1940) comprises the northernmost and westernmost portions of the district, and is laid out along straight streets lined with sidewalks. Later development (1940-1968) is laid out along increasingly curvilinear streets lacking sidewalks, evidencing the influence of the automobile. There are two small commercial nodes outside the commercial core, both comprised of detached commercial buildings that accommodate parking. Block sizes and lot sizes vary in different sections of the neighborhood, as do setbacks and road widths. Community landmarks include the former East Atlanta Bank (1911), the Madison Theatre (1929), the former East Atlanta Library (1949), the East Atlanta Post Office (c.1960), the former Peterson Elementary (1957), the former East Atlanta High School (1959), and churches including the former Martha Brown United Methodist Church (now Eastside Church) (1918), and the former Moreland Avenue Baptist Church (now First Iconium Church) (c.1920-1961). Contributing sites in the district include Sylvester Cemetery (1838) and Brownwood Park (1922).

3b. Period of Significance: 1890-1968

3c. Acreage: 1,176 acres

3d. Boundary Explanation: The boundaries of the East Atlanta Historic District include the highest concentration of intact and contiguous properties historically associated with the neighborhood during the period of significance. The boundaries exclude portions of the neighborhood that were historically associated but have lost integrity due to nonhistoric development, and/or were separated from the neighborhood by the construction of Interstate 20.

4a. National Register Criteria: A and C

4b. National Register Areas of Significance: Architecture, Commerce, Community Planning and Development, and Social History

4c. Statement of Significance: The area that would become East Atlanta was still a sparsely populated agricultural area in September 1877, when a monument to commemorate Civil War General James McPherson was erected at the location of his death during the Battle of Atlanta 15 years earlier. This monument, located in what is today the northwest corner of the district, set the stage for the area's growth. A streetcar line began operation on Moreland Avenue in 1883, and the neighborhood's initial residential platting and commercial development occurred that same decade. Commercial development remained centered on the intersection of Flat Shoals and Glenwood avenues and grew to encompass the surrounding blocks, while residential development largely followed various annexations of most of the neighborhood into the city of Atlanta by 1927. A housing boom occurred after World War II, resulting in the development of most of the southern half of the district during the 1950s and 1960s. The construction of Interstate 20 through the northernmost portion of the neighborhood in the late 1950s and early 1960s altered the neighborhood's boundaries, and spurred increased commercial development on Moreland Avenue. In the 1960s, East Atlanta experienced racial tensions and white flight after the early integration of nearby Murphy High School. The East Atlanta Historic District is significant in the area of architecture for its excellent intact collection of residential, commercial, and community landmark buildings, representing various architectural types and styles popular in Georgia from the late 19th through the mid-20th centuries. It is significant in the area of commerce as one of DeKalb County and Atlanta's primary commercial nodes during the early to mid-20th century. The district is also significant in the areas of community planning and development and social history as an embodiment of the trends and changes that shaped and defined DeKalb County and Atlanta's development during the late 19th and early to mid-20th centuries, including economic and political forces such as transportation improvements, urban consolidation, and integration leading to demographic shifts in the 1960s.

4d. Suggested Level of Significance: The district is being nominated at the local level of significance as a microcosm of the overarching trends and influences that shaped, transformed, and defined Atlanta and DeKalb County's development from the late 19th through the mid-20th centuries.

4e. National Register Status: The following property in the district was individually listed in the National Register in 1997: the Zuber-Jarrell House, 810 Flat Shoals Avenue.

5. Sponsor: The nomination is sponsored by the East Atlanta Community Association, and the nomination materials were prepared by Georgia State University graduate students in Heritage Preservation and community volunteers.

Summary prepared June 2018/SLCF