

# SWEET AUBURN

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DISTRICT

Atlanta, Georgia

INTEGRITY AND CONDITION  
ASSESSMENT 2019



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Atlanta, Georgia

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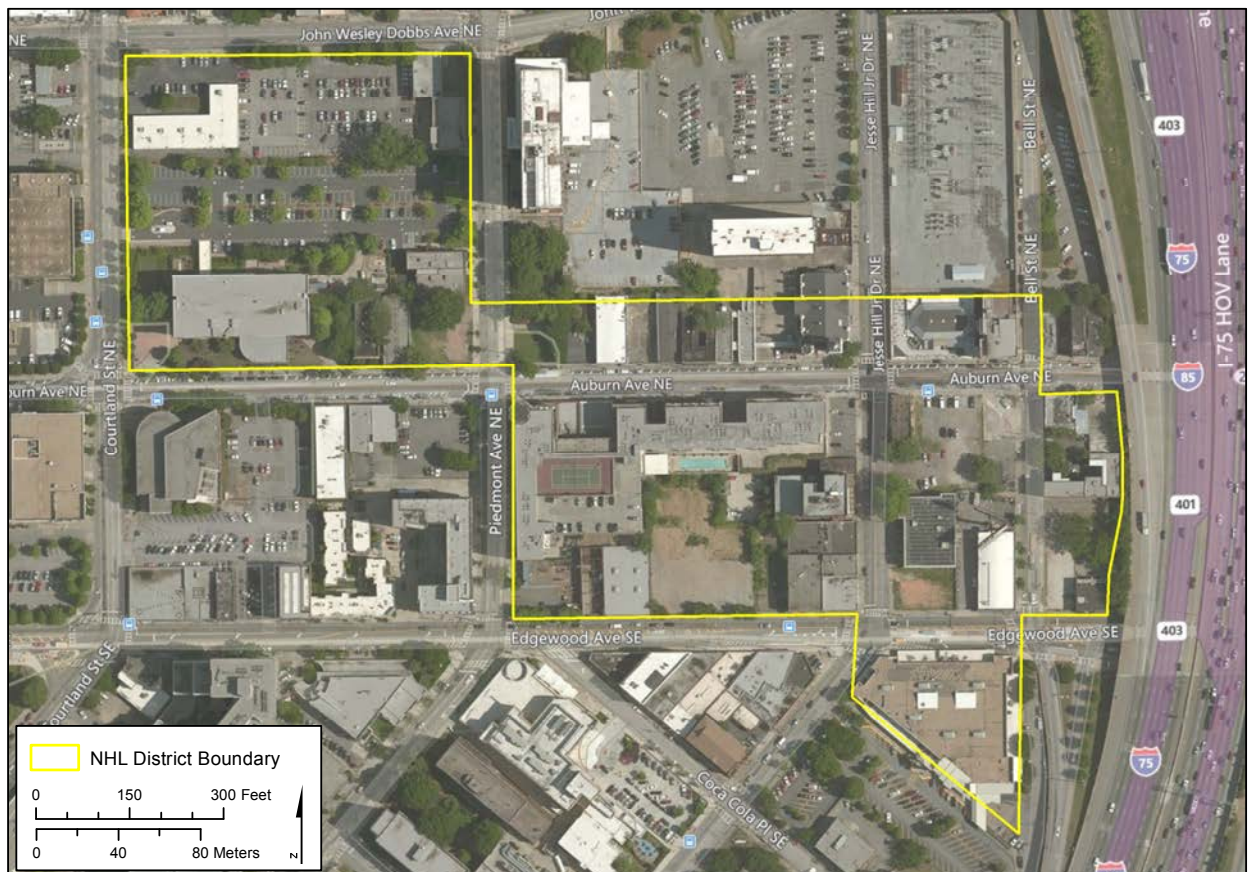
# Chapter 1. Introduction

The Sweet Auburn National Historic Landmark District (Sweet Auburn NHLD) is one of the nation's most important historic districts. Designated by the Secretary of the Interior in 1976, the Sweet Auburn NHLD covers approximately 0.03 square miles or 18.8 acres and is home to or adjacent to several buildings considered highly significant to Atlanta and the nation's history.

The National Park Service (NPS) has funded an Integrity and Condition Assessment study to document, in narrative and photographic formats, major changes that have occurred within and adjacent to the district since its designation in 1976. New South Associates was contracted to assess the integrity and condition of the district as a whole. The effort involved research, a building survey, photographic documentation, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis and mapping, and gathering stakeholder and public input on current and future threats to the Sweet Auburn NHLD.

The scope required that the study result in a narrative that addresses all seven aspects of integrity, described in Chapter 3, for the Sweet Auburn NHLD using the condition of the district when it was

**Figure 1.1** Map Showing Sweet Auburn NHLD boundary.



Source: Bing Maps Hybrid (2019)

designated as its baseline for analysis. For the evaluation of setting, the team was tasked with not only addressing the setting within the NHL district, but also addressing properties adjacent to the district's boundary. Requirements for photo documentation included representative views of the district as well as the duplication of seven views that were included with the nomination in 1976.

Mapping of the National Historic Landmark (NHL) using the NPS's Cultural Resources GIS Standards was an important objective, generating mapping of the Sweet Auburn NHL. The team also created additional maps that illustrate areas where the integrity of the district is threatened or where integrity has been lost. In developing the challenges section, the team was asked to interview local historic preservation professionals, NPS staff, and others knowledgeable about development or other threats; and to search media reports; Section 106 files from the State Historic Preservation Office and the Southeast Regional Office of the NPS; and any other relevant source.

This document is divided into seven chapters including this introduction. Chapter 2 discusses the history of the Sweet Auburn NHL. A discussion of the methods followed during this project is in Chapter 3. The survey results are described in Chapter 4 and assessment results are discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 includes an assessment of current challenges to the district's integrity while Chapter 7 provides the conclusion. The References Cited follows, along with four appendices: Appendix A contains the NHL nomination form; Appendix B holds the duplicated eight views from the original NHL nomination; Appendix C contains a timeline of events chronicling significant events discussed in Chapter 2; Appendix D contains aggregate census data of the district's census tract 28, depicting how the demographic has changed from 1940 to 2010; Appendix E is a table of the organizations involved with the Sweet Auburn NHL; and Appendix F contains a table of the major studies published involving the district.



# Chapter 2

## History of Sweet Auburn National Historic Landmark District

Auburn Avenue in downtown Atlanta became a hub of African American prosperity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and is of national significance. Originally named Wheat Street, and renamed Auburn Avenue in 1893, it was the heart of Atlanta's black business community during the segregated Jim Crow era, and home to some of the most successful black businesses in the country. "Sweet Auburn," as the street was named by Auburn Avenue patriarch John Wesley Dobbs, is synonymous with the commercial blocks of Auburn Avenue. The businesses, shops, nightclubs, restaurants, churches, and fraternal orders that were established along Auburn Avenue from Courtland Street on the west to Boulevard on the east combined to create a special place for Atlanta's African American community to call their own. Auburn Avenue flourished and was a center of power for black Atlantans.

### Growth and Renaissance

Auburn Avenue became the central business district of black Atlanta beginning at the turn of the twentieth century. The business and commercial district, extending from the Five Points area of downtown Atlanta east to the Old Fourth Ward residential area of the city, was the product of the Jim Crow segregation laws prevalent throughout the South. Beginning around 1890, the city became racially regulated through segregation ordinances and zoning laws, the enforcement of them, and the widespread violence waged against black residents, particularly in the form of lynching, and the intimidation brought by the Ku Klux Klan.

African American businesses began to coalesce around the Auburn Avenue corridor, with middle- and upper-class black residences in the adjacent Old Fourth Ward, during this era of segregation. In particular the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot was a pivotal event in the city's segregated history. Over three days in September, the Atlanta Race Riot was a period of violence, with white people killing dozens of African American people. This led to many African Americans leaving the city or moving even closer together than previously (Mixon 2005; Ambrose 1992:70).

Black neighborhoods solidified on the west side of the city and on the east side, in the Old Fourth Ward. Just to the west of the Old Fourth Ward, African American businesses centered on the west end of Auburn Avenue. Between 1900 and 1920, African American businesses on Auburn Avenue increased in number from 10 to 72. By 1920, Auburn Avenue was the central business district for Atlanta's African American residents. Home to professional offices and commercial enterprises, the thoroughfare became the destination for Atlanta's African American population to see a doctor, lawyer, and purchase life insurance and real estate, all things that were impossible to do in Atlanta's white business district (Ambrose 1992:74).

What emerged on the Auburn Avenue landscape was an array of successful businesses built upon an exclusively African American clientele because of the racial segregation policies of the City of Atlanta. Financial institutions that anchored the business district and led the nation in black-owned businesses included the Citizens' Trust Company bank, the Standard Life Insurance Company, and the Atlanta Life Insurance Company. Prominent black leaders of the business district included Alonzo Herndon,



**Figure 2.1.** Harry Pace (Left), Heman Perry, and Alonzo Herndon (Right) were three of the most influential business leaders in Atlanta's African American community in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Henderson 1987).

Henry Rucker, and Heman Perry, all credited with constructing some of the first African American-owned office buildings on Auburn Avenue. Along with the financial institutions, other important early businesses included the Gate City Pharmacy and the *Atlanta Daily World* newspaper. Geneva Haugabrooks established Haugabrooks Funeral Home at 257 Auburn Avenue, beginning her business' long tenure in the Sweet Auburn area (Calloway 1988:4).

From its inception as a black business district, Auburn Avenue was the home to several African American Masonic/fraternal organizations. These organizations formed an important piece in the cultural and financial makeup of the street. African American Masonic groups in Atlanta served as burial associations for African Americans when white insurance companies would not cover them, serving as precursors to the African American life insurance companies that emerged in the early twentieth century. Fraternal organizations constructed buildings along Auburn Avenue, including the Odd Fellows Lodge and Auditorium in 1913, the Prince Hall Grand Lodge in 1914 (located outside Sweet Auburn NHL district boundaries), and the 1960 Smooth Ashlar Grand Lodge, located on Piedmont Avenue, adjacent to Auburn Avenue and the Atlanta Life Insurance buildings (Calloway 1988:5–6).

John Wesley Dobbs, one of Prince Hall Lodge's most famous Atlantans who became locally known as the mayor of Auburn Avenue, is credited with calling the street "Sweet Auburn." The term was indicative of the success represented by the businesses and people of Auburn Avenue and more generally, the prosperity many African Americans in Atlanta were enjoying during the first half of the twentieth century. Dobbs was part of this success and established, along with civil rights attorney A.T. Walden, the Atlanta Negro Voters League in 1946. It was through Dobbs' political relationship with Mayor William B. Hartsfield in the 1940s and 1950s that the black community achieved several victories, like the city hiring its first African American police officers in 1948 (Bailey 2005).





**Figure 2.2.** Three masonic buildings located within the Sweet Auburn NHLD include Odd Fellows Building Smooth Ashlar Masonic Lodge (Top; Photo Credit: New South Associates (NSA) 2018), and the Prince Hall Masonic Temple (Left; Photo Credit: Wally Gobetz, Flickr), just outside the district.





**Figure 2.3.** One of the most visible landmarks in the Sweet Auburn NHLD is Big Bethel AME Church, with Wheat Street Baptist Church (Right) located just down the street, outside of the district (Photo Credit: NSA; (Right) Wally Gobetz, Flickr).



**Figure 2.4.** The Royal Peacock nightclub in the 1950s (Source: Atlanta100.com).

Churches, including Ebenezer Baptist Church and Wheat Street Baptist Church, are also central to Auburn Avenue's community history. Big Bethel AME Church, the sole church within the boundary of the Sweet Auburn NHL District, was reconstructed in 1923, but the church congregation had its origins dating to 1847, with the first church built in 1855 on Jenkins Street. The Romanesque Revival church that stands today was reconstructed after a fire damaged the second circa 1891 building in 1923 (Carmolingo 2015).

The 1940s and 1950s saw Auburn Avenue as a cultural center, with nightclubs such as the Top Hat Club (later reopened as Royal Peacock) hosting national acts such as Little Richard, James Brown, Ray Charles, Otis Redding, Louis Armstrong, and Bessie Smith. The adjacent (but no longer extant) Royal Hotel, run by Carrie "Mama" Cunningham, provided upscale lodging for African Americans and for the acts playing at the nightclub (Dyer 2009).



## Civil Rights Era Associations

As the neighborhood where Martin Luther King, Jr., grew up and later established the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Auburn Avenue was important to the city's civil rights movement. The SCLC grew out of the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955-56), which resulted in the desegregation of Montgomery's public bus system. That success prompted other similar boycotts in cities across the South. The SCLC, a regional organization to coordinate various protest efforts, formed in Ebenezer Baptist Church in January 1957. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the first president of the SCLC and Ralph David Abernathy served as Financial Secretary-Treasurer (SCLC). The SCLC has historically always been located on Auburn Avenue and was located in the Sweet Auburn NHLD during its earliest years, first at the Savoy Hotel (in the Herndon Building that is no longer extant) and later at 208 Auburn Avenue (Davis 1999:154).

The Butler Street YMCA was the site of the SCLC's early fundraising events, as well as conferences held by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and meetings with the local police over issues such as police brutality toward black Atlantans (Davis 1999:155).



**Figure 2.5.** Butler Street YMCA with Atlanta Life Insurance Company Managers in 1921 (Hamilton 2002).

## Desegregation and the Construction of Interstate 85/75

Two major events contributed to the economic decline of Sweet Auburn, beginning in the 1960s: desegregation and the construction of Interstate 85/75. White downtown businesses did not fully integrate until after the end of legal segregation. In response to pressure from black student protests and boycotts against their segregated policies between 1960 and 1964, and ultimately to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, desegregation of Atlanta's white businesses soon followed. African Americans no longer had to confine their businesses and patronage to the Auburn Avenue corridor, thus setting the stage for its decline (Reed et al. 2018:E-57, E-58).

The construction of Interstate 75/85 technically began in 1948 but at a slow pace until 1954. After the passage of the Federal Highway Act of 1956 construction restarted in earnest and incorporated a route that became known as the “Grady Curve,” just east of the Sweet Auburn NHLD. The curved design allowed all but four blocks of Capitol Homes public housing and Grady Hospital to remain but forced the destruction of Auburn Avenue buildings east of Bell Street and west of Fort Street. Historic aerial photography from the era shows the land was cleared by 1960 and the interstate was constructed by 1968. The interstate divided the Auburn Avenue business district, forcing pedestrians to walk under the dark and uninviting interstate overpass (Reed et al. 2018:E-14).

The disinvestment had taken its toll and by 1975, 27 years after the beginning construction of Interstate 85/75, a preliminary study prepared for the City of Atlanta cited the decline as a major concern. The study, according to *The Atlanta Constitution*, stated, “The avenue was ‘the spine of a significant black business and residential community,’ but the area reached its economic peak between the 1920s and 1950s. . . it later declined because of a number of factors, including an interstate expressway which severed the neighborhood (Merriner 1975).” The plan cited the factors contributing to the business district’s decline as the construction of the interstate, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 expanding the geographic options of the African American business community, and the retirement of long-standing Sweet Auburn business leaders (College of Architecture, Georgia Institute of Technology 1975: 16-17).

## Designation of the Sweet Auburn National Historic Landmark District, 1976

In 1973, Atlanta elected the first African American to serve as mayor of a large southern city, Maynard Jackson. Although born in Dallas, Texas, Jackson was raised in Atlanta and attended Morehouse College. His maternal grandfather was John Wesley Dobbs, “mayor” of Sweet Auburn and advocate for the rights of African American voters. Dobbs was a major influence on Jackson’s life, and ultimately, Jackson had Houston Street renamed John Wesley Dobbs Avenue (Rice 2004). Jackson’s successful bid for mayor took place during a time when blacks in Atlanta were continuing to gain a tremendous amount of political capital in the city because of the leadership that largely was borne out of Sweet Auburn.

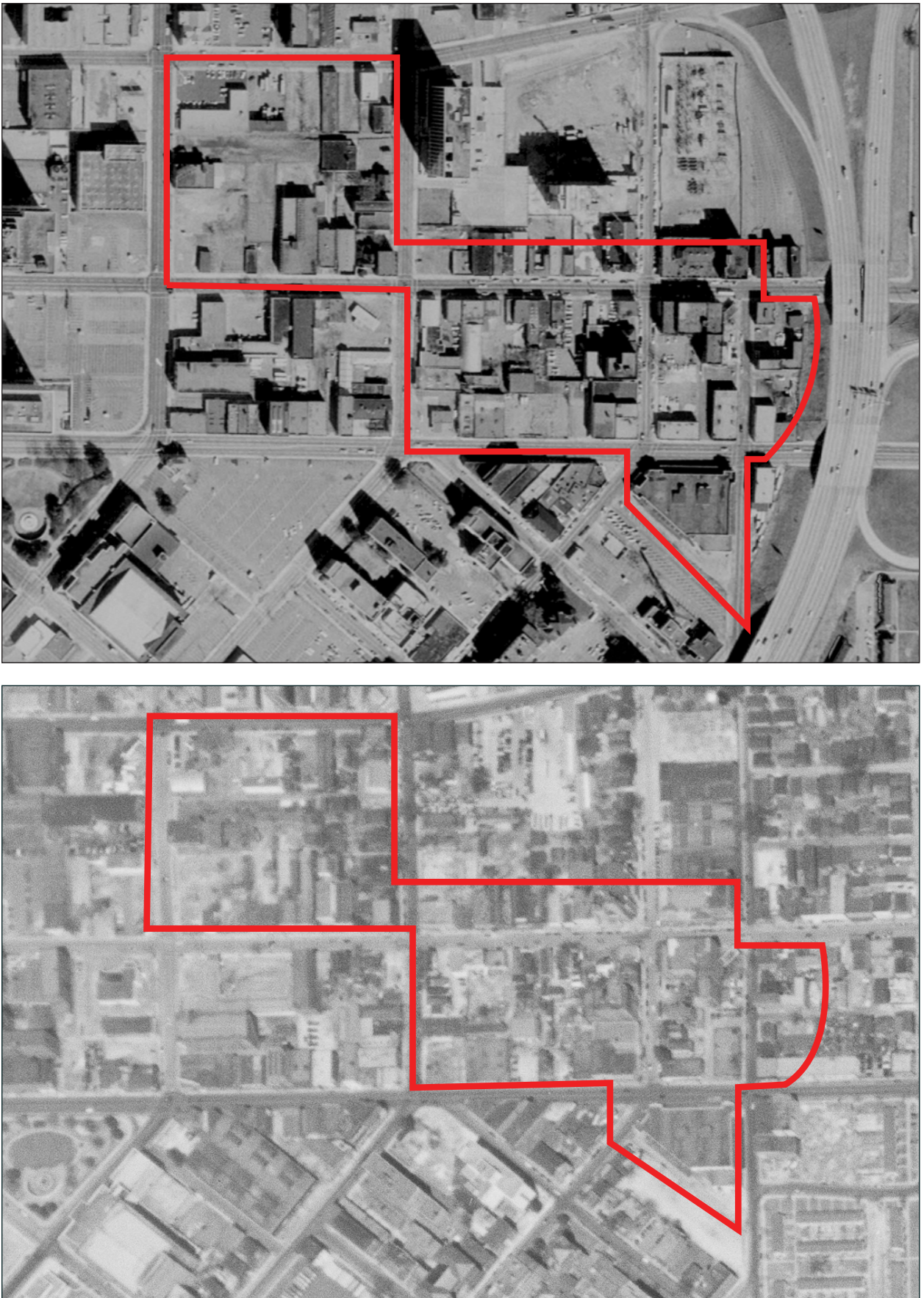


**Figure 2.6.** Mayor Maynard Jackson Announcing Preservation Initiative for Sweet Auburn in Front of Big Bethel AME Church, 1981 (Source: Atlanta Journal-Constitution Archives and GSU).

Among that leadership was William “Bill” Calloway, one of the successful business leaders of the Sweet Auburn community, having started the Alexander-Calloway Realty Company with his partner, T.M. Alexander, in 1941. They later founded the Consolidated Mortgage and Investment Company. Calloway, along with the Citizens & Southern Bank president Mills B. Lane, established the Atlanta Action Forum in 1971. The Action Forum brought together 12 business leaders each from both the black and white community that met monthly in an informal setting to discuss and problem solve the challenges that the city was facing (Russell and Andelman 2014:xiv).

With the Action Forum in place and Sweet Auburn’s powerful business community’s influence present at City Hall, in March 1975, Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson announced the beginnings of the “Sweet Auburn project,” a preservation project to produce a plan for the





**Figure 2.7.** 1972 (top) and 1952 Aerial Photos Showing the Sweet Auburn NHLD Prior to, and After Construction of Interstate 75/85.



**Figure 2.8.** William “Bill” Calloway in Front of the Mutual Federal Savings Building at 205 Auburn Avenue in 1992 (Source: Atlanta Journal-Constitution Archives and GSU).

district. Jackson said, “The Sweet Auburn project will be a step toward revitalizing the area and bringing business and tourism back (Merriner 1975).” The preservation plan, titled *Sweet Auburn Comprehensive Urban Design Plan for Auburn Avenue, Atlanta*, became the basis for the Sweet Auburn Historic District NHL designation (College of Architecture, Georgia Institute of Technology 1975).

The preservation plan cited some specific areas of concern within the proposed district, which helped describe the condition of the district at the time of its designation as an NHL district. It cited four areas of “land use problems,” including: functional disorganization of land uses; physical deterioration of buildings and structures; outmoded forms of commercial and industrial use; and underutilized and vacant parcels and structures. Economic decline up to that point had contributed to the abandonment of businesses and the neglect of historic buildings. The preservation plan recommended the renovation of several buildings, including the Rucker Office Building (lost in 2001), the Carriage Factory (which was demolished by 1979), and the Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium. Long-range planning, the document states, “should include a major recognition of historical significance and identity, and should include the preservation and enhancement of selected historical elements (College of Architecture, Georgia Institute of Technology 1975:18).”

The Secretary of the Interior designated the Sweet Auburn Historic District as an NHL on December 8, 1976. Completed in the first decades of preparing National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nominations and NHL designations, the nomination does not contain the information that is common to nominations by current standards. As was the convention at the time, the NHL nomination was prepared using an NRHP form. It was designated for its significance in the areas of commerce, economics, social/humanitarian and African American history. At the time of its designation, the current NPS guidance for establishing periods of significance had not been established, but the narrative in Section 8 of the nomination supports a period of significance of 1865-1930. Likewise, the nomination did not list all contributing and non-contributing resources, as it would today by current NHL standards. However, it did contain a detailed narrative describing the NHL district boundary. The form was prepared by Lynne Gomez-Graves, the Historical Projects Director of the Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation located in Washington, DC. Dr. Elizabeth Lyon and Dr. Gloria Blackwell prepared a preservation plan for Sweet Auburn in 1975, and much of the nomination as well as the preservation-related work that took place in the 1970s was based on the preservation plan.



The 1976 Sweet Auburn Historic District NHL nomination, in addition to providing a boundary, lists key properties considered to be part of the district. These include only six properties: Atlanta Life Insurance Company, Big Bethel AME Church, Butler Street YMCA, Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium, Municipal Market (commonly known today as the Sweet Auburn Curb Market), and the Herndon Building (Gomez-Graves 1976). These buildings are named as some of the more “outstanding” buildings in the district, but the nomination also notes,

These buildings, named as the most outstanding structures within the boundaries of the Sweet Auburn Historic District, are not all the important sites. There are a number of one and two-story shops along Auburn Avenue, Bell and Butler Streets that add to the total complexion of the district. One of these types of buildings is the Hanley Funeral Home on Bell Street built during the 1890s as a lodge building. The structure today remains an important part of the community. Likewise there are other barber shops, beauty parlors and cafes which taken together add much to the architectural texture of Sweet Auburn (Gomez-Graves 1976).

The NHL boundary was described in detail but is not explained or defended. The boundary includes several properties that at the time had been recently constructed and would likely not have been considered historic, including commercial buildings dating to the late 1960s on John Wesley Dobbs Avenue (Houston Street). The boundary also does not include properties such as the Atlanta Daily World building, directly across from the historic Atlanta Life Insurance buildings, and commercial buildings on the north side of Auburn Avenue, between the Odd Fellows Building and Interstate 75/85 (Gomez-Graves 1976).

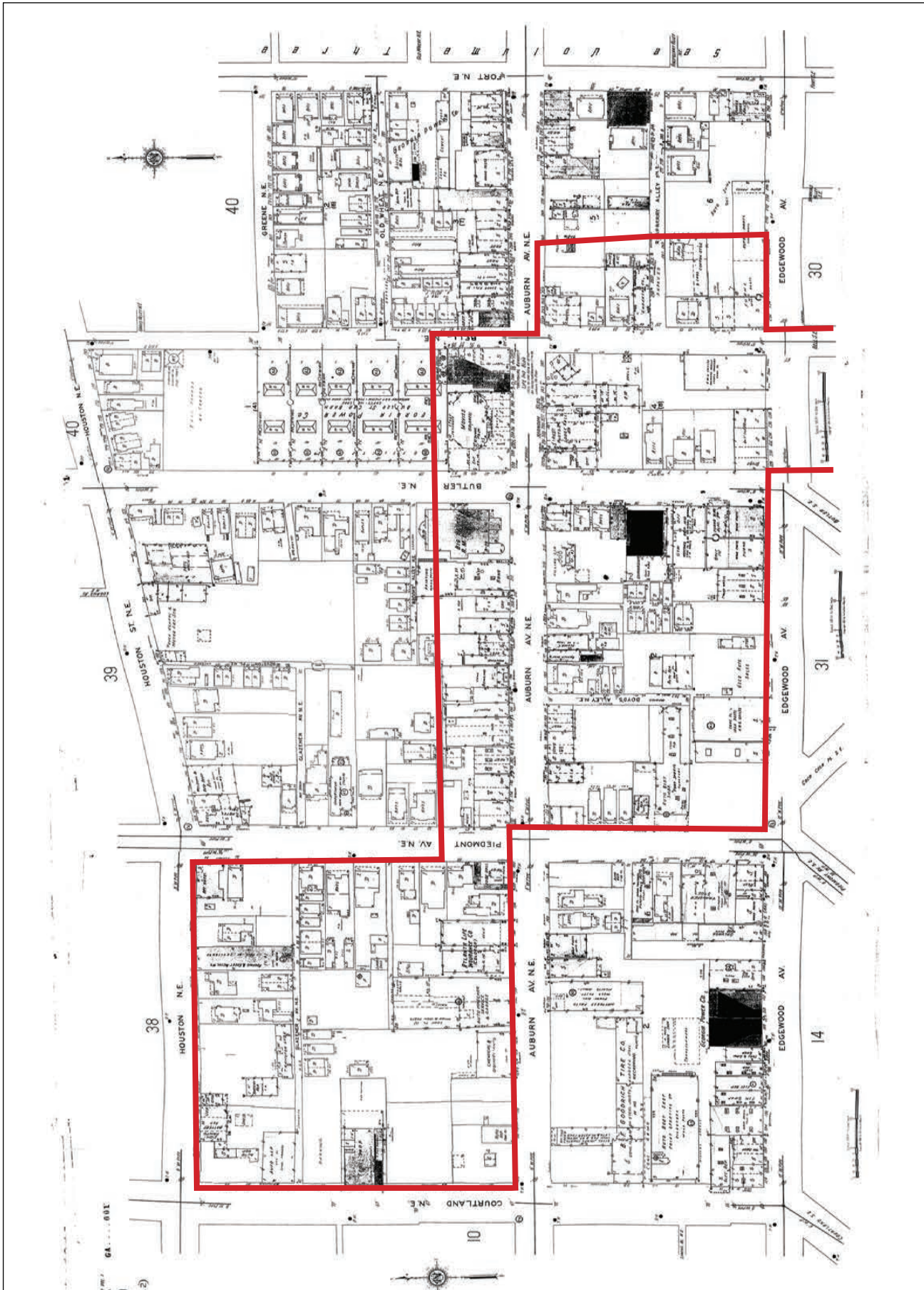
On December 8, 1976, the Secretary of the Interior designated Sweet Auburn an NHL. A bronze plaque and certificate was presented to Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson at a ceremony on May 10, 1977 that took place on the steps of Big Bethel AME Church (Favorite 1977). Jerry Rodgers, the Chief of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation with the NPS, presented the bronze plaque and certificate to Mayor Jackson at the ceremony. Also present at the ceremony were Reverend William Holmes Borders, David Sherman and Elizabeth Lyon of the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and George E. Davidson, Regional Director of the NPS (Stultz 1977).

In 1979, the Sweet Auburn project launched by Mayor Jackson in 1975 brought the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) program to the district, resulting in a series of archival large format photography of the district that captures the district’s condition in 1977.

The HABS team also had the staff of the Interagency Archeological Services-Atlanta produce a four-page document on recommendations for archaeological work in the Sweet Auburn NHL. The 1979 document states that “the potential for early historic archeological resources within the historic district is quite strong,” based on an analysis of historic maps, secondary resources, and field observations within the district. The report recommends the development of a programmatic research design for the district as well as further research and historic context development. In particular the report recommends further research needs to be conducted on the development of the Auburn Avenue area from its initial settlement to its emergence as a commercial center (Interagency Archeological Services-Atlanta 1979). The report further identifies potential periods of development to consider for further research:

Preliminary examination of several maps of the area (1858 City Plat map, 1878 City Atlas map, various Sanborn Insurance maps) indicates that in 1858 there was no settlement in the project area; by 1878, the area was heavily populated with dwellings and some businesses; and by 1920, the area had become almost entirely commercial. If these maps are any indication, the graphic information available for the project area should provide an excellent means of predicting the location of archaeological resources and identifying those resources once they are found (Interagency Archeological Services-Atlanta 1979:2–3).

Figure 2.9. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, Atlanta, 1924-1962, with Sweet Auburn NHLD Boundary in Red.





# A Bitter Battle Brews In Sweet Auburn

## Proposed Demolition Menaces Atlanta's Black Historic District

By Emma Edmunds  
Continuation Staff Writer

**T**IME IS running out for three historic Auburn Avenue buildings that could meet the wrecking ball within a week, taking with them a segment of black history and possibly jeopardizing the integrity of a proposed national park for the area.

Located near the downtown central business district in an area where black financial, cultural and social life once flourished and Martin Luther King Jr. was born and buried, the buildings are owned by Atlanta Life Insurance Co. Technically, the buildings could be demolished immediately. The structures are:

- The Rucker Office Building, corner of Auburn and Piedmont avenues, built after Atlanta's race riot of 1906 by black contractors to provide office space for black doctors, lawyers and professionals. A powerful black official, Henry Rucker, internal revenue collector, led the project.
- The Rucker House, 66 Piedmont Ave., built around 1870. Rucker, appointed by President William McKinley, brought his bride — the daughter of Georgia's first black congressman — to this home in the late 1880s. One of a few turn-of-the-century black homeowners, Rucker raised his eight children here, maintaining a genteel lifestyle typical of Atlanta's early black aristocracy.
- The John Smith House. Built around 1870 by John Smith, founder of a carriage factory and later John Smith Chevrolet Co. One of the oldest residential structures in downtown Atlanta and one of the few examples of "plantation plain" architecture in the city.

Atlanta Life Insurance Co., a black insurance company with Auburn Avenue

**Rucker House: Emblem Of A Genteel Black Past**

**B**OOKER T. WASHINGTON slept there. Walter White, a founder of the NAACP, lived around the corner and often visited. There was a garden that, in retrospect, reminds her of Eden — filled with almost every vegetable and fruit. The stables housed horses for survey rides, and inside, the wide, pine floors were waxed to a honey-colored gloss.

For Lucy Rucker Aiken, who grew up there, the Henry Rucker House at 66 Piedmont Ave. is home — albeit a lost home — full of memories of a genteel past. Her father, Henry Rucker, Georgia's collector of internal revenue appointed by President William McKinley in 1897, brought her mother there

See AUBURN, Page 4-B

The Rucker House On Piedmont Avenue

See RUCKER, Page 14-B



**Figure 2.10.** The Rucker House (Above) and the Smith House (Left) Were Demolished in 1980, Marking One of the First Preservation Battles in the Sweet Auburn NHLD (Article and Top Photos Source: Edmunds 1980a; Left: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-3).

During the late 1970s, the City attempted to address the economic decline of the newly designated NHL district, an issue discussed in the 1975 preservation plan for the district (Blackwell et al. 1975). Through the Community Block Development Grant funds, the City provided \$57,000 to the preservation of the Odd Fellows Building in 1979, with the SHPO contributing \$33,000 to the effort (Laney 1979). Additionally, the City had the Auburn Area Revitalization Program report developed, which included façade and storefront design guidelines to assist property owners (National Urban Development Services Corporation 1979).

The Sweet Auburn NHLD was impacted in 1980 by the demolition of two historic buildings within the district: the Rucker House on the corner of Auburn Avenue and Piedmont Avenue and the John Smith House, adjacent to the Smooth Ashlar Masonic building on the north side of Piedmont Avenue. The Rucker Office Building was also slated for demolition at the time but was spared by the denial of a demolition permit by Mayor Maynard Jackson. Both the Rucker House and Rucker Office Building were built by Henry Rucker, who was the first African American internal revenue commissioner appointed by President William McKinley (Edmunds 1980b). Built in 1904, the Rucker Office Building was the first office

building built by an African American. Rucker was part of the emerging black aristocracy of Atlanta and was a leader in the Sweet Auburn community.

The Atlanta Life Insurance Company owned all three of the properties and wanted to demolish them to construct parking facilities and a park-plaza adjacent to its newly constructed headquarters building at the corner of Auburn Avenue and Courtland Street. The two circa 1870 houses were demolished in early September 1980 following several months of postponement because of the opposition to the demolitions by the Atlanta Urban Design Commission (Edmunds 1980c).

This event marks the beginning of the continual tension between preserving the historically significant buildings along Auburn Avenue and the desire to redevelop the corridor to increase its economic viability. Jesse Hill, the president of Atlanta Life Insurance Company at the time, stated that although the City and others opposed the demolitions, “However, up until now neither the mayor, nor the private or public sector has come forward with any serious commitment to saving those buildings — from an economic point of view. All we have received is a lot of impractical advice. A lot of rhetoric, from a lot of people.” Though the Rucker Building and Rucker House did not end up being demolished then, ultimately, the lack of maintenance of the buildings left both in poor condition and they were eventually razed.

## **Creation of the Martin Luther King Jr. Preservation District, 1980**

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District, located on the east side of I-75/85 was designated an NHL in 1977. The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park (formerly Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic Site), was established on October 10, 1980 by Congress (Public Law 96-428). The area includes the birthplace of Dr. King (501 Auburn Avenue), Ebenezer Baptist Church, Historic Fire Station No. 6, and The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change (The King Center, established in 1970). The legislation also established a Preservation District including both Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park and the Sweet Auburn NHL, in 1980 (Public Law 96-428 [1980]). The Preservation District “links Dr. King’s career to the African American businesses, religious, social, and political organizations that flourished along Auburn Avenue and Edgewood Avenue prior to and during Dr. King’s lifetime (Harpers Ferry Center Interpretive Planning and Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site 2011:vi).”

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Preservation District allows the NPS, by entering into cooperative agreements:

- To mark, interpret, improve, restore and provide technical assistance to private property owners within the Preservation District through cooperative agreements; and
- To have the right of access at reasonable times to the public portions of the property for interpretive or other purposes (Public Law 96-428).

Public Law 102-575 (1992) modified the boundary of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District. The additional land acquisitions authorized by the 1992 legislation were mostly completed by 2011 and visitor facilities were constructed (Harpers Ferry Center Interpretive Planning and Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site 2011:1). On January 8, 2017, President Trump signed Public Law No: 115-108, which re-titled the park as a national historical park rather than as a national historic site. National historical Parks are commonly areas of greater physical extent and complexity than national historic sites.

When the Preservation District was created in 1980, the condition of many of the Sweet Auburn NHL buildings was marred by “deferred maintenance and minor deterioration (Johnson and Wilson 1979).” At that point in time, the oldest of the buildings had aged about 60-70 years, and the need for rehabilitation and investment in preservation had grown. Demolitions of the Smith House and the Rucker House by the Atlanta Life Insurance Company that year brought the issue to a new light for the City and community.



In 1980 the Historic District Development Corporation (HDDC) was established by co-founders Coretta Scott King and Christine King Farris, sister of Martin Luther King, Jr. The HDDC's mission has been to preserve, revitalize, and prevent the displacement of residents in an area including the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District and the Sweet Auburn NHL. HDDC continues its mission today and has successfully led numerous development projects in the service area, including the rehabilitation of hundreds of historic residences (Lynch 2012:8; HDDC).



**Figure 2.11.** Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Coretta Scott King, and Mayor Maynard Jackson at a Press Conference in 1981 Discussing the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change Building (Source: Atlanta Journal-Constitution Archives and GSU).

In 1982, Coretta Scott King wrote a letter to Dr. Elizabeth Lyon, Chief of the Historic Preservation Section at the Georgia SHPO. King urged the SHPO to re-examine the National Register boundary of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District. King wrote of

her concerns regarding the boundaries for the district and its failure to include all significant properties in the area:

As I indicated in testimony before the Congress on the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site of the National Park Service, we believe there is a need, in the face of more recent research and survey, to restudy the boundaries of the district. At the very least, properties along Houston Street in the vicinity of Howard High School in the north end of the area which are extremely important to the history of the whole Sweet Auburn and Old Fourth Ward areas need to be considered for inclusion. The Sweet Auburn business area, as I know you are aware, provided the environment in which my husband was born, grew to manhood, co-pastored and planted the early seeds for nonviolent social change (King 1982).

In 2001, the SHPO and NPS expanded the boundary of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District (The NRHP district, not the NHL district), and added seven contributing properties to the district on the east side (Old Fourth Ward area) of Interstate 75/85, maintaining the distinction of the Sweet Auburn NHLD as “downtown,” while the area east of the interstate was “generally viewed a residential neighborhood,” even though the commercial area just east of the interstate is a part of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park. The nomination states the reasoning for not extending the district to the west, “The elevated interstate was rebuilt and widened three times its original width since 1980 and is a large and physical barrier between the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District and the Sweet Auburn Historic District further west” (Moffson and Kissane 2001:7–8).

State Representative Hosea Williams established the Sweet Auburn Revitalization Task Force and Commission in 1983, designed to help put pressure on the city and federal governments to provide more financial support for the district. During the 1980s, the City of Atlanta did indeed face pressure in regards to how grant funds were and were not allocated to Auburn Avenue. In early November of 1985, Mayor Andrew Young announced that \$2.3 million of an estimated \$9.6 million in federal grant money would be

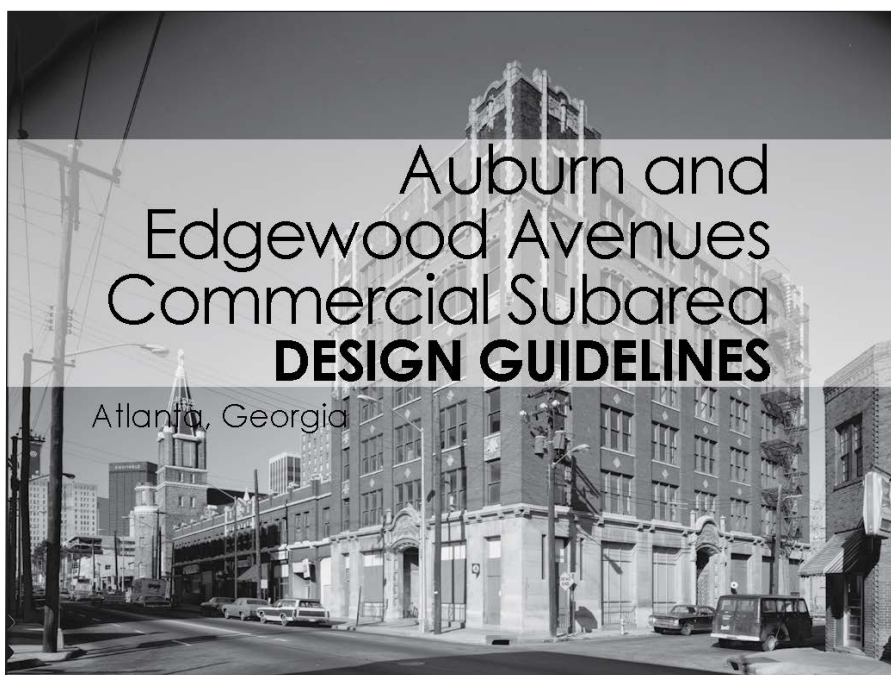
allocated for the “rebuilding” of Auburn Avenue. The Young administration had previously been criticized for allocating such grant money to the redevelopment of Underground Atlanta near the Central Business District and this announcement signaled it would rededicate more funds to the declining area. The rebuilding effort included a one million dollar parking lot for the Atlanta Municipal Market, a contributing resource in the Sweet Auburn NHLD (Galloway 1987).

## Threats and the Endangered Status of the Sweet Auburn NHLD, 1992 and 2012

In 1990 the National Main Street Center prepared design guidelines for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Landmark District for the City of Atlanta, with different boundaries than the Martin Luther King, Jr. NRHP and NHL districts. The guidelines were based on the local historic overlay zoning of the area by the City of Atlanta, which includes both the Sweet Auburn NHLD and the Martin Luther King, Jr. NHLD. This document was revised in 2017 by Sweet Auburn Works. Sweet Auburn Works was established in 2013 as a partnership with the National Main Street program based in Washington, DC. Sweet Auburn Works has multiple committees that are focused on attracting public and private investment in developing the Sweet Auburn area (Hall 2013).

In 1992, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) placed the Sweet Auburn Historic District on its annual “11 Most Endangered Historic Places” list. The addition of the district to the NTHP’s list brought national attention to the condition of the district, which saw many of its important buildings, including the Atlanta Life Insurance Building, continue to be neglected and vacant. Despite this, there were some positive events for the district during this time, including the relocation of the APEX Museum at 135 Auburn Avenue (just outside the district boundary), the renovation of the Odd Fellows Building, and the construction of the Auburn Avenue Research Library (located just outside the district boundary), at the corner of Auburn Avenue and Courtland Street. Businesses in the district continued to struggle, however, even with the 3 million visitors to the King Center, less than one mile away, who didn’t make it to the Sweet Auburn business district (Reid and Burden 1993).

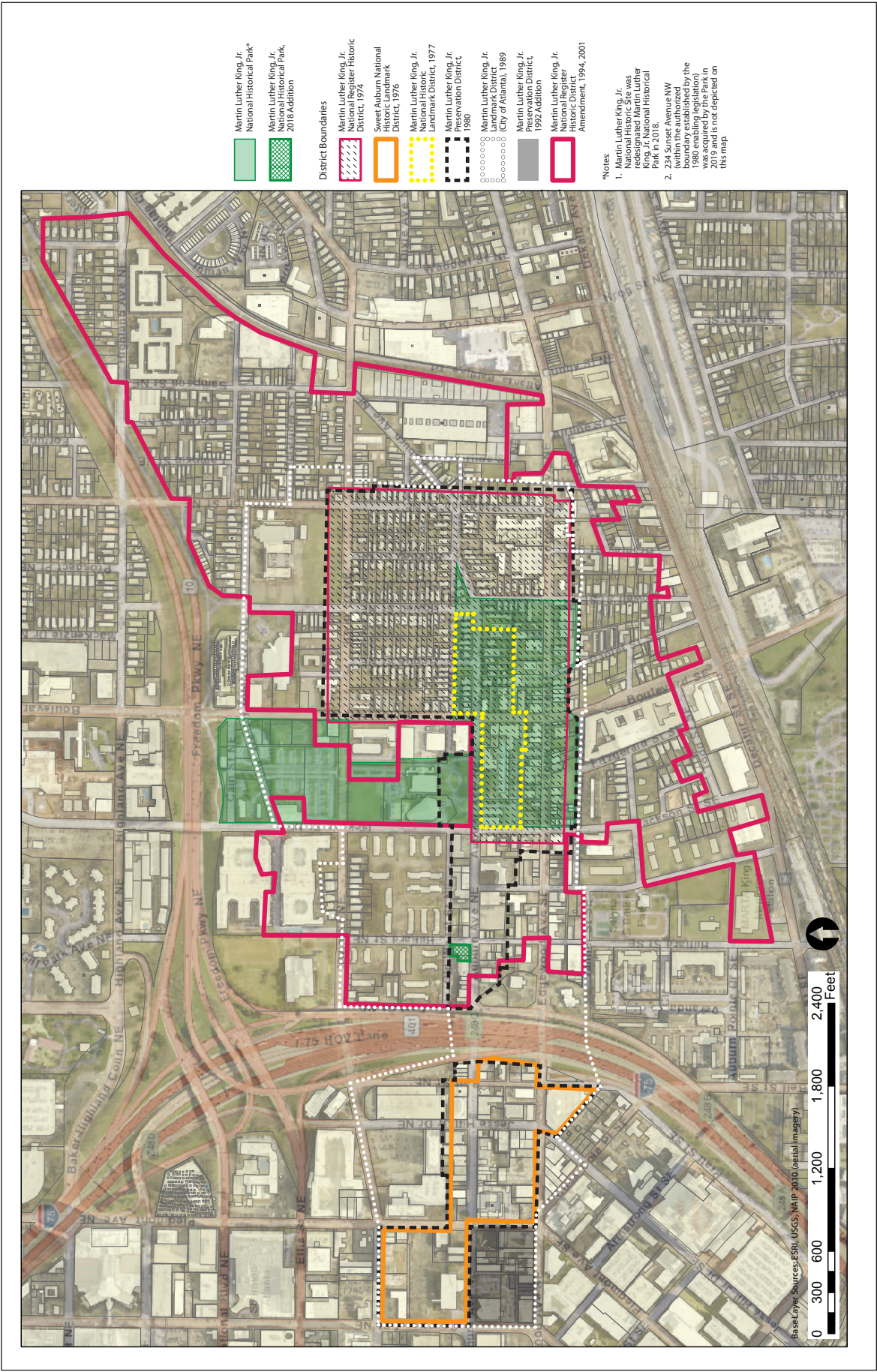
By 2000, eight years following the NTHP’s endangered list, many of Sweet Auburn’s important buildings continued to decline. The hopes of a revitalized Sweet Auburn from the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta did



**Figure 2.12.** Sweet Auburn Design Guidelines, Revised in 2017 (National Main Street Center and Sweet Auburn Works 2017).



Figure 2.13. Map Showing Various Boundary Designations in Relation to the Sweet Auburn NHLD (Source: NPS Map Prepared by CHG for Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Cultural Landscape Report, 2019)





not come to fruition and the vacant buildings remained vacant. The NPS inspected seven buildings in the Sweet Auburn NHLD in 2000. The following is a summary of the buildings and their conditions, according to the NPS:

1. Atlanta Life Insurance Company- Very poor condition; boarded over windows and doors; separated from street by chain-link security fence; large cracks in brickwork and cement columns in poor condition.
2. Big Bethel AME Church- Outstanding condition; no observable threat to the building.
3. Butler Street YMCA- Good condition; no observable threat to the building.
4. Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium- Good condition; eroded and missing brickwork in places,



**Figure 2.14.** Central Atlanta Progress Co-sponsored a Design Competition to Renovate Peachtree Street and Auburn Avenue in 1991 in Preparation for the City Hosting the 1996 Olympic Games. Jack Patrick & Associates of Boston Won the Auburn Avenue Design, with the Idea of "dividing the street into entertainment, employment, research, and historical nodes, as well as restoring the Sweet Auburn trolley (Hill 1991)."

some deterioration of limestone blocks.

5. Municipal Market- Good condition; needs to be repainted.
6. Herndon Building- Abandoned and in poor condition; boarded up and in state of decay.
7. Walden Building- Abandoned and in poor condition; building is unoccupied and in a state of decay (Everson 2000).

The Rucker Building, located at the corner of Auburn and Piedmont avenues, was not included in this assessment, but a record of its condition by the City of Atlanta in 1990 documented severe decay of the building, with photos of the interior of where Jenkins' Steak House was located showing a collapsed ceiling and moisture damage. In 2001, the building's fate was sealed when a car crashed into the corner of the building, tragically killing the driver. The building, which was slated for redevelopment, collapsed and the site has remained vacant and used for parking since that time (Auchmutey 2001).

In 2005, a Landmarks Report by the NPS listed the Sweet Auburn NHL as a Priority 3 Satisfactory status. However, the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) recommended the status be changed to Priority 2 Watch status based on a townhouse and shopping development (which came to fruition as Renaissance Walk development) proposed by Big Bethel AME Church that would be located on the south side of Auburn Avenue between Piedmont Avenue and Butler Street. The NPS concurred with this recommendation and changed the status to Priority 2 Watch for the 2006 Landmarks Report.

In 2005 the City of Atlanta commissioned the *Butler-Auburn Redevelopment Plan* to map out development for the future of a wide swath of land between the Old Fourth Ward to the east and extending through the Auburn Avenue corridor to Peachtree Street and Woodruff Park in the central business district. The plan acknowledged the need for a comprehensive strategy for the area's future, stating, "Now, however, with pressure from a strong market resurgence in urban living, Auburn Avenue is facing challenges to preserve not only its low-scaled historic buildings but its commercial orientation (Urban Collage, Inc. et al. 2005:3–4)." The plan outlines goals and objectives, zoning and land use conditions, future zoning plans, future redevelopment projects, and implementation strategies. In 2007 the NTHP placed Sweet Auburn NHL on that year's list of "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places," just 15 years after the district's original placement on the list. The NTHP cited proposed new construction, the \$45 million mixed-use development project planned by Big Bethel AME Church named Renaissance Walk, as a major concern. The NTHP stated, "Preservation partners recognize Sweet Auburn's high vacancy rate and fear this project will spur the wholesale demolition of historic properties (Dart 2007)."

Construction of the Renaissance Walk (now called Dwell ATL Luxury Apartments) mixed-use development was completed in 2008, resulting in the addition of a seven-story building occupying most of the south side of the block of Auburn Avenue located between Piedmont Avenue and Jesse Hill Jr. Drive within the Sweet Auburn NHL. The large parcel on which the development was built (originally included buildings constructed between 1915 and 1968) was acquired by Big Bethel AME Church over a 14-year period. Plans for the development began forming in 2003, when the church hired Integral Group, an African American development company based in Sweet Auburn, to lead the effort. The building design plans were subject to review and approval under the Martin Luther King, Jr. Landmark District ordinance by the City's Atlanta Urban Design Commission (AUDC) (Fox 2007).

The AUDC meetings for the review of the Renaissance Walk plans drew large turnouts as members of the public voiced concern about the proposed demolitions and overall impact the large-scale building would have on the district. Because of the controversial plans, the approval process took a year of negotiation. Developers (including Big Bethel as the landowner) agreed to preserve four of the existing historic





Figure 2.15. Views of the District in 2000 (Source: NPS).







**Figure 2.16.** The Rucker Building in 1979 (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-4).

buildings and integrate them into the overall building design and won approval for demolishing two historic buildings, including the Palamont Motor Lodge. The Bronner Brothers Building at the corner of Auburn Avenue and Jesse Hill Jr. Drive. Three other commercial buildings on the site had been demolished between 1999 and 2002 and it is not known if these demolitions were tied to the transfer of land ownership to Big Bethel AME Church. The overall scale of the building was the other point of contention for the development, as the Sweet Auburn NHL is defined by its small-scale (one to three stories) commercial character. The introduction of a mega-block type of building to the landscape

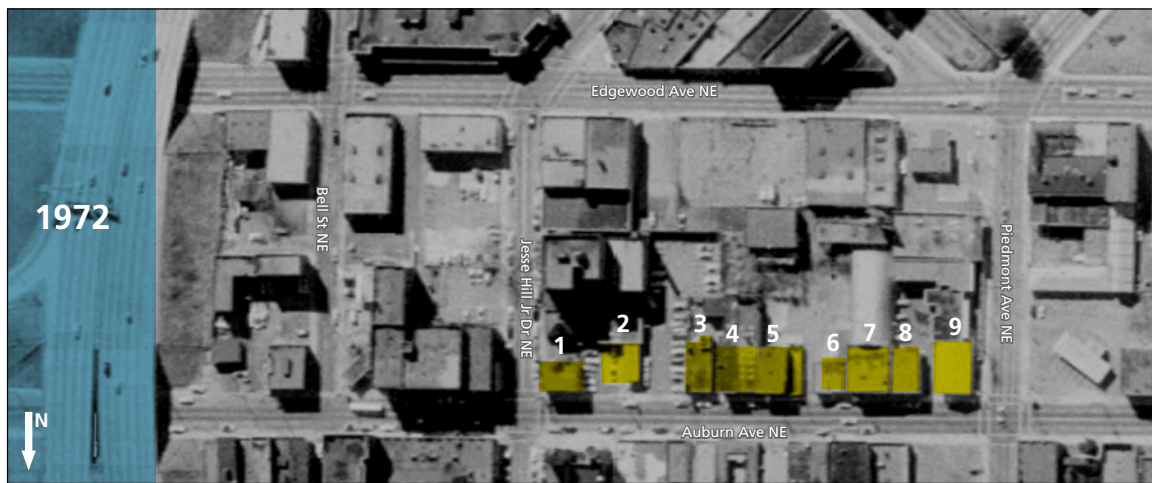
would forever change the dynamic of the street. The design process was influenced by the AUDC meetings and ultimately developers sought to soften the impact of the large-scale building through designing the facade as “protruding and receding elements.” Additionally the corner tower, meant to be an homage to the Odd Fellows Building a block away, was lowered a story in height as concerns were raised about it competing with the iconic Big Bethel AME Church steeple across the street (Fox 2007).

In 2008, the Sweet Auburn NHL suffered another loss when a tornado swept through the area, impacting the Herndon Building and forcing its demolition. The building, like others on the street, had been left vacant and deteriorating, making it especially susceptible to the storm. The large office building, constructed by Alonzo Herndon in 1924, occupied the majority of the block between Jesse Hill Jr. Drive and Bell Street. The building site has not been redeveloped and remains a surface parking lot.

## Redevelopment and Looking to the Future

In 2012 a National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) assessment report was prepared by the NTHP on the heels of the announcement by the NTHP of including Sweet Auburn on its “America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places” list once again. The assessment study focused on an area much larger than the Sweet Auburn NHL. The study described the street’s business district, or the area included in the

**Figure 2.17.** 1979 HABS Views of Block where Renaissance Walk was Developed in 2008, with 1972 and 2002 aerials (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-29 to C-37)





Sweet Auburn NHL, as needing the most attention and assistance. To its east, and outside of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District, more positive redevelopment had occurred, particularly in regards to historic residences renovated in part by the Historic District Development Corporation (HDDC) in the Old Fourth Ward area adjacent to the King Center (Lynch 2012:9).

The 2012 assessment summarized several positive contributions toward the revitalization of the district that reaffirm a local level of commitment to the preservation of the area, including: Several studies and comprehensive plan updates; the successes of the HDDC, particularly in the historic residential section of the Old Fourth Ward (outside of the Sweet Auburn NHL); the 2005 Butler-Auburn Redevelopment Plan, “a major expression of the City’s commitment to revitalization within the Sweet Auburn district;” plans between the City of Atlanta and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) to complete a streetcar line connecting Auburn Avenue with the Central Business District; and the longstanding interest of local leaders and engaged citizens (Lynch 2012:9–10).

The assessment identified major property owners within the Sweet Auburn NHL, with the largest being Big Bethel AME Church. Big Bethel AME Church owns the majority of properties to its west, along the north side of Auburn Avenue, including the church itself, the Big Bethel Towers apartment building to the north of the church, three commercial buildings, and one vacant lot. The church owns two parcels used as parking lots as well, one at 252 Edgewood Avenue and the other, much larger parcel at the corner of John Wesley Dobbs Avenue and Jesse Hill, Jr. Drive (Lynch 2012:21).

Today, Big Bethel AME Church is rivaled in owning the most property in the Sweet Auburn NHL by the Georgia Board of Regents, and specifically, by Georgia State University (GSU). GSU currently owns approximately six acres in the 18.8-acre district, while Big Bethel owns 3.3 acres and Butler Street Development Corporation and HDDC own 1.2 and 0.6 acres, respectively.

The 2012 assessment cites several factors contributing to the problems facing the district. These included “a plethora” of vacant lots throughout the district, many of them lacking maintenance, with trash and weeds making them unsightly. Another obstacle to successful redevelopment of the district cited by the assessment was the lack of a consensus on how to redevelop properties and design infill. Another problem cited among the business community was the lack of information about new projects and new developments in the district had created misinformation, rumors, and misperceptions. The report stated “the proposed Sweet Auburn Main Street program (Sweet Auburn Works founded in 2013) will have its work cut out for it as it gathers the needed information and establishes communication systems that disseminate that information to the broad Sweet Auburn community (Lynch 2012:29).”

The same year that the National Trust identified Sweet Auburn as an endangered historic place (2012), the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, a private statewide nonprofit advocacy organization, placed the Sweet Auburn NHL on their annual “Places in Peril list,” citing the continual decline of the area and threats to the buildings as the main issues the district was facing. Mark McDonald, executive director of the Georgia Trust, stated that the district “is really in danger of losing its character. We don’t want to lose any more buildings (Poole 2012).” The Georgia Trust was particularly concerned with the loss of so many

historic buildings in the district and cites as many as 18 to have been lost over the decades. In 2012, there was development pressure surrounding the district, threatening the historic Atlanta Daily World building (not within the district boundary). The City of Atlanta was able to stop the demolition, but the potential for additional losses to the historic street contributed to the district being placed on the National Trust's and the Georgia Trust's endangered properties list in 2012.

The centennial anniversary of the construction of the prominent Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium was celebrated in 2012, marking a positive story of the Sweet Auburn NHLD in an otherwise negative news year for the district. The classically-designed Beaux Arts building, occupying the entire north side of Auburn Avenue between Bell Street and Jesse Hill, Jr. Drive, has been a preservation success story for Sweet Auburn since a major restoration and rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse project took place from 1988 to 1991, bringing the building back to its former glory and providing event space in the building as an income generator.

The year 2012 was pivotal for the Sweet Auburn NHLD, with national and state preservation organizations calling attention to its plight and this attention did not go unanswered. In 2013, the City of Atlanta began planning for a beautification project called the "Auburn Avenue History and Culture Project," which includes plans for a mural, lightboxes, wayfinding signage, historic markers, and decorative lights. The Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID) and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)

**Figure 2.18.** Herndon Building in 1979 (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-45).

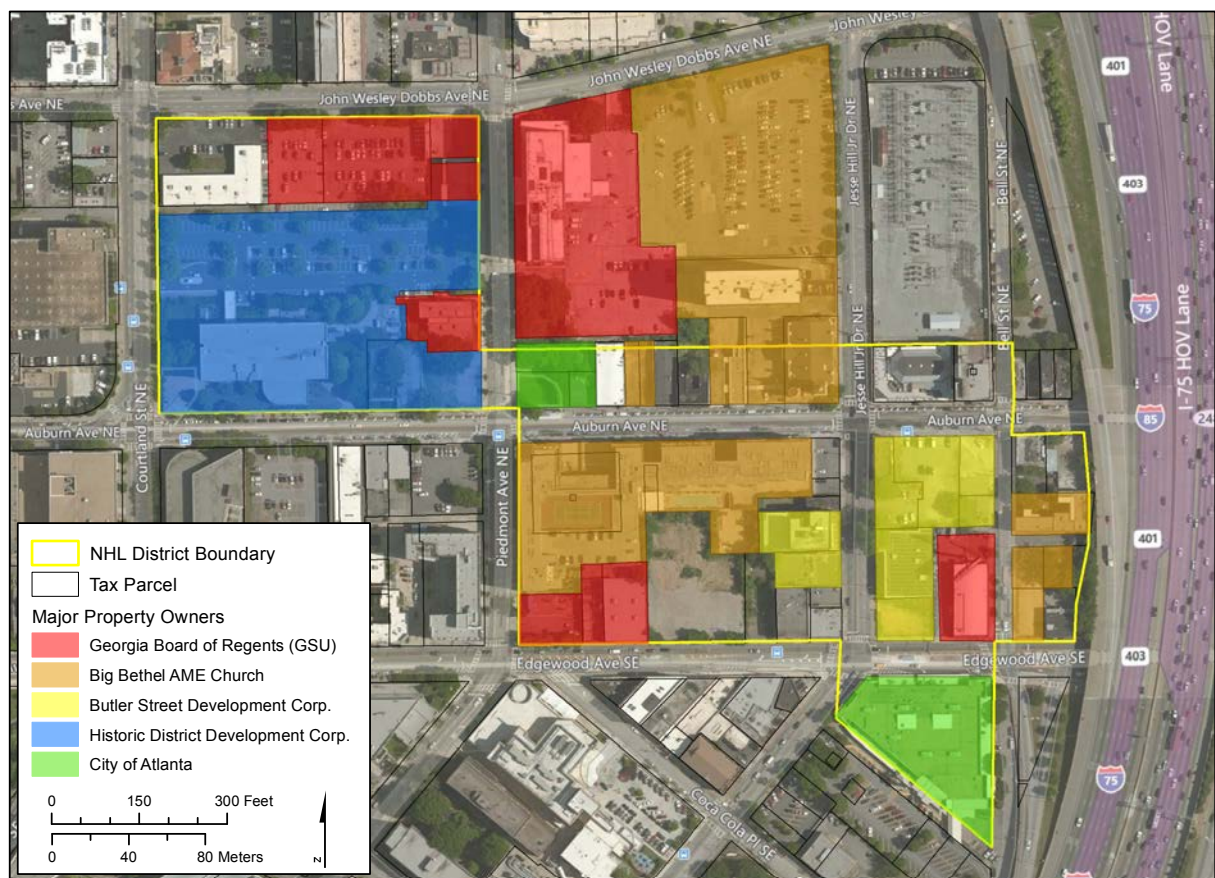


are funding the project, which will begin in 2018-2019 (Pendered 2017). The project extends along Auburn Avenue from Peachtree Street to Old Wheat Street and includes a 267-foot mural with historic photos depicted on large light boxes, all to be placed in the Interstate 85/75 underpass.

Additionally, the area that includes the Sweet Auburn NHLD was incorporated into a new Auburn Avenue Opportunity Zone in 2013. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) designates areas of the state as Opportunity Zones. The program enables businesses within the district to apply for a tax credit for creating new jobs within the zone. During that time, the first phase of the Atlanta Streetcar project, the Downtown Loop, started service in 2014. The streetcar route runs along Auburn and Edgewood avenues between Pryor Street to the west and Jackson Street to the east, connecting passengers from Centennial Olympic Park to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center. There is a streetcar stop in front of the Sweet Auburn Curb Market (formerly the Municipal Market), which has become a downtown destination for lunch and fresh produce.

In 2016 Big Bethel AME Church proposed the renovation of Big Bethel tower and the construction of a parking garage. As of 2018, no work had been started on this project. Recent renovations in the district include the Haverty Building on Edgewood Avenue, which has been converted into residences on the upper levels and retail on the ground level, and just outside the district boundary, the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse project of the Atlanta Daily World Building has been an acclaimed preservation project. Additionally, in 2018, Wheat Street Baptist Church, located outside the NHL District on Auburn Avenue, received a \$500,000 African American Civil Rights Preservation Grant from the National Park Service.

**Figure 2.19.** Map of Major Property Owners in Sweet Auburn NHLD.



Source: Bing Maps Hybrid (2019)



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# Chapter 3.

## Methods

A stakeholders meeting for the Sweet Auburn NHLD Integrity and Condition Assessment was held on the morning of September 25, 2018 at the Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium, Atlanta, Georgia. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the various agency, consultant, and development teams to one another, review expectations and understanding of the project, and solicit input on the development of the Condition and Integrity Assessment report. A brief overview of the Sweet Auburn NHLD's history and status was given at the beginning of the meeting. Major landowners and parties with a demonstrated interest in the district were invited, including Big Bethel AME Church, representatives from the Georgia Board of Regents, and the Historic District Development Cooperation. The list of attendants are as follows:

- NPS: Cynthia Walton, Danita Brown, Ellen Rankin, with facilitators Deirdre Hewitt, and Josh Tuck of the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) along with Judy Forte, Leah Berry, Tina Smiley, and Rebecca Karcher of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park;
- Georgia Historic Preservation Division (HPD), the State Historic Preservation Office: Christy Atkins and Melissa Jest;
- City of Atlanta: Doug Young and Harrison Clark with the Department of City Planning, Office of Design and Historic Preservation, and Gloria Strong with the Auburn Avenue Research Library;
- Sweet Auburn Works: LeJuano Varnell and Karen Huebner;
- National Trust for Historic Preservation: Nancy Tinker;
- Historic District Development Corporation: Chenée Joseph;
- Big RIG: Dean Baker;
- Gene Kansas real estate group: Ted Bradford;
- Historic Atlanta: Charles Lawrence;
- Georgia State University's Heritage Preservation Program: Chad Keller; and
- New South Associates: Mary Beth Reed and Jackie Tyson.

The meeting attendees were asked for input in regards to the existing stakeholder list, how to make this report beneficial to the stakeholders, the current state of the district, as well as the positive and negative occurrences in the district. Primary areas of concern, or potential challenges to the district, that were discussed in this meeting are reported in Chapter 6 of this report. Topics or items the group identified as being useful for the development of this report included:

- Map showing the various boundaries in the area (local designation, NHL, and neighboring districts);
- Define roles and responsibilities of differing entities associated with the district;
- Document change in condition over time; and
- Provide a list of studies that have been conducted in the area and for the district.

This input proved invaluable in helping to shape this assessment report, and contributed to the report including an organizations and studies table.

Following the meeting, project team members conducted research to gather information about the history of the Sweet Auburn NHLD and notable changes or impacts that have occurred within the resource since its original designation in 1976. Cynthia Walton with the NPS provided copies of the agency's Sweet Auburn NHLD-related correspondence with local, state, and federal organizations dating from the late 1970s to the present. The NPS files also included photos of the district from 2000 and 2002, a 2006 conditions assessment document, and GSU student survey forms of the district dated 2002. Electronic copies of the original 1976 Sweet Auburn NHLD nomination, as well as pertinent documents and letters pertaining to the district, were collected from the Georgia HPD. The building data, including construction dates and property ownership, was accessed through the Fulton County tax assessor. Visits were also made to the Auburn Avenue Research Library and the Atlanta History Center for city directories, historic photography, historic newspaper articles, and research of secondary source materials.

## GIS Mapping

The Fulton County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) served as a primary data source. The merged dataset was then used to map district buildings by their year of construction. Evaluation of the Sweet Auburn NHLD focused on all extant buildings within the district boundary, regardless of construction date. The accuracy of county tax assessor dates of construction can vary from county to county. The survey team took this into account as the survey was conducted. The team had experience working with Fulton County tax data previously and have found it largely to be accurate, but were aware of potential inaccuracies as the survey was conducted. City directory research and historic aerial photography assisted the author with confirming tax assessor construction dates.

## Photography

The project scope of work required current photographs that matched the views in the original nomination to the best possible extent. Jim Lockhart of HPD photographed eight representative views of the district in 1976. Architectural historian Terri Gillett recreated the eight photographic views over the course of one day using a Canon EOS Rebel T6i camera (Appendix B). These before and after photographs, when viewed collectively, show only significant change in the block photographed where the Herndon Building was located and they also show the loss of the Smith Carriage Factory in the foreground of the view looking at the Atlanta Life Insurance Building. The photos are concentrated along Auburn Avenue except for one view of the Atlanta Municipal Market on Edgewood Avenue.

Photography was performed for the buildings that were individually surveyed for this report. Other photography shows representative views of the boundary areas of the district, both within and outside of the district. This helped to depict the increasingly developed periphery of the district, as well as streetscapes with vacant parcels.

Upon the completion of fieldwork photography, files were uploaded and minor edits performed using Adobe Photoshop to include straightening, cropping, and improvements to brightness and contrast.



## Building Survey

Architectural historians Jackie Tyson and Terri Gillett conducted the architectural survey of the Sweet Auburn NHL in November 2017, with the area field-checked in 2018 and 2019 to observe any changes during this time. Preparation for the survey involved the creation of field maps with parcel and construction data. Historians walked the entire district, taking photographs of each building from differing views, capturing details and streetscape views as necessary, and noting the exterior conditions of the buildings.

## Integrity Evaluation

The NPS Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (1995) provides the process used for the integrity evaluation of the Sweet Auburn NHL, beginning with the following definition - integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. Consideration of the seven aspects that define integrity, structured the analysis.

A property retains integrity if it possesses one, some, or all of these aspects:

- **Location** – This aspect refers to the critical relationship between a property and its actual location when it was constructed and within which historic events took place during the period of significance.
- **Design** – The form, plan, space, structure or style of a property is highlighted in this aspect. For districts, such as the Sweet Auburn NHL, design concerns are elevated to a more holistic level of analysis clued in by how buildings, sites and structures are spatially related, the visual rhythms within the streetscape, circulation patterns, and the relationship of other features.
- **Setting** – Either natural or manmade, this refers to the physical environment of a property. It is important particularly for districts that an evaluation should look not only within the district boundary but also at its immediate surroundings.
- **Materials** – This aspect speaks to the physical elements that compose and configure the property and help it speak to its sense of time and place.
- **Workmanship** – How a property is crafted is also an aspect of integrity, displaying cultural trends, technological advances, and/or traditional practices in its construction and its finishes.
- **Feeling** – This aspect highlights the property’s ability to express its historic time and place through its character.
- **Association** – For integrity of association, a property needs to have a direct link between a historic event or a person and needs to be sufficiently intact to demonstrate that link. Notably, because of the subjectivity of feeling and association, their retention alone is not considered sufficient in an evaluation of integrity.

The integrity and condition assessment’s first task was to identify the character-defining features of the Sweet Auburn NHL that convey its significance and then to use its condition in 1976 when it was designated as an NHL as the integrity baseline for the assessment. The deficiencies of the nomination precluded a full analysis of the district’s character-defining features so their identification was an important first step for this study. As noted, this was completed by survey and through gathering public comment from the preservation community. Survey also helped to further establish if the character-defining features critical to the Sweet Auburn NHL’s significance remain sufficiently visible and to pinpoint the specific aspects of integrity that count in the district’s ability to convey its significance.

NPS guidance for a district evaluation of integrity states that the plurality of the features that compose a district need to possess integrity and that spatial relationships between those features must be substantially unchanged. Moreover, when evaluating the impact of intrusions upon the district's integrity, take into consideration the relative number, size, scale, design, and location of the components that do not contribute to the significance. A district is not eligible if it contains so many alterations or new intrusions that it no longer conveys the sense of a historic environment (NPS 1995:46).

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# Chapter 4.

## Survey Results

Twenty-seven buildings were surveyed within the district boundary (Table 1). Each building is listed in Table 1, along with its respective address and build date. The descriptions for each of the buildings include a brief history of the building and any historical information pertaining to the building identified during archival research. Where available, the HABS 1979 photo of each building is presented in conjunction with the current survey photo.

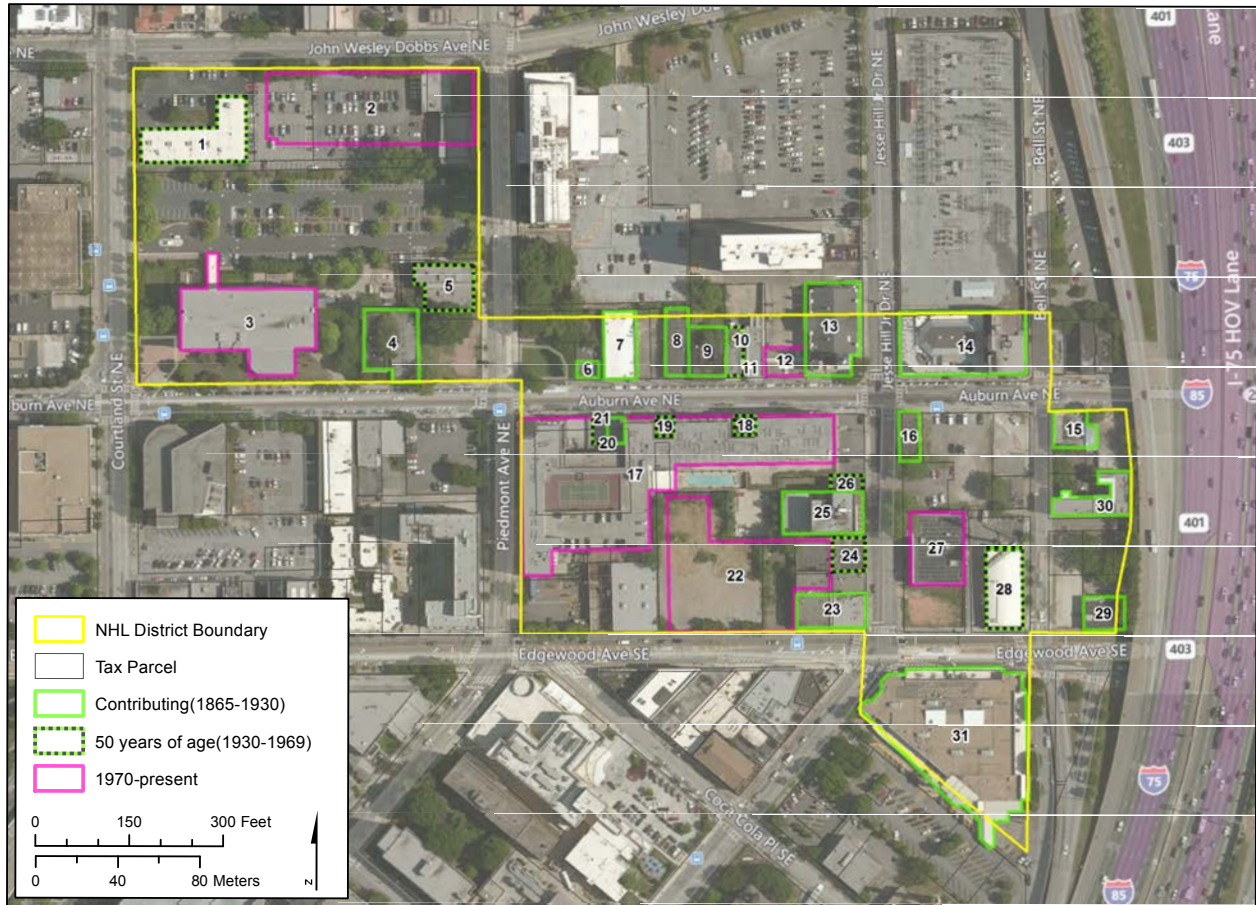
Because the 1976 NHL nomination for the district lacks a discussion of the character-defining features of the Sweet Auburn NHL, the following character-defining features were developed, based on the survey and input from stakeholders. They include:

- Small-scale commercial buildings of masonry construction;
- Traditional storefront designs;
- Historic tiled entries in front of storefronts;
- Narrow, two-lane thoroughfares;
- Paved sidewalks;
- Minimal to no landscaping; and
- An overall scale and rhythm resulting in iconic viewsheds including the Big Bethel AME Church steeple, the Butler Street YMCA, and the Odd Fellows Building.

The following table records all buildings contained within the boundary of the Sweet Auburn NHL. The numbers correspond with the map in Figure 4.1. The 16 buildings that are highlighted are buildings that have construction dates that fall into the period of significance for the district, 1865-1930. Integrity is discussed for the contributing buildings only in the following building descriptions, as they appear to have been considered a part of the Sweet Auburn NHL upon its designation in 1976.



Figure 4.1. Map of Surveyed Properties



Source: Bing Maps Hybrid (2019)

Table 1. Surveyed Properties

Contributing Buildings
Non- Contributing Buildings

Resource Number	Building Name	Address	Build Date
1	Unknown/Former Auto Repair Shop	111 John Wesley Dobbs Avenue (Houston Street)	1967
2	Piedmont Central	92 Piedmont Avenue	2016
3	GSU Centennial Hall (former Atlanta Life Insurance Co. headquarters)	100 Auburn Avenue	1980
4	Atlanta Life Insurance Co.	100 Auburn Avenue (formerly 148 Auburn Avenue)	Ca. 1900, 1936
5	GSU Alumni office/Smooth Ashlar Masonic Lodge	60 Piedmont Avenue	1956
6	Henry's Grill (ca. 1950)	178-182 Auburn Avenue	1922
7	Royal Peacock/Top Hat Club	186 Auburn Avenue	Ca. 1922
8	Former theater	196 Auburn Avenue	Ca. 1913

Resource Number	Building Name	Address	Build Date
9	Commercial Building (Silver Moon Barber Shop housed here)	198-202 Auburn Avenue	Ca. 1911
10	Ned Hooper's Fish and Poultry Market	204-206 Auburn Avenue	1935
11	Alexander Building	208 Auburn Avenue	1946
12	Parking Garage/Retail	210 Auburn Avenue	1972
13	Big Bethel A.M.E. Church	220 Auburn Avenue	1891 (1923)
14	Odd Fellows Building	238 Auburn Avenue	1912
15	Two-Story Commercial Building	253-255 Auburn Avenue	1923
16	Atlanta Life Insurance Branch Office	229 Auburn Avenue	Ca. 1908
17	Dwell ATL (Renaissance Walk)	171 Auburn Avenue	2007
18	Mutual Federal Savings	205 Auburn Avenue	Ca. 1952
19	Georgia Insurance Brokerage	193 Auburn Avenue	Ca. 1961
20	Casino Social Club	181-185 Auburn Avenue	Ca. 1915-1920
21	O.T. Bell Building	175-179 Auburn Avenue	1949
22	200 Edgewood	200 Edgewood Avenue	2016
23	Haverty Building	206-208 Edgewood Avenue, 10 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive	1927
24	Butler Street YMCA Boy's Branch	20 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive	1950
25	Butler Street YMCA	22 Jesse Hill, Jr. Drive	1920
26	Walden Building	28 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive	1948
27	Former Butler Street YMCA Boy's Branch	17 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive	1995
28	A & P Grocery/ North Side Loan Office (Pawn Shop)/GSU Sculpture Building	246 Edgewood Avenue	Ca. 1941
29	Unknown/Various Commercial Uses	264 Edgewood Avenue	1909
30	Hanley's Bell Street Funeral Home	21 Bell Street	Ca. 1915
31	Atlanta Municipal Market	209 Edgewood Avenue	1924

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 1****BUILDING NAME:** UNKNOWN/FORMER AUTO REPAIR SHOP**ADDRESS:** 111 JOHN WESLEY DOBBS AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** 1967

This building, a former auto repair shop, is located at the corner of John Wesley Dobbs Avenue and Courtland Street, on the northwest corner of the Sweet Auburn NHLD. Built in 1967, it is an L-shaped, one-story, brick-veneer building that has been renovated in recent years. The building's street front façade no longer conveys its original use as an automotive-related business, as it was renovated and now serves as an office. An asphalt paved parking lot surrounds the building, which is set back from the road.



Figure 4.2. 111 John Wesley Dobbs Avenue (Photo credit: NSA 2018).

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 2****BUILDING NAME:** PIEDMONT CENTRAL**ADDRESS:** 92 PIEDMONT AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** 2016

The building located at 92 Piedmont Avenue is an 11-story student housing mid-rise building called Piedmont Central. Constructed by GSU on the north side of the district in 2016, it is adjacent to the mid-rise Citizens Trust Bank, outside of the district boundary. Similar to the newer 200 Edgewood Avenue development, 92 Piedmont Avenue represents a large, non-contributing resource into the NHL district, but because it is not located within the more sensitive Auburn Avenue corridor, it does not impose a significant visual effect to the district. Additionally, its scale and massing is in proportion to the Citizens Trust Bank building, which is not included in the district boundary. Construction of this building resulted in the demolition of two 1960s era commercial buildings.



Figure 4.3. Piedmont Central (Source: GSU 2018).

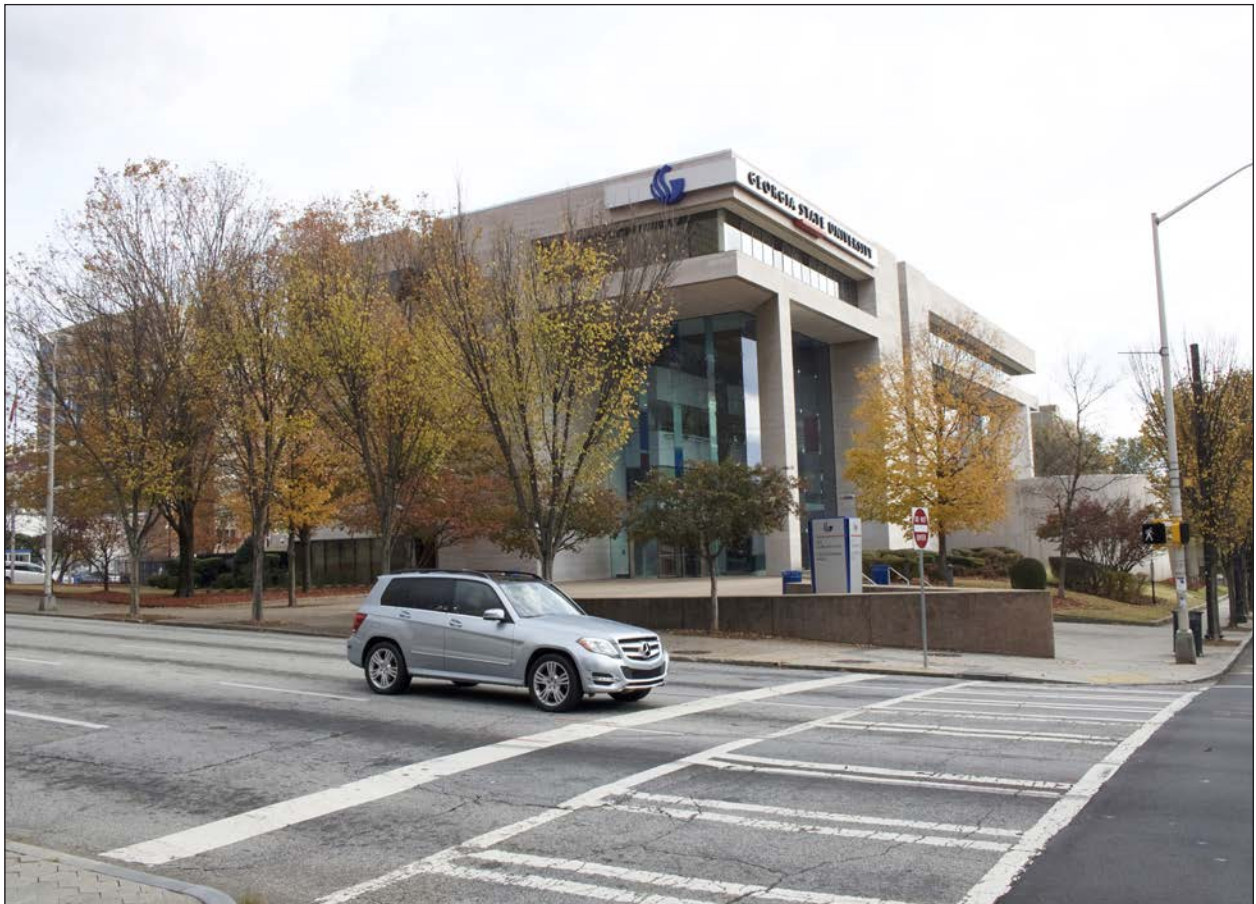


**RESOURCE NUMBER: 3****BUILDING NAME:** GSU CENTENNIAL HALL/ATLANTA LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY HEADQUARTERS**ADDRESS:** 100 AUBURN AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** 1980

Constructed in 1980 as the new headquarters building for Atlanta Life Insurance Company, 100 Auburn Avenue is a six-story, 105,000 square foot building. Designed by architecture firms Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback and Associates (Omni Coliseum, Georgia World Congress Center, Georgia Dome), and J.W. Robinson and Associates (Robert W. Woodruff Library at Clark Atlanta University), the building is clad in marble and features a distinctive multi-story atrium lobby. The building and site appear to have undergone little exterior alteration, even after the acquisition of the property by GSU. GSU has reportedly renovated the interior to accommodate classrooms and office space, however, the atrium lobby appears intact.

The construction of this new headquarters building resulted in the demolition of several historic buildings prior to construction, four years following the designation of the district as an NHL. These included the last two historic residences in the district, the Rucker House and the Smith House, as well as the Smith Carriage Factory.

**Figure 4.4. GSU Centennial Hall/Atlanta Life Insurance Company Headquarters (Photo credit: NSA 2018).**



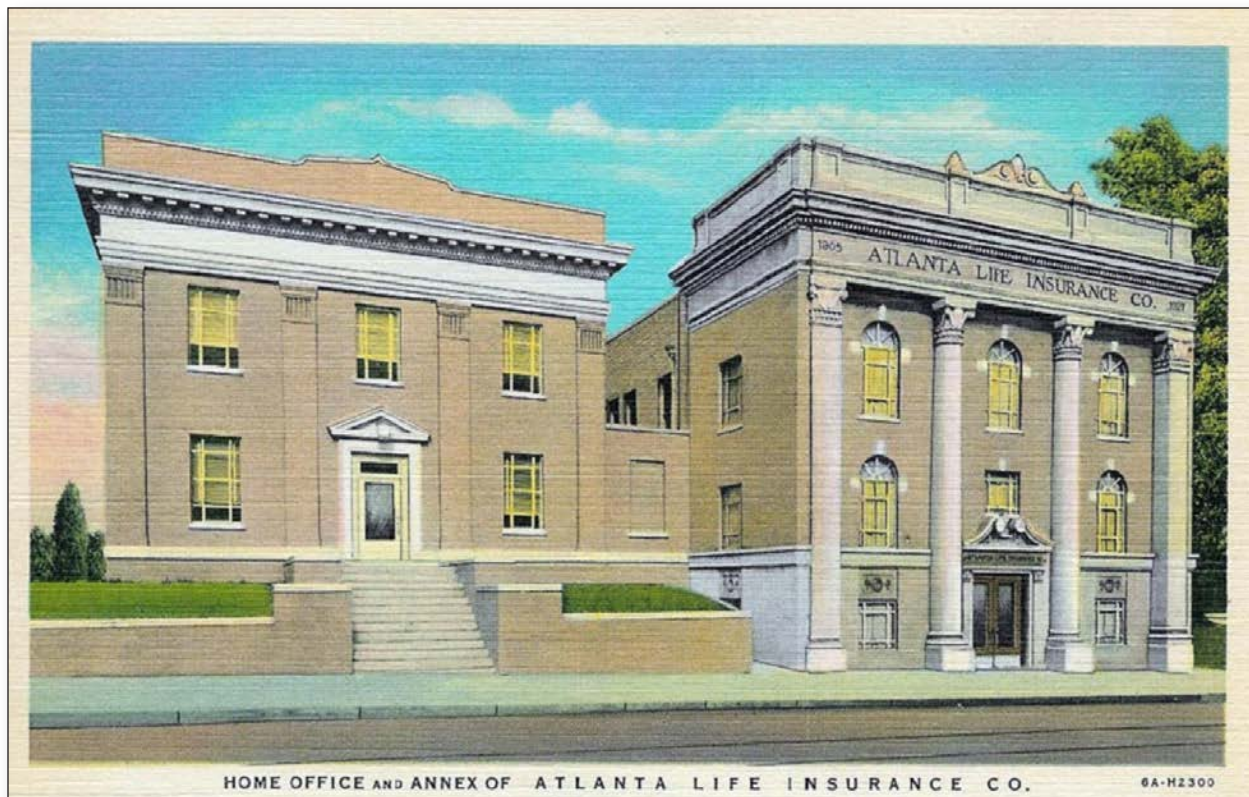
**RESOURCE NUMBER: 4****BUILDING NAME:** ATLANTA LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY**ADDRESS:** 100 AUBURN AVENUE (FORMERLY 148 AUBURN AVENUE)**BUILD DATE:** CA. 1900, 1936

The location of Alonzo Herndon's Atlanta Life Insurance Company between 1919 and 1980, this neo-classical-style headquarters includes two two-story buildings joined by a one-story hyphen. The oldest of the two, considered the main office building, was reportedly constructed prior to 1892 while the annex, slightly recessed from the main office building, was constructed by Atlanta Life Insurance Company in 1936. The earlier building was depicted as a frame two-story boarding house on the 1899 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of Atlanta, and as a two-story frame YMCA on the 1911 Sanborn map. According to Atlanta city directories, this location, 132 Auburn Avenue, served as the YMCA for African American Atlantans from 1905 until it moved to its new building on Butler Street in 1919.

When acquired by the Atlanta Life Insurance Company in 1919, the building was renovated to include the present classical façade with engaged Corinthian columns and pilasters and formal entrance with classical pediment. The annex building to the immediate west was constructed in 1936. Both are of brick construction, with the earlier building identified on Sanborn maps as a brick veneer building. It is possible that the Atlanta Life Insurance Company purchased the frame YMCA building and renovated it with a brick veneer and new formal entrance, using the existing building frame. The classical facade was reportedly added in 1927, which coincides with the date on the entablature.

Both buildings have been vacant since 1980. The main building's façade, composed of a tan colored brick veneer but dominated by white plaster classical elements, has sustained some degradation in material integrity over the years, but remains intact. The arched windows and double-door entry are boarded over but the ornately carved entablature, with its carved cornice with dentils and sign reading "1905 Atlanta Life

Figure 4.5. Historic Postcard of Building (Source: Atlanta Time Machine).





Insurance Co. 1927,” remains in place. The rectangular windows along the east elevation are also boarded over.

The annex building façade, less ornate than the main building façade, has a tan-colored brick veneer with brick pilasters and white plaster entablature and pedimented main entrance. The annex is recessed back from the main building and features a low brick retaining wall framing raised planting beds on either side of the central stairs. The planting beds are not well maintained and are overgrown with vegetation - these were originally maintained as small manicured lawns. The annex façade has rectangular windows that are boarded over and a rusted and dilapidated metal fire escape. Metal coping is evident along the parapet roof of both buildings. With its intact exterior and architectural detailing, this resource retains integrity.

**Figure 4.6. 1979 Views (Top) and Current Views (Bottom) of Atlanta Life Insurance Company (Source: [Top] (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-1; C-2).; [Bottom] NSA 2019).**







Figure 4.7. Atlanta Life Insurance Company, Facade (Above) and West Elevation (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).







Figure 4.8. Current Views, Facade (Above) and East Elevation of Atlanta Life Insurance Company (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).





**RESOURCE NUMBER: 5****BUILDING NAME:** GSU ALUMNI OFFICE/SMOOTH ASHLAR MASONIC LODGE**ADDRESS:** 60 PIEDMONT AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** 1956

The Smooth Ashlar Grand Lodge was constructed on Piedmont Avenue, near its intersection with Auburn Avenue and adjacent to Alonzo Herndon's Atlanta Life Insurance Company complex. The Smooth Ashlar Grand Lodge was constructed in 1956 to serve as the meeting space for over 25 local African American fraternal lodges organized under the Smooth Ashlar Grand Lodge. Along with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and the Prince Hall Grand Lodge, these African American fraternal and benevolent organizations were prominent institutions in the Auburn Avenue business district, providing life insurance, funeral assistance, college scholarships and more to the disenfranchised community (Reed et al. 2018:16).

The building was not mentioned in the Sweet Auburn NHL nomination and this was likely because it would not have been considered of historic age in 1976. Currently the building is owned by GSU and serves as its alumni office. The interior features exposed brick walls which may be an original feature of the masonry building. The windows were replaced within the last decade but retain the original configuration of the 1956 windows.

Figure 4.9. Smooth Ashlar Masonic Lodge, Current View (Historic View Not Available; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).







Figure 4.10. Smooth Ashlar Masonic Lodge, Looking Southwest (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 6**

**BUILDING NAME:** HENRY'S GRILL

**ADDRESS:** 178-182 AUBURN AVENUE

**BUILD DATE:** 1922

This one-story brick commercial building located adjacent to the Royal Peacock club has three storefronts. Built in 1922, it served as Henry's Grill & Lounge (also called Henry's Cabaret & Grill) during the 1950s and through the 1970s. The building was owned by Henry Wynn, a local music promoter. Wynn's music promotion and booking agency was called Supersonic Attractions and he also ran the record label Peachtree Records with Memphis-born and STAX records singer and songwriter William Bell. Supersonic Attractions booked and promoted several prominent musical acts, including Sam Cooke, Hank Ballard, Jimi Hendrix, and Jackie Wilson.

Wynn was known for his fierce competition with B.B. Beamon, another Atlanta music promoter and restaurant owner. Beamon's restaurant was located in the now-demolished Herndon Building and was an important meeting place for civil rights activists such as Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1960, Wynn took over ownership of the adjacent Royal Peacock nightclub.

The building at 178-182 Auburn Avenue is the second location of Henry's Grill & Lounge, with the original being located at 345 Auburn Avenue, in a two-story commercial brick building. However, it was only located at 345 Auburn Avenue between 1948 and 1950, a short period of time in the restaurant's history.

The building's façade has been altered since the building was photographed in 1979, shortly after the designation of the Sweet Auburn NHL. In 1979, the building's façade was clad with porcelain enameled steel panels and glass blocks, materials typical of the 1950s, with a metal awning sheltering the



Figure 4.11. Henry's Grill in 1979 HABS Photograph (Above) (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-6), and Current View (Below; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).





large rectangular picture windows and full-light glass store doors. A neon tube sign in a script font with “Henry’s Grill & Lounge” was emblazoned over the awning, spanning the length of the façade, mirroring the neon sign next door identifying the Royal Peacock. Since that time, the enameled steel panels, glass blocks, metal awning, and sign have been removed, exposing the brick exterior. Because the original three storefront configuration and placement of storefront windows and entries remain the same, this building appears to retain integrity. This building is in use as a restaurant, as it has been for most of its existence.

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 7**

**BUILDING NAME:** ROYAL PEACOCK/TOP HAT CLUB

**ADDRESS:** 186 AUBURN AVENUE

**BUILD DATE:** 1922

Constructed in 1922, this two-story brick commercial building is most famous for its role as the Royal Peacock night club, a landmark of the Sweet Auburn NHLD in terms of music history and black culture. The building was constructed as a professional office building, with doctors, dentists, and realty companies occupying its premises from 1922 until 1930. After 1930 the building was vacant until 1936 when it was known as Club Harlem, but the short-lived club closed by the following year. Finally, in 1938 the building became the Top Hat Club, which was managed by Maude Robinson. The Top Hat Club hosted such high-profile musical artists such as Cab Calloway and Louis Armstrong until it was purchased in 1949 by Carrie Cunningham, a former circus performer who also operated the Royal Hotel and Restaurant in a building next to Big Bethel Church.

**Figure 4.12. Royal Peacock Club in 1979 HABS Photograph (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-7).**







**Figure 4.13. Current View of Royal Peacock Club (Photo Credit: NSA 2019).**

The Royal Peacock, still in operation under its most famous name, had its heyday during the 1950s and 1960s with nearly every top African American rock and roll and rhythm and blues artists of the time performing there, including Ray Charles, Nina Simone, Little Richard, Sam Cooke, James Brown, and Gladys Knight. The doors shut in 1973, with the overall decline of the avenue as a black cultural and commercial mecca. Since that time, the building found other uses, mostly as an entertainment venue, and today continues its musical tradition as a hip-hop, soul, and reggae club (Dyer 2009).

The building exterior has seen some alterations since the 1979 HABS photo was taken, mainly in regards to the lower level storefronts and theater entrance and the exterior signage and marquee. Like with the signage of the adjacent Henry's Grill & Lounge, the Royal Peacocks' original neon tubing signage has been removed and replaced with more modern and smaller scale signage. The original marquee seen in the 1979 photo, located on the right side of the building, was replaced by a smaller marquee. The three storefronts remain evident on the façade, retaining their original window and door placements, although a few are covered up and no longer in use as windows, storefront windows, and entry points. It does not appear that the original retail spaces on the lower level are used as such any longer, but may be a part of the current music venue layout. Because the building retains much of its original exterior materials and fenestration, it appears to retain integrity.

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 8****BUILDING NAME:** FORMER THEATER, BOLISEUM, ROY'S GRILL**ADDRESS:** 196 AUBURN AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** CA. 1913

This one-story commercial building may be one of the earliest buildings in the Sweet Auburn NHLD, although its present facade mainly references mid-twentieth century architectural traits. The building was best known as a bowling alley beginning in the mid-1940s and Roy's Grill during the 1950s and well into the 1970s, but also had a long history as an automotive repair shop, from 1924 to 1942. The façade has two storefronts and a long narrow space at the back where the bowling alley was housed. The storefronts are recessed under an angled façade with three separate entrances gaining access to the two storefronts and the bowling alley section. A gable roof over the bowling alley section can be seen from the street.

Since its 1979 HABS photo was taken, the building façade has seen some alterations, but retains its overall original configuration. The panels cladding the façade walls have been covered with a stucco material. The storefront windows have been replaced with divided aluminum sash windows that fit within the original window openings. The three store entries are still evident but appear to be boarded over and have been for some time as this building has been vacant for several years. Because the building retains much of its original exterior materials and fenestration, it appears to retain integrity.



Figure 4.14. 196 Auburn Avenue in 1979 HABS Photo (Above; Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-9), and Current View (Below; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).





**RESOURCE NUMBER: 9**

**BUILDING NAME:** UNKNOWN/COMMERCIAL BUILDING/SILVER MOON BARBER SHOP

**ADDRESS:** 198-202 AUBURN AVENUE

**BUILD DATE:** CA. 1911

This two-story commercial building was constructed ca. 1911 as indicated by an evaluation of Atlanta city directory listings from the era. The masonry building, covered in a stucco material, had its start as a printing company, with its retail components on the first level housing various professional and retail establishments. The Hamilton Robinson Printing Company was the primary occupant of the building from 1919 to the 1950s. One of its more famous tenants is the Silver Moon Barber Shop, which claims to be the oldest operating black barber shop in the city. The Silver Moon Barber Shop has been located in the building, at 202 Auburn Avenue, since 1912, and may have had its origins at another location in previous years.

Today the building looks much as it did in 1979. The lower level façade, with its two retail spaces, has maintained the original pattern of storefront windows and doors, and the flat-roof metal awning continues to shelter the storefronts. The upper story windows also appear to be the same, with their two-light divided vertical metal sashes occupying the six window spaces. As a result of its intact exterior and fenestration, this building appears to retain integrity.



Figure 4.15. 198-202 Auburn Avenue in 1979 HABS Photo (Above; (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-10), and Current View (Below; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).





**RESOURCE NUMBER: 10****BUILDING NAME:** NED HOOPER'S FISH AND POULTRY MARKET**ADDRESS:** 204-206 AUBURN AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** CA. 1935

The two-story commercial building located at 204 and 206 Auburn Avenue was constructed in ca. 1935, as evidenced by an analysis of Atlanta city directories, with an original use as Ned Hooper's Fish and Poultry Market. The building was used solely as Ned Hooper's Fish and Poultry Market from 1935 until 1950, when it appears the building was split between five tenants, including Hooper's Crystal Poultry Market, State Department of Public Health, American Cancer Society, Atkinson Plastering Company, and Camp Fire Girls.

The building has been connected to the adjacent and similarly constructed 208 Auburn Avenue by a two-story recessed appendage sometime after 1979. Up until that point, they were separate but nearly identical buildings with lower level storefronts and upper story office space. The storefront facades have replacement wall cladding but retain the original door and window configurations, all sheltered by suspended flat-roof awnings that were present in 1979. The stucco-clad facades on the upper levels are



Figure 4.16. 204-206 and 208 Auburn Avenue in 1979 HABS Photo (Above; (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-11) and Current View (Below; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).



accented by triple banded lines radiating across the tops of both buildings, with the 204-206 building accented by an “H” in the top left corner, referencing Ned Hooper, evidently. The center addition tying the two buildings together is covered by a modern commercial garage bay. The top floor windows retain the original openings but have been replaced by three-light aluminum sashes and single-pane sashes.

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 11**

**BUILDING NAME:** ALEXANDER BUILDING

**ADDRESS:** 208 AUBURN AVENUE

**BUILD DATE:** 1946

This two-story commercial building, similar in construction to its neighbor 206-206 Auburn Avenue, was built in 1946 by T.M. (Theodore Martin) Alexander to house his insurance company and provide office space for other professionals in the community. Alexander, a Morehouse College alumni, was a leader in the black business community in Atlanta and founded Alexander & Company insurance in 1931. He later founded the Southeastern Fidelity Fire and Casualty Company in 1951, the first black-owned multi-line insurance company. He also co-founded the Atlanta Negro League of Voters in 1937 and assisted in insuring vehicles during the Montgomery bus boycott (Civil Rights Digital Library; Auburn Avenue Research Library).

The Alexander Building is also noted for serving as the first location of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957 (Georgia Historic Resources Survey Form on file at NPS, Atlanta). The building has been connected to the adjacent and similarly constructed 204-206 Auburn Avenue by a two-story recessed appendage since sometime after 1979. Up until that point, they were separate but nearly identical buildings with lower level storefronts and upper story office space. The storefront facades have replacement wall cladding but retain the original door and window configurations, all sheltered by suspended flat-roof awnings that were present in 1979. The stucco-clad facades on the upper levels are accented by triple banded lines radiating across the tops of both buildings, with the 204-206 building accented by an “H” in the top left corner, referencing Ned Hooper, evidently. The center addition tying the two buildings together is covered by a modern commercial garage bay. The top floor windows retain the original openings but have been replaced by three-light aluminum sashes and single-pane sashes.

**Figure 4.17. 208 Auburn Avenue in 1979 (Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-12).**



**RESOURCE NUMBER: 12****BUILDING NAME:** PARKING GARAGE/RETAIL**ADDRESS:** 210 AUBURN AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** 1972

This is a two-level reinforced concrete parking garage with retail storefronts at the street level. Originally built in conjunction with the construction of the adjacent Big Bethel Towers residential high-rise for the elderly, the parking garage has served as parking for the Sweet Auburn business patrons as well. The parking garage has retained its overall appearance and form, with no additions on the upper level save for a covered parking area on the upper level. Some areas of the façade wall have been filled in with poured concrete and the original poured concrete parapet wall that had decorative rectangular stamps has been covered over.



Figure 4.18. 210 Auburn Avenue in 1979 HABS Photo (Above; Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-13) and Current View (Below; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).





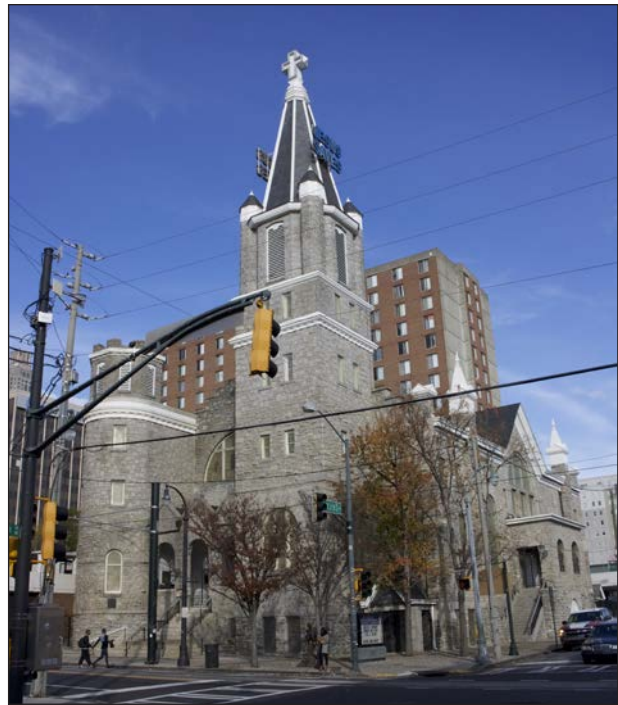


Figure 4.19. Big Bethel AME Church in 1979 HABS Photo (Left; Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-14) and Current View (Right; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 13**

**BUILDING NAME:** BIG BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH

**ADDRESS:** 220 AUBURN AVENUE

**BUILD DATE:** 1891, WITH TOWERS AND INTERIOR REBUILT AFTER 1923 FIRE

Big Bethel AME Church is considered the oldest African American religious congregation in Atlanta. Its congregation originates from enslaved peoples who were permitted to worship in the white Union Church, and who built their first church, under the name Bethel Tabernacle, in 1855. The second church building was constructed in 1868 adjacent to its present location, which was then the corner of Wheat Street (Auburn Avenue) and Butler Street (Jesse Hill Jr. Drive). In 1891, a new stone church building was completed in its present location. In 1924 the building suffered considerable fire damage and much of it had to be rebuilt, including the interior and the towers. The redesign of the building as it appears today was undertaken by African American architect J.A. Lankford and builder Alexander Hamilton (Carmolingo 2015).

The church has housed various organizations, including the Gate City Colored School, the city's first public school for African American children, in 1879 and was the first location of Morris Brown College. The church was a major part of the formation of Morris Brown College as the church officials, along with the Georgia Conference of the AME Church, purchased the first piece of land for the college and constructed Gaines Hall, named in honor of Big Bethel Church's Reverend Wesley John Gaines (New Georgia Encyclopedia; Carmolingo 2015).

Today the Romanesque Revival stone church retains integrity, as it remains virtually unchanged since it was photographed in 1979. It has been well maintained, with its original stone exterior walls, front and side entrances, and fenestration well preserved. The only significant change appears to be the addition of protective glass over the stained-glass windows, that partially obscures the stained glass from the exterior. The church's iconic original bell tower, complete with the historic "Jesus Saves" sign atop it, retains its random ashlar stone construction and wood trim cornice, two major elements found throughout the building. Crenellated rooflines accent the smaller tower and the façade over the main entrance.



Figure 4.20. Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium in 1979 (Left; Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-20) and Current View (Top, Below; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 14**

**BUILDING NAME:** ODD FELLOW'S BUILDING AND AUDITORIUM

**ADDRESS:** 238 AUBURN AVENUE

**BUILD DATE:** 1912



This visually prominent building, constructed in 1912-1913, was built to house the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows. Comprising the entire northern side of Auburn Avenue between Jesse Hill Jr. Drive and Bell Street, the building has a two-story section with an adjacent six-story office tower. Constructed of brick with terracotta details, the Jacobean Revival-style building was individually listed in the NRHP in 1975, just prior to the Sweet Auburn NHL designation. It was found significant in the areas of commerce, architecture, and social history.

Designed by Atlanta architect William A. Edwards (later of firm Edwards and Sayward) and built by Robert A. Pharrow, owner of a prominent African American contracting firm, the building was the idea of Benjamin J. Davis, the editor of the black-owned newspaper, the *Atlanta Independent*. Davis was an important figure in the Atlanta Odd Fellows as well, and through his work with the *Atlanta Independent*, he promoted the Odd Fellows building construction and is credited with its successful completion (Lyon 1975:2).

The brick building and auditorium underwent a restoration from 1988 to 1991, and remains in good condition. The building retains integrity, as it appears much as it did in 1979, with the exception of the storefronts. The rehabilitation of the storefronts in the late 1980s brought them back to their original design and materials, with a recessed entry, large glass display windows with wood sashes, and wood bulkheads.



**RESOURCE NUMBER: 15**

**BUILDING NAME:** UNKNOWN/TWO-STORY COMMERCIAL BUILDING

**ADDRESS:** 253-255 AUBURN AVENUE

**BUILD DATE:** 1923

Located at the corner of Auburn Avenue and Bell Street, this two-story brick building was constructed in 1923 on property owned by William Shaw, Atlanta's first African American optometrist. While Shaw's office was located across the street in the Odd Fellow's Building, when the building was completed at 253-255 Auburn Avenue, William Shaw had a restaurant there in 1924, which was the Jessie Shaw Restaurant until 1930. Throughout its history, the building housed the Sanson Flower Shop, owned by James J. Sanson who



Figure 4.21. 253-255 Auburn Avenue in 1979 HABS Photo (Above; Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-43) and Current View (Below; Photo Credit: NSA 2019).



lived on Chamberlain Street near Edgewood Avenue in 1920. The Sanson Flower Shop was located at the building through the 1950s. Harry Murphy's Print Shop was also located in the building from 1925 until 1933, later moving to the Rucker Building where it was known as the House of Murphy Printing Company for over 40 years. Haugabrooks Funeral Home was also located in the building for a short time prior to 1930. Other tenants included Algernon Harper's restaurant (1935-1950), Jack R. Posner liquor store (1950), Auburn Liquor Store, Hy-Beaute Cosmetic Shop, and Hamburger King.

The building currently is vacant with the storefront windows and doors boarded over. The lower level, which historically was divided into three storefronts, has been altered, with the central bay serving as a main entrance and the flanking bays that formerly has entry doors and windows now only having windows. A brick bulkhead has been added to each flanking bay, creating the windows above. The building's brick exterior has been painted and it appears the windows on the upper floor have been replaced. Despite these alterations, the building continues to convey its use as a historic commercial building and as a result, it appears to retain integrity.

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 16**

**BUILDING NAME:** ATLANTA LIFE INSURANCE BRANCH OFFICE

**ADDRESS:** 229 AUBURN AVENUE

**BUILD DATE:** CA. 1908

This three-story brick building, located at the corner of Auburn Avenue and Jesse Hill Jr. Drive (formerly Butler Street), is the last remaining building from the Herndon Building block. The building was historically home to the Atlanta Life Insurance Company branch office and was connected to the adjacent Herndon Building with a two-story addition that was addressed as 229 ½ Auburn Avenue.



Figure 4.22. Atlanta Life Insurance Branch Office in 1979 HABS Photo (Left; Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-39), and Current View (Right; Photo Credit: NSA 2019).



Figure 4.23. Current Views of 229 Auburn Avenue, Detail of Gold Dust Twins Sign, Top (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).



The Atlanta Life Insurance Company branch office was the longest running tenant of the building, having occupied the space for over thirty years beginning around 1935. When the building originally opened in 1908, it housed three insurance companies, Mutual Benefit Association, Union Benefit Association, and the National Investment and Savings Association. From 1910 to 1935, various other tenants included Atlanta Savings Bank, Bozeman & Barlow, H.H. and P.E. Williams undertakers, Russell & Jordan tailors, John Butler restaurant, Relford Momon news dealer, and Apex Beauty College. When the building was photographed for HABS in 1979, Atlanta Life Insurance occupied the first floor, Atlanta Dance Theatre was on the second floor, and the Blayton School of Accounting was at the top floor.



The building has been vacant for nearly two decades and along with being under maintained, it suffered damage during the 2008 tornado, which brought down the adjacent Herndon building. When the Herndon building collapsed, it brought with it the two-story appendage that connected it with 229 Auburn Avenue, revealing the original brick exterior wall and an early twentieth-century, degrading, Gold Dust Twins soap advertisement that was painted on the building's east wall, prior to the construction of

the Herndon building in 1924 (Thomas 2015). This advertisement is a rare example of a Gold Dust Twin soap advertisement, possibly one of only two in the south, according to historian Velma Maia Thomas (Personal Communication 2019). As it currently stands, the building is in poor structural condition, with sections of outer wall and roofing missing, and windows boarded over. A historic corner sign for Atlanta Life Insurance, identifying this location as the branch office, was present in the 1979 photo, but has been removed.

The 1979 photo also shows the Atlanta Life Insurance store front on the first level with a black polished stone tile exterior, recessed entry with decorative glass blocks, and three plate glass windows — all of which have been removed. The upper floors featured stone beltcourses between each story and a molded stone cornice at the top of the building, just below the brick parapet roof. Two stone globes, located at each front corner of the parapet, remain on the building as classical design elements. Although the building has suffered neglect and has not been maintained, it retains integrity with its relatively intact exterior.

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 17****BUILDING NAME:** DWELL ATL/RENAISSANCE WALK**ADDRESS:** 171 AUBURN AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** 2007

The seven-story mixed-use Dwell ATL/Renaissance Walk development is the largest building in the district, encompassing nearly the entire length of the block of Auburn Avenue between Jesse Hill Jr. Drive and Piedmont Avenue. It is constructed of concrete with a brick and concrete exterior. The lower level has retail storefronts. The upper levels of the building has portions that are set back slightly from the rest of the block. Through the City's AUDC design review process, developers of Renaissance Walk (including Big Bethel as the landowner) agreed to preserve four existing historic buildings and integrate them into the overall building design and won approval for demolishing two historic buildings, including the Palamont Motor Lodge. The Bronner Brothers Building at the corner of Auburn Avenue and Jesse Hill Jr. Drive and three other commercial buildings on the site had been demolished between 1999 and 2002 and it is not known if these demolitions were tied to the transfer of land ownership to Big Bethel AME Church.

Figure 4.24. Dwell ATL/Renaissance Walk, Current View (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).





**RESOURCE NUMBER: 18****BUILDING NAME:** MUTUAL FEDERAL SAVINGS**ADDRESS:** 205 AUBURN AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** CA. 1952

This one-story International Style commercial building was constructed as the headquarters of Mutual Federal Savings. It was constructed in 1952 and built by the Bank Building and Equipment Corporation (Mason 1995). The address (and previous building) was previously connected to Clarence C. Hart plumbing, BMC Real Estate Company, and Louella P. Slappy. The building was originally a detached, stand-alone building on the south side of Auburn Avenue, near other one, two, and three-story commercial buildings. It features a vertical brick slab wall on the east elevation that contrasts with the polished marble tile exterior of the façade. The brick wall is a mid-century architectural element that also served as a place

for prominent business signage, as can be seen in the 1979 HABS photo.



Originating as Atlanta Mutual Federal Savings in the 1920s, the bank gained renewed leadership in the 1930s with John P. Whittaker of Atlanta University. Under Whittaker, the bank opened its first office at 186 Auburn Avenue and grew to a \$20 million operation. In 1952, Whittaker had the building at 205 Auburn Avenue constructed to serve as the institution's headquarters. He was succeeded in leadership by Jesse B. Blayton and then Fletcher Coombs, its last president (Calloway 1988:7-8). The bank endured until the late 1990s, and finally dissolved in 2000. Citizens Trust Bank acquired the remaining assets of the operation when it closed.



The building remains in good condition and retains all of its original exterior elements, except for the original signage. In 2008, the building was preserved and incorporated into the new Renaissance Walk mixed-use development. The storefront windows and doors have been replaced, but the original design and fenestration pattern were retained. The bulkhead below the five vertical plate glass windows retains its original limestone ashlar veneer.

**Figure 4.25. Mutual Federal Savings in 1979 HABS Photo (Top; Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-35) and Current View (Bottom; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).**

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 19****BUILDING NAME:** GEORGIA INSURANCE BROKERAGE**ADDRESS:** 193 AUBURN AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** CA. 1961

The one-story, concrete block commercial building was built circa 1961 by William Calloway for his realty company, Calloway Realty Company. Calloway was a business leader in the community and was instrumental in the formation of the Atlanta Action Forum in 1971 (Calloway 1988:12; Mason 1995). Previously, a restaurant was located at this site, but in a different building.

The building was originally constructed adjacent (and attached) to the two-story brick office building shown in the 1979 HABS photos. The building, 195 Auburn Avenue, housed the Consolidated Mortgage Company, which was established by Calloway and T.M. Alexander as the first African American small loan company in Georgia licensed by the Secretary of State. The building at 195 Auburn Avenue was demolished in the early 1980s. The building at 193 Auburn Avenue remained, having been the location of the Georgia Insurance Brokerage Company beginning sometime in the 1970s. The business continues in this location today.

The building was renovated as part of the Renaissance Walk mixed-use development that was completed in 2008. Along with three other historic commercial buildings, it was incorporated as part of the development, preserving the historic storefronts in the new development. The building retains its metal panel exterior and the plate glass window storefront appears to be unchanged since the 1979 HABS photo was taken.



Figure 4.26. Georgia Insurance Brokerage in 1979 HABS Photo (Above; Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-33) and Current View (below; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).





**RESOURCE NUMBER: 20****BUILDING NAME:** CASINO SOCIAL CLUB**ADDRESS:** 181-185 AUBURN AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** CA. 1915-1920

This two-story brick commercial building is located at 181-185 Auburn Avenue. It contains three storefronts and was best known as the home of the Casino Social Club, which occupied one of the storefronts beginning in 1953. The Casino, as it was known, was a popular nightclub because of its large dancefloor and competed with the Royal Peacock as an entertainment destination. The building was constructed circa 1915-1920 and was first home to the Jackson Appliance Store beginning in the early 1950s. Dr. Homer Nash's offices were also located in this building at one time. Other tenants included Bell Realty Company, and Paul Poole photography. The building was constructed by Benjamin D. Watkins, a white real estate developer (Mason 1995; Calloway 1988).

The building was incorporated into the Renaissance Walk mixed-use development, constructed in 2008. The Casino marquee, seen in the 1979 HABS photo, is no longer present, but the three storefronts, with decorative metal surround, remain in the same configuration with a few alterations. The storefront windows and doors have been replaced, but with in-kind materials and in keeping with the historic fenestration pattern. A glass block bulkhead has been added to the storefronts as well. The side walk-up entry providing access to the second story where the Taurus Club was located in the 1979 photo is also intact. The upper story's windows were covered in the 1979 photo and are currently one-over-one-light replacement sashes. Although the building retains much of its exterior fabric, because it was incorporated into the Renaissance Walk development, its integrity of setting is diminished; therefore the building does not appear to retain integrity.



Figure 4.27. The Casino Social Club in 1979 HABS Photo (Top; Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-31), and Current View (Bottom; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).



**RESOURCE NUMBER: 21****BUILDING NAME:** O.T. BELL BUILDING**ADDRESS:** 175-179 AUBURN AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** 1949

This two-story brick commercial building was constructed in 1949 by O.A. Arnold for the O.T. Bell Realty Company. The building was also home to the offices of the oldest African American law firm in the city established by R. Edwin Thomas with attorneys Thomas J. Henry, Eugene Moore, and Sylvester Robinson (Calloway 1988; Mason 1995). The law firm was located in the office building through the 1960s.

The building has two storefronts and a side walk-up entry providing access to the second story. The upper portion of the façade is marked “4B9” in concrete, denoting the date of construction as 1949 and the B standing for Bell (O.T. Bell). The building was incorporated into the Renaissance Walk mixed-use development in 2008. The two storefronts remain in the same locations and while the windows, doors, and bulkheads have replacement materials, they are in-kind replacements in the historic fenestration pattern. The upper story windows contain eight-light metal awning sashes that appear to be original to the building’s construction.



Figure 4.28. 1979 HABS Photo of O.T. Bell Building (Top; LOC 1979) and Current View (Bottom; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).





**RESOURCE NUMBER: 22****BUILDING NAME:** 200 EDGEWOOD**ADDRESS:** 200 EDGEWOOD AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** 2016

The six-story apartment building located at 200 Edgewood Avenue, constructed in 2016, is located on the district's south boundary, near the Atlanta Municipal Market. It has a brick and parged mixed material exterior with both arched and rectangular windows. A molded beltcourse accents the space between the second and third stories, with the same element forming a cornice at the top of the building.



Figure 4.29. Current View of 200 Edgewood Avenue (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 23****BUILDING NAME:** HAVERTY'S BUILDING**ADDRESS:** 206-208 EDGEWOOD AVENUE, 10 JESSE HILL JR. DRIVE**BUILD DATE:** 1927

This two-story commercial building was constructed in 1927 for the Haverty's Furniture Company. It is one of the only buildings in the district that does not have ties to Atlanta's African American business community, as it was owned and operated by white owners and employees. A portion of the building can be seen in a 1974 photo showing the western section of the building. The Haverty Furniture Company was founded in Atlanta in 1885 by J.J. Haverty. The company is one of the city's renown local businesses, serving the area's residents throughout the last century. The Rhodes-Haverty building, constructed in



Figure 4.30. Haverty's Building, Historic View, Circa 1974  
(Source: Shell-McElroy.com)

1929, remains an important high-rise building near Five Points. This Haverty's Building, located at the corner of Edgewood Avenue and Jesse Hill Jr. Drive (Butler Street), was likely one of a few of the company's stores located in the city. It has recently been renovated with commercial storefronts at the lower level and apartments at the upper floors. Although portions of the storefronts have been altered, the building retains integrity with its intact blonde brick exterior. The building has a historic two-story brick addition with two oversized vehicle bays on the east side, which wraps around Jesse Hill Jr. Drive. This was constructed in 1950 and was used for delivery vehicles.



Figure 4.31. Current View of Haverty's Building (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).

**RESOURCE NUMBER:** 24

**BUILDING NAME:** BUTLER STREET YMCA BOY'S BRANCH

**ADDRESS:** 20 JESSE HILL JR. DRIVE

**BUILD DATE:** 1950

The building located at 20 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive is the Boy's Branch of the Butler Street YMCA, which is adjacent to the main YMCA building. The original Boy's Branch was located in the basement of the main YMCA building. It is a two-story brick institutional building with a central double-door entrance flanked by windows with two-over-two-light double-hung metal sashes. A classical stone door surround outlines the entrance and a stone beltcourse runs above the second-floor windows. Brick jack arches are above each of the first story windows. The building appears much as it did in the 1979 HABS photo and it retains its original exterior and windows. Like the main building of the Butler Street YMCA however, the Boy's Branch has been vacant for over two decades and may have suffered some interior deterioration not visible



Figure 4.32. Current View of Butler Street YMCA Boy's Branch (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).





Figure 4.33. Current view of Butler Street YMCA, Boy's Branch, and Walden Building (Above; Photo Credit: NSA 2019). 1979 HABS photograph of Butler Street YMCA block (Below; Source: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, GA-1170 C-38; Note, there is no detailed view of these buildings in the 1979 HABS Collection).







Figure 4.34. Circa 1920 View of Butler Street YMCA (Above; Source: Sweettauburn.us), and Current View (Below; Photo Credit: NSA 2019).



## RESOURCE NUMBER: 25

**BUILDING NAME:** BUTLER STREET YMCA

**ADDRESS:** 22 JESSE HILL JR. DRIVE

**BUILD DATE:** 1920

Known as Atlanta's Black City Hall, the Butler Street YMCA is one of the most important buildings in the Sweet Auburn NHLD. Constructed in the Georgian Revival style in 1920, it was designed by Atlanta architects Hentz, Reid, and Adler and constructed by African American contractor Alexander Hamilton. Organized in 1894 in the basement of Wheat Street Baptist Church, the YMCA moved to a house on Auburn Avenue (no longer extant), in the location of the Atlanta Life Insurance buildings in the early 1900s. After raising funds to construct the new building in 1920, the Butler Street YMCA moved to its new location.

The 10,000 square foot, six-story, brick building had ample meeting facilities, which prompted it to become an important site for business and community organizations like the Atlanta Business League, the Atlanta Medical Society, and the Atlanta Negro Voters League. The Hungry Club Forum, a luncheon meeting bringing the city's black and white leaders together, began here in 1942. Besides its important political function for Atlanta's African American residents, it also provided the city's youth a place to play sports, swim, and take classes. Its prominent members included Martin Luther King, Jr., Julian Bond, Andrew Young, Maynard Jackson, Vernon Jordan, Jesse Hill, Herman Russell, and Walt Frazier (Harvey 1984). The building also housed Atlanta's first African American police precinct beginning in 1948, and was the site of the first Bronner Brothers trade show in 1947 (Rhone 2018).

Across the street a new building located at 17 Butler Street (now Jesse Hill Jr. Drive) was constructed in 1995 as the J.D. Winston YMCA, the new Boy's Branch of the Butler Street YMCA (McKinley 1995). Named for the director of the Butler Street YMCA Boy's Branch for almost 60 years, the building



remains vacant since 2012 when the YMCA was closed. Plans to redevelop the building into the Sweet Auburn Ballroom were discussed in the news in 2016 (Kahn 2016).

Following the construction of the new Boy's Branch, less events were held at the Butler Street YMCA building, and it has been vacant for over 20 years. Windows and doors are either boarded over or left open at the upper stories. The building retains intergity with its remarkably intact brick and stone exterior. The double staircase at the front entry retains its metal railing and the large central entrance's carved stone surround, complete with an entablature and modillions, continues to express the building's iconic presence in the district. Plans have been in development for the restoration and adaptive reuse of the building, but no imminent work has been publicized.

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 26**

**BUILDING NAME:** WALDEN BUILDING

**ADDRESS:** 28 JESSE HILL JR. DRIVE

**BUILD DATE:** 1948

This two-story concrete block and brick commercial building was constructed in 1948. It is named the Walden Building after its original owner, Austin T. Walden, a prominent local civil rights leader and attorney who, in 1963, became Georgia's first African American judge since Reconstruction. Due to its association with A.T. Walden, it is a significant building in the district. It is also a good example of a modern, mid-20th-century International style commercial building in the city. Walden maintained offices in this building until his death in 1965. Other tenants included a beauty salon that occupied the first-floor storefront. The building has been vacant for several years and the storefront and side walk-up entry are boarded over. However, the building retains its original exterior brick, and the original "Walden Building" metal signage on the facade above the original storefront configuration. Windows are original two-over-two-light double-hung metal sashes. The northernmost window wraps around the corner of the building, an interesting design feature.



Figure 4.35. Current View of Walden Building (Individual Historic View Not Available; Photo Credit: NSA 2019).

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 27****BUILDING NAME:** FORMER BUTLER STREET YMCA BOY'S BRANCH**ADDRESS:** 100 AUBURN AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** 1995

Across the street from the original Butler Street YMCA, this building located at 17 Butler Street (now Jesse Hill Jr. Drive) was constructed in 1995 as the J.D. Winston YMCA, the new Boy's Branch of the Butler Street YMCA (McKinley 1995). The low-rise brick building features large windows on its west elevation. Named for the director of the Butler Street YMCA Boy's Branch for almost 60 years, the building remains vacant since 2012 when the YMCA was closed. Plans to redevelop the building into the Sweet Auburn Ballroom were discussed in the news in 2016 (Kahn 2016).



**Figure 4.36. Former Butler Street YMCA Boy's Branch, Current View**  
(Photo Credit: NSA 2018)

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 28****BUILDING NAME:** A & P GROCERY/NORTH SIDE LOAN OFFICE (PAWN SHOP)/GSU SCULPTURE BUILDING**ADDRESS:** 246 EDGEWOOD AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** CA. 1941

Located at the corner of Edgewood Avenue and Bell Street, this one-story commercial building was constructed around 1941 and originally housed an A&P Grocery store. It has a brick parapet wall on the façade intended for business signage and the interior has steel truss construction with a poured concrete floor. Previously in the 1930s, a used car business was located in this approximate location, presumably in a different building on or near this location. The North Side Loan Office pawn shop occupied the building prior to Georgia State University (GSU) acquiring it in 2008. It now serves as the GSU Sculpture Building (Drummond and Kohr 2014:57–58).



The building remains in good condition. Its original storefront has been restored and its historic fenestration pattern and the brick exterior is intact except for the addition of three garage bays on the building's west elevation.

**Figure 4.37. Circa 2000 View of 246 Edgewood Avenue (Source: NPS).**





Figure 4.38. Current view of 246 Edgewood Avenue (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).

**RESOURCE NUMBER: 29**

**BUILDING NAME:** UNKNOWN/VARIOUS COMMERCIAL USES

**ADDRESS:** 264 EDGEWOOD AVENUE

**BUILD DATE:** 1909

This one-story brick commercial building was constructed in 1909 near the corner of Edgewood Avenue and Bell Street. The building has two storefronts sheltered by a non-historic awning. A parapet roof with terracotta tile coping is located on the facade, while a stepped brick parapet is visible on the west elevation.

The building was designed by Atlanta architect J.R. MacEachron (credited with the design of the Douglass Theatre in Macon and the Ben Hill County Jail) and constructed by Griffin Construction. Once a part of a row of similar commercial buildings, the block was disrupted in the 1950s when the interstate was constructed, leaving this building. Tenants of the building throughout its history included grocery stores, restaurants, and other small businesses.

With its intact exterior, the building retains integrity; its storefronts have been altered over time with the turnover of newer tenants, however, they appear to have the same general configuration as they would have historically.





Figure 4.39. Circa 2000 view of 264 Edgewood Avenue (Above; Source: NPS), current view (Below; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).





**RESOURCE NUMBER: 30****BUILDING NAME:** HANLEY'S BELL STREET FUNERAL HOME**ADDRESS:** 21 BELL STREET**BUILD DATE:** CIRCA 1915

This three-story brick commercial building was constructed in circa 1915 and was originally built for the headquarters of the Independent Benevolent Order, an African American fraternal organization with 35,000 members and \$50,000 in real estate holdings in 1922. It is one of the oldest remaining buildings in the district. The fraternal organization was led by William S. Cannon, its Supreme Grand Master (Work 1922:416). The building's connection to the Independent Benevolent Order is still evident on the building's parapet, above the upper story windows, where a rectangular stone is carved with the following:

1896 Home — Office 1913

District Grand Lodge No. 1 of Georgia of Independent

Benevolent Order W.S. Cannon Founder



The Independent Benevolent Order moved out of the building in 1927 and by 1929, Jesse Howard Hanley purchased the building. Hanley established the Hanley Undertaking Company with his brother William in 1917, setting the business up at 250 Edgewood Avenue. When he moved the business to 21 Bell Street, the business changed to Hanley's Bell Street Funeral Home. Hanley opened another branch of the business on Ashby Street, called Hanley's Ashby Street Funeral Home. The business stayed in the Hanley family after Jesse Hanley's death in 1948 until it closed in the 1990s. Hanley's Bell Street Funeral Home was known for offering its services to all of the community, regardless of their means. It is also well known for serving as the funeral home for Dr. Martin Luther King following his assassination (Emory University 2008; AJC Archives 2018).

The building is composed of three parts forming an "L" shape. The original

**Figure 4.40. 2002 Photo of Hanley's Bell Street Funeral Home (Source: Georgia Historic Resources Form on file at NPS).**



section is a narrow, rectangular building facing Bell Street, and its two historic period additions extend back and to the north; these additions are visible in a 1952 historic aerial photo. The building has been renovated and altered over the last 15 years, with the addition of an exterior stairway on the north side, and additions on the second and third historic additions. Even with the additions, the building retains integrity and continues to convey its significance as a circa 1915 commercial building. The façade appears much as it did historically, with one-over-one-light windows, a five-course American brick bond exterior, and an arched portico entry. The building is occupied by a non-profit, Trinity Community Ministries.

**Figure 4.41. Current Views of Hanley's Bell Street Funeral Home, Showing Facade and Side Elevations (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).**







Figure 4.42. Current Views of Hanley's Bell Street Funeral Home, Showing Side Elevations (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).





**RESOURCE NUMBER: 31****BUILDING NAME:** ATLANTA MUNICIPAL MARKET**ADDRESS:** 209 EDGEWOOD AVENUE**BUILD DATE:** 1924

The Atlanta Municipal Market was constructed in 1924 and designed by Atlanta architect A. Ten Eyck. It was built on the site of an existing curb market that began in 1918 after the Great Atlanta fire of 1917 wiped out the houses that were once there. The Atlanta Women's Club raised funds for the construction of the permanent market building, seeing the need for access to fresh food as an imperative for the city, particularly following the devastating fire that wiped out people's homes and gardens. As a result, the building was designed to be fireproof and was constructed of brick and concrete (Garrett 1969:802; Municipal Market 2014).

The market's significance to the Sweet Auburn NHLD is included in the 1976 designation materials, owing its importance to the local area in terms of commerce. Some of the earliest vendors occupying the city-owned market in 1927 included the Fulton Market, Piggly Wiggly, and Southern Grocery Stores, and many individual, independent vendors. In 1941, vendors included Edna Pearson, Horace Hardeman, and A&P Foods.

By the 1960s, the market was the largest source for Georgia farm products in a single location in the state. During segregation, African Americans were not allowed to sell their goods inside the market, but were allotted space outside, along the Edgewood Avenue curb, until the 1960s when the city desegregated. The curb market, as it came to be known, was one of the more popular places at the market to purchase goods.



Black Atlantans were allowed to shop inside the market along with whites, one of the few places in town that had integrated shopping. The *Atlanta Daily World*, Atlanta's African American newspaper, was an early supporter of the market, publishing 12 recipes from the market during the 1930s and promoting readers to shop there and "Use Georgia Products and Help Georgia" (Shimabukuro 2015).

**Figure 4.43. 1924 Illustration of Atlanta Municipal Market (Left; Source: [gsu.edu/historyofourstreets](http://gsu.edu/historyofourstreets)), and Current View (Below; Photo Credit: NSA 2018).**





The success of the Municipal Market has ebbed and flowed during its history and faced closure in 1973 when Mayor Sam Massell voiced his opposition in supporting a renewed lease for the market, which has always been owned by the City. This prompted a grassroots effort to save the market and local banks put together a \$1,050,000 loan to keep its doors open. In 1996, coinciding with Atlanta hosting the Olympics, \$7 million in renovation funds became available to the market, and the work was completed in 1997.

Since then, the building was renamed the Sweet Auburn Curb Market and has seen a resurgence of popularity in recent years. The building retains much of its original and historic fabric and appears much as it did historically. The interior's wide-open warehouse-like space is virtually unchanged, providing adaptable space for the many vendors conducting business there. Because the building exterior and interior remain relatively intact, the Municipal Market appears to retain integrity.



Figure 4.44. South Elevation of Atlanta Municipal Market (above), and Rear Elevation (below) (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).



# Chapter 5.

## Assessment Results

The Sweet Auburn NHLD has lost 14 buildings that would have dated to the period of significance of 1865-1930. This represents a loss of 47% of contributing buildings within the district after the 1976 NHL designation. Sixteen buildings dating to the period of significance remain (Table 2). Ten buildings, with construction dates ranging between 1930 and 1970, are no longer extant. As discussed in Chapter 2, the nomination form did not identify all the contributing and non-contributing buildings in the district. It did specifically discuss the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, Big Bethel AME Church, Butler Street YMCA, Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium, Municipal Market, and the Herndon Building, and briefly mentioned Hanley's Bell Street Funeral Home. The remaining buildings were identified as "other barber shops, beauty parlors and cafes which taken together add much to the architectural texture of Sweet Auburn" (Gomez-Graves 1976).

Of the seven buildings listed above that the 1976 NHL designation form identifies, all are extant except for the Herndon Building. Two of these buildings, the Atlanta Life Insurance Company and Butler Street YMCA, have been vacant for several years and are at risk for deterioration and demolition by neglect if funding for maintenance and a use for these buildings is not identified by property owners. Additionally, although the Herndon Building is no longer extant, the building that was adjacent to it, located at 229 Auburn Avenue, the Atlanta Life Insurance Branch Office, remains. It has suffered severe deterioration and neglect, and is probably the building at greatest risk for imminent demolition within the district. The historically important Gold Dust Twins Soap advertisement, painted on its east elevation, is also at risk since it is a part of the building.

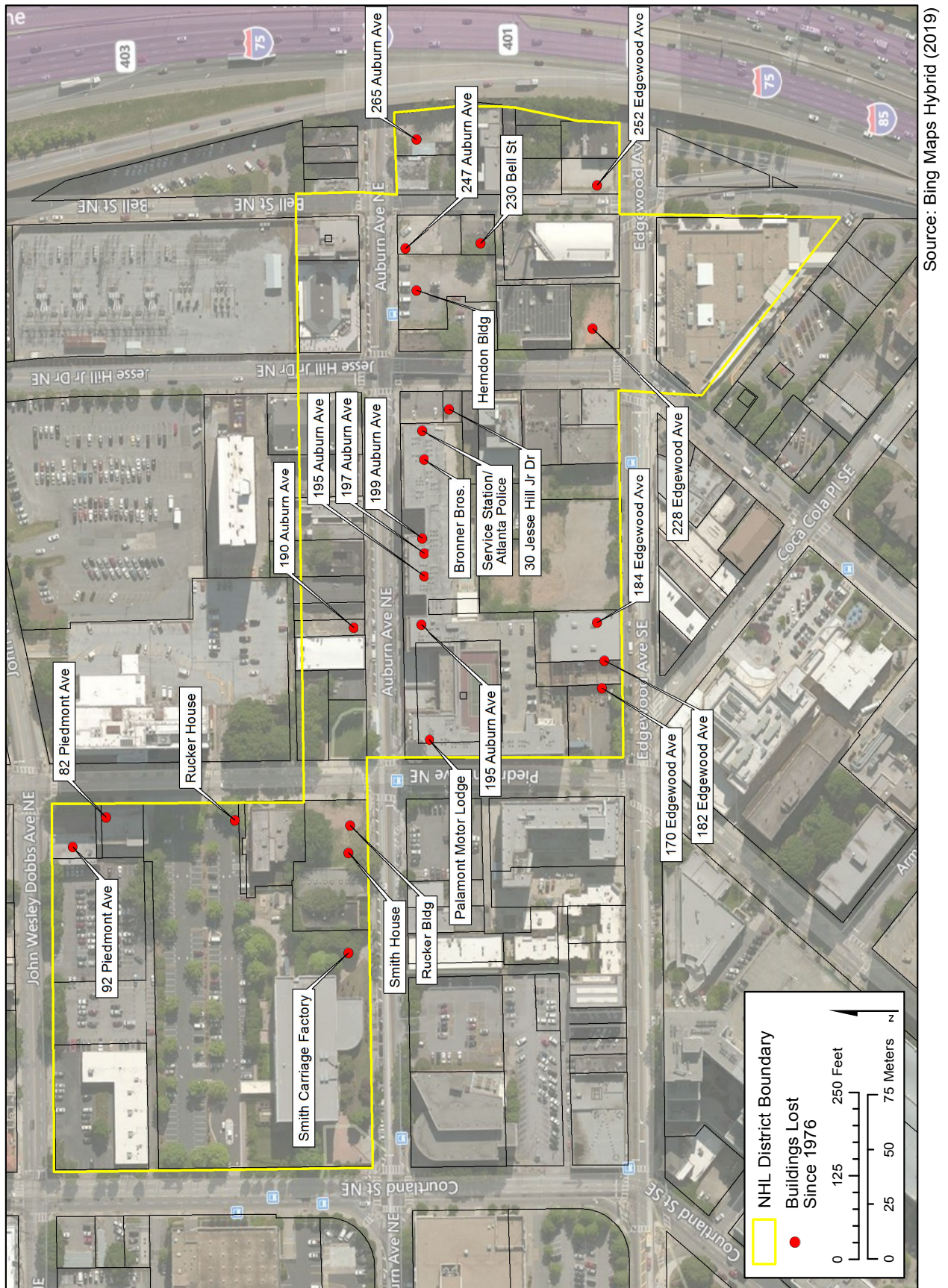
**Table 2. Buildings Lost Since 1976 NHL Designation.**

Contributing Buildings				
Non- Contributing Buildings				
Building Name	Address/Location	Build Date	Demolish Date	Notes
John M. Smith Carriage Factory/Atlanta Life Insurance warehouse	120, 122, 124 block Auburn Avenue	Circa 1881	Between Aug. 1975 and 1978	This building may not have been present in the district at the time of designation.
Rucker House	66 Piedmont Avenue	Circa 1870	1979	Demolished for new Atlanta Life Insurance building
John M. Smith House	154 Auburn Avenue	Circa 1870	1979	Demolished for new Atlanta Life Insurance building
Rucker Office Building	158-160 Auburn Avenue	1906-07	2001	Under maintained building hit by a car and collapsed



Building Name	Address/Location	Build Date	Demolish Date	Notes
Herndon Building	231-245 Auburn Avenue	1924	2008	Under maintained building demolished following 2008 tornado damage
Service Station/Atlanta City Police Station	247 Auburn Avenue	1924	Circa 2009	Demolished following tornado damage
N/A	190 Auburn Avenue	Circa 1913	Circa 1982	Last photographed in 1979 HABS photos
Bellevue Hotel/Kingsmen Motel/Palamont Motor Lodge	180 Auburn Avenue at Piedmont Avenue	1957	2006	Demolished for mixed-use development
N/A	191 Auburn Avenue	Circa 1940	Circa 1999-2002	Three storefront, one-story commercial building
Consolidated Mortgage Bldg.	195 Auburn Avenue	Circa 1950	Circa 1999-2002	
Afro-American Life Insurance Co.	197 Auburn Avenue	Circa 1960	Circa 1999-2002	
RT Plumbing	199 Auburn Avenue	Circa 1930	Circa 1999-2002	
Service Station	215 Auburn Avenue	Circa 1950	2006	Demolished for mixed-use development
Bronner Brothers	219 Auburn Avenue	Circa 1910	Circa 1993-1999	
Unknown	265 Auburn Avenue	Unknown but present in 1972 aerial	Circa 1988-1993	
Two-story hip-roof residence (Genie's Café in 1979)	30 Jesse Hill, Jr. Drive (Butler Street)	Circa 1930	Circa 1999-2002	
One-story four storefront brick commercial building	228 Edgewood Avenue	Circa 1930	Circa 2007-2009	
Unknown	252 Edgewood Avenue	Circa pre-1938	Circa 1993-1999	
Possible service station	170 Edgewood Avenue	Circa 1955-1960	Circa 1978-1988	
New Formalist style commercial building (former bank?)	82 Piedmont Avenue	1960	Circa 2013-2015	Demolished for new GSU construction
Three-story Commercial Building	92 Piedmont Avenue	1968	Circa 2013-2015	Demolished for new GSU construction
ACE Bar-B-Q Barn	230 Bell Street	1949	2017-2018	
GSU Sculpture Building/ Former Commercial Space	182 Edgewood Avenue	Circa 1930	2016	
GSU Sculpture Building/ Jack's Self Service/Dry Goods, Clothing Store	184 Edgewood Avenue	1930	2016	

**Figure 5.1. Map Showing Lost Buildings Since 1976.**





## Building Survey Results

The survey conducted for this assessment identified 16 extant buildings built within the period of significance of 1865-1930 that are considered contributing to the Sweet Auburn NHL. Although several buildings, because of vacancy and neglect, have varying levels of condition, as a whole, the district's remaining historic buildings continue to convey the sense of time and place of a small-scale historic commercial area dating from the 1910s to the 1960s.

From an NHL perspective, the district has some well-preserved contributing buildings. However, there are important changes the district has undergone over the last 40 years to consider when assessing its condition. They are:

- The construction of Renaissance Walk (now Dwell Apartments) on Auburn Avenue in 2008;
- The construction of 200 Edgewood Avenue in 2016;
- The construction of 92 Piedmont Avenue in 2016;
- The loss of almost half of the district's 1865-1930-era buildings since 1976;
- The remaining vacant parcels of land that disrupt the historic streetscape; and
- The continuing vacancy and deterioration of several important buildings.

The seven-story mixed-use Renaissance Walk development is the largest building in the district, encompassing nearly the entire length of the block of Auburn Avenue between Jesse Hill Jr. Drive and Piedmont Avenue. It is a larger scale than any of the remaining buildings in the district and its height dwarfs the opposing one and two-story commercial buildings on the north side of Auburn Avenue. This non-contributing building diminishes the integrity of the district's design and setting because of its mass, scale, and height. The building is located in the heart of the district, in view of Big Bethel Church, the Royal Peacock, Atlanta Life Insurance, and the Odd Fellows Building. This is a historically sensitive area because of the highly significant buildings along the Auburn Avenue corridor. The developers conceded their original plans and incorporated four of the existing low-scale historic buildings into the building. This helped preserve these buildings, and also integrated the larger building somewhat into the streetscape. However, this segment of Auburn Avenue has lost much of its historic character and ability to express its historic and aesthetic sense of a small-scale historic commercial area because of the size of the newer development.

The six-story apartment building located at 200 Edgewood Avenue, constructed in 2016, is located on the district's south boundary, near the Atlanta Municipal Market. In relation to the Renaissance Walk development, this building's scale and massing is not as large and is less intrusive to the neighboring buildings on Edgewood Avenue that are varied in size and scale. This portion of the district is not as historically sensitive as the Auburn Avenue corridor because there are simply very few contributing buildings from the Sweet Auburn NHL in this area. While this new building adds a large non-contributing resource to the district, its impact is lesser because of its scale and massing, as well as the less sensitive area of the district.

The building located at 92 Piedmont Avenue is an 11-story student housing mid-rise building called Piedmont Central. Constructed by GSU on the north side of the district in 2016, it is adjacent to the mid-rise Citizens Trust Bank building, constructed in 1969. Similar to the newer 200 Edgewood Avenue development, 92 Piedmont Avenue represents a large, non-contributing resource into the NHL district, but because it is not located within the more sensitive Auburn Avenue corridor with a greater density of contributing resources, it does not impose a significant visual effect to the district. Construction of 92 Piedmont Avenue resulted in the demolition of two 1960s era commercial buildings.



Figure 5.2. Map Showing Developments Constructed During the Last 15 Years.





Figure 5.3. Overviews of the Renaissance Walk Development on the South Side of Auburn Avenue (Photo Credits: NSA 2018).







**Figure 5.4.** Overviews of 200 Edgewood Development (Photo Credits: NSA 2018).



**Figure 5.5.** View of Newer GSU Construction at 92 Piedmont Avenue (Source: GSU).



**Figure 5.6.** Buildings Located at 82 and 92 Piedmont Avenue (Built 1960, and 1968, Respectively) demolished circa 2013 for construction of 92 Piedmont Avenue (Drummond and Kohr 2014).



The district has lost nearly half of its historic fabric over the last 40 years, resulting in a loss of integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The loss of these buildings impacts the streetscape and most of the lost buildings have not been replaced by newer infill, except for Renaissance Walk, leaving vacant lots, as well as opportunities for appropriately-scaled new construction.

Another significant change over these decades is that several important buildings have fell out of use and have remained vacant, leaving them vulnerable to demolition by neglect. Atlanta Life Insurance, the Butler Street YMCA and YMCA Boys' Branch, the Walden Building, Atlanta Life Insurance Branch office, and the commercial building located at 253-255 Auburn Avenue all fall within this category and the loss of these buildings could be detrimental to the district's NHL standing.

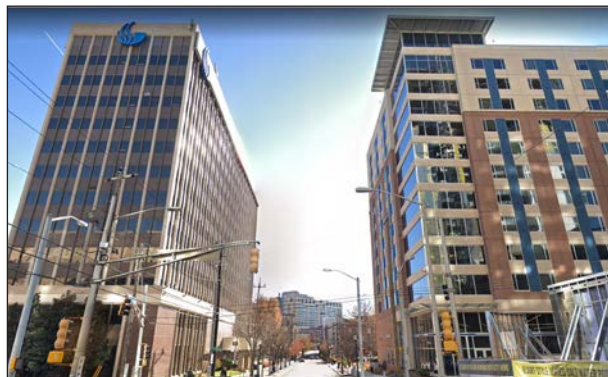
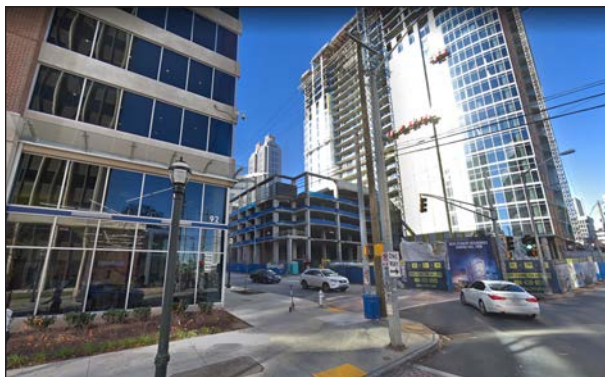
## Boundary Assessment

The boundary designated as the Sweet Auburn NHLD in 1976, while described in the nomination, was not fully explained. The lack of explanation for the boundary leaves many questions as to why it was originally drawn the way it was and it is important to note these questions while discussing the current state of the boundary areas. When assessing the buildings that are currently within and just outside the boundary for an NHL district, it is important to note any historic building losses on the boundary edges, any newer non-contributing infill on the boundary edges, and any encroaching development outside the boundary.

The condition of the boundary of the Sweet Auburn NHLD is discussed in individual segments below.

The north boundary along south side of John Wesley Dobbs Avenue between Courtland Street and Piedmont Avenue is in poor condition.

**Figure 5.7.** Overviews Along North Boundary: John Wesley Dobbs Avenue near Courtland Street (top two views, with First Congregational Church top right) and John Wesley Dobbs Avenue near Piedmont Avenue (bottom two views) (Photos Courtesy Google Street View, with the exception of the top right photo by NSA, 2018).





**Figure 5.8.** Overview Photograph Showing Boundary along Piedmont Avenue with Smooth Ashlar Masonic Lodge to the left (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).

- This area contains an 11-story GSU student housing building (92 Piedmont), constructed in 2016 and one circa 1960 commercial building, a one-story former automotive repair shop.
- It is not known why the boundary included this area, as there were circa 1968 buildings there at the time of designation that would not have been considered historic according to the 50-year guidance of the NRHP/NHL programs.
- It is also not known why the boundary would not have included the historically significant 1908 African American First Congregational Church at the northeast corner of Courtland Street and John Wesley Dobbs Avenue. It is, however, individually listed on the NRHP.
- The area to the immediate north of the boundary is facing increased GSU development, with additional student housing being constructed at the corner of Piedmont Avenue and John Wesley Dobbs Avenue.

**Figure 5.9.** Overview Photograph Showing North Side of Auburn Avenue (Photo Credit: NSA 2018).





The boundary line along the west side of Piedmont Avenue, running south from John Wesley Dobbs Avenue to Auburn Avenue is in poor condition.

- This side of the street is anchored by the Smooth Ashlar Masonic Lodge building, which is located mid-block.
- This side of the street has suffered the loss of the Rucker House and the Rucker Building.
- The non-contributing infill of 92 Piedmont Avenue is on this block as well.



**Figure 5.10.** Overview Photographs Showing Views along Bell Street Area Boundary. Top left: Looking North to Odd Fellows Building; Top right: Looking East toward I-85/75; Bottom left: Looking West toward Jesse Hill Jr. Drive; Bottom right: Looking Northeast toward Commercial Building just outside of Boundary (Photo Credits: NSA 2018).

The boundary line running west from Piedmont Avenue to Bell Street along the rear lot lines of buildings on the north side of Auburn Avenue is in good condition.

- This is the strongest section of the district as far as continuity and the retention of historic buildings, with the Royal Peacock, Big Bethel Church, and Odd Fellows Building.
- The mid-century-era Big Bethel Tower building and Citizens Trust Bank building are of a more suitable scale in relation to the NHL district than the more recent, larger-scale construction.



**Figure 5.11.** Overview Photographs Showing Views along Edgewood Avenue Area Boundary. Top left: Looking Northeast; Top right: Looking East; Bottom: Looking West from Municipal Market (Photo Credits: NSA 2018).

The Bell Street boundary area on the east end of the district is in fair condition.

- This includes the Odd Fellows Building, Hanley’s Bell Street Funeral Home, and 253-255 Auburn Avenue.
- The boundary has suffered the loss of the Atlanta Police Station/former service station and the nearby Herndon Building.
- The commercial buildings located on the northwest corner of Bell Street and Auburn Avenue are of a more appropriate scale of development that is consistent with the smaller-scale of the NHL district.





**Figure 5.12.** Overview Photographs Showing Views along Courtland Street Area of Boundary. Top left: Looking East; Top Right: Looking East toward Atlanta Life Insurance Headquarters; Bottom Left: Looking Southeast toward Auburn Avenue Research Library; Bottom Right: Looking East along Auburn Avenue (Photo Credits: NSA 2018).

The Edgewood Avenue boundary between Interstate 85/75 and Piedmont Avenue is in fair condition.

- There are four historic commercial buildings and the Atlanta Municipal Market that continue to maintain this boundary in fair condition.
- The new non-contributing 200 Edgewood Avenue was built along this boundary in 2016.
- It is not known why the north side of Edgewood Avenue was included in the district and why the commercial buildings on the south side, at Coca Cola Place, were not. Future research could evaluate any potential associations these buildings may have to the district.
- The Piedmont Avenue and north side of Auburn Avenue boundary between Courtland Street and Piedmont Avenue is in poor condition.
- This boundary area has lost the Rucker Building, the Smith House, and the Palamont Motor Lodge.

- The Renaissance Walk development has introduced a large non-contributing building in this area that is a significant change in historic character for the area.
- The mid-century Citizen Trust Bank Building and the historic buildings on the south side of Auburn Avenue (including the Atlanta Daily World building) are appropriately scaled development that is compatible with the NHL district.
- The boundary along Courtland Street between Auburn Avenue and John Wesley Dobbs is in fair condition.
- It is not clear why the boundary included the whole block between Auburn Avenue and Courtland Street as there were very few, if any, buildings that would have been 50 years of age at the time on the northern and western sides of the block.
- The Atlanta Life Insurance Building and Auburn Avenue Research Library are appropriately-scaled development that is compatible with the NHL district.

In summary, the existing district boundary faces encroaching development on its northern and western edges. The NHL nomination did not provide a justification for the current boundary. An update to the NHL nomination would require research to determine if the current areas of significance and period of significance should be revised. A boundary would then be selected based on the district's significance and integrity.



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# Chapter 6.

## Challenges to the Sweet Auburn NHLD and Community Input

From a National Historic Landmark perspective, what is viewed as a threat to the integrity of a district is one that would cause the loss of its integrity of design, materials, workmanship, setting, location, feeling, and association. In examining the past 40 years of the district, the Sweet Auburn NHLD has suffered the loss of several of its contributing buildings because of neglect and to make way for new development. These continue to be threats to the district's preservation, as development pressures in the downtown area continue to rise.

### Encroaching Development

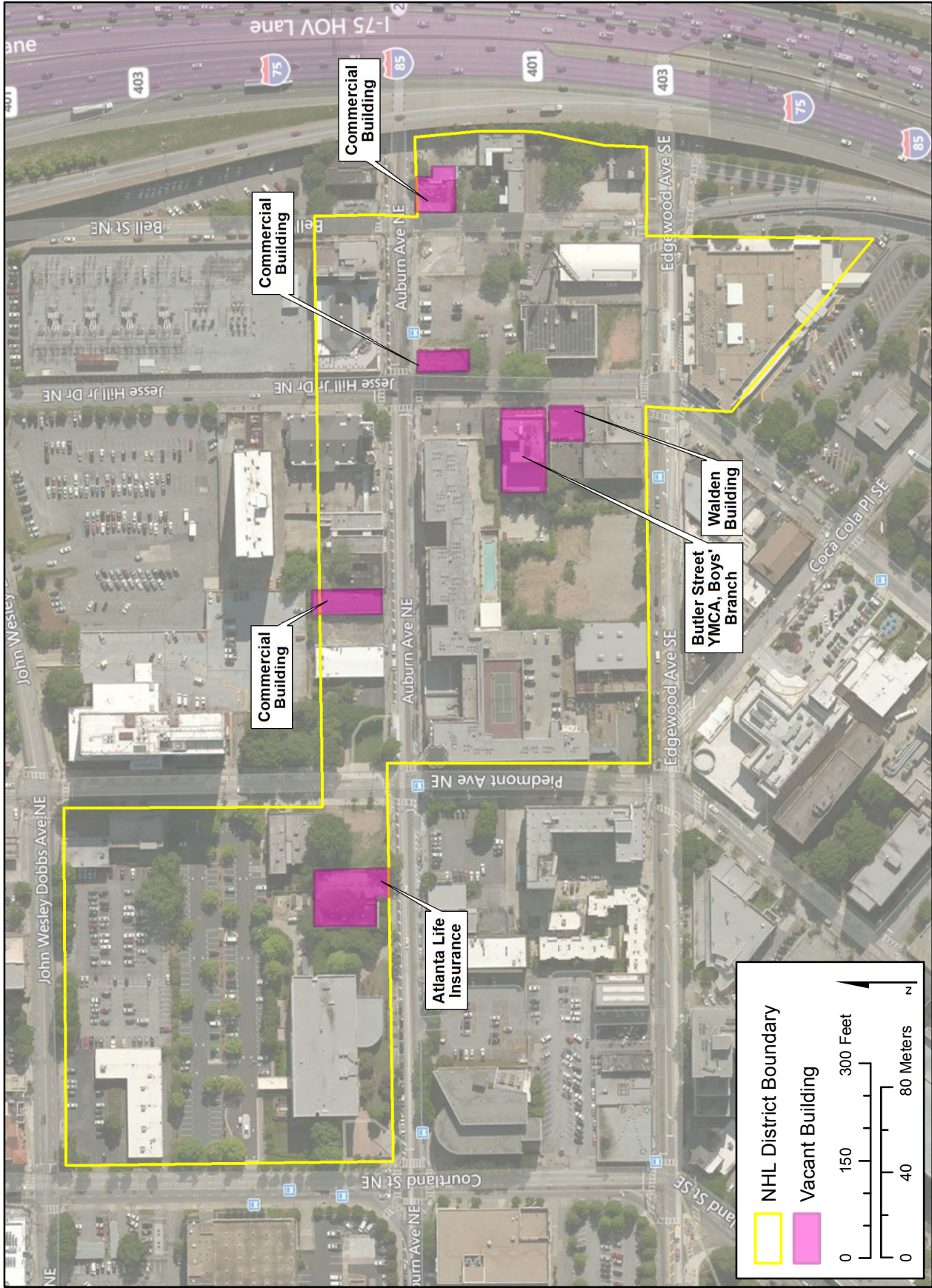
New construction within and on the periphery of the district has occurred in recent years and will continue as large institutional property owners look for new development opportunities. GSU is the largest of these property owners and as the university looks to expand its campus, the district will continue to feel its presence in both positive and more concerning ways. GSU has elected to adaptively reuse three of the buildings in the district in recent years, including the Smooth Ashlar Masonic Lodge, the historic commercial building at 246 Edgewood Avenue, and the newer Atlanta Life Insurance Building. It also has done the same with the Citizens Trust Bank, just outside the district. This appears to have been beneficial for the district as the buildings have a use and are being preserved. However, the university, as part of the Georgia Board of Regents, is not subject to local zoning ordinances because GSU property is state-owned property. The State of Georgia's Historic Preservation Act of 1980 preempts any local zoning laws (O.C.G.A. Part 1-3-8). This means GSU has the freedom to change and demolish buildings without having to adhere to the local historic district codes and review process.

Approximately five GSU student housing and non-GSU developments that are marketed as student housing have been constructed within and on the periphery of the district boundary within the last five years. These are not small developments- they range from six to 12 stories in heights with some occupying the majority of a city block. As discussed in the assessment of the survey in Chapter 5, these developments result in a range of impacts to the integrity of the district. The Sweet Auburn NHLD is located within a densely built urban environment where larger and taller developments are common. However, the district is a small-scale commercial area that differs in both feeling and character from the neighboring downtown. The Renaissance Walk development (located on another large property-owning institution in the district, Big Bethel AME Church) on the south side of Auburn Avenue within the district is an example of how an out-of-scale development can impact the district's historic character and integrity.

The Sweet Auburn NHLD has several vacant surface lots that could be developed in the future, making the need for compatible design an imperative for the future of the district.



Figure 6.1. Map Showing Vacant Buildings



Source: Bing Maps Hybrid (2019)

## Vacant Buildings

A major problem within the district boundary includes the persistence of vacant and neglected buildings, several of which are highly important to the history of the Sweet Auburn, the greater Atlanta area, and the nation. The original Atlanta Life Insurance Company Building and Annex and the Butler Street YMCA and Boys' Branch are among these vacant buildings. The past has not proven kind to the district's vacant buildings, which, without a use, run into a deteriorated state making them vulnerable to demolition and natural disasters. The Rucker Building and Herndon Building are two examples of historically significant buildings within the district left vacant that resulted in demolition. One such prominent building in the district, the Odd Fellows Building, has successfully been rehabilitated with utilized commercial spaces and is a remarkable asset to the district. It would be considered detrimental to the health and integrity of the district from a NHL perspective if the Atlanta Life Insurance or Butler Street YMCA were lost; it would be detrimental to the city as a whole to lose these iconic buildings, which were specifically identified in the Sweet Auburn NHL nomination.

## Incompatible Construction

Infill construction for the Sweet Auburn NHL is regulated through the City of Atlanta Zoning Code for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Landmark District. The district lies in the Auburn Commercial Subarea 4 portion of the City's landmark district. The zoning code for the district has certain design requirements that need to be met before new construction is approved. The quality of new design relies on the strength of the city's zoning process and one of the largest landowners in the area, GSU, is not subject to local ordinance. The concern of new construction impacting the district is the danger of the district's integrity be diminished by buildings that are not compatible in scale and design with the historic buildings.

The strength of the city's design review process lies in its commission and its interpretation of the code, as well as the public's involvement in the process. Concerned citizens can have a voice in the process and make their opinions known about proposed developments. Additionally, Sweet Auburn Works and the National Trust for Historic Preservation have revised design guidelines for the district that detail appropriate and inappropriate design for both the rehabilitation of existing properties as well as new construction. The city could consider adopting these design guidelines to strengthen and assist in the review process (National Main Street Center and Sweet Auburn Works 2017:33).

## Weak Boundary Areas

The boundary assessment detailed in Chapter 5 concluded that some boundary areas have poor integrity. The boundaries have been eroded by demolition and new construction both within and on the periphery of the boundary and there is little historic fabric remaining in these areas to substantiate the boundary. The strength of the district lies in its core, Auburn Avenue. The boundary assessment concluded that there is a need for a reevaluation of the district's period of significance as well as a reevaluation of the boundary based on the district's historic significance.

## Archaeology

In addition to the threat large-scale development poses to the district's integrity, the action of constructing new buildings in the district poses an additional, less tangible threat to its potential to yield history. With no archaeological ordinances in place, Atlanta's historic resources preserved underground are continually lost when the earth is turned and altered as part of new construction activities. This is a significant threat within the Sweet Auburn NHL, as one of the nation's most significant historic African American developments. Much can be gleaned from what remains in situ, however, it is extremely rare for formal archaeological efforts to ever be performed.



Figure 6.2. Views of vacant properties.



## Stakeholder and Community Input

The stakeholders input for the development of this report also cited a concern for the lack of interest and appreciation for the district and a worry that gentrification of the district's businesses, which have always been historically black-owned, will be detrimental to the preservation of the district. Other concerns voiced from the stakeholders included:

- Lack of civic engagement, particularly in the city's design review process;
- Outdated documentation leaves out buildings that have achieved significance since the 1976 designation;
- The need for the city to begin funding the mothballing of vacant buildings;
- GSU's needs for expansion and the fact the Board of Regents is not subject to the local ordinance. The State of Georgia's Historic Preservation Act of 1980 preempts any local zoning laws (O.C.G.A. Part 1-3-8).;
- The Atlanta Beltline pedestrian path has been a boon for the area, but it has also created elevated real estate values, making the area harder for the longtime businesses to afford to have storefronts.

The community also voiced their concerns for the district, several sharing the sentiments of the stakeholders. These concerns included:

- The district boundary does not include the actual and traditional Sweet Auburn area;
- Lack of financial resources and philanthropic investment;
- Lack of strategic and coordinated vision by large property owners in district;
- Lack of destinations within the district to make it appealing to consumers;
- Lack of big picture perspective for the area as opposed to the hyperintense focus of the city on reviving the Gulch area of downtown;
- Lack of knowledge and incentives for developing with an appreciation for the historical significance of the area;
- Lack of connection between district and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center to bring its visitors (over 700,000 annually) into the district to shop and eat (Pousner 2018);
- Lack of involvement and assistance from elected officials;
- Lack of knowledge of the history of the area;
- Little capacity by local organizations to apply and manage a project grant;
- Historic preservation as an obstacle for investments and progress;
- Increasing deterioration of the buildings;
- Loss of valuable buildings and sites;
- Lack of appreciation for historic African American sites because of institutionalized racism;



- Lack of signage and promotion of area;
- Increasing homelessness and drug use; and
- Security and safety are major concerns.

While the Sweet Auburn NHLD has endured a number of events that have contributed to a diminishment of its integrity, and faces a number of continuing threats to its NHL status, there are positives that should be noted as well. Both the stakeholders and community voiced these positives as:

- Renovation of Bethel Towers behind Big Bethel AME Church- just outside the district boundary;
- Existence of Sweet Auburn Works as an advocacy liaison for the community;
- Adaptive reuse of the Atlanta Daily World Building – just outside the district boundary;
- The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center and its more than 700,000 annual visitors (Pousner 2018);
- Big Bethel AME Church serving as an anchor in the community;
- Renewed interest in business development in area;
- The Eastside Tax Allocation District;
- Area's history and authenticity;
- Location of district as a gateway to the city;
- Sweet Auburn Curb Market (Municipal Market);
- The new streetcar; and
- The expansion of GSU providing an increased customer base for the area and increasing student presence in area.

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# Chapter 7.

## Conclusion

The objective of this study was the development of a narrative that addresses all seven aspects of integrity for the Sweet Auburn NHLD using the condition of the district when it was designated as its baseline for analysis. For the evaluation of setting, the team was tasked with not only addressing the setting within the Sweet Auburn NHLD, but also addressing properties adjacent to the district's boundary. The team identified character-defining features and identified 16 extant contributing buildings dating from the 1865-1930 period of significance identified in the Sweet Auburn NHLD designation. Per the scope, the primary task of this Integrity and Condition Assessment report was to provide the NPS with the data and analysis necessary for the NPS to assign a condition category for the district.

Through the development of the administrative history of the district's formation and changes to the district over the last 40 years, and informed by the building survey and input from the stakeholders and public, five specific areas were identified that reflect the threats facing the future health of the Sweet Auburn NHLD. These include encroaching development, vacant properties and buildings, incompatible construction, weak boundary areas, and lack of a local archaeology ordinance. The district has lost nearly half of its contributing buildings and three of its prominent buildings remain vacant and in danger of demolition by neglect. The district has seen a loss of integrity since its designation in 1976 and is in danger of losing additional integrity in the near future if the impending threats are not addressed. The Sweet Auburn NHLD holds national significance as a place of historic African American institutional and community buildings. It represents the achievements of African American leaders of the city, state, and nation and was an important part of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s formative years. Its history represents a significant part of our shared past and serves to inform future generations of the stories of segregation, entrepreneurship, the civil rights movement, and organizations that strengthened the community and provided leadership and support throughout its history. It can only continue doing so if what remains is preserved and its integrity can be maintained.



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Appendix A.  
NHL Form, 1976





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Sweet Auburn Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Sweet Auburn Historic District

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Along Auburn Avenue

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Georgia

— VICINITY OF

CODE  
13COUNTY  
FultonCODE  
121**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☒ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☒ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☒ ENTERTAINMENT☒ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Multiple Ownership

STREET &amp; NUMBER

See Continuation Sheet

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registry of Deeds; Fulton County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Pryor Street

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Survey of Historic Structures, Sites and Districts

DATE

November, 1973

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Atlanta Urban Design Commission

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia



## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Sweet Auburn was the center of a thriving black economy and base of a rising black middle class. The Auburn Avenue of the late 19th and early 20th centuries no longer exists. There does exist, however, numerous enterprises which date to this early period. Moreover, there remains the buildings in which much of the total life of all Afro-Atlantans, business and social, took place.

Auburn Avenue has no one particular architectural style as the present district is composed of buildings ranging in date of construction from the 1890s to the 1940s. Likewise, modern intrusions, including the construction of modern thoroughfare I-85 has severed the Avenue and made the total extent of the Avenue as one historic district impossible. There does exist on the west side of I-85/75 substantial historical remains with a good degree of integrity. These buildings stretch along a four block space of Auburn Avenue and when taken together give an effective picture of this once thriving business sector. This district does not, however, reflect the total picture of Auburn Avenue as important residential buildings are located on the east side of I-85/75. On this east side is also located the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places which includes the birthplace, Ebenezer Baptist Church and the Center for Social Change. But the inclusion of such important historical structures is impractical because of its disjuncture from the main center of economic buildings and its many intrusive elements.

#### Atlanta Life Insurance Company 148 Auburn Avenue

Located on Auburn Avenue is the second largest black insurance company in the United States, the Atlanta Life Insurance Company. Founded by Alonzo F. Herndon, a former slave of Walton County, Georgia, the Atlanta Life Insurance Company is a conglomerate of nine companies amalgamated in 1905. The company steadily grew so that by 1910, there were more than 42 branch offices. Herndon grew in reputation and finances to become one of the richest "Negroes" in the country. It is important to note that with financial success the business has remained on Auburn Avenue. This location may change in the near future as the company is thinking of relocating.

The Atlanta Life Insurance Company is a complex of buildings. The central building faces Auburn Avenue and has a Beaux-Arts classical facade. The structure was originally constructed as a YMCA. This new facade was added in 1927. An additional wing in similar style was added in the 1930s. This facade is without question one of the outstanding visual points of the district because of its highly stylized version of the corinthian order used to support the entablature. The double entrance doors of the first floor are topped with an ornate pediment.

Located also on this block are Rucker Building, the Atlanta Daily World office, the Smith House and Carriage Factory.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Afro-American History	

SPECIFIC DATES **1865-1930**

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The phenomenal growth of black enterprise in the post Civil War period is typified by the "Sweet Auburn Historic District." Once a sprawling expanse of one mile the district has been altered by the construction of a modern interstate highway as well as intrusive buildings of recent construction. There remains on the west side of I-85 outstanding examples of the institutional buildings of the district during the early 20th century.

The name Sweet Auburn was coined by John Wesley Dobbs and applies to Auburn Avenue which was called the "richest Negro street in the world." Like other black communities throughout the country, Sweet Auburn's success was intricately tied to the residential pattern forced on blacks by the rise of Jim Crow. The Sweet Auburn Historic District is a good example of the results of segregation policies as well as a prime case pointing out the merits of black entrepreneurs.

Though the success of Sweet Auburn in recent years has been diminished, the remnants of past days are clear along the streets of the Sweet Auburn Historic District.

### History

In the post Civil War period blacks began a surge into the economic circles of commerce. Though many of these businesses were small there rose some very good examples of black entrepreneur expertise. The enterprises of Madame C. J. Walker, Asa Spaulding and Robert Abbott are but a few examples of this activity. However the rise of Jim Crow in the south led to the separation of communities thus giving rise to entire districts of black shops and businesses. Outstanding among such districts is "Sweet Auburn Historic District" in Atlanta. Without question this vast stretch originally one mile in length gained the reputation of "the richest Negro street in the world." The rise of Sweet Auburn is intricately tied to the history of the nation and imparticular to the part that the south has played in that history.

Sweet Auburn's history goes back to the end of the Civil War. Originally known as Wheat Street, the name was changed in 1893 to Auburn Avenue. During this period Wheat Street had no racial barriers and blacks and whites lived as neighbors. At this time also the majority of black businesses were located in what is now downtown Atlanta and along Decatur Street. In the 1890s, however, this pattern began to change.



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## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA 19

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

UTM REFERENCES

A | 1, 6 | 74, 2 | 90, 0 | 3, 7 | 3, 7 | 24, 0  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
C | 1, 6 | 74, 2 | 33, 0 | 3, 7 | 3, 7 | 90, 0

B | 1, 6 | 74, 2 | 75, 0 | 3, 7 | 3, 7 | 72, 0  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
D | 1, 6 | 74, 2 | 30, 0 | 3, 7 | 3, 8 | 20, 0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Lynne Gomez-Graves, Historical Projects Director

ORGANIZATION

Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

1420 N Street, Northwest

TELEPHONE

(202) 462-2519

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D. C.

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

65

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn  
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE One

Owner of Property

Contact: Bob Jackson  
Inner City Development Corporation  
55 Marietta Street  
Atlanta, Georgia

Dr. Elizabeth Lyons  
Preservation Department  
Department of Natural Resources  
Atlanta, Georgia

Atlanta Life Insurance Company  
Atlanta Life Insurance Company  
148 Auburn Avenue  
Atlanta, Georgia

Big Bethel AME Church  
Big Bethel AME Church  
Auburn Avenue  
Atlanta, Georgia

Butler Street YMCA  
Young Mens Christian Association  
22 Butler Street  
Atlanta, Georgia

Odd Fellows Building & Auditorium  
New Era Missionary Baptist Association

Municipal Market  
Mayor  
City Hall  
Atlanta, Georgia

Herndon Building  
Rose Martin  
3049 Mission Ridge Court  
Atlanta, Georgia (436-9235)



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CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn  
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE Two

Big Bethel AME Church  
Corner of Butler Street and Auburn Avenue

The Church throughout the black experience has played a very important leadership role both secular and sacred. Big Bethel has since its founding in 1865 been an important force in the development of Atlanta's black community. Not only has it provided spiritual leadership to its members but it has also fostered the development of diverse social, educational and economic institutions of great significance to that community. This church remains a source of leadership in this community.

Big Bethel was first constructed in 1891. It is a stone building fashioned of rough hewn granite. Built in Romanesque Revival form the church has been a prominent landmark on Auburn Avenue. There are two assymetrically balanced towers on the south facade topped with steeple and belfrey steps rise to an arched central recessed entrance. The towers and interior of Big Bethel date from 1924, the time of the church's rebuilding after a fire. However, the basic structure which dates to 1891 is clearly discernable.

Butler Street YMCA  
22 Butler Street

Butler Street YMCA is historically one of the most significant buildings of the Sweet Auburn Historic District. At this site was located the central recreational facility for the young black men of this community and all of Atlanta. Organized on May 16, 1920 the YMCA became more than a recreational facility it was used as a regular meeting place for Atlanta's many black fraternal, civic and political organizations. Many campaigns had their origin in this building. In the conference rooms of Butler Street YMCA according to John Calhoun, a local civic leader, many events were held for public participation.

In 1942, the Hungry Club was organized here. (For more than 30 years this organization sponsored lectures by persons of local, national and international fame.)

The Butler Street YMCA is a five story brick building in Georgian Revival style. The building was constructed by Hamilton and Son, a local contractor. The second level contains the conference rooms and meeting facilities used by local organizations. The first floor contains YMCA offices as well as large room for billiards, ping-pong and other games. The first floor is elevated and double stairways lead from either side up to a landing. The architects for the building were Heintz, Reid and Adler of Atlanta.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn  
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

**Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium  
250 Auburn Ave.**

One of the most architecturally outstanding buildings of the business structures along Auburn Avenue is the Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium. This structure was the brain-child of Benjamin J. Davis, editor of the Atlanta Independent. William A. Edwards, a distinguished white architect of the south in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, designed the building. It was constructed in 1912-1913 by Robert E. Pharrow. At the time of the construction this building was local headquarters of the Atlanta Chapter of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows. The Odd Fellows building was an overwhelmingly large building for blacks to construct. This building is one of the major black entrepreneurial centers in America. The Odd Fellows is presently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. At the time of construction in 1912, many shops were located in the building. One of these, Yates and Milton Drugstore, remains an outstanding business today with shops located throughout the city.

This six-story brick building with unique terre-cotta figure has a two story section on its east side. At one time this six-story section contained stores and shops, forty-two offices and six lodge rooms in addition a large auditorium. Moreover, a real sense of pride was demonstrated in the terre-cotta figureheads on the building with their African features. These figures are located on opposite sides of the entrance and are clearly visible to the passerby or visitor. The recessed entrance portico has an arch above it. The first level of the building is fashioned of stone while the upper levels are brick. In addition this six-story building was topped with an exquisite roof garden. The building presently houses several small businesses and a community center.

**Herndon Building  
251 Auburn Avenue**

Situated just opposite the Odd Fellows Building, the Herndon Building is one of the outstanding examples of a multiple use building of the Sweet Auburn Historic District. The structure was named after its builder Alonzo F. Herndon. The Herndon Building has been used as the home of the Atlanta Urban League up to 1964. It also provided space for the Atlanta School of Social Work, incorporated in 1925 and now a part of the Atlanta University. This building was a major source of office space for black businesses in Atlanta and until the construction of other office space in particular the Citizens Trust Building made on a large impression in the economics of Sweet Auburn.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn  
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE Four

The Herndon Building is a three-story brick structure. The building is easily recognized by the large "H" located on the front facade of the building. L shaped in plan, the building has a central entrance. This entrance is framed with leaded glass over the low entrance-way. Though a typical office building of the period, the Herdon building becomes unique because of its interior fashioned of salvaged wood.

**Municipal Market**  
Between Bell and Butler Streets at 209 Edgewood

The Municipal Market brings another dimension to the Sweet Auburn Historic District. This building was located on Edgewood Avenue, a structure which was traditionally composed of all white businesses and where black entrepreneurs of Auburn Avenue never ventured to open shops. However, the Municipal Market acted as a common marketplace for the two communities. Today the market remains a source of fresh vegetables, poultry, fruit and meat and is one of the few remaining city owned markets in the country.

The Municipal Market was built in the 1920s by the architect A. Ten Eyck. Constructed of brick the building is two stories in height. At the time of construction there were two towered corner elements which flanked the one-story recessed entrance. The towers were removed as part of the renovation and rehabilitation of the building. Likewise, the addition of shed type brick sections between the end bays of the building has slightly altered its appearance. On the interior the market is very much the same as when constructed. There are numerous individual stalls located throughout. This facility has the capacity of becoming a major landmark attraction of Atlanta.

These buildings named as the most outstanding structures within the boundaries of the Sweet Auburn Historic District are not all the important sites. There are a number of one and two story shops along Auburn Avenue, Bell and Butler Streets that add to the total complexion of the district. One of these type buildings is the Healy Funeral Home on Bell Street built during the 1890s as a lodge building. The structure today remains an important part of the community. Likewise there are other barber shops, beauty parlors and cafes which taken together add much to the architectural texture of Sweet Auburn.

With the passage of time, many of the buildings that could have been added to the historic district have fallen into such disrepair, their inclusion is impossible. This condition is presently being combated by the Inner City Development Corporation, which is trying to revitalize the economic interest in the east side of Atlanta and in the Sweet Auburn Historic District.



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CONTINUATION SHEET      Sweet Auburn  
                                 Historic District      ITEM NUMBER    7      PAGE    Five

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Much of the material for completion of the description of the Sweet Auburn Historic District was provided by Dr. Elizabeth Lyons in the study 500.03 Preservation Plan: Sweet Auburn Project prepared by Dr. Gloria Blackwell, Dr. Elizabeth Lyons and Dr. C. A. Bacote, n.p. - August 1975.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn  
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE Two

As Auburn Avenue began to be developed into a commercial zone, black businesses began a steady flow into the district. Concurrent with this influx of blacks, there was a withdrawal of whites and white businesses to other parts of town -- particularly to Edgewood Avenue. Between the late 1890s and early 1920s the business district along Auburn Avenue rapidly increased. On the other hand, black businesses in the central business district steadily declined. By 1930, a concentrated variety of black professionals could be found in Sweet Auburn. There were only fourteen (14) black businesses left in central Atlanta and no professionals. The years between 1890 and 1930 parallel the assurgence of segregation; and also indicate the rise of Sweet Auburn as "the major center of black entrepreneurial and social activity within a large residential community." Coinage of the term John Wesley Dobbs was perhaps taken from the Oliver Goldsmith poem "The Deserted Village." Though the poem was one of lament, Dobbs lauded the success of Auburn Avenue and praised the triumphs of successful black businesses recognizing that it was the money invested in Auburn Avenue that made it "sweet." Of particular importance is the fact that while Georgia led the nation in lynchings between 1889 and 1918 with more than 386 reported blacks were making significant inroads in the economic life of Atlanta.

The steady growth in the black population of the city clearly establishes the spirit of uplift which was present. Schools were opened in the Reconstruction period (Bethel Church being a first location for a black school in Atlanta) and the climate was one of confidence and determination.

With the rise of segregation and the general acceptance of "seperate but equal" as indicated in the Plessy vs. Ferguson Supreme Court decision of 1896, the base of existence was laid for such streets as Sweet Auburn. It is also interesting to note that Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Compromise Speech was received to cheering crowds at Piedmont Park. The speech marks the surge of Atlanta's blacks to Auburn Avenue.

The rise of local black newspapers played an important part in setting the climate of opinion of black Atlanta. H. A. Hagler, a local printer, opened the People's Advocate in 1891. Though the paper was relatively short-lived folding in 1896, it laid the foundation for other papers in Atlanta. Hagler was instrumental in the organization of the Negro Press Association of Georgia. It was reported that " . . . Mr. Hagler runs the best paper in Georgia, the only Negro job office in Atlanta and the largest Negro bookstore in the South."

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CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn  
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE Three

Though many of these original buildings are long gone - the Atlanta Fire of 1917 leveled much of the district " - there does remain lasting symbols of these businesses and in the buildings of the Sweet Auburn Historic District."

One of the outstanding figures in Sweet Auburn history is Alonzo F. Herndon. Born a slave, Herndon founded the Atlanta Life Insurance Company by uniting nine (9) black insurance societies. Operating a number of other enterprises, Herndon's wealth increased to make him one of the richest blacks in Atlanta. The Atlanta Life Insurance Company served blacks who were refused coverage by white companies. Herndon's monies were placed back into Sweet Auburn. His beaux-arts classical facade on his Atlanta Life Insurance building, gives testimony to his concern for beautifying Sweet Auburn. In addition, as a good businessman, he constructed the Herndon Office building. The violent riots of 1906 had indicated the need to build within the black community. In the riots wake there was a surge of construction.

The first building constructed after the riots was the Henry Rucker building. However, churches were to play an important role in the leadership of the community. In 1911 Henry Perry, a Texas native, founded the Standard Life Insurance Company in Big Bethel AME Church. Out of this endeavor was to come the Citizens Trust Company founded in 1921. For 50 years this business was also located on Auburn Avenue. Walter White, an Atlanta native and resident of Auburn Avenue Historic District was employed with Standard Life. White was instrumental in founding the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He was later to become the Field Secretary of that organization.

With the rise of businesses and social consciousness came rise in social activity. The local YMCA had been founded in the basement of Wheat Street Baptist Church. The construction of the Butler Street YMCA at a cost of \$100,000 gave a source of recreation and guidance for Atlanta's black youth under segregation. Moreover, the "Y" was a major meeting place for the adults of the city. The Butler Street YMCA grew in respect and in later years became one "of the city's most venerated institutions."

Likewise local fraternal organizations joined in the expansion and development of Auburn Avenue. The Odd Fellows Building constructed in 1912 provided the community with facilities for concerts and theatre. The Royal Theatre of the Auditorium building was opened in 1914. In comparison to the city's auditorium, this structure was small, seating



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CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn  
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE Four

only about 1,300 on both the main floor and gallery floor. This facility opened to the black community a variety of talents including the Black Patti Company, Bessie Smith, the Rabbit Foot Show and Ma Rainey.

The Atlanta Fire of 1917 began a new trend in Auburn Avenue. Many of the older structures of the district were destroyed consequently during the rebuilding the character changed. Likewise the Zoning Ordinance of 1922, later declared unconstitutional, greatly altered "Sweet Auburn." After the 1930s, the development of Atlanta's west side became a central focus for blacks. Sweet Auburn continued to thrive as the center of black business and social life. However, as the west side of Atlanta grew, Sweet Auburn began to decline.

Population changes are reflected in land use. Former property used as residential property has now been supplanted by the Martin Luther King Center for Social Change. For this reason the district only encompasses the business area on the east of I-85/75.

The success of Sweet Auburn served as an example for the rise of other black business sectors. It overwhelmingly exemplifies the successes all over the south of black entrepreneurs who used segregation as a tool for the cohesion of the black community.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn  
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE Two

Lyon, Elizabeth A., Blackwell, Gloria and Bacote, Clarence E. Sweet Auburn History - Culture Study for Sweet Auburn Urban Design Project, NEA City Options Project, City of Atlanta, 1975.

Porter, Michael L. "Black Atlanta: An Interdisciplinary Study of Blacks on the East Side of Atlanta, 1890-1930." Emory University, 1974.

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Sweet Auburn  
Historic District

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE two

Beginning at the intersection of Houston and Courtland Streets, proceed in a southerly direction along the east curb of Courtland Street to a point of intersection with Auburn Avenue, then east along the ~~south~~ north curb of Auburn Avenue to a point of intersection with Piedmont Street, then south along the east curb of Piedmont Street to a point of intersection with Edgewood Avenue, then east along the north curb of Edgewood Avenue to a point of intersection with Butler Street, then proceed across Edgewood Avenue continuing along the northeast curb of Boaz Street to a point of intersection with Bell Street, then north along the west curb of Bell Street to a point of intersection with Edgewood Avenue, then east along the ~~west~~ north curb of Edgewood Avenue to a point of intersection with the west right-of-way of I-85, then north along said right-of-way to a point of intersection with Auburn Avenue, then west along the south curb of Auburn Avenue to a point of intersection with Bell Street, then north following the east curb of Bell Street approximately 80 feet past the north curb, then east, excluding a city power facility, continuing along the south side of Brooks Alley to a point of intersection with the west curb of Piedmont Street, then north along the west curb of Piedmont Street to a point of intersection with Houston Street, then west along the south curb to the point of beginning.

Curb lines are used to indicate that entire blocks are included in the Historic District boundaries. In cases where boundaries follow other lines, they are indicated in the boundary description.





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**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Sweet Auburn Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Sweet Auburn Historic District

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

\_\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

COUNTY

Fulton

**3 PHOTO REFERENCE**

PHOTO CREDIT

Preservation Department

DATE OF PHOTO 1976

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

**4 IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

Municipal Market, north elevation, looking southwest.





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**4 IDENTIFICATION**

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PHOTO NO.

View of Auburn Ave., looking east.



JESUS SAVES

WELCOME TO

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PHOTO CREDIT

Preservation Department

DATE OF PHOTO 1976

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**4 IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

Big Bethel Church, looking nottheast





Sweet Auburn Historic District (Odd Fellows Building) Atlanta, Georgia Preservation Dept., Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources, 1976

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Preservation Department

DATE OF PHOTO 1976

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

**4 IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium, south elevation, looking east.



Sweet Auburn Historic District (Herndon Bldg.) Atlanta  
Georgia      Preservation Dept., Georgia Dept. of Natural  
Resources, 1976



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PHOTO CREDIT

Preservation Department

DATE OF PHOTO

1976

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**4 IDENTIFICATION**

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PHOTO NO.

Herndon Building, east and north elevations, looking southwest.



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Georgia

COUNTY

Fulton

**3 PHOTO REFERENCE**

PHOTO CREDIT

Preservation Department

DATE OF PHOTO 1976

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

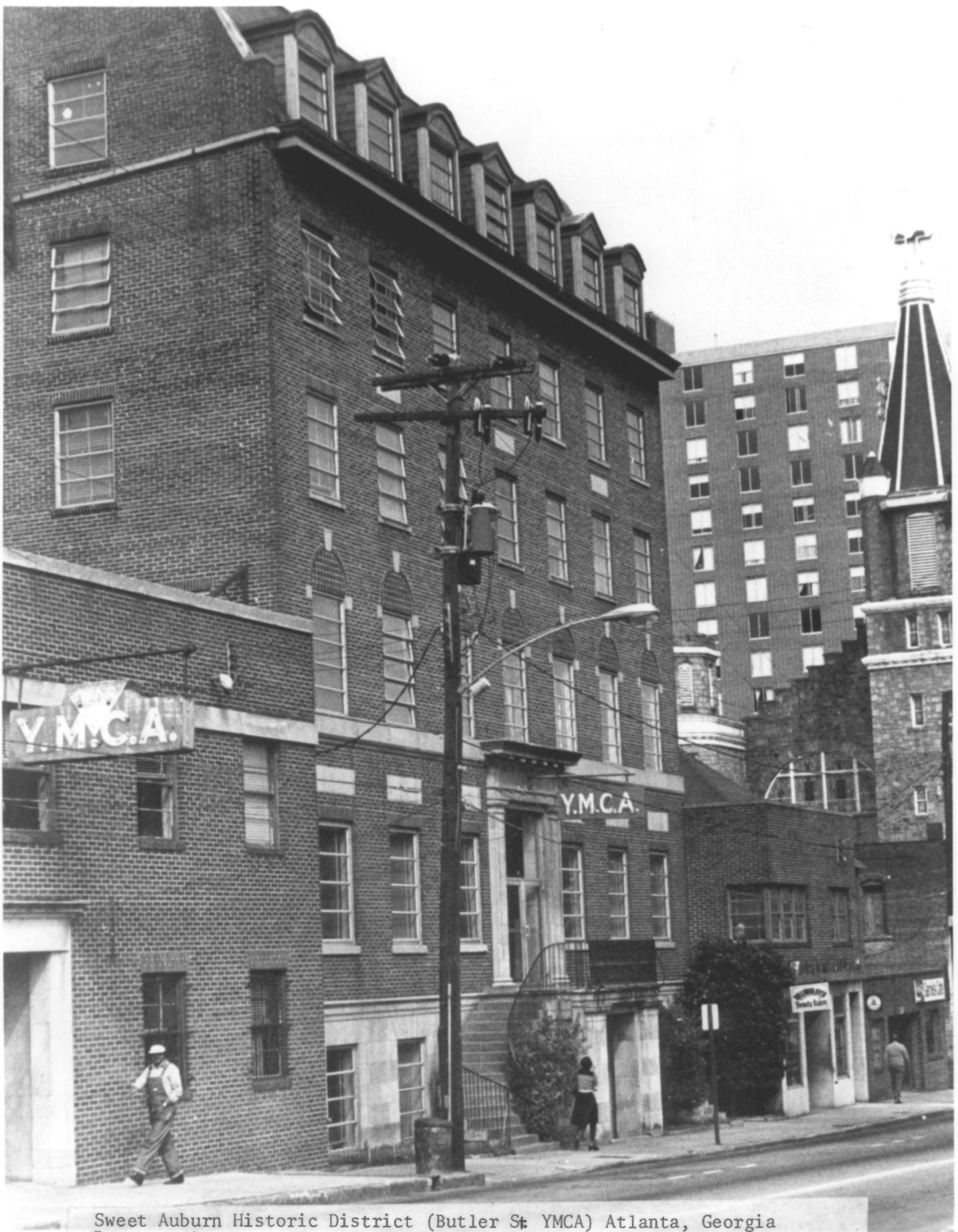
**4 IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO. 3

Atlanta Life, south facade, looking northeast.





Sweet Auburn Historic District (Butler St. YMCA) Atlanta, Georgia  
Preservation Dept., Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources, 1976



Appendix B.  
Sweet Auburn NHLD Photograph  
Recreations, 1976, 2017







A. 1976 View of Auburn Avenue, Looking East



B. 2017 View of Auburn Avenue, Looking East





A. 1976 Atlanta Life, South Façade, Looking Northeast



B. 2017 Atlanta Life, South Façade, Looking Northeast





A. 1976 Municipal Market, North Elevation, Looking Southwest



B. 2017 Municipal Market, North Elevation, Looking Southwest



A. 1976 Big Bethel Church, Looking Northeast



B. 2017 Big Bethel Church, Looking Northeast





B. 2017 Butler Street YMCA, Looking Northwest



A. 1976 Butler Street YMCA, Looking Northwest





A. 1976 Herndon Building, East and North Elevations, Looking Southwest



B. 2017 Herndon Building, East and North Elevations, Looking Southwest





A. 1976 Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium, South Elevation, Looking East



B. 2017 Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium, South Elevation, Looking East





## Appendix C.

### Timeline of Events



## **Sweet Auburn Historic District Timeline**

1976- Designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL)

1979- Smith Carriage Factory demolished

1980- Included in the Federally-legislated Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District (as a preservation district)

1980- Smith and Rucker houses demolished

1992- The National Trust for Historic Preservation declared the residential, east side of Auburn Avenue, the “most endangered” historic places

2001- Rucker Building demolished

2005- Butler-Auburn Redevelopment Plan completed for City of Atlanta

2006- Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation adds Auburn Avenue commercial district to endangered list

2006- Palamont Motor Lodge demolished

2006-2007- Renaissance Walk/City Walk mixed-use building completed in district

2008- Tornado causes further damage to Herndon Building (already in deteriorating condition) and other buildings in district

2008- Herndon Building demolished following tornado damage

2010- NPS observes “urban renewal” from the downtown area is beginning to touch the Sweet Auburn Historic District (quote from 2011 MLK, Jr. National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan)

2011- MLK, Jr. National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan completed

2012- Atlanta Urban Design Commission halts planned demolition of Atlanta Daily World Building

2012- NTHP added Sweet Auburn back to most endangered list

2014- New Atlanta Streetcar opens

2014- Gold Dust mural revealed on Atlanta Life building



2015- Big Bethel AME Church enters into MOU with 2 development teams for a multi-phase redevelopment project, including renovation of Bethel Towers, construction of multi-level parking garage, and 321-unit student housing building

2015- Atlanta Daily World Building purchased and renovated

2016-2017- 135 Auburn Ave purchased for redevelopment

## Appendix D.

### Aggregate Census Data





Census Tract 28, Fulton County

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Total Population	9,767	9,084	4,186	3,080	2,169	1,910	1,331	1,747
African American	9,712 (99.4%)	9,034 (99.5%)	3,996 (95.5%)	2,547 (82.7%)	1,865 (86%)	1,799 (94.2%)	N/A	1,361 (77.9%)
White	51 (0.5%)	43 (0.5%)	190 (4.5%)	528 (17.1%)	282 (13%)	101 (5.3%)	N/A	349 (20%)
Male	4,307 (44.1%)	4,157 (45.8%)	N/A	1,364 (44.3%)	903 (41.6%)	835 (43.7%)	N/A	763 (43.7%)
Female	5,460 (55.9%)	4,927 (54.2%)	N/A	1,716 (55.7%)	1,266 (58.4%)	1,075 (56.3%)	N/A	984 (56.3%)

Census 1940			
Statistics		Census Tract F28, Fulton County, Georgia	
<b>SE:T1. Total Population</b>			
Total Population	9,767		
<b>SE:T2. Area</b>			
Total Area (sq. miles)	0.30		
<b>SE:T3. Population Density</b>			
Total Population	9,767		
Population Density per sq. mile	32,090.70		
Total Area (sq. miles)	0.30		
<b>SE:T4. Sex</b>			
Total Population:	9,767		
Male	4,307	44.1%	
Female	5,460	55.9%	
<b>SE:T9. Race</b>			
Total Population:	9,767		
White	51	0.5%	
Black	9,712	99.4%	
Other	4	0.0%	
<b>SE:T11. Age</b>			
Total Population:	9,767		
Under 5 Years	536	5.5%	
5 to 9 Years	553	5.7%	
10 to 14 Years	678	6.9%	
15 to 19 Years	727	7.4%	
20 to 24 Years	1,095	11.2%	
25 to 29 Years	1,440	14.7%	
30 to 34 Years	1,145	11.7%	
35 to 39 Years	1,087	11.1%	
40 to 44 Years	786	8.1%	
45 to 49 Years	595	6.1%	
50 to 54 Years	408	4.2%	
55 to 59 Years	242	2.5%	
60 to 64 Years	155	1.6%	
65 to 69 Years	167	1.7%	
70 to 74 Years	73	0.8%	
75 Years and over	80	0.8%	
<b>SE:T27. Nativity (White Population Only)</b>			
White Population:	51		
Native-Born	42	82.4%	
Foreign-Born	9	17.7%	
<b>SE:T34. Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Over</b>			
Population Age 25 and Over:	6,178		
No School Years Completed	333	5.4%	
At Least Some Elementary (1 to 8 Years):	4,896	79.3%	
Elementary 1 To 4 Years	1,828	29.6%	

Elementary 5 To 6 Years	1,741	28.2%
Elementary 7 To 8 Years	1,327	21.5%
At Least Some High School (1 To 4 Years):	667	10.8%
Some High School (1 To 3 Years)	442	7.2%
High School 4 Years	225	3.6%
At Least Some College (1 To 4 Years):	231	3.7%
Some College (1 To 3 Years)	135	2.2%
College 4 Years or More	96	1.6%
School Years Not Reported	51	0.8%
<b>SE:T38. Highest Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Over</b>		
Population Age 25 and Over:	6,178	
No School Years Completed	333	5.4%
Less Than High School	5,229	84.6%
Some High School Or More	898	14.5%
High School Or More	456	7.4%
Some College Or More	231	3.7%
College 4 Years or More	96	1.6%
School Years Not Reported	51	0.8%
<b>SE:T41. Employment Status (Population 14 and Over)</b>		
Population Age 14 and Over:	8,130	
In Labor Force:	5,772	71.0%
In Civilian Labor Force:	5,575	68.6%
Employed	4,910	60.4%
Unemployed (Seeking Work)	665	8.2%
In Armed Forces	197	2.4%
Not In Labor Force:	2,358	29.0%
Housework	1,006	12.4%
In School	295	3.6%
Unable To Work	819	10.1%
In Institutions	0	0.0%
Other and Not Reported	238	2.9%
<b>SE:T64. Occupancy Status</b>		
Total Housing Units:	2,869	
Occupied Housing Units	2,838	98.9%
Vacant	31	1.1%
For Sale or Rent	30	1.1%
Other	1	0.0%
<b>SE:T65. Vacancy Type</b>		
Vacant Housing Unit:	31	
For Sale or Rent	30	96.8%
Other	1	3.2%
<b>SE:T94. Median House Value</b>		
Housing Units Reporting Value of Home:	121	
Median Value of Home	\$2,631	
<b>SE:T95. Median Contract Monthly Rent</b>		
Housing Units Reporting Monthly Contract Rent:	2,706	
Median Contract Monthly Rent	\$11	



<b>SE:T96. Median Gross Monthly Rent</b>		
Housing Units Reporting Monthly Gross Rent:	2,651	
Median Gross Monthly Rent	\$14	

Census 1950			
Statistics	Census Tract F0028, Fulton County, Georgia		
SE:T1. Total Population			
Total Population	9,084		
SE:T2. Area			
Total Area (sq. miles)	0.30		
SE:T3. Population Density			
Total Population	9,084		
Population Density per sq. mile	29,846.61		
Total Area (sq. miles)	0.30		
SE:T4. Sex			
Total Population:	9,084		
Male	4,157	45.8%	
Female	4,927	54.2%	
SE:T5. Race			
Total Population:	9,084		
White	43	0.5%	
Black	9,034	99.5%	
Other	7	0.1%	
SE:T7. Age (Detailed)			
Total Population:	9,084		
Under 5 years	799	8.8%	
5 to 9 years	536	5.9%	
10 to 14 years	560	6.2%	
15 to 19 years	544	6.0%	
20 to 24 years	734	8.1%	
25 to 29 years	895	9.9%	
30 to 34 years	805	8.9%	
35 to 39 years	1,062	11.7%	
40 to 44 years	832	9.2%	
45 to 49 years	693	7.6%	
50 to 54 years	568	6.3%	
55 to 59 years	338	3.7%	
60 to 64 years	227	2.5%	
65 to 69 years	241	2.7%	
70 to 74 years	111	1.2%	
75 to 84 years	114	1.3%	
85 years and over	25	0.3%	
SE:T20. Household Income			
Households:	4,055		
Less Than \$500	730	18.0%	
\$500 to \$999	925	22.8%	
\$1,000 to \$1,499	790	19.5%	
\$1,500 to \$1,999	710	17.5%	
\$2,000 to \$2,499	360	8.9%	
\$2,500 to \$2,999	150	3.7%	
\$3,000 to \$3,499	75	1.9%	
\$3,500 to \$3,999	60	1.5%	

<b>Census 1950</b>		
\$4,000 to \$4,499	30	0.7%
\$4,500 to \$4,999	35	0.9%
\$5,000 to \$5,999	10	0.3%
\$6,000 to \$6,999	10	0.3%
\$7,000 to \$9,999	10	0.3%
\$10,000 or More	10	0.3%
Not Reported	150	3.7%
<b>SE:T24. Employment Status</b>		
Population Age 14 and Over:	7,293	
In Labor Force:	4,817	66.1%
In Civilian Labor Force:	4,815	66.0%
Employed	4,551	62.4%
Unemployed	264	3.6%
In Armed Forces	2	0.0%
Not in Labor Force	2,476	34.0%
<b>SE:T34. Occupation</b>		
Employed Civilian:	4,551	
Professional\Technical\Kindred Workers	91	2.0%
Managers\Officials\Props Including Farm	74	1.6%
Clerical\Kindred Workers	111	2.4%
Sales Workers	60	1.3%
Craftsmen\Foremen\Kindred Workers	240	5.3%
Operatives\Kindred Workers	1,052	23.1%
Private Household Workers	946	20.8%
Service Workers Except Private Household	1,262	27.7%
Laborers Except Mine	673	14.8%
Occupation Not Reported	42	0.9%
<b>SE:T38. Households</b>		
Households	2,629	
<b>SE:T46. Occupancy Status</b>		
Housing Units:	2,681	
Occupied Housing Units	2,648	98.8%
Vacant Housing Units	33	1.2%
Nonseasonal, etc	9	0.3%
Other	24	0.9%
<b>SE:T64. Median Contract Monthly Rent</b>		
Housing Units Reporting Monthly Contract Rent:	2,456	
Median Contract Monthly Rent	\$16	
<b>SE:T68. Median House Value</b>		
Housing Units Reporting Value of Home:	88	
Median House Value	\$0	
<b>SE:T74. Foreign-Born</b>		
Total Population:	9,084	
Foreign Born	8	0.1%
Native Born	9,076	99.9%



<b>Census 1960</b>		
<b>Statistics</b>	<b>Census Tract F0028000, Fulton County, Georgia</b>	
<b>SE:T1. Total Population</b>		
Total Population	4,186	
<b>SE:T2. Area</b>		
Total Area (sq. miles)	0.30	
<b>SE:T3. Population Density</b>		
Total Population	4,186	
Population Density per sq. mile	13,753.63	
Total Area (sq. miles)	0.30	
<b>SE:T13. Race (100% Count)</b>		
Total Population:	4,186	
White	190	4.5%
Black	3,996	95.5%
Other Race	0	0.0%
<b>SE:T16. Age (100% Count)</b>		
Total Population:	4,186	
Under 5 Years	458	10.9%
5 to 9 Years	356	8.5%
10 to 14 Years	245	5.9%
15 to 19 Years	200	4.8%
20 to 24 Years	252	6.0%
25 to 29 Years	263	6.3%
30 to 34 Years	281	6.7%
35 to 39 Years	325	7.8%
40 to 44 Years	340	8.1%
45 to 49 Years	345	8.2%
50 to 54 Years	303	7.2%
55 to 59 Years	242	5.8%
60 to 64 Years	200	4.8%
65 to 69 Years	165	3.9%
70 to 74 Years	103	2.5%
75 Years and Over	108	2.6%
<b>SE:T50. Employment Status</b>		
Total Population Age 14+:	3,168	
In Labor Force:	2,204	69.6%
In Civilian Labor Force:	2,204	69.6%
Employed	2,036	64.3%
Unemployed	168	5.3%
In Armed Forces	0	0.0%
Not In Labor Force	964	30.4%
<b>SE:T100. Unrelated Individual Income (Nonwhite Population)</b>		
Nonwhite Individuals Age 14+:	759	
Less than \$1,000	223	29.4%
\$1,000 - \$1,999	296	39.0%
\$2,000 - \$2,999	180	23.7%
\$3,000 - \$3,999	34	4.5%

<b>Census 1960</b>		
\$4,000 - \$4,999	12	1.6%
\$5,000 - \$5,999	9	1.2%
\$6,000 - \$6,999	5	0.7%
\$7,000 - \$7,999	0	0.0%
\$8,000 - \$8,999	0	0.0%
\$9,000 - \$9,999	0	0.0%
\$10,000 or more	0	0.0%
<b>SE:T103. Foreign Born</b>		
Total Population:	4,186	
Foreign Stock Population:	0	0.0%
Foreign Born	0	0.0%
Native of foreign or mixed parentage	0	0.0%
<b>SE:T106. Occupancy Status</b>		
Housing Units:	1,532	
Occupied Housing Units	1,426	93.1%
Vacant Units:	106	6.9%
Vacant-for-sale only	0	0.0%
Vacant-for-rent	46	3.0%
Other vacant (includes seasonal and migratory)	60	3.9%
<b>SE:T165. Gross Rent</b>		
Renter-Occupied Housing Units Reporting Gross Rent:	1,334	
Less than \$20	25	1.9%
\$20 to \$29	76	5.7%
\$30 to \$39	241	18.1%
\$40 to \$49	407	30.5%
\$50 to \$59	311	23.3%
\$60 to \$69	164	12.3%
\$70 to \$79	86	6.5%
\$80 to \$89	12	0.9%
\$90 to \$99	0	0.0%
\$100 to \$119	4	0.3%
\$120 to \$149	8	0.6%
\$150 to \$199	0	0.0%
\$200 or more	0	0.0%

<b>Census 1970</b>		
<b>Statistics</b>	<b>Census Tract 28, Fulton County, Georgia</b>	
<b>SE:T1. Total Population</b>		
Total Population	3,080	
<b>SE:T2. Population Density (per sq. mile)</b>		
Total Population	3,080	
Population Density (per sq. mile)	10,119.7	
Area Total	0.30	
<b>SE:T3. Land Area (sq. miles)</b>		
Area Total	0.30	
<b>SE:T4. Sex</b>		
Total Population:	3,080	
Male	1,364	44.3%
Female	1,716	55.7%
<b>SE:T7. Age</b>		
Total Population:	3,080	
Under 5 years	260	8.4%
5 to 9 years	265	8.6%
10 to 14 years	291	9.5%
15 to 17 years	148	4.8%
18 to 24 years	620	20.1%
25 to 34 years	332	10.8%
35 to 44 years	407	13.2%
45 to 54 years	334	10.8%
55 to 64 years	259	8.4%
65 to 74 years	131	4.3%
75 years and over	33	1.1%
<b>SE:T12. Race</b>		
Total Population:	3,080	
White	528	17.1%
Black	2,547	82.7%
Some Other Race	5	0.2%
<b>SE:T13. Spanish Origin or Descent Indicator (15%)</b>		
Total Population:	2,965	
Spanish Origin or Descent	15	0.5%
Not of Spanish Origin or Descent	2,950	99.5%
<b>SE:T14. Households By Household Type</b>		
Total Occupied Households:	935	
Husband-wife family	392	41.9%
Other Family:	238	25.5%
Other Family with male head	15	1.6%
Other Family with female head	223	23.9%
Male primary individual	173	18.5%
Female primary individual	132	14.1%



<b>Census 1970</b>		
<b>SE:T18. Population in Households And Group Quarters</b>		
Total Population:	3,080	
In Nonfamily Households:	297	9.6%
Male primary individual	174	5.7%
Female primary individual	123	4.0%
In Family Households:	2,390	77.6%
Head:	660	21.4%
Male	456	14.8%
Female	204	6.6%
Wife of head	404	13.1%
Child of head	982	31.9%
Other relative of head	273	8.9%
Nonrelative (includes roomer, boarder or lodger) of head of household	71	2.3%
In Group Quarters:	393	12.8%
Institution:	24	0.8%
Male inmate of institution	15	0.5%
Female inmate of institution	9	0.3%
Other:	369	12.0%
Male in other group quarters	74	2.4%
Female in other group quarters	295	9.6%
<b>SE:T20. Group Quarters Population By Type of Group Quarters</b>		
Count of Persons in Group Quarters:	393	
Institutionalized:	24	6.1%
Inmate of mental hospital	24	6.1%
Inmate of home for the aged and dependent	0	0.0%
Inmate of other institution	0	0.0%
Not Institutionalized:	369	93.9%
In rooming house	35	8.9%
In military barracks	0	0.0%
In college dormitory	0	0.0%
In other group quarters	334	85.0%
<b>SE:T45. Employment Status For Total Population 16 Years And Over</b>		
Population 16 Years Old and Over:	2,193	
In labor force:	1,381	63.0%
In Armed Forces	0	0.0%
In Civilian labor force:	1,381	63.0%
Employed	1,335	60.9%
Unemployed	46	2.1%
Not in labor force	812	37.0%
<b>SE:T56. Unemployment Rate</b>		
Population 16 years and over In Civilian labor force:	1,381	
Employed	1,335	96.7%
Unemployed	46	3.3%
<b>SE:T85. Average Family Income</b>		
Average Family Income	\$8,175	

<b>Census 1970</b>		
<b>SE:T86. Average Income Of Unrelated Individuals Age 14+</b>		
Count of Unrelated Individuals Age 14+	714	
Average Income Of Unrelated Individuals 14+	\$3,524	
<b>SE:T88. Poverty Status For Families</b>		
Families:	660	
Above poverty level	502	76.1%
Below poverty level	158	23.9%
<b>SE:T107. Housing Units</b>		
Total Housing units	990	
<b>SE:T108. Tenure</b>		
Total occupied:	935	
Owner occupied	29	3.1%
Renter occupied	906	96.9%
<b>SE:T109. Occupancy Status</b>		
Total Housing units:	990	
Occupied	935	94.4%
Vacant	55	5.6%
<b>SE:T132. Nativity By Citizenship Status (5%)</b>		
Count of Persons:	2,874	
Native	2,822	98.2%
Foreign born:	52	1.8%
Naturalized	52	1.8%
Alien	0	0.0%

Census 1980			
Statistics	Census Tract 28, Fulton County, Georgia		
<b>SE:T1. Total Population</b>			
Total Population	2,169		
<b>SE:A1. Population Density</b>			
Total Population	2,169		
Population Density Per Square Mile	7,126.5		
<b>SE:A2. Area (square miles)</b>			
Total Area in Square Miles	0.30		
<b>SE:T3. Sex</b>			
Total Population:	2,169		
Male	903	41.6%	
Female	1,266	58.4%	
<b>SE:T6. Age</b>			
Total Population:	2,169		
Under 5 year	117	5.4%	
5 to 9 years	113	5.2%	
10 to 14 years	94	4.3%	
15 to 17 years	67	3.1%	
18 to 24 years	329	15.2%	
25 to 34 years	345	15.9%	
35 to 44 years	219	10.1%	
45 to 54 years	233	10.7%	
55 to 64 years	253	11.7%	
65 to 74 years	243	11.2%	
75 to 84 years	129	6.0%	
85 years and over	27	1.2%	
<b>SE:T12. Race</b>			
Total Population:	2,169		
White	282	13.0%	
Black	1,865	86.0%	
American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut	1	0.1%	
Asian and Pacific Islander	9	0.4%	
Other	12	0.6%	
<b>SE:T13. Race By Spanish Origin Status</b>			
Total Population:	2,169		
Persons Not of Spanish origin:	2,147	99.0%	
White	280	12.9%	
Black	1,852	85.4%	
Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	10	0.5%	
Other	5	0.2%	
Persons Of Spanish Origin:	22	1.0%	
White	2	0.1%	
Black	13	0.6%	
American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Asian and Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	
Other	7	0.3%	



## Census 1980

### SE:T19. Households By Household Type

Households:	1,081	
1 person:	598	55.3%
Male householder	264	24.4%
Female householder	334	30.9%
2 or more persons:	483	44.7%
Married-couple family	164	15.2%
Other family:	279	25.8%
Male householder, no wife present	45	4.2%
Female householder, no husband	234	21.7%
Nonfamily household:	40	3.7%
Male householder	18	1.7%
Female householder	22	2.0%

### SE:T23. Population in Households By Household Type and Relationship

Total Population:	2,169	
In family household:	1,320	60.9%
Householder	439	20.2%
Spouse	190	8.8%
Other relatives	678	31.3%
Nonrelatives	13	0.6%
In nonfamily household:	698	32.2%
Male householder	322	14.9%
Female householder	358	16.5%
Nonrelatives	18	0.8%
In group quarters:	154	7.1%
Inmate of institution	27	1.2%
Other	127	5.9%

### SE:T36. Employment Status For Total Population 16 Years and Over

Persons 16 Years And Over:	1,889	
Armed Forces	0	0.0%
Civilian labor force:	857	45.4%
Employed	784	41.5%
Unemployed	73	3.9%
Not in labor force	1,032	54.6%

### SE:T40. Unemployment Rate For Civilian Population

Civilian Population In Labor Force 16 Years And Over:	857	
Employed	784	91.5%
Unemployed	73	8.5%

### SE:T53. Median Household Income (In 1979 Dollars)

Median Household Income In 1979 Dollars	\$5,522	
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### SE:T54. Average Household Income (In 1979 Dollars)

Average Household Income In 1979 Dollars	\$9,276	
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<b>Census 1980</b>		
<b>SE:T55. Median Family Income (In 1979 Dollars)</b>		
Median Family Income In 1979 Dollars	\$8,610	
<b>SE:T56. Average Family Income (In 1979 Dollars)</b>		
Average family income In 1979 Dollars	\$9,961	
<b>SE:T58. Median Income for Unrelated Individuals (In 1979 Dollars)</b>		
Median Income for Unrelated Individuals (In 1979 Dollars)	\$3,354	
<b>SE:T124. Average Income for Unrelated Individuals 15 + (In 1979 Dollars)</b>		
Average Income for Unrelated Individuals 15 + (In 1979 Dollars)	\$7,824	
<b>SE:T73. Per Capita Income (In 1979 Dollars)</b>		
Per Capita Income In 1979 Dollars	\$5,092	
<b>SE:T80. Year-Round Housing Units</b>		
Year-Round Housing units	1,212	
<b>SE:T81. Tenure</b>		
Occupied Housing Units:	1,036	
Owner occupied	158	15.3%
Renter occupied	878	84.8%
<b>SE:T82. Occupancy Status</b>		
Year-Round Housing Units:	1,212	
Occupied	1,036	85.5%
Vacant	176	14.5%
<b>SE:T100. Poverty Status In 1979 (short version)</b>		
Population For Whom Poverty Status Is Determined:	2,145	
Above poverty level	1,229	57.3%
Below poverty level	916	42.7%
<b>SE:T110. Ratio of Income to Poverty Level In 1979</b>		
Persons For Whom Poverty Status Is Determined:	2,145	
Income below 75 percent of poverty level	596	27.8%
Income between 75 and 124 percent of poverty level	528	24.6%
Income between 125 and 149 percent of poverty level	100	4.7%
Income between 150 and 199 percent of poverty level	317	14.8%
Income 200 percent of poverty level and above	604	28.2%

Census 1980		



Census 1990			
Statistics	Tract 28, Fulton County, Georgia		
<b>SE:T1. Total Population</b>			
Total Population	1,910		
<b>SE:T5. Sex</b>			
Total Population	1,910		
Male	835	43.7%	
Female	1,075	56.3%	
<b>SE:T8. Age</b>			
Persons:	1,910		
Under 5 year	129	6.8%	
5 to 9 years	86	4.5%	
10 to 14 years	87	4.6%	
15 to 17 years	50	2.6%	
18 to 24 years	178	9.3%	
25 to 34 years	368	19.3%	
35 to 44 years	295	15.5%	
45 to 54 years	178	9.3%	
55 to 64 years	174	9.1%	
65 to 74 years	191	10.0%	
75 to 84 years	138	7.2%	
85 years and over	36	1.9%	
<b>SE:T12. Race</b>			
Persons:	1,910		
White	101	5.3%	
Black	1,799	94.2%	
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	0	0.0%	
Asian or Pacific Islander	5	0.3%	
Other race	5	0.3%	
<b>SE:T16. Household Type</b>			
Households:	1,064		
Family households:	392	36.8%	
Married-couple family:	128	12.0%	
Other family:	264	24.8%	
Male householder, no wife present:	44	4.1%	
Female householder, no husband present:	220	20.7%	
Nonfamily households:	672	63.2%	
Male householder	277	26.0%	
Female householder	395	37.1%	
<b>SE:T19. Population in Households By Household Type and Relationship</b>			
Total Population	1,976		
In Households:	1,929	97.6%	
Family households:	1,238	62.7%	
Householder	431	21.8%	
Spouse	120	6.1%	
Child:	429	21.7%	
Grandchild	129	6.5%	
Other relatives	105	5.3%	

<b>Census 1990</b>		
Nonrelatives	24	1.2%
nonfamily households:	691	35.0%
Living alone	471	23.8%
Not living alone	84	4.3%
Nonrelatives	136	6.9%
In group quarters	47	2.4%
<b>SE:T29. Unemployment Rate For Total Population 16 Years And Over</b>		
Civilian Population In Labor Force 16 Years And Over:	936	
Employed	891	95.2%
Unemployed	45	4.8%
<b>SE:T43. Median Household Income In 1989 Dollars</b>		
Median Household Income In 1989 Dollars	\$8,257	
<b>SE:T44. Average Household Income In 1989 Dollars</b>		
Average Household Income In 1989 Dollars	\$18,904	
<b>SE:T72. Housing Units</b>		
Housing units	1,281	
<b>SE:T73. Tenure</b>		
Occupied housing units:	1,108	
Owner occupied	108	9.8%
Renter occupied	1,000	90.3%
<b>SE:T98. Ratio Of Income In 1989 To Poverty Level (Summarized)</b>		
Persons for whom poverty status is determined:	1,976	
Under 1.00 (Doing Poorly)	941	47.6%
1.00 to 1.99 (Stuggling)	571	28.9%
Under 2.00 (Poor or stuggling)	1,512	76.5%
2.00 and over (Doing ok)	464	23.5%

Census 2000			
Statistics	Census Tract 28, Fulton County, Georgia		
<b>SE:T1. Total Population</b>			
Total Population	2,859		
<b>SE:T3. Population Density (per sq. mile)</b>			
Total Population	2,859		
Population Density (per sq. mile)	9,393.8		
Area (Land)	0.30		
<b>SE:T4. Land Area (sq. miles)</b>			
Area Total:	0.30		
Area (Land)	0.30	100.0%	
Area (Water)	0.00	0.0%	
<b>SE:T5. Sex</b>			
Total Population:	2,859		
Male	1,433	50.1%	
Female	1,426	49.9%	
<b>SE:T8. Age</b>			
Total Population:	2,859		
Under 5 years	217	7.6%	
5 to 9 years	137	4.8%	
10 to 14 years	114	4.0%	
15 to 17 years	286	10.0%	
18 to 24 years	328	11.5%	
25 to 34 years	513	17.9%	
35 to 44 years	392	13.7%	
45 to 54 years	301	10.5%	
55 to 64 years	164	5.7%	
65 to 74 years	211	7.4%	
75 to 84 years	147	5.1%	
85 years and over	49	1.7%	
<b>SE:T14. Race</b>			
Total Population:	2,859		
White Alone	365	12.8%	
Black or African American Alone	2,107	73.7%	
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	6	0.2%	
Asian Alone	10	0.4%	
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	1	0.0%	
Some other race Alone	312	10.9%	
Two or more races	58	2.0%	
<b>SE:T20. Households By Household Type</b>			
Households:	1,264		
Family households:	470	37.2%	
Married-couple family	163	12.9%	
Other family:	307	24.3%	
Male householder, no wife present	58	4.6%	
Female householder, no husband present	249	19.7%	
Nonfamily households:	794	62.8%	



<b>Census 2000</b>		
Male householder	381	30.1%
Female householder	413	32.7%
<b>SE:T25. Population in Households By Household Type and Relationship</b>		
Total Population	2,878	
In households:	2,546	88.5%
In family households:	1,672	58.1%
Householder	463	16.1%
Spouse	193	6.7%
Child	523	18.2%
Grandchild	211	7.3%
Brother or sister	101	3.5%
Parent	17	0.6%
Other relatives	70	2.4%
Nonrelatives	94	3.3%
In nonfamily households:	874	30.4%
Living Alone	692	24.0%
Not living Alone	84	2.9%
Nonrelatives	98	3.4%
In group quarters:	332	11.5%
Institutionalized Population	203	7.1%
Noninstitutionalized Population	129	4.5%
<b>SE:T69. Employment Status For Total Population 16 Years And Over</b>		
Population 16 years and over:	2,332	
In labor force:	1,331	57.1%
In Armed Forces	0	0.0%
Civilian:	1,331	57.1%
Employed	1,142	49.0%
Unemployed	189	8.1%
Not in labor force	1,001	42.9%
<b>SE:T73. Unemployment Rate For Civilian Population In Labor Force 16 Years And Over</b>		
Civilian Population In Labor Force 16 Years And Over:	1,331	
Employed	1,142	85.8%
Unemployed	189	14.2%
<b>SE:T93. Median Household Income In 1999 Dollars</b>		
Median household income In 1999 Dollars	\$15,160	
<b>SE:T155. Housing Units</b>		
Housing units	1,374	
<b>SE:T156. Tenure</b>		
Occupied Housing Units:	1,264	
Owner Occupied	112	8.9%
Renter Occupied	1,152	91.1%
<b>SE:T185. Ratio Of Income In 1999 To Poverty Level (Summarized)</b>		

Census 2000		
Population for whom poverty status is determined:	2,654	
Under 1.00 (Doing Poorly)	838	31.6%
1.00 to 1.99 (Stuggling)	995	37.5%
Under 2.00 (Poor or stuggling)	1,833	69.1%
2.00 and over (Doing ok)	821	30.9%

Census 2010			
Statistics	Census Tract 28, Fulton County, Georgia		
SE:A00001. Total Population			
Total Population	1,747		
SE:A00002. Population Density (per sq. mile)			
Total Population	1,747		
Population Density (Per Sq. Mile)	6,048.6		
Area (Land)	0.29		
SE:A02001. Sex			
Total Population:	1,747		
Male:	763	43.7%	
Female:	984	56.3%	
SE:A01001. Age			
Total Population:	1,747		
Under 5 Years	121	6.9%	
5 to 9 Years	66	3.8%	
10 to 14 Years	77	4.4%	
15 to 17 Years	38	2.2%	
18 to 24 Years	99	5.7%	
25 to 34 Years	311	17.8%	
35 to 44 Years	274	15.7%	
45 to 54 Years	247	14.1%	
55 to 64 Years	266	15.2%	
65 to 74 Years	172	9.9%	
75 to 84 Years	58	3.3%	
85 Years and Over	18	1.0%	
SE:A03001. Race			
Total Population:	1,747		
White Alone	349	20.0%	
Black or African American Alone	1,361	77.9%	
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	0	0.0%	
Asian Alone	21	1.2%	
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	0	0.0%	
Some Other Race Alone	0	0.0%	
Two or More Races	16	0.9%	
SE:A10008. Households by Household Type			
Households:	952		
Family Households:	273	28.7%	
Married-Couple Family:	51	5.4%	
Other Family:	222	23.3%	
Male Householder, No Wife Present	30	3.2%	
Female Householder, No Husband Present	192	20.2%	
Nonfamily Households:	679	71.3%	
Male Householder	334	35.1%	
Female Householder	345	36.2%	



<b>Census 2010</b>		
<b>SE:A14006. Median Household Income (In 2010 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)</b>		
Median Household Income (In 2010 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)	\$11,706	
<b>SE:A10001. Housing Units</b>		
Housing Units	1,326	
<b>SE:A10060. Tenure</b>		
Occupied Housing Units:	952	
Owner Occupied	133	14.0%
Renter Occupied	819	86.0%
<b>SE:B13004. Ratio of Income in 2010 to Poverty Level (Summarized)</b>		
Population for Whom Poverty Status Is Determined	1,747	
Under 1.00 (Doing Poorly)	1,009	57.8%
1.00 to 1.99 (Struggling)	323	18.5%
Under 2.00 (Poor or Struggling)	1,332	76.2%
2.00 and Over (Doing Ok)	415	23.8%

Appendix E.  
Organizations Involved  
with Sweet Auburn NHLD





## Organizations Involved with the Sweet Auburn NHLD

<b>Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Mission/ Involvement with District</b>	<b>Specific Project or Program Highlights</b>
Sweet Auburn Works	Non-profit	Sweet Auburn's local Main Street Program. To Preserve, Revitalize, and Promote the commercial and cultural legacy of the Sweet Auburn Historic District	Sweet Auburn Retail Strategies panel study (2016) with Urban Land Institute; Generator Workshop: Sweet Auburn Walks- to inform enhancements of the accessibility, appearance, and sociability of the area.
National Park Service	Federal agency	Provides technical assistance for the preservation of National Historic Landmarks such as the Sweet Auburn NHLD; operates Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park.	Commissioned this conditions assessment report for the Sweet Auburn NHLD.
Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	State agency	Administers historic preservation grants; administers federal tax incentive and NRHP programs; provides technical assistance; is a consulting party in Section 106 review for Federal projects.	Administers the federal tax incentive program and provides technical assistance.
Historic District Development Corporation	Non-profit	To passionately set the standard for strengthening, revitalizing and preserving the identity and history of our communities through equitable and inclusive development.	Property owners and development proponents in District.

Butler Street Community Development Corporation	Non-profit	To provide innovative, enriching, community-based programs and services for the community.	Property owners and development proponents in District.
National Trust for Historic Preservation	Non-profit	Craft and implement a plan to revitalize the commercial area around Auburn Avenue.	Added District to endangered list in 2007 and 2012.
Old Fourth Ward Business District	Non-profit	To foster a safe and sustainable business environment with close ties to the surrounding residential community.	
Atlanta Urban Design Commission	City agency commission	Reviews and comments on projects falling under City's historic preservation ordinance (includes Sweet Auburn NHLD); nominates and regulates locally designated historic buildings/sites; reviews and comments on projects involving City of Atlanta property; provides property owners technical assistance.	Review of proposed Renaissance Walk development in 2008 helped lead to the preservation of historic commercial buildings in the District.
Central Atlanta Progress	Non-profit	A leading advocate for the economic vitality and growth of Downtown Atlanta; acts as a catalyst for programs and projects promoting the Downtown area.	Key sponsor of Auburn Avenue History & Cultural Information Project- wayside signage and enhancing interstate underpass along Auburn Avenue

Invest Atlanta	Local government authority	To advance Atlanta's global competitiveness by growing a strong economy, building vibrant communities, and increasing economic prosperity for all Atlantans.	February 2019- Approved creation of Real Estate Technical Assistance and Predevelopment Fund to provide resources to real estate development and economic vibrancy in the Sweet Auburn area. Authorized up to \$500,000 in Eastside TAS funding, matched by \$200,000 from Central Atlanta Progress.
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	State agency	Helps communities spur private job creation, implement comprehensive plans, develop downtowns, generate affordable housing solutions and promote volunteerism.	Auburn Avenue Opportunity Zone, 2013, provides a tax credit for new job creation.
Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation	Non-profit	To work for the preservation and revitalization of Georgia's diverse historic resources and advocate their appreciation, protection and use.	Listed Sweet Auburn on the Trust's Places in Peril list in 2012.
Atlanta Preservation Center	Non-profit	Advocacy and education to promote the preservation of Atlanta's architecturally, historically and	Ongoing advocacy for preserving the district's



		culturally significant buildings, neighborhoods and landscapes.	buildings; provides a Sweet Auburn tour.
Urban Land Institute	Non-profit	To provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.	Sweet Auburn Retail Strategies panel study (2016) with Sweet Auburn Works

Appendix F.  
Studies Related to the Sweet Auburn NHLD





Date	Name	Organization	Purpose	Conclusion/Recommendations
1975	Sweet Auburn Comprehensive Urban Design Plan for Auburn Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia	City of Atlanta, Georgia Tech (prepared by Dr. Gloria Blackwell, Dr. C.E. Bacote, Dr. Elizabeth Lyon)	Provide the city with preservation planning tools and recommendations for the Sweet Auburn District	Future infill should be consistent with the existing scale and orientation; the low-rise profile should be maintained. Adaptive reuse for historic buildings emphasized.
1979	Reuse Evaluation and Recommendations for Atlanta Life Historic Properties, Sweet Auburn Landmark District	Atlanta Life Insurance Co., Georgia SHPO, City of Atlanta Urban Design Commission	Provided evaluation of reuse potential for 5 buildings on property owned by Atlanta Life Insurance: Atlanta Life Insurance Buildings, John Smith House, Rucker House, Rucker Buildings, Smooth Ashlar Masonic Hall	Recommended finding economically feasible and marketable reuse potentials for the first four of the buildings, which were identified as historically significant (Smooth Ashlar Building would not have been considered historic because it was built in the 1950s)
1979	Auburn Area Revitalization Program	City of Atlanta	Includes façade improvement guidelines	City (Shirley Franklin and staff) concluded the proposed guidance was not practical for most property owners and should not emphasize one design scheme for all buildings
1983	Architectural Reconnaissance, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District	National Park Service	Assess architectural conditions of the site and district and identify specific exterior problems on buildings.	Recommend halting deterioration of exteriors through education and technical assistance to property owners.
1990	Design Guidelines for the Martin	National Main Street Center,	Encourage preservation of and improvement in	Revised in 2017 (see below)

	Luther King, Jr. Landmark District	National Trust for Historic Preservation	the appearance of the historic buildings and public spaces, context-sensitive infill design	
2005	Butler-Auburn Redevelopment Plan	City of Atlanta	Study future development between Old Fourth Ward to Five Points	Proposed use of buildings in area, including potential demolitions, relocation assistance, guidelines for acquisition, redevelopment phasing.
2011	MLK, Jr. National Historic Site, Long-Range Interpretive Plan	National Park Service	Provides direction for future interpretation of the MLK, Jr. National Historic Site	Includes interpretive themes for the Preservation District (the commercial district of Auburn Avenue)
2012	Assessment Report, Sweet Auburn	National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), Main Street Center	Summary of observations and recommendations of the NTHP assessment team site visit	Observed the residential area of the area (not including Sweet Auburn NHLD) had improved with investment and renovations, but the business areas continued to decline. Recommended short-term design improvements to vacant buildings and steps to provide more tools for property owners to rehabilitate their buildings.
2014	Georgia State University Campus Historic Preservation Plan	Georgia State University (GSU)	Provides data on historic buildings owned by GSU and potential plans for those buildings	Provides information regarding GSU's ownership of historic buildings inside and just outside the Sweet Auburn NHLD
2016	Sweet Auburn Retail Strategies	Urban Land Institute: Atlanta	Study borne out of a Technical Assistance Panel to examine the desirable retail mix in the Sweet Auburn area as part of a broader strategy to revitalize the area.	Visioning/Brand Championing; Wayfinding and Signage; Bring in key retail tenants; Sweet Auburn Works drive a visioning process and unite the property owners and business leaders.

2017	Auburn and Edgewood Avenues Commercial Subarea Design Guidelines	National Main Street Center, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Sweet Auburn Works	Provide guidance on rehabilitation and infill design	Encourage preservation of and improvement in the appearance of the historic buildings and public spaces, context-sensitive infill design
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