Martin Luther King, Jr.
National Historic Site
Historic Resource Study

Robert W. Blythe
Maureen A. Carroll
Steven H. Moffson

August 1994

Cultural Resources Planning Division Southeast Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia

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FOREWORD

Several years ago, the Cultural Resources Planning Division undertook a complete restructuring of the historical research program in the Southeast Region. A multidisciplinary team was assembled, field surveys were begun, and intensive primary and secondary research initiated into the origins and significance of the historic structures and landscapes of National Park Service units in the Southeast Region. This Historic Resource Study is the first of many to treat the historic resources of the parks in a holistic manner, establishing the relevant historic contexts, and containing the information necessary to list all of the eligible resources in the National Register of Historic Places. We have, in the process of developing this study, updated the park's List of Classified Structures and transferred the text of this document to National Register forms to update the Historic Site's listing. It is our hope that this study will provide clear guidance to park management about the historic values embodied in this unit of the National Park System. Finally, we are grateful for the recognition accorded this report by the Vernacular Architecture Forum, which selected the draft as the recipient of its 1994 Paul E. Buchanan Award for the best unpublished work in this field.

Kirk A. Cordell
Chief
Cultural Resources Planning Division
National Park Service Southeast Region
August 1994
INTRODUCTION

Martin Luther King, Jr., is best known nationally and internationally for his leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement [1] and his subsequent efforts to promote world peace and economic equality. The Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, located in the historic east side Atlanta black community where King was reared and to which he later returned in the height of his activism, commemorates King's lifetime achievements. The Site preserves the King Birth Home and the immediate historic black neighborhood where King spent his youth. The larger "Sweet Auburn" community, which served as the economic, cultural, and religious center for Atlanta's segregated black population from 1910 through the 1960s, greatly influenced King both as a youth and as an adult.

On January 15, 1929, Martin Luther King, Jr., was born in Atlanta at 501 Auburn Avenue within a prosperous black commercial and residential district. He lived in this house with his mother, father, grandparents, sister, brother, and an occasional boarder until he was twelve years old. King attended public schools nearby and walked to services at Ebenezer Baptist, where his maternal grandfather and father served as ministers. In 1941, the family moved to another house within the Auburn Avenue community, and King commuted to Atlanta University on the west side to attend high school classes. As an adult, King left Atlanta to attend Crozer Seminary, in Chester, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia, and continued his education at Boston University. King led the members of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, while completing his doctorate in theology at Boston University. After serving in Montgomery for six years, King traveled to Atlanta to help organize the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957, and eventually moved to the city in 1960. The dominant force in the SCLC, King also co-pastored at Ebenezer Baptist Church in the Auburn Avenue community with his father.

Few nationally significant civil rights activities occurred under King's mantle in Atlanta. However, King served upon the governing board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), headquartered in Atlanta, participated in a lunch counter boycott at Rich's department store, a well-known Atlanta commercial establishment, and supported black Atlanta union members in a strike. King's best known and most effective civil protests occurred outside Atlanta, particularly in Alabama, where blacks wielded little economic, social, or political power.

Nevertheless, the black commercial and residential district centered around Auburn Avenue and the prominent black religious institutions in the community had a lasting impact on King and other black community leaders. Throughout the South, civil rights activities relied on strong communities and outspoken religious leaders. Auburn Avenue and its surrounding black residential areas developed as a direct result of segregationist policies common throughout nineteenth- and twentieth-century Southern urban centers. Within this milieu of hardship, black economic, cultural, and political institutions waxed, and in some cases, flourished. Auburn Avenue's vitality surpassed that achieved by many southern black communities. This unique community greatly influenced the life path chosen by King, to challenge racism, poverty, and the denial of black civil rights.
Auburn Avenue and its coterminous residential community developed as a stronghold of black Atlanta politics, commerce, spirituality, and social life. Sweet Auburn described the corridor east of Peachtree to Howell Avenue and north of Auburn to Houston Street. Edgewood Avenue, located just south of Auburn Avenue, developed later predominantly as a white commercial corridor. On both avenues, access to the central business district to the west via horse cars, streetcars, and eventually, private automobiles greatly augmented their growth (photograph 1). The first settlers along Auburn Avenue differed greatly in race and class from subsequent residents. In nineteenth-century cities, the elite occupied the residential areas located within walking distance of the central business district. As the Atlanta city limits widened from one concentric mile in the 1840s to one and one-half miles in the 1890s, elite residential settlement branched out, and patterns of settlement along Auburn Avenue changed. The avenue was predominantly black by 1910.

Martin Luther King, Jr., matured within a unique environment of black independence and progress, in a city that defined its black citizens as economically and socially inferior, and in an era that promised little black opportunity outside of prescribed roles. Between 1910 and 1960, the Auburn Avenue black community hummed. From Courtland Street to Randolph Street, food and drug stores, movie theaters, barber shops and beauty parlors, banks, insurance companies, restaurants, newspapers, and meeting halls, all owned and operated by black entrepreneurs, lined the street. Three churches towered over Auburn Avenue, and their ministers demanded from members participation in spiritual, social, and civic progress. Middle class professionals, ministers, skilled craftsmen, laborers, and domestics all resided on or near Auburn, thriving for several decades within the black world they nurtured.

At his birth in 1929, King became part of an economically and socially prosperous community, but one which also struggled within the confines of racial segregation. King's childhood in this community combined racial pride and progress with persistent fears of economic decline and the humiliation associated with unpredictable and irrational racial prejudice. Within a few years of King's birth, the Depression began to take its toll upon the community, especially the residential section. Black professionals exited the community for new residential areas to the west, leaving behind laboring residents unable or unwilling to invest money and time into older, often rented dwellings. As the century progressed, Auburn Avenue's commercial vitality persisted, but decades of poverty and neglect had degraded the housing.

Between 1929 and 1941, King and his family lived at 501 Auburn Avenue, in a two-story,
Queen Anne house. His neighbors included black professionals like Charles Harper, the first principal of Booker T. Washington High School, as well as skilled and unskilled laborers. The blocks between Boulevard and Howell Street had two-story Queen Anne houses and modest two- to three-room vernacular dwellings. Originally, the entire area east of Jackson Street (the Site's western boundary) and north and south of the Site was predominantly residential. King attended David T. Howard Elementary School, several blocks north of his home, played in grassed vacant lots behind his house along Edgewood Avenue, and frequented several corner stores within a two-block vicinity. Auburn Avenue west of Jackson Street consisted of denser commercial development. Ebenezer Baptist Church straddled the commercial and residential boundary.

In 1941, the King family moved north of Auburn Avenue, to a middle-class residential area known as Bishop's Row at Boulevard and Houston. King's house was demolished to make way for the Freedom Parkway. Daddy King, young King's father, still ministered at Ebenezer Baptist Church, and King attended services there until he left Atlanta to pursue his theological education in Pennsylvania and Boston. Ebenezer later played an important role in King's return to Atlanta in 1960. King followed in his father's footsteps, pastoring at Ebenezer and utilizing his pulpit and its conferred social status to help organize black civil rights activities in Atlanta and across America.

Ebenezer Baptist Church symbolizes both King's individual efforts toward achieving racial equality and the impressive role black clergymen played in post-World War II civil rights activities. Black clergymen traditionally had great prestige and authority in the black community, but prior to the 1950s, they rarely led civil rights protests that extended beyond their church membership or community. A new generation of southern black ministers, including King, Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, Rev. C. K. Steele, and Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, took the lead in the fight against segregation on a national level. King urged civil rights activists to utilize the Christian doctrines of nonviolence, redemption through suffering, and love for all enemies in their protests. Having studied the principles of civil disobedience exemplified by Henry David Thoreau and Mohandas Gandhi, King and the SCLC developed new strategies utilizing massive peaceful marches and demonstrations to confront the southern system of segregation. Beginning with the boycott of segregated buses in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955-1956, King spearheaded the movement that spread throughout the South and elicited considerable sympathy among whites nationally.

Through the SCLC, King supported local movements against segregation in Birmingham and Selma, Alabama; Albany, Georgia; St. Augustine, Florida; and elsewhere. Demonstrations planned or led by King often were brutally repressed by white authorities, resulting in intensive national media coverage of these events. The attention that King focused on the plight of southern blacks was instrumental in gaining passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, major legislative victories for the Civil Rights Movement. King received numerous awards, including the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition of his nonviolent civil rights work.

The assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968, robbed the American Civil Rights Movement of one of its most effective and respected leaders. Following his death, SCLC and other black activist organizations continued civil protests. But these organizations' beliefs and tactics varied widely, and their subsequent campaigns never gained the cohesion which, although fragile at times, generally characterized the progressive campaigns led by King.

DESCRIPTION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
The Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site is a small, urban park located in the city of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. Containing approximately 38 acres, 4.78 of which are federally owned, the Site lies 1-1/4 miles east of the central business district (map 1). [2]

Most properties within the Site front one of two avenues running east and west, Auburn Avenue and Edgewood Avenue. The Site is irregularly shaped and roughly bounded by Jackson Street on the west, Cain Street on the north from Jackson to Boulevard, Old Wheat Street on the north between Boulevard and Howell Street, Howell Street on the east, and the rear property lines on the south side of Edgewood Avenue. Current land use within the Site is mostly residential on Auburn Avenue and largely commercial on Edgewood Avenue and north of Irwin Street. The Site is located in a predominantly black residential and commercial area characterized by low-income housing in poor condition and moderate commercial activity on Edgewood and along Auburn Avenue west of the Site. The Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc. (King Center), is located on the west side of the Site and occupies an entire city block. [3]

The Site commemorates the life and accomplishments of Martin Luther King, Jr., a prominent leader of the American Civil Rights Movement during the 1950s and 1960s. Federal legislation established the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site and
Preservation District on October 10, 1980, to "protect and interpret for the benefit, inspiration, and education of present and future generations the places where Martin Luther King, Junior, was born, where he lived, worked, and worshipped, and where he is buried." Historic resources within the Site include the houses along the block where King was born (Birth-Home Block), Ebenezer Baptist Church where King, his father, and grandfather were pastors, and commercial buildings along Edgewood Avenue. As noted, the legislation identifies the grave site of King as a resource requiring protection and interpretation. Since 1971, the King Center has housed the grave site, consisting of the marble tomb and eternal flame. The King Center, a modern complex built between 1971 and 1981, also includes a memorial plaza with a fountain, interpretive exhibits, a restaurant, and administrative offices. The National Park Service (NPS) does not contribute to interpretive programs at the gravesite. However, NPS does maintain the grave site at the King Center and conducts tours of the Birth Home.

The Martin Luther King, Jr., Preservation District (Preservation District), also established in the 1980 legislation, adjoins the Site on the east, north, and west and embraces the larger Auburn Avenue black community in which King grew up. The Preservation District links King's career to the black business, religious, social, and political organizations that flourished along Auburn Avenue prior to and during King's lifetime (map 2).

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY

This Historic Resource Study (HRS) identifies and evaluates the historic properties within the Site. The study establishes and documents historic contexts associated with the Site and then evaluates the extent to which the historic resources represent those contexts. The completed HRS will serve as a tool for future Site planning, resource management decisions, and the continuing development of interpretive programs at the Site.

The architectural resources of the Site primarily represent the formative years of King's life, from 1929 through 1948, rather than the events for which he subsequently gained national and international recognition. Although much of his civil rights activity occurred outside Atlanta, King resided in Atlanta from 1960 to 1968. He also established a base of operations for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the city in 1957. Most of the resources
within the Site are important for interpreting King's youth; Ebenezer Baptist Church is the only significant Site resource associated with King's adult career.

The Site is located in an urban area that has suffered significant deterioration in recent decades and continues to be threatened. Several architectural surveys have been conducted within the Site and the Preservation District. Although the park is listed in the National Register, many individual structures were not documented in the nomination, and a comprehensive interpretive study of the Site remains unfinished. The HRS and associated surveys will provide park management with a physical survey of structures, an interpretive framework for the Site, and National Register documentation for the park's historic resources.

SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

Survey Methodology

Goals of the historic resources survey of the Site are to 1) update the List of Classified Structures (LCS) database for the Site for use by park management; 2) prepare a Historic Resource Study for the Site; 3) update National Register documentation for the Site; 4) assemble a comprehensive inventory of the Site's historic structures, completing Georgia State Historic Preservation Office survey forms and a photographic record for each structure built prior to 1950 and considered eligible for listing in the National Register. The assembled documentation will be used in complying with Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Initially, the survey team examined building files, maintenance records, historic research compiled by the park staff, and maps at the park headquarters. The field survey of the park yielded information on the present condition of the historic resources. Additionally, the team reviewed archival materials at the Southeast Regional Office of the National Park Service (NPS) and at the Site. Research with primary and secondary sources was conducted at the park library, the Atlanta Historical Society, the Fulton County Clerk of Court, and elsewhere to obtain information on the Sweet Auburn neighborhood, the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the American Civil Rights Movement. Maps and Atlanta city directories helped trace the physical development of the area. The survey team relied heavily on several unpublished studies of the Site and vicinity for specific information. Independent researchers and park staff previously compiled most of the necessary historic information, though several buildings with uncertain construction dates required additional research.

Determination of Historic Contexts

This study will assess and evaluate the Site's historic resources in relationship to three historic contexts identified by the survey team. These contexts correspond closely to historic themes identified by the NPS and the Georgia SHPO. The thematic framework of the NPS is outlined in History and Prehistory in the National Park System and the National Historic Landmark Program. In addition to general historical themes like "Architecture" or "Commerce," the Georgia SHPO has identified twelve distinctive aspects of Georgia history. These aspects are currently undeveloped but should be considered when assembling local and state context studies.

The following three historic contexts (chapters 1 through 3) were developed for this study: 1) The Development of a Black Community and Leader: Atlanta's Auburn Avenue Neighborhood and Martin Luther King, Jr., 1906-1948; 2) Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1968; and 3) Architectural Resources of the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, ca. 1880-1950.
The first context, The Development of a Black Community and Leader: Atlanta's Auburn Avenue Neighborhood and Martin Luther King, Jr., 1906-1948, relates to the NPS subtheme "Ethnic Communities" of Theme XXX, "American Ways of Life." This context also relates to two aspects of Georgia history: "Large Black Population and Strong Cultural Presence" and "Conflict and Accommodation in Race Relations." The context addresses the physical, social, and economic environment in which Martin Luther King, Jr., was reared. The Site embraces only a portion of the Auburn Avenue neighborhood, while the geographical area for this context encompasses an area akin to the Preservation District. Subthemes within this context include urban life, ethnic community growth and isolation, and occupational and class distinctions. The context begins in 1906, the year a bloody race riot signalled increased racial segregation patterns among black and white Atlantans, both residually and commercially. The context ends in 1948, the year that King left Atlanta to pursue his education at Crozer Seminary in Pennsylvania.

Chapter 1 will briefly summarize the development of the Auburn Avenue black neighborhood. The chapter then will address the influence of the community on the intellectual and moral development of Martin Luther King, Jr. Throughout the period of significance, Auburn Avenue between Pryor on the west and Randolph on the east was the focus of Atlanta's east-side black community. Many of the churches, businesses, and other institutions of key importance to the Auburn Avenue black community are located outside the boundaries of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic Site. Thus, a discussion of these community institutions is essential in establishing this context, but only those historic resources that lie within the historic site will be evaluated in relation to this context.

The second context, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the American Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1968, is closely related to the NPS subtheme "Civil Rights Movements" under Theme XXXI, "Social and Humanitarian Movements." The context relates to the Georgia SHPO contextual theme "Major Theater for Civil Rights Movement." Chapter 2 encompasses the period during which King was a nationally prominent civil rights leader. King's civil rights activity in Atlanta during the period was limited primarily to his involvement with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Ebenezer Baptist Church, local lunch counter sit-ins, and a labor dispute at Scripto, Inc. Events occurring across America, many involving King, are important in establishing this context and will be briefly sketched. The chapter begins with the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott led by the city's religious leaders, including King, and ends with his death in Memphis, Tennessee.

The final context, Architectural Resources of the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, ca. 1880-1950 relates to NPS theme XVI, "Architecture" and to the Georgia SHPO historical theme, "Architecture." [6] This context addresses buildings possessing local architectural significance recognized under Criteria C. The context commences with the earliest building construction date within the Site. All buildings constructed prior to 1950 were surveyed; however, only in exceptional cases are buildings less than fifty years old eligible under this context. The Site's architectural resources represent residential and commercial buildings common in urban areas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Few of these resources exhibit high-style architectural features, but they serve as good examples of local adaptations of popular methods of construction which often incorporate elements of nationally popular architectural styles.

**Determination of Significant Property Types**

Property types are determined by shared form, function, associations, events, or physical characteristics among a group of resources and may include buildings, sites, structures, or objects. These property types are primarily based on a knowledge of historic contexts and then on whether the type is a manageable and efficient tool for setting requirements for
National Register listing. Base property types relate to National Register criteria, either physical or associative, and illustrate the broadest possible range of applicable resources.

National Register Bulletin 16B discusses some applications of structural typology. "Property types may be defined to include resources that are associated with the general growth or prosperity influenced by the theme and that are not directly resultant from the predominant theme of the context." As an example, the bulletin states railroad-era buildings and structures "could include commercial buildings, public buildings, residences, bridges, storage sheds, as well as railroad stations and freighthouses" of the period. [7]

The historic resources of the Site, composed largely of residential and commercial buildings, derive their primary significance from their association with the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the American Civil Rights Movement. Many of these buildings also are eligible for listing in the National Register as examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century urban structural fabric once common throughout Atlanta. Building typologies, such as double shotguns, provide a framework in which significant property types can be studied and their relationship to historic contexts solidified. Property types at the Site are based on massing, architectural style, function, and period of construction.

Derivation of Integrity Requirements

Requirements for integrity were based upon the property's association with the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the American Civil Rights Movement (Criteria A and B.) In addition, integrity requirements stress the physical characteristics of the properties (Criterion C) as they relate to location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Properties eligible for listing only under Criterion C are held to a higher standard of integrity than those eligible under Criteria A and B.

HISTORICAL BASE MAP DISCUSSION

The historical base map (Appendix A) visually connects resources extant during the period of significance with the present physical environment. The historical base map for the Site illustrates the built, urban environment during the period King lived on Auburn Avenue (1929-1941). The map includes street layout, as well as residential and commercial buildings, alleys, and the spatial relationships among buildings and other urban structural features. Extant structures (1992) are represented by a solid line; extant historic structures are shaded; and nonextant historic structures, including streetcar lines, alleys, and buildings, are indicated by a broken line. All nonextant historic structures were present during the period of significance; some have been replaced by nonhistoric buildings. Thus, broken line building footprints and solid line imprints in some cases are overlaid. Buildings destroyed or replaced by other structures within the period of significance are not indicated. Thus structural change within the period of significance is not discernable. Two important environmental features—the presence of alleys, both dirt and paved, and streetcar lines—are illustrated by broken lines indicating that they are no longer extant. A second map is included that indicates the street addresses of extant historic buildings. All of these structures except King's grave site were present during the period of significance. The grave site is an eligible historic resource that falls outside the period of significance (see page 51). Additional information on the historic structures is provided in Appendix B, Building Descriptions.

The historical base map best illustrates the use of space in an early twentieth century black neighborhood. Closely spaced housing and commercial buildings are located on major city thoroughfares and narrow alleys. Outbuildings for autos and storage are abundant, and the corner store also is a common feature. Detailed landscape features on the Birth-Home Block, such as sidewalk pavement, fencing, location of utility lines, street lighting, and fire hydrants
will be illustrated on maps included in the Cultural Landscape Report.

Several sources were consulted to compose the historical base map: 1911 and 1932 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, a 1928 City Engineer (Atlanta) Topographic Map, and two aerial photographs taken by the Soil Conservation Service in 1939 and the Atlanta Metropolitan Planning Commission in 1949. Historic photograph collections at the Atlanta Historical Society, the Georgia Department of Archives and History, and the Georgia State Labor History Archives were consulted. Also, a Works Projects Administration cadastral map (1937) and City of Atlanta Council Meeting Minutes verified changes and additions to the urban environment including alleys, paving, water sources, and streetcar lines.
Chapter One:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BLACK COMMUNITY AND LEADER: ATLANTA'S AUBURN AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD AND MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., 1906-1948

During Martin Luther King, Jr.'s youth, Atlanta's Auburn Avenue neighborhood was a vital, largely self-contained black community. A product of segregation, the community included laborers and domestic workers as well as successful professionals and businessmen. King grew up understanding both the limits imposed by segregation and the achievements that blacks accomplished in spite of it. The Auburn Avenue environment helped shape King's mature views on racial harmony and social justice.

The Auburn Avenue community developed against a backdrop of increasingly rigid, legally enforced racial segregation and the effective disfranchisement of blacks throughout the American South in the 1890s and 1900s. Following the end of Reconstruction in 1877, inconsistency and flux characterized southern race relations. Before 1900, few southern states required segregation in public places. Separation in public activities was common, but local racial protocol varied considerably. In urban areas, limited racial mixing on public carriers, in common areas, and even in work places testified to the fragile foothold that blacks had established in municipalities. The political participation of southern blacks also varied considerably in this period. Beginning in the 1890s, however, southern whites fashioned a strictly segregated public realm and eliminated blacks' civil and political rights. In Atlanta, a 1906 race riot accelerated the development of separate spheres for blacks and whites in the city.

The Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in 1870, prohibited the denial of the franchise "by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." However, when the protection of federal troops was withdrawn, blacks' voting rights increasingly were restricted through intimidation, restrictive legislation, and discriminatory practices. Whites employed numerous devices to disfranchise blacks without openly flouting the Fifteenth Amendment. Southern governments created all-white primaries, poll taxes, literacy tests, and complicated voting procedures to exclude black voters. Many of these measures also limited the franchise of less affluent whites, in spite of mitigating efforts like "grandfather clauses." Grandfather clauses sheltered illiterate whites by exempting from literacy requirements individuals whose ancestors had voted prior to emancipation. By 1910, nearly all southern states had enacted suffrage laws that prevented blacks from voting.

In Atlanta, whites limited black political participation as early as 1872. That year the city's Democratic Party adopted the white primary, excluding blacks from this preliminary selection process. Following the decline of the Republican Party in the South, nomination in a Democratic primary usually assured victory in the general election. Although blacks in Georgia were generally excluded from Democratic primaries, their votes were occasionally sought, and often manipulated, in close contests. In the 1890s, the rise of the Populist Party
led to increased competition for southern black votes. Georgia disfranchisement policies wavered as Populist and Democrat candidates vied for urban and rural black votes in 1892, 1894, and 1896. Shortly thereafter, Georgia whites, uncomfortable with black political power, especially in close elections, resumed efforts to effectively disfranchise blacks. This was accomplished in an amendment to the state constitution ratified by referendum in 1908. The primary motivation was to prevent blacks from voting in state and national contests. Even after this date, some blacks were able to vote in Atlanta municipal elections. [13]

By 1900, increased efforts to codify segregation practices accompanied disfranchisement measures. The Federal Civil Rights Act of 1875 prohibited segregation on steamboats, railroad cars, hotels, theaters, and other places of entertainment, but it was rarely enforced. In October 1883, the U.S. Supreme Court declared the act's enabling clauses unconstitutional, nullifying its effectiveness. In 1890, the court went further and upheld a Mississippi law mandating "separate but equal" accommodations for black and white railroad passengers. In 1896, the Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* sanctioned the same principle of racial separation in education. Following these rulings, southern states enacted numerous segregation or "Jim Crow" statutes limiting black and white contact in most public places. [14]

Atlanta's Auburn Avenue reflected the changing nature of southern race relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As was typical in newer postbellum southern cities, Atlanta blacks were clustered residentially in a number of distinct settlements. Many black neighborhoods were in less desirable low-lying areas or near railroad tracks. However, Atlanta neighborhoods and blocks were less rigidly segregated from 1870 to 1890 than they were after 1900, when Jim Crow was more firmly established. De facto residential segregation existed in the late nineteenth century but was not uniform. After 1900, as Atlanta grew and white hostility increased, the color line became firmly drawn. [15]

Auburn Avenue was opened in 1853 as Wheat Street, named for Augustus M. Wheat, a white merchant. The street runs east from Whitehall Street in downtown Atlanta. The Atlanta City Council renamed the street in April 1893 at the request of residents who thought Auburn Avenue sounded more stylish. [16] Between the 1850s and 1906, Auburn Avenue developed primarily as a white residential and business district that included a substantial black minority. [17] From 1884 to 1900, the racial make-up of the area bounded by Old Wheat Street, Howell, Edgewood, and Jackson (now a portion of the Site) remained substantially constant at approximately 55 percent white and 45 percent black. [18] As one study noted:

> Interestingly enough, the old Fourth Ward, in which the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site and Preservation District are located, not only had the greatest proportion of blacks in 1896 (46 percent of the ward's population), but the highest degree of integration as well (26 percent of residences located adjacent to or across from a residence of another race), a possible indication of the area's appeal to both blacks and whites. [19]

Around 1900, more blacks began to move to the Auburn Avenue neighborhood. This trend accelerated following the bloody September 1906 race riot, during which whites attacked many blacks and black-owned properties in downtown Atlanta and other neighborhoods. A riot relief committee reported that ten blacks and two whites died in the rioting, but contemporary observers put the death toll as high as 100. Black disfranchisement, racial fears, and black economic power were all factors involved in the build-up to the riot. The riot followed a Georgia election for governor in which both candidates, Hoke Smith and Clark Howell, appealed to anti-black sentiment. Both candidates had ties to Atlanta newspapers, which published a series of highly sensationalized accounts of alleged crimes by black males against white women. The month prior to the riot, one thousand delegates to the National Negro Business League convention had met in Atlanta, antagonizing some whites who
resented successful blacks. [20]

Subject to increased hostility and rising rents for downtown retail and office space, black businessmen left the central business district and began to concentrate on Auburn Avenue between Courtland and Jackson streets. This area's growing black residential population provided a customer base for these businesses. By 1909, black residences outnumbered white residences along Auburn by 117 to 74, and the section of Auburn Avenue between Courtland Avenue and Jackson Street contained 64 black businesses. Once the Auburn Avenue black business area was established, the number of downtown black business concerns declined sharply. [21]

The Auburn Avenue black community emerged because rigid social and physical segregation denied blacks meaningful roles in white-dominated society. In Atlanta and elsewhere in the urban South, blacks developed and strengthened their own churches, businesses, social and cultural institutions, and social welfare agencies.

Between 1910 and 1930, the Auburn Avenue neighborhood became the center of Atlanta black life. Black Masonic leader John Wesley Dobbs tagged the area "Sweet Auburn," because its churches, homes, and commercial buildings were highly visible emblems of black achievement. The Avenue and its vicinity was the site of influential black businesses, churches, and a diverse black residential community. Businesses concentrated on Auburn west of Jackson, and residences lay east. After 1920, industrial concerns that presumably employed blacks, such as laundries and a pencil factory, located on Houston Street. Housing segregation confined blacks to limited areas in Atlanta, and working-class and middle-class blacks often lived side by side in the Auburn Avenue neighborhood. [22]

Small retail businesses, such as barber shops, cleaners and tailors, groceries, drugstores, and restaurants, shared the Avenue with substantial black-owned banks and insurance companies. The Atlanta Life Insurance Company began as a small mutual aid society founded by members of the Wheat Street Baptist Church in 1904. Purchased by black entrepreneur Alonzo Herndon in 1905 and combined by him with other small mutual aid societies, Atlanta Life became one of the largest black-owned proprietary companies in America. [23]

Auburn Avenue exhibited considerable social class and occupational diversity. From 1910 to 1930, many black teachers, clergymen, physicians, and businessmen lived in the community. The most prestigious addresses were on Auburn Avenue and on Houston Street, known as "Bishops Row," because it was home to several Methodist bishops employed at nearby Morris Brown College. Other prominent Auburn Avenue residents were Bishop Lucius H. Holsey of the Methodist Church, Charles L. Harper, the first principal of Booker T. Washington High School, and the Reverend Peter James Bryant of Wheat Street Baptist Church. [24] Domestic workers, laundresses, carpenters, and laborers also called Auburn Avenue home. Many laborers found employment in the industrial concerns along Houston Street. The neighborhood's housing stock reflected this diversity in employment. Two-story Victorian houses, two-room shotgun cottages, and boarding houses shared Auburn Avenue addresses (photographs 2 and 3).
Black churches were the oldest and most important Auburn Avenue institutions. Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal churches dominated black community life, providing spiritual support to their members and meeting places for many community groups. Numerous social, cultural, and educational institutions and businesses, such as banks and life insurance companies, originated in church benevolent societies. Church leadership conferred great status and autonomy within the black community and often served as a conduit to the white power structure. Ministers led efforts to improve conditions in the community and served on the boards of black colleges, businesses, and social-service institutions. [23] Prominent Auburn Avenue churches included Wheat Street Baptist Church (founded 1870), Bethel AME Church (reorganized in 1865), Butler Street Colored (later Christian) Methodist Episcopal Church (founded 1884), First Congregational Church (founded 1867), and Martin Luther King, Jr.’s church, Ebenezer Baptist Church (founded 1886). [26]

Auburn Avenue boasted an array of organizations devoted to enriching the social, cultural, and social-welfare aspects of black life. These groups included women’s clubs, an orphanage and school, Social clubs, fraternal orders, libraries, and a YMCA. Large black fraternal
orders, like the Odd Fellows, Masons, and Knights of Tabor, added self-help activities to their social and recreational concerns. Members of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows participated in an insurance benefit program and could borrow money from the order to start businesses and purchase property. [27]

The chief rival to Auburn Avenue as a center of black life was the area surrounding the Atlanta University complex on the city's West Side. The site of several black colleges since the 1870s, the West Side in the 1920s began to attract middle-income blacks in search of new homes. Serious overcrowding in the Auburn Avenue neighborhood contributed to the shift to the West Side. By 1950, if not earlier, the West Side had replaced Auburn Avenue as the preferred residential address for relatively affluent blacks, but Auburn Avenue continued as a center of black business activity well into the 1950s. [28]

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., IN THE AUBURN AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD

Martin Luther King, Jr., lived within the Site until he was twelve and within the broader Auburn Avenue community until he was eighteen. The close-knit world of Auburn Avenue, with its emphasis on church and family and its pride in black self-reliance and achievement, profoundly influenced King. Martin Luther King, Jr., was born in a house at 501 Auburn Avenue (Birth Home) on January 15, 1929. The Reverend Adam Daniel Williams (known as A. D.) of Ebenezer Baptist Church, King's maternal grandfather, had purchased the house in 1909. King's father, Martin Luther King, Sr. (Daddy King), moved to the house in 1926, upon his marriage to Alberta Williams (photograph 4). The King family lived on Auburn Avenue until 1941, when they moved three blocks away to 193 Boulevard, near the intersection of Boulevard and Houston Street. This house, built about 1924 and occupied by a black physician, John W. Burney, from 1925 to 1939, is no longer standing and was located outside the Site's boundaries. [29]

In childhood, King observed blacks succeeding within the constraints of a segregated society. Daddy King's ministry gave the family many contacts with black community leaders. Black clergymen, educators, and businessmen often visited Ebenezer Church and the King home. Yet, the community housed a broad range of residents, and King's neighbors employed shovels and brooms as well as pens and cash registers. This environment exposed King to the richness and poverty of black community life.

From an early age, King resented the limitations segregation imposed on blacks, both within and outside his community. King attended Younge Street and David T. Howard elementary schools, both segregated institutions, and commuted on the backs of buses to Atlanta University Lab School and Morehouse College on the West Side of Atlanta. He received discriminatory treatment at downtown stores, movie theaters, and restaurants. One Georgia bus trip fixed the humiliations of segregation in King's mind forever. The driver ordered King and a high school teacher, returning from an oratorical competition, to give up their seats to whites. King later said he was never angrier than on that day. [30]

King also observed the efforts of his father and others to resist the inferior treatment of blacks. In his autobiographical work, Stride Toward Freedom, King related how his father forcefully objected when a white policeman called Daddy King a boy. On another occasion, the senior King stormed out of a downtown shoe store when asked to step to the rear of the store. King's father and grandfather both worked to register black voters; A. D. Williams's efforts helped defeat Atlanta school bond issues until they provided for a black high school. Daddy King was an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and helped lead efforts to equalize the pay of black and white school teachers, to establish Booker T. Washington High School (Atlanta's first public high
school for blacks), and to desegregate elevators in the Atlanta courthouse. [31]

As the son and grandson of prominent Baptist ministers, King knew from personal experience the crucial role of the church in southern black life. Just two blocks west on Auburn Avenue, Ebenezer Baptist Church was a second home to young Martin Luther King, Jr. He spent all day Sunday and much of weekday afternoons and evenings at the church. [32] Prominent black clergymen from as far away as Chicago stayed with the Kings when in Atlanta. King's father was active in his denomination's national organization, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., serving on its executive board. [33] Ministers had been leaders of the black community from slavery days and would play a leading role in the Civil Rights Movement.

King's background in the black Christian church also helped him to develop a moral basis for opposing segregation. Christian precepts of community, the redemptive power of suffering, and love for enemies provided the basis for King's philosophy of nonviolent resistance to discriminatory laws and customs. King's theological studies at Crozer Seminary and Boston University built on this early exposure to Christian principles at Ebenezer Baptist. Because of his background, King was able to call upon the images and metaphors familiar to millions of southern black churchgoers to rally support for the Civil Rights Movement. Old Testament themes of exile and eventual deliverance had special meaning for southern blacks, who often saw themselves as internal exiles. Black spirituals and gospel songs became mainstays of the Civil Rights Movement. [34]

The experience of growing up on Auburn Avenue firmly rooted Martin Luther King, Jr., in southern black culture. He learned of the diversity, triumphs, and failures of southern blacks. King used this experience to lead blacks in the struggle against segregation. The black church provided a community model that transcended class and status distinctions. King's youthful experience in the Auburn Avenue community helped shape his vision of a just interracial society.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES AND PROPERTY TYPES

The Birth Home, Ebenezer Baptist Church, and other Site residences are the properties associated with the context The Development of a Black Community and Leader: Atlanta's Auburn Avenue Neighborhood and Martin Luther King, Jr., 1906-1948. Residences are grouped as a property type because they share functional and associative characteristics. The Birth Home is considered separately because of its unique associations with King's youth, while Ebenezer Baptist Church is the only religious building within the Site associated with this context.

Physical Characteristics

East of Boulevard, the Site remains a residential neighborhood, as it was during King's residence. The basic spatial relationships along the Birth-Home Block (Street and sidewalk widths and building setbacks) are unchanged from the 1929-1941 period, although several residences and small store buildings have been demolished. West of Boulevard, the King Center and the Martin Luther King, Jr., Community Center have replaced residences, altering the character of land use surrounding Ebenezer Baptist Church.

The Birth Home, 511 Auburn Avenue, was built ca. 1894 and occupied by whites until sold to the Reverend A. D. Williams, King's maternal grandfather, in 1909. The house is a two-story frame structure with Queen Anne features, including irregular massing, shingled gables, a broad front porch wrapping around part of the west side, scrollwork porch brackets, and a circular window next to the front door (photograph 5). The NPS has restored the interior and
photograph 5: martin luther king, jr. birth home, 501 auburn avenue.

ebenezer baptist church (407-413 auburn avenue) is a three-story red brick and stucco gothic revival church constructed from 1914 to 1922 and located at the southeast corner of auburn avenue and jackson street. to the east of the church is a 1956 education building addition, faced with red brick.

the other site residences located on auburn avenue, old wheat street, howell street, hogue street, and boulevard date from circa 1880 to 1933. two subtypes of residence predominate: single-family houses from 1890-1910 and double shotgun houses from the first decade of the twentieth century. the single family houses are generally two-story frame structures, with queen anne or vernacular victorian detailing. typical characteristics of these houses include irregular massing, projecting bays, broad front porches carried on columns or posts, contrasting surface areas of shingles and clapboard siding, and decorative millwork. the double shotgun houses are single-story frame structures, often with turned and jigsawed porch decoration. in plan, the shotgun houses are one room wide and two or three rooms deep, with each room opening directly into the room behind. the double shotgun houses consist of two shotgun houses joined by a party wall with separate front entrances for each half of the house. ornamentation on the double shotgun houses is minimal. one rectangular frame store building, built around 1920, survives at 521-1/2 auburn.

chapter 3, architectural resources of the martin luther king, jr., national historic site, ca. 1880-1950, contains detailed physical descriptions of the birth home, ebenezer baptist
Church, and the other Site residences.

**Associative Characteristics**

The Birth Home and Ebenezer Baptist Church are closely associated with the formative years of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. King was born in an upstairs bedroom of the Birth Home and lived there until he was twelve. King's family was a prominent one in the Auburn Avenue black community, and black ministers, educators, and businessmen were frequent guests in the house. The Birth Home represents the role of King's family and the black community in shaping King's beliefs and character. As the eldest son of Ebenezer's pastor, King spent a great deal of time in the church, at services and other church functions, from his earliest years until he was eighteen. Ebenezer Baptist Church was also an important institution in the largely self-sufficient Auburn Avenue black community. Ebenezer symbolizes the important place of the black church in this community and in King's youth.

The other residences, fire station, sidewalk store building, and landscape features within the Site help to evoke the appearance of the neighborhood where King grew up. These houses formed the physical environment of King's youth. Two houses within the Site were occupied by prominent members of the Auburn Avenue black community. The Reverend Peter J. Bryant, pastor of Wheat Street Baptist Church, and later, Antoine Graves, a real estate broker, lived at 522 Auburn, and Charles L. Harper, Atlanta's first black high school principal, lived at 535 Auburn. The diversity in size and cost of the extant residences within the Site helps to convey the social class and occupational diversity that characterized the neighborhood during King's youth.

**Significance**

The Birth Home is nationally significant under Criterion B (persons) as the birthplace and boyhood home of Martin Luther King, Jr., a nationally recognized civil rights leader. King's own autobiographical writings as well as the written and taped recollections of his father and sister document his childhood in this house. King's national significance as an adult civil rights leader is documented below in chapter 2. The Birth Home is also locally significant under Criterion A (events) as a component of the larger Auburn Avenue black community.

Ebenezer Baptist Church is nationally significant under Criterion B (persons) as a place where King spent much of his youth and where his mature beliefs and values began to take shape. Ebenezer Baptist Church is an extremely significant link to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s formative years. At Ebenezer, King learned the Christian doctrines that helped form the basis of his nonviolent opposition to racial discrimination. The Civil Rights Movement relied on themes and images common to the southern black Christian experience. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s exposure to southern black religious culture largely occurred at Ebenezer Baptist Church. King's youthful activities at Ebenezer are well documented in his autobiographical writings and in several biographies of King. Ebenezer is also locally significant under Criterion A (events) as an important institution in the Auburn Avenue community. King's later involvement with Ebenezer Baptist Church as co-pastor from 1960 to 1968 and the church's role as a site for numerous Civil Rights Movement conferences, meetings, and strategy sessions enhance the national significance of this resource under Criterion A (see chapter 2 below).

Other residences within the Site, Fire Station Number Six, and landscape features such as historic sidewalks are contributing resources under Criteria A (events) and B (persons), because they represent the environment in which King grew up. The largely self-contained Auburn Avenue black neighborhood helped form King's character and influenced King's future development as a civil rights leader. The extant Site residences are physical links to
the community that existed from 1929 to 1941

The eligibility of these resources under Criterion C (design/construction) is considered below in chapter 3.

**REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS/INTEGRITY**

In general, birthplaces are eligible for National Register listing if the person is of outstanding historical importance and other appropriate sites connected with the individual's productive life are not available. For Martin Luther King, Jr., Congress specifically authorized the protection and interpretation of King's birthplace as part of the Site. King is unquestionably of national historical importance as a civil rights leader.

The NPS has restored the interior and exterior of the Birth Home to represent its appearance during King's years of residence. The Birth Home possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The essential physical features that defined the appearance of the house in 1929-1941 are intact.

Church properties usually are eligible for National Register listing only if their significance derives primarily from architectural or historical importance, independent of the property's religious function. Ebenezer Baptist Church has historical importance in relationship to this context both as an institution of great importance to the Auburn Avenue black community and as a place where Martin Luther King, Jr., spent much of his youth. King became historically important as a national civil rights leader, not as a pastor. The influences that shaped King's career as a civil rights leader are represented in Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Ebenezer Baptist Church possesses a high degree of integrity. The exterior and interior are substantially as they were from 1929 to 1941. Exterior materials, window and door openings, decorative brick work, and stained glass windows are unchanged. The addition of an education building in 1956 and a minor 1971 addition to the south facade of the church are changes with minor visual impact. The education building has significance under the Civil Rights Movement context as the site of important events connected with the Civil Rights Movement (see chapter 2). Ebenezer Baptist is in current use as a church and is instantly recognizable as such. It possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and setting. It also retains considerable integrity of setting, although surrounding land use has changed somewhat from residential to institutional (King Center and community center).

To qualify as contributing resources, Site residences must have been present during the period (1929-1941) that Martin Luther King, Jr., lived within the Site. Residences on the Birth Block or near enough to it to have been an important part of King's youthful environment are evaluated under this context. Because residences are primarily significant under this context for associative characteristics rather than for design, a considerable degree of alteration or deterioration may be present without defeating eligibility. Much of the housing stock within the Site has deteriorated since 1941, detracting from the integrity of design and workmanship in some cases. Some single-family houses have been converted to multiple occupancy; nonhistoric exterior treatments, such as asphalt siding, have been applied to some structures; and some original architectural details have been removed or replaced. To be eligible as a contributing resource, enough original fabric should remain to permit a residence, after exterior rehabilitation, to adequately represent the appearance of the neighborhood in the 1929-1941 period.

Some residences within the Site are not eligible as contributing resources under this context because they lack integrity. More than 75 percent of the original fabric of 492-494 Auburn
had to be replaced, making this structure a reconstruction and therefore ineligible. 18 Howell, which has suffered years of structural and architectural deterioration and a fire, does not retain sufficient integrity to qualify as a contributing resource. In addition, 479-481 Old Wheat Street, through various alterations over the years, has lost most of its distinctive architectural decorative features such as the porch millwork. It also has a concrete porch and has been converted to a single-family residence.

ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES

Nationally Significant

Ebenezer Baptist Church, 407-413 Auburn Avenue (1914-1922)
Birth Home, 501 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1894)

Contributing to the Site's National Significance

472-474 Auburn Avenue (1905)
476-478 Auburn Avenue (1905)
480-482 Auburn Avenue (1905)
484-486 Auburn Avenue (1905)
488-490 Auburn Avenue (1905)
491-493 Auburn Avenue (1911)
493 Auburn Avenue, Rear, units 1-6 (1911)
497 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1900) and back yard shed/garage (ca. 1933-1935)
503 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895) and granite front yard steps (ca. 1895-1915)
506 Auburn Avenue (1933)
510 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
514 Auburn Avenue (1893)
515 Auburn Avenue (1909)
518 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1893) and front walk (ca. 1895-1915)
521 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1886) and front walk (ca. 1890-1915)
521-1/2 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1920)
522 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1894)
526 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895)
530 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895) and iron fence (ca. 1895-1915)
535 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895)
540 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
546 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
550 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1890)
Fire Station Number Six, 37-39 Boulevard (1894)
53-55 Boulevard (1905)
483-485 Old Wheat Street (1905)
487-489 Old Wheat Street (1905)
53 Hogue Street (ca. 1940)
14 Howell Street (ca. 1927)
24 Howell Street (ca. 1895)
28 Howell Street (ca. 1895)
54 Howell Street (ca. 1931)
Alley running south from Auburn between 493 and 497 Auburn (ca. 1911)
Pea-gravel sidewalk on north side of Auburn between Boulevard and Howell Street (ca. 1922-1923)
Brick sidewalk on north side of Auburn east of Howell Street (ca. 1890-1920)
Brick sidewalk on west side of Howell Street north of Auburn Avenue (ca. 1895-1922)
NONELIGIBLE PROPERTIES

492-494 Auburn Avenue (ca. 1897), a reconstruction managed as a cultural resource
18 Howell Street (1927)
479-481 Old Wheat Street (1905)
Chapter Two:

This chapter briefly reviews the origins of the American Civil Rights Movement and provides an overview of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s career as a civil rights leader. The Civil Rights Movement encompassed many desegregation demonstrations and campaigns in diverse locations across the American South. Dr. King participated in many of these campaigns, while residing in Montgomery, Alabama (1954 to 1960), and Atlanta (1960-1968). Atlanta was also the headquarters of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an important civil rights organization headed by King from 1957 to 1968. The period of significance begins in 1955, when King became the leader of a movement to boycott segregated buses in Montgomery, Alabama, and ends in 1968, the year of King's death. [35]

AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Although the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), founded in 1909, had worked for decades to secure black civil rights, several factors infused black civil rights campaigns with new vigor and made national politicians more receptive to black demands following 1945. The experience of blacks in World War II, the increasing political power of blacks in northern cities, the willingness of some black ministers to more aggressively attack segregation, and the role of a new communications medium—television—in exposing Americans to the plight of blacks in the segregated South all influenced the postwar racial climate. [36]

As the United States slowly emerged from the Great Depression and prepared for the possibility of war, black leaders lobbied for equitable treatment of blacks in the military and defense industries. In January 1941, A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, an important black labor union, pressured the Roosevelt Administration to increase black employment in defense industries. Randolph began preparations for a mass protest march in Washington, D.C., with fifty to one hundred thousand black participants. President Franklin D. Roosevelt avoided the march by issuing Executive Order 8802 on June 25, 1941, banning employment discrimination by defense contractors. Approximately one million blacks served in the armed forces during World War II in segregated units, usually with white officers. But these men enjoyed greater opportunities to train as officers, pilots, and engineers than during previous conflicts. Black veterans returned from the war with broader horizons and enhanced self-confidence to press for full civil rights and an end to segregation. [37]

Legal racial segregation in public places continued after World War II throughout the South, where 70 percent of American blacks lived. In 1944, only 5 percent of black adults in the South were registered voters. The NAACP, led by blacks, spearheaded intensified challenges to segregation and disfranchisement and remained the dominant civil rights organization.
during the 1940s and 1950s. While the NAACP concentrated on legal challenges through the courts, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), an interracial group founded in 1942, experimented with nonviolent sit-ins to protest discriminatory hiring practices at Chicago department stores. CORE, however, never gained a large following among blacks.

The postwar federal courts and Democratic administrations were increasingly sympathetic to black concerns. The Democratic Party was becoming more dependent on black voters in northern cities and included in its ranks outspoken civil rights advocates like former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Minneapolis Mayor Hubert Humphrey. In 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court banned the all-white primary election, a device commonly employed in the one-party, Democratic South to exclude blacks from the political process. In 1946, President Harry S Truman appointed a biracial presidential commission that released a report, *To Secure These Rights*, which called for the elimination of segregation. The President issued an executive order in July 1948 desegregating the armed forces. A civil rights platform plank endorsed at the 1948 Democratic National Convention led to a walk-out by many Southern delegates and the creation of a third-party presidential ticket that carried four southern states. Also in 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court declared racially restrictive covenants in residential real estate transfers legally unenforceable. The covenants were widely used to prevent the sale of houses to nonwhites. In 1950, the Supreme Court ruled segregation on interstate railroad dining facilities unconstitutional.

In the early 1950s, blacks were gaining political influence in parts of the South. By 1952, 20 percent of eligible southern blacks were registered voters, a fourfold increase over 1944. Blacks were elected to city councils in Winston-Salem (1947) and Greensboro, North Carolina (1951). Most registration gains came in the Upper South rather than in the Deep-South states, where entrenched legal hurdles, culturally sanctioned intimidation, and violence effectively crippled enfranchisement attempts.

The most important legal defeat for segregation occurred in May 1954 when the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled segregated public schools unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education*—a group of consolidated cases the NAACP had been pursuing for years. The *Brown* decision greatly encouraged civil rights activists to expand their attacks on other aspects of segregation. It also intensified southern white resistance to integration.

Local desegregation campaigns launched the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s. In Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Montgomery, Alabama; and Tallahassee, Florida, blacks challenged segregation on city buses. Leadership of the bus boycotts quickly passed from teachers and other professionals to black clergymen. Black ministers, supported financially by their congregations, were less vulnerable to white economic reprisals. Churches also possessed unmatched prestige in the black community and controlled organizational assets. Church auditoriums and classrooms provided space for meetings, and mimeograph machines spread the message for mass actions.

During the Civil Rights Movement, blacks relied less on traditional legal challenges to segregation and more on direct-action protests, often involving hundreds or thousands of demonstrators. Southern blacks in the 1960s protested with boycotts, sit-ins, and marches, risking arrest and beatings from white law-enforcement officers. The press carried news of any violent response by white authorities to a national audience. The new medium of television cast a particularly harsh light on the repressive tactics of southern officials and spurred reform efforts nationally. Civil rights leaders always hoped to extract concessions from local governments, but federal legislation, which tended to be more progressive and broad-based and more likely to be enforced, was usually more effective in accomplishing change. Civil rights campaigns in the 1960s aimed to influence national opinion as much as
secure local concessions.
Chapter Three: ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES OF THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, CA. 1880-1950

The architectural resources of the Site reflect its continuing evolution as an inner city Atlanta neighborhood. Population growth, transportation advances, and changing patterns of racial segregation were important factors shaping that evolution. Between 1880 and 1930, Auburn Avenue and Edgewood Avenue within the Site boundaries developed at the same time, but served different needs and populations. Residential, commercial, religious, and public buildings are represented on these avenues, but four principal streets comprise the Site: Jackson and Boulevard running north and south and Edgewood and Auburn running east and west. The resources are clustered by use: Auburn Avenue is residential, and Edgewood Avenue is predominantly commercial. [87]

This chapter demonstrates the diversity of style and type within the Site and how architectural resources and their settings convey historical meaning. The residential resources that dominate Auburn Avenue and the commercial structures along Edgewood Avenue each illustrate different patterns of urban growth, yet they share characteristics with other urban communities which emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The residential resources incorporate elements of identifiable national architectural styles, such as Italianate, Queen Anne, and Craftsman, which are applied to vernacular house types. The commercial and public resources apply elements of the Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Moderne, and International styles to nineteenth and early twentieth century brick commercial buildings. Regional influences also are evident, especially in form. Shotgun houses and gabled ells predominate. Porches constitute the largest common regional denominator. Most of the Site's resources are vernacular in character. They adapt stylistic elements to suit economy and decoration, and they are traditionally massed.

The most intact historic area of Auburn Avenue lies between Boulevard and Howell and commonly is referred to as the Birth-Home Block, because it includes the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr. (photograph 8). This area contains the oldest residential resources and the highest level of integrity. Located on this portion of Auburn are twenty-three historic residences constructed between circa 1886 and 1933. Two lots, 502, which contained a house and store, and 509, which had an apartment building, are now vacant. One modern intrusion is located at 531 Auburn Avenue and consists of two 1954 brick apartment buildings, on a lot formerly containing four wood dwellings comprising the Baptist Memorial Institute School.
West of the Birth-Home Block lies the King Center, the modern city of Atlanta community center and natatorium, and Ebenezer Baptist Church. Prior to 1960s urban renewal, this portion of Auburn Avenue consisted of wooden, one- and two-story dwellings, likely similar to those farther east. The church, completed in 1922, anchors the western portion of Auburn Avenue historically but is now isolated from the Site's other historic resources. Farther west lies the historic Sweet Auburn district which served the black residential community to the east.

Thirteen additional dwellings complete the historic residential resources adjacent to the principal Birth-Home Block dwellings: three shotgun houses on an alley off of Auburn Avenue, three duplexes on Old Wheat Street, one duplex on Boulevard, five residences on Howell Street, and one on Hogue Street. These remaining resources are in various stages of deterioration. The buildings on Old Wheat and Howell streets are most endangered. The Birth-Home Block represents the southern edge of a substantial late nineteenth and early twentieth century black middle-class residential community roughly bounded by Jackson on the west, Randolph Street on the east, and Forrest Avenue on the north. Housing in this community ranged from plain two- to three-room houses to modest two-story wood dwellings. The 1917 fire destroyed many homes in this community, and the construction of Interstate 75/85 further obliterated evidence of the community. [88]

Edgewood Avenue, within the Site, is entirely commercial with sixteen brick buildings constructed prior to 1916, three additional buildings erected between 1920 and 1945, and the remaining twelve buildings representative of post-war construction (photograph 9). Historic resources are concentrated around the intersection of Boulevard and Edgewood Avenue and represent a growth spurt between 1908 and 1915. Many of these buildings exhibit typical early twentieth century commercial architecture associated with residential and transportation-related urban expansion.
A second characteristic of Edgewood Avenue is the preponderance of vacant lots and nonhistoric buildings. East of the Boulevard, the historic integrity of Edgewood Avenue buildings decreases both in quantity and quality. The Roane Building, constructed in 1906, stands alone on the southwest corner of Edgewood and Howell Street, a full block away from any other historic buildings. At one time, one- and two-story wood dwellings occupied Edgewood Avenue east of Boulevard, an extension of the residential area to the north. When these residences were removed, many between 1928 and 1936, the lots either remained vacant or had postwar commercial buildings erected on them. Vacant, undeveloped lots have characterized Edgewood Avenue throughout the period from 1880 to the present.

Edgewood Avenue also has suffered significant losses of historic commercial buildings in the past ten years. Buildings at 410, 414, 461-465, and 491-493 Edgewood are gone. One of the last remaining residences at 528 Edgewood, built in 1895, also has vanished.

In this context, the buildings within the Site are evaluated for significance in the area of architecture. No buildings within the Site have national significance under Criterion C, but many have local architectural significance. In general, the residential resources on Auburn Avenue illustrate the staged growth of the community and are visible evidence of its changing population. These resources retain a high degree of integrity, although their material condition varies considerably. The resources on Edgewood Avenue are more problematic because structural deterioration or destruction and modern intrusions have altered the corridor's historic fabric. However, the dominant historic commercial development of Edgewood Avenue is obvious, and most remaining buildings retain integrity. A discussion of integrity and registration requirements appears at the end of the chapter.

**ATLANTA HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Atlanta began as a rail terminus. In 1836, the Georgia legislature approved the construction of a state railroad, the Atlantic & Western, to run from the Tennessee line to the Chattahoochee River in the Georgia Piedmont. The engineer laying out the line chose a terminal point on a ridge eight miles south of the river. By 1846, the Macon & Western Railroad and the Georgia Railroad connected with the Atlantic & Western, forming a triangular junction around which the city of Atlanta grew. In 1861, at the beginning of the Civil War, Atlanta was a city of ten thousand and an important rail hub and manufacturing center for the Southeast. [89]

Virtually destroyed during the war, Atlanta rebuilt quickly, reaching a population of 65,000 in 1890. Nineteenth-century business activity concentrated around the railroad junction with
most residential areas within walking distance of downtown. Atlanta's affluent citizens lived along streets located on ridges radiating from the central business district, particularly Peachtree and Washington streets. Working-class neighborhoods flourished around factories and rolling mills located along the railroad corridors emanating from downtown. Most of Atlanta's black population lived in several scattered settlements, often on less desirable land near railroads or in low-lying areas. [90]

Street railways, powered first by horses and mules, and in the late 1880s by electricity, facilitated the expansion of Atlanta beyond pedestrian limits. The Site lies approximately a mile and a quarter from the central business district and represents the commercial and residential growth advanced by streetcar expansion. In 1884, the Gate City Street Railroad Company constructed a horsecar line which traveled from the central business district along Pryor Street to Wheat Street (later changed to Auburn Avenue) and along Wheat to Jackson Street, then north on Jackson. This streetcar line provided direct access to downtown and spurred residential development along Auburn Avenue. In 1889, entrepreneur Joel Hurt operated Atlanta's first electric street railway along Edgewood Avenue linking downtown and the suburb of Inman Park. In the 1890s, existing horsecar lines were electrified, and new electric streetcar lines were built. By the mid-1890s, streetcar lines on Auburn and Edgewood avenues provided commuters direct access from their homes to jobs and shopping downtown. [91]
Chapter Four:
EXPANSION OF THE SITE BOUNDARY

On October 30, 1992, the boundary of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site was expanded in an effort to accomplish several goals. The additional acreage (boundary expansion area) will accommodate off-street parking lots for the increasing number of visitors to the Site. Within the boundary expansion area is the Martin Luther King, Jr., Community Center, which NPS contemplates acquiring and converting to a visitor center. Finally, subject to the negotiation of appropriate agreements and successful fund-raising by the congregation, a portion of the new acreage will be made available to Ebenezer Baptist Church for the construction of a new place of worship. For some time, Ebenezer's auditorium has been unable to accommodate all who wish to attend services and programs there. If the congregation can build a new auditorium, this will relieve the pressure to enlarge or modify the historic church structure, with its strong associations to Dr. King, and permit expanded NPS interpretation at the existing church building.

The expanded Site boundary extends north from Auburn Avenue to the rear property lines of the parcels lying on the north side of Cain Street. The east side of Jackson Street forms the west boundary line. The west side of Boulevard and the west property lines of 70 Boulevard and 200 Auburn Avenue form the east boundary. Currently, NPS plans to demolish most or all standing structures within the boundary expansion area, except 412 Houston Street, which will be adapted for use as a new maintenance facility.

Fifteen industrial and commercial buildings are located within the boundary expansion area. Most are remnants of Atlanta's early-twentieth-century urbanization. Devastated by fire in 1917, this area was rebuilt as a residential, commercial, and industrial district. By 1923, substantial single-family residences lined Boulevard, and three industrial concerns bordered this residential community. As additional manufacturing and industrial enterprises replaced the residences along the main avenues, multiple dwellings and apartment flats clustered around interior alleys. This area extended black residential and commercial occupancy beyond Auburn Avenue.

During the 1950s, the entire Auburn Avenue community experienced economic decline. Some industrial concerns, such as Scripto, Inc., continued to expand. Many more affluent residents relocated, some moving to more fashionable west-side neighborhoods. By 1965, not a single residence remained within the boundary expansion area. Industrial and manufacturing concerns were affected by this decline as well. In 1977, Scripto relocated to suburban Gwinnett County, further destabilizing the community.

Many of the boundary expansion area's fifteen commercial and industrial buildings are currently unoccupied and in disrepair. The interior alleys are no longer discernable, and streetscapes are defined by the vacant lots separating most structures. Only part of one building remains on the north side of Cain Street, for example, where construction of the Presidential Parkway has hastened the destruction of buildings on that side of the street.
List of Classified Structures and Georgia SHPO architectural survey forms were completed for all boundary expansion area properties considered potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion C. The Martin Luther King, Jr., National Register Historic District extends as far north as Auburn Avenue and, east of Boulevard, to Irwin Street. The boundary expansion area was excluded from the original district nomination because its integrity was compromised by the earlier removal of period structures, leaving discontinuous remnants intact. Because they are not part of a district, the boundary expansion area properties were evaluated under the criteria established for individual and multiple property nominations. None of these properties was found to meet the minimum requirements for National Register eligibility under Criterion C. Three properties do not meet the 50-year requirement. No structure is the work of a master and none possesses high artistic merit. The structures also do not embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, because all properties have problems of integrity relating to design, setting, feeling, or association. A description of each of the surveyed properties follows:

130 BOULEVARD, 1920-1923. A two-story, brick industrial building with a shed roof, decorative brick parapet, and brick pilasters. The one-story, two-bay addition to the north matches in both style and building materials.

442 CAIN STREET, 1929. A one-story, trapezoid-shaped, brick service station with a shed roof, stepped parapet, and skylight. Facade features a single service bay with double, cross-braced doors and a three-bay office.

409 HOUSTON, 1923 - 1928. A one-story, trapezoid-shaped, brick-and-concrete-block industrial building with a gable roof and two, large saw-tooth skylights. Formerly a laundry, the large open factory retains original features.


423 HOUSTON STREET, 1931. A two-story, gable-roofed, brick industrial building with gable-roofed end pavilions featuring terra-cotta door surrounds. One-and-two story structures have been added on the south and east sides.

450 HOUSTON STREET, ca. 1923. A two-story, shed-roofed, trapezoid-shaped, brick commercial building with a three-part facade defined by four brick piers. Brick panels exist above the storefront and below the parapet.


466 HOUSTON STREET, 1946. A one-story, trapezoidal-shaped, brick commercial building with a shed roof which supports three, large billboards. A corner storefront is located on Boulevard with a second on Houston Street.

Chapter Five: MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The nationally significant or contributing historic resources within the Site are primarily located on the Birth-Home Block. These resources should be managed so that the period of significance, 1929 to 1941, is represented as accurately as present knowledge of historic conditions allows. The Birth-Home Block was the residence of blacks of varying economic status during a period of national economic hardship. The historic appearance of the neighborhood reflected high density development and a great variety in income level. Management of resources should reflect the methods employed by the residents to upgrade and maintain their homes, often within limited means, and the diversity of housing types. For example, the alley duplexes behind 493 Auburn Avenue are the last remnants, within the Site, of a formerly common residential spatial arrangement and housing type. During the period of significance, large numbers of inexpensive multiple-family dwellings, often on alleys, were constructed in Atlanta to accommodate working-class blacks. These resources are important because they represent the intensive land use and crowding that characterized the Auburn Avenue black community. The store building at 521-1/2 Auburn is the last survivor of at least six outbuilding-stores known to have been in operation on the Birth-Home Block during King's residence. The garage/shed at 497 Auburn is the last surviving back yard outbuilding. Both are thus important resources that should be maintained and interpreted. Other elements of the physical environment important to an accurate interpretation of King's boyhood include: exterior plumbing and vent pipes, retaining walls, fences, sidewalks, and front and rear yards. For management recommendations concerning landscape features on the Birth-Home Block refer to "Cultural Landscape Report: Birth-Home Block, Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, 1929-1941."

As recommended in the Site's General Management Plan, all the historic resources on the Birth-Home Block should have the facades restored and the interiors rehabilitated for adaptive reuse. Any delay in stabilization or rehabilitation of historic resources further jeopardizes their material condition. Most notably, two double shotguns on Old Wheat Street, currently vacant and in deteriorated condition, may be lost without prompt stabilization. Those historic buildings on the Birth-Home Block already rehabilitated should be maintained to present a streetscape that accurately reflects the period of significance. Most buildings on the Birth-Home Block are residences and should be maintained as residences through tenant lease agreements. Fire Station Number Six is one notable exception. Currently, stabilization is occurring on the building and rehabilitation should be completed promptly to avoid further deterioration of the historic resource.

Ebenezer Baptist Church is the only nationally significant historic Site resource that directly relates to the Civil Rights Movement. NPS should pursue cooperative agreements with Ebenezer's congregation to encourage maintenance, stabilization, and appropriate rehabilitation. To facilitate maintenance and rehabilitation, a Historic Structure Report should be prepared for Ebenezer. Additionally, research needs to be done in the King Center archives to identify more precisely King's and SCLC's activities at Ebenezer from 1957 to 1968.
The historic resources along Edgewood Avenue are marginally linked to the Site's primary significance, because the relationship between the Auburn Avenue black community and the white-owned and operated businesses on Edgewood was probably limited. However, the Edgewood Avenue corridor, composed chiefly of locally significant examples of early twentieth century commercial buildings, supplies a largely historic buffer on the south side of the Birth-Home Block. Therefore, preservation easements and facade restoration, through private or City of Atlanta efforts, should be encouraged by Site management. Significant deterioration and loss of the historic structures along Edgewood Avenue threaten the integrity of the Birth-Home Block, because inappropriate private development within view of the Birth Home would visually intrude. Site management should also participate in planning for corridor improvements along Auburn and Edgewood to ensure that any city-funded improvements do not compromise the historic integrity of the Site and Preservation District.

Several buildings constructed before 1943 are located along Houston and Jackson within the boundary expansion area. Although none of these buildings was found eligible for the National Register, Site management may wish to consider adaptive reuse of sound structures in future development plans.

Interpretation of the Site, including exhibits, publications, and staff interpretation, should focus on the 1929 to 1941 period of the King family's residence on Auburn Avenue. Interpretive programs should also draw connections between the historic Auburn Avenue black community and King's subsequent civil rights activism.

Ebenezer Baptist Church is the key Site resource for interpretation of the Civil Rights Movement. The interpretive program at Ebenezer could be expanded to include mention of the rally he held there in support of the Scripto strike.

Finally, to link the Site and the Preservation District, interpretive programs and exhibits within the Site should emphasize the larger geographical and social interaction between the Auburn Avenue community and the city, particularly in the areas of urban growth and segregation policies. The Site's national significance, as both the birthplace of a significant black leader and as a crucible of the Civil Rights Era, should be interpreted concurrently.
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Appendix A:

HISTORICAL BASE MAP

(click on image for an enlargement in a new window)
Appendix B:

BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

407-413 Auburn Avenue, 1914-1922. Ebenezer Baptist Church is a two-story, rectangular, brick, Gothic Revival church with a gable roof and two large towers flanking the main elevation. The lower level, which contains the meeting hall, is covered with gray stucco and scored to resemble stone. Two-story buttresses divide the side elevations into nine bays containing stained-glass lancet windows. Brick beltcourses, panels, corbels, and window hoods ornament the front and side elevations. The auditorium is an open, rectangular space, with the pulpit and choir elevated on a platform and a balcony across the rear of the sanctuary. The education building was constructed in 1956; in 1971, a new front was placed on it.

449 Auburn Avenue, 1976. The Martin Luther King, Jr., grave site consists of a large white marble sarcophagus with a stepped base and a projecting cap. The sarcophagus is sited on a circular island in a pool, which is part of a memorial plaza that incorporates cascading pools, a fountain, and the Freedom Walk, a barrel-vaulted arcade. The narrow end of the sarcophagus, which faces Auburn Avenue, carries the inscription, "REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR./1929-1968/Free at Last, Free at Last/Thank God Almighty/I'm Free at Last."

472-474, 476-478, 480-[482]* and 484-[486] Auburn Avenue, 1905. Four identical hip-roofed double shotgun houses with weatherboard siding that have been rehabilitated by the NPS. Each unit of each duplex has a hip-roofed entry porch with turned posts, sawn brackets, and a plain stick balustrade. After rehabilitation, 472-474 and 476-478 remained duplexes, while 480-482 and 484-486 were converted to single-family residences. The rehabilitation connected the decks of the separate front porches on each unit.

488-[490] Auburn Avenue, 1905. Hip-roofed double shotgun house with weatherboard siding. Parallel hip-roofed porches have turned posts, sawn brackets, and a plain stick balustrade. NPS rehabilitation, which will convert structure to a single-family house, was ongoing at time of survey.

492-[494] Auburn Avenue, ca. 1897. Constructed as a duplex, this building has parallel front-facing gable roofs and a gabled-ell addition on the east. A porch with turned posts, sawn brackets, and a stick balustrade extends across the front of the house and the addition. Existing structure is a reconstruction of a severely deteriorated building and is now a single-family residence.

491-[493] Auburn Avenue, 1911. A small, rectangular-plan apartment building with a hip roof and a recessed, two-story, full-facade porch. The building has square porch posts and exposed rafter ends. Asbestos siding now sheaths the building, presumably covering original weatherboards.

493 Auburn Avenue, rear, units 1-6, 1911. Three identical two-room-deep double shotguns are on an alley behind the Birth Block. Each has a hip roof, a combined front porch with turned posts, milled brackets, and a shed roof.
497 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1900. A two-story, single-family house with Queen Anne elements. The house has a hip roof with a front-facing cross gable and an addition at the rear. The one-story full-facade porch has a wide entablature with dentils and a stick balustrade, while the gable end features a sunburst motif, decorative shingles and a double vent. In the back yard is a small frame storage shed, oriented 45 degrees from the lot line, built circa 1933-1935.

501 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1894. This two-story, single-family home, the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr., was restored by the NPS. The house incorporates a number of Queen Anne stylistic elements: irregular massing, a side entrance, a hip roof with lower cross gables, decorative shingles in the gable ends, and a wrap-around porch with turned posts, milled brackets, and a plain, openwork balustrade.

503 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895. A two-story house with Queen Anne elements. The house features a hip roof with a front-facing gable and an addition at the rear. Beneath the shingle-clad gable end is a three-sided cutaway bay with a jigsaw panel at the second story. A one-story porch supported on brick piers and square columns runs across the facade. One pier lacks a post, which may originally have been present. The front yard has five granite steps leading to the house from the sidewalk, built ca. 1895-1915.

506 Auburn Avenue, 1933. A plain, four-unit apartment building that may have been built as a duplex. The building has a hip roof and a recessed, two-story, full-facade porch carried on brick piers and square posts.

510 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1890. A two-story house with a hip roof, a front-facing gable over a cutaway bay, and a single-story, full-facade porch. Surviving Queen Anne features include turned porch posts and sawn brackets, a diamond-shaped window next to the main entrance, and decorative shingles in the gable end. Alterations include asphalt siding over weatherboards, an exterior stair to the second floor on the west, boarded up windows, and probable removal of brackets over the cutaway bay. In the back yard is an eighteen-inch-high, thirty-foot-long rubble stone wall running parallel to back lot line, built ca. 1895-1945.

514 Auburn Avenue, 1893. A two-story house with Queen Anne elements, possibly converted from a single-family to a duplex at an early point in its history. Rehabilitated by the NPS, the house retains decorative trusswork and a circular vent in the gable end and has two additions at the rear. Two-story, full-facade porch with fluted posts. Along the east property line is brick and stone wall with a partial stucco finish, built ca. 1895-1945. The wall ranges from two to four feet in height.

515 Auburn Avenue, 1909. A vernacular gabled-ell house, with several additions, that was converted from a single-family residence to a duplex. The roof is complex with two hipped portions and a front-facing gable. The wraparound porch displays Tuscan columns.

518 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1893. A two-story house with Queen Anne elements. Two front-facing gables project from the hip roof. The western gabled projection is probably an addition, and a three-sided cutaway bay is beneath the eastern gable end. Both gable ends have decorative shingles, horseshoe-shaped vents, and pent eaves. One-story, full-facade porch has fluted square posts and deep entablature. Leading to the porch is a three- to four-foot-wide concrete front walk with a rolled curb and V shaped gutter, built ca. 1895-1915.

521 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1886. One-and-one-half-story Georgian cottage with Italianate details, including a molded cornice with brackets and hooded doors and windows. House has three-sided bay windows on the east and west and a decked pyramidal roof with six dormers, two of which appear to be later additions. House has been subdivided; original Sheathing now obscured by asphalt shingles and asbestos tile; porch details have been removed.

http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/malu/hrshrsab.htm[8/1/2013 2:54:12 PM]
porch is reached by a four-foot-wide concrete front walk, scored in a diamond pattern, built ca. 1890-1915.

521 - 1/2 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1920. Plain, rectangular store building with front-facing gable roof and pent canopy over entrance. Original weatherboards are now obscured by asphalt roll and asbestos siding.

522 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1894. A two-story frame house with Queen Anne elements. House has a hip roof with a front-facing cross gable over a Cutaway bay with a jigsawn second-story panel. Decorative shingles and horseshoe-shaped vent appear in the gable end. Porch has turned posts, sawn brackets, an openwork frieze, and a stick balustrade. Former home of Antoine Graves, a prominent black real estate broker. Rehabilitated by the NPS and now used as a visitors' center. East of the house is a six-and-one-half-foot stone and brick retaining wall, built ca. 1895-1920.

526 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895. Two-story frame house with Queen Anne elements, similar in configuration to 522 Auburn. Porch differs in having square posts and a deep entablature. Decorative shingles, a circular vent, and a pent eave are present in the gable end. Now used by the NPS for administrative offices.

530 Auburn, ca. 1895. Two-story frame house with hip roof, front-facing projecting gable, and rear additions. Similar to other Queen Anne houses on Auburn, but most details are removed or obscured by asphalt siding. Porch supports are cast-iron replacements. Diamond-shaped vent in gable end and circular window flanking entrance remain. Enclosing the front yard is a three-foot-high cast iron fence with arched tops and a star motif, built ca. 1895-1915. West of the house along the property line with 526 Auburn is a brick and stone wall approximately three feet high, built ca. 1895-1915.

535 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895. Two-story frame house with Queen Anne elements. House has a rear addition, a hip roof with front-facing gable over a cutaway bay, and one-story full-facade porch with brackets, stick frieze, and a balustrade with missing sections. Asbestos shingles cover weatherboards. House is severely deteriorated with boarded-up windows and some uncovered openings and broken windows. Former home of Charles L. Harper, first black high school principal in Atlanta.

540 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1890. One-story, Vernacular T-plan frame house with complex roof configuration, rear addition, and front-facing cross gable. Front porch has chamfered posts and sawn brackets and trim. Rehabilitated in the early 1980s.

546 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1900. This vernacular gable-front-and-wing house with millwork decoration retains its early additions at the rear. The house has weatherboard siding and a porch with chamfered posts and sawn brackets and trim. Rehabilitated in the early 1980s.

550 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1890. A two-Story, U-plan frame residence with a hip roof and two front-facing gables on either side of a two-story porch. The shingled gable ends are bordered by pent eaves. The house was converted to apartments, and the western portion of the house is apparently an addition. Two-story porch at rear. Rehabilitated in the early 1980s.

29 Boulevard, 1912. Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church is a three-story, stone and brick building with a hip roof. It is a plain building with most of the exterior ornamentation associated with the two- and three-part jalousie windows, which replaced the original windows at an unknown date. The church was originally housed in the first floor with the classrooms and auditorium above.

37-39 Boulevard, 1894. Fire Station Number Six is a two-Story, brick Romanesque Revival
style building with a shed roof and decorative parapet. A single arched engine bay is flanked by pedestrian entrances, windows and an asymmetrically-placed tower with date panel. Bands of windows, arched on the Boulevard facade, are found at the second level. Elaborate brickwork includes corbels, door and window surrounds, a diaper-patterned frieze, and a machicolated cornice.

53-55 Boulevard, ca. 1905. Hip-roofed double shotgun house with weatherboard siding. Parallel hip-roofed entry porches have turned posts, sawn brackets, and a plain stick balustrade.

130 Boulevard, 1920-1923. A two-story, brick industrial building with a shed roof, decorative brick parapet, and brick pilasters. The one-story, two-bay addition to the north matches in both style and building materials.

442 Cain Street, 1929. A one-story, trapezoid-shaped, brick service station with a shed roof, stepped parapet, and skylight. Facade features a single service bay with double, cross-braced doors and a three-bay office.

420 Edgewood Avenue, 1912. A two-story, three-bay, rectangular-shaped commercial building with shed roof and stepped parapet. It is constructed of brick with side and rear segmental arched windows. Decorative elements include corbeled brickwork and a stamped-metal cornice.

421-429 Edgewood Avenue, 1946. A large, one-story commercial building constructed of masonry block and faced with beige brick. It contains four storefronts and has a shed roof and parapet. Decorative brickwork includes headers and stretchers lining display windows and brick panels above each store. Elements of the facade have been altered and the easternmost store is a later addition.

438-442 Edgewood Avenue, 1939. A brick garage with a hemispherical roof and stepped parapet. The three-part facade maintains its original fenestration and the pump island and shelter remain at the front of the lot. A one-story masonry addition of 1946-1953 adjoins the east side of the garage.

439-441 Edgewood Avenue, 1920. A two-story, brick, parallelogram-shaped commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. This duplex contains two storefronts with display windows and recessed entrances. Decorative elements include brick panels, a corbeled cornice and stone corner blocks.


447 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A two-story, beige brick, parallelogram-shaped commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. Wood-and-glass storefront is surmounted by two triple windows at the second level and an elaborate brick entablature.

451 Edgewood Avenue, 1915. A one-story, beige brick, parallelogram-shaped building with a shed roof. The symmetrical wood-and-glass storefront is sheltered by a bracketed pent roof.
458 Edgewood Avenue, 1946. A small, one-story, concrete-block Art Moderne commercial building with a shed roof. Commercial buildings with Art Moderne features are rare in the Atlanta area. This building features rounded brick corners, glass block, pigmented glass, oculi, and aluminum coping. A small, shed-roofed addition has been added to the rear of the building.

462 Edgewood Avenue, 1927. A one-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and large plate-glass windows. Building to the south has been removed exposing the load-bearing brick wall and the interior is contiguous with 464-468 Edgewood Avenue. Substantially altered 1946-1952, leaving almost no traces of original storefront.

464-468 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A large, two-story, brick commercial block with a shed roof and corbeled parapet. Fenestration is irregular with many windows and doors bricked in. Alterations of ca. 1930 and ca. 1955 have left little of the early twentieth century storefronts.

467 Edgewood Avenue, 1911. A two-Story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and plain stone cornice. Main facade features a symmetrical, wood-and-glass storefront with a recessed entrance and a triple window at the second level. Fenestration on the east facade is irregular with a series of double windows at the second level. Several painted wall signs are present on the two Street facades.

476-480 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A large, two-story, brick commercial block with a shed roof and stepped parapet. Three wood-and-glass storefronts face Edgewood and are capped with a stamped-metal cornice. Second floor includes arched windows paired within a large brick arch. Elaborate brickwork is found throughout.

479 Edgewood Avenue, 1932. A small, three-bay, concrete-block filling station situated at the rear of the lot. It has a shed roof with broad, overhanging eaves and a symmetrical facade. Substantial alterations in 1935 and 1950 removed the pumps and awning and added a small ell and a two-bay, concrete-block garage to the site.

482 Edgewood Avenue, 1908. A one-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. Symmetrical wood-and-glass storefront is surmounted by a stamped metal cornice and decorative brick entablature.

483 Edgewood Avenue, 1908. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and corbeled brick cornice. Wood-and-glass storefront with tiled, recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor. Three double windows at the second level feature stone sills and lintels above. The building has been rehabilitated.

484 Edgewood Avenue, 1908. A one-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and parapet. Virtually the entire facade has been replaced with a metal-and-glass storefront. Only the outer piers and corbeled cornice remain.

485 Edgewood Avenue, 1908. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and corbeled brick cornice. Wood-and-glass storefront with recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor. Three double windows at the second level feature stone sills and brick lintels.

487 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof. Wood-and-glass storefront with recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor and framed by stamped-metal piers and cornice. Second level contains two triple windows. Entablature is covered with sheet metal and two rear windows have been bricked-in.

489 Edgewood Avenue, 1909. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and corbeled brick cornice. Wood-and-glass storefront with recessed entrance is flanked by entrance to second floor and framed by stamped-metal piers and cornice. Second level contains two triple windows with stone sills and lintels. Entablature features corbeled and panelled brick elements.

510 Edgewood Avenue, 1947. A two-story, flat-roofed, brick-and-concrete-block International style building with a gable-roofed, concrete-block structure at rear. A central tower is flanked by two wings, containing multiple roof levels, ribbon windows, boxed overhangs, white-stuccoed wall surfaces, and a recessed main entrance. The base of the building and elements of the tower are constructed of red brick with flush vertical joints and bands of darker brick. International style buildings are rare in Atlanta.

513 Edgewood Avenue, 1920. A two-story, brick commercial building. The facade was completely remodeled in the 1970s with plate glass windows and large panels that obscure most of the facade. Brick surfaces have been stuccoed and painted.

525 Edgewood Avenue, 1948. A one-story, three-bay, stuccoed, terra-cotta-tile garage with a flat roof and stepped parapet. One-story, brick structures have been added to the east and west sides. Significant alterations ca. 1986.

536 Edgewood Avenue, 1951. A large, one-story, rectangular-shaped, concrete-block building with a flat roof. The three-part facade features six automobile service bays with a three-bay office in the center.

541 Edgewood Avenue, 1906. A two-story, brick commercial building with a shed roof and stamped-metal cornice. Storefront is obscured by metal security grate. Second floor contains a three-part, basket-arched window flanked by narrow, sash windows. Elaborate ornamentation includes a machicolated brick cornice and terra-cotta rondels, finials, and egg-and-dart motifs.

53 Hogue Street, 1940. A one-story frame duplex with a recessed porch and a roof that is hipped at the rear and a clipped gable at the front. Porch is supported on square posts and has a plain stick balustrade.

409 Houston, 1923-1928. A one-story, trapezoid-shaped, brick-and-concrete-block industrial building with a gable roof and two, large saw-tooth skylights. Formerly a laundry, the large open factory retains original features.

412 Houston Street, 1920-1923. A one-story, shed-roofed brick industrial building with a two-story, shed-roofed office tower at the NW corner. Decorative brickwork and awning, milled newel post and wainscoting remain.

423 Houston Street, 1931. A two-story, gable-roofed, brick industrial building with gable-roofed end pavilions featuring terra-cotta door surrounds. One-and-two-story structures have been added on the south and east sides.

450 Houston Street, ca. 1923. A two-story, shed-roofed, trapezoid-shaped, brick commercial building with a three-part facade defined by four brick piers. Brick panels exist above the
storefront and below the parapet.


466 Houston Street, 1938-1946. A one-story, trapezoidal-shaped, brick commercial building with a shed roof which supports three, large billboards. A corner storefront is located on Boulevard with a second on Houston Street.

14 Howell Street, ca. 1927. A one-story frame duplex with a front-facing gable roof and cross gables on each side. The porch across the front is carried on wood posts with molded capitals. Knee braces are present under the projecting eaves of the facade.

18 Howell Street, 1927. Two-story frame dwelling with an unusual decked gable roof, a single-story porch with a front-facing gable roof, and two rear additions. Knee braces appear under the eaves. The house is severely fire damaged and open to the elements.

24 Howell Street, ca. 1895. One-and-one-half story frame house with steeply pitched, front-facing, clipped gable roof, and a three-part window in the gable end. Alterations include two shed-roofed dormers, an enclosed, concrete-replacement porch, a carport added to the north side, and asbestos shingle siding.

28 Howell Street, ca. 1895. One-and-one-half story frame house with steeply pitched front-facing clipped gable roof. Massing is identical to 24 Howell Street, but a rear addition is present and the gable windows have probably been covered. Full-facade porch has square posts with capitals, turned balustrade, and decorative brackets.

54 Howell Street, 1931. Utilitarian two-story frame apartment building with side gable roof and full-facade two-story porch supported by brick posts. Rafter ends and knee braces appear in gable ends. Partially enclosed back porch. Severely fire damaged, with doors and windows boarded up. Rehabilitation was ongoing at time of survey.


479-481 Old Wheat Street, ca. 1905. Hip-roofed frame double shotgun house, two rooms deep, that has been converted to a single-family house, with one entry blocked up. Concrete porch floor is a replacement, separate porch roofs have been joined, and porch posts and balustrade appear to be replacements.

483-485 Old Wheat Street, ca. 1905. Hip-roofed frame double shotgun house with parallel hip-roofed entry porches. House is vacant and threatened by lack of maintenance, but fabric is present for use in future rehabilitation. Some porch posts are missing and balustrades are replacements.

487-489 Old Wheat Street, ca. 1905. Hip-roofed frame double shotgun house with parallel hip-roofed entry porches. House is vacant and threatened by lack of maintenance, but retains fabric for use in future rehabilitation. Porch roofs and brackets are all that remain of porches. Some weatherboards have fallen off at rear.

**Landscape Features**

Alley running south from Auburn Avenue between 493 and 497 Auburn, ca. 1911. A sixteen-
to twenty-foot-wide alley, currently paved with asphalt, that likely was unpaved through much of its history.

Brick sidewalk, north side of Auburn Avenue east of Howell, ca. 1890-1920. A herringbone brick sidewalk with a granite curb. Sidewalk is approximately 165 feet long and nine feet wide.

Brick sidewalk, west side of Howell Street north of Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895-1922. An approximately 40-foot segment of herringbone brick sidewalk with a granite curb. The pavement is approximately six feet wide.

River-stone sidewalk, north side of Auburn Avenue between Boulevard and Howell Street, ca. 1922-1923. The sidewalk is composed of a brown river-stone aggregate, with a granite curb. The pavement is approximately nine feet wide.

* Street numbers no longer used, as with duplexes that have been converted to single-family residences, are indicated in brackets.
## Appendix C:
### NATIONAL REGISTER FORM

**Excerpts from the NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name:</strong></th>
<th>Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
<td>Roughly bounded by Jackson, Howell, and Old Wheat Streets and Edgewood Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Owner:</strong></td>
<td>Private, Public-Local, Public-Federal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category:</strong></td>
<td>District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Historic Functions:</strong></td>
<td>Domestic (single and multiple dwellings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion (religious facility)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commerce/Trade (specialty store, department store)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Functions:</strong></td>
<td>Domestic (single dwelling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion (religious facility)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commerce/Trade (specialty store)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recreation and Culture (National Historic Site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Architectural Classification:</strong></td>
<td>Late Victorian (Queen Anne, Gothic, Italianate, Romanesque)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements (Bungalow/Craftsman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modern Movements (Moderne, International Style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (double shotgun houses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials:</strong></td>
<td>Foundation (brick, stone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roof (asphalt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walls (Weatherboard, brick, asbestos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (concrete, metal)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- Property is associated with the lives of persons significant to our past.
- Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the
work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

**Criteria Considerations:**
- Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- Birthplace or grave.
- Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance:**
- Ethnic Heritage; Black
- Social History
- Commerce
- Architecture

**Period of Significance:**
1880-1968
Ebenezer Baptist Church
407 Auburn Avenue, N. E.
Atlanta 12, Georgia
Church Phone MUrray 8-7263

"Father the Lord helped us"

Ministers:
MARTIN LUTHER KING, SR.
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
REVEREND MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
1929 — 1968
Here at Last, Here at Last
Thank God Almighty
For Jesus Christ's Love