REESE STREET'S LAST STAND: AN AFRICAN AMERICAN LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT'S FIGHT TO RETAIN COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY

by

AMELIA M. ANDREWS

(Under the Direction of Katie Marages)

ABSTRACT

Kappa Alpha Fraternity's purchase of land adjacent to the historic African American Reese Street neighborhood near downtown and the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia precipitated a fierce debate on racism, disenfranchisement, zoning, local historic district designation, and studentification—the displacement of a historic group of residents with college students. The post-emancipation neighborhood had been an educational and cultural center and home to several important leaders in the Black community but had also witnessed an influx of investors and students since the 1990s. The only land use tool available to counteract the influence of the Kappa Alpha fraternity was local historic district designation, which would prevent demolitions and ensure that historic buildings retained their integrity. While that saved the remaining built environment, it did not stem studentification which continues to change the character of the neighborhood, and only a small minority of African American residents remain. This paper will examine both the failure and success of local historic district designation in preserving the neighborhood as well as the factors affecting that outcome.

INDEX WORDS: Local historic district, Designation, Historic African American neighborhood, Historic Black community, Athens, Georgia, Gentrification, Studentification, Disenfranchisement, Racism, Zoning, Historic Preservation, University student housing.

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AMELIA M. ANDREWS

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AMELIA M. ANDREWS

Major Professor:	Katie Marages
Committee:	Cari Goetcheus Jane McPherson Hope Iglehart

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Mary Kathryn Snell, who showed me by example how to use my voice and engage with my community; to my father, James Monroe, who wanted all his children to get the college education he did not have and who made it financially possible to do so; and to my children, Emily Kathryn Andrews and Benjamin James Andrews, who set their individual educational goals and attained them despite occasional adversity. You inspired me to do the same.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the residents of the Reese Street neighborhood, past and present, whose talents, aspirations, dignity and resilience created a vibrant and thriving community that shaped Athens. I especially want to recognize Hope Iglehart, Gail Hurley, the late Thelma Hurley, and Wilucia Green who have tirelessly advocated for their community. Although he is no longer in Athens, I want to also acknowledge former Hill First Baptist Church minister Benjamin Rivers, who lent his support to neighborhood organizational efforts during the designation project.

I am indebted to several individuals who granted interviews that provided essential facts and illuminating perspectives. These include current and former Reese Street residents Gail Hurley, Hope Iglehart, Herschell Henderson, Brian K. Weaver, and one resident who wished to remain anonymous; current and former members of Hill First Baptist Church including James Alford and Bertha Rambeau; Cobbham residents including June Ball, Michael and Mary Songster, and David Lynn; current and former preservation professionals and volunteers including Amy Kissane, Tommy Valentine, Jeanne Cyriaque, Mary Joseph, and Rosemarie Goodrum; and other Athenians who were familiar with the Reese Street neighborhood and provided insight including Larry Fort and Linda Ford.

Amy Kissane served as a mentor in my early days of volunteering with the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation, and I admire her leadership, passion, humor, and deep understanding of preservation issues. She was a key liaison with the Reese Street community and patiently shepherded the designation process from conception to completion. I am especially grateful for the records she retained on the designation efforts as it allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of ACHF's role in the process.

When I told Steven and Beth Brown that I was writing my thesis on the Reese Street neighborhood, they gathered all of the knowledge they had on the area's history along with images and

maps which greatly increased my understanding of the area's development and enhanced the historical section of this thesis. I am so very grateful for their knowledge and generosity.

I would like to thank Amber Eskew who provided me with access to all the Certificate of Appropriateness records for the Reese Street Local Historic District and who answered countless questions about the process and provided dates and details on all aspects of historic preservation as managed by the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department. Assistant Planning Director Bruce Lonnee provided me with thesis topic advice and answered questions at various times. Thank you to first-year historic preservation graduate student and planning department intern Maddy Markle, who scanned and shared the historic zoning maps.

Rosemarie Goodrum has helped me immensely with her editorial guidance on this thesis. She was closely involved in the designation efforts for the Reese Street Local Historic District 15 years ago when she served as an Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation trustee and co-chair of the Preservation Issues Committee. That experience, combined with her skills as a former writing tutor in the UGA Division of Academic Enhancement, made me seek her out to polish my very first paper in pursuit of my master's degree in historic preservation five years ago (after not having written an academic paper in 38 years). Fittingly, she provided invaluable editorial assistance on my last writing project for my degree—this thesis.

Professor Jane McPherson served on my thesis committee, but she has also been a mentor who has inspired me through her work on social justice projects and her research on the Athens Factory and early social work in Athens. She is working on a forthcoming article for the *Athens Historian* to be titled "The Jackson-Brydie Educators of North Finley Street." It is through her research that I learned the Knox Institute survived at least temporarily after its initial closure in 1928.

Because I have spent five years working on my two-year degree, I have taken classes with several different graduate student cohorts. I have met wonderful students every year, but I will finish with my favorite cohort of all: Jeffery Bussey, Inga McGuire Gudmundsson: Laura Leigh Haga, Mel Staton, Janeth Garcia Torres, and Shelby McWhirter. You have been so welcoming to an older-generation

student, and I have enjoyed our classes, field studies, and project work. You provided much-needed fellowship and commiseration at the appropriate times.

The professors in the historic preservation department have been incredible teachers and mentors, all with their own intriguing areas of specialty and interests. Thank you to Wayde Brown, Cari Goetcheus, Tom Jones, Eric McDonald, Scott Nesbit, James Reap, Mark Reinberger, and Joe Smith. I am going to miss learning from each of you. I would also like to thank my thesis advisor Katie Marages, whom I did not have as a professor, but who has provided invaluable advice in writing my thesis.

When I began in the historic preservation program, I had no idea how rich my experience would be. I am fortunate to live in a city with so many talented professional and non-professional academics, historians, and preservationists who nurture learning, research and, most importantly, questioning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> Three months ago, the house at 495 Reese Street was in shambles. Reportedly the last crack house on the street, the dwelling stopped traffic as drive-up drug deals went down. Richard Hathaway saw opportunity knocking and stepped in. "The neighbors were going to move out, they were so sick of that house," says Hathaway. "This was a horrible corner. Four years ago, these were all drug dealers." Hathaway came in, bought the house from its absentee owner, kicked out the dealers and rehabilitated the residence. It is currently occupied by two young men whose worst transgression to date is leaving a couple of beer bottles on the front porch. About eight years ago, Hathaway left his career as an accountant to enter the rental property business. What started as one house on Reese Street, has become around 50 residences that have undergone the same surgery Hathaway just performed on his most recent purchase on Reese Street. The "gentrification" performed by Hathaway and other landlords results in houses unaffordable to the low-income people in whose midst they sit, and the trend continues: retro-fitting low-income neighborhoods has been going on here since the 1960s.[1]

> The rebel flag doesn't bother me . . . the reason [for the Civil War] was to keep slaves. It wasn't to hurt Black people. We didn't hate Black people. We wanted to keep an institution going. It was all about money.[2]

These seemingly disparate statements—the first from a 1999 article in *Flagpole* magazine and the second made in 2010 by Major Brannon, Vice President of Kappa Alpha Fraternity, after its move into the Reese Street neighborhood in Athens, Georgia—illustrate the forces that contributed to the destabilization, denigration, and dismantling of the historic African American Reese Street community in Athens, Georgia.[3] Those forces include a history of disenfranchisement that resulted in the diminishment

[1] John Britt, "HOPE Outbids Crack: Students are Taking Over Poorer Neighborhoods," *Flagpole*, November 3, 1999.
[2] Danielle Beverly, director, *Old South* (Petunia Productions LLC, 2015), DVD, 54 min.
[3] Note: These comments by Major Brannon in the documentary *Old South* were made impromptu, as he was explaining a Confederate flag he had wrapped around an owl figurine in his room. In other footage, he is shown with

of residents' political capital and zoning classifications that encouraged studentification—the displacement of the historic group of residents with college students. Even after local historic district designation in 2008, these forces have continued to transform the Reese Street neighborhood. Designation offered a partial remedy—it was one of the only land use tools available and offered protection against demolitions. Designation saved the remaining built environment, but it did not stem the influx of investors and students which changed and continue to change the character of the neighborhood. This paper will examine both the failure and success of local historic district designation in preserving the neighborhood as well as the factors affecting that outcome.

The Reese Street Local Historic District is a small historic Black neighborhood of relatively modest late nineteenth and early twentieth-century mostly frame residences occupying approximately six blocks on the western edge of downtown Athens, Georgia (see Figure 1). There are approximately sixty residences as well as one historic church, one historic school building and two historic commercial structures. The area was designated as a National Register district in 1987 and as a local historic district in 2008. However, with its prime location adjacent to downtown Athens and close to the University of Georgia (UGA), and multi-family zoning classification, real estate investors—Black and White—had begun buying property in the Reese Street neighborhood in the early 1990s and turning residences into student housing.

A crisis point occurred in 2005, when the housing corporation for the Kappa Alpha fraternity bought property in the Reese Street neighborhood to build its fraternity house. Residents were alarmed not only that a fraternity, known for disruptive conduct, was building a house in their neighborhood, but they were dismayed that this particular fraternity which celebrated antebellum culture would be in their midst—in one of Athens' most historically significant Black neighborhoods.[4]

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his fraternity members helping with a community garden and tutoring students at Hill First Baptist Church. The use of this quote is not to impugn Brannon but rather to illustrate the logic ingrained in many White individuals regarding the use of Confederate symbols and critical race theory.

[4] Amy Harmon, "Fraternity that Reveres Robert E. Lee Faces Revolt Over Racism," *The New York Times*, October 19, 2020, accessed February 1, 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/19/us/kappa-alpha-robert-e-lee.html.

The story of the Reese Street Local Historic District is complex and differs from most of the other predominately-White residential local historic districts in Athens, which have, by and large, experienced typical patterns of rejuvenation, a return to majority single-family residency, protection from inappropriate intrusions, and recognition of the districts' histories. While the Reese Street district's historic resources have been preserved, the neighborhood has not experienced the same outcomes as other local historic districts, primarily due to disenfranchisement and zoning among other factors. The percentage of African American residents has continued to decline, and studentification has continued to increase post-designation. The continued loss of the descendant community has diminished the character, history and recognition of the community. The future of the Reese Street Local Historic District remains uncertain due to development pressures caused by its proximity to downtown and the University of Georgia campus and the forces of designation and zoning, which create an uncertain limbo. Ever-increasing development pressure may eventually thwart protection of the historic structures and drive any remaining African American residents and institutions out of the neighborhood. There are several large vacant lots which could be developed, and the potential for parcels to be combined for even larger developments is ever-present. Although it has not occurred to date, the potential for demolition-by-neglect exists and could grow stronger as the University of Georgia student population continues to expand, creating a demand for more rental housing.

In order to understand why the Reese Street neighborhood is historically significant, why it was designated as a local historic district, and why it remains in a precarious position despite its designation, it is necessary to examine the development of the Reese Street neighborhood from its inception as a post-emancipation Black community, its growth as a major cultural center in Athens and the region, resident attrition and decline, and the years of opportunistic development that contributed to destabilizing the neighborhood. It has been 15 years since designation in 2008. The neighborhood's structures have been saved, but this historic Black community has continued to lose its descendant community. Was local historic designation the solution? Is the preservation of an African American neighborhood without its cultural context meaningless? How can community be retained and can/should that even be a goal? This

thesis will study how the neighborhood has been impacted by designation and, more importantly, identify some shared issues and barriers that are affecting the future of Athens' other African American neighborhoods.

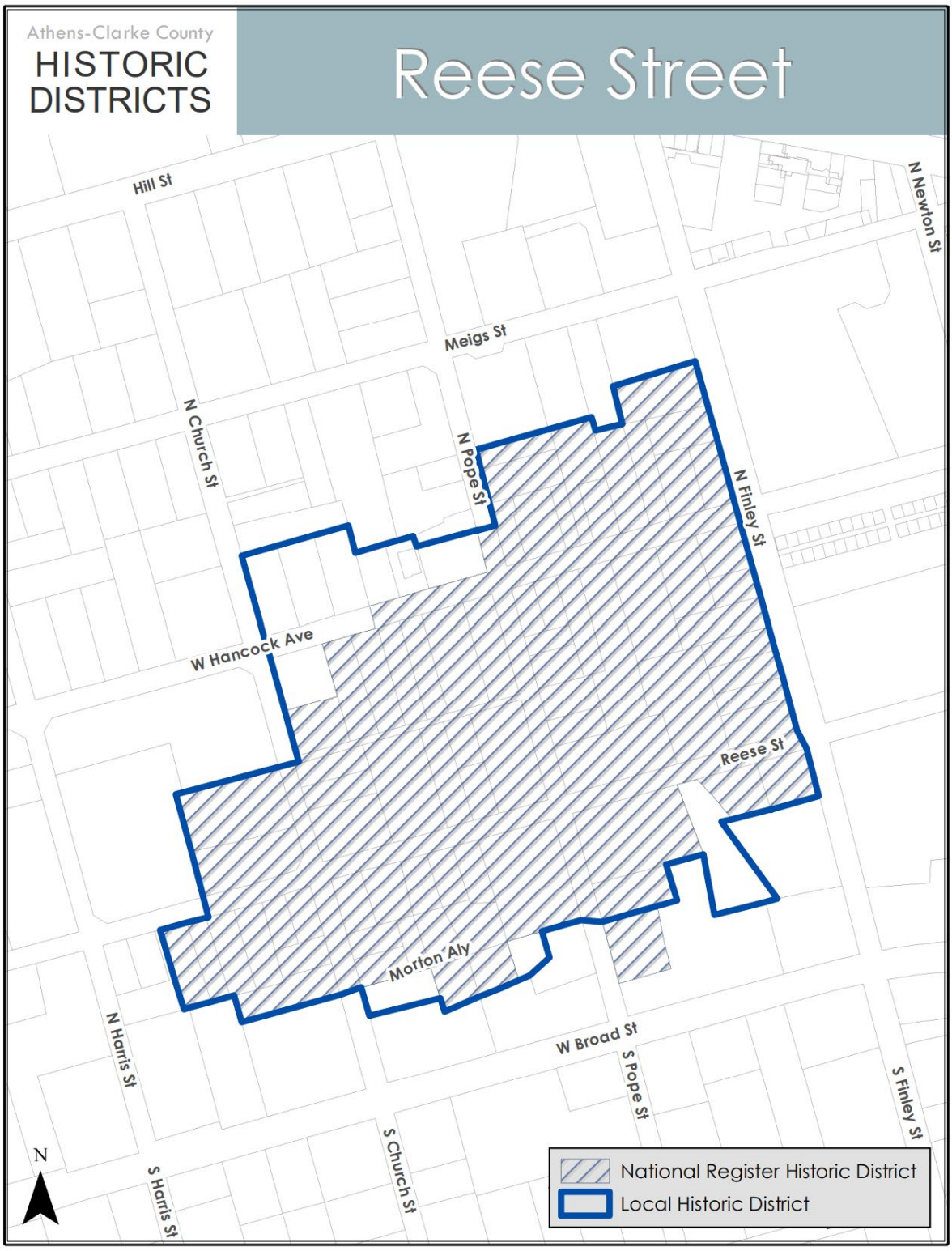

Figure 1. Map of the Reese Street Local Historic District from the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department. Shown are both the National Register Historic District and the Local Historic District boundaries.

Definitions and limitations

I have used both the terms "Black" and "African American" when referring to individuals of a particular race although I used the term "African American" exclusively when referring to more recent events (1980 and beyond).[5] This choice is supported by the *Diversity Style Guide* and other sources.[6] I have used the term "White" when referring to individuals of that race in any time period, and I have chosen to capitalize it as I have done with Black and African American. This choice is supported by both the *Chicago Manual of Style*, and the *Diversity Style Guide.*[7]

I need to acknowledge that I was a trustee of the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation at the time the Reese Street neighborhood undertook efforts to become a local historic district. Although I was not directly involved, I did support the designation effort, and I arranged for Jeanne Cyriaque, African American historic resources coordinator at the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office to speak to Reese Street neighborhood residents at a neighborhood meeting. Her presentation, titled "Place Matters in the Neighborhood: The Evolution of African American Historic Districts" took place on May 29, 2008 at Hill First Baptist Church. At the time, I was aware of some of the major issues, but performing research provided me with the opportunity to explore the complexity of the issues and gain a new perspective.

The name of the neighborhood which is the subject of this case study—"Reese Street"—is taken from one of its primary streets on which key historic African American educational institutions were located. Reese Street and West Hancock Avenue are the two primary east-west streets and they are located in both the Reese Street neighborhood and the West Hancock Avenue neighborhood to the west (see Figure 2). Both are historic African American neighborhoods but common usage has dictated the use of "Reese Street" as the name for the neighborhood closest to downtown between Milledge Avenue and

[5] Aly Colón, "Black, black, or African American?" Poynter, October 14, 2003, accessed April 10, 2024, https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2003/black-black-or-african-american/.
[6] "African American, African-American, Black, black," *The Diversity Style Guide*, accessed April 10, 2024, https://www.diversitystyleguide.com/glossary/african-american-african-american-black-2/.
[7] "Ethnic and national groups and associated adjectives," *The Chicago Manual of Style Online*, 17th edition, accessed April 10, 2024, https://www-chicagomanualofstyle-org.us1.proxy.openathens.net/home.html.

Pulaski Street, and the use of "West Hancock Avenue" as the name for the neighborhood further west between Milledge Avenue and The Plaza. The Reese Street neighborhood was designated as a local historic district in 2008. The West Hancock Avenue Historic District was designated as a National Register district in 1988, but it is not a local historic district.

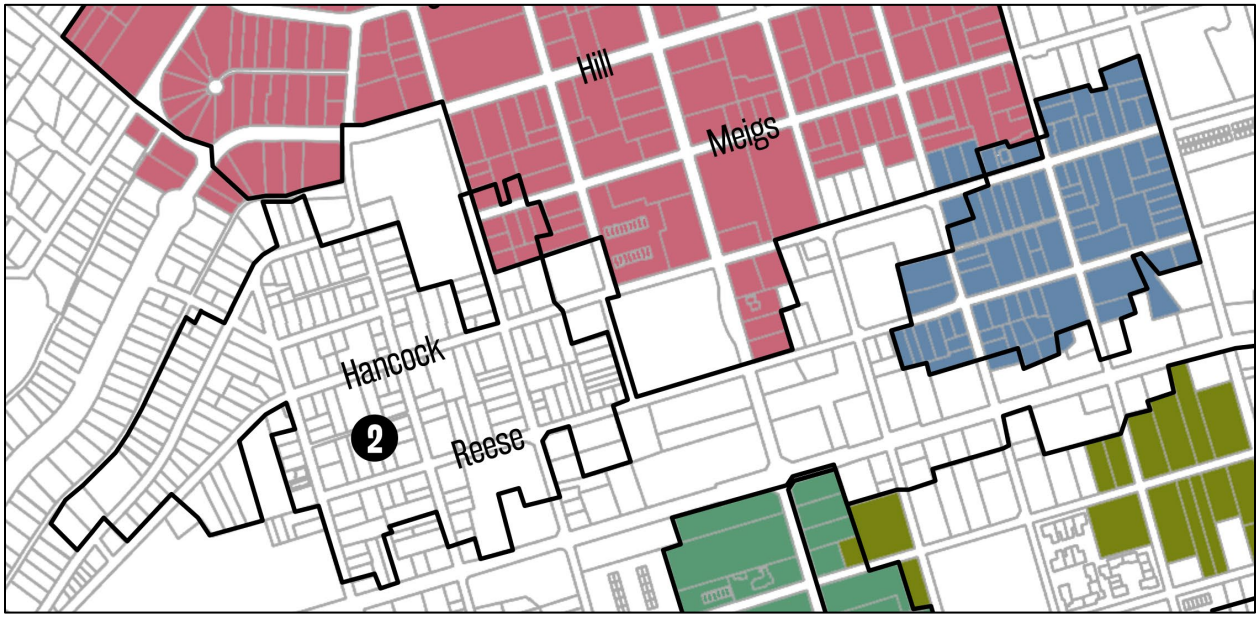

Figure 2. The Reese Street Local Historic District and the West Hancock National Register District. This map from the 2023 Annual Report of the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission shows the Reese Street Local Historic District boundaries in blue over the National Register District boundaries outlined in black at the right. The boundaries of the West Hancock National Register District are noted by the black outline to the left with the label "2."

Regarding limitations, I have striven to become aware of my implicit bias, but as a White individual, I acknowledge that I have subconscious perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes that may impact my research, analysis and conclusions regarding an African American neighborhood and its residents as well as other African American individuals. I have attempted to be conscious of my language as well as my statements and conclusions. Where I have encountered bias in prior research, I have noted it and provided context. Due to disenfranchisement and previous experiences with bias, some of the African American residents and stakeholders of the Reese Street neighborhood did not wish to be interviewed, citing that they have either been misquoted, misrepresented, or their public stance has caused disapprobation from their community. Therefore, I do not have as much first-hand information from the

African American community to draw from as would have been desirable. I am not aware of prior research on, or analysis of, African American historic districts in Athens. I created metrics to research, analyze and draw conclusions, but these were devised without a precedent and they could likely be improved through further research.

Methodology

I interviewed Reese Street neighborhood activist Hope Iglehart on June 16, 2023 and began a review of the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation records on the Reese Street neighborhood designation effort in order to identify past and present issues in the Reese Street Local Historic District. Several themes became apparent such as the continued gentrification by UGA students, the ever-present development pressures, possible zoning incongruities, the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process which can be intimidating, and the success and failure of local historic designation. Iglehart, like other preservationists, would like to find a way to preserve culture and community along with the built environment, and noted that other historic African American communities such as East Athens are facing challenges. I determined that a thorough review of the events which transpired and have continued to unfold in the Reese Street neighborhood—a case study—would be the best way to elucidate both successes and failures and find potential areas for improvement or innovation.

The case study involved several methods and resources to answer the research question including archival research, data analysis, and oral history interviews. A qualitative approach providing details and context was used to present the benefits and limitations of local historic designation of the Reese Street neighborhood. This method provided an in-depth understanding of motivations and perceptions primarily through oral history interviews. A standard set of questions was created but altered slightly to tailor them to the various categories of interview subjects: residents, investors, preservationists, COA applicants, etc. This thesis will explore why local historic designation was sought and how it was and is currently perceived depending on a stakeholder's individual context. This includes but is not limited to race,

ownership status (e.g., owner-occupant or investor), current or previous residency, non-residency affiliation (e.g., member of the Masonic lodge or Hill First Baptist Church), and property owners who underwent the COA process.

I also used some quantitative data, where it was available and when it was appropriate. Some examples include Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessor data on ownership, homestead exemption, lot sizes and values, and census data on population statistics. The sources I examined included the following:

Archived and current records/documents/maps/images

The records of the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (ACHF) on the designation of the Reese Street Local Historic District are retained by the University of Georgia Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and they provided valuable primary source material. Historic maps (e.g., Sanborn) from the Digital Library of Georgia and images were used to provide historical context and to extract information on the built environment.

Athens-Clarke County tax assessor data via qPublic

This data was used to determine current and past ownership; built dates; ratio of owner-occupied vs. rental; zoning designations, building footprints and relation to streets; and to create maps for research and or representation in the thesis.

Interviews

I sought interviews with stakeholders who could provide varied perspectives on the designation of the Reese Street neighborhood. Those individuals included current and former residents, preservationists, property owners who underwent the COA process, investors who have property in the neighborhood (both White and African American); as well as other individuals who could offer perspectives on larger topics.

Athens-Clarke County Planning Department Records

Historic as well as current zoning and local historic district maps and regulations were examined. Certificate of Appropriateness records were used to gauge construction/renovation activity in Reese Street Local Historic District since designation; to determine what type of material changes occurred; to determine the number of new-builds; to determine ratio of owner-occupant vs. investor COAs; and to determine COA process costs.

Books and journal articles

Books on Athens' history provided historical background to lend context to the designation of the Reese Street neighborhood. Other academic books and journal articles provided an understanding of existing research and the debates relevant to my topic and prepared me in making my argument on that topic.

Newspaper and other media sources

The *Athens Banner-Herald, Flagpole* magazine, and the *Red and Black* extensively covered the purchase of property in the Reese Street neighborhood by the Kappa Alpha fraternity and the ensuing events, including the effort to seek local historic designation. A 2015 documentary, *Old South* by Danielle Beverly, provides an interesting perspective on the relationship between the fraternity and the neighborhood after the Kappa Alpha fraternity house was built and fraternity members began living there. The Georgia Historic Newspapers database from the Digital Library of Georgia provided historical information on the Reese Street neighborhood.

Athens City Directories

Data from the directories provided information on occupations, race, homeownership, racial composition and information on the built environment such as locations of residents, businesses and institutions, and years of existence.

Summary of upcoming chapters

The Reese Street neighborhood transitioned from a vibrant and stable African American community to an area dominated by rental houses and college students. Local historic district designation has not been able to stem or reverse that trend. It has preserved the built environment, but it has not succeeded in saving the community. The research presented here will explore that conundrum.

Chapter Two will provide a literature review of the themes that became evident while researching material for the Reese Street Local Historic District case study including the role that historic marginalization and disenfranchisement of African Americans played in a neighborhood's development; historic preservation's part in ignoring the histories of African Americans and their contributions to place which has resulted in a blend of suspicion and resentment towards preservation and affected efforts to preserve the Reese Street neighborhood; studentification—a specific form of gentrification which has destabilized the Reese Street neighborhood and which contributed to the crisis that ultimately led to the area's designation as a local historic district; and lastly, zoning and its impact on local historic districts and gentrification.

Chapter Three will detail the rich history of the Reese Street neighborhood from emancipation to its designation as a local historic district in 2008 and will provide necessary context to lend understanding to the current state of affairs. Chapters Four through Seven will each be dedicated to four primary areas of study that elucidate the major questions which emerged before and after designation. Chapter Four will discuss grassroots activism and support for designation; Chapter Five will discuss the financial burden of designation on a low-to-moderate-income neighborhood; Chapter Six will discuss the effect of designation on material changes; and Chapter Seven will discuss zoning, development, and studentification. Chapter Eight will conclude the thesis with a summary of the impacts of designation, identification of shared issues and barriers that are affecting the future of Athens' other African American neighborhoods, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this case study of the Reese Street Local Historic District, several significant themes emerged in the course of my research which have been addressed by other scholars. The first is the role that historic marginalization and disenfranchisement of African Americans plays in a neighborhood's development, in this case, Reese Street. Another theme is historic preservation's part in ignoring the histories of African Americans and their contributions to place which has resulted in a blend of suspicion and resentment towards preservation and affected efforts to preserve the Reese Street neighborhood and other African American neighborhoods. A third theme is studentification—a specific form of gentrification which has destabilized the Reese Street neighborhood and which contributed to the crisis that ultimately led to the area's designation as a local historic district. A fourth theme—zoning and its impact on local historic districts and gentrification—emerged, but very little scholarly literature could be found on this topic. A review of scholarly literature which examines these topics follows.

Marginalization and disenfranchisement of African American neighborhoods

The issues involved with preservation of historic African American neighborhoods are complex and intertwined with a history of social, political and economic disenfranchisement. African American neighborhoods have long been subject to systemic inequities in housing and land use policies as documented by Richard Rothstein in his book *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*[8] and by Tom Carroll in his article "Housing, Land-use Policy, and Local Government's Role in Structural Racism: Lead the Effort in Confronting Racial Inequality by

[8] Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, First edition. (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, a division of W.W. Norton & Company, 2017).

Examining Policy."[9] African Americans were often relegated to the least desirable land, they were segregated by Jim Crow policies, they were disproportionately targeted for urban renewal projects, and their population has seen increasing displacement through various forms of gentrification or, in the case of the Reese Street Local Historic District, studentification, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

African American neighborhoods have a history of either being ignored or targeted as noted by Chused,[10] Snyder et al,[11] and Redden et al.[12] Examples in Athens include Linnentown and The Bottom, both African American neighborhoods lost to urban renewal. Residents were denied basic infrastructure such as paved roads, water and sewer lines, and streetlights in Linnentown, and then they were declared slums, in part because there was no indoor plumbing. Hattie Thomas Whitehead documents the inequities her community faced in *Giving Voice to Linnentown*.[13] While there were dilapidated houses due to poverty, there were also many well-built houses that would have stood the test of time. Had economic resources existed, houses would have been replaced or improved over time, and communities would have survived and thrived. Displacing communities created further economic hardship on the residents and deprived many of the generational wealth they could have acquired as noted by Galster et al,[14] Krivo and

[9] Tom Carroll, "Housing, Land-use Policy, and Local Government's Role in Structural Racism: Lead the Effort in Confronting Racial Inequality by Examining Policy," *Public Management* (00333611) 103, no. 6 (2021), 10-13. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=f6h&AN=151018222&site=eds-live.
[10] Richard Chused, "Strategic Thinking about Racism in American Zoning." *New York Law School Law Review* 66, no. 2 (January 1, 2021): 307–38. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=edshol&AN=edshol.hein.journals.nyls66.21&site=eds-live.Richard Chused, "Strategic Thinking about Racism in American Zoning," 2022,
[11] Susan Nigra Snyder and George E. Thomas, "Curating Exclusion and Privilege: History, Heritage, and Nature as Neoliberal Tools," *Landscape Architecture Frontiers* 8, no. 6 (2020), 60. doi:10.15302/J-LAF-0-020008.
[12] Tyeshia Redden et al., "Gainesville's Forgotten Neighborhood: An Examination of Narratives in Planning," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 88, no. 3 (2022), 392-404. doi:10.1080/01944363.2021.1981775.
[13] Hattie Thomas Whitehead, Giving Voice to Linnentown, (Tiny Tots & Tikes, 2020).
[14] George Galster and Erin Godfrey, "By Words and Deeds," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 71, no. 3 (2005), 251-268. doi:10.1080/01944360508976697.

Kaufman,[15] and Flippen.[16] In the case of Linnentown, the University of Georgia partnered with the city of Athens to remove an African American community and claim the land. The outsized role that universities often played in urban renewal projects is documented in a journal article by Kahler and Harrison.[17]

Preservation's role in perpetuating and solving racial inequities

The marginalization of African Americans permeated not only society but its institutions and organizations, and the field of preservation was no exception. Preservation has historically been exclusive rather than inclusive, largely focusing on what was thought to be important: large, high-stye houses and places associated with national heroes or wars as noted by several essayists in Michael A. Tomlan's *Preservation of What, For Whom?*[18] Extensive research has been performed regarding the fact that African American historic resources as well as the stories and cultural heritage surrounding them were essentially ignored by the preservation community, as noted by Cep,[19] Price,[20] and Worthington, et al.[21] As noted by Cep, only two percent of the more than 95,000 historic sites on the National Register of Historic Places in 2020 were African American in focus.[22]

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[15] Lauren J. Krivo and Robert L. Kaufman, "Housing and Wealth Inequality: Racial-Ethnic Differences in Home Equity in the United States," *Demography* 41, no. 3 (2004), 585-605. doi:10.1353/dem.2004.0023. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.1515194&site=eds-live.

[16] Chenoa Flippen, "Unequal Returns to Housing Investments - A Study of Real Housing Appreciation among Black, White, and Hispanic Households." *Social Forces* 82, no. 4 (June 1, 2004): 1523–52. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=edshol&AN=edshol.hein.journals.josf82.60&site=eds-live.

[17] Sophie Kahler and Conor Harrison, "'Wipe Out the Entire Slum Area': University-Led Urban Renewal in Columbia, South Carolina, 1950–1985," *Journal of Historical Geography* 67 (2020), 61-70. doi:10.1016/j.jhg.2019.10.008.

[18] Michael A. Tomlan, "*Preservation of What, for Whom? A Critical Look at Historical Significance*," (National Council for Preservation Education, 1998). https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=cat06564a&AN=uga.9937479543902959&site=eds-live.

[19] Casey Cep, "The Fight to Preserve African-American History," last modified January 27, accessed April 13, 2023, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/02/03/the-fight-to-preserve-african-american-history.

[20] Clement Alexander Price, "The Path to Big Mama's House: Historic Preservation, Memory, and African-American History," *Forum Journal,* no. 28, no. 3 (2014), 23-31. doi:https://doi.org/10.1353/fmj.2014.a543388.

[21] Leah Worthington, Clare Donaldson Rachel and John W. White, *Challenging History: Race, Equity, and the Practice of Public History* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2021). https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=cat06564a&AN=uga.9949382371902959&site=eds-live.

[22] Cep.

In *Place, Race, and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation,* published in 2009, just one year after the designation of the Reese Street Local Historic District, author Ned Kaufman argues that the future of preservation is not in architectural significance but rather a focus on the social relevance of historic places. He asserts that preservation is "a social practice, part history and part planning."[23] The "ultimate goal" is to create "places where people can live well and connect to meaningful narratives about history, culture and identity."[24] It has only been since the 1980s that preservationists have recognized its past failures and made a concerted effort to reform its attitudes and practices. As noted by Kaufman, diversity gained national recognition in the preservation field when the National Trust for Historic Preservation situated its 1992 conference theme on that topic.[25] Since that time, preservation has come to be recognized as a tool for social and cultural justice as noted by Ifill[26] and Kaufman.[27]

Nordbrock and Vojnovic maintain that there is a definitive relationship between preservation activity and gentrification, noting that it can lead to "the gradual loss of [a neighborhood's] historic integrity—the very reason for preservation to begin with."[28] This is corroborated by Aileen de la Torres in her thesis on the participation of Africans in preservation. She notes that, "historic designation and preservation of declining neighborhoods are regularly followed by gentrification [and] the result is often the loss of homes by longtime residents, usually the poor minorities and elderly."[29] De la Torres further makes the point that patterns of gentrification have left countless minorities wary of any type of preservation activity."[30] African Americans are reluctant to interact with the White preservation

[23] Ned Kaufman, *Place, Race, and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1.
[24] Kaufman, 1.
[25] Kaufman.
[26] Sherrilyn Ifill and Darren Walker, "A Conversation about Philanthropy and Preservation as Justice," *Forum Journal*, no. 22, no. 1 (2021), 7-20. doi:https://doi.org/10.1353/fmj.2021.a784066.
[27] Kaufman.
[28] Ted Grevstad-Nordbrock and Igor Vojnovic, "Heritage-Fueled Gentrification: A Cautionary Tale from Chicago," *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 38 (2019), 261-270. doi:10.1016/j.culher.2018.08.004, 261.
[29] de la Torre.
[30] Aileen Alexis de la Torre, "An Analysis of African American Participation in Historic Preservation" (master's thesis, University of Georgia, 2003), https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/delatorre_aileen_a_200312_mhp.pdf.

establishment when doing so may lead to further gentrification than they are already facing. On a local level, there are only two standalone African American local historic districts among the sixteen historically White local historic districts in Athens, and the Reese Street Local Historic District is one of them (see Appendix A for a map of all local historic districts in relation to one another). This is not solely due to the preservation community's neglect of these histories—it is also the result of negative perceptions held by African American towards preservation.

As noted by Kaufman[31] and Jest,[32] because of trauma from urban renewal, preservation's history of exclusion, and a hard-fought battle to obtain sovereignty over their property, African Americans can be understandably suspicious of preservation efforts that require them to relinquish some of their property rights. This was evident when African American property owners in downtown Athens' Hot Corner fought to remove themselves from the most recent local historic district—the West Downtown Local Historic District—citing that the designation would effectively remove their ability to capitalize on their investment by placing design restrictions on the properties' potential redevelopment.

There has been an encouraging amount of new scholarship on issues and strategies for the preservation of African American historic resources. The National Trust for Historic Preservation's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, led by Brent Leggs, issued an in-depth report in 2020 titled "Preserving African American Places: Growing Preservation's Potential as a Path for Equity." As noted by the report, preservationists must first understand place-based injustice and then identify preservation-based strategies in partnership with African American neighborhoods. However, the report clarifies that there is no one single solution, and an "in-depth, city-specific approach" needs to be done to take into account local factors which include the real estate market, development pressure, and land use regulations.[33] The report does emphasize that early intervention is key, however, before displacement

[31] Kaufman.
[32] Melissa Jest, "Making Historic Preservation Relevant in Urban Communities of Color." *Forum Journal*, no. 24, no. 3 (2010), 47-52. muse.jhu.edu/article/908520.
[33] "Preserving African American Places: Growing Preservation's Potential as a Path for Equity," National Trust for Historic Preservation African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, (October 2020): 32, accessed March 25, 2024. https://savingplaces.org/equity-report.

becomes predominant, which runs contrary to the situation in the Reese Street neighborhood. The examples outlined in another African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund report, "Perspectives of Neighborhood Change: Case Studies from the 2018 African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund Research Fellows," offer specific strategies from neighborhoods across the country that are facing disenfranchisement and displacement.[34] While none of them match the conditions in the Reese Street Local Historic District exactly, the research provides important insights and potential strategies.

Studentification in the Reese Street neighborhood

Studentification is a term used to describe a specific form of gentrification—the displacement of a historic group of residents with college students, which is a unique dynamic in college towns. As noted by Graham Pickren in "Where Can I Build My Student Housing? The Politics of Studentification in Athens-Clarke County, Georgia," the properties subject to studentification are typically less expensive and the residents have often felt politically powerless to resist the forces of gentrification. Although Pickren's case study was about the removal of a Latino/a mobile home community and its replacement with a student-oriented apartment complex in Athens, the dynamics are similar in the Reese Street neighborhood. Pickren makes a compelling argument that students are a gentrifying force that have displaced residents and decrease the availability of housing for the working-class in Athens. Moos et al., in "The Knowledge Economy City: Gentrification, Studentification and Youthification, and their Connections to Universities" echo that argument, stating that it becomes a class struggle with the non-degreed pitted against the degreed in competition for housing.[35] Because investors and developers prefer

[34] Favors, Akilah, et al. "Perspectives of Neighborhood Change: Case Studies from the 2018 African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund Research Fellows." National Trust for Historic Preservation African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund. October 2020, accessed March 26, 2024. https://cdn.savingplaces.org/2023/07/20/15/31/52/440/NTHP_Perspectives%20of%20Neighborhood%20Change.pdf.
[35] Markus Moos et al., "The Knowledge Economy City: Gentrification, Studentification and Youthification, and their Connections to Universities," *Urban Studies* 56, no. 6 (May 1, 2019): 1075–92, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.26650832&site=eds-live.

tenants who can afford higher rent, college students effectively outbid and displace lower-income residents.

There is a significant cottage market of local real estate investors who buy homes to turn into student housing because the University of Georgia has de facto relegated the responsibility for housing its students to the city of Athens. Per Moos, et al., universities are "self-serving members of growth regimes," despite their missions of research and service, and act as "profit-maximizing property developers who actively displace lower income earners."[36] Another impact of studentification as noted by Revington and Wray in "Studentification and student wellbeing in the private rented sector: further reflections on Lynch et al" is the inflation of property values within established neighborhoods.[37]

Zachary Shrader, who wrote his master's thesis for urban and regional planning on studentification, studied Florida State University's impact on the African American neighborhoods of Gaines Street and Frenchtown in Tallahassee and found that studentification has disrupted the "social and economic context" of the neighborhoods, especially as it pertained to the loss of affordable housing.[38] Shrader attributes studentification to "inaction" by all the key players: universities, students, city leaders and officials, and long-time residents of the neighborhoods themselves. Revington and Wray propose that it is a combination of landlords, property developers, institutions, and urban planning regulations that direct students to particular housing markets, causing studentification.[39] In the case of Reese Street and other Black in-town neighborhoods in Athens, all of the stakeholders cited above have played a role in their studentification. The "inaction" occurs when market forces are allowed to shape the neighborhoods. Disinvestment and proximity to the UGA campus made these neighborhoods attractive to investors. Disinvestment, among other causes, led some residents to sell their properties to investors, causing the

[36] Moos, 1079.
[37] N. Revington and A. Wray, "Studentification and Student Wellbeing in the Private Rented Sector: Further Reflections on Lynch et al," *Perspectives in Public Health* 144, no. 1 (2024), 18-20. doi:10.1177/1757913923120286.
[38] Zachary M. Shrader, "Studentification of University Cities: A Case Study Examining the Effect of University Growth in Tallahassee, Florida" (master's thesis, The University of Florida, 2019), 45, https://original-ufdc.uflib.ufl.edu/AA00082962/00001.
[39] Revington and Wray.

loss of a critical mass of African American residents. In addition, historic disenfranchisement contributed to disengagement with city planning. There is often an expectation from African Americans that any engagement with a White power structure will be fruitless. Additionally, organizing into a formal neighborhood organization to resist development and/or encourage planning/zoning changes is more commonly a White power strategy and not one seen as often in Athens' African American neighborhoods due to disenfranchisement.

Zoning impacts on local historic districts and gentrification

There is an absence of scholarly research on the intersection of local historic districts that primarily consist of multi-family zoning (i.e., no single-family zoning). Local historic districts in commercially-zoned areas (e.g., downtowns) are common in downtown areas—Athens has two such districts. These districts have their own set of design guidelines because of the unique nature of commercial architecture; however, the Reese Street neighborhood relies on the guidelines designed primarily for single-family neighborhoods. Likewise, additional research on how zoning might prevent studentification is lacking although James Jennings wrote about the zoning codes in the city of Boston which include fair housing language, added in 2021. One of the primary goals was to address displacement, i.e., gentrification.[40]

Chapter two takeaways

- There is no one single solution, and an in-depth, city-specific (or neighborhood-specific) approach needs to be taken to address issues of inequity and displacement.

[40] James Jennings, "Fair Housing and Zoning as Anti-Gentrification: The Case of Boston, Massachusetts." *Journal of Affordable Housing & Community Development Law*, 30, no. 1 (April 2021): 93–115. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=lgs&AN=155897829&site=eds-live.

- Early intervention is key when addressing issues of displacement in African American neighborhoods—before that displacement becomes predominant.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY OF THE REESE STREET NEIGHBORHOOD

Transition from antebellum to Post-Civil War Black settlement patterns in Athens

Black and White individuals in the antebellum South lived in varying degrees of proximity to one another as enslavers depended upon enslaved persons to work the land, provide skilled trade, and furnish domestic services. The enslaved in Athens, by law, had to live on their owner's property unless a fee was paid, so White and Black individuals lived in close proximity to each other. Like many areas in the South, the enslaved in Athens accounted for a large percentage of the population. They nearly equaled the number of White residents in Athens and exceeded the number of White residents in Clarke County.[41]

Table 1. Athens and Clarke County Racial Population in 1860.

	White		Free Black		Enslaved	
Athens	1,955	0.51%	1	0%	1,892	0.49%
Clarke County	5,539	0.49%	19	0%	5,660	0.51%

After the Civil War, emancipated Black individuals tended to live close to their employers on alleys and side streets, reminiscent of the antebellum pattern of plantation and town life under slavery. As town populations swelled, larger Black settlements formed, but they continued to be interspersed with White neighborhoods although on much less desirable land.[42] Athens, like many other Southern cities, practiced segregation on a microscale level "like the backyard housing during the slave period when

[41] Joseph. C. G. Kennedy, *The United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, (Washington: General Printing Office, 1864), 72-74, accessed February 1, 2024, https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1860/population/1860a-01.pdf.
[42] Nancy Perry, Spencer Crew, and Nigel M. Waters, "'We Didn't Have Any Other Place to Live:' Residential Patterns in Segregated Arlington County, Virginia," *Southeastern Geographer* 53, no. 4 (2013): 405, accessed December 3, 2023, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26233662.

Black individuals lived in very close proximity to Whites but clearly separated from them by the spatial layout."[43]

Figure 3. Saddlebag house on the northwest corner of Newton and Reese streets. The extant Camak House is visible in the distance on the right and the rear of the William Letcher Mitchell house is seen in the distance on the left. The Mitchell house faced Hancock Avenue on the block between Newton and Finley streets and has since been demolished. This photograph is one of several taken by the Warren H. Manning planning firm of Boston. Manning was a nationally-known landscape architect hired in 1924 by the Athens Chamber of Commerce to develop a master plan for the city; however, it was never implemented.

Early in Athens history, prosperous White residents primarily lived either downtown (which was on high ground) or along the two main ridges in Athens—Milledge Avenue and Prince Avenue—seeking level ground. Generally, the land between these streets was hilly and less desirable and these are the areas in which Black settlements appeared. Black settlements also developed to the east of downtown, on land

[43] John R. Logan, "Racial Segregation in Postbellum Southern Cities: The Case of Washington, D.C.," *Demographic Research* 36 (2017): 1760, accessed December 3, 2020, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26332180.

sloping down to the North Oconee River then rising again on hills, along railroad tracks and on the outskirts of town. Although there were no ordinances in Athens dictating where Black residents could live, social and economic forces dictated the placement of these settlements—Black residents lived where Whites would rent to them or allow them to purchase property. As noted previously, Athens is typical of Southern towns where "micro-segregation" developed—Black populations dispersed in pockets around the town instead of being relegated to single areas.

A valuable resource in the study of early life of Black individuals in Athens, Georgia is *The Negroes of Athens, Georgia* by Thomas Jackson Woofter, the first in a series of Phelps-Stokes Fellowship Studies, funded by a grant administered by the University of Georgia.[44] Although Woofer's perceptions and conclusions exhibit latent racism, the field work he performed and the demographic data he collected provide valuable insight regarding the conditions of Black Athenians in the early twentieth century. Black neighborhoods in Athens were fairly evenly dispersed around the city, as seen on the Phelps-Stokes study's map (Figure 4) and were in close proximity to White neighborhoods. What is now known as the Reese Street neighborhood was originally part of a larger Black community that extended on either side of West Broad Street just west of Pulaski Street (noted as neighborhood 2 in Figure 4).

The area in which the Reese Street neighborhood developed was part of the original Milledge purchase,[45] and it was laid out in four-acre parcels with a grid pattern that, although undeveloped at the time, is apparent in the street patterns today. Tanyard Branch flowed through a portion of the area, making the terrain hilly, and it was undeveloped until after the Civil War. From 1833–1856, the University of Georgia Botanical Garden was located there on a four-acre parcel in the block with the stream, bounded by Broad, Pope, Reese, and Finley in what would become part of the Reese Street

[44] T. J. Woofter Jr., *The Negroes of Athens, Georgia,* Phelps-Stokes Fellowship Studies, No. 1. Volume XIV, Number 4 (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 1913), https://digihum.libs.uga.edu/items/show/179.
[45] W. L. Mitchell, "Map of Milledge Purchase," 1852, Athens City records, ms1633a, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries.

neighborhood.[46] Antebellum White residences were located on the outer perimeters and level edges on Pulaski Street, Hawthorne, Meigs Street and Milledge Avenue.

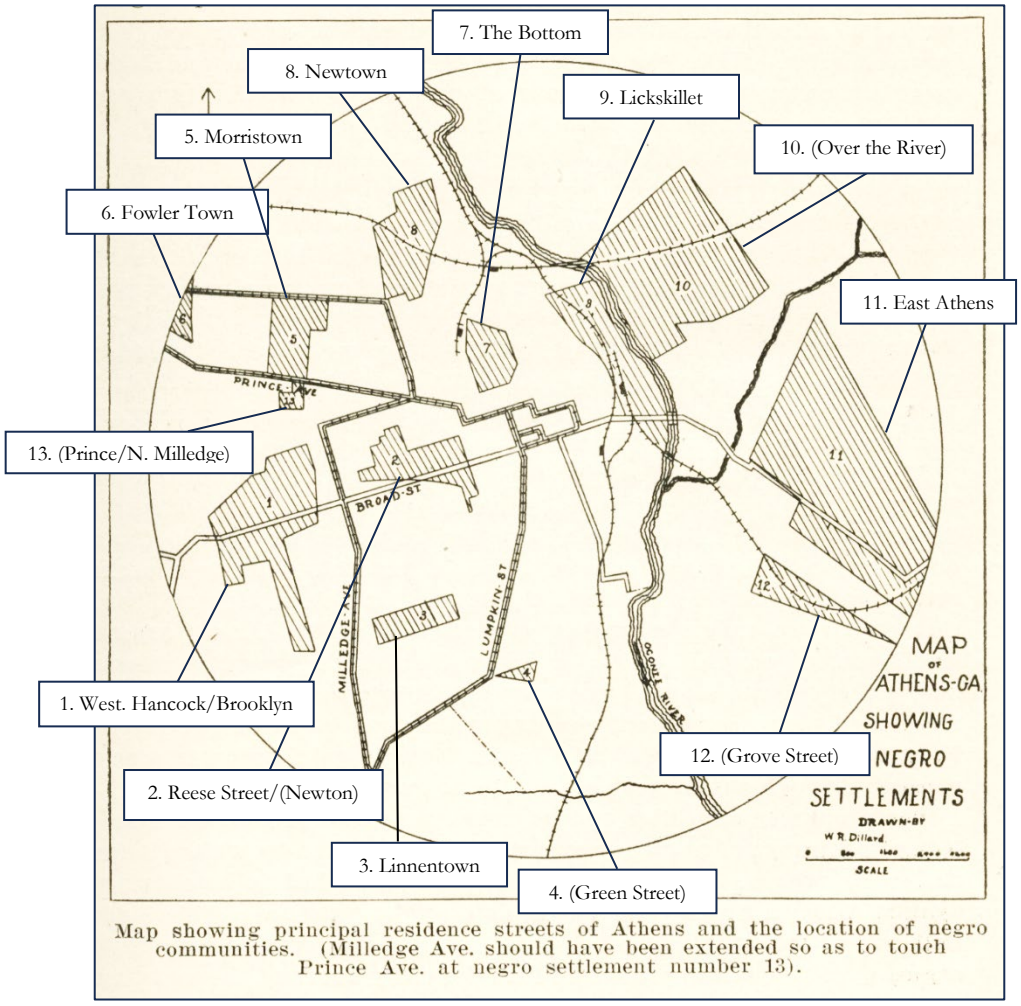


Figure 4. 1913 map of Black settlements in Athens, Georgia from T. J. Woofter, Jr. "The Negroes of Athens, Georgia" (place names added—see Appendix B).

The Phelps-Stokes study describes this Black community thus: "Leaving the business section of town the street drops down into a hollow and crosses a brook. At this point is a negro settlement, the

[46] "University of Georgia Botanical Garden 1833-1856," Georgia Historical Society, accessed January 26, 2024, https://www.georgiahistory.com/ghmi_marker_updated/university-of-georgia-botanical-garden-1833-1856/.

second in size in the town. On this section of Broad there are two negro churches, a negro lodge hall, and several small grocery stores."[47] Woofter enumerated thirteen small grocery stores in the neighborhood, eleven of which were owned by Black individuals.[48] The Black community in this area was fairly large when it was first settled post-emancipation with an estimated population of 1,125 people in 1913.[49]

Figure 5. Mrs. S. E. Bishop Groceries at the northwest corner of West Broad and Pope streets. At the far right is the Knox Institute bell-tower beside Carnegie Hall. The rear of J. Thomas Heard University can be seen beside it. Image from the "Growing Up in Athens, Georgia" Facebook group (c.1935-1938).

With few economic resources and operating under Jim Crow policies, most Black Athenians were dependent upon White property owners for housing, and landlords did not miss an opportunity to exploit this source of income.

> . . . negro rental property is looked on by the landlord class as one of the best investments for small amounts of money. The average rent per room in the two largest settlements of the town [West Hancock and Reese Street] for the 8,013 rooms rented is $1.77 per month. The houses average 3.4 rooms each, the average rent per house being $6.00 per

[47] Woofter, 10.
[48] Woofter.
[49] Woofter.

> month, from 15 to 20 per cent interest on the investment. These houses are in the best negro settlements, but when the value of the house, built as it is of loose boards, seldom kept in repair, with no water or light connections, is considered, the rental appears very high. In fact, it is in the nature of a burden placed upon the weak by the strong. There is some evidence also that the rent of these houses is regulated to fit the price that the market will bear.[50]

The streets were unpaved and narrow, and wells and privies were shared among groups of houses. The streets remained unpaved through the 1940s and perhaps beyond, as evidenced by the 1947 Sanborn map, which has a notation "UNPAVED" on the following streets: Reese Street, N. Church Street, N. Newton Street and a portion of W. Hancock Street. Nearby streets, such as Meigs Street in neighboring Cobbham, were not noted as being unpaved.[51]

As noted by Woofter, despite much of the Black community being limited to rental housing, homeownership among Black residents was increasing. While statistics were not provided for the Reese Street area, the Phelps-Stokes study noted that 65 percent of the houses on the east side of Athens were owner-occupied with much of the rental property in that area owned by Black landlords.[52] In the Reese Street neighborhood, there was a full spectrum of housing types and quality, reflecting the range of resident classes—from laborer to professional. Larger houses were built on higher, more level and more spacious sites. The variety of Black housing is evident in the images taken for the Warren Manning study of Athens in 1924–1925 (see Figures 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9).[53]

[50] Woofter, 13.
[51] Sanborn Map Company, "Insurance Maps of Athens, Clarke Co., Georgia, including Barnett Shoals, High Shoals, and White Hall, 1926, published by the Sanborn Map Company of New York." Athens-Clarke County Planning Department. Updated January 1947.
[52] Woofter.
[53] "Athens, Georgia - City Plan Study, 1925." (Warren H. Manning photographs) Felix Hargrett papers, ms2311, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

Figure 6. This is believed to be the view looking north on Newton Street from W. Broad Street. In spite of the unpaved road, there is an ornamented porch and a two-story plan. These houses appear to be of better quality than the typical rental houses in Figure 9. Photograph from the 1924–25 Manning report.

Figure 7. This is believed to be the view looking southeast from the corner of Newton and Reese streets. Photograph from the 1924–25 Manning report.

Figure 8. View from Newton Street overlooking the former University of Georgia Botanical Garden. The Knox Institute iron bell tower on N. Pope Street is visible to the left of center. To its left, in the distance, is the Seney-Stovall Chapel steeple on N. Milledge Avenue. Photograph from the 1924–25 Manning report.

Figure 9. Black neighborhood housing. These houses typify the Phelps-Stokes study's description of Black rental housing. The exact location of these houses is unknown, but they are presumed to be in the West Broad/Reese Street area, as the photographs are sequentially numbered and these are close in number to the other Reese Street photographs. Photograph from the 1924–25 Manning report.

A cultural center for Black Athenians

The Reese Street neighborhood, with its close proximity to downtown Athens, developed into a significant center for Black culture. The area became a thriving community that included educational institutions, churches, businesses, lodges, and residences, and it became one of Athens' most significant African-American residential neighborhoods. While in some ways typical of African-American residential development in Athens, the Reese Street neighborhood's breadth of resources set it apart as an especially vital and significant community.

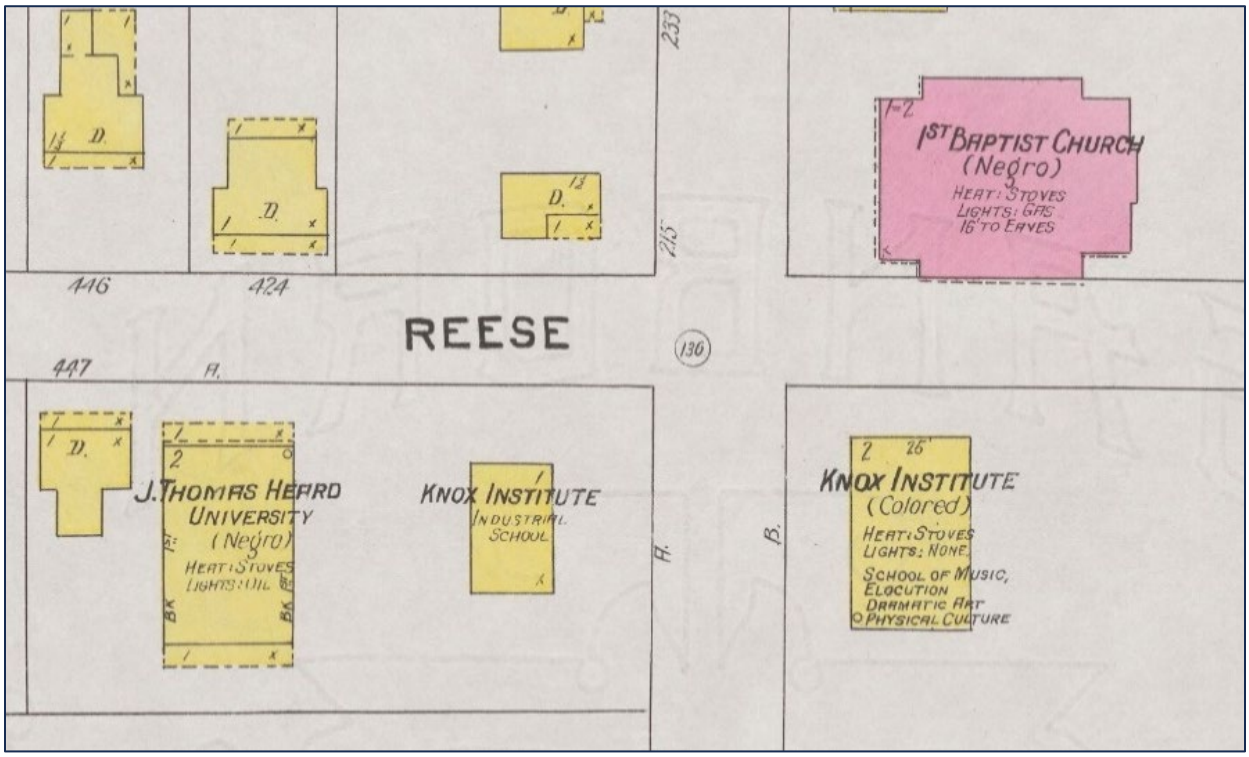


Figure 10. 1908 Sanborn map of the corner of Reese Street and N. Pope Street. This was a key corner in the Reese Street community on which were located the two Knox Institute buildings, Hill First Baptist Church, and the nearby J. Thomas Heard University.

Knox Institute

The Freedman's Bureau founded the first school for Black Athenians in the Reese Street community in 1868.[54] The land for the school was purchased in 1867 by three formerly enslaved local

[54] Michael L. Thurmond, Dan A. Aldridge Jr. and Conoly Hester, *A Story Untold: Black Men and Women in Athens History*, 3rd ed., (Athens, GA: Deeds Publishing, 2019).

African-Americans: Mr. Courtney Beal, a property owner who would later be noted by the *Southern Watchman* newspaper as the "wealthiest negro in the state;" Reverend Floyd Hill, for whom Hill First Baptist Church was named; and Madison Davis, who lived on Newton Street in the Reese Street neighborhood and who would be elected to the Georgia House of Representatives the following year, one of the first two Black legislators from Clarke County.[55]

Figure 11. Students gathered in front of the original Knox Institute building. Lewis Sherman Clark, the principal of the school for thirty-one years (1887-1918) is pictured standing in the front row, just to the left of the front walkway. This 1900 photo was taken by David Lewis Earnest.

The three men donated the land specifically to be used "to educate freedmen's children or children of any race."[56] The school was named for Major John J. Knox, the Freedman's Bureau Assistant Commissioner who directed the Reconstruction program in Athens. The school eventually came under the

[55] Albert L. Hester, *Enduring Legacy: Clarke County, Georgia's Ex-Slave Legislators Madison Davis and Alfred Richardson*, (Green Berry Press, 2010); "The Richest Negro in the State," *The Southern Watchman*, November 4, 1874; Thurmond.
[56] Hester, 66.

auspices of the American Missionary Association, based in New York, which was active in establishing schools and colleges for Black students all over the country. As the Phelps-Stokes study noted, "The campus is located in the very center of the negro population of the town, just where a public negro high school should be located."[57] The school was later renamed the Knox Institute and Industrial School.

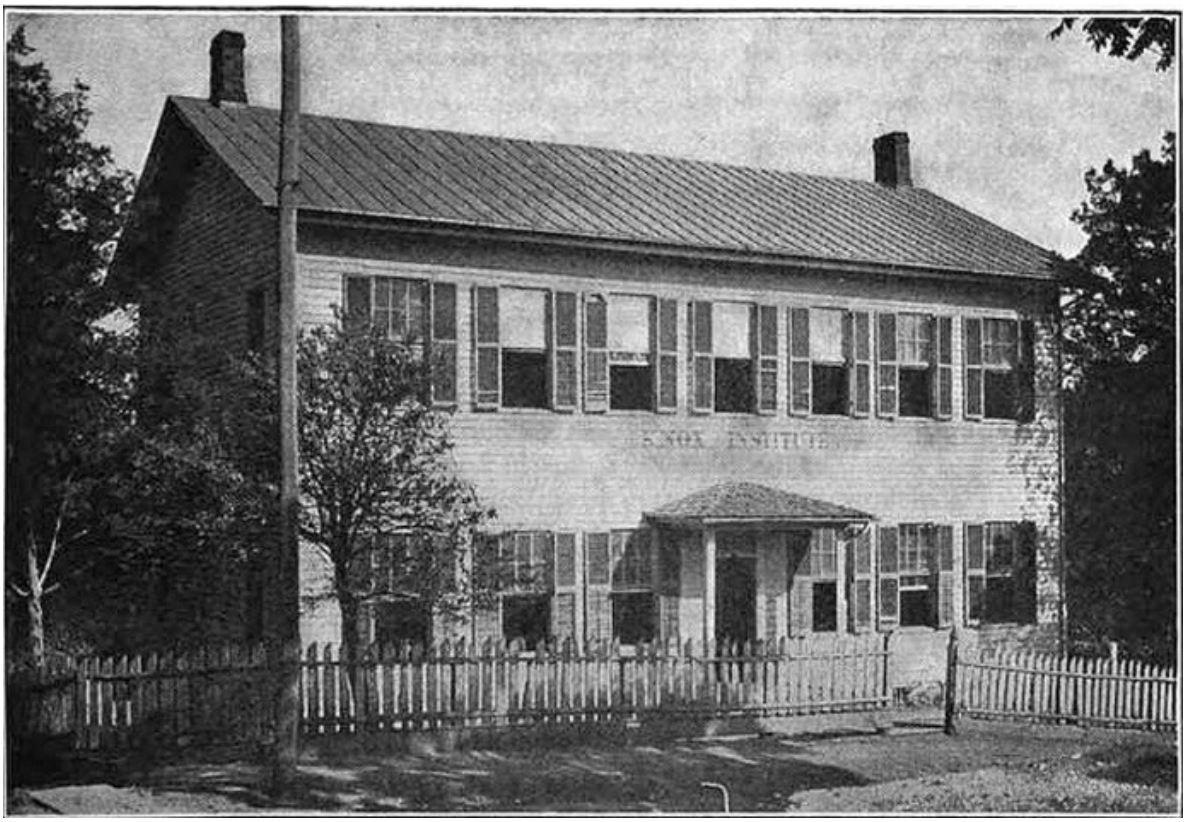


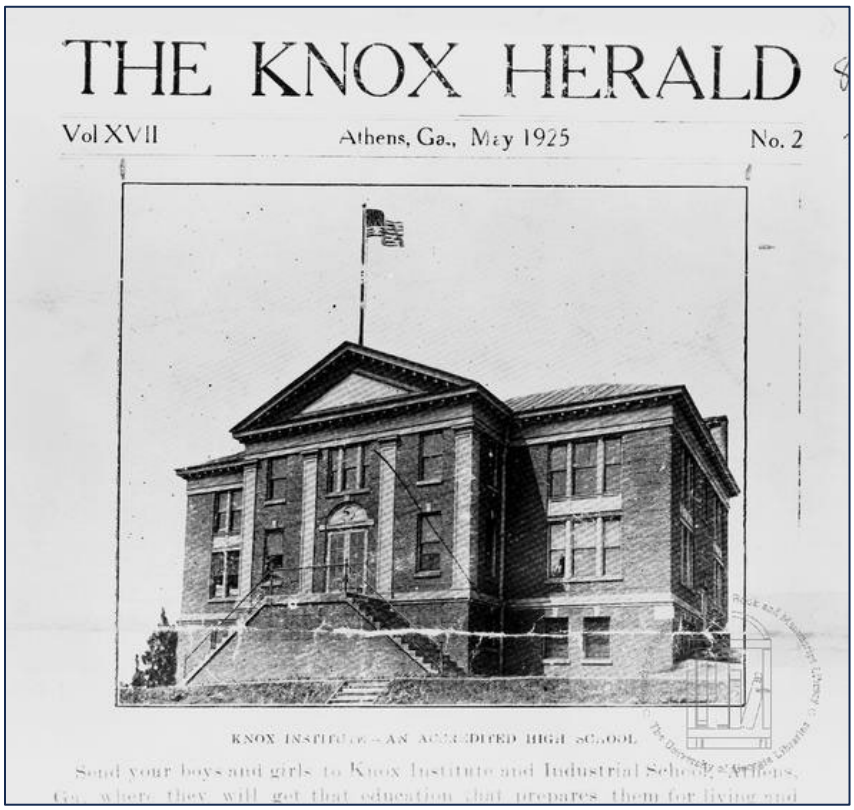
Figure 12. The original Knox Institute building on N. Pope Street. The image is from the collection of William Mann, professor emeritus of landscape architecture in the College of the Environment and Design at the University of Georgia (date and source unknown).

The original school was a two-story frame building on the southeast corner of Reese and N. Pope Streets, facing N. Pope Street. It remained the only school for Black Athenians for eighteen years until the Athens public school system was established in 1886. Although a public school for Black students was

[57] Woofter, 23.

built that year on Baxter Street, many Black parents continued to send their children—33 percent—to Knox Institute and other private schools.[58] As the Phelps-Stokes study noted,

> . . . many parents stint themselves to send their children to Knox Institute and the other private schools. This is partly accounted for by the crowded condition of the public schools, and partly because of a lingering of the old-south idea that it is a reflection on a child to attend a "free school." Knox Institute stands well with the colored community and with the whites, who are often called on to address the pupils.[59]


THE KNOX HERALD

Vol XVII Athens, Ga., May 1925 No. 2

KNOX INSTITUTE—AN ACCREDITED HIGH SCHOOL

Send your boys and girls to Knox Institute and Industrial School, Athens, Ga., where they will get that education that prepares them for living and

Figure 13. Knox Herald newsletter, May 1925. From Georgia photograph file ms3705, University of Georgia Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

In 1912 industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie donated money to construct a new three-story brick building across the street on the southwest corner of Reese and N. Pope Streets; it was named Carnegie Hall in his honor. The original school became a dormitory for out-of-town girls and

[58] Woofter.
[59] Woofter, 23-24.

another small building behind Carnegie Hall became a dormitory for out-of-town boys.[60] The Phelps-Stokes study noted that in 1912 there were 272 pupils enrolled in the regular school of Knox Institute, eighty-seven of whom were from out of town.[61] By 1925 the school had an enrollment of 339 students, representing five states, twenty-eight counties and thirty-eight different cities.[62] The school expanded to include twelve grades in 1913 and prepared students to attend Black colleges as well as teaching trades such as carpentry, type-setting, printing and sewing.[63]

The school continued to thrive until 1928 when financial difficulties within the American Missionary Association caused that institution to cease funding. There is some suggestion that the Knox Institute continued to operate briefly at a house at 193 N. Finley Street, which still stands.[64] Later, in the 1930s. a private preschool called The Little Knox School, also operated at that address.[65] The original Knox Institute building and Carnegie Hall were later demolished.

J. Thomas Heard University

Figure 14. At center is the rear of J. Thomas Heard University. Image from the "Growing Up in Athens, Georgia" Facebook group (c.1935-1938).

[60] Woofter.
[61] Woofter.
[62] Thurmond.
[63] Thurmond.
[64] "Knox Institute Invites Public to School Today," *The Banner-Herald*, September 9, 1928.
[65] Jane McPherson, "The Jackson-Brydie Educators of North Finley Street," *Athens Historian* (forthcoming).

Another private school for Black students was the J. Thomas Heard University founded by the Black attorney J. Thomas Heard. It was located on Reese Street next to the Knox Institute and offered a six-year course of study and both day and evening classes. Heard referred to it as a university because he hoped it would one day become one, and he also believed the name would help uplift and encourage its students.[66] Heard's wife and family served as teachers, and he served as principal and evening teacher.[67] It is not clear when the school was established, but it first appeared on the 1908 Sanborn map (see Figure 10) and was listed in the city directories through 1916-17. It was no longer listed in the 1920-21 city directory, so it presumably closed sometime between 1917-1921.

Reese Street School/Athens High and Industrial School

Figure 15. Reese Street School, 1915. At right: Principal Samuel F. Harris is shown with Dr. E. C. Sage, Secretary of the General Education Board (far right). Images from the Jackson Davis Collection of African American Educational Photographs, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library.

In 1914 the Athens Board of Education built what is now known as the Reese Street School building on the northeast corner of Reese Street and Church Street. It included both elementary and secondary grades initially. Samuel F. Harris served as principal and taught languages, and Miss Annie H. Burney was assistant principal and taught mathematics. In 1915, the school was renamed Athens High

[66] Thurmond.
[67] Piedmont Directory Company, "Athens, Georgia city directory [1914-1915]." 1914/1915, accessed February 3, 2024, https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/acd/do:acd1914-15.

and Industrial School and Professor Samuel Harris was appointed principal and supervisor of all the Black schools in Athens. Harris was one of the first educators in the state of Georgia to incorporate industrial training courses into the traditional public school curriculum. He had been instrumental in equipping the newly-constructed Reese Street School with a manual training shop and he instituted evening vocational classes so adults could learn cooking, sewing, home nursing, carpentry, masonry and bookkeeping.[68] In 1922, Athens High and Industrial School became the first Black public secondary school to be accredited in the state of Georgia.[69] The high school moved to the former Carnegie Hall in 1928 and remained there for another twenty-eight years. The Reese Street School then became a grammar school with first through seventh grades.[70]

[68] Thurmond.
[69] Thurmond.
[70] "Plans Underway for Opening of Colored Schools," *The Banner-Herald,* September 02, 1928, 6.

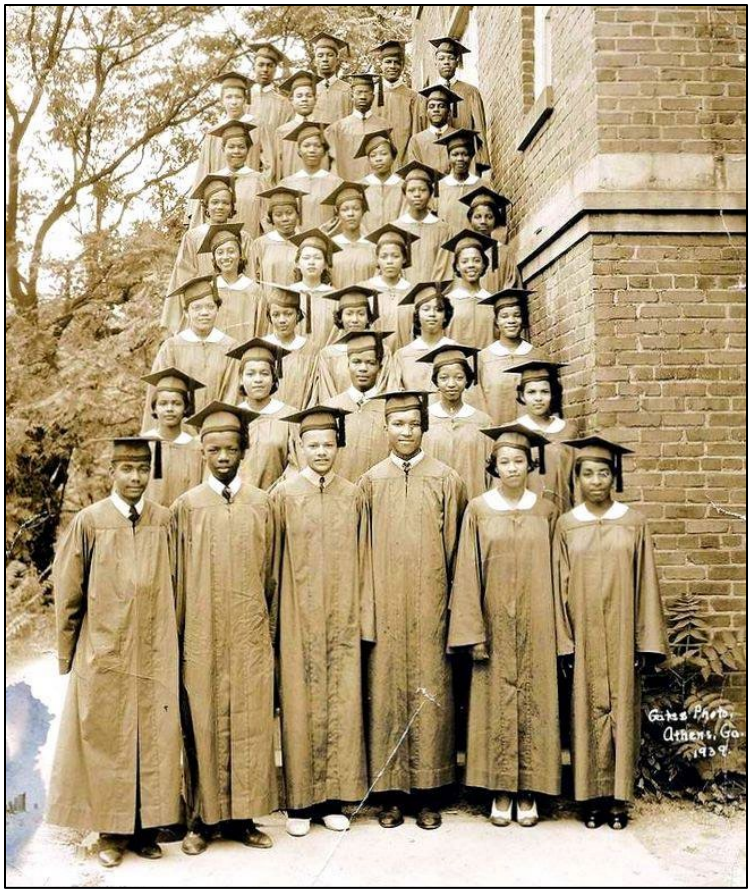


Figure 16. Athens High and Industrial School Class of 1939. Students are shown standing on the front steps of Carnegie Hall. Image from "Growing Up in Athens, Georgia" Facebook group.

The high school relocated to a new building 1.1 miles away on Dearing Extension in the African American neighborhood of Brooklyn in 1956.[71] In 1960, the Reese Street School was declared surplus property and was sold by the school board. It was eventually purchased by three Black Masonic lodges in 1968, and they continue to own and use the building. The structure remains intact but is in need of repair. A historic marker for Athens High and Industrial, also noting the location's original use for the Knox Institute, was installed on the southwest corner of Reese and Pope Streets in 2010.[72]

[71] Note: Thurmond's book states that AHIS moved to Carnegie Hall in 1933. However, two articles in *The Banner-Herald:* July 25, 1928, "Board Declines to Allow Bible Taught in Athens Schools: Elects 4 Teachers," pg. 4, and September 2, 1928, "Plans Underway for Opening of Colored Schools, indicated that the move occurred in 1928.
[72] Athens High and Industrial School," Georgia Historical Society, accessed January 27, 2024, https://www.georgiahistory.com/ghmi_marker_updated/athens-high-and-industrial-school/.

Dunbar Branch Library

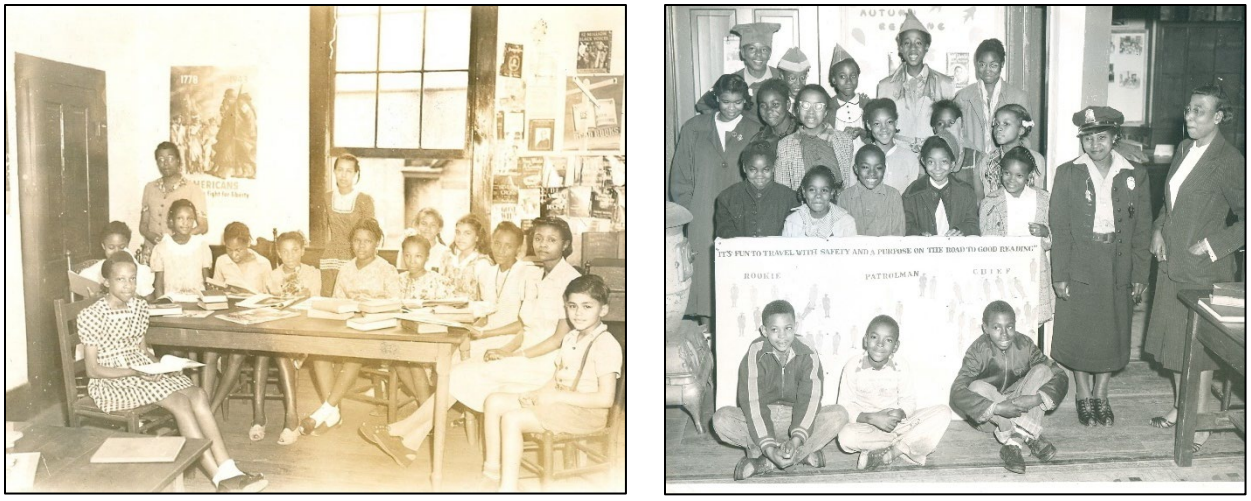


Figure 17. Dunbar Branch Library. At left is a photo of children taken in July 1945. At right is a photo of the Vacation Reading Club in 1954. Librarian Roxie Jarrell is at the far right. Images from the Athens-Clarke County Library Heritage Room website.

The Dunbar Branch Library opened on August 15, 1942 in the former Knox Institute building on the corner of Pope and Reese streets. It was a segregated branch for Black Athenians operated under the auspices of the Athens-Clarke County Library and partially funded by the Works Progress Administration.[73] Named for the famous Black author Paul Lawrence Dunbar, the library was one of only thirteen public libraries available to Black citizens in Georgia. In 1957, the Dunbar Library moved to the home economics building on the former Athens High and Industrial School campus on Reese Street, next to the Reese Street School building.[74] It remained in that location until 1962, when it was relocated to Union Hall at 196 E. Washington Street downtown. The branch closed in 1972 when the library system desegregated.[75]

[73] "Dunbar Branch of Public Library Now in Readiness." *Athens Banner-Herald*, September 20, 1942.
[74] "History of Athens Regional Library," Fall 1997. The Georgia Librarian, accessed February 26, 2024. http://www.libsci.sc.edu/histories/georgia/libraries/public/athens/athens_regional_history.pdf.
[75] "History of the Dunbar Branch Library," Athens-Clarke County Library, April 9, 2024, accessed April 10, 2024, https://accheritageroom.wordpress.com/2024/04/09/history-of-the-dunbar-branch-library/.

Hill First Baptist Church

Hill First Baptist Church is the oldest African-American Baptist church in Athens. Its congregation formed in 1867 after splitting from the White Athens Baptist Church, which the enslaved had attended in the antebellum period.[76] A brick vernacular church with Gothic Revival elements was constructed in 1893 on the northeast corner of Reese and Pope Streets. It is the first Black church to be built of brick and was noted as the only church to have that distinction in the Phelps-Stokes 1913 study.[77] The church was named in honor of its first minister, the Reverend Floyd Hill.[78]

There were at least five other churches in the Reese Street community around the turn of the twentieth century, all within two to three blocks of Hill First Baptist. Churches served a central role in advocating for Black advancement and as practical locations for socializing and sharing resources. According to the Phelps-Stokes study, "[churches and lodges] are the only two institutions wholly in the hands of the negroes which have as their aim the uplift of the race."[79] The original location of Ebenezer Baptist Church was the corner of W. Broad and Newton Street. The church was established in 1878 and later moved to its present location on North Chase Street in the West Hancock National Historic District.

The Reese Street community was home to people with a full range of occupations including doctors, teachers, business owners, cooks, laundry workers and other laborers. Some of Athens' most prominent African-American leaders in the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries lived there including the aforementioned J. Thomas Heard and Madison Davis; Dr. W. H. Harris, one of Athens' most prominent early Black physicians and co-founder of the Georgia State Medical Association; Dr. Charles Haynes, who founded the department of nursing at Athens High and Industrial School in 1918; Mary Wright Hill, a pioneering Athens African-American educator who served as principal of East Athens School for forty years; Dr. Donarell R. Green, who helped found the Northeast Georgia Medical

[76] "Brief History of First Baptist Church," First Baptist Church, accessed January 25, 2024, https://firstbaptistathens.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Brief-History-of-FBC.pdf.
[77] Woofter.
[78] Thurmond.
[79] Woofter, 33.

Association in 1947 and who operated the Susan Medical Center, an African-American maternity hospital on West Hancock Avenue; and Drs. Ida Mae and Lace Hiram, two of Athens' earliest Black dentists. Ida Mae Hiram was the first Black woman in Georgia licensed to practice by the State Board of Dentistry.[80]

By the early to mid-1900s, the Reese Street neighborhood had evolved into a neighborhood populated by both working class and middle-class African Americans, but change in the form of Athens' growth and the resultant development pressure soon began to physically alter the area.

Pre- and post-WWII development

In 1938, West Broad Street was widened as well as extended and commercial enterprises replaced Black housing (see Figure 18). Athens' first public housing complex, Parkview Homes, was constructed

Figure 18. West Broad looking east towards Pulaski Street, c. 1929. This image just west of downtown depicts the residential character of the street before its expansion in 1938. The original Ebenezer Baptist Church on the northeast corner of N. Newton and West Broad can be seen at the top middle of the image. Image from the Roland Harper photo collection at the University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections.

[80] Thurmond.

in 1941 on the southeast block of Newton Street and West Broad for White residents and displaced the Black community that had originally stretched across the south side of West Broad Street. The original Black settlement area expanded slightly northward onto West Hancock Avenue but greatly constricted overall into roughly the area it exists within today as seen in a 1959 map (see Figure 19).

Clarke County grew rapidly after World War II, with the population increasing from 28,398 in 1940 to 45,363 in 1960—a 58 percent increase.[81] However, the Black population in Athens had been steadily decreasing. As late as 1910, there were still more Black than White residents in Clarke County (11,767 Black residents or 51 percent and 11,502 White residents or 49 percent).[82] By the second decade of the twentieth century, however, the Black population began to precipitously decline relative to the White population due to the Great Migration—the voluntary relocation of Black residents to northern states due to the boll weevil infestation, Jim Crow policies, violence against Black people in the South, and better job opportunities in the more industrialized North. By 1960, the population of Clarke County was 74.4 percent White, 25.4 percent Black and .2 percent other races.[83]

A major turning point in the Reese Street neighborhood occurred in 1956 when Athens High and Industrial moved to a new building one mile west on the corner of Evans Street and Dearing Extension. The Reese Street School closed within a couple years following it. The Reese Street neighborhood began as the African American educational center of Athens and of the region with the opening of the Knox Institute in 1868, and it remained so for seventy years through a succession of schools that served all Black Athenians. The schools not only provided education, but its buildings served as venues for concerts, graduations, dances and other celebrations that brought other residents into the neighborhood. The proximity to schools attracted countless teachers who made the Reese Street community their home and who positively influenced the neighborhood's character. With the closure of the last school, the Reese Street neighborhood was no longer the bustling center of Black life with the activities, events and daily

[81] U.S. Census Bureau, Total Population, 1940 and 1960, prepared by Social Explorer, accessed February 19, 2024.
[82] U.S. Census Bureau, Total Population and Race, 1910, prepared by Social Explorer, accessed February 19, 2024.
[83] 1868
U.S. Census Bureau, Total Population and Race, 1960, prepared by Social Explorer, accessed February 19, 2024.

visitation into the neighborhood engendered by the schools. What had once been the educational mecca for Black Athenians was no more. The former Knox Institute buildings were demolished sometime in the 1960s, leaving only the Reese Street School building at the corner of Reese and N. Church streets to bear witness to Reese Street's storied educational past.

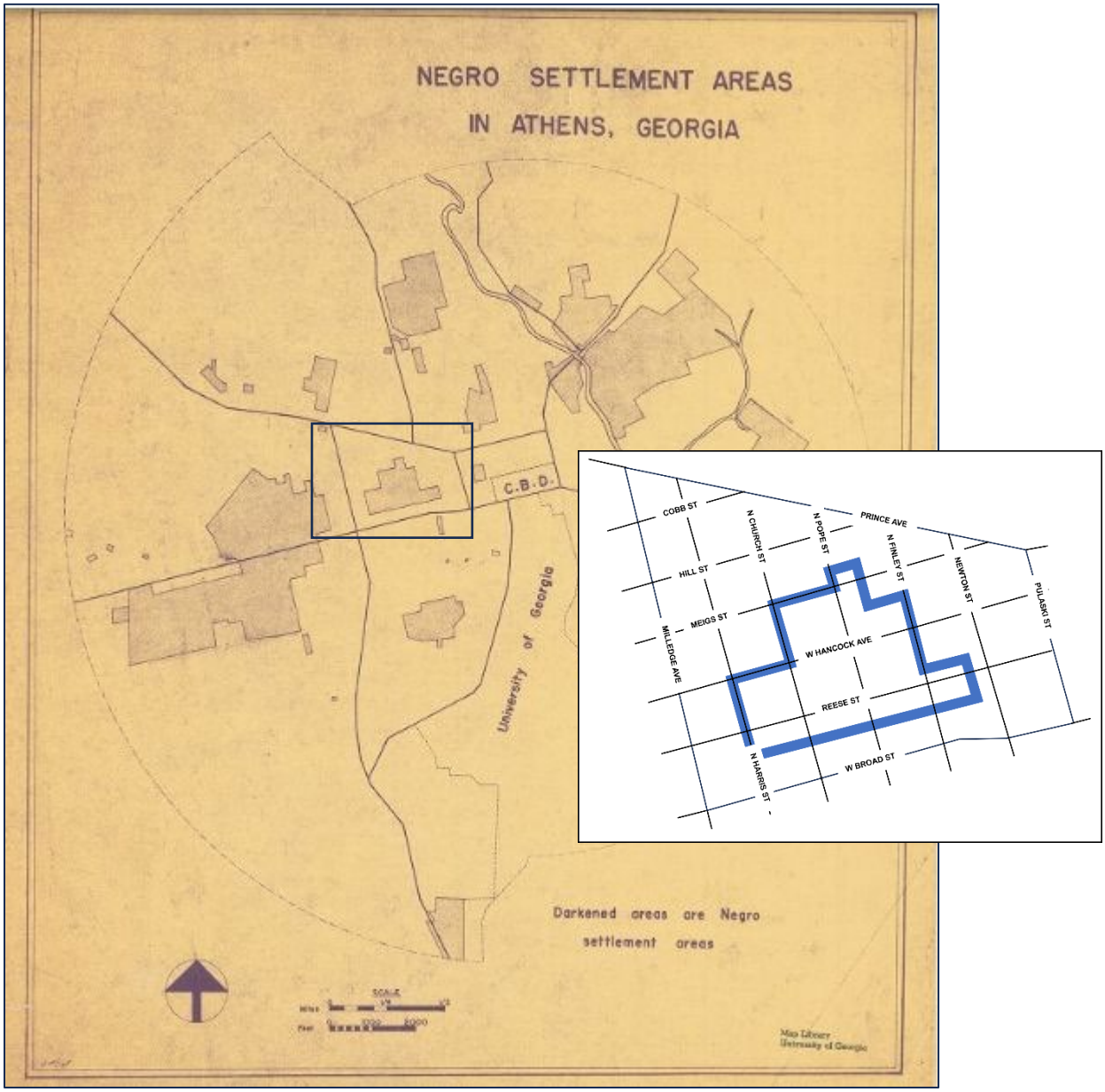


Figure 19. 1959 map of Negro Settlement Areas in Athens, Georgia. The Reese Street neighborhood is indicated by the pullout, directly west of the Central Business District (C.B.D.). The neighborhood had condensed considerably from the original Black settlement post-emancipation and was closer to its present local historic district boundaries. Map from the University of Georgia Map and Government Information Library.

Commercial growth expanded greatly in the downtown environs and reached the Black residential area by 1960 as evidenced by the Sanborn map of that year (see Appendix C). The entire block between Newton, West Hancock, North Finley and Reese Street was developed into two large commercial enterprises—an apartment building (extant) and a motel. A more detailed examination of the zoning of the Reese Street neighborhood and how it affected the neighborhood's development will be addressed in Chapter Seven.

In the post-WWII era, in-town neighborhoods lost popularity. The affordability of automobiles meant that houses and businesses did not have to be in a centralized location. Suburban living outside of Athens' city limits became popular, leaving most of the historic in-town neighborhoods to the old, the poor, and University students. Urban neighborhoods, particularly African American ones, were branded as undesirable and targeted for redevelopment. In-town Black neighborhoods such as Linnentown were characterized as slums, and three of them—Linnentown, the Bottom and Lickskillet—were demolished under urban renewal programs although a small percentage of White-owned historic properties were demolished as well.[84] City planning officials considered in-town neighborhoods as desirable areas for redevelopment and zoned large portions of them as multi-family or commercial. This included portions of White neighborhoods such as Cobbham and Boulevard as well as African American neighborhoods such as Reese Street. In 1974, the first apartment complex, the Cobb Hill Apartments, was built on the corner of West Hancock and North Harris Street in the Reese Street neighborhood.

As the suburban lifestyle became more popular between the 1970s to 1990s, the Reese Street community was typical of Athens' historic in-town neighborhoods where owner-occupancy decreased and rentals and vacancies increased. The neighborhood was also undergoing attrition caused by elderly residents who had no children or whose inheritors were not interested in living there. It became less common for younger generations to remain in the same community and societal mobility also contributed

[84] Hattie Thomas Whitehead, *Giving Voice to Linnentown*, (Tiny Tots & Tikes, 2020), 130.

to the severance of ties with Athens and the loss of owner-occupants in the Reese Street community. As noted by Hope Iglehart, fifth-generation resident:

> There were pieces of property where elderly people had died, their family members didn't live here in Athens, they didn't have a tie to Athens . . . there were people who were looking for upward mobility, so they were not looking at Athens because Athens didn't have the jobs . . . it did not provide the [same] opportunities [as a] large city, so the people who I think ended up with the properties, they ended up selling the properties, and then they . . . those properties ended up going to individuals who rented those properties."[85]

Drug use and drug-related crime—which is a product of disenfranchisement, poverty, and disinvestment—were increasing at the same time and disproportionately affected African Americans. Drug dealers and users began to frequent the area, and the neighborhood gained an unsavory reputation. Fannie Jordan, who lived at 650 West Hancock Avenue, expressed her frustration with the government's perceived failure to address the drug problem when she spoke in 2008 against designation: "When they had dope, they didn't have anyone to help and they don't need all these people coming in now changing our standards. We do good things and are against changing anything."[86] David Lynn, former District 5 Commissioner who lived in the neighboring Cobbham Local Historic District, recounted how he witnessed open-air drug deals as he drove through the corner of West Hancock and North Pope Street in an attempt to both observe and discourage illicit behavior.[87] Linda Ford, former District 7 Commissioner and the owner of the Cobb Hill Apartments between 1995–1996, recounted that she felt compelled to hire an off-duty police officer to patrol the apartment grounds to make residents feel safe.[88]

Gail Hurley, a fourth-generation resident, acknowledged the Reese Street neighborhood, along with many other communities at that time, dealt with drug issues, stating that "During the late 80s . . .

[85] Hope Iglehart (Reese Street Local Historic District resident and former Director of Engagement and African American Heritage, Historic Athens), Interview with the author, November 20, 2023.
[86] Amber Eskew, "Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission Minutes." May 21, 2008.
[87] David Lynn (Director of Planning and Outreach, Athens Downtown Development Authority), Interview with the author, January 3, 2024.
[88] Linda Ford (Director of Business Services, Athens Downtown Development Authority), Interview with the author, January 3, 2024.

there was a lot of disarray in the community . . . [and] there was drug use."[89] Her daughter Hope Iglehart clarified that the problem was not unique to the Reese Street neighborhood. "It wasn't just Reese, it was all over the United States, and it was in the White community, but they had money to be able to hide and sugarcoat and send people to rehab."[90]

By the early 1990s, investors had begun buying homes in many of Athens' in-town neighborhoods, encouraged by the relatively low price, proximity to campus, and ready supply of student renters as there were not enough beds on campus. When the HOPE scholarship program began in 1993, it fueled even greater growth in the UGA student population. More importantly to investors, parents of HOPE students had more discretionary income and could afford to pay higher rental rates. Richard Hathaway, whose first purchase in the Reese Street neighborhood was in 1993 and who eventually owned eight rental properties there, specifically cites the HOPE scholarship as a boon and driver for his real estate investment business.[91]

About this same time, preservation gained traction locally as a land use tool, and Athens-Clarke County (ACC) passed its historic preservation ordinance in 1986. In 1988, Reese Street's neighbor, Cobbham, was one of the first to achieve local historic district status. The Reese Street neighborhood was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1987, along with several other districts aided by a grant received by the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (ACHF, renamed Historic Athens in 2019) from the Historic Preservation Section of the Department of Natural Resources.[92] Amy Kissane, who served as Executive Director of the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation from 2002–2018, recalls performing surveys of the Reese Street neighborhood as a component of the designation report when she was a student in UGA's historic preservation program.[93] Two buildings in the Reese Street neighborhood were

[89] Gail Hurley (Reese Street Local Historic District resident), Interview with the author, November 20, 2023.
[90] Iglehart, interview.
[91] John Britt, "HOPE Outbids Crack: Students are Taking Over Poorer Neighborhoods," *Flagpole*, November 3, 1999.
[92] "2008 Comprehensive Plan," Athens-Clarke County Planning Department, accessed March 24, 2024, https://www.accgov.com/9736/2008-Comprehensive-Plan.
[93] Amy Kissane (former Executive Director, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation), Interview with author, December 4, 2023.

designated as local historic landmarks prior to district designation. Athens High and Industrial School (1913) at 496 Reese Street received local landmark status in 1988 due to its significance as Georgia's first four-year high school for African Americans.[94] The Hiram House (1910) at 635 West Hancock Avenue received local landmark status in 1998 as the home of Dr. Ida Mae Hiram.[95] However, at that time there was no grassroots support for local historic district designation in the Reese Street neighborhood. In addition, appreciation for African American history and vernacular housing had yet to be fully realized.

A precipitating event

In 2005, the University of Georgia began serious negotiations to remove five fraternities which had built their houses on Lumpkin Street in order to reclaim the land for future academic buildings. Fraternities could either enter into a land lease agreement with UGA in a planned "Greek Park" on the southeast end of campus or look for their own property off campus. In November 2005 Gamma Partners, LLC, a private investment group associated with the Kappa Alpha fraternity, bought the Cobb Hill Apartments on W. Hancock Ave between N. Church and N. Harris streets as well as two historic homes on the corner of Reese Street and N. Church Street on which to build a fraternity house. The only property in the entire block which was not under the ownership of Gamma Partners was the house of Gail Hurley, an African American physician and fourth-generation resident of the neighborhood. This was a turning point in the Reese Street neighborhood.

Reese Street neighborhood residents were alarmed that a fraternity which celebrated antebellum culture, proudly waved the Confederate flag, revered Robert E. Lee as their "spiritual founder," and held an annual parade in which their members dressed in Confederate uniforms and their dates dressed in

[94] "Athens-Clarke County, Georgia Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Landmark Properties," Athens-Clarke County Unified Government, accessed March 11, 2024. https://www.accgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/54539/Design-Guidelines-for-Most-Historic-Districts-and-Landmarks_11519?bidId=.
[95] Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Landmark Properties.

antebellum-style gowns, was moving into their neighborhood.[96] Concerned residents from the Reese Street neighborhood and the adjacent Cobbham neighborhood quickly joined forces, along with the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation, to counter this intrusion. ACHF (now Historic Athens) was Athens' historic preservation advocacy organization. Cobbham's interest in the issue was heightened when the Sigma Nu fraternity purchased 369 and 399 Meigs Street next to the Cobbham district in early 2006. Multi-family zoning allowed Greek housing at that time, and an effort was soon underway by commissioners to amend the zoning code and make Greek housing a special use category. Before the vote was scheduled, the housing corporation for Kappa Alpha filed building plans, which grandfathered its use. They also demolished two 1890 gabled-wing houses just months before the commission voted to approve designation in July 2008.

Although Reese Street neighborhood residents could not prevent the fraternity from building its house in their neighborhood, they searched for ways to protect the remaining houses and ultimately decided on local historic district designation. It was the only land use tool available and, although imperfect, it would provide measures to protect the neighborhood's historic buildings. The events that transpired around the mobilization of the neighborhood and decision-making process will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter three takeaways

- The Reese Street neighborhood holds a unique place in Athens' history and it deserves more recognition and protection. Formerly enslaved individuals built a community from the ground up with few resources. They established educational, religious and social institutions to improve their futures and those of other Black Athenians and not only persevered but thrived through decades of adversity until market forces hastened the loss of the African American population and

[96] "Robert E. Lee," Kappa Alpha Order, accessed January 7, 2024. https://www.kappaalphaorder.org/about/history/robert-e-lee/.

led to studentification. This neighborhood is a unique example of American ingenuity and resilience and that story needs to be celebrated and made known to the rest of Athens.

- Studentification is taking place in all of Athens' in-town neighborhoods but especially in low-to-moderate-income historic African American neighborhoods (e.g., Reese Street, West Hancock, Brooklyn, Newtown, East Athens).

- The multi-family zoning of the Reese Street neighborhood is problematic and allowed the Kappa Alpha fraternity to buy property there, which solidified the trend of studentification.

CHAPTER 4

GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM AND SUPPORT FOR DESIGNATION

The designation of the Reese Street neighborhood as a local historic district in 2008 was the result of its residents' activism and leadership. A small but very active coalition of African American residents organized to address the threat that the Kappa Alpha purchase posed and it ultimately determined that local historic district designation provided the best possible protection and the only viable recourse. The residents led the efforts and made the decisions with the assistance of the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation and neighboring Cobbham residents.

Hope Iglehart and her family were among the most prominent activists for their neighborhood, motivated not only by their advocacy for their neighborhood but by the fact that the housing corporation for Kappa Alpha had purchased the entire block surrounding their house in 2005. Iglehart is a fifth-generation resident of her home at 237 N. Church Street. Built c. 1895, it was the home of her great-great-grandfather, Edward Minor Freeman, the first Black postal clerk in Athens, and his wife Julia. Hope's mother, Gail Hurley, a retired physician at the time the designation effort transpired and the owner of the house recalls, "[Gamma Partners] were on me all the time. They were wanting me to sell to them so they could have it and I would not move."[97] At the time, Iglehart was a mortician who managed Hurley Funeral Home in Newtown, a business established by her grandfather, John Hurley, and she was also teaching business courses at Athens Technical College.[98] John Hurley's widow and Iglehart's grandmother, Thelma Hurley, was also a constant presence in neighborhood preservation efforts.

Other neighborhood activists included Wilucia Green, a second generation resident of the Reese Street neighborhood, who still lives in her family's home at 680 W. Hancock Avenue. Her parents were

[97] Hurley, interview.
[98] Note: Iglehart later served as Director of Engagement and African American Heritage for Historic Athens from 2022–2023.

Dr. Donarell Green, Jr., a physician, and his wife Kathleen. Wilucia and her sister Majorie were among the first five African American children to voluntarily integrate the Clarke County School District in 1963 and were respected as local Civil Rights pioneers.[99] Pastor Benjamin Rivers, minister of Hill First Baptist Church, was also actively involved, and all of the neighborhood meetings were held at the church.[100] It is important to note that there were only thirteen owner-occupants who owned fifteen of the eighty-four parcels in the Reese Street neighborhood in 2008, although there were a few properties owned by Reese Street neighborhood descendants who rented them out, and there were properties occupied by African American tenants.

Amy Kissane, who was then the executive director of ACHF, was well aware of the neighborhood's history and significance. ACHF also had a connection with the neighborhood through its Hands On Athens (HOA) program. HOA, established in 1999, assists low-to-moderate-income homeowners with repair and maintenance of houses in historic neighborhoods using funds from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and private grants. In fact, the first HOA project was a clean-up of West Hancock Avenue held on November 6, 1999 to introduce ACHF and HOA to the neighborhood and to make Athens aware of the neighborhood's historic nature.[101] By 2007, at least 17 house repair and maintenance projects had been performed by Hands On Athens in the Hancock Corridor, which included both Reese Street and the West Hancock neighborhoods. Although not all of HOA's records were available to search, documentation was found for at least three HOA projects in the Reese Street neighborhood: the Wade House at 573 W. Hancock Ave. (2007); the Callahan House at 229 N. Finley St. (~2005); and the Champion House at 566 W. Hancock Ave. (project date unknown).[102] Thus, ACHF was poised and ready to lend assistance.

Iglehart recalls that connections were made with Cobbham and with ACHF soon after she and her mother learned that the Kappa Alpha fraternity had purchased the property surrounding their house,

[99] Thurmond.
[100] Note: Wilucia Green and Ben Rivers declined an invitation to be interviewed.
[101] Ben Deck, "Preserving History," *Athens Daily News/Athens Banner-Herald*, November 7, 1999.
[102] "Hands on Afterglow Pamphlet," Hands on Athens, (Athens, GA: Historic Athens, 2007).

recalling "I do know that we got in gear . . . and then there were people in Cobbham who were organizing as well. I think they had learned around the same time."[103] Iglehart remembers being invited to meetings with Cobbham residents that included Liz DeMarco, Mary and Michael Songster, June and Milner Ball, Blair Dorminey and John English among others. Cobbham's residents were overwhelmingly White, middle-to-high-income, politically savvy and well organized. They had successfully deterred unwanted development in the past, perhaps unwittingly placing that pressure on the Reese Street neighborhood. In spite of these clear differences between their neighborhood and her own, Iglehart recognized that Cobbham residents would be supportive and valuable allies, who might bring their financial and political power to the effort:

> Cobbham had their neighborhood association up and thriving . . . they had funds behind them, they also had attorneys that were in their community like Bertis [Downs] and whomever else, so they had . . . they had organized. We were just a community living and working and, you know, we didn't necessarily need . . . we didn't really need [a neighborhood organization] until these big threats came in.[104]

Iglehart embraced the role of lead advocate, recalling that her mother had cautioned her, "You're going to be the face." That did not deter Iglehart who noted, "That was my jam anyways because I love community work . . . being involved in the community, doing stuff in the community. So, it just . . . it was a natural fit."

While the neighborhood's African American residents and stakeholders' opinions varied on how or even if to fight this threat, they were united in their condemnation of Kappa Alpha's move into the neighborhood, citing its racist traditions and disruptive behavior.[105] A meeting held at Hill First Baptist Church on March 6, 2006, attended by University of Georgia Director of Community Relations Pat Allen, UGA Vice President for Student Affairs Rodney Bennet, Kappa Alpha advisor Mark Cross and several members of the fraternity, elicited sharp criticism from residents regarding Kappa Alpha's insensitivity,

[103] Iglehart, interview.
[104] Iglehart, interview.
[105] Juanita Cousins, "Historic District Fine without Frat," *Red and Black*, September 12, 2006. https://gahistoricnewspapers-files.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/gua1179162/2006-09-12/ed-1/seq-4.pdf.

some of which was displayed at the meeting when Cross described plans to erect "what we'd refer to as a Southern mansion, antebellum-type house."[106] When questioned about Kappa Alpha's annual "Old South" parade in which fraternity members dressed in Confederate uniforms and their dates wore antebellum gowns, Cross said it was "meant more as a re-enactment than anything else," and said that allegations that the parade is a display of racism "couldn't be further from the truth."[107] Bertha Troutman-Rambeau, a member of Hill First Baptist Church, responded "It is. It is racial, and it doesn't feel good. Even your building doesn't feel good, and you know that." Rev. Ben Rivers added, "The tradition of the Old South doesn't feel good. Hearing it doesn't feel good."[108]

The goal: local historic district designation

Reese Street neighborhood organizers decided upon local historic designation as a course of action within a few months of Kappa Alpha's announcement that they were going to build in the neighborhood. Iglehart recalls, "I think it was the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation that . . . and also working with Cobbham that kind of helped us decide that we wanted to go for the local historic designation."[109] However, not everyone in Cobbham advocated for that strategy. Michael and Mary Songster were Cobbham residents who, with partner Tom Reynolds, renovated and built homes in in-town neighborhoods, including Reese Street. Even though they lived in a historic district, they were not advocates of designation because they felt it restricted creative design and materials and was an undue financial burden. Mary Songster recalls, "I would voice my concerns about it being harder and more complicated and more expensive to maintain the houses or the buildings."[110] The Songsters were also concerned that designation would not provide the desired result. Michael Songster recalls that residents hoped "historic preservation would be the tool that allowed them to hold onto the dignity that had been in

[106] Ben Emanuel, "Kappa Alpha Unwelcome in the Neighborhood," *Flagpole*, March 15, 2006.
[107] Emanuel.
[108] Emanuel.
[109] Hurley, interview.
[110] Songster, Michael and Mary Songster (former Cobbham residents, contractors and property owners in Reese Street Local Historic District, Interview by author, April 3, 2024.

that community."[111] He adds, "Our belief was that it had nothing to do with keeping the neighborhood intact. The buildings may remain but it could be hollowed out and become something completely different. It's really a tool to preserve the investment more than the community."[112] Songster recognized that the benefits offered by designation were primarily limited to the built environment even as the preservation community was beginning its quest to incorporate preservation of community and intangible cultural heritage in conjunction with physical structures. Regardless, Reese Street neighborhood advocates saw designation as the only way to preserve what was left of the neighborhood. Gail Hurley decided it was the best course of action after she realized that the existing National Register designation was honorific only and did not provide any safeguards. "It was my misunderstanding that it was going to protect us. And then when I found out that it was not . . . that was when we worked to try and make sure that we wouldn't . . . that they wouldn't encroach upon all of us."[113]

A June 29, 2006 letter to the editor from Marvin Nunnally, ACHF president, and Rosemarie Goodrum and Allen Stovall, co-chairs of the ACHF Preservation Issues Committee, was published in the *Athens Banner-Herald*. It praised the activism of Reese Street neighborhood residents and made public the consideration of local historic designation:

> To their credit, the neighborhood residents have organized and are working with groups such as the Historic Cobbham Association to raise awareness about their community's history and its contributions to Athens. One initiative is to seek local historic district designation for the Reese Street/West Hancock neighborhoods. The Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation fully supports this effort and has offered its assistance and resources in gaining designation, but this is only a first step. Local historic designation will protect the fabric of these neighborhoods, but it will not protect their social and cultural history.[114]

The letter went on to urge UGA to help resolve the immediate issue of the relocation of the fraternities it was kicking off campus as well as to address the long-term impacts of student housing in

[111] Songster, interview.
[112] Songster, interview.
[113] Hurley, interview.
[114] Rosemarie Goodrum, Allen Stovall and Amy C. Kissane, "University Must Help Resolve Kappa Alpha Relocation Issues," *Athens Banner-Herald*, June 29, 2006.

Athens. While the 2006 letter mentions an initiative to seek designation for both the Reese Street and the West Hancock Avenue Historic Districts, ACHF ultimately decided that the best strategy was to focus on the Reese Street neighborhood, as it was facing the immediate threat. A month later, on July 21, 2006, ACHF submitted a Historic District Designation Application to the ACC Planning Department for designation of the Reese Street Local Historic District.

Designation was seen as the only viable option available to protect the neighborhood from further encroachment although Hurley admits that residents did not fully comprehend what becoming a local historic district meant stating, "I don't know if they or I fully understood [designation], but I think there were some people that were definitely interested in making sure that the neighborhood stayed and that their homes were protected."[115] Residents, long conscious of being ignored, disenfranchised, and feeling powerless to effect or prevent change in their neighborhood, had observed their once thriving family-oriented neighborhood become investor-owned student rental houses. Hurley noted, "It felt like there was always encroachment, you know, the government . . . they have very lax things about the University of Georgia . . . you could tell that early all along that they were moving, encroaching on the area. And so, that . . . that part has always been there."[116] Another resident noted, "We thought we'd have a say whether or not [Kappa Alpha] would come but we didn't have a say. I didn't want it because that would surely change our neighborhood. I knew how they were on Milledge Avenue, and I didn't think we needed that."[117] That same resident lamented the fact that city improvements in the neighborhood were too little, too late, "They built a playground by the church. Why couldn't they have did that earlier? Why now because there are more other people in the neighborhood? We paid taxes too, but we didn't get those privileges. I felt that was not a good thing."[118] Brian Weaver, who grew up in the Reese Street neighborhood, adds, "[The park] didn't look like it did now, but it's real nice, fixed up—they got

[115] Hurley, interview.
[116] Hurley, interview.
[117] Anonymous (former Reese Street Local Historic District resident), Interview with the author, November 14, 2023.
[118] Anonymous, interview.

playground equipment in there. They redid the basketball courts and stuff like that. And, of course, when I was growing up, none of that was like that. It was just red dirt that we played on."[119] The impetus for improvements to the Reese-Pope Park came about, in part, because of renewed attention to ameliorating pocket parks in urban spaces, and input sessions were held at Hill First Baptist Church beginning in 2004.[120] However, it is not unfair for residents to feel that upgrades were only being made because the area was gentrifying. When asked in 2005 why improvements to the park were being considered, Kent Kilpatrick, an administrator with Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services, stated that "We've been seeing a lot more residents, including some college students who live in that area, walking down to that site."[121] At a May 2008 Commission meeting, Commissioner George Maxwell cautioned against too many substantial improvements to the park, noting the neighborhood is gentrifying and White tenants will "take control of the park, and it will no longer be our park."[122]

Activism and resignation

For some, like Iglehart's family, Green, and Rivers, Kappa Alpha's pending move into the neighborhood provided the incentive to organize and seek recourse through community activism. For others, it was just more evidence that those with money and power would triumph over those without. Iglehart encountered a defeated attitude from some within the neighborhood. "It was like they just felt so beat down by Athens. They weren't . . . some of our neighbors on the other end of Hancock down towards . . . they just kind of . . . like it was whatever was dealt, they were going to just whatever . . . because

[119] Brian Weaver (former Reese Street Local Historic District resident and investor), Interview with author, November 16, 2023.
[120] "Park revitalization forum scheduled," *Athens Banner-Herald*, September 26, 2004, accessed April 18, 2024, *NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current*. https://infoweb-newsbank-com.us1.proxy.openathens.net/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/12EFE173C7B08950.
[121] Blake Aued, "Officials want input on park improvement - Athens-Clarke Leisure," *Athens Banner-Herald*, October 24, 2005, accessed April 18, 2024, *NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current*. https://infoweb-newsbank-com.us1.proxy.openathens.net/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/12EFD354834C3D00.
[122] "Blog bits," *Athens Banner-Herald*, May 14, 2008, accessed April 18, 2024, *NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current*. https://infoweb-newsbank-com.us1.proxy.openathens.net/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/120AAF2A56ECF138.

they've dealt with so much over the years."[123] Even outside the neighborhood, Iglehart found some of the same reaction:

> I had people who didn't live in my community, didn't live in my neighborhood, to tell me that, *I don't see why you all doing that in the first place. They're going to get it anyway.* So, it's a very defeated mentality. So, imagine the people who lived there and they've gone through a lot of the transitions with the neighborhood. They just . . . probably some of them are probably feeling like they're just biding their time.[124]

This fatalistic attitude was partly due to the change that had already taken place in the neighborhood. Developers had been buying properties in the neighborhood in the 15 years leading up to Kappa Alpha's purchase in 2005. African American residents were now in a minority, and the sense of community had dwindled. Brian Weaver voiced what many feared, "It was never going to return back to what it used to be and, because of its proximity to UGA and downtown area, it was ideal for students and ideal for rental property.[125] Other residents simply felt defeated after learning that there was no way to prevent Kappa Alpha from moving into the neighborhood. Recalls one resident:

> "When we met as a community, we were told that [Kappa Alpha] got approval already to build it, so we had nothing to say. *If you have any questions, you can contact the director of the fraternity house,' and 'We know they'll be very respectful of you*, *and blah, blah and different things*. It's something that we had to accept."[126]

Some residents were supportive but took a more watchful attitude rather than speaking out publicly. As noted by Hope, "There were people like our neighbors who, you know, they looked . . . they were wanting to know what was going on . . . trying to keep up with what was going on." Weaver did not attend any of the meetings and relied on his sister who lived in the neighborhood to keep him informed. He had a "a general idea" of what local historic district designation meant, "I just was reading the material they were sending out and then talking with my sisters and them to get clarification about what they were doing, why they were doing it."[127] Asked if he knew why the neighborhood chose to seek

[123] Iglehart, interview.
[124] Iglehart, interview.
[125] Weaver, interview.
[126] Anonymous, interview.
[127] Weaver, interview.

designation, he responded, "Well, I think it was to have some type of policy or guidelines in place to make sure the neighborhood is preserved in a good way. Because I think everybody . . . at the end of the day, everybody wants the same thing. They want to maintain their neighborhood just like Boulevard and some of the other neighborhoods where some of the houses were maintained."[128] Property owners such as Weaver were hopeful that local historic district designation would serve as a catalyst for improvements which, although not mandated, were often the result of designation.

Some residents publicly spoke against designation, such as Fannie Jordan and Demetrius Burgess. The minutes of the May 21, 2008 Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting note that Burgess was "representing" 565 W. Hancock Avenue, and it is not known what relationship he had to the owner.[129] The house's owner of record at that time was WOODS MARY W ETAL C/O MARY WOODS, and the house was vacant and boarded up.[130] The house was later sold to an investor in 2012. Burgess made no comment other than to state he was in opposition. Fannie Jordan, who owned the house at 650 Hancock Avenue expressed her resentment with what she perceived as interference that was too-late and of the wrong type: "When they had dope, they didn't have anyone to help and they don't need all these people coming in now changing our standards. We do good things and are against changing anything."[131]

Organization of a neighborhood association

The neighborhood formed the joint Reese Street-W. Hancock Neighborhood Association to help with organizational and communication efforts and as a way to accept donations. The neighborhood association hosted a series of "town hall meetings" at Hill First Baptist Church. Iglehart explained, "I had email addresses from the meetings, and I would email people the information and put flyers in people's boxes in the neighborhood and things of that nature." (See sample flyer in Appendix D.) She also recalled

[128] Weaver, interview.
[129] Amber Eskew, "Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission Minutes." May 21, 2008.
[130] Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessor data; Google Street View, October 2012 and May 2008.
[131] Eskew, minutes.

that she was the "hands and legs" of the association.[132] After the initial town hall meeting with UGA and Kappa Alpha representatives in March 2006, notes and agendas from ACHF records and newspaper articles indicate that there were at least five other neighborhood meetings: January 17, 2007; March 8, 2007; September 26, 2007; October 24, 2007; and January 23, 2008.[133] Meeting flyers were hand delivered or mailed to Reese Street neighborhood residents and property owners and invitations were also extended to members of Hill First Baptist Church, the Athens Masonic Association, the Hancock Community Development Corporation, the Athens-Clarke County Commission, the Historic Preservation Commission, and reporters from *Flagpole* and the *Athens Banner-Herald*.

The initial meeting on January 17, 2007 was facilitated by Rev. Benjamin Rivers, Hope Iglehart and Rosemarie Goodrum, co-chair of the ACHF Preservation Issues Committee. The agenda centered around discussion of forming a neighborhood association with goals to "advocate for the neighborhood with public officials, preserve and celebrate neighborhood history and identify; voice concerns on appropriate land use and zoning codes; and pursue ways to revitalize neighborhood."[134] The last meeting on January 23, 2008 included a welcome from Hope Iglehart; an update and introductions by Amy Kissane; an overview of the Reese Street Historic District and Designation Report and map by John Kissane; and discussion of a designation timetable.[135]

A suspicion voiced about designation efforts from opponents was that the preservation community was controlling the process and that residents were not in favor of designation. At the May 21, 2008 Historic Preservation Commission public hearing, Maurice Daniels stated that "90% of the calls that he has received came from people residing outside the district who are in favor of the designation,

[132] Iglehart, interview.
[133] "Reese Street Local District Desig.," Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 66, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries; "Reese St-W. Hancock Neighborhoods," *Flagpole*, sec. Out There!, September 26, 2007 and October 24, 2007.
[134] "Reese-West Hancock Neighborhood Meeting Agenda," January 17, 2007, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 66, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.
[135] "Reese Street Neighborhood Meeting," January 23, 2008, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 67, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

which is very telling."[136] Maurice Daniels was an African American investor who owned nine properties in the neighborhood at the time of designation (seven houses and two vacant lots), and he was one of the most vocal critics on the issue of potential negative impact on low-to-moderate-income residents. Daniels was the dean of the UGA School of Social Work, a civil rights scholar, and a member of Ebenezer Baptist Church West located in the adjacent historic African American West Hancock neighborhood. It must be acknowledged that ACHF has historically been a majority White organization although efforts were made to recruit African American trustees, which met with only minor success. Both Iglehart and Rivers were invited to join ACHF as trustees and both served terms either during or after designation. In addition, government entities involved in the designation process—the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Mayor and Commission were majority White organizations; therefore, Daniels' larger point about the lack of representation is valid.[137] Amy Kissane, executive director of ACHF, recalls that her role and that of ACHF was:

> to provide guidance and to help—not to lead the effort because I was trying to be very respectful of the neighborhood residents and what they wanted, and I didn't want it to seem like the Foundation was coming in on top and telling them this is something they should do. So, I think [our role] was more to provide the professional and technical knowledge to help guide them through the process. The Foundation also did the designation report—John [Kissane] actually wrote the designation. So, we paid for that and . . . being an advocate . . . working with commissioners to get them supportive of [the designation]. I felt like I really tried to take a backseat in terms of advocacy . . . this was a neighborhood-led effort and we weren't pulling people along—that they wanted this. And that's something I felt very strongly about.[138]

ACHF records support this stance. Soon after the designation application was submitted, Amy Kissane sent an email dated August 11, 2006 to Hope Iglehart, Ben Rivers, John Kissane (historic preservation consultant and Amy Kissane's spouse), Rosemarie Goodrum and Andrew Robison (former resident) asking for a meeting to define the roles and tasks that the neighborhood, ACHF, John Kissane, and the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department would play in the designation process. The

[136] Eskew, minutes.
[137] Note: Maurice Daniels declined an invitation to be interviewed; he provided written answers to questions posed by the author but did not grant permission for them to be used in this thesis.
[138] Kissane, interview.

neighborhood's role was to schedule neighborhood meetings, fundraise, gather property owner data, identify oral history interviewees, provide historical information for the neighborhood, and advocate with residents, the HPC as well as the Mayor and Commission (See Appendix E). ACHF would finance a local historic district designation report, provide educational assistance and logistical support at neighborhood meetings, and advocate for the designation with the Historic Preservation Commission, the Mayor and Commission and the community at large.

Measuring support through surveys

Prior to the May 21, 2008 Historic Preservation Commission public hearing, the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department mailed 164 notifications to the owners and occupants of each affected property in the Reese Street neighborhood, informing them of the designation proposal and the public hearing at the HPC meeting. Also included in the notification was information on the COA process and the tax freeze program (discussed in a later section). At the HPC meeting, Amber Eskew reported forty-three responses were returned but one without a signature could not be counted.[139] The forty-two responses accounted for a twenty-five percent response rate. Twelve were in support of the designation (ten owners and two occupants) and thirty were in opposition (twenty-eight owners and two occupants).[140] Amy Kissane took exception to the survey results, arguing that they were skewed in favor of investors because they owned the majority of parcels in the neighborhood. In a June 26, 2008 letter to Mayor Heidi Davison and ACC Commissioners, she pointed out that nineteen of the thirty surveys were completed by just three investors.[141] Eskew defended the process, noting that it was dictated by the historic preservation ordinance:

> Each parcel owner receives a survey, whether they own multiple properties or not. They must have a say for each of their lots. Their voice should not be dimished [sic] due to

[139] Note: Amber Mason's last name changed to Eskew, and she will be referred to by the name she was using at the time she is cited.
[140] Eskew, minutes.
[141] Amy Kissane, "Letter to Mayor Heidi Davison and ACC Commissioners," June 26, 2008, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 63, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

> their multiple ownership any more than occupants voices should due to a perceived lack of financial impact. This is why the ordinance requires a survey form be sent to each owner and occupant.[142]

Regarding the relatively small number of responses from African American residents, it must be noted that of the eighty-four parcels listed on the designation report, only fourteen were owned by African Americans. A small number of additional houses that were still owned by African Americans did not have homestead exemption (meaning the house was not their primary residence). When asked why so few African American owners returned the survey, Iglehart responded,

> I think that it was such a small response because a lot of people probably felt defeated anyway. Plus, the whole thing about surveys is a lot of them don't like to fill out surveys because they don't want to give the government their information because they're scared that they're going to use that against them. You look at Linnentown—what happened with Linnentown. The people gave information or they coaxed information out of them. They had people . . . where they banked, where they worked, all those different things, and they used that against them. For the most part, people are not going to give you ammunition to be able to basically try to use it against them.[143]

Measuring support through public comments

Activism by African American residents can also be measured through their comments made at public hearings, the first of which was the May 21, 2008 ACC HPC meeting. In summary, six individuals, four of whom were African American (two residents), opposed designation, citing private property rights, financial burden on low-to-moderate-income residents, outside influences, devaluation of investment value, safety, and opposition to change. Eleven individuals, five of whom were African American (three residents), supported designation, citing quality of life, historic value of houses and neighborhood history, neighborhood support for designation, its value as an African-American neighborhood, and development threats (see Appendix F).[144]

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[142] Amber Eskew Email: "Reese schedule," May 28, 2008, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 65, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

[143] Iglehart, interview.

[144] Eskew, minutes.

At the subsequent ACC Mayor and Commission meeting on July 1, 2008, nine individuals spoke in support of designation, and there were no public comments made in opposition. Critics may have presumed that designation was a foregone conclusion. Five of the commenters were ACHF representatives, two were African American residents (Hope Iglehart and Gail Hurley), one was a trustee of Hill First Baptist Church (James Alford), and one was a former resident (Andrew Robison).[145] In the fall of 2008, Iglehart summarized what the effort and accomplishments meant to her as well as other community members in an article she wrote for the ACHF newsletter:

> Designation as a Local Historic District has been, for my family and other families within the Reese Street Community, a triumph in preserving a piece of Athens history that could easily have been lost forever. For many people, this neighborhood is one of the few places where people can see where African Americans lived from the 1900s to the 1950s and can understand that they were a part of the very fabric that makes Athens great. I believe the designation will preserve the little snippets of history that add value to our children's lives and will help foster pride in their heritage.[146]

Chapter four takeaways

- A history of disenfranchisement—de facto and de juris discrimination—often prevents African Americans from successfully employing organizational power to enact planning and zoning changes. Disenfranchisement has many outcomes, some of which are individuals with fewer resources, less spare time to devote to anything but essential living tasks, feelings of apathy, resignation, and distrust, and a city power structure overwhelmingly populated by White individuals.

- Community organization by Reese Street's African American residents and stakeholders was key to enacting change (i.e., designation) through city government and elected officials.

[145] Jean Spratlin, "Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission Minutes," July 1, 2008.
[146] Hope Iglehart, "Preservation Profile: Hope Iglehart," *Heritage* newsletter. Athens, GA: Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation. Fall 2008.

- Collaboration with other established organizations (e.g., Cobbham and the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (now Historic Athens) that are aligned with a neighborhood's goals is often necessary and helpful to achieving those goals. However, neighborhood residents must control the process.

- An independent, objective analysis of the results of the survey sent by the Athens Planning Department should be conducted as was done by ACHF for the Reese Street survey results. This analysis should note the ownership interests (e.g., owner-occupant or investor) to provide clarification on the validity of the survey. The analysis should be communicated to elected officials and other interested parties to provide insight into the results.

- Local historic district designation was the only planning and zoning tool available, but its protection is limited to the built environment. It does not protect intangible cultural resources such as the continued residency of African Americans in the neighborhood. Market forces prevailed in spite of designation resulting in continued studentification.

CHAPTER 5

THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF DESIGNATION ON A LOW-TO-MODERATE INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD

The Reese Street neighborhood was the second standalone historically African American neighborhood to be considered for designation, and it was very different from the first standalone district of Rocksprings, which had only 10 houses with RS-5 zoning.[147] The Reese Street Local Historic District was a much larger district with eighty-four properties, a variety of residential and institutional uses and four types of zoning but none residential. There were valid concerns regarding the potential impact that designation would have on low-to-moderate-income residents. Preservationists analyzed and sought to address the potential burdens, either by considering financial assistance or by clarifying what areas were not cause for concern, e.g., routine maintenance. Information on other remediating factors such as property tax relief for homeowners was disseminated. However, studentification had already greatly reduced the number of owner-occupants, mitigating the impact, and that decline continued. The following section will address the concerns and strategies as well as reviewing the extent of low-to-moderate-income residents in the Reese Street neighborhood.

Both proponents and opponents of designation cited concerns about potential financial burdens if the Reese Street neighborhood were to become a local historic district. This presented an interesting dichotomy. On the one hand, low-to-moderate-income residents and preservationists were worried that

[147] Note: There are five single-family residential zoning categories: RS-40, RS-25, RS-15, RS-8, and RS-5, listed from the least to the most dense. The numbers correspond to the minimum lot area (square feet expressed in thousands) required for a single-family home. RS-40 requires the largest minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet and RS-5 requires the minimum of 5,000 square feet. RS-5 is the densest single family zoning category, allowing the minimum in lot width (50 feet), lot depth (80 feet), front yard (15 feet), side yard (6-10 feet), separation between structures (12 feet), and rear yard (10 feet). Information taken from Athens-Clarke County, Georgia - Code of Ordinances Title 9 - ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS ARTICLE I. - ZONING CHAPTER 9-7. - SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (RS) DISTRICTS at https://library.municode.com/ga/athens-clarke_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIIICOOR_TIT9ZODEST_ARTIZO_CH9-7SIMIRERSDI.

the application cost and potential higher-end material costs which might be required by the design guidelines would create financial barriers to making renovations. On the other hand, most investors opposed designation because it could increase their costs, preventing them from maximizing the profit on their investment.

Daniels cited the potential burden on low-to-moderate-income owner-occupants when addressing the HPC at its May 21, 2008 public hearing, stating that:

> This would be an additional administrative and financial burden placed on property owners, which would be very difficult for them. This would be overbearing for the low to moderate income property owners. Affordable housing is one of the main concerns of the Athens-Clarke County Commission and this proposal to designate will be a great impediment to the lower to moderate income families.[148]

Daniels also contended that any cost increases incurred by investors would ultimately be borne by their tenants, stating, "Costly repairs increase the developer's cost, which in turn get handed to the residents."[149] Whether he was speaking of his own properties or of investor-owned properties in general is not known; however, that concern has not been a factor in Daniels' case as he has not submitted a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application in the fifteen years since designation.

Renee Daniels,[150] who was not a resident of the Reese Street neighborhood but who was a member of Hill First Baptist Church, also cited concerns about financial burden at the HPC meeting, referencing the HPC proceedings that transpired immediately prior to the discussion of the Reese Street Local Historic District: "We had seen the need for COA applicants to resubmit additional drawings, which showed a prime example of financial burden."[151] Mike Morris, an attorney working with the Kappa Alpha housing corporation, commented at the HPC meeting that "his greatest fear is that this is going to hurt the people that the HPC thinks that it will help because it will make their maintenance costs higher."[152]

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[148] Eskew, minutes.
[149] Eskew, minutes.
[150] Note: Renee Daniels is the wife of Maurice Daniels.
[151] Eskew, minutes.
[152] Eskew, minutes.

Investors were more likely to cite objections based on difficulty or cost. Some critics, such as investor Faisal Anwar, who owned two properties in the Reese Street area, stated that the "Historic Preservation Commission guidelines will impose undue time constraints and costs that will deter investors from taking interest in improving the properties in this neighborhood."[153] Brian Austin, an investor who owned three properties, spoke at the HPC meeting and objected to the perceived financial burden of being required to renovate versus demolish houses in disrepair, noting that, "It is not economically feasible to bring [boarded up buildings] up to code."[154] This concern turned out to be unfounded, as there were two cases of boarded-up houses in the district for which the HPC approved investors' decisions to—in one case—demolish the building (587 W. Hancock Avenue) as it was proven structurally unsound and—in another case—to rehabilitate the building (565 West Hancock). Additional information on those two projects can be found in Appendix I. Richard Hathaway was more explicit about the perceived financial burden on the part of the investor; the HPC minutes note that, "He owns eight houses in the district and it costs more to maintain houses in a historic district."[155]

Homer Wilson, a member of the Athens Masonic Association that owns the former Reese Street School/Athens High and Industrial School building, was primarily concerned with the loss of control that the COA process entailed, stating, "When you get ready to fix your property up, you've got to fix it the way (county officials) tell you to fix it." The president and vice president of the Athens Masonic Association later clarified the official stance of the organization in a letter to the ACC Mayor and Commission a week prior to the July 1, 2008 designation vote, noting that while it "has never opposed the neighborhood's exercising its rights to protect the character and historical value it shares with the neighbors, it has been noted during previous discussions that any extra ordinary expense a homeowner with limited financial means needs to be considered by those making code regulated decisions."[156]

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[153] Eskew, minutes.
[154] Eskew, minutes.
[155] Eskew, minutes.
[156] Ron Neely and Marvin J. Nunnally, Letter to Mayor Heidi Davison and the Athens-Clarke County Board of Commissioners, June 22, 2008, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 65, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

The expression of concern for low-to-moderate-income residents on the part of investors could be viewed as disingenuous and a ploy—i.e., using sympathy for low-to-moderate-income residents to derail designation efforts, thus protecting investors' own interests without appearing avaricious. The Reese Street neighborhood's proximity to downtown made it particularly attractive to investors who bought homes at relatively low prices and rented them for a profit in anticipation of an eventual redevelopment of the area. Designation placed limitations on their ability to demolish structures and realize a higher profit through redevelopment. Hathaway readily admitted to his motives for purchasing two properties very close to the downtown edge in his response to the Planning Department's questionnaire in May 2008. Explaining his reasons for opposing designation of his property at 349 N. Finley Street, he wrote, "Property purchased because of future commercial or multifamily value." His reason for opposing designation for 369 N. Finley Street was, "Property next door and across street from commercial retail restaurant and large legal office. Purchased for future value as office or multifamily property or commercial."[157]

Preservationists' efforts to address potential burdens

As early as 2006, when the idea of pursuing local historic district designation was first broached, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation Executive Director Amy Kissane recognized that a key issue was the potential financial burden on low-to-moderate-income owner-occupants, and she began discussions on how to address those concerns and mitigate any potential burden. After learning of Maurice Daniels' concerns along those lines, Kissane wrote a letter to him in October 2006, acknowledging that his concern was "legitimate" and proposed that they meet in person to discuss. She included several documents in her letter including a Fact Sheet on National Register vs. Local Historic Districts, FAQ about Local Historic Districts, ACC's Design Guidelines for Historic Districts, ACC's COA application, ACC's Fee Schedule

[157] Richard Hathaway, "Survey Form for the Proposed Reese Street Local Historic District," May 16, 2008, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 65, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

for COAs, and a Fact Sheet on the ACC Local Historic Property Tax Assessment Freeze. It is not known whether Kissane and Daniels ever discussed his concerns in-person. However, Daniels continued to make similar statements on why he objected to designation, noted by his comments to the Historic Preservation Committee at its May 21, 2008 meeting referenced above.

Kissane continued her outreach efforts to African American community leaders such as Alvin Sheats, the director of the Hancock Corridor Development Corporation, who had publicly voiced opposition to the designation. Sheats told Kissane that he opposed designation for two reasons, the first being "his 'property rights point of view,'" i.e., he felt that required compliance with design guidelines was government overreach. Secondly, like Daniels, he cited the possible burden of designation on low-to-moderate-income residents. In an email about her conversation with Sheats to ACHF trustees and Reese Street neighborhood activists working on designation efforts, Kissane noted, "I told him that we KNEW this and that it has been on our radar screen from the beginning."[158]

Kissane proposed forming a committee to solicit concerns from Reese Street neighborhood residents and recommend initiatives which would be supported by both ACC and ACHF. She said, "I would like to start talking about this in earnest. I would hate for the Reese Street District to be designated and we've done nothing to address it. I would like for us to work on possible solutions to these issues simultaneously to working on the designation.[159] Kissane proposed that the committee be composed of Reese/West Hancock Steering Committee members which included residents; ACHF trustees; elected officials, staff and appointed officials; as well as representatives from stakeholder organizations such as the Hancock Corridor Development Corporation and the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions.[160] In anticipation of that effort, she developed a flowchart that she shared with ACHF

[158] Amy Kissane, Email: "Reese Street, Alvin Sheats, Economic Hardship" to Allen Stovall, Rosemarie Goodrum, Hope Iglehart, Ben Rivers, Drane Wilkinson and Jennifer Lewis with copy to Ken Jarrett, August 22, 2007, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 74, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.
[159] Kissane, Email: "Reese Street, Alvin Sheats, Economic Hardship."
[160] Amy Kissane, Email: "Low Income Districts" to Jennifer Lewis and copied to Rosemarie Goodrum, Allen Stovall, Ken Jarrett, Drane Wilkinson and Hope Iglehart, September 12, 2007, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation

trustees to identify the specific areas where financial burden for low-to-moderate-income owner-occupants could be incurred, namely the application fee, the application preparation, and building materials (see Appendix G). Kissane proposed that relief might be provided via one or more means including ACC waiving the application fee if the owner met income standards and/or a grant program through the ACHF Revolving Fund to assist with application preparation or higher than anticipated material costs.

There was no evidence in ACHF's records to suggest that this cross-organizational / private-public committee was ever formalized although Kissane did reach out to the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department to discuss the ideas. When asked what became of the initiative, she stated, "I think the reluctance of Planning to implement a process to screen for low-income residents (which to be fair would have been fairly involved) put a damper on our trying to provide assistance. We needed them as a partner so that COA applicants would be aware."[161]

In addition to acknowledging and considering strategies to address financial burdens, preservationists challenged the assumption that a COA is always required, that project costs would be higher, and that it was an onerous process. Kissane recalls, "I argued that homeowners weren't required to do anything unless they initiated it themselves. If you're already planning a project, the guidelines wouldn't necessarily mean it would be more expensive."[162] Preservationists also argued that the COA process was not as burdensome as some critics alleged. Cobbham resident Blair Dorminey spoke at the May 21, 2008 HPC hearing stating that "he objects to comments about the added burden to owners. He owns an old house himself and they always need work and the Commission review is not that great a burden."[163]

(Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 74, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

[161] Amy Kissane, email to author, January 11, 2024.

[162] Email from Amy Kissane to author, January 11, 2024.

[163] Eskew, minutes.

Ultimately, ACHF did not establish a new program or funding mechanism nor did it succeed in establishing a joint program with the ACC Planning Department to assist low-to-moderate-income owner-occupants. As a non-profit organization, ACHF had little in the way of discretionary funds. It is also highly likely that ACHF reasoned that maintenance and repair needs for low-to-moderate-income property owners were already being served by Hands On Athens. Several HOA projects had taken place in the Reese Street neighborhood in the years preceding designation efforts as discussed previously. There is no record of an HOA project in the Reese Street neighborhood post-designation, which may be due to the continued decline of owner-occupants.[164]

Property tax relief for homeowners

Besides addressing the potential fees and costs associated with COAs, the financial impact in the form of increased property taxes was a concern. Residents asked about the potential for property taxes to rise at a neighborhood meeting on September 26, 2007.[165] Residents had a legitimate concern as property values, and thus property taxes, typically increase once an area is designated as a local historic district, as documented in national studies conducted by Donovan Rypkema[166] and in a 1997 study which included Athens.[167] While increasing property values are considered a boon in most cases, they can increase gentrification (loss of the descendant population) in historic African American neighborhoods. Some

[164] Note: Investment property is ineligible for Hands On Athens funding. Low- to moderate-income homeowners living in Athens-Clarke County in houses that are 50 years or older are eligible to apply for Hands on Historic Athens funding. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JyQr-xz3BO3QB6Mm7NekIYmSvr1h2keVebp2CbIqd5A/edit

[165] Amy Andrews, "Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes," October 15, 2007.

[166] Donovan D. Rypkema, *Measuring Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation: A Report to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation by PlaceEconomics*, eds. Caroline Cheong and Randall Mason, second ed. September 2013, (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2013). https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=cat06564a&AN=uga.9910022933102931&site=eds-live&custid=uga1 https://galileo-uga.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/openurl/01GALI_UGA/01GALI_UGA:UGA?u.ignore_date_coverage=true&rft.mms_id=9910022933102931.

[167] Julie D. Morgan, Monica Callahan, Kirsten Hongisto, and Pamela Stoddard. "Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation in Georgia, A Study of Three Communities: Athens, Rome, and Tifton." Athens-Clarke County Unified Government. 1997, accessed March 12, 2024, https://www.accgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/291/HP_EconomicBenefits?bidId=.

residents may sell because they cannot afford the increased property taxes or because they can realize a greater profit. Gentrification was already taking place in the Reese Street neighborhood in the form of studentification. Due to that trend, a standard evaluation of whether properties have increased in value due to designation is not easily discernable. Regardless, property taxes have undoubtedly become higher in the Reese Street neighborhood as they have across Athens-Clarke County, particularly in the last several years. In the fifteen years since the Reese Street Local Historic District was designated, house prices in Athens-Clarke County have increased by 110 percent on average.[168]

Property tax freeze

As mentioned to residents at meetings and in mailings, a short-term property tax freeze was available for property owners in a local historic district—the "Local Option Tax Incentive for Historic Property."[169] The Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessor's Office reported that fifteen property owners took advantage of the tax freeze in the Reese Street Local Historic District, as noted in Table 2 below. All were investors, as determined by homestead exemption status, with the exception of one institution—the Athens Masonic Association. No owner-occupant has filed for the property tax freeze.[170]

[168] "U.S. Federal Housing Finance Agency, all-Transactions House Price Index for Athens-Clarke County, GA (MSA) [ATNHPIUS12020Q]," FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, accessed March 12, 2024, https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/ATNHPIUS12020Q.

[169] Note: The state enabling legislation for the property tax freeze was passed in 1990 and the local ordinance was signed in 1995 for this program, formally known as the "Local Option Tax Incentive for Historic Property." Owners of property in a local historic district can apply to freeze their property taxes for eight years. In the ninth year, the assessment increases by 50% of the difference between the recorded first year value and the current fair market value. In the tenth and following years, the tax assessment is once again based on the current fair market value. The incentive program does not require rehabilitation. However, the option to freeze taxes is available only once per property (not per owner). So, if a prior owner already took advantage of the freeze, any subsequent owners cannot apply for the program.

[170] Data provided by Kirk Dunagan, Chief Appraiser, Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessor's Office via email to author, February 19, 2024.

Table 2. Owners Who Filed for Local Option Tax Incentive for Historic Property 2008–2024

	PARCEL ID	PARCEL ADDRESS	OWNER	Year LHD property tax freeze filed	Owner-occupant	Investor
1	171A1 M008	690 W HANCOCK AVE	PETERSON CHRIS R	2009	0	1
2	171A1 N008	588 W HANCOCK AVE	VOGELEY CHRISTOPHER J	2009	0	1
3	171A3 A014	245 N Pope St	PETERSON CHRIS R	2011	0	1
4	171A3 A010A	496 REESE ST	ATHENS MASONIC ASSOC INC C/O HOMER WILSON	2012	0	1
5	171A1 N016	369 N FINLEY ST	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS, LLC	2019	0	1
6	171A3 A008	260 N CHURCH ST	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS, LLC	2019	0	1
7	171A3 E001	515 REESE ST	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS, LLC	2019	0	1
8	171A3 E003	525 REESE ST	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS, LLC	2019	0	1
9	171A3 F004	465 REESE ST	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS, LLC	2019	0	1
10	171A3 F006	495 REESE ST	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS, LLC	2019	0	1
11	171A3 A012	424 REESE ST	HOWARD CHRISTINE WEAVER ESTATE OF	2021	0	1
12	171A3 A001	601 W HANCOCK AVE	BKW PROPERTIES LLC	2021	0	1
13	171A3 A011	446 REESE ST	WEAVER BRIAN K	2021	0	1
14	171A3 F002	447 REESE ST	WEAVER BRIAN K	2021	0	1
15	171A3 F003	449 REESE ST	CHAPMAN KENNETH	2022	0	1

Low-income homestead exemption

A new low-income homestead exemption has just recently become available that was not available in 2008.[171] Former District 5 Commissioner Tim Denson initiated, and Georgia State Representative Spencer Frye helped pass, a property tax amendment in 2022 intended to help homeowners in historic African American neighborhoods undergoing gentrification. The "Low-Income Homestead Exemption" is a new property tax freeze for property owners who meet federal poverty guidelines.[172] The Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessor's Office and Tax Commissioner's Office confirmed that no one in the Reese Street Local Historic District has been granted this exemption in the first year of its availability.[173] That is likely due to the fact that there are only four owner-occupants with

[171] "Low-Income Homestead Exemption," Athens-Clarke County Tax Commissioner's Office, accessed March 12, 2024, https://www.accgov.com/10586/Low-Income-Homestead-Exemption.
[172] Note: The Low-Income Homestead Exemption is a property tax freeze for owners who meet federal poverty guidelines. For those who qualify, a base value for their home will be set based on the year they qualify. The Athens-Clarke County Unified Government's portion of a home's property taxes each year is calculated on this set base value of the house, even if the actual property value increases, as long as a homeowner remains eligible for the exemption. The Clarke County School District's portion of property taxes are not affected by this exemption. 2023 was the first year this exemption was offered. It is available every year, but homeowners must apply every year. https://www.accgov.com/10586/Low-Income-Homestead-Exemption.
[173] Email from Kirk Dunagan to author, dated February 29, 2024.

homestead status (see Table 3) who either may not be eligible or may not know of the new exemption. While this exemption may not be relevant to the Reese Street community, it may provide relief to low-income residents in other areas of Athens, fulfilling the purpose originally proposed for the exemption.

Assessing the magnitude of low-to-moderate-income owner-occupants

The potential negative financial impact of designation on the Reese Street neighborhood was somewhat overstated due to the fact that only a small number of owner-occupants remained. Of the eighty-four parcels listed on the designation report in 2008, fifty-nine were investor-owned (70.2 percent); fifteen were owned by residents (17.8 percent); and the remaining ten properties (11.9 percent) were institutionally or government owned. Owner-occupants were identified through an examination of homestead exemptions in 2008 (when the district was designated) as provided by the Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessor's Office.

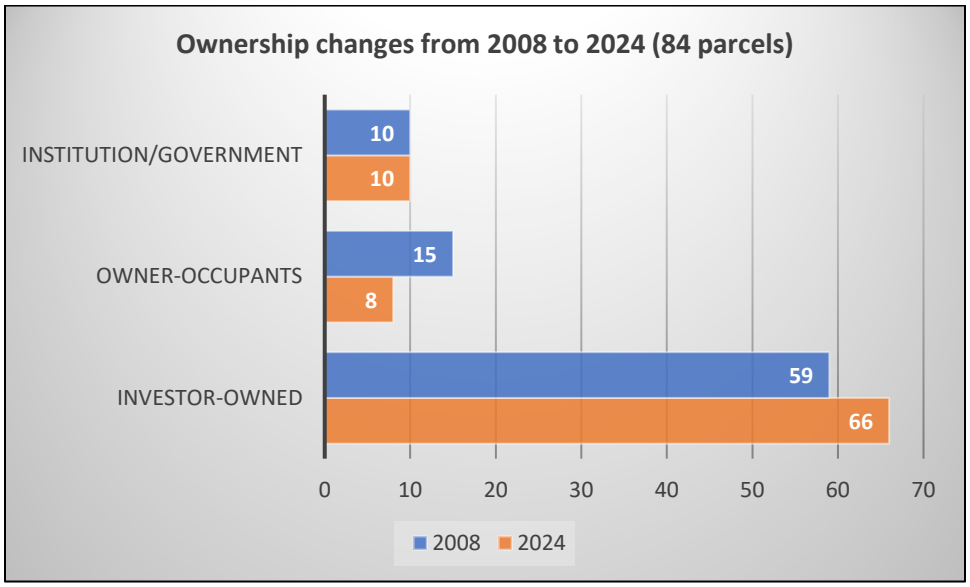

Figure 20. Ownership statistics between designation in 2008 and present. Owner-occupancy continued to decline while investor ownership increased.

Table 3 below provides a list of all the owner-occupants in 2008 and 2024, based on these records. There were three owners that did not apply for homestead exemption but who were known to be

African American owner-occupants (Kathleen Green, Delreey Faison and Lillie Ann Wade), so the table also includes them.[174] Also included are two vacant lots owned by owner-occupants. The cells highlighted in gray indicate a change in status from owner-occupant to investor owned.

Table 3. Reese Street Neighborhood Property Owners in 2008 and in 2024

	Address	2008 Owner	2008 Homestead Exemption	2024 Owner	2024 Homestead exemption
1	640 W HANCOCK AVE	ATHENS LAND TRUST INC C/O BRENDA CRAWFORD*	S0	ATHENS LAND TRUST INC/SMITH BURGESS ELIZABETH A	S1
2	229 N FINLEY ST	CALLAHAN LINDSEY	S1	SAPPHIRE PROPERTIES LP	S0
3	659 W HANCOCK AVE	CHEAPOO MARVA ANN	S1	BUSH III RAY PALMER	S0
4	660 W HANCOCK AVE (vacant lot)**	GREEN KATHLEEN W	S0	GREEN KATHLEEN W ESTATE	S0
5	680 W HANCOCK AVE	GREEN KATHLEEN W*	S0	GREEN KATHLEEN W ESTATE*	S0
6	171 N CHURCH ST	HENDERSON HERSCHELL	SC	HENDERSON HERSCHELL	SC
7	363 REESE ST	HUFF JESSE & MATTIE & PATRICIA	S4	HUFF JESSE & MATTIE & PATRICIA	S0
8	543 REESE ST (vacant lot)**	HURLEY GAIL	S0	HURLEY GAIL	S0
9	237 N CHURCH ST	HURLEY GAIL LENICE	S1	HURLEY GAIL LENICE	SC
10	170 N CHURCH ST	JORDAN DANIEL T	S1	JORDAN DANIEL T	S1
11	549 REESE ST	JORDAN DOROTHY	SC	549 REESE STREET LLC	S0
12	650 W HANCOCK AVE	JORDAN FANNIE MARIE	S4	JORDAN FANNIE MAE LIFE ESTATE LUMPKIN WILLIE DWIGHT & MARY LOUISE	S0
13	245 N POPE St (aka 659 1/2 W. Hancock Ave.)	TURNER JEAN B & LILLY K BELL	S4	DELCOY LLC	S0
14	424 REESE ST	WEAVER JANIE	S1	HOWARD CHRISTINE WEAVER ESTATE OF	S0
15	573 W HANCOCK AVE	WISE BENNIE ROBERT WISE & ETAL	S1	WADE LILLIE ANN*	S0

S0 – No homestead; S1 – Regular homestead; S4 – Age 65 (Net income < 10,000); SC – Age 65
*Owners who did not apply for homestead exemption but were/are known to be African American owner-occupants.
**Vacant lots owned by owner-occupants are included in the owner-occupied tally.

There were some African American property owners who were not residents but were descendants of residents and who used their property for rental or other purposes in 2008. All of the owner-occupied properties were and are owned by African Americans with the exception of 170 N. Church Street, which was and still is owned by Daniel T. Jordan, who is White. He purchased the shotgun house in 2007, just a few months before designation. The full list of property owners for the eighty-four

[174] Homestead exemption status from the Athens-Clarke Tax Assessor's Office is publicly available via qPublic; Kathleen Green's daughters Wilucia and Harriet Green lived in their parents' former house at 680 W. Hancock Avenue; Delreey Faison owned her house at 640 W. Hancock Avenue and the Athens Land Trust held a ground lease on the property. Lillie Ann Wade is the sister of Bennie Wise who died on April 6, 2008.

parcels in 2008 and present is included as Appendix H. Three African American institutions that own property in the Reese Street neighborhood—Project Renew, the Athens Masonic Association and Hill First Baptist Church—have a vested interest in the district. While they cannot be categorized by income, they are all non-profit.

There was an assumption by both detractors and supporters of designation that many residents in the Reese Street neighborhood were low-income. While income data is not available, an analysis of occupation data from city directories, the qualification of former residents for Hands On Athens, a review of housing conditions, and house sales data indicate that some residents were low-income, some were moderate-income, while others were solidly middle class. Among the residents were individuals with bachelor's or higher degrees, including a physician, two teachers and an accountant. However, there were also individuals who were retired but had previously worked in industry or had positions such as "waitress" and "maid" based on city directory research.[175] Three individuals claimed the S4 homestead exemption, which excludes anyone aged 65 or more and making less than $10,000 in net income per year from paying county and school bonds. Athens-Clarke County Deputy Tax Commissioner Amanda Stephens noted that the tax commissioner's office provided the S4 exemption to homeowners if they specifically requested it, but she said that her office did not qualify them as low-income as there have been no county or school bonds for a number of years (Amanda Stephens, phone conversation with author, February 29, 2024). Therefore, it cannot be confirmed that the three individuals with S4 homestead exemption status in 2008 were low-income although those individuals evidently believed they were.

[175] Note: Lindsey Callahan, who owned 229 N. Finley Street, worked as a waitress and bartender at the Athens Country Club in the 1990 city directory; she would have been 69 years of age at that time; she was 87 years of age at the time of designation in 2008; she died in 2010. Dorothy Jordan, who owned 549 Reese Street, was a maid at the U.S. Navy School in the 1990 city directory; she would have been 68 years of age at that time; she was 86 years of age at the time of designation in 2008; she died in 2014. Fannie Marie Jordan, who owned 650 W. Hancock Avenue, was a "skill opr" at Seabord Farms in the 1984 city directory; she would have been 61 years of age at that time; she was 85 years of age at the time of designation in 2008; she died in 2014. Herschell Henderson, who owns 171 N. Church Street, was a janitor at First United Methodist Church in the 1979 city directory at the age of 38; he retired from his position as painter with the Athens Housing Authority at age 64 in 2005; he is still living. Ages calculated from obituaries for Callahan, D. Jordan and F. M. Jordan. Herschell Henderson provided his age during his interview.

Thus, of the thirteen African American individuals who owned fifteen of the eighty-four properties in the Reese Street neighborhood in 2008, some were likely low-to-moderate-income while others were likely in a higher income category. The argument that designation would negatively impact low-to-moderate-income owner-occupants had merit but was somewhat of a red herring due to their small number. Unfortunately, the neighborhood had already lost many of its African American constituents by the time it was designated in 2008, and it was well on its way to becoming a student rental community.

Declining African American residency

African American owner-occupancy in the Reese Street neighborhood continued to decrease even after designation. The same trend that was happening before designation—attrition and studentification, continued afterwards. Investors continued to purchase homes as owners moved away or passed away. Currently, only six owner-occupants remain in the neighborhood (see Table 3). Of the thirteen African American owner-occupants that existed at the time of designation in 2008, seven of their properties changed status, i.e., they were sold to investors and/or the use changed to rental or other non-occupant status.[176] Local historic district designation was not able to stem the loss of African American residents due to the multi-family zoning which invited studentification. That transition and the reasons for it are examined in the section titled "Zoning, Development, and Studentification."

[176] Note: The specific reasons why several properties no longer have owner-occupied status as shown in Table 3 since designation follows. 650 W. Hancock: Fannie Marie Jordan died in 2014 and left the house to her nephew Dwight Lumpkin, who is using it as investment property. 229 Finley Street: Owner Larry Callahan died in 2010; his heirs sold the property to an investor in 2020. 659 W. Hancock Avenue: Owner Marva Cheapoo sold her house to an investor in April 2023 after several incidents of vandalism by Kappa Alpha fraternity members and bought elsewhere in Athens. 424 Reese Street: Owner Janie Weaver died in 2006; it was inherited by her sister Christine Howard who died in 2021; the house is now owned by family members who use it for family gatherings. 245 N. Pope Street: Co-owner Lilly K. Bell died in 2006; her daughter Jean Turner, the other co-owner, applied for a COA to demolish the house and build a new one; after HPC denial, it was sold in 2009 to an investor who subsequently sold it to the current investor-owner. 549 Reese Street: Owner Dorothy Jordan died in 2014; the property later went into foreclosure, and it was bought by an investor in 2018. 363 Reese Street: Jesse Huff died in 1994, and his wife Mattie Huff died in 2005; their daughter Patricia Huff still owns the property but it is now rented out.

Chapter five takeaways

- In addition to the architectural survey that is required for a potential historic designation, an analysis of a neighborhood's demographics needs to be made to determine strategies to address potential financial burdens. This will include a review of tax assessor data to determine 1) which properties are owner-occupied versus investor-owned and institutionally-owned; and 2) homestead exemption status and category to identify both ownership and possible low-income status. Census tract data, if it matches the boundaries of the area in question, could be used to determine racial makeup as well as income level and other data points.

- An analysis of tax assessor data can also be used to identify gentrification trends by examining ownership changes and sales price. This information can be helpful in identifying displacement which can influence planning and zoning decisions.

- The Hands on Athens program administered by Historic Athens is a good resource for low-to-moderate income homeowners in historic neighborhoods that need assistance with renovations or repairs, and it should be used as a talking point and strategy when considering the designation of other low-to-middle-income neighborhoods.

CHAPTER 6

THE EFFECT OF DESIGNATION ON MATERIAL CHANGES

After the extended debate about the potential financial burden on low-to-moderate-income property owners in the Reese Street neighborhood, it is necessary to review and analyze what actual financial burdens were realized after designation and whether designation inhibited material changes as predicted by some of its detractors. This analysis will include a look at the education provided to users and their experiences, a review of Reese Street Local Historic District Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications and findings, a statistical analysis compared to other local historic districts, and a review of design guidelines concerns. A detailed record of all COAs applied for by owner-occupant between 2008-2023 and selected others is included in Appendix I.

COA education and comprehension

One of the arguments against designation was the financial burden of the application and fee; however, the COA is just one of approximately fifty different types of citizen actions for which an application from the city is required. These items fall in the area of business, construction and development, hearings, variances, rezonings, etc. Fees are required for about 90 percent of the applications and, as with the COA, they are meant to mitigate the incidental and indirect costs borne by the city for permit issuance and oversight. A project in a local historic district requires both a zoning permit and a COA. The scale drawing that the COA requires is also required for a zoning permit, so it is fair to say that scaled drawings are not an extra, separate expense. COAs do not require plans to be drawn by an architect or other professional, but they are required to be clear and to-scale.

The financial burden consists of the application fee ($20–500, based on the extent of material change) and a potential additional cost if more expensive materials are required than what the homeowner proposed. In addition to the cost, there is a time factor with which applicants must contend. For complex

changes or other proposed projects that cannot be approved by staff, an application must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Because of the work involved in reviewing these applications and the state laws about notification, these applications must be submitted at least thirty days before the HPC's monthly meeting. Another impact that is not financial in nature but is still a burden is the possibility of owner-occupants being inhibited or confused by the process—from how to submit drawings to understanding the timeline and steps involved. This is a legitimate and common concern regardless of the income or educational level of applicant.

The guidelines surrounding local historic districts are involved, and the complexity was evidenced by missteps on various projects even though educational presentations and materials were provided at various points before and after designation. ACC Preservation Planner Amber Mason provided information on the COA process at a September 26, 2007 neighborhood meeting[177] and ACHF discussed the design guidelines and COA process in multiple interactions with residents. As part of the required public notification process, the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department also mailed a series of notifications about the designation process and public hearings to property owners and residents. After the Commission approved designation on July 1, 2008, the Planning Department mailed a letter to the owner of record notifying them that their property had been officially designated as part of the Reese Street Local Historic District and notifying them of the COA process for material changes.[178]

[177] Amber Mason, "Presentation on Local Historic Districts," September 27, 2007, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 67, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

[178] Note: Any material change to the exterior of a property in a local historic district must be submitted for review via a Certificate of Appropriateness application to the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department. These changes include building material alterations, additions, new construction, and site features such as new driveways, fences, or retaining walls. A COA is not required for normal maintenance and repair (e.g., painting, reroofing with the same material, etc.) or for interior work. The preservation planner in the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department determines if the proposed material change can be reviewed under their authority or if it requires review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) at a public hearing. The application fee is based on the extent of the proposed changes and ranges from $20–$500. The fee is meant to mitigate the cost associated with the time and effort of the Planning Department staff to review and manage the application. Fees range from $20 for a staff-level review; $50 for a minor HPC level review (e.g., material changes, hardscape, fences, windows); $150 for a moderate HPC level review (e.g., small to moderate sized additions; renovation of existing structure; new accessory building; and $500 for a major HPC level review, (e.g., new construction, major addition or demo of a main structure). On November 5, 2019, the Commission approved an increase in the type of material changes that could be reviewed and approved at staff level, effectively streamlining the process and reducing costs.

The level of understanding of the design guidelines and COA process directly impacted the smoothness or difficulty of the project and impacted the user's impression of historic preservation and design guidelines. Not surprisingly, the less the property owner understood the process, the more difficulties they had, which resulted in a generally unfavorable impression of the COA process. The process requires multiple steps, and the onus is on the property owner or their agent to manage the necessary communications with various city departments. Those using contractors familiar with the COA process (e.g., Wilucia Green) had far less difficulties. For those who acted as their own contractor on complex projects, (e.g., Brian Weaver), there were misunderstandings and missteps.

It is not known how many owner-occupants did not apply because the process or cost was prohibitive. The COA cost represents only a small part of a project budget, so it is not likely that the COA presented a deciding factor. If cost was a factor and the owner knew of the Hands on Athens (HOA) program, they could have applied. However, none of the Reese Street Local Historic District's owner-occupants did so. Owners who might have used this program would still be required to submit a COA: however, HOA would have likely provided assistance with the application as well as with scaled drawings in addition to funding the material changes. As far as the procedure, individuals did express that the process was somewhat intimidating in terms of complexity, a factor mentioned by Gail Hurley, "One of the reasons why I haven't undergone [a COA request] is because I didn't really understand all of it. But I still see that, you know, other people have gone and done different things with their homes."[179] Regardless of the difficulty, a significant number of owner-occupants—46 percent—did undertake the process.

COA experiences and perceptions

Regardless of the reasons why, negative experiences with the COA process impacts the public's acceptance of local historic district designation. Of the three individuals interviewed who had submitted a

[179] Hurley, interview.

COA application, two reported a negative experience. James Alford, who was a trustee of Hill First Baptist Church, had spoken in favor of local historic designation on behalf of the church at the July 1, 2008 ACC Commission meeting. Subsequently, however, he had a negative experience managing the approved demolition of a mobile home on church property at 420 Reese Street, remarking that, "We caught the devil trying to get rid of that trailer. Historic preservation . . . they said you couldn't move it.[180] Alford conflated the requirements of other city departments with the historic preservation ordinance. Athens-Clarke County does not allow relocation of manufactured homes built prior to 1976, and this particular mobile home was manufactured in 1970. Alford mentioned that asbestos was an issue and, as with the demolition of any structure, asbestos testing and abatement is required. That and removal of electrical and/or gas and water connections fell under Building and Inspection Department requirements and were not part of the historic preservation ordinance. However, even though Alford conflated COA policies with other non-COA policies, the impression left on him was that the difficulties were connected to the Reese Street neighborhood being a local historic district.

Another negative experience was reported by Brian Weaver, who grew up at 424 Reese Street in a house still owned by his family. He is a real estate investor who owns three rental properties in the Reese Street Local Historic District (446 Reese Street, 447 Reese Street and 601 W. Hancock Avenue), and one in Newtown. Weaver was in favor of designation although he did not speak publicly, recalling that, "I thought it was something positive. I attribute it to being similar to a HOA [homeowners association]—making sure that property values stay, you know, at a certain level and making sure there are things you had to do to make sure that it wasn't an eyesore, undesirable, or it wouldn't affect other properties around in a negative way."[181] He submitted just one COA since designation and reported a negative experience centered around what he viewed as miscommunication and restrictive requirements. In November 2012, he received a COA to convert the former commercial building at 601 W. Hancock Avenue to a four-bedroom, three-bath residence. ACC staff noticed that some material changes were

[180] James Alford (former Hill First Baptist Church Trustee). Interview with the author, January 9, 2024.
[181] Weaver, interview.

being made in violation of the HPC conditions, and Weaver was issued a stop workorder and asked to submit another COA to request modifications to the previously-approved design. He attributed his violations of the COA to not understanding that any change had to be brought to the historic preservation planner's attention, even if it was a change he deemed non-controversial. Weaver contradicted one of the conditions of the COA by keeping the driveway on W. Hancock Avenue instead of placing it on N. Pope Street as required, arguing that since the driveway was historically at that location, and all the other buildings on West Hancock Avenue had driveways from the street, his property's driveway location should be "grandfathered in."[182]

He also did not understand that he was responsible for communicating with each of the various city departments, instead assuming that they would coordinate among each other. He cited differing instructions from the Athens-Clarke County Fire Department, the Building and Inspections Department and the historic preservation unit in the Planning Department as well as a lack of coordination between them as contributing to his violations and to making the process difficult. "You had the historic preservation, then you had the city planning office which was right across the hall from each other, but they never communicated . . . I thought If I'm dealing with the city, I'm dealing with the city. You guys putting everything together in one file, keeping up with it, but that was not the case."[183] Staff recommended denial of the non-complying material changes; however, the HPC approved the COA at its June 19, 2013 meeting and allowed some of the non-confirming modifications already made.

Weaver also has an erroneous assumption of local historic district mandates, not unlike other Reese Street Local Historic District residents who expressed some misunderstandings about the requirements. When asked what effect designation has had on the Reese Street neighborhood, he replied, "Property owners have to, number one, either maintain a property to a certain standard or they'll probably sell it, you know. It really puts the onus on them as far as maintaining it." Contrary to that assumption, the historic preservation ordinance does not require property owners to make any changes or to maintain their

[182] Weaver, interview.
[183] Weaver, interview.

property. It is only when an owner wants to make an exterior material change that the project has to be reviewed via the COA process. Reese Street neighborhood residents are no different from residents in other local historic districts who find it difficult to fully understand the mandates of the historic preservation ordinance, design guidelines, and the workings of the HPC.

Reese Street Local Historic District COA findings

In the fifteen years since designation in 2008, a total of thirty-three COA applications were submitted for sixteen of the eighty-four parcels in the district. There were several parcels with more than one COA application, representing a new project or different iteration of an existing project. Below is a graph (see Figure 21) indicating the types of material changes organized by frequency. Following it is an analysis of all COAs submitted from 2008 to 2023 (see Table 4). See Appendix I for a detailed description of selected COA activity.

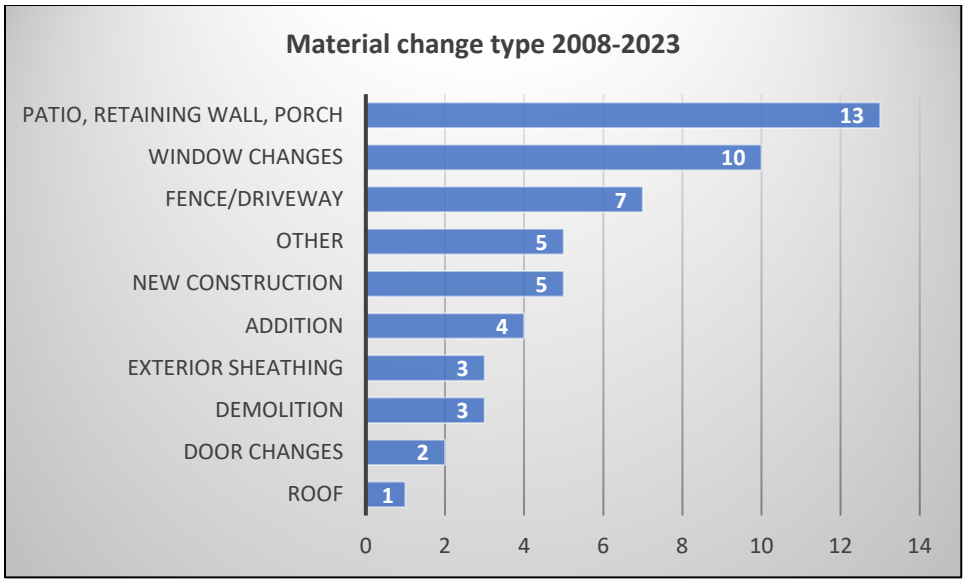

Figure 21. Types of material change that occurred between 2008-2023. As shown in the bar graph above, the most common material changes were for exterior features such as patios and porches followed by window changes. Roofs did not require a COA unless a change in material was requested, e.g., metal to shingle.

Table 4. Certificate of Appropriateness Activity 2008–2023

Address	# of COA applications	Patio, retaining wall, porch	Window changes	Fence/driveway	New construction	Addition	Demolition*	Exterior sheathing	Door changes	Roof	Other**	Staff review	HPC review	Investor-owned	Owner-occupant	Institution
229 N Finley St - Project 1	4		1									1		1		
229 N Finley St - Project 2			1			1		1				1	1			
229 N Finley St - Project 3				1							1		1			
229 N Finley St - Project 4		1									1		1			
205 N Pope St	1									1						1
245 N Pope St - Project 1	3						1					1		1		
245 N Pope St - Project 2								1			1		1			
245 N Pope St - Project 3		1	1							1		1	1			
248 N Pope St	1				1							1	1			
250 N Pope St	1				1							1	1			
328 N Pope St - Project 1***	2		1						1			1	1			
328 N Pope St - Project 2***				1							1		1			
420 Reese St	1						1									1
560 W Hancock Ave - Project 1	2				1							1	1			
560 W Hancock Ave - Project 2		1		1							1		1			
565 W Hancock Ave - Project 1	4					1						1	1			
565 W Hancock Ave - Project 2		1	1									1	1			
565 W Hancock Ave - Project 3		1		1								1	1			
565 W Hancock Ave - Project 4			1									1	1			
587 W Hancock Ave - Project 1	2				1		1					1	1			
587 W Hancock Ave - Project 2		1								1		1	1			
599 W Hancock Ave - Project 1	5				1							1	1			
599 W Hancock Ave - Project 2				1							1		1			
599 W Hancock Ave - Project 3		1									1		1			
599 W Hancock Ave - Project 4										1	1		1			
599 W Hancock Ave - Project 5										1	1		1			
601 W Hancock Ave - Project 1	2			1				1	1			1	1			
601 W Hancock Ave - Project 2		1	1									1	1			
640 W Hancock Ave	1	1									1			1		
659 W Hancock Ave - Project 1	2	1				1						1		1		
659 W Hancock Ave - Project 2		1	1								1			1		
669 W Hancock Ave	1	1	1	1		1						1	1			
680 W Hancock Ave	1	1	1									1		1		
	33	13	10	7	5	4	3	3	2	1	5	11	20	25	6	2

*Three demolitions were requested: one was denied, two were approved.

**Other material changes:
205 N Pope St: sign change
245 N Pope St - Project 2: removal of non-historic chimneys
587 W Hancock Ave - Project 3: foundation height increase on new build
599 W Hancock Ave - Project 4 and 5: Solar panel installation; subsequent modification

***328 N Pope Street is now 598 W. Hancock Avenue

Smaller scale projects accounted for the vast majority of material changes, e.g., patios, retaining walls, porches, fences, driveways, etc. Windows changes were represented in many of the applications, which is common for all local historic districts. Investors' projects were larger and more expensive, including the construction of five new houses (248 and 250 N. Pope St. and 560, 587 and 599 W. Hancock). The number of new houses built was relatively high and was due to the number of vacant lots, some of which were the site of previously demolished houses. All were built as investment property as evidenced by the fact that no homestead exemption has been filed and the address of the owner is different from the property address. Three of the four additions were requested by investors and one by an owner-occupant. In contrast, the projects undertaken by owner-occupants in the district were relatively modest. The required COA applicant fees ranged from $20–$500, with most paying between $20–$150.

There were three demolition requests; two were granted and one was denied by the HPC. A mobile home at 420 Reese Street on property owned by Hill First Baptist Church was allowed to be demolished. The HPC also granted the demolition of 587 W. Hancock Avenue, a c. 1900 historic house that had fallen into disrepair and for which a structural report provided evidence of the extent of deterioration. The property was owned by an investor, and a new house was built in its place. The HPC denied demolition of a c. 1905 house at 245 Pope Street by an African American owner, citing the lack of evidence that it was structurally unsound. There was only one other denial of a COA in the Reese Street Local Historic District, and it was for a rear addition at 565 W. Hancock Avenue that was deemed too large in comparison to the original house. The investor-owner, Faisal Anwar, subsequently submitted another COA for a smaller addition, which was approved. Although Anwar voiced his opposition to designation in 2008, stating that it "will deter investors from taking interest in improving the properties in this neighborhood,"[184] that did not prove true in his case, as he undertook one of the most extensive COA projects in 2012 on a house which had been boarded up, winning a historic preservation award for outstanding rehabilitation from the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation in 2014.

[184] Eskew, minutes.

A list of all owner-occupants who requested COAs is noted in Table 5. Six COAs were submitted by African American owner-occupants or their agents, representing approximately eighteen percent of the total. While this seems low, it is not when you consider that, as noted previously, there were only thirteen owner-occupants in 2008. Five of the thirteen owners filed COAs—almost half (see Table 3 for a list of owner-occupants). While some of the owners later sold their property, the COA applications took place while they still owned it. Two COAs were requested by Hill First Baptist Church (noted in the "Institution" column of Table 4), representing .06 percent of the total. The remaining twenty-five COA applications were submitted by investors for material changes to eleven parcels, representing 76 percent of the total COAs (see Figure 22).

Table 5. Owner Occupant COA Applications 2008–2023

Year	Address	Owner-occupant	COA application fee
2008	659 W. Hancock Ave.	Marva Cheapoo (two COAs)	$150/$20
2008	245 N. Pope St.	Jean Turner	$500
2009	229 N. Finley St.	Larry Callahan	$50
2010	640 W. Hancock Ave.	Delreey Faison	$20
2010	680 W. Hancock Ave.	Wilucia Green	$50

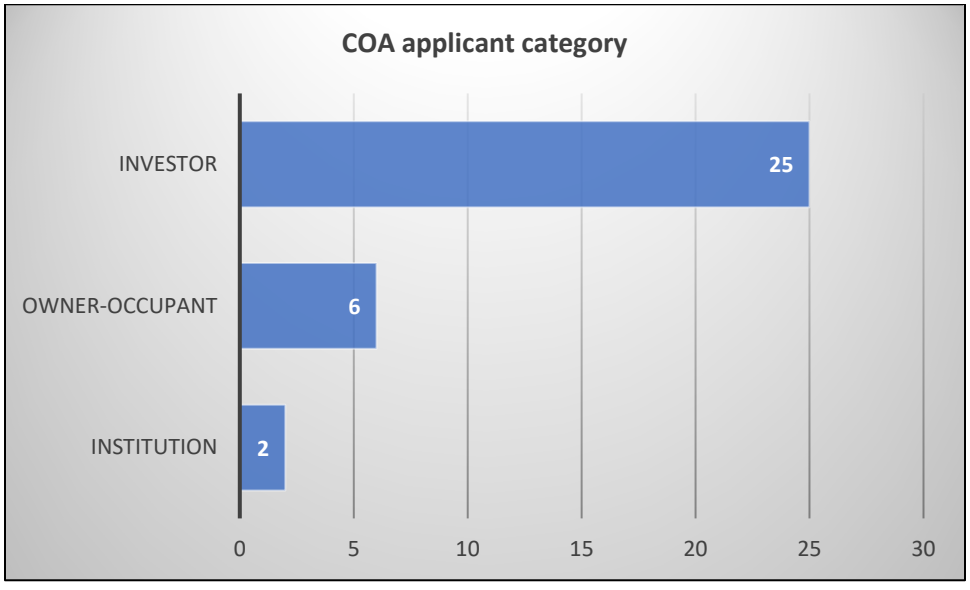

Figure 22. Number of COA applications per ownership category: investor, owner-occupant and institution.

Figure 23. Certificate of Appropriateness activity 2008–2024 in relation to vacant properties and major investment holdings. Ownership status was at the time of application.

Reviewing the map of COA activity (see **Error! Reference source not found.**) reveals a trend and provides some insight into investor behavior regarding material change. Those owning one or two properties were far more likely to request a COA, while those owning multiple properties were the least likely. The vast majority of material changes were concentrated in the central and northern sections of the district. This can mostly be attributed to fact that most of the eastern and southern parcels are either vacant or owned by two LLCs who have not submitted any COAs. The two largest property holders in the district are Austin & Austin Holdings, LLC which owns 14 properties, and Carrington Real Estate LLC which owns 10 properties. The Georgia Corporations Division website states that Austin & Austin Holdings LLC was formed in 2008 and its principles are Athens real estate investors Brian Austin and Glenn Austin per filing documents. Carrington Real Estate, LLC was formed in 2007 and its principle is Maurice Daniels per filing documents. Both Bryan Austin and Maurice Daniels spoke against designation. Most of the parcels owned by these two LLCs are strategically located on or near the perimeter, adjacent to Commercial Downtown or Commercial General zoned land. The fact that no COAs have been submitted by these two investors does not indicate that the properties are not being maintained. Routine maintenance, as previously noted, is not subject to COA review. This may be reflective of the investors' desire to minimize their costs and/or reflective of their intent to retain them as is for future redevelopment potential.

Comparison with other local historic districts

Comparing the activity in the Reese Street Local Historic District against that of other local historic districts provides a means of gauging COA status quo. The graph below (see Figure 24), which was included in the most recent annual report issued by the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission, indicates the number of applications reviewed for each of the sixteen local historic districts in 2023.

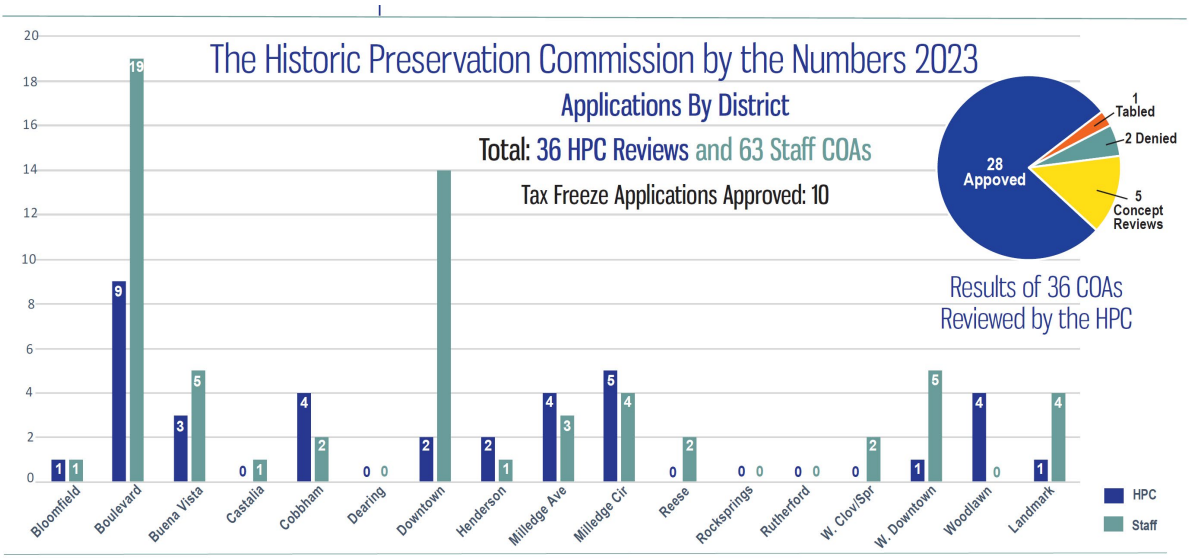

Figure 24. 2023 COA activity in Athens-Clarke County.

In 2023, COA activity in the Reese Street Local Historic District was fairly low, tying for third of the sixteen districts. (Activity was equalized by dividing the number of COAs by the number of parcels in each district.) Aggregating the COA data for the past five years (2019–2023), The Reese Street Local Historic District ranked second of the sixteen districts, indicating that it is far below average in terms of development activity compared to the other local historic districts.[185] This relative paucity of material changes is likely due to the fact that the majority of property is owned by investors. Investors are motivated by profit, and unless a material change results in enough income-producing space to make the investment economically feasible (hence, the number of new builds and additions), they are not as likely as owner-occupants to make material changes and invest money to improve the appearance of a building.

However, if the COA activity for owner-occupant and investor-owned properties is analyzed separately, the results vary slightly. For owner-occupied property, the Reese Street Local Historic District had a COA activity rate of 46 percent—meaning that almost half of the owner-occupants completed COA projects. When the owner-occupant activity is compared with all activity of other local historic districts

[185] "Annual Reports," Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission, accessed March 10, 2024. https://accgov.com/208/Historic-Preservation.

for a five-year period, the Reese Street Local Historic District falls directly in the middle, ranking eight out of sixteen. Reese had more activity than Rocksprings, Dearing, Cobbham, W. Rutherford, Bloomfield, Boulevard and West Downtown Local Historic Districts and less activity than Buena Vista, West Cloverhurst-Springdale, Milledge, Henderson, Downtown, Castalia Avenue, Woodlawn, and Milledge Circle Local Historic Districts. All of the owner-occupant COA activity in the fifteen years since designation fell in a two-year period between 2008-2010. The reasons for this are not known although one factor may be that the number of owner-occupants declined from thirteen in 2008 to just six at present (see Table 3).

When separating investor-owned property and comparing it to other districts as a whole, the Reese Street Local Historic District had a slightly lower rate of COA activity—33 percent. This lower rate could be due to different motivations of owner-occupants and investors. Owner-occupants generally make material changes to improve their quality of life. Investors are motivated by reducing costs and maximizing profit, and much of the material change activity for investors involved creating or adding rental space. A similar scenario has occurred in the Rocksprings Local Historic District, the only other standalone historically African American district. Like the Reese Street Local Historic District, the majority of properties in the Rocksprings are investor-owned. Only one of the ten houses in the Rocksprings local historic district is owner-occupied, and there have been no COA applications between 2019–2023. By contrast, the top two local historic districts for COA activity for the last five years (2019–2023) were Woodlawn and Milledge Circle, both of which are largely owner-occupied. The number of COAs relative to the number of parcels in Woodlawn was 95 percent and Milledge Circle was 114 percent. There is no judgement assigned to the material change data of owner-occupants versus investors. In fact, empirically, the less material change is the better option in terms of historic integrity.

Design guideline concerns

The Reese Street neighborhood designation process raised many new questions for residents, local preservationists, and investors, as this was the first sizeable standalone African American local

historic district with primarily vernacular buildings that had been designated. The Rocksprings Local Historic District was designated in 2000 but it had only ten houses and had seen little development activity. One of the concerns pertained to how well the design guidelines would function for this unique district. Tom Reynolds, a graduate of the historic preservation master's program at the University of Georgia, who went on to become a contractor specializing in the renovation of historic houses, owned four properties on West Hancock Avenue with his business partners Michael and Mary Songster at the time of designation. He initially opposed the designation of the Reese Street neighborhood as a local historic district because he believed the design guidelines were too rigid and did not allow for innovative design. Reynolds eventually changed his position and supported the designation although he had reservations that he wanted to make known. He wrote a statement addressed to Amber Eskew, ACC preservation planner, but intended for the ACC Mayor and Commission on June 11, 2008, acknowledging the neighborhood's historic importance but stating that there should be an allowance "for new acceptable materials and a variety of acceptable design guidelines." He felt that the Reese Street neighborhood had "the greatest variety of materials, lot size, [and] design of any historic district in Athens," and that this variety should continue through new development, "not museum archiving of homes and other buildings."[186]

Design guidelines provide the criteria used by ACC preservation staff and the HPC to evaluate proposed material changes to the exterior of properties. The guidelines provide guidance regarding alterations to existing structures, additions, new construction, and site work and includes such elements as roofs, windows, porches, siding, foundations, drives, walkways, fencing, signs, etc. ACC had only one set of guidelines for all residential districts at the time of the Reese Street Local Historic District designation in 2008 and a separate set of design guidelines for Downtown Athens. Since that time, a separate set of design guidelines was adopted specifically for the Milledge Avenue Local Historic District, which was

[186] Tom Reynolds, "Letter to Amber Eskew regarding Reese Street designation," June 11, 2008, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 63, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

established in 2010. Due to the complexity of stakeholder interests in the Milledge Avenue designation process, a committee was appointed by the Commission and they recommended that a separate set of guidelines be created for that district to address set-backs, façade renovations, front yard fencing, driveways, placement of accessory structures, in addition to the customary elements.[187]

There are some professionals in the preservation field who believe a separate set of design guidelines are needed to provide equity for low-income districts with vernacular housing. For instance, design guidelines can first require identification of the significant, defining features of a building under COA review. A determination is then made regarding which of those features require stricter adherence in terms of design and materials and which features can be a source of compromise—e.g., allowing stock materials. Amy Kissane had broached the idea of less-stringent design guidelines specifically for the Reese Street neighborhood on the flowchart she created (see Appendix G). However, ACHF ultimately chose not to advocate for this option for a few reasons. Kissane recognized that this could be problematic, as it was a strategy that ACC had not heretofore employed. In addition, Kissane believed that the character of the Reese Street neighborhood would best be retained by following the same standard as other local historic districts in Athens and she felt this was achievable without significant cost, noting ". . . that approach would diminish the significance of the district, would indicate that we don't think it's as important to preserve to the same standard as other districts. I also didn't think that following the guidelines would necessarily make something more costly."[188] ACC maintains that its design guidelines are flexible and can be applied to any district and any housing type. In reviewing the COAs examples provided, that appears to hold true. However, the flexibility of the HPC and the design guidelines is not always viewed as a positive attribute but rather as a form of inequity as noted by Iglehart:

> They don't enforce at the level that they do in other neighborhoods. It seems like a lot of people are able to make adjustments and changes to their homes very easily without the

[187] "Design Guidelines for the Milledge Avenue Historic District and Landmark Properties on Milledge Avenue," Athens-Clarke County Unified Government, 2021, accessed March 23, 2024. https://www.accgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/83426/HP--Design-Guidelines--Milledge-Ave--Reformat.
[188] Amy Kissane, email to author, February 22, 2024.

> rigidness that they would have gone before . . . I had also wondered is it the fact that they don't value our neighborhood as they would value one of the others?[189]

In summary, the COA process has not appeared to significantly inhibit development by either owner-occupants or investors in the Reese Street Local Historic District although it is below average compared to other local historic districts. For some, the process was cumbersome, for others it was flawed due to a poor understanding of the process and for still others, it was a necessary process which they took in stride. When James Alford was asked if he would recommend designation to other historic African American neighborhoods, he stated, "I see a lot of problems with it. Most of the time, [owners] don't understand [and you] need to understand the rules. They make it sound like all peaches and cream. It's not always peaches and cream. If they go in with a good understanding, it's fine, but they need to have good understanding."[190] A resident who had a more positive experience said, "Maybe because I wasn't doing a complete remodel . . . it just didn't faze me, you know."[191] Some of the frustration expressed concerned requirements of ACC ordinances that were outside of historic preservation requirements, such as with 601 W. Hancock and 420 Reese Street. Even though many of the owner-occupant applicants were in favor of local historic district designation, they nonetheless felt some frustration with the COA process and chafed at the requirements.

A review of the decisions of the HPC reflects flexibility and a willingness to compromise as evidenced by the initial COA for 229 Finley Street as well as the COAs for 601 W. Hancock Avenue and 659 W. Hancock Avenue (see Appendix I). There is a good overall record of projects across all local historic districts receiving approval by the HPC as noted by Figure 24. Of the thirty-six COAs reviewed in 2023, twenty-eight received approval, one was tabled and two were denied. The remaining COAs were concept reviews. Of the 228 COA applications received for the last five years (2019-2023 not including concept reviews) for all local historic districts, 194 were approved (85 percent), twenty-one were tabled,

[189] Iglehart, interview.
[190] Alford, interview.
[191] Anonymous, interview.

and thirteen were denied. It is not known how many of the proposals that were tabled or denied resulted in a subsequent modification and/or resubmittal for approval, but that is often the case, as with the two denials in the Reese Street Local Historic District.

Chapter six takeaways

- Residents in a potential local historic district need to be educated on the historic preservation ordinance, design guidelines and Certificate of Appropriateness process in one or more ways to suit the audience, e.g., large group meetings, small group meetings, one-on-one training sessions, mock COA scenarios, educational material, etc. This is especially important for low-to-moderate-income residents who may not have as much experience with planning and zoning processes. While not all residents will be responsive, it is incumbent upon Historic Athens and the Athens Planning Department to make every effort to educate them.

- Re-education and debriefing is important for residents who have had experiences with the COA process. That information can help to counter negative perceptions or it can educate Historic Athens and the Planning Department on improvements that can be made in the process.

- Evidence from the study of COAs between 2008-2024 in the Reese Street neighborhood indicates that local historic district designation has not had a negative impact on low-to-moderate-income residents' ability to make desired changes to their houses.

CHAPTER 7

ZONING, DEVELOPMENT, AND STUDENTIFICATION

The diagnosis of what caused the transition of a stable community of primarily African American owner-occupants to an area dominated by transitional college students is complex. Factors such as segregation, suburbanization, geographic mobility, and attrition have played a role in the evolution of the Reese Street neighborhood. Zoning has also played a key role although maybe not a definitive one, and it will be examined by reviewing its history in the Reese Street neighborhood and the areas surrounding it as well as by examining zoning in other historic neighborhoods, both designated and undesignated. Zoning definitely played a role in the studentification of the neighborhood, but the insidious nature of disenfranchisement may have been and still be the cause of destabilization.

History of zoning in the Reese Street neighborhood

Athens created its first planning commission and adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1957 and the first land use plan for Athens was created in 1969.[192] The earliest zoning maps available from the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department for the Reese Street neighborhood date from the 1960s, and the neighborhood is zoned RM-1, i.e. multi-family (see Appendix J).[193] Reese Street was not alone as an in-town neighborhood zoned for multi-family. As noted on the map in Appendix J, a large portion of the historically White Cobbham neighborhood immediately north and adjacent to the Reese Street neighborhood was also zoned RM-1 with some portions zoned RM-2.[194] The decision to zone historic in-

[192] "FY23-25 Planning Department Strategic Plan," Athens-Clarke County Planning Department, May 12, 2023.
[193] Note: the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department has a set of undated and annotated zoning maps which are from the 1960s although the staff could not provide a specific date. Revision dates are noted, the earliest of which is December 1969.
[194] Note: The permitted uses and minimum lot requirements for mixed density (aka multi-family) residential have changed multiple times since the 1960s; the information provided here reflects what in in the current ordinance.

town neighborhoods in Athens as multi-family, thus encouraging their redevelopment, recognized that most of the single-family housing development was taking place in the county, outside the city limits, at the time the maps were drawn. The 1960s was an era of expansion, new construction and suburbanization. Athens experienced tremendous growth between 1950 and 1970 with the population increasing from 36,550 to 65,177, a 78 percent increase, in part fueled by UGA's expansion of its research, science and technology departments.[195]

Redevelopment was considered a logical goal for in-town neighborhoods which were viewed as stagnant, outdated, and blighted. Historic properties, with few exceptions, had little value in this era, especially those owned by African Americans. Black neighborhoods were often characterized as slums, and the economic disenfranchisement of African Americans meant that many were living in subsistence-level housing. Although Reese Street was one of the more upscale African-American neighborhoods because it was home to many Black professionals as well as Athens High and Industrial School, it was nonetheless seen as an area past its prime and ripe for redevelopment due to its proximity to downtown. David Lynn, director of planning and outreach for the Athens Downtown Development Authority, former District 5 commissioner and former staff member in the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department, sees the multi-family designation of the area by planners as a logical decision at the time although he does not discount the influence of disenfranchisement.

> I'm sure it had something to do with political will, historic trends, and where they [city planners] thought development would occur. If I was a planner in the 60s, and I saw downtown, and we have UGA that's just expanded in 1950, and UGA is turning student housing over to Athenians . . . this seems like a good spot. It may be because it was an underrepresented African American neighborhood which equates to urban renewal. You also have to look at the fact that you're smack dab between Prince, Milledge, and Broad. It's not unreasonable for even a well-intentioned planner to say this area is not our idea or our notion of a single-family development area.[196]

[195] U.S. Census Bureau, Total Population, 1950 and 1970, prepared by Social Explorer, accessed February 19, 2024.
[196] David Lynn (Director of Planning and Outreach, Athens Downtown Development Authority), Interview with the author, January 3, 2024.

Despite multi-family zoning, the Reese Street neighborhood remained an intact neighborhood occupied by African Americans through the 1960s, primarily through de facto segregation. That, in addition to the fact that most development was occurring outside the city limits, meant that the Reese Street neighborhood experienced minimal development activity.

Growth catches up to zoning

In the 1960s, commercial growth began to occur beyond the periphery of downtown Athens' traditional boundaries, one of which was Pulaski Street which formed the western edge. Two blocks between Pulaski Street and N. Finley Street, dissected by Newton Street, separated downtown from the Reese Street neighborhood. In the early 1960s, two large developments were built on the blocks adjacent to the eastern edge of the Reese Street neighborhood. The Key to America Motel and the Confederate Arms apartments (extant and now known as 421 West) were built on the block bordered by West Hancock Avenue, N. Newton Street, Reese Street and N. Finley Street. Another motel was later built in the adjacent block framed by Reese Street, N. Newton Street, N. Finley Street and West Broad (see Appendix C).[197]

On the opposite (western) side of the Reese Street neighborhood, the Cobb Hill Apartments were built in 1974 at the corner of West Hancock Avenue and N. Harris Street on the edge separating the historic African American neighborhood of Reese Street from the predominantly-White neighborhood of Cobbham. The RM-1 zoning of the Cobb Hill Apartment property at 755 W. Hancock Avenue is what attracted the housing corporation for Kappa Alpha, as noted by Attorney Mike Morris and KA chapter advisor Mark Cross in their public comments at the February 7, 2006 Commission meeting. According to

[197] Note: A review of the 1958 city directory and the 1960 Sanborn map indicates that east of N. Newton Street was White; west of N. Newton Street was African American. Per the 1958 directory, the entire block framed by Newton Street, W. Hancock Avenue, N. Finley Street and Reese Street was the Athens High and Industrial School athletic field. African American houses and one business occupied the block between it and West Broad Street. The "White" blocks were occupied by a mixture of businesses, institutional uses (e.g., YWCA) and apartments. By 1960, the athletic field had become two large developments: the Key to America Motel, which became a Days Inn and has since been demolished to build The William student apartment high-rise, and the Confederate Arms apartments (extant and now known as 421 West) See Appendix B.

Cross, "We did our due diligence." Morris added, "We made it very clear that we wanted to buy property that was properly zoned."[198]

In 2000, Athens-Clarke County adopted a very different land use plan as part of the update of its comprehensive plan. The post-WWII low-density growth was now viewed as undesirable sprawl. As a result, a movement began to preserve open space in the county's periphery and increase density in the urban core. New Urbanism principles of mixed use, connectivity, and increased density were embraced, leading to several zoning changes, including creating a "greenbelt" of low-density use in the periphery of the county in an effort to preserve open space and allowing increased density in urban areas as a tradeoff. Downtown was a logical area to increase density, and the zoning ordinance was amended to allow residential uses of property zoned Commercial Downtown (CD). CD is the densest zoning category, allowing 200 bedrooms per gross acre; 100 percent lot coverage (i.e., no setbacks); zero landscaping; and a maximum building height of 100 feet, which is typically around seven stories.

Student housing complexes arrive downtown

This zoning change led to 11 university/student-oriented housing developments built downtown between 2003–2024.[199] This was viewed as a positive development by David Lynn, and he noted that dense student housing downtown has "taken pressure off of in-town neighborhoods."[200] The Great Recession which occurred from 2007 to 2009 led to a temporary lull in development, and it was also during this time that Reese Street neighborhood residents were closing in on designation for their neighborhood, prompted by Kappa Alpha's purchase of property on the west end of the neighborhood in late 2005. In hindsight, the recession worked in the neighborhood's favor as student housing developers

[198] Ben Emanuel, "Frat Houses: Your New Neighbors?," *Flagpole*, February 15, 2006.
[199] Note: University/student housing built between 2003–2024: Gameday Center, 250 W. Broad Street (2003); Georgia Traditions, 755 E. Broad St. (2004); 909 Broad, 909 E. Broad St. (2008); The Standard, 600 N. Thomas St. (2014); Georgia Heights, 150 W. Broad St. (2015); Eclipse, 805 E. Broad St. (2013); Uncommon Athens, 165 E. Dougherty St. (2016); The Mark, 130 Hickory St. (2017); The Mark, Phase II (2021); The William, 230 N. Finley St. (2022); The Rambler, 558 W. Broad St. (2024).
[200] Lynn, interview.

had not yet set their sights on the western end of downtown—the blocks between Newton Street and N. Finley Street which had been zoned CD since 2000. That changed in 2021 when construction began on The William, a student-oriented housing development at 230 N. Finley Street. Another student housing development, the Rambler, began construction in 2022 at 558 W. Broad St.[201] Several-story apartment buildings are now opposite modest, mostly one-story houses on N. Finley Street.

Student housing complexes are lucrative projects. The William was built on land purchased for $5.6 million in 2020; the developer sold the complex in February 2024 for $67.5 million.[202] The property on which the Rambler is being built was assembled from five parcels which included three small properties on N. Newton Street (#139, 149 and 157), originally owned by African American residents (noted on Sanborn map in Appendix C).[203] All of the land in this block was originally part of the larger African American settlement discussed in Chapter One which had shrunk over time as development pressures increased. These three lots, totaling slightly less than a half-acre, included two houses and a vacant lot between them (the house had previously been demolished). The lots sold for $2.4 million or approximately $800,000 each. Deed research and tax assessor data indicate that just one of the lots (139 N. Newton Street) was purchased in 1986 for $16,000.[204] This same real estate investor, Maurice Daniels of Carrington Real Estate, LLC, owns 10 parcels in the Reese Street Local Historic District.

Objectively, the redevelopment of this block was good for Athens—it created jobs, more housing, and increased the property tax base. However, profit is a powerful motivator, and these two new

[201] Note: The William at 230 N. Finley Street is a 164-unit complex with five stories that opened in 2023. The Rambler at 166 N. Finley Street is an eight-story, 342-unit complex with retail space fronting West Broad Street. It is anticipated to open by fall 2024.
[202] Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessor's Office, Parcel 171A1 R002, 230 Finley Street, https://qpublic.schneidercorp.com/Application.aspx?AppID=630&LayerID=11199&PageTypeID=4&PageID=4601&KeyValue=171A1%20R002.
[203] Note: The land on which the Rambler is being built was assembled from five parcels: the former Courtyard by Marriott Hotel (parcel 171A4 B009); the former Phi Kappa Tau fraternity house, formerly the site of restaurant/bar Red Rooster and, prior to that, Steak & Ale (171A4 B011); 139 N Newton St (171A4 B016); 149 N Newton St. (171A4 B017); and 157 N Newton St. (171A4 B018).
[204] Note: Warranty Deed from Grantors George B. Chester and Henry J. Chester to Grantee Maurice Daniels, June 11, 1986, deed book 635, page 267. The value was calculated from the transfer tax paid, which was $16. The State of Georgia transfer tax rate is $1.00 per thousand (plus $0.10 / hundred) based upon the value of the property conveyed.

complexes highlight the development pressures facing the Reese Street Local Historic District. All but one border of the district—the one shared with Cobbham—is vulnerable. The district's southern border has already fielded a proposal to build a 448-bedroom apartment complex by piecing together four parcels, one of which is in the historic district, and rezone them to Commercial Downtown. The proposed planned development, presented to the Planning Commission at its December 2022 meeting, was tabled after receiving an unfavorable review and has not yet been resubmitted. The topography of this area is another factor that should be considered when considering redevelopment of any W. Broad Street property (if it is negotiable—e.g. a planned development), particularly in the block between N. Finley Street and N. Church Street, as the natural depression created by the Tanyard Branch stream will cause viewshed issues for the neighborhood.

Analysis of land use in the Reese Street Local Historic District

The area of the Reese Street Local Historic District is 16.35 acres.[205] There is no single-family zoning—only Multi-Family, Commercial-Neighborhood and Park, owing to the two lots owned by ACC. The higher density RM-2 lots primarily adjoin the Commercial-General lots on W. Broad Street although there are some anomalies with several lots zoned RM-2 that are on the opposite side of Reese Street (adjoining RM-1 lots) and on N. Finley Street.[206] Figure 25 below provides a reference to analyze zoning, vacant property, the location of remaining owner-occupied property and present or proposed large-scale uses.

[205] Note: This number was calculated by adding up the acreage of all individual parcels from Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessor's Office data available via qPublic. It is slightly less than Athens-Clarke County calculation of approximately 19 acres as that is a measurement of the entire area, including streets. etc.

[206] Note: There are three categories of mixed density (aka multi-family) residential districts: RM-1, RM-2 and RM-3, from the least to the densest, respectively (Reese Street and Cobbham do not have any RM-3 zoning). Many of the minimum measurements for siting are similar across the three categories. All require a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet. The differences appear in density. The maximum number of units per gross acre in RM-1 is 16 whereas 24 units per gross acres are allowed in RM-2. The lot coverage, landscaped area and building heights are scaled as well. The table of Permitted Uses and General Regulations, detailing density requirements can be found in Appendix J. Information taken from Athens-Clarke County, Georgia - Code of Ordinances Title 9 - ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS ARTICLE I. - ZONING CHAPTER 9-8. - MIXED DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (RM) DISTRICTS at https://library.municode.com/ga/athens-clarke_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIIICOOR_TIT9ZODEST_ARTIZO_CH9-8MIDERERMDI

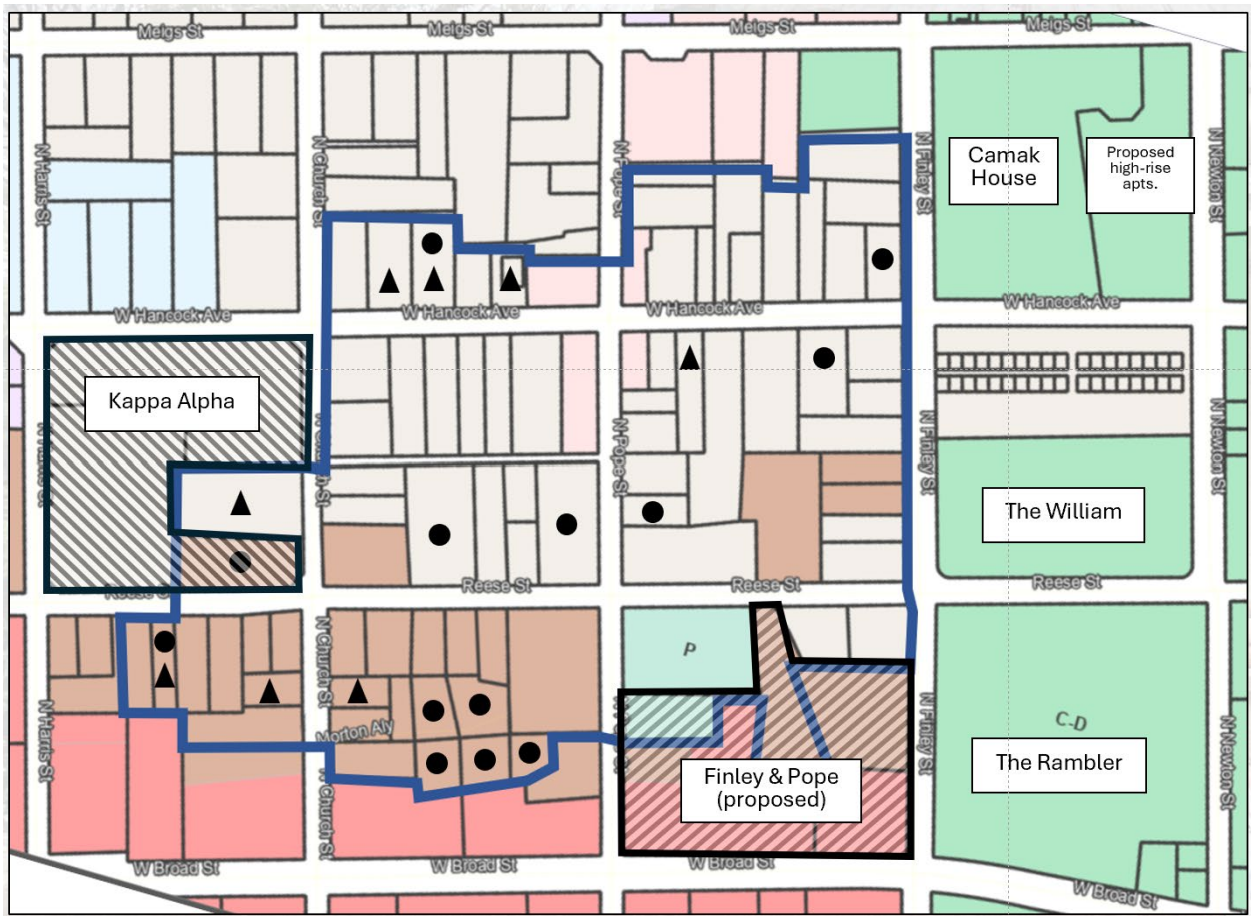

Figure 25. Reese Street Local Historic District zoning map. Also noted is owner-occupied property, current and proposed large developments, and vacant property (boundary denoted in blue).

Table 6. Breakdown of Land by Zoning Category

Zoning	Acres	Percent
Total Local Historic District	16.35	
RM-1	10.42	0.64
RM-2	4.41	0.27
P	0.9	0.06
C-N	0.62	0.04

Average lot size: .19 acres
Median lot size: .16 acres

Fourteen lots are currently vacant as noted in Table 7. Vacant property provides an indication of past demolition activity and future potential development areas (see Table 7 and Figure 25). One lot (which was combined from two adjacent lots at the time of designation) is owned by the Athens Masonic Association and is used for parking. Two of the vacant lots are owned by African American residents. Three lots are adjacent to and owned by Hill First Baptist Church. According to James Alford, the church bought property to keep from being "landlocked" and to have property in the event they wanted to add another building.[207] Alford noted that there were originally houses on the lot they bought at 420 Reese Street, but they ended up demolishing them. "It was cheaper to tear them down. We needed the land for parking too. We tried to rent the properties. That just didn't work. We had a lot of problems collecting rent, so we decided to get out of the rental business."[208] Alford did not know why the original frame building of the Knox Institute at 178 N. Pope Street (listed as 375 Reese Street in the tax assessor records), was torn down. The building had become four apartments sometime between the time of the school's closure in 1928 and 1960. It was demolished sometime between 1960-1963.[209] He stated that the Athens Masonic Association had bought the property at 179 N. Pope Street and demolished Carnegie Hall, the former second home of the Knox Institute and Athens High and Industrial School. The church

[207] Alford, interview.
[208] Alford, interview.
[209] Note: The 1960 Sanborn map at the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department was last updated in October 1960, and it includes the footprint of what is presumed to be the original Knox Institute building. The 1960 Sanborn map at the Athens-Clarke County Library Heritage Room was last updated in November 1963, and the building has been pasted over with blank paper, indicating it had been demolished (see Appendix B).

subsequently purchased that lot from the Masons. The remaining nine lots are owned by investors who have chosen to leave them undeveloped.

Table 7. Vacant Lots in the Reese Street Local Historic District

	Address	Owner	Zoning	Parcel Size
1	524 W HANCOCK AVE	CARRINGTON REAL ESTATE LLC	RM-1	0.13
2	537 W HANCOCK AVE	CARRINGTON REAL ESTATE LLC	RM-1	0.22
3	660 W HANCOCK AVE	GREEN KATHLEEN W ESTATE*	RM-1	0.2
4	250 HARRIS ST	GAMMA PARTNERS LLC	RM-1	0.37**
5	141 MORTON ALY	OGELSBY THOMAS J	RM-2	0.08
6	143 MORTON ALY	OGELSBY THOMAS J	RM-2	0.16
7	148 MORTON ALY	CC SMOKE LLC	RM-2	0.13
8	150 MORTON ALY	CC SMOKE LLC	RM-2	0.13
9	153 MORTON ALY	HOPKINS FISKE C	RM-2	0.16
10	155 N POPE ST	CC SMOKE LLC	RM-2	0.09
11	179 N POPE ST	HILL FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH C/O M MITCHELL*	RM-2	0.61
12	234 N POPE ST	HILL FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH C/O M MITCHELL*	RM-1	0.1
13	420 REESE ST	HILLS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH C/O M J JACKSON*	RM-1	0.42
14	462 REESE ST	ATHENS MASONIC ASSOC INC C/O HOMER WILSON*	RM-1	0.32
15	543 REESE ST	HURLEY GAIL*	RM-2	0.12
			Total acreage:	**2.87**

*Owned by an African American resident or institution in the Reese Street Local Historic District
**Only a portion (estimated at about 1/4) of the 1.65 acre lot is in the Reese Street Local Historic District

Historic neighborhoods and zoning

The purchase of 755 W. Hancock Avenue in late 2005 and the purchase of 369 and 399 Meigs Street in early 2006 by the housing corporations for the Kappa Alpha and Sigma Nu fraternities, respectively, alarmed residents in the Reese Street and Cobbham neighborhoods as well as those in the preservation community. ACHF began an analysis of the zoning designations in historic neighborhoods to determine where else fraternities could build once it became recognized that they were an allowed use on multi-family zoned land (see Figure 26).[210]

[210] Amy Kissane, "Historic Neighborhood Zoning," 2006, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 66, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD ZONING

Zoning in A-CC Locally Designated Historic Districts (all are also National Register Districts):	
Bloomfield	RS-8
Boulevard	RS-8 and RS-15
Cloverhurst-Springdale	RS-15
Cobbham	RM-1 (east of Milledge) and RS-8 (west of Milledge)
Dearing	RS-8
Henderson	RS-8
Woodlawn	RS-15
Zoning in A-CC National Register Residential Districts/Not Locally Designated:	
Buena Vista	RS-8
Dearing Street	RS-8 and RM-1 (area outside local historic district)
King Avenue	mostly RS-8
Milledge Circle	RS-15
Oglethorpe Avenue	RM-1 and RS-8 (mostly)
Reese Street	RM-1 and RM-2
S. Milledge	C-N
W. Hancock	RM-1
Zoning in Historic Neighborhoods Not Currently Designated	
Carr's Hill	RM-2
East Athens	RS-5 and RM-1

Figure 26. ACHF 2006 zoning analysis of historic neighborhoods. Note: King Avenue is listed as being a National Register district, which is incorrect. It has no historic designation.

The ACHF analysis revealed that West Hancock and Carr's Hill as well as portions of East Athens and Cobbham were zoned multi-family. The West Hancock and East Athens neighborhoods are historically African American; Cobbham and Carr's Hill are historically White. The 2006 passage of a permanent special-use restriction that requires fraternities to receive approval from the Commission before building new houses effectively prevented fraternities from purchasing land in historic neighborhoods.[211]

However, the question of how zoning impacts historic neighborhoods remained unanswered. Although ACHF analyzed the zoning in historic neighborhoods for the purpose of determining which would allow Greek housing by right, they also recognized that the multi-family zoning (RM-1 and RM-2) in the Reese Street neighborhood might be problematic for its future. Amy Kissane referenced this in an

[211] Ben Emanuel, "Fraternity Row: On the Table at Last," *Flagpole,* August 16, 2006.

email she wrote to Michael and Mary Songster and copied to neighborhood activist Hope Iglehart and ACHF Preservation Issues Co-chair Rosemarie Goodrum on June 5, 2008. The Songsters had expressed reservations about designation similar to those of Tom Reynolds with whom they co-owned property in the Reese Street neighborhood. Kissane acknowledged their "legitimate concerns" but noted that she hoped designation would be "the first step in moving this neighborhood back towards a stronger (not necessarily exclusive) single-family presence." She also advocated for a reevaluation of zoning there, noting "I would like to see some serious thought given to a future vision for this neighborhood and how the current zoning fits or doesn't fit that future."[212]

Michael Songster recalls arguing at the time that RM-1 zoning was not going to be the cause of the neighborhood being razed for apartments. Because of the small lot sizes (.08-.23 acres) and zoning codes at that time, developers were incentivized to build single-family homes and not apartments. In fact, there were seven new houses built on vacant lots between 2004–2008: 537 Reese St., 554 W. Hancock Ave., 620 W. Hancock Ave., 647 W. Hancock Ave., 228 N. Church St., 238 N. Church St., and 252 N. Pope St. By-right, an owner can build a four bedroom house on an RM-1 zoned lot. For illustrative purposes, if there are ten lots of .10 acres each, you could potentially build ten homes with four bedrooms each, which would yield forty bedrooms. If you were to assemble ten of those lots into one acre, by-right you could build only sixteen bedrooms in an apartment building. In addition, an apartment has more complicated parking requirements, sewer requirements, etc. Therefore, the financial incentive was to build single-family homes. However, Songster noted the zoning code has changed in the last several years due to concern about an excess of student housing. Current zoning codes only allow two bedrooms on a 5,000 square foot lot (roughly .11 acres). Songster notes that the incentive is not nearly as great now as it used to be to keep lots intact. While aggregating lots is expensive, he notes that the amount of investment happening nearby has changed the dynamic.[213]

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[212] Amy Kissane, Email: "Reese Street" to Mary and Michael Songster, copied to Hope Iglehart and Rosemarie Goodrum, June 5, 2008, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 65, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.
[213] Songster, interview.

Unlike Reese Street and Cobbham, the other historic neighborhoods which are the closest in proximity to downtown (Pulaski Heights, Dearing, and Boulevard) are primarily single-family zoned although there is a smattering of other zoning classifications mixed in and all are historically and currently White neighborhoods. Athens has only two examples of historically African American neighborhoods that have become local historic districts and both are residentially zoned: Rocksprings and Morristown. Rocksprings is a standalone district of only ten houses (designated in 2000). The zoning there is RS-5, which is the highest density single-family zoning classification available. Nine of the ten homes are owned by investors, and the maintenance appears to be inadequate, judging by a cursory review of the houses' exteriors. Morristown, which was included in the Boulevard Local Historic District when it was designated in 1988, includes Lyndon Avenue, part of Dubose Avenue, Cain Street and Cohen Street. It originally had approximately fifty-sixty houses and was exclusively African American with neighborhood grocery stores, a church and a couple of small businesses until the 1980s. The church remains with a very small congregation, the businesses are gone, and there are only a few African American residents remaining. The zoning in Morristown is RS-8, and twenty-eight of the seventy-one homes are owner-occupied—approximately 39 percent. The homes exhibit various degrees of maintenance. In these two neighborhoods, residential zoning does not appear to have made a substantial impact on the owner-occupancy vs. investor-owned rate. The only local historic district without single-family zoning is a portion of Cobbham, which will be examined below.

A tale of two blocks

Two questions became apparent as this case study progressed: Did the multi-family zoning of the Reese Street neighborhood contribute to studentification and destabilization of community and what impact does multi-family zoning have for a local historic district? In an effort to answer that question, statistics were compiled from two blocks of similar size and zoning: one in the Cobbham Local Historic District and one in the Reese Street Local Historic District (see). Cobbham, the second largest historic district in Athens, roughly parallels Prince Avenue between King Avenue on the west and N. Pope Street

on the east and is dissected by Milledge Avenue. Roughly 60 percent of the district lies west of Milledge Avenue, and the zoning is primarily RS-8 with a small amount of RM-1 and Commercial-Office (C-O) zoning along Milledge Avenue. By contrast, the eastern side of Cobbham (from Milledge Avenue to N. Pope Street) has no single-family zoning, similar to the Reese Street neighborhood, with which it shares a partial border. The majority of the lots are zoned RM-1 with a small percentage of RM-2; there is also C-O and Government zoning. The blocks being compared are within one block of each other and are of similar size. The block in Cobbham is 3.75 acres while the one in the Reese Street neighborhood is 3.41 acres due to an alley that dissects the block (see Figure 27).

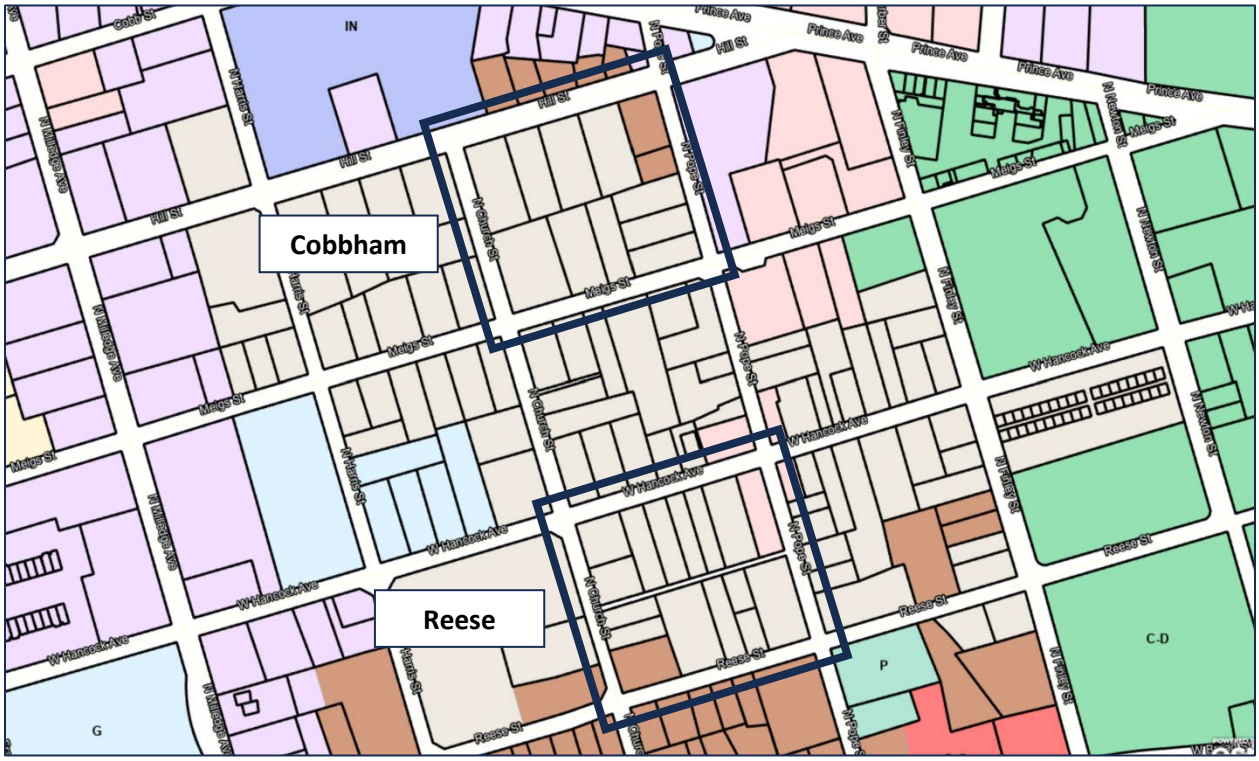

Figure 27. Cobbham and Reese Street sample blocks used for comparison. The Cobbham Local Historic District block is bordered by Hill Street, N. Church Street, Meigs Street, and N. Pope Street. The Reese Street Local Historic District block is bordered by W. Hancock Avenue, N. Church Street, Reese Street and N. Pope Street.

Table 8. Cobbham and Reese Street Neighborhood Block Comparison

	# lots	# vacant lots	Avg. lot size	RM-1	RM-2	C-N	Owner occupants	Avg. sq. ft. of bldgs.	Avg. price per sq. ft.	Total value**
Cobbham	12	2	0.31	10	2	0	4	3599	$229	$8,050,128
Reese	16	2	0.21	14	1	1	0	1577*	$181	$4,533,844

*includes former Reese Street School
**as determined by Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessors Office

As noted by District 5 Commissioner David Lynn in 2006, the "functional land use" of the Reese Street neighborhood is primarily single-family.[214] That is true as far as the built environment, as several new single-family homes, albeit with enough bedrooms and bathrooms to attract college renters, have been built in the last twenty-five years and no apartment buildings have been constructed. Cobbham also has a functional land use of single family even though it is also zoned multi-family. The zoning is fairly analogous (the former commercial building in the Reese Street neighborhood block has been converted to a rental residence), and the majority of property is owned by investors in both districts, but that is where the similarity ends. The Reese Street neighborhood lots and buildings are smaller, and the value is just a little over half of the value of the Cobbham buildings. While the block in the Reese Street neighborhood is completely investor-owned, approximately 77 percent of the Cobbham property is investor-owned. Does race, disenfranchisement, wealth, clout, and/or proximity to less-dense nearby commercial zoning account for the differences?

This area of Cobbham was, as David Lynn notes, "touch and go during the late nighties and 00's in terms of student intrusion, but the combination of downtown apartments, a strong neighborhood association and larger housing options helped preserve the area as largely single family," although there are still several noisy student houses in the area.[215] Lynn does not believe that zoning is to blame for the Reese Street neighborhood's condition. In his opinion, it is a combination of the Kappa Alpha fraternity

[214] Emanuel, "Frat Houses: Your New Neighbors?"
[215] David Lynn, email to author, April 8, 2024.

being sited there along with relatively inexpensive properties sold to student-oriented investors. He continues, "Moreover, there appears to be a lot more inventory in terms of individual units that would encourage student occupancy and surrounding development of student housing."[216] One must remember, however, that this argument is somewhat of a "chicken or the egg" debate—the only reason the Kappa Alpha fraternity could locate there in the first place was due to multi-family zoning. Although that particular loophole has been removed, the impact of the fraternity's presence there has been profound.

Cobbham has demonstrated that local historic districts and multi-family zoning can co-exist and remain fairly stable—i.e., it can function as a single-family neighborhood which is considered a cohesive community by its residents. Reese is also a historic district, and it would be difficult to demolish homes; however, Reese appears far more vulnerable. One significant difference is that Cobbham has a long-standing, cohesive and active neighborhood organization that is quick to mobilize and readily exercises its political will. Its residents have a significantly different demographic from Reese Street which recent studies have confirmed are more likely to speak out: "older, whiter and wealthier."[217]

Studentification

As noted in Chapter Two, "studentification" is the term used to describe a specific form of gentrification—the displacement of a historic group of residents with college students, which is a unique dynamic in college towns. Studentification leads to neighborhood destabilization through the erosion of community. Students often have little interaction with their neighbors and the community loses its sense of identity, cohesion, and unity. Studentification has particularly impacted African American neighborhoods near campus—principally the Reese Street neighborhood but also East Athens. Investors buy properties in these areas as they have been typically less expensive than in White neighborhoods and the residents have often felt politically powerless to resist the forces of studentification.

[216] Lynn, email.
[217] Jared Brey, "This Data Shows Who Grabs the Mic at Public Planning Meetings." *Next City*. September 6, 2018, accessed April 18, 2024, https://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/new-data-boston-metro-nimbys-public-meetings-development.

The University of Georgia has effectively relegated responsibility for housing the majority of its students to Athens-Clarke County by providing beds for only a small portion of its students. There are 8,955 residence hall beds at UGA and 40,118 students enrolled as of Fall 2023, which means that UGA provides housing for only twenty-two percent of its students.[218] The remaining 31,163 students must find off-campus housing.

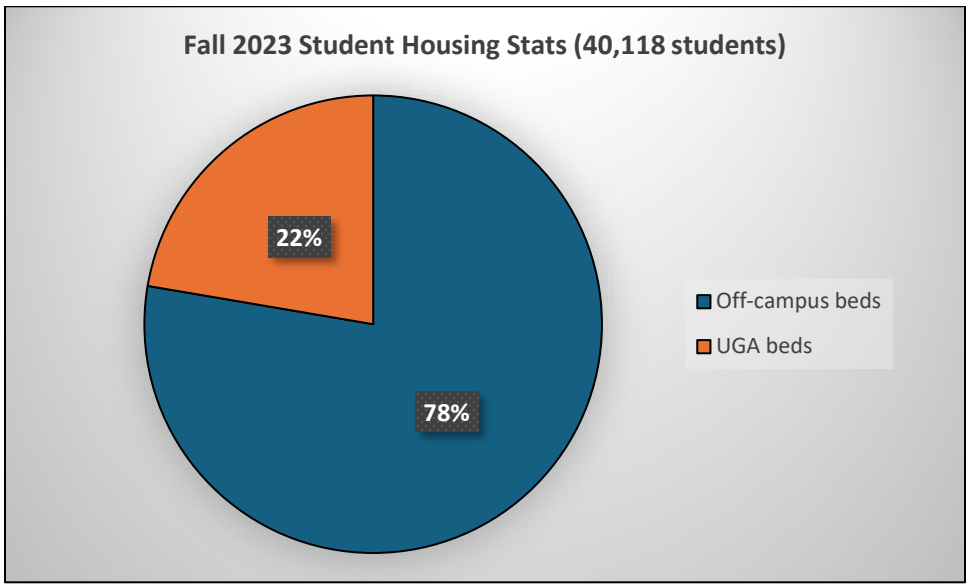

Figure 28. Proportion of on-campus versus off-campus housing.

Athens residents often express their hope that UGA will take responsibility for housing its students and build more residence halls. David Lynn is not one of them although he does not absolve UGA of responsibility.

> Why would UGA build more dorms when they need classroom instructional space? They don't have the land, and it's not a part of their educational mission. They're under pressure to add more students. As Georgia grows, UGA grows. With the HOPE scholarship, they stay here. We're not a joke school anymore—we have high achieving students. [Certainly, the] University owes the community some understanding. It is a burden to intown neighborhoods to co-exist with students.[219]

[218] "Halls Information," University Housing, University of Georgia, accessed March 17, 2024, https://housing.uga.edu/halls-information/; "Admissions Statistics/Admitted Class of 2027: A Competitive Class," Undergraduate Admissions, University of Georgia, accessed March 17, 2024, https://www.admissions.uga.edu/admissions/admission-statistics/.
[219] Lynn, interview.

To local, small-scale real estate investors and large-scale out-of-town private equity firms, the number of students that need housing off-campus is a boon. There is a ready supply of students who can afford top rental rates, thus providing incentive to purchase homes and turn them into student rentals and/or develop new student-oriented housing complexes such as the new developments between N. Finley Street and N. Newton Street. Both of these forces have negatively impacted the Reese Street neighborhood.

Investors such as Richard Hathaway began buying houses in the Reese Street neighborhood in 1993, which was also the first year of the HOPE scholarship program.[220] The HOPE scholarship fueled a growth in the UGA student population and provided student recipients and their parents with more discretionary income. Hathaway cited HOPE as a primary reason for his purchase of investment houses and advised other investors to do the same in a 1999 *Flagpole* article.

> Find a couple of HOPE scholarship-receiving sophomores who are sick of dorm life. "You've got a [loan] payment of $400 a month, and you rent this house for at least $500 a month. So, you've got your payment, plus you've got an extra hundred for your taxes and insurance. Now you've got an asset which is worth $45,000, and two years from now it'll be worth $60,000.[221]

Assistant Planning Director Bruce Lonnee and Comprehensive Planning Coordinator Marc Beechuk provided an update on the current growth concept plan to the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission at its January 9, 2024 work session and stated that the county must prepare for an anticipated 30,000 new residents by 2045. Based on enrollment statistics, slightly over half of that number, or approximately 15,525, are anticipated to be students. UGA's student enrollment increased an average of 675 students per year between 2013 (34,536) and 2022 (40,607).[222] If that trend continues, UGA will have an enrollment of approximately 56,132 in 2045, adding a total of 15,525 students since 2022. A student population of this size is not uncommon. Currently, seven public universities have enrollments

[220] Jennifer Lee and Allie Schneider, *A Brief History of HOPE* (Atlanta, GA: Georgia Budget & Policy Institute, 2021).
[221] Britt, "HOPE Outbids Crack."
[222] "University of Georgia Fact Book 2022," University of Georgia, accessed March 18, 2024, https://oir.uga.edu/_resources/files/factbook/UGA_FactBook2022.pdf.

even greater than that: Texas A&M University (74,869), Rutgers University (68,942), University of Central Florida (68,442), University of Florida (60,795), Ohio State University (60,540), Arizona State University (57,588), and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (56,644).[223] UGA has the room to expand both within its current campus and onto adjacent land the UGA Real Estate Foundation has strategically acquired.[224]

The city and county will continue to pursue cooperative discussions regarding the student population and land use. However, ultimately, the University of Georgia will continue to act in its own interests. As former UGA President Michael F. Adams once noted, "Often what is good for Athens may or may not be good for either the university or the state. This is not the University of Athens. This is not the University of North Atlanta. It is the University of Georgia."[225] Athens-Clarke County planning and zoning decisions must factor in the effect that the increasing student population will have on the historic integrity of African American neighborhoods, designated or undesignated, which have been exploited by studentification. What do the current goals of increasing density, housing availability and variety mean for the future of these neighborhoods, in general, and the Reese Street Local Historic District, in particular, with its multi-family and commercial zoning? Further studentification of the district, due to its proximity to downtown and campus and current zoning, is inevitable without some type of course correct.

Another fairly recent phenomenon that has caused consternation in many neighborhoods is the issue of short-term rentals. There are no VRBO listings but there are three short-term rentals in the Reese Street Local Historic District on the Airbnb website: 229 N. Finley Street, 525 W. Hancock Avenue, and 587 W. Hancock Avenue (see Appendix L). 229 N. Finley Street is a house that underwent COA review for projects completed by both the original African American owner and the investor who eventually purchased it and made changes to add to its short-term rental appeal. The short-term rental at 525 W.

[223] "List of United States Public University Campuses by Enrollment, *Wikipedia*, accessed March 18, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_States_public_university_campuses_by_enrollment.
[224] "Projects & Properties," UGA Real Estate Foundation, University of Georgia, accessed March 18, 2024, http://ugaref.com/.
[225] Kate Carter, "At UGA, State Comes First, Adams Tells Club," *Athens Banner-Herald*, January 16, 2003.

Hancock Avenue is a basement apartment in a 1.5 story house; the main and upper floors are rented. 587 W. Hancock Avenue is a new house that appears to have been built for use as a short-term rental. HPC allowed the original house to be demolished because of its poor structural condition. See Appendix I for COA details.

The Athens-Clarke County Commission unanimously passed a text amendment to revise policies regarding short-term rentals such as Airbnb and VRBO at its February 6, 2024 meeting. Prior to the vote, there was no official definition of a "short-term rental" in the county's zoning code, thus there was no regulation. The new regulations prohibit new short-term rentals in single-family neighborhoods unless the owner of the rental lives there most of the time.[226] Short-term rentals are also regulated in multi-family zones but with different criteria including whether it is the primary or secondary use of the property and whether or not there is a "primary resident"— not necessarily the owner—on site. A sunset clause was added, giving non-compliant short-term rentals two years before they must stop operating and before registration of all short-term rentals is required. Opponents of the regulation have threatened a lawsuit, so the future of the law is uncertain. It is still unclear what impact the short-term rental regulations will have in multi-family zoned areas. It is likely that there will be additional pressure to operate them in the Reese Street neighborhood, given its close proximity to downtown and campus—the existing short-term rentals are being marketed to UGA football fans. Short-term rental occupants further erode any sense of community in the Reese Street neighborhood, more so than with student occupants, who at least live there for a period of time.

The future of zoning in the Reese Street Local Historic District

The zoning of historic neighborhoods is a value proposition. Empirical data may suggest the optimal zoning for an area but it is ultimately a community decision. One of the outcomes of the 2000

[226] Lizzie Rice, "ACC Unanimously Approves Short-Term Rental Amendments but Debate Will Continue," *The Red and Black*, February 12, 2024, https://www.redandblack.com/athensnews/acc-unanimously-approves-short-term-rental-amendments-but-debate-will-continue/article_78f87cc2-c5c6-11ee-949f-5ff2a4ec3549.html.

revision of the land use plan was the rezoning of the historic African American neighborhood of Brooklyn between West Broad and Baxter Streets. The planning department recommended an upzone from single family to multifamily (RM-1) in the area between Rocksprings Street and Alps Road. Data indicated that the area had the most public investment of any part of town to include schools, roads, a library, a police station, a hospital, etc., and that should be capitalized on by increasing density. Planners envisioned that owners could retain their homes or benefit from increased property values and realize a profit by selling. Although there were public input sessions, the rezoning caught the residents of that area by surprise. Six months after adoption, the residents, led by George Maxwell, who eventually became a commissioner for that district, petitioned the Mayor and Commission to return the zoning to single family.[227]

The city is about to embark on the next major iteration of its land use plan with an end date of 2028. The next step in the process is to create a Future Land Use Map and, ultimately, rewrite zoning codes and make actual, on-the-ground, zoning changes. The current Future Land Use Map shows the Reese Street neighborhood as "Traditional Neighborhood" which is defined as follows (emphasis added):

> These are neighborhoods that are [sic] either were developed in a traditional style, or new areas that are intended to develop with traditional qualities. **Average density would not exceed 6 units per acre**. These areas would include a well-connected street system, narrower streets, sidewalks, street trees, and a variety of housing types. Homes would be built closer to the street with many having porches. Alley access to garages would be encouraged, and garages would be set back farther than the homes and porches. **Homes on lots as small as 4,000 square feet**, **duplexes which resemble large homes, and townhouses would be allowed, as well as accessory units**, although overall densities would be within the limitations of six units per acre. Strict design standards would be in place to ensure a high quality character of the neighborhood. **Apartments and condominiums designed solely for rental purposes are not compatible with these areas.** The areas designated include some residential areas of traditional Athens which are suitable for infill development, and large areas of relatively vacant land in greater Athens that are close to corridors and centers, and have good access to transit.[228]

[227] Allison Floyd, "Rezoning Catches Up to Residents," *Athens Banner-Herald*, September 8, 2003, https://infoweb-newsbank-com.us1.proxy.openathens.net/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/12EFD2A9A525B848.

[228] "Athens-Clarke County Future Land use Categories." Athens-Clarke County Planning Department, accessed March 18, 2024, https://www.accgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/1569/Future-Land-Use-Text?bidId=.

The elements described in the Traditional Neighborhood category more closely resemble single-family zoning versus the current multi-family zoning in the neighborhood. Current discussions regarding the direction of land use planning center around increasing the density and allowing more multi-family housing. Often the pressure to accommodate increased density comes to bear on African American versus White neighborhoods. This is apparent through the review of the zoning classifications of Reese Street and other historically African-American neighborhoods such as West Hancock, East Athens, Newtown, and Brooklyn. African Americans are typically underrepresented in public input sessions due to the legacies of disenfranchisement.

The question is how best to preserve the integrity of the neighborhood. Could the Reese Street Local Historic District be downzoned? There are pros and cons of this action. Athens-Clarke County downzoned agricultural-residential (AR) zoning districts in 2000 to preserve land in a "greenbelt" on the perimeter of the county and the ordinance change was not challenged in court. However, there was a several-year effort and considerable public support for and participation in this change. Gentrification would almost surely replace studentification in the form of affluent White residents if it was zoned single; however, the neighborhood might regain a sense of community and political strength. Certainly, investor-owners in the district would not be in favor of downzoning, and even the few remaining African American residents may not want it because it would decrease their property value. If not downzoning, what are other zoning options? Create a special zoning category or design guidelines for the Reese Street Local Historic District as was done with Milledge Avenue to address parking, setback and tree canopy? One specific zoning change that is warranted is the provision of a stepped-down transition of the general regulations of CD zoning in regard to setback, height, and landscaping where it meets any single or multi-family zoning.

Will the increasing pressures of downtown eventually result in demolition by neglect? The HPC would likely deny demolitions of viable houses, yet they will allow demolitions of houses deemed structurally unsound. There is no evidence of that taking place yet. However, as development pressures increase, that is a possible outcome. Willful demolition by neglect is taking place within the Milledge

Avenue Local Historic District (357 S. Milledge Avenue) by the property owner, and Athens does not have an ordinance to prevent it.

Chapter seven takeaways

- Due to societal change and market forces, it is unlikely that the Reese Street neighborhood will ever organically return to being an African American neighborhood.

- How can we, as a community, keep from displacing the remaining African American residents and/or encourage continued single-family use of those houses?

- What zoning changes can be made to the Reese Street neighborhood to encourage single-family use or should that even be an objective?

- How does the zoning of other historic African American neighborhoods contribute to their stability or lack thereof?

- How should stability be measured—is it retention of the historic group of residents? While movement of different races between neighborhoods cannot and should not be impeded, current zoning and land use policies encourage displacement of low-to-moderate-income residents.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The Reese Street neighborhood was shaped from within by its educated, goal-oriented and influential residents. Pride in its community and history persists today. However, outside forces—attrition, development pressures, zoning, proximity to downtown and campus and, above all, pervasive disenfranchisement, have placed the Reese Street community in a seemingly untenable situation—a historic African American local historic district with just a few remaining residents struggling to hold on to its identity while the majority of property has become rental housing for University of Georgia students. Designation succeeded in preserving the built environment, but it has not succeeded in saving the community. According to the Georgia Historic Preservation Division, designation: "provides communities with the means to make sure that growth, development, and change take place in ways that respect the important architectural, historical, and environmental characteristics within a district. Local designation encourages sensitive development in the district and discourages unsympathetic changes from occurring." While the built environment meets that definition, there has not been "respect" and "sensitivity" provided to the intangible cultural resources of the Reese Street neighborhood.

The impact of designation on the Reese Street neighborhood has been decidedly different from that experienced by other residential districts in Athens, the majority of which are White. Most residential local historic districts in Athens tend to experience a rise in occupant ownership while investor ownership decreases. In the case of the Reese Street Local Historic District, it was the opposite. The ratio of owner-occupied vs. investor-owned properties decreased in the fifteen years since designation. While many of the stakeholders in the Reese Street neighborhood acknowledge that it will never return to what it was—a thriving Black neighborhood—there was hope that designation would stem or turn the tide of studentification.

Kappa Alpha fraternity's move into the neighborhood was a tipping point. While it led to local historic district designation, it also has encouraged further studentification. The antebellum-style fraternity house visually dominates the neighborhood from its location on the highest point of land in the neighborhood. Kappa Alpha-owned land surrounds the only remaining African American house on its block, which is included in the historic district. Additionally, the fraternity's impact is felt through the constant travel of fraternity members to and from campus on foot and by car. Many Kappa Alpha members as well as members of some sororities rent from the houses surrounding the fraternity house, thus creating a de facto Greek campus within the local historic district. The neighborhood and the fraternity's attempts to forge a relationship after it moved in through volunteer tutoring at Hill First Baptist Church, work in the community garden and neighborhood socials—as recorded in the documentary *Old South*—lasted for only a short while.

This case study of the Reese Street community highlights notable limitations of historic designation depending on neighborhood sociodemographic variables. Designation as a local historic district is ultimately a land use tool, not a social justice tool that adequately addresses past and current power imbalances. Due to this, designation as a local historic district had decidedly different outcomes in low-to-moderate income communities of color compared to higher income, historically White communities as evidenced by the disparate outcomes in the Rocksprings and Reese Street local historic districts. In the case of the Reese Street neighborhood in particular, while designation was not able to stop studentification of the neighborhood, it did succeed in preserving certain aspects of the neighborhood's physical fabric. To achieve equity of outcomes in preserving historically African American neighborhoods, different supports and intervention strategies will be needed.

The examination of the Reese Street community's history and development, a review of the data, the interviews and other research performed points to a much larger problem—disenfranchisement. All neighborhoods go through cyclical changes when what was once desirable becomes undesirable, but most neighborhoods bounce back as taste, appreciation for history, and lifestyles change. The investment community exploited the Reese Street neighborhood at its weakest point, when disinvestment was high,

before it had time to regain its natural momentum. The slow steps over time towards studentification occurred without adequate engagement or acknowledgment of the existing Reese Street community, leading to far-reaching and permanent changes to the community that occurred without their participation and consent.

Figure 29. April 2024 view of N. Finley Street near its intersection with Reese Street. Two new high-rise student complexes sit directly across the street from mostly single-story early twentieth-century African American houses in the Reese Street Local Historic District.

Athens must protect the diversity of the city and of downtown environs in particular. Downtown and the neighborhoods surrounding it are quickly becoming studentified by higher-income, majority-White students, and housing ownership is almost exclusively in the hands of real estate investors and private equity firms. When property becomes unaffordable to low-to-moderate income individuals, it leads to a perpetuation of segregation, exclusivity, and disenfranchisement. Athens needs to retain a mix of affordable housing options in its urban core and it must address issues of affordability and displacement—issues that disproportionately impact communities of color. Not only is there an imperative to protect marginalized communities, but it is incumbent upon Athens to honor and protect the remarkable African American communities that are an integral part of its history. Measures to improve equity will not only help marginalized communities but it will help the city as a whole become healthier, both socially and economically.

In his book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Dr. Richard Florida identified three components of a healthy city economy: Technology, Talent and Tolerance.[229] The disparate outcomes identified in the historic preservation process of the Reese Street neighborhood points to a deficit in tolerance and appreciation of diversity that ultimately negatively impacts the entire Athens community. Beyond the moral imperative to promote equity and diversity, Florida's work also highlights economic arguments, specifically making a point that diverse cities are more innovative and productive and thus better off economically. Additionally, promoting equity and cultural diversity makes cities more interesting, reduces historic separation, and leads to increased opportunities for learning new perspectives and creating new paths forward for justice and collaboration.

This case study illustrates how some communities have not been as protected and valued as others, despite being important parts of Athens' past and present. Historically, land use planning and zoning policies have not supported low-income communities of color. Athens' land use planning should promote equity, i.e., ensuring that all people benefit from urban development, and that no one is marginalized. This includes ensuring that fairness, justice, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, affordability, and sustainability are part of urban planning policies and outcomes. To ensure equity, land use planning needs to expand to more adequately address the social, economic, and environmental challenges and opportunities that affect quality of life for a community's residents.

Topics for further study

This case study, with its study of grassroots activism and resignation, the documentation and analysis of the Certificate of Appropriateness projects and study of studentification helps elucidate some of the issues involved in preserving African American neighborhoods in a southern college town.

[229] Richard L. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life,* Richard Florida. Basic Books. 2002, https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=4d59794a-a472-3771-a6c4-81f863238845.

Additionally, it reveals that Athens' current land use policies do not adequately appreciate or preserve less tangible, yet still important, aspects of a community.

These and other case study insights also suggest many potential topics for further research moving forward including:

- How can a local historic district without its descendant community remain viable?
- What is the perception of historic preservation held by Black Athenians?
- What has been the movement of Black residents throughout Athens and the county over time and what can be determined (e.g. patterns, influences) from location data.
- What can research on other African American communities dealing with studentification reveal regarding issues and potential solutions?
- How does multi-family zoning affect residential local historic districts?
- How does the zoning of historic African American neighborhoods contribute to their stability or lack thereof? How should stability be measured? Is it retention of the historic group of residents? While movement of different races between neighborhoods cannot and should not be impeded, current zoning and land use policies encourage displacement of low-to-moderate-income residents at higher rates compared to other groups.

Case study lessons learned

The Reese Street neighborhood holds a unique place in Athens' history and it deserves more recognition and protection. Formerly enslaved individuals built a community from the ground up with few resources. They established educational, religious and social institutions to improve their futures and those of other Black Athenians and not only persevered but thrived through decades of adversity until market forces hastened the loss of the African American population through studentification. This neighborhood is a unique example of American ingenuity and resilience and that story needs to be celebrated and made known to the rest of Athens. Due to societal change and market forces, it is unlikely

that the Reese Street neighborhood will ever organically return to being an African American neighborhood. There are, however, inequities that need to be addressed.

While designation alone was not successful in protecting intangible cultural resources in the Reese Street neighborhood, it is still an important tool. Despite its limitations, designation was beneficial to the Reese Street neighborhood as it protected the historic built resources, and evidence indicates that designation did not have a negative impact on low-to-moderate-income residents' ability to make material changes to their homes. Below is a summary of the key takeaways that appear at the end of each chapter. These are the major points of knowledge gained through the research performed for this thesis, and they can provide some of the groundwork necessary to begin addressing next steps. The points are two pronged: they advocate for historic preservation, and also advocate for additional land use and zoning policies to address issues of equity and displacement.

Local Historic District process takeaways:

- In addition to the architectural survey that is required for a potential historic designation, an analysis of a neighborhood's demographics needs to be made to determine strategies to address potential financial burdens. This will include a review of tax assessor data to determine 1) which properties are owner-occupied versus investor-owned and institutionally-owned; and 2) homestead exemption status and category to identify both ownership and possible low-income status. Census tract data, if it matches the boundaries of the area in question, could be used to determine racial makeup as well as income level and other data points.

- An analysis of tax assessor data can also be used to identify gentrification trends by examining ownership changes and sales price. This information can be helpful in identifying displacement and inform planning and zoning decisions.

- Residents in a potential local historic district need to be educated on the historic preservation ordinance, design guidelines and Certificate of Appropriateness process using various strategies; this is especially important for low-to-moderate-income residents who may not have as much experience with planning and zoning processes.

- Community advocacy and organization by residents and stakeholders is key to enacting change. Collaboration with other established organizations aligned with a neighborhood's goals is often necessary and helpful to achieving those goals. However, neighborhood residents must control the process.

- There is no one single solution, and an in-depth, neighborhood-specific approach needs to be taken to address issues of inequity and displacement.

Equity and displacement takeaways:

- Studentification is taking place in all of Athens' in-town neighborhoods but especially in low-to-moderate-income historic African American neighborhoods (e.g., Reese Street, West Hancock, Brooklyn, Newtown, and East Athens).

- Early intervention is key when addressing issues of displacement in African American neighborhoods—before that displacement becomes predominant.

- A history of disenfranchisement—de facto and de juris discrimination—often prevents African Americans from successfully employing organizational power to enact planning and zoning changes. Disenfranchisement has many outcomes, some of which are individuals with fewer resources, less spare time to devote to anything but essential living

tasks, feelings of apathy, resignation, and distrust, and a city power structure overwhelmingly populated by White individuals. Efforts to reduce and/or eliminate community members' disenfranchisement need to be implemented and monitored as part of the historic preservation process.

Recommendations

There has been an encouraging amount of new resources dedicated to the study and preservation of African American history and culture on a national, state and local level which provides a clear indication of its relevance and the level of awareness this topic has engendered. Historic preservation advocacy organizations have increasingly dedicated financial resources towards preserving African American neighborhoods, cultural history and historic resources, developed positions to monitor these goals, partnered with other adjacent historical, advocacy, and educational institutions, and made efforts to better understand and document the cultural history and impact of African American neighborhoods as part of the overall community and historical record. Reviewing some of these current efforts at the state and local level provides an important grounding around which to coalesce additional study and resources to preserve Reese Street and other African American neighborhoods.

In November 2017, the National Trust for Historic Preservation unveiled the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund led by Brent Leggs. Grants totaling more than $20 million have been awarded since 2018.[230] On a state level, a new context statement for African American historic resources in Georgia is being developed by a consultant for the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. It will support the identification and documentation of African

[230] African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, accessed July 12, 2024, https://savingplaces.org/african-american-cultural-heritage.

American heritage sites in Georgia and will help in preparing nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. That work is expected to be completed in early 2025.[231]

Locally, there has been new programs, activism and research dedicated to the preservation of African American historic resources. Historic Athens created a new position in 2022—the Director of Engagement and African American Heritage—which was funded for one-year with a grant from the National Trust.[232] The organization later made it a permanent position. Athenian Hope Iglehart served as the director from 2022–2023, and it is now being filled by another African American Athenian, Denise Sunta, with a title change to Engagement Coordinator although the focus remains centered on engagement with the African American community. Historic Athens has also secured a $531,000 grant from the Athens Justice and Memory Project for large-scale repairs to historic homes owned by low-to-moderate-income individuals, and it is being administered by another African American Athenian Taneisha

Figure 30. Reese Street Local Historic District sign. At right is a representation of the sign if it were placed on the southeast corner of N. Church Street and Reese Streets. Its final location has not yet been determined.

[231] "Georgia's Full Story' project to identify Black heritage sites, stories statewide," Georgia Department of Community Affairs, accessed July 12, 2024, https://www.dca.ga.gov/newsroom/blog/%E2%80%98georgia%E2%80%99s-full-story%E2%80%99-project-identify-black-heritage-sites-stories-statewide.

[232] Alexis Derickson, "Historic Athens announces first African American heritage director," *The Red and Black*, January 12, 2022, Updated January 18, 2022, accessed July 12, 2024, https://www.redandblack.com/culture/historic-athens-announces-first-african-american-heritage-director/article_88ad4f52-73cb-11ec-ae8c-affab29aae7e.html

Brooks.[233] Historic Athens is in the process of completing a several-years long local historic district signage project. Districts that already had signs are being given new ones and districts that did not have signs would receive one. The signs' dimensions, materials, color and font are similar to provide cohesiveness and a visual identity throughout the city. The Reese Street Local Historic District is one of five districts that has not yet had its sign installed.[234]

Hattie Thomas Whitehead, a first descendant of Linnentown, has been one of the most vocal and active members of the African American community through her work in The Linnentown Project and the Athens Justice and Memory Project, and she has brought much attention to the plight of African American neighborhoods. She has succeeded in having a section of South Finley Street, which was part of the Linnentown neighborhood erased by Urban Renewal Project R-50, renamed to Linnentown Lane. She leads walking tours, presents to K-12 and community groups to relay the history of the neighborhood, has written a book, Giving Voice to Linnentown, and has also written a musical which debuted in April 2024 at the Classic Center to nearly sold-out audiences. Whitehead's emphasis on relaying the stories of individual residents as well as the collective community has humanized the harm done through the urban renewal project and she brings attention to the effects that still exist today. She has also formed a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to create a new African American history center which will further help tell the story of Black Athenians and provide a space for collaboration. The Center for Racial Justice and Black Futures is anticipated to open by 2026 in space provided by the Classic Center. The initial seed funding comes from the reparation payment from the city of Athens.

There has been a surge of new academic research on Athens' African American neighborhoods that includes community engagement in its methodology, particularly from professors and students in the University of Georgia Department of Geography. In the fall semester of 2021, Dr. Jennifer Rice of the Department of Geography and Dr. Lynn Sanders-Bustle of the Lamar Dodd School of Art taught a

[233] Alexia Rule, "Lifelong community members assume new Historic Athens roles," *The Red and Black*, April 9, 2024, updated Apr 11, 2024, accessed July 12, 2024, https://www.redandblack.com/culture/lifelong-community-members-assume-new-historic-athens-roles/article_df3a867e-f631-11ee-a2fc-1b00c0cffc0d.html
[234] Kristen Morales, "Historic district sign," email to author, July 11, 2024.

graduate seminar course (GEOG 8920 / ARED 7230/8430) titled "Honoring Linnentown Through Public Art: A Socially Engaged Urban Geography Project." Students studied community engagement practices and worked with the community to design a tile and mirror mosaic that would be placed in the former Linnentown neighborhood as a commemoration of the neighborhood's history and resilience. While the University ultimately asserted ownership of the right-of-way and denied permission to install the mosaic, the project continues to evolve.[235] A First Year Odyssey class continued to develop the mosaic and the professors and their graduate students have continued to meet with community members who have contributed pieces to the mosaic. The mosaic is currently functioning as a traveling exhibit and is assembled during public engagement workshops.[236]

In Spring 2022, the Athens-Clarke County mayor's office and the ACC Justice and Memory Project commissioned Dr. Jerry Shannon of the University of Georgia Department of Geography, Dr. Richard Martin of the Terry College of Business, and Geography Ph.D. candidate Aidan Hysjulien to assess the financial losses to Linnentown property owners as a result of their displacement by Urban Renewal Project R-50.[237] The estimated $5,022,375 loss became the seed money that is being used for a house downpayment assistance program, a low-income home renovation fund managed by Historic Athens, and the start-up funding for a new black history center.[238] Continuing their research on the Linnentown neighborhood, Dr. Jerry Shannon and his students performed extensive research created storymaps that include a historic overview, a look at community life, a virtual walking tour, and an examination of urban renewal project documents that detail the erasure of the neighborhood and the

[235] Chris Dowd, "Board of Regents block Linnentown Mosaic by claiming ownership of right-of-way," Athens Politics Nerd, August 10, 2022, accessed July 12, 2024, https://athenspoliticsnerd.com/board-of-regents-block-linnentown-mosaic/.
[236] Ireland Hayes, "Telling the story: Living mosaic honors Linnentown," *The Red and Black*, October 4, 2022, updated Dec 9, 2022, accessed July 12, 2024, https://www.redandblack.com/culture/telling-the-story-living-mosaic-honors-linnentown/article_b4c380c8-441f-11ed-b64d-4b40d895d4ab.html.
[237] "Linnentown," Community Mapping Lab, University of Georgia Department of Geography, accessed July 12, 2024, https://www.communitymappinglab.org/linnentown.html.
[238] Chris Dowd, "Down payment assistance program recommended by Justice and Memory Project set for approval," Athens Politics Nerd, February 21, 2024, accessed July 12, 2024, https://athenspoliticsnerd.com/athens-justice-and-memory-project-recommends-down-payment-assistance-program/.

resistance of its residents.[239] Dr. Shannon and his students are currently undertaking a similar project for the Reese Street neighborhood. Hope Iglehart and this author are involved in that project as well.

Finally, Dr. Hilda Kurtz, professor and head of the University of Georgia Department of Geography, taught a combined undergraduate and graduate course titled, "Historical Geographies of East Athens" in spring semester 2024. The course consisted of archival and community-based research on the historical forces that shaped East Athens—the largest historic African American neighborhood. The research from that class culminated in a Community GIS class report, "Mapping Inner East Athens: Current and Future Considerations for Development," as well as four storymaps that examine demographics, businesses, property ownership, gentrification and food access.[240]

Overall, these programs, collaborations, and initiatives highlight some new and necessary intervention strategies to address the current weaknesses in the land use policies that were identified in this case study. These current efforts were considered, in addition to case study insights, in order to inform recommendations for next steps. The following recommendations are grouped in two categories: 1) zoning, planning, and policy changes; and 2) education, advocacy, and activism.

Zoning, planning, and policy changes

- Special consideration should be given to the Reese Street Local Historic District, as well as other historic African American neighborhoods, as research is underway for Athens' next long-range comprehensive plan, which will include on-the-ground zoning amendments. A repeated theme has been the need to provide more housing choices and denser development. However, as noted previously, half of the anticipated housing is for UGA students. We must distinguish between students, the working poor and the middle class when we create new housing options. Reese Street has traditionally functioned as a single-family neighborhood with mixed uses (local businesses, churches and schools), but

[239] Linnentown," Community Mapping Lab.
[240] "Inner East Athens," Community Mapping Lab, University of Georgia Department of Geography, accessed July 12, 2024, https://www.communitymappinglab.org/inner-east-athens.html.

it is now primarily populated with White college students. This is an opportunity to enact measures to help protect the Reese Street Local Historic District from further studentification and, ideally, reverse it.

- Consider the impacts of multi-family zoning on a local historic district and the resulting studentification. Analyze the pros and cons of downzoning to single-family zoning. It would certainly raise practical and legal questions. A single-family zoning designation would likely lead to gentrification by White residents. Measures to encourage the development of affordable housing in the Reese Street neighborhood should be studied.

- Consider developing a new category of multi-family zoning or an overlay which would not require downzoning but which might put some controls on studentification in the Reese Street and other historic African American neighborhoods: reducing the number of bedrooms and bathrooms, reducing the parking allowance, increasing setbacks (if they're not already deemed sufficient), requiring landscaping, looking at heights, etc.

- As Athens develops its land-use plan, it must be cognizant of the effect of any zoning changes on West Broad Street between Finley Street and Milledge Avenue as they impact the Reese Street neighborhood due to its topography. The portion of the neighborhood immediately behind West Broad falls sharply down due to the creek bed and any development more than one to two stories in height will have viewshed impacts.

- Enact transitional zoning between Commercial-Downtown (CD) zoning and any contiguous zoning that is of another category and/or require stepped-back heights, some

front setback and landscaping to soften the impact between CD zoning and adjacent property.

- Hire another preservation planner to keep up with the workload and to provide additional customer service for COA applications. There has been only one preservation planner since 1990, but there are now sixteen local historic districts plus local landmarks to manage.

- Create a "demolition by neglect" ordinance that protects historic resources. Study similar ordinances in other communities to develop one that achieves the desired purpose without unduly impacting low-income property owners.

- Perform a comprehensive survey of African American resources in Athens with the goal of creating an inventory. The research provided in this body of information is a valuable resource for city officials, historic preservationists, owners, developers, and researchers to inform preservation policies. A local historic resources survey also serves to increase public awareness of both the tangible and intangible contributions of African Americans.

- Create a city-specific historic context statement to assist with the designation of African American heritage sites and districts in Athens.

- Consider zoning and other changes to make the Reese Street neighborhood an "affordable housing zone" which requires any non-resident owners, i.e., investors, to rent properties at affordable housing rates to qualified low-to-moderate individuals.

- Consider a program to purchase homes within the Reese Street Local Historic District by the Athens Land Trust (ALT) or other non-profit organization to make them exclusively for use as affordable housing, similar to the house at 640 West Hancock Avenue for which ALT has a ground lease and the Hiram House at 635 West Hancock Avenue which is owned by Project Renew and used for affordable housing.

Education, advocacy, and activism

- Discussions between Historic Athens, the UGA Historic Preservation Department, the Planning Department, and the Historic Preservation Commission should be held to explore ways to protect intangible cultural heritage as studentification is occurring in all of Athens' historic African Americans neighborhoods.

- Any committee, panel or other group that considers solutions should include African Americans residents in the affected neighborhoods, and their voices should lead the process.

- The Athens Branch for the Study of African American Life and History, Historic Athens, and the Athens Historical Society have sponsored a number of excellent programs, walking tours and videos that highlight Athens' African American history. These three organizations (in addition to the planned Center for Racial Justice and Black Futures) are uniquely poised to educate current and future generations of Athenians about the relevance of local African American history, historic sites and communities, especially those which have been erased and the reasons for that erasure. The city should partner with these organizations in historic preservation efforts.

- Encourage continued academic research of the history and future of the Reese Street Local Historic District and other African American neighborhoods by departments at the University of Georgia such as history, historic preservation, landscape architecture, real estate, and urban planning and design.

- Encourage further research on the preservation of tangible and especially intangible historic African American resources, such as preservation of culture and community.

- Organize a conference on Athens' African American historic resources which would include scholars from the University of Georgia, local historians and activists, the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department, elected officials, non-profit organizations such as the Athens Branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, the Athens Historical Society, Historic Athens and the future Center for Racial Justice and Black Futures. The conference would highlight the research being performed and would encourage opportunities for collaboration.

- Follow up the conference with a collaborative partnership, potentially using the "Los Angeles African American Historic Places Project" as a model. That project is a collaboration between the Getty Conservation Institute and the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources with a goal of "increasing recognition and improving conservation of African American heritage through more inclusive and equitable preservation practices."[241] The project goals include identifying and designating more African American historic sites; developing intangible cultural heritage interpretation and recognition strategies; and increasing community engagement and participation including

[241] African American Historic Places Los Angeles, The Getty Foundation, accessed July 12, 2024, https://www.getty.edu/projects/african-american-historic-places-los-angeles/.

development of community preservation advocates among other goals. This collaborative effort between the city, the community, and advocacy organizations coalesces resources to create holistic strategies.

- The University of Georgia's historic preservation program (students, faculty and administration) should engage with historically Black student groups at UGA and with historically Black colleges and universities in Georgia and the surrounding states to introduce them to the preservation field, whether it is through an advertisement in student newspaper, an open house event or other strategy. It is critical to bring Black voices into the preservation profession in order to provide true representation and understanding.

- Hands On Athens uses Community Development Block Grant funds which have been approved for areas served by the Hancock Corridor Development Corporation and the East Athens Development Corporation. If the program does not already serve other historic in-town African American neighborhoods such as Newton or Brooklyn, an effort should be made to expand the program to those areas.

- Residents in the Reese Street neighborhood should be contacted by this author or by Historic Athens if they have not taken advantage of the two property tax relief programs to ensure they are aware of their availability.

- Preservationists and community activists should begin efforts to educate all non-designated in-town historic neighborhoods about historic preservation. Any designation effort should emulate the process undertaken with Milledge Avenue and the original

designation of Downtown Athens, which assembled a steering committee with disparate goals, emphasized education, consensus, and had no pre-determined deadline.

Athens allowed Linnentown, The Bottom, Lickskillet, Fowler Town, and other historic African American neighborhoods to be erased in an era when they were not valued.[242] Another era saw the designation of the first three historically Black local historic districts—Morristown, Rocksprings and Reese Street—but they have undergone gentrification to a large degree and are no longer predominately Black. It is hoped that, in this next era, Athens will consider what policy changes can be made to discourage displacement and positively impact the remaining historic African American neighborhoods in Athens including Brooklyn, Newtown, East Athens, and West Hancock and to continue to preserve the Reese Street Local Historic District.

[242] Note: Linnentown and The Bottom/Lickskillet neighborhoods were razed in separate urban renewal projects; Fowler Town was an African American community behind the Normaltown business district, between Satula Avenue and Park Avenue and centered around Yonah Avenue and Easy Street. A group of investors purchased most of the homes, demolished them and then applied for a rezoning request in order to build medical offices. The request was denied and the land was eventually redeveloped into single-family homes occupied by White residents.

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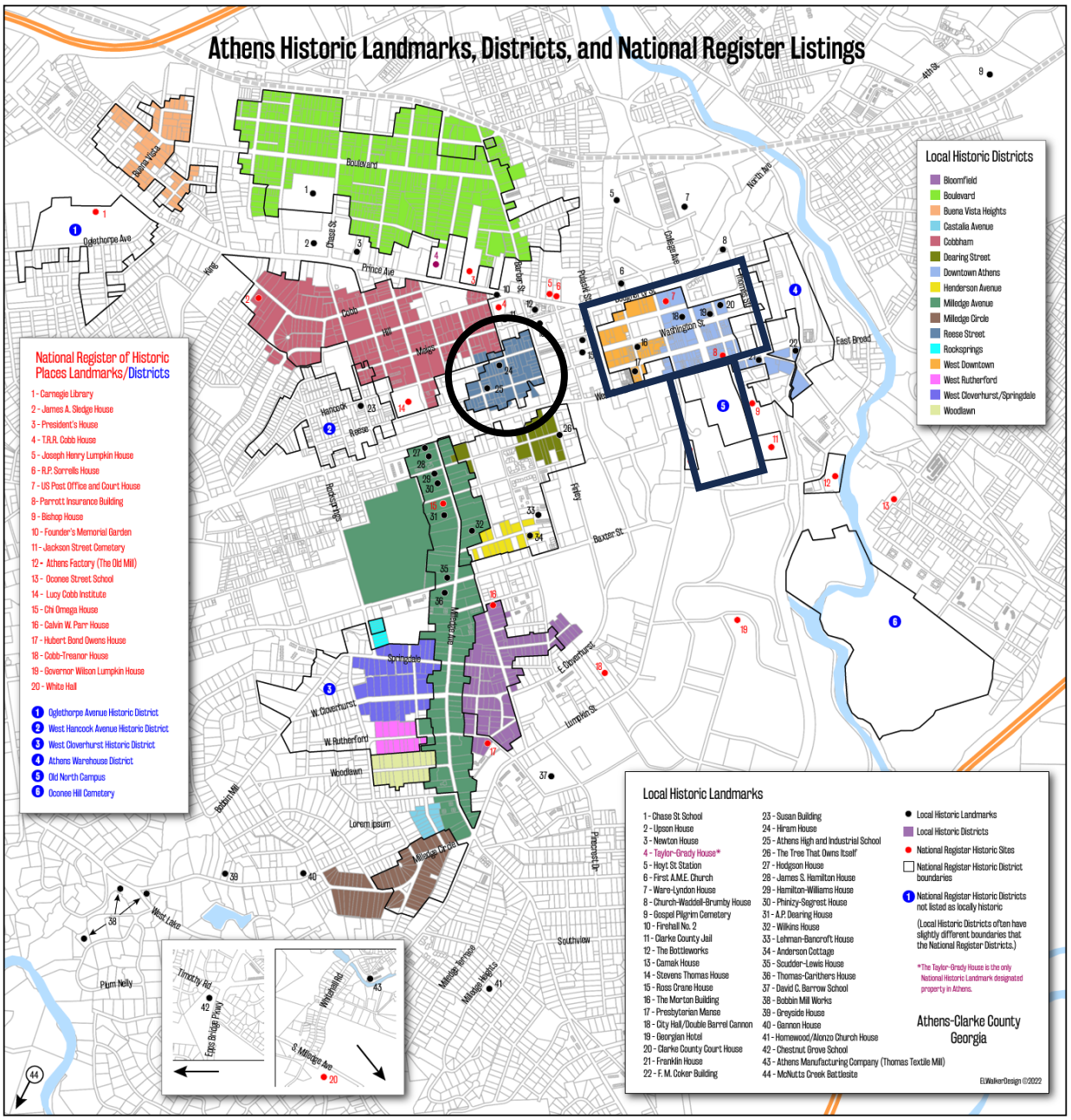
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MAP OF ATHENS LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The Reese Street Local Historic District (circled) is the closest residential local historic district to downtown Athens (indicated to oblong rectangle) and to UGA's North Campus (indicated by rectangle).



APPENDIX B

IDENTIFYING PLACE NAMES FOR 1913 MAP OF AFRICAN AMERICAN SETTLEMENTS

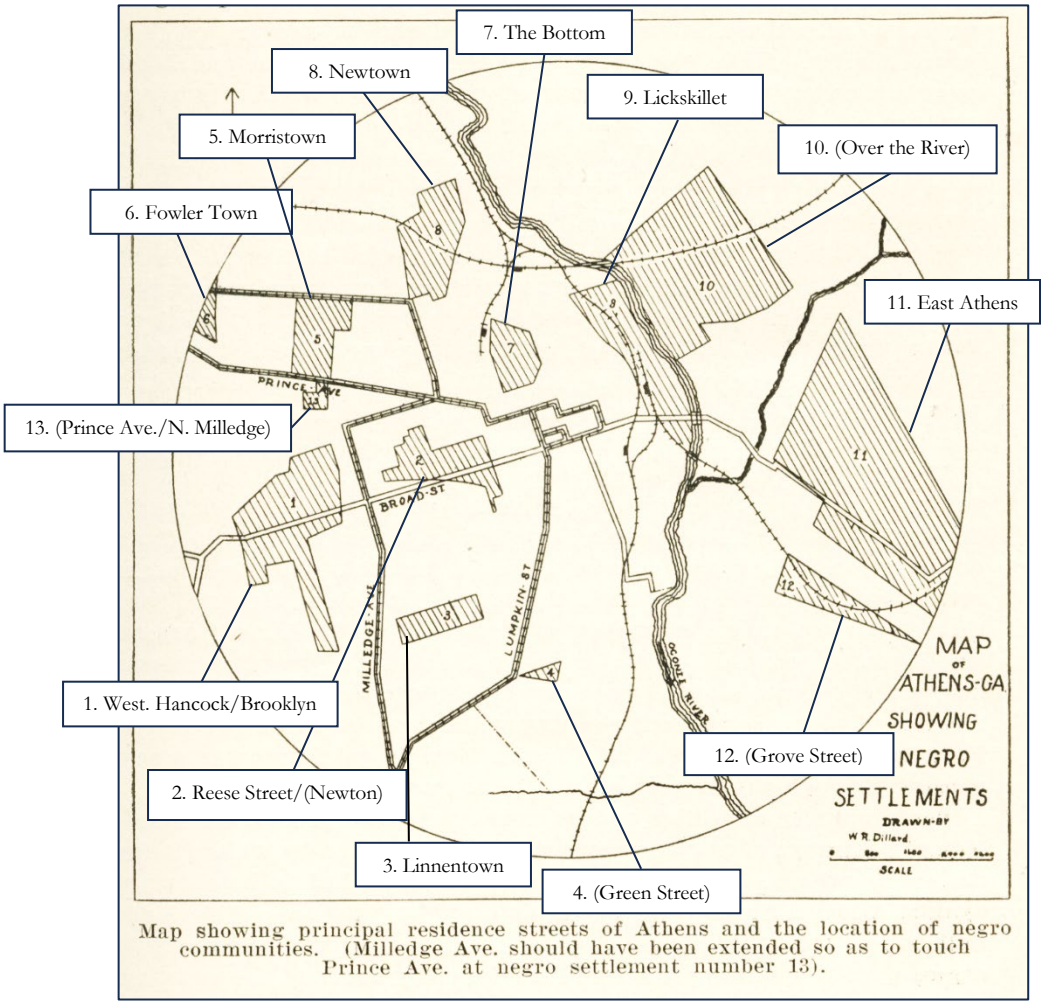


Figure 31. 1913 map of Black settlements in Athens, Georgia from T. J. Woofter, Jr. "The Negroes of Athens, Georgia."

An academic fellowship for the study of "Negro problems in the South"[243] was created at the University of Georgia during the 1912-13 academic year and endowed by the Trustees of the Phelps-Stokes Fund. This foundation was established by Caroline Phelps Stokes, who was noted as "especially

[243] Woofter, 3.

solicitous to assist in improving the condition of the negro."[244] According to the preface in the book, written by University of Georgia Chancellor David C. Barrow, "It is the conviction of the Trustees that one of the best methods of forwarding this purpose is to provide means to enable southern youth of broad sympathies to make a scientific study of the negro and of his adjustment to American civilization."[245] Thomas Jackson Woofter, Jr., a 1912 graduate of the University of Georgia was appointed as the first Fellow. Fellows were required to write a report detailing their investigations and conclusions. The *Phelps -Stokes Fellowship Studies, No. 1, The Negroes of Athens, Georgia* published in December 1913 was the first such report.

In his report, Woofter included a hand drawn and lettered map drawn by W. R. Dillard titled "Map of Athens GA Showing Negro Settlements." Dillard's role in the study and methodology for drawing the map is unknown. The map indicates the rough boundaries of thirteen Black neighborhoods which fell inside the Athens city limits (a circular boundary with a 1.5 mile radius from the UGA Chapel). The settlements were numbered 1-13, and Woofter noted in his report that "There are eight large negro settlements, and five small groups of houses; but as a general rule, the small groups are within easy distance of a larger settlement."[246] He provided only two place names for the neighborhoods, which he referred to as "settlements:" Morristown and Lickskillet.[247] However, place names can be derived from the names of three African American city schools noted by Woofter in the report: East Athens, Newtown and Reese Street.[248]

Some of the settlements are identified not by name but by their street location—e.g., "The largest of these settlements is on the west end of Broad street and is a little town in itself."[249] This is presumed to be Settlement no. 1 (West Hancock). Regarding Settlement no. 13 (Prince Ave/N Milledge), Woofter writes, "This group occupies one block of Milledge avenue and one Block of Prince avenue at their

[244] Woofter, 3.
[245] Woofter, 3.
[246] Woofter, 11.
[247] Woofter, 13.
[248] Woofter, 18.
[249] Woofter, 11.

intersection, and is just between two street car lines."[250] He identifies settlements 10, 11 and 12 as "three which lie on the hills across the river from the town proper."[251] In a general description of the location of settlements under the subheading "Proximity of White and Black Settlements," Woofter writes (annotations noted in brackets):

> Broad street, at its eastern limit, near one of the town's large fertilizer factories [the Empire State Chemical Company per local historian Steven Brown], runs through a scattered negro settlement [presumed to be the East Athens neighborhood]. Crossing the river it rises into the business section of town, but just on the outer business blocks there is an undesirable spot where a spur track intersects the street. Here negroes rented little unpainted shacks, which are operated as fish shops, restaurants, and beer saloons for negroes, one room being ordinarily used as the residence of the proprietor. This is the general loafing place for a dirty, noisy, crowd on Saturday nights and is known in police court circles as 'Wood's Corner.' Leaving the business section of town the street drops down into a hollow and crosses a brook. [presumed to be the approximate location of Newton Street at its intersection with East Broad Street, with the brook being Tanyard Creek] At this point is a negro settlement, the second in size in the town [this is the neighborhood which spanned West Broad and included what become known as the Reese Street neighborhood as well as a large swath of homes around Newton Street, which is now public housing.] On this section of Broad there are two negro churches, a negro lodge hall, and several small grocery stores. Rising over another ridge, Broad intersects the principal white residence street, Milledge Avenue, the last mentioned negro settlement running within one block of this street [presumed to be Reese Street]. Between Milledge and the city limits Broad again becomes black, passing through the largest of all to settlements [West Hancock and Brooklyn neighborhoods].[252]

Gary Doster's 2021 book, *Athens Streets & Neighborhoods,* documents the origins and locations of the neighborhood names Fowler Town (aka Fowler's Town), New Town (aka New Town), East Athens, Morristown, and Lickskillet. The name Linnentown became known after former residents were contacted upon the rediscovery of documents related to Urban Renewal Project R-50 at the University of Georgia Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Old city directories, such as the one from 1923-24, cite some neighborhood names, such as Fowler Town.[253]

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[250] Woofter, 11.
[251] Woofter, 15.
[252] Woofter, 10.
[253] Piedmont Directory Company, "Athens, Georgia city directory [1923-1924]." 1923/1924. July 15, 2024. https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/acd/do:acd1923-24.

Some of the neighborhoods which Woofter did not identify by name have historical place names which are still in common use today, e.g., Newtown and Reese Street. Other neighborhoods no longer exist, and the names have receded from public memory, e.g., Settlement no. 4. For the neighborhoods which do not have a known historical place name, I identified the nearest major street that fell within the boundaries drawn by Dillard (identified by superimposing the Dillard map over a current map although the maps do not precisely align) and placed that street name in parentheses. The one exception is "Over the River" (see explanation in Settlement no. 10 below). Further research will need to be performed to correctly identify the historical place name if it exists. Below are some notes regarding the source of the place names I identified for each of the 10 settlements.

Settlement no. 1: West Hancock/Brooklyn

This neighborhood is shown on Woofter's map extending on both the north and south sides of West Broad Street. Those neighborhoods later became separately known as the West Hancock neighborhood (north of West Broad Street) and the Brooklyn community (south side of West Broad). The rectangular southern leg on the map appears to overlay Rocksprings Street. The place name of Brooklyn is documented in Gary Doster's 2021 book and is also noted on the 1874 map of Athens by W. W. Thomas.[254]

Settlement no. 2: Reese Street/(Newton)

This neighborhood originally spanned the north and south sides of Broad Street, but the houses on Newton Street were replaced with public housing in the 1940s, and the current neighborhood receded in size north of Broad Street to become what is now known as Reese Street, named for one of its major streets. That name is reflected in the historic designation name: the Reese Street Local Historic District.

[254] W. W. Thomas, Map of the City of Athens, Athens, Georgia, 1874.

Settlement no. 3: Linnentown

The name is documented by former residents, including Hattie Thomas Whitehead who wrote a book, *Giving Voice to Linnentown*. It has been conjectured that the neighborhood was actually known as "Lyndon Town" and common pronunciation turned it into "Linnentown." Lyndon Row was the primary street in the neighborhood on which the majority of the houses were located and no longer exists. The neighborhood was demolished in Urban Renewal Project GA. R-50 in the early 1960s and replaced with high-rise University of Georgia dormitories.

Settlement no. 4: (Green Street)

The name of this small enclave of African American homes is unknown but it was located on the south campus of the University of Georgia, generally around Green Street/Soule Hall. According to local historian Steven Brown, Andrew Soule, who was president of the Georgia State College of Agriculture from 1907-1932, advocated for the neighborhood's removal, which eventually happened as the university expanded.

Settlement no. 5: Morristown

This is one of only two neighborhood place names documented by Woofter: "In settlements numbers 5 and 9 on the map, known as "Morristown" and "Lickskillet," the worst settlements, the 85 houses are crowded, inconvenient, and poorly kept."[255] This place name is also documented in Doster's book and comes from the formerly named Morris Street (now known as Lyndon Avenue) which was the primary street in the neighborhood. The place name is also found in newspaper articles searchable via the Georgia Historic Newspapers database. Morristown is included within the boundaries of the Boulevard Local Historic District.

[255] Woofter, 13.

Settlement no. 6: Fowler Town

This place name is documented in Doster's book. It is also included in the street listing section of the 1923-24 Athens city directory as "FOWLER TOWN—a settlement e of Satullah av, n of Prince av extd."[256]

Settlement no. 7: The Bottom (aka The Bottoms)

Although all the homes in the neighborhood were destroyed in the early to mid-1960s under Urban Renewal Project R-51 and replaced with public and low-income housing, the place name is still commonly known although it is not generally used as a current place name.

Settlement no. 8: Newtown

This place name remains in common usage and is documented in Doster's book. It is also used in the name of a former elementary school located on Athens Avenue—the Newtown School, the building of which is extant but now Hurley's Funeral Home. The name is also documented in various city directories.

Settlement no. 9: Lickskillet

This is the second of only two neighborhood place names documented by Woofter (see note included in Settlement no. 5). This place name is also documented in Doster's book, and he notes that there were both White and African American houses in this neighborhood. It was adjacent to The Bottom and most of the buildings were also destroyed in Urban Renewal Project R-51.

Settlement no. 10: (Over the River)

James Peek, an African American resident of Lyndon Avenue, who was born in 1929, grew up on Hobson Avenue—the former name of Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, which paralleled the east side of

[256] Athens city directory, 1923-1924.

the North Oconee River. He referred to his home neighborhood as "Over the River," but that may be a general place name for the area on the east side of the North Oconee River. This place name needs to be further researched.

Settlement no. 11: East Athens

This name remains in current usage and appears to have been historically used as well and is documented in Doster's book. The place name is also used in a former elementary school located on Water Oak Street—the East Athens School—and is documented in city directories.

Settlement no. 12: (Grove Street)

The name of this small neighborhood is unknown but it appears to have been located east of Carr's Hill on the south side of Oak Street around present-day Grove Street. This place name for this neighborhood requires further research.

Settlement no 13: (Prince Ave./N. Milledge)

Woofter notes that this neighborhood is the smallest but most prosperous African American enclave, consisting of just six houses. He writes, "In all there are nine families in this settlement, who have risen in the social scale and moved into a better part of the city. A barber who has for years been patronized by some of the old families of Athens owns one of these houses [Richard S. Harris]. Another home-owner is a cateress, an ex-slave, who is dear to many of the city not only on account to the fineness of her confection, but also by reason of the fact that people cannot pass house without remembering that it was she who baked their wedding cake [Laura Billups]. Another is owned by a former postmaster of Athens, a negro of considerable means [Monroe Bowers Morton]. The fourth house is owned by a

salaried clerk employed in the post office. The two houses rented are occupied by five other equally as quiet, but not so prosperous, families."[257]

[257] Woofter, 11-12.

APPENDIX C

1960s-ERA SANBORN MAP OF BLOCKS SEPARATING REESE STREET NEIGHBORHOOD FROM DOWNTOWN ATHENS

Below are two slightly different iterations of Sheet 18 of 1960's-era Sanborn maps of the two blocks separating the Reese Street neighborhood from Pulaski Street, the former historical edge of downtown Athens. Sanborn maps for Athens-Clarke County were not produced after 1926 due to financial exigencies. Instead, Sanborn Map Company employees began updating the 1926 map by using paste-on annotations. A "Correction Record" was attached to the title page, recording the dates on which updates were made.[258] The 1960s-era Sanborn map at the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department was last updated in October 1960. The 1960s-era Sanborn map at the Athens-Clarke County Library Heritage Room was last updated in November 1963.

[258] "About this Collection/Corrected Editions," Sanborn Maps, Library of Congress, accessed April 10, 2024, https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/about-this-collection/.

1960s-era Sanborn map at the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department (updated October 1960):

1960s-era Sanborn map at the Athens-Clarke County Library (updated in November 1963):

APPENDIX D

REESE STREET-WEST HANCOCK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MEETING FLYER

APPENDIX E

STAKEHOLDERS' ROLES IN DESIGNATION EFFORT

Reese Street Historic District Local District Designation
Report – Monday, September 25, 2006

The Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation will take the lead in preparing designation report to nominate the Reese Street Historic District for local designation. The project will be done in partnership with the Reese Street neighborhood and with assistance from the Planning Department.

ROLES

ACHF:

- Contract with and pay for a consultant to prepare the local historic district designation report. (Need to get proposal from consultant and approval of Board.)
- Work with the neighborhood on public meetings to educate residents of both Reese Street and the West Hancock neighborhoods:
  -- ACHF arrange for educational component
  -- Neighborhood publicize and provide logistics for meetings
- Advocate for the designation with the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and the Mayor and Commission and the community-at-large.
- Assist in other ways as needed and possible.

Neighborhood:

- Work with ACHF on public meetings to educate residents of both Reese Street and the West Hancock neighborhoods:
  -- Neighborhood publicize and provide logistics for meetings
  -- ACHF arrange for educational component
- Fundraiser to assist with cost of designation report?
- Gather data on property owners' names and addresses. (Andrew Robison)
- Help consultant identify people to interview and assist in conducting interviews to gather neighborhood history.
- Advocate with neighborhood residents, the HPC, and the Mayor and Commission.

Consultant

- Participate in public education meetings.
- Prepare local designation report, including survey of buildings, photography and determination of contributing/non-contributing status.
- Meet with HPC Designation Committee to gather comments on report.
- Provide one copy of each draft submitted.

A-CC Planning Department:

- Participate in public meetings – provide presentation on local designation process and what it means.
- Provide all mapping for designation report.
- ACHF consultant will provide one copy of each draft submitted.
- Finalize designation report including final edits to report, labeling of photos, and copies.

STEP ONE

Neighborhood and ACHF representatives meet with primary property owners (landlords) in the neighborhood to be sure they are supportive of the designation. Meet with them one-on-one? Who meets with them? Who can arrange the meetings?

Richard Hathaway
Maurice Daniels
Songsters + Tom Reynolds
Weaver family

APPENDIX F

PUBLIC COMMENTS AT MAY 21, 2008 ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Homer Wilson - In opposition, concerned with needing permission to do work on buildings. He said that he is associated with the old historical school house on Reese Street. He asked that they not be included and have to pay to do work. He is referring to the Masonic Lodge on Reese Street.

Hope Iglehart - In favor, a property owner and on the Reese Street Steering Committee, wants the designation. She said that this district is about the quality of life for the residents and most of the people who are speaking in opposition are not residents and have no ties to the neighborhood. For those who are opposing the designation, it is about dollars and they should just opt out.

June Ball - In support, said that the designation is important to Athens and to a large number of African-American neighbors. She said that she has attended the meetings since the beginning. Feels that it is sometimes difficult for people to fill out forms and return them and that many are in support that didn't respond. She feels that this is a treasured part of Athens and we will lose something if we allow it to be glossed over.

Susan Field - Member of the steering committee, in favor of the district. She lives in the Midtown/Bloomfield area and feels that this is a vital part of the Classic City and that all historic districts are important to Athens.

James Alford, Jr. - In support, speaking as a trustee of Hill First Baptist Church. He said that he has been a part of this neighborhood all his life through the church and also as he attended the historic high school. He said that the church wants to have the district.

Gail Hurley Iglehart - owner, very much in favor of the district. This area has been on the National Register of Historic Places and people who live in the community have been long time residents who love it. We want to make sure that we and our families are not forgotten.

Andrew Robison - in favor, stated that he had lived in the Reese Street area for 7-1/2 years prior to purchasing a home. He stated that he has worked with homeowners in the neighborhood. The quality of the older homes, the fabric, feel, craftsmanship, and design are appealing and need to be preserved. The Commission should take the responsibility to protect our heritage.

Alan Stovall - trustee for Athens Clarke Heritage Foundation, in support. ACHF has been working on the designation of the Reese Street area for the past two years. All meetings have been posted and all residents and owners have been notified by either mail or hand delivered invitations. The meetings have been well attended. This area received National Register designation 20 years ago and local designation is the next logical step. He urged the Historic Preservation Commission to support the designation.

Amy Kissane - director of Athens Clarke Heritage Foundation, stated that there is no question about the qualifications of this area for designation. There have been significant residents in this area who have played an important role in Athens. The question is what will happen if it is not designated. In the past couple of months, two structures have

already been demolished. If it is not designated, then there may not be anything left for designation in ten years.

Wilucia Green - in favor, felt the area was appropriate for designation. She said that we need to recognize the contribution of people in this area for over a century of growth. This area is as important as Cobbham and to not recognize it would be an injustice.

Blair Dorminey - in favor, considers this area part of history. He travels through here daily and feels that it is worthy of designation. This is a tangible visible point of our legacy and needs to be preserved. He objects to comments about the added burden to owners. He owns an old house himself and they always need work and the Commission review is not that great a burden. The opponents to the district are overstating this burden. He took issue with Mr. Morris' statement that the effort to designate this area far exceeds the need and he does not feel that this area would be adequately protected by Special Use requirements. It will only be adequately protected by designation.

Renee Daniels - in opposition, a member of Hill's Baptist Church. She noted that earlier tonight we had seen the need for COA applicants to resubmit additional drawings, which showed a prime example of financial burden. Others have said that only people in opposition are those looking for profit, but there are others in opposition.

Richard Hathaway - in opposition, wanted to express his displeasure with the designation. He feels that this is outrageous that the main speaker in favor of this district lives outside of the district. Where were these people when it was riddled with drug dealers and prostitutes? Now that we've gotten it mostly cleaned up, they want to make it historic. He owns eight houses in the district and it costs more to maintain houses in a historic district.

In favor of historic preservation and would like to see spot designation, but not to force historic designation on the whole neighborhood.

Brian Austin - in opposition, owns 136, 157 and 158 N. Church Street. He feels that designation restricts his property rights and is against it. He said that it should be up to the individual property owners. He said that it is an issue of safety. There are boarded up buildings; what happens if the district is passed and these need to be torn down. It is not economically feasible to bring them up to code. He objects to being told that his property is going to be in a historic district. He said that they should have the right to opt out.

Thelma Hurley - in favor, owns house in the district that her daughter and granddaughter lives in and would like to have the district approved.

Fannie George - in opposition, has lived at 650 Hancock Avenue for 86 years. She said that when they had dope, they didn't have anyone to help and they don't need all these people coming in now changing our standards. We do good things and are against changing anything.[259]

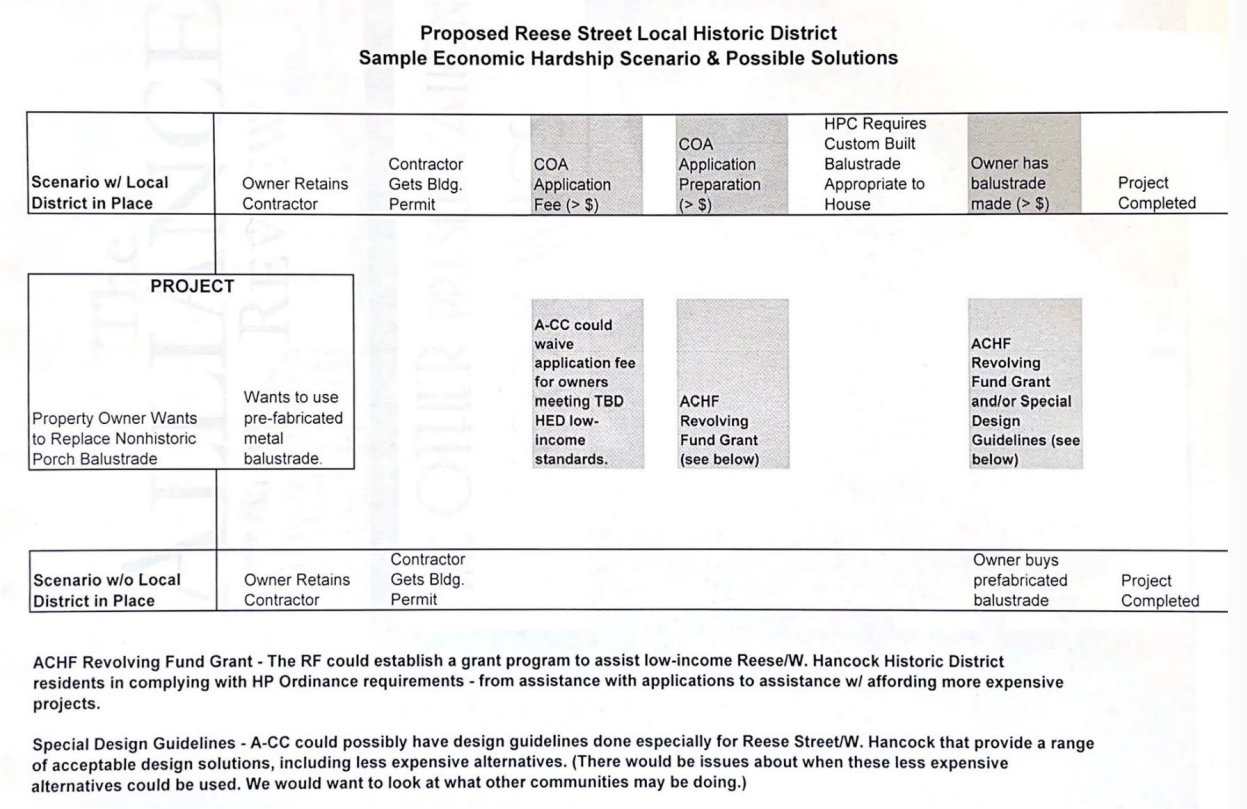
Demetrius Burgess - in opposition, representing 565 W. Hancock.

[259] Note: The last name "George" is in error. The owner of 650 W. Hancock Avenue was Fannie Jordan per Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessor records.

APPENDIX G

COA COST PROJECTION FLOWCHART

Flowchart created by Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation Executive Director Amy Kissane to identify and mitigate any potential financial burden on low-income residents.[260]



[260] "Low Income Owners - Economic Hardship," Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Historic Athens) records, ms3739, Box 37, Folder 74, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

APPENDIX H

REESE STREET NEIGHBORHOOD PROPERTY OWNERSHIP 2008 AND 2024

Designated per homestead exemption status; sorted by parcel ID. Owner-occupants in gray-shaded cells.

	PARCEL ID	PARCEL ADDRESS	2008 Owner	2008 Homestead Exemption	2024 Owner	2024 Homestead Exemption
1	171A1 M008	690 W HANCOCK AVE	PETERSON CHRIS R	S0	RCWSJ LLC	S0
2	171A1 M009	680 W HANCOCK AVE	GREEN KATHLEEN W*	S0	GREEN KATHLEEN W ESTATE*	S0
3	171A1 M010	660 W HANCOCK AVE (vacant lot)	GREEN KATHLEEN W	S0	GREEN KATHLEEN W ESTATE	S0
4	171A1 M011	650 W HANCOCK AVE	JORDAN FANNIE MARIE	S4	JORDAN FANNIE MAE LIFE ESTATE LUMPKIN WILLIE DWIGHT & MARY LOUISE	S0
5	171A1 M012	640 W HANCOCK AVE	ATHENS LAND TRUST INC C/O BRENDA CRAWFORD*	S0	ATHENS LAND TRUST INC/SMITH BURGESS ELIZABETH A	S1
6	171A1 M013	620 W HANCOCK AVE	KENARY JON L & MARY JANE KENARY	S0	HALL MATTHEW ISAAC & ERICA L GILBERTSON	S0
7	171A1 N005	350 N POPE ST	SPEARSMAN NANNIE LOU C/O DORIS CHRISTOPHER	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
8	171A1 N006	346 N POPE ST	346 NORTH POPE STREET LLC	S0	ANWAR FAISAL M & JANET ANWAR	S0
9	171A1 N007	328 N POPE ST (aka 598 W. Hancock)	CITYBLOCK DEVELOPMENT LLC	S0	CITYBLOCK DEVELOPMENT LLC	S0
10	171A1 N008	588 W HANCOCK AVE	VOGELEY CHRISTOPHER J	S0	VOGELEY CHRISTOPHER J	S0
11	171A1 N009	566 W HANCOCK AVE	HILL STREET PROPERTIES LLC	S0	CHURCH STREET LLC	S0
12	171A1 N010	554 W HANCOCK AVE	HILL STREET PROPERTIES LLC	S0	ATHENS TERRACES LLC	S0
13	171A1 N010A	560 W HANCOCK AVE	HILL STREET PROPERTIES LLC	S0	560 W HANCOCK AVE LLC	S0
14	171A1 N011	550 W HANCOCK AVE	TUMLIN DOUGLAS	S0	ATHENS GA REAL ESTATE FUND I-IN-TOWN PROPERTIES GROUP I LLC	S0
15	171A1 N012	540 W HANCOCK AVE	TUMLIN DOUGLAS	S0	ATHENS GA REAL ESTATE FUND I-IN-TOWN PROPERTIES GROUP I LLC	S0
16	171A1 N013	530 W HANCOCK AVE	THORNTON WILLIAM P & ELIZABETH R LARKINS	S0	ATHENS IN TOWN PROPERTIES GROUP I INC	S0
17	171A1 N014	524 W HANCOCK AVE	DANIELS MAURICE C	S0	CARRINGTON REAL ESTATE LLC	S0
18	171A1 N015	349 N FINLEY ST	HATHAWAY RICHARD M	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
19	171A1 N016	369 N FINLEY ST	HATHAWAY RICHARD M	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
20	171A1 Q001	525 W HANCOCK AVE	DANIELS MAURICE	S0	CARRINGTON REAL ESTATE LLC	S0
21	171A1 Q002	537 W HANCOCK AVE	DANIELS MAURICE	S0	CARRINGTON REAL ESTATE LLC	S0
22	171A1 Q003	553 W HANCOCK AVE	DANIELS MAURICE	S0	CARRINGTON REAL ESTATE LLC	S0
23	171A1 Q004	565 W HANCOCK AVE	WOODS MARY W ETAL C/O MARY WOODS	S0	CITYBLOCK HOLDINGS 1 LLC	S0

24	171A1 Q005	573 W HANCOCK AVE	WISE BENNIE ROBERT WISE & ETAL	S1	WADE LILLIE ANN*	S0
25	171A1 Q006	587 W HANCOCK AVE	HARRISON PATRICIA ANN	S0	MOSELY JOHN D	S0
26	171A1 Q007	599 W HANCOCK AVE	REYNOLDS SONGSTER LLC	S0	SONGSTER PROPERTIES LLC	S0
27	171A1 Q008	252 N POPE ST	VILLAND ANDRALEIA & KIINO VILLAND	S0	ATHENS TERRACES LLC	S0
28	171A1 Q009	250 N POPE ST	JONES SARAH GILLAM & EDDIE B GILLAM JR	S0	ATHENS TERRACES LLC	S0
29	171A1 Q010	248 N POPE ST	JONES SARAH GILLAM & EDDIE 8 GILLAM JR	S0	ATHENS TERRACES LLC	S0
30	171A1 Q011	234 N POPE ST	HILL FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH C/O M MITCHELL	S0	HILL FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH	S0
31	171A1 Q012	205 N POPE ST	HILLS FIRST BAPTIST CH	S0	HILLS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH	S0
32	171A1 Q013	346 REESE ST	DANIELS MAURICE	S0	CARRINGTON REAL ESTATE LLC	S0
33	171A1 Q014	223 N FINLEY ST	DANIELS MAURICE	S0	CARRINGTON REAL ESTATE LLC	S0
34	171A1 Q015	229 N FINLEY ST	CALLAHAN LINDSEY	S1	SAPPHIRE PROPERTIES LP	S0
35	171A1 Q016	239 N FINLEY ST	CUNNINGHAM SAMUEL THOMAS JR C/O JUANITA CUNNINGHAM	S0	CARRINGTON REAL ESTATE LLC	S0
36	171A1 Q017	249 N FINLEY ST	DANIELS MAURICE	S0	CARRINGTON REAL ESTATE LLC	S0
37	171A1 Q018	257 N FINLEY ST	DANIELS MAURICE	S0	CARRINGTON REAL ESTATE LLC	S0
38	171A1 Q019	269 N FINLEY ST	DANIELS MAURICE C	S0	CARRINGTON REAL ESTATE LLC	S0
39	171A3 A001	601 W HANCOCK AVE	WEAVER BRIAN JENNIFER JORDAN CHRISTINE C/O JENNIFER JORDAN	S0	BKW PROPERTIES LLC	S0
40	171A3 A003	635 W HANCOCK AVE	PROJECT RENEW INC	S0	PROJECT RENEW INC	S0
41	171A3 A004	647 W HANCOCK AVE	WALTON HANES JR DR	S0	GEORGIA DAWGHOUSE HOLDINGS LLC	S0
42	171A3 A004A	641 W HANCOCK AVE	(this parcel didn't exist in 2008; it was later split from 171A3 A004)	S0	GEORGIA DAWGHOUSE HOLDINGS LLC	S0
43	171A3 A005	659 W HANCOCK AVE	CHEAPOO MARVA ANN	S1	BUSH III RAY PALMER	S0
44	171A3 A006	669 W HANCOCK AVE	BYRD ANNIE JONES	S0	MACDOUGALD LEVIN & BRIANA M MACDOUGALD	S0
45	171A3 A007	699 W HANCOCK AVE	MORTON MAUDE	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
46	171A3 A008	260 N CHURCH ST	HATHAWAY RICHARD	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
47	171A3 A009	238 N CHURCH ST	LARISCY JOSEPH E C/O LANDMARK PROPERTIES INC	S0	RJM INVESTMENTS LLC	S0
48	171A3 A009A	228 N CHURCH ST	LARISCY JOSEPH E	S0	RJM INVESTMENTS LLC	S0
49	171A3 A010	462 REESE ST	ATHENS MASONIC ASSOC !NC C/O HOMER WILSON	S0	ATHENS MASONIC COMMUNITY FOUNDATION	S0
50	171A3 A010A	496 REESE ST	ATHENS MASONIC ASSOC INC C/O HOMER WILSON	S0	ATHENS MASONIC COMMUNITY FOUNDATION	S0
51	171A3 A010Z	482 REESE ST	ATHENS MASONIC ASSOC INC	S0	(Vacant lot combined into 462 Reese St. since designation)	S0
52	171A3 A011	446 REESE ST	BKW PROPERTIES LLC	S0	BKW PROPERTIES LLC	S0
53	171A3 A012	424 REESE ST	WEAVER JANIE	S1	HOWARD CHRISTINE WEAVER ESTATE OF	S0

54	171A3 A013	420 REESE ST	HILLS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH C/O M J JACKSON	S0	HILLS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH	S0
55	171A3 A014	245 N POPE St (aka 659 1/2 W. Hancock Ave.)	TURNER JEAN B & LILLY K BELL	S4	DELCOY LLC	S0
56	171A3 B008	237 N CHURCH ST	HURLEY GAIL LENICE	S1	HURLEY GAIL LENICE	SC
57	171A3 E001	515 REESE ST	HATHAWAY RICHARD M	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
58	171A3 E002	519 REESE ST	HATHAWAY RICHARD M	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
59	171A3 E003	525 REESE ST	HATHAWAY RICHARD M	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
61	171A3 E004	537 REESE ST	FUSSELL COREY GEORGE FUSSELL & GAY	S0	TAYLOR ROGER E	S0
61	171A3 E005	543 REESE ST (vacant lot)	HURLEY GAIL	S0	HURLEY GAIL	S0
62	171A3 E006	549 REESE ST	JORDAN DOROTHY	SC	549 REESE STREET LLC	S0
63	171A3 E014	157 N CHURCH ST	WEAVER DEXTER	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
64	171A3 E015	171 N CHURCH ST	HENDERSON HERSCHELL	SC	HENDERSON HERSCHELL	SC
65	171A3 F001	179 REESE ST (aka 179 N Pope St.)	HILL FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH C/O M MITCHELL	S0	HILL FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH	S0
66	171A3 F002	447 REESE ST	BKW PROPERTIES LLC	S0	BKW PROPERTIES LLC	S0
67	171A3 F003	449 REESE ST	CHAPMAN JOHN C/O KEN CHAPMAN	S0	CHAPMAN KENNETH	S0
68	171A3 F004	465 REESE ST	HATHAWAY RICHARD M	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
69	171A3 F005	475 REESE ST	EVANS SARAH H MRS C/O DR GAIL HURLEY INGLEHART	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
70	171A3 F006	495 REESE ST	HATHAWAY RICHARD M	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
71	171A3 F007	170 N CHURCH ST	JORDAN DANIEL T	S1	JORDAN DANIEL T	S1
72	171A3 F008	158 N CHURCH ST	AUSTIN GLENN & BRYAN AUSTIN	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
73	171A3 F009	141 MORTON ALY	OGELSBY THOMAS J	S0	OGELSBY THOMAS J	S0
74	171A3 F010	143 MORTON ALY	OGLESBY THOMAS J	S0	OGELSBY THOMAS J	S0
75	171A3 F011	153 MORTON ALY	HOPKINS FISKE C	S0	HOPKINS FISKE C	S0
76	171A3 F012	150 MORTON ALY	SHAH REBECCA	S0	CC SMOKE LLC	S0
77	171A3 F013	148 MORTON ALY	SHAH REBECCA	S0	CC SMOKE LLC	S0
78	171A3 F014	136 N CHURCH ST	AUSTIN GLENN & BRYAN AUSTIN	S0	AUSTIN & AUSTIN HOLDINGS LLC	S0
79	171A3 F018	155 N POPE ST	GARRETT ELLIS LIFE ESTATE & MILDRED	S0	CC SMOKE LLC	S0
80	171A3 G001	193 N FINLEY ST	MICHAELS G E FAMILY LIMITED PARTNERSHIP	S0	D BARRETT INVESTMENT PROPERTIES LLC	S0
81	171A3 G002	337 REESE ST	PRINGLE RONALD JR	S0	ATHENS GA REAL ESTATE FUND I-IN-TOWN PROPERTIES GROUP I LLC	S0
82	171A3 G003	363 REESE ST	HUFF JESSE & MATTIE & PATRICIA	S4	HUFF JESSE & MATTIE & PATRICIA	S0
83	171A3 G004	375 REESE ST	ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY UNIFIED GOVERNMENT	S0	ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY UNIFIED GOVERNMENT	S0
84	171A3 G005	168 N POPE ST	ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY UNIFIED GOVERNMENT	S0	ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY UNIFIED GOVERNMENT	S0

S0 – No homestead; S1 – Regular homestead; S4 – Age 65 (Net income < 10,000); SC – Age 65
*Owners who did not apply for homestead exemption but were/are known to be African American owner-occupants.

APPENDIX I

OWNER-OCCUPANT COAS 2008-2023 AND SELECTED OTHERS

Below is detailed information obtained from ACC Planning Department records for each of the projects requested by African American owner-occupants since designation in 2008.

635 W. Hancock Avenue

Figure 32. Before and after photographs of the Hiram House at 635 W. Hancock Avenue. Left: the Hiram House as it appeared in 1999 before its rehabilitation by First A.M.E. Church. Right: the house in June 2023 after the 2000 rehabilitation and the 2023 reroofing.

The Hiram House, at 635 W. Hancock Avenue, had to undergo a COA review in 1999 prior to the designation of the Reese Street Local Historic District, as it had been given local historic landmark status in 1998. It had been the home of Ida Mae Johnson Hiram (1885-1975), a graduate of the Knox Institute and the first Black female dentist licensed in state of Georgia. First A.M.E. Church, which Hiram had attended, purchased the property in 1985 with the intent to establish a non-profit and rent the house at affordable housing rates to elderly or disabled individuals. The material changes performed at the Hiram House were quite extensive and included installation of a cement drive and parking area in the rear, removal of asphalt siding and repairing the original wood siding, reconstruction of the decorative brick rail on the front porch, replacement of gutters, installation of a wood window in the bathroom, and replacement of the side door. Project Renew, the 501(c)(3) affiliated with First A.M.E. Church, replaced

the roof in 2023, using a $5,000 matching grant from the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation. A COA was not required for that project since it was replaced with a similar material (asphalt shingles) and was considered routine maintenance. The house is still used as affordable housing.

659 W. Hancock Avenue

The first COA application after the July 1, 2008 designation of Reese Street as a local historic district was submitted on August 18, 2008 for a rear addition at 659 W. Hancock Avenue (c. 1918) by African American owner-occupant Marva Cheapoo. She had previously requested a zoning and building permit in February 2008 to build a ramp at the rear of her house. However, an unapproved addition with a small deck to the side had been substantially constructed instead.[261]

Figure 33. Photographs of the in-progress addition at 659 W. Hancock Avenue. The addition had not been approved but was allowed to remain with some modifications required by the HPC.

It is not known how the work came to the attention of Athens-Clarke County officials, but Cheapoo was required to submit a COA and a new zoning/building application when it was discovered. In her application, she specified that cement siding would be used. However, vertical wood siding had already been put in place. There were no windows in the addition at the time of the application; however, Cheapoo proposed adding three windows to the rear elevation. Staff recommended to the HPC that the

[261] Note: There were extenuating circumstances involved which cannot be disclosed for privacy reasons.

vertical wood siding currently in place be replaced with horizonal lap siding of either wood or a smooth cement-based siding to relate to the orientation of siding on the main house, the installation of corner boards to demarcate the original building massing and the submission of scaled drawings. The HPC approved the COA for a rear addition across the full width of the rear elevation with a deck at the east side elevation with the following conditions:

- Battens of no more than 2 inches in width shall be added and evenly spaced approximately 18".
- Wood window trim, boxed soffits, and corner boards shall be used.
- Corner boards shall be restored at the corners of the original house.
- The windows must use applied exterior muntins with a profile, true divided lights, or must be without divisions. Embedded grilles and snap in grilles are not approved.

In addition, Cheapoo was required to provide scaled drawings to indicate the placement and materials for trim, windows and siding. A few months later, Cheapoo submitted another application to request a modification of the design to include relocation of the side deck and door to the rear instead of the side of the addition and to change the size of the window openings. Cheapoo was required to pay $150 for review of the first application as it required HPC review. She was charged $20 for second application, as it could be reviewed and approved by staff; the second COA was approved as requested.

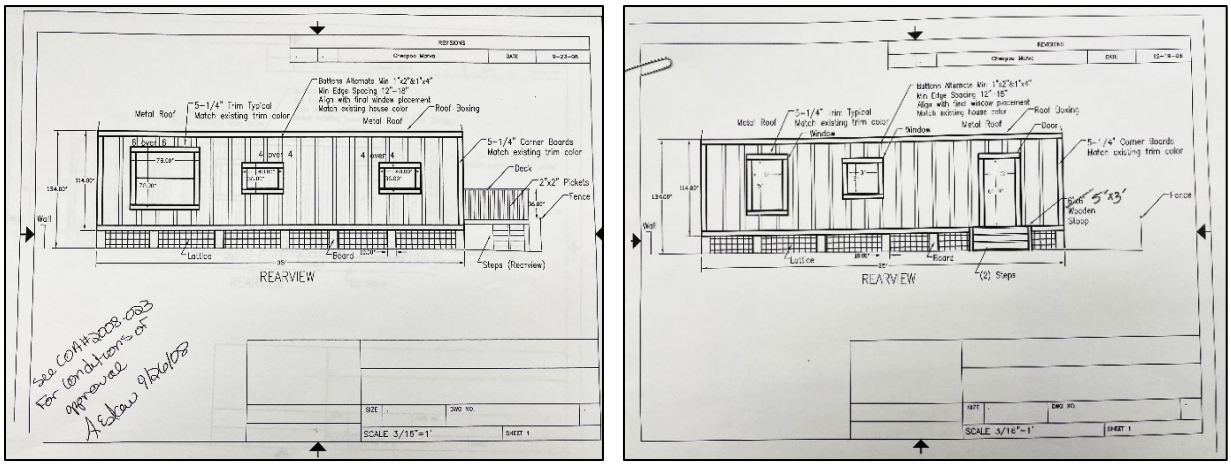


Figure 34. Scaled drawings for 659 W. Hancock Avenue. At left is the original drawing submitted, showing the placement and size of windows and the proposed batten treatment. At right is the revised drawing reflecting changes to the windows, rear door and deck that was approved by staff.

420 Reese Street

Hill First Baptist Church submitted a COA application in October 2008 for demolition and removal of a manufactured home at the parcel it owned at 420 Reese Street. Jessie Mae Smith had asked Hill First Baptist Church for permission to place her mobile home on a lot it owned and pay rent; however, it is not known when the home was placed there. After she passed away, her descendants did not want the mobile home, and the church sought to demolish it. A COA was required for its removal and, since the request was for demolition, it had to be reviewed by the HPC at a cost of $150. The HPC approved the demolition at its November 2008 meeting and required grassing of the area afterward.

245 N. Pope Street

Figure 35. 245 N. Pope Street in 2008. A COA application was submitted to demolish the house

Architect Robert Segrest submitted a COA application on behalf of Jean Turner, the owner of 245 N. Pope Street (formerly known as 659 1/2 W. Hancock Avenue until 2010), in December 2008, requesting demolition of the existing house and replacement with a new house. Due to the nature of the review, the applicant was charged $500. The request was denied one month later by the HPC, which noted that the existing structure (c. 1905) was found to be architecturally significant as well as contextually significant as it was one of the two remaining structures on an alleyway; there was no

structural report to justify demolition; and the HPC felt that reasonable measures could be taken to rehabilitate the structure. In addition, the HPC noted that the massing, solid to void ratio, materials and facade elements of the new house were not in keeping with the design guidelines for new construction.

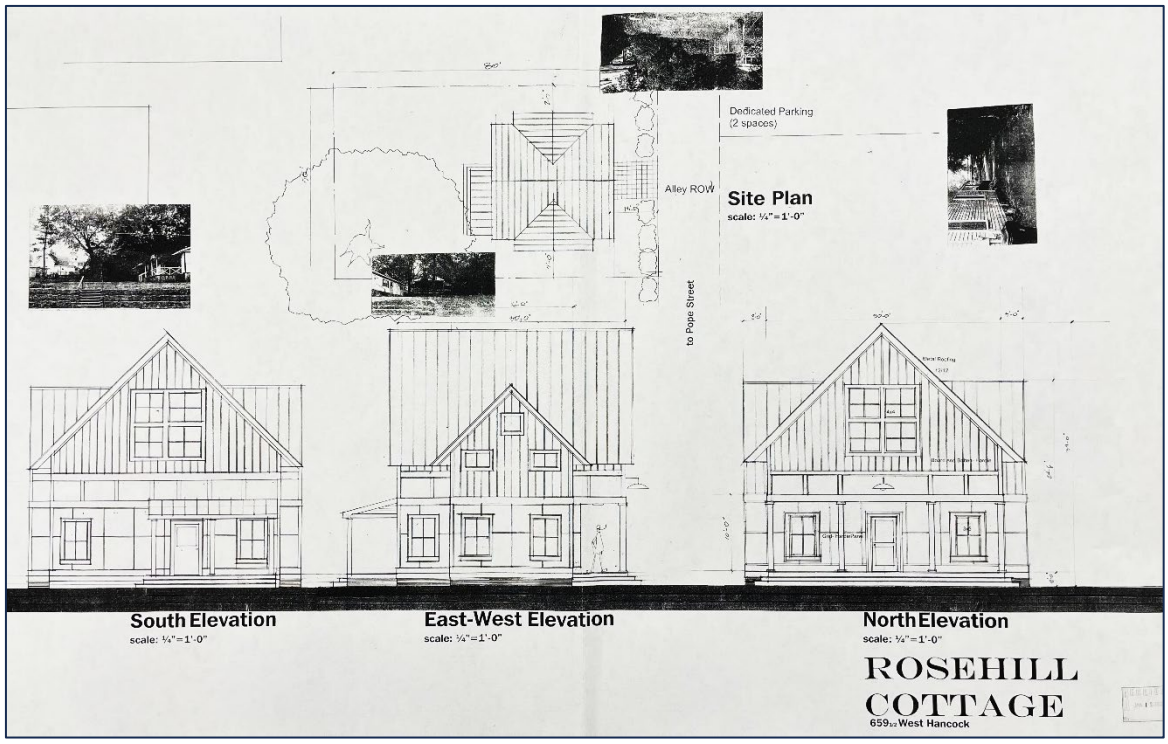


Figure 36. Site plans and elevations for new house proposed at 245 N. Pope Street.

In December 2009, the property was sold to investor and contractor Chris Peterson who subsequently submitted two COA applications. The first was for removal of two non-original chimneys which was approved by staff. The second was to remove the asbestos siding and restore the original wood lapboard siding underneath and to make modifications to the rear enclosed porch to include moving and replacing windows. Both of these items were approved. He also requested to replace the metal roof with asphalt shingles, and that was denied by HPC, which required him to use a metal roof with similar characteristics to the original roof. The house was later sold to another investor, John LaFlamme.

Figure 37. 245 N. Pope Street. Photographs taken in March 2024 after the 2009 renovations by then-owner Chris Peterson.

229 N. Finley Street

At the time of designation, Lindsey Callahan owned the c. 1900 house described in the designation report as an extended hall/parlor type. The property was transferred to Larry Callahan on May 17, 2009. Two months later, Callahan began replacing windows, but the work was halted when it became known that he had not submitted a COA application. It is possible that he was not aware of the district's designation or the necessity to apply for a COA due to the timing of his ownership. Callahan, represented by Gregory L. Smith, subsequently applied for the COA to replace two windows on the right side elevation. Staff could have approved the replacement if the original windows had been able to inspected, but they had been destroyed, and the project had to go before the HPC. For this reason, Callahan was charged $50 for the application/review.

The applicant stated that the original windows were wooden with a 12/12 configuration and were deteriorated from AC units. He had proposed replacing them with aluminum windows with an embedded grid and a 9/6 configuration. The HPC granted the COA on August 19, 2009 with these conditions:

> Replacement of eastern-most window on northern (right) side elevation (the window closest to the street) with a new window of the same size to have a 12 over 12 light configuration with either true divided light or a permanently applied profiled exterior grid to closely match the original window remaining on the front elevation. Replacement of the westernmost window on the northern (right) side elevation (the window furthest from the street) with a new window as submitted including the 9 over 6 light configuration.

Callahan sold the property to an investor, Sapphire Properties LP, ten years later. The new owner submitted a series of four COAs in 2021 for various material changes including removal and replacement of a rear addition, removal of asbestos siding, adding a walkway and steps at the rear, adding a stone fire pit and a retaining wall, and work on the front porch and foundation.

Figure 38. 229 N. Finley Street. Top left: the house as it appeared in 2009. Top right: remains of the original window. Bottom left: the house as it appeared before 2021 COA. Bottom right: the house after material changes were completed.

640 W. Hancock Avenue

Delreey Faison submitted a COA application in March 2010 for a proposed 10x12 wood deck at the rear of her house with rails but no steps, adjacent to an existing stoop which had a step. Her application included a simple hand-drawn plan with the deck's location outlined in relation to the house and existing stoop. It appears she was not required to submit a to-scale drawing, likely because of the simplicity of the proposed material change and the fact that the house was a non-contributing resource in

the district. She was charged $20 for the application, and it was approved by staff a day later with the following conditions:

> Construction of wood deck at northeast corner of the existing house and adjacent to the rear stoop, which is to remain. The deck is to be wood with a railing on the two exposed sides that has 2 inch square pickets and a handrail. No lattice or skirting is proposed. The deck will not be readily visible from the street and is approved by staff under Section X.D (5)f of the Rules of Procedure.

Faison owned the house but the Athens Land Trust holds a ground lease on the property. ALT built a house on the lot between 1999-2002 for Delreey Faison as part of their affordable housing program. According to Athens Land Trust (ALT) Executive Director Heather Benham, a 1970's tornado damaged the original house at 640 W. Hancock Avenue, and the property ultimately ended up in a tax sale. The purchaser eventually donated the lot to ALT. ALT structures their affordable housing by holding a 99-year renewable ground lease on the land while building a house for a low-to moderate income individual, who obtains a mortgage at favorable terms, allowing the owner to build equity in the home. The owner can realize their investment if they decide to sell. If the property is inherited or sold, the ground lease renews for another 99-year period, effectively removing the house from the speculative market, thus making it always available for low- to moderate-income individuals. Faison passed away in 2016, and the house was inherited by her daughter, Elizabeth Smith-Burgess, which restarted the 99-year ground lease.

680 W. Hancock Avenue

David Matheny of Armentrout, Roebuck, Matheny Consulting Group filed a COA application as agent on behalf of Wilucia Green and Harriet Green Church for material changes to their c. 1950 house at 680 W. Hancock Avenue in March 2010. The owners wanted to replace the windows and exterior vertical panel sheathing on a former side screened porch, which had been enclosed at some point in the past, with more traditional double-hung sash windows and Hardie board lap siding. Neither the roof nor the porch form, size or location was to be altered. The applicant was charged $50 for the COA review which went before Staff recommended that the triple window proposed for the side elevation be expanded to include

five windows to maintain the appearance of an open porch. They also recommended that the applicant have the option of adding corner boards to provide a visual break between the porch and the main house. The HPC approved the owner's request as it had been originally proposed, including using three windows instead of five on the side elevation at its April 2010 meeting.

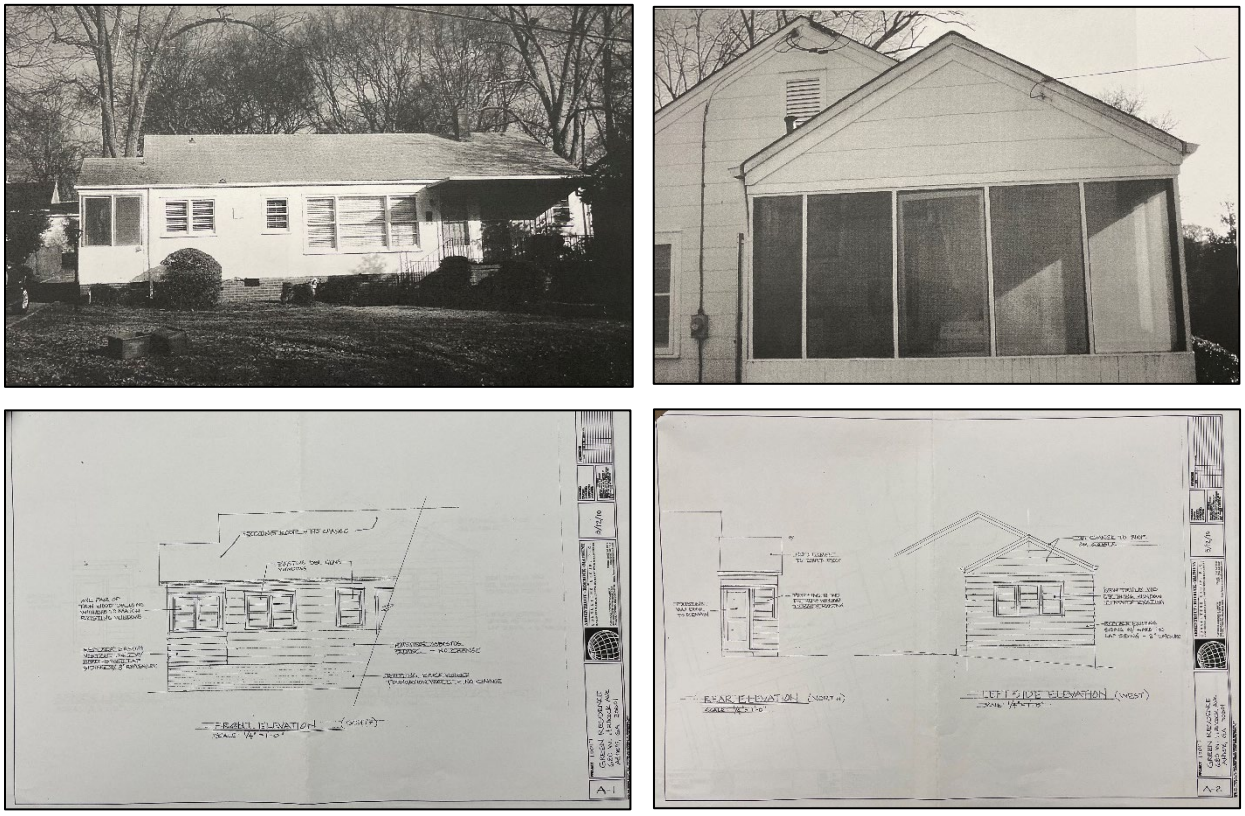


Figure 39. 680 W. Hancock Avenue. Top right and left: before pictures of house and side porch. Bottom left and right: elevations showing enclosure plans.

205 North Pope Street

In April 2023, Casey Tanner of A-Sign Group LLC, submitted a COA application as agent for Hill Street Baptist Church to install a new monument sign in front of the church. The freestanding sign was to replace the existing sign in the same general location and be constructed of aluminum supported on cedar posts. The dimensions of the proposed sign were 25" x 48" and six feet in height with no illumination. Staff issued the COA one day after the application was submitted at a cost of $25.

Figure 40. Old and new sign at Hill First Baptist Church.

Demolition approval for 587 W. Hancock Avenue

As discussed in the previous pages, the demolition request for 245 N. Pope Street was denied. However, another demolition request was submitted for 587 W. Hancock Avenue and it was ultimately approved. Cam Hopkins submitted a COA as agent for owner/investor John Mosely in March 2021 requesting demolition of the existing house and replacement with a new house. The house had been purchased by investors in 1981 for use as a rental property. After multiple years of being rented, the house fell into disrepair and was eventually boarded up. Google Street View shows the house boarded up at least since May 2008—the earliest images available on its website. John Mosely, the current owner-investor on whose behalf the COA was submitted, purchased the house from the original investors in 2020.

Figure 41. Before and after photos of 587 West Hancock Avenue. At left is the house as it appeared in October 2012 (image from Google Street View). HPC approved demolition in 2022 because of its poor structural condition and also approved the design and construction of the new house, at right, which replaced it.

Due to the extent of the material changes to be reviewed, a COA application fee of $500 was charged. The owner submitted a home inspection report from Blueprint Home Inspection and a structural evaluation report from Armentrout Matheny Thurmond PC which identified termite damage, structural damage and evidence of a previous fire. The HPC found that the condition of the structure supported demolition, but they had several concerns about the proposed new construction to include front setback, front porch depth, solid-to-void ratio on the side elevation, window choices and piers/foundation. The request was tabled at the April 2021 HPC meeting with the owner's agreement to allow revisions to the new construction design and placement. The demolition of the existing structure and construction of a new dwelling was approved in July 2021. A subsequent COA application was submitted in July 2023 for modifications to the design previously approved. The application qualified for staff level approval at a cost of $25, and it was approved by staff in August 2023.

565 W. Hancock Avenue

Besides the denial of the request to demolish 245 N. Pope Street, there was only one other denial of a COA in the Reese Street Local Historic District. The HPC denied the request for a rear addition at 565 W. Hancock Avenue at its October 17, 2012 meeting, stating that it was too large in comparison to the original house (the proposed addition would have increased the square footage by approximately 35 percent) and the addition's rooflines were too tall. The denial passed 3-2. The owner, investor Faisal Anwar of CityBlock Holdings1, LLC, submitted an appeal of the decision to the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission but also submitted another COA for a smaller addition, which was ultimately approved with conditions at the HPC's November 28, 2012 meeting. Anwar subsequently rescinded his appeal of the earlier decision.

Figure 42. Front and rear photos of 565 W. Hancock Avenue in 2012. The house was boarded up at the time a COA was submitted for a rear addition as well as repairs to the original house.

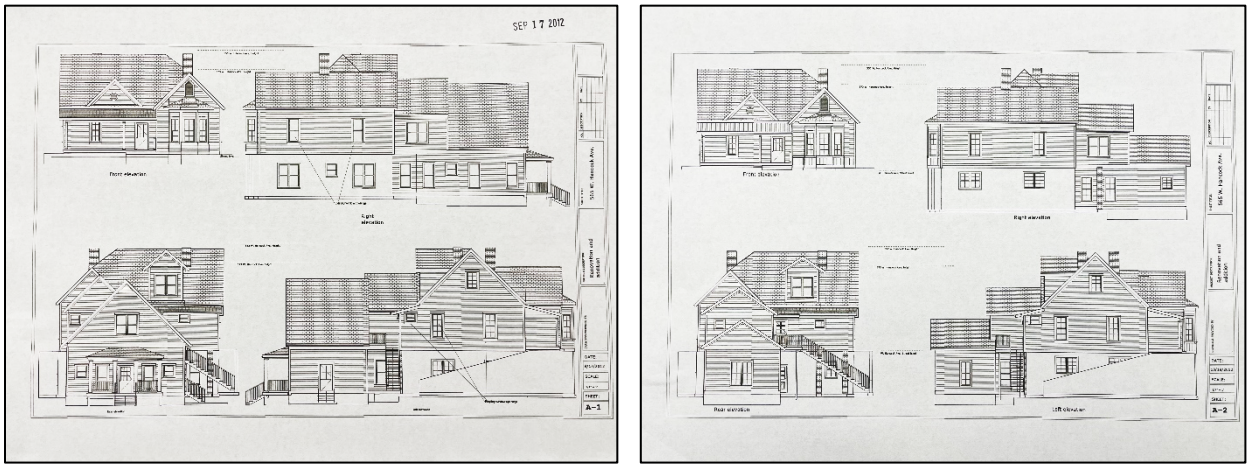


Figure 43. Proposed elevations for 565 W. Hancock Avenue. At left are the drawings of the addition as originally proposed in October 2012. At right are the revised drawings submitted in November 2012, including a smaller addition which received HPC approval with conditions.

Figure 44. 565 West Hancock Avenue in March 2024. The house which was renovated and a rear addition added in 2013.

601 W. Hancock Avenue

The following COA is being included as it was a project completed by an individual who grew up in the Reese Street neighborhood and who has since become an investor, acquiring property there to rent, illustrating the transition that the neighborhood has underwent. Brian K. Weaver bought a former commercial building at 601 W. Hancock in 1996 with the intent to make it a rental residence. The building appears on the 1947 Sanborn Map as a two-suite commercial building which replaced a church shown on the 1926 map. It is one of four parcels in the Reese Street Local Historic District zoned Commercial Neighborhood (C-N) that are located at the four corners of the intersection of N. Pope Street and W. Hancock Avenue. In September 2012, he submitted a COA application proposing to convert the formerly commercial building to a four-bedroom, three-bath residence, add a driveway to the west side of the building (off W. Hancock Avenue) and add a parking pad at the rear. The application was reviewed at the HPC meeting on October 17, 2012, but it was tabled to address issues regarding several window and door modifications. The application was reviewed again at the HPC meeting on November 28, 2012 and the COA was approved with the following conditions: metal awnings over front entry doors shall have a shed roof design and extend completely over each door opening; front entry doors are a metal, commercial style as shown on the revised drawings; all new brick introduced on the face for infill of existing openings shall be recessed a half inch to differentiate it from the original brick and shall be of a matching color. The revised plan also moved the curb cut to N. Pope Street rather than W. Hancock Avenue and required any existing paving from W. Hancock Avenue to be removed.

ACC staff noticed that some material changes were being made were in violation of the HPC conditions: the brick infill was not recessed in places; he had dismantled the southeast corner of the building (due to a crack in the exterior brick); changes were made to the window heights, placement, and dimensions; the concrete drive had been placed from W. Hancock Avenue versus N. Pope Street and the large concrete pad in the rear violated zoning standards. Weaver was issued a stop workorder and asked to submit another COA to request modifications to the design approved previously, which he did on May 17, 2013.

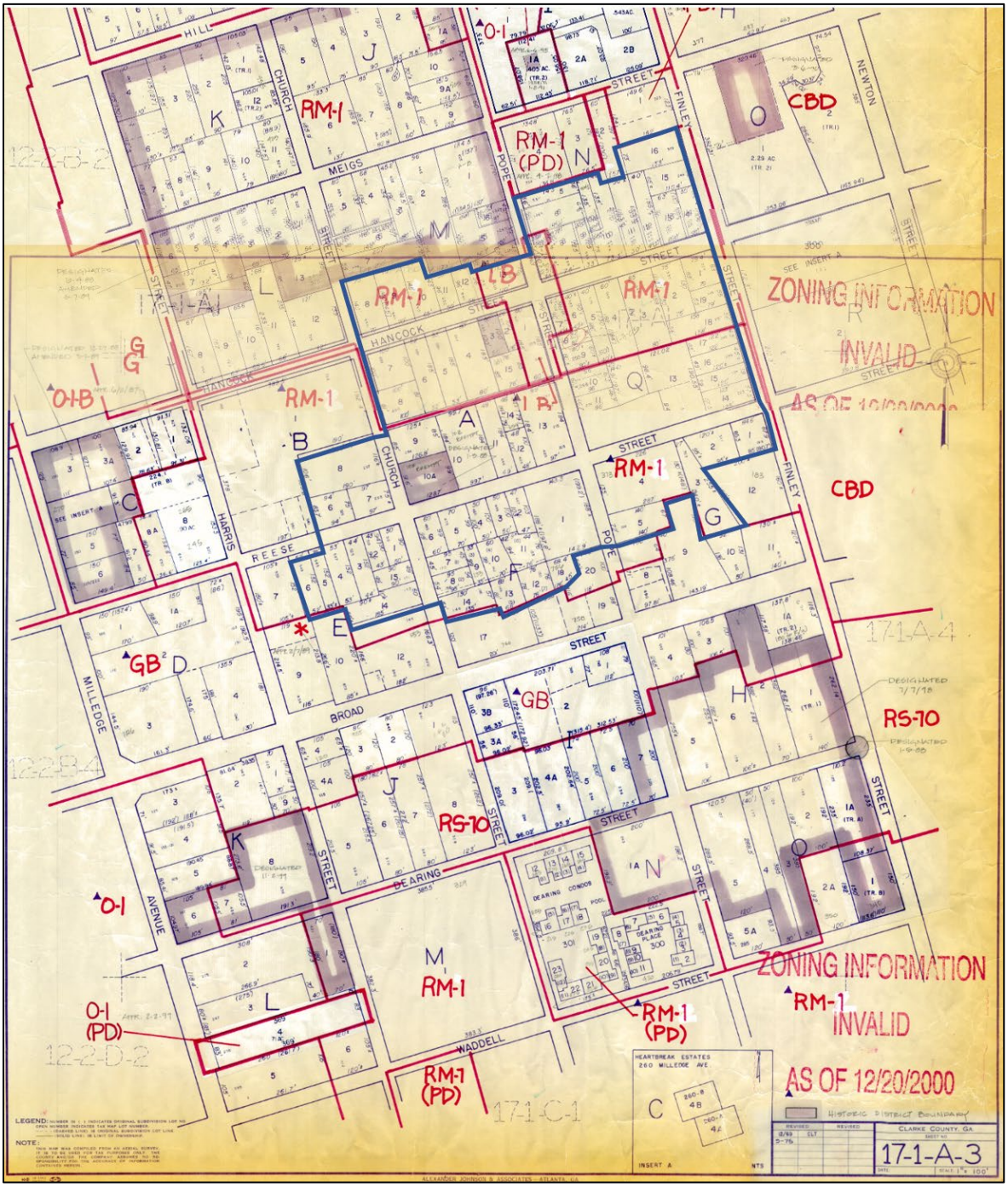
Staff recommended denial of the non-complying material changes; however, the HPC approved the COA at its June 19, 2013 meeting and allowed the non-confirming modifications already made. The HPC also made the use of awnings at the two front entrance doors optional. However, they did require that the rear patio area be defined with planters or landscaping instead of tire strips and staff was to verify windows at both side elevations were the same sizes.

Figure 45. 601 W. Hancock Avenue. At left are images of the building as it appeared in 2012 prior to a COA to convert the former commercial building to a residence. At right are images from March 2024.

APPENDIX J

EARLY ZONING MAP OF REESE STREET NEIGHBORHOOD

The earliest zoning map of the Reese Street neighborhood (sheet no. 17-1-A-3 laid over sheet no. 17-1-A-1), Athens-Clarke County Planning Department, c. 1960s. Historic district boundary added by author.



APPENDIX K

ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY, GEORGIA - CODE OF ORDINANCES TITLE 9 - ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS ARTICLE I. - ZONING CHAPTER 9-8. - MIXED DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (RM) DISTRICTS

Sec. 9-8-2. Permitted uses.

The following uses and their accessory uses are permitted according to the following matrix:

Zoning Districts	RM-1	RM-2	RM-3
Residential Categories			
Agriculture	N	N	N
Single-Family Dwellings	P	P	P
Accessory Dwelling Units	L(7)	L (7)	L(7)
Dwellings Above Businesses	P	P	P
Duplexes	P	P	P
Personal care homes, individual	P, L(6)	P, L(6)	P, L(6)
Personal care homes, family	P, L(6)	P, L(6)	P, L(6)
Personal care homes, group	S, L(6)	S, L(6)	S, L(6)
Personal care homes, congregate	S, L(6)	S, L(6)	S, L(6)
Multifamily Dwellings	P	P	P
Class “A” Manufactured Homes	L(1)	L(1)	L(1)
Class “B” Manufactured Homes	L(2)	L(2)	L(2)
Boarding House, Rooming House	S	S	S
Dormitory	S	S	S
Halfway House	S, L(8)	S, L(8)	S, L(8)
Community Garden	P	P	P
Commercial Categories			
Home Occupation	P	P	P
Sales of products grown on site	N	N	N
Hostels	N	P	P
Hotels	N	N	N
Motels	N	N	N
Bed and Breakfast	L(3)	L(4)	L(4)
Retail Sales And Service	S	S	S
Convenience Store	S	S	S
Theaters (less than 1,000 seats)	N	N	N
Restaurant or Bar	S	S	S
Drive-Through Facility	N	N	N
Professional Services and Office	L(5)	L(5)	L(5)
Quick Vehicle Servicing	N	N	N
Zoning Districts	RM-1	RM-2	RM-3
Vehicle Repair	N	N	N
Auto and RV Sales	N	N	N
Laundry Facilities	L(5)	L(5)	L(5)
Equestrian Facilities	N	N	N

Commercial Outdoor Recreation	S	S	S
Indoor Recreation	N	N	N
Major Event Entertainment	N	N	N
Commercial Parking Structures or Lots	N	N	N
Administrative or Research Facilities	S	S	S
Broadcasting or production Studios	S	S	S
Temporary Uses	P	P	P
Temporary Special Event	N	N	N
Industrial Categories			
Printing/Publishing	N	N	N
Bakeries	L(5)	L(5)	L(5)
Bottling Plants	N	N	N
Manufacture of Non-Odiferous Foods	N	N	N
Feed Lots or Slaughterhouses	N	N	N
Food Processing	N	N	N
Light Manufacturing	N	N	N
Heavy Manufacturing	N	N	N
Wholesale Sales	N	N	N
Wholesale Nurseries	N	N	N
24-Hour Distribution Center	N	N	N
Outdoor Storage	N	N	N
Wholesale Storage And Distribution	N	N	N
Self-Service Storage	N	N	N
Construction Materials Sales	N	N	N
Junk Yards and Auto Wrecking	N	N	N
Kennels	N	N	N
Veterinary Clinics	N	N	N
Transfer Stations	N	N	N
Sanitary Landfills, Landfills, Commercial Incinerators	N	N	N
Asphalt Plants	N	N	N
Mines, mining, surface mining, quarries, gravel pits, sand pits	N	N	N
Institutional Categories			
Basic Utilities	P	P	P
Community Service	N	N	N
Parks And Open Areas	P	P	P
Churches	P	P	P
Business/Trade Schools	S	S	S
Day Care, Kindergarten, Elementary, Middle, and High School	P	P	P
Colleges	S	S	S
Hospital	S	S	S
Nursing Homes	P	P	P
Medical Centers	S	S	S
Cemeteries	P	P	P
Mortuaries	N	N	N
Fraternity or Sorority	S	S	S
Semi-Public Halls, Clubs or Lodges	S	S	S

Drug Rehabilitation Center or Other Facility for Treatment of Drug Dependency	S, L(5)	S, L(5)	S, L(5)

Legend:

P = Permitted outright.

S = Subject to approval under the special use procedures section.

N = Prohibited use.

L(1) = Class "A" manufactured homes on individual lots are permitted, subject to the following criteria:

1. The portion of the lot on which the manufactured home is to be located shall not exceed a slope of ten percent following excavation or fill on the parcel.
2. The manufactured home shall be multi-sectional, no less than 24 feet in width, and have a minimum enclosed floor area of 1,000 square feet.
3. The manufactured home shall have a roof pitch of a minimum of 14 degrees (three feet in height for each 12 feet in width).
4. The manufactured home shall have no metal siding or roofing, and shall have wood, wood-product, or vinyl siding and composition roofing, or approved equivalent.
5. The manufactured home shall be placed on an excavated and back-filled foundation and fully enclosed. The foundation area of the manufactured home shall be fully skirted with masonry.

L(2) = Class "B" manufactured homes are only permitted in manufactured housing developments of at least five acres in size, developed under the manufactured home development section [chapter] 9-16.

L(3) = Bed and breakfast accommodations are permitted, provided that:

1. That all residences used for travelers' accommodation be business-owner occupied. The business-owner shall be required to reside on the property occupied by the accommodation, and occupancy shall be determined as the travelers' accommodation location being the primary residence of the owner during operation of the accommodation. "Business-owner" shall be defined as a person or persons who own the property and accommodation outright or who have entered into a lease agreement with the property owner(s) allowing for the operation of the accommodation. Such lease agreement to state specifically that the property owner is not involved in the day to day operation or financial management of the accommodation, and that the business-owner is wholly responsible for all operations associated with the accommodation, and has actual ownership of the business.
2. That each accommodation unit shall have one off-street parking space, and the owners shall have two parking spaces. All spaces shall be in conformance with the requirements of the off-street parking section of this title.
3. That only one ground or wall sign, constructed of a non-plastic material, non-interior illuminated of six square feet maximum size be allowed. Any exterior illumination of signage shall be installed such that it does not directly illuminate any residential structures adjacent or nearby the travelers' accommodation.
4. That the number of accommodation units allowed shall be proportional to the permitted density of the zone. Each traveler's accommodation unit shall be counted as 0.6 units for the purpose of calculating the permitted number of traveler's accommodations.
5. All traveler's accommodations shall be within 200 feet of an arterial. Street designations shall be as determined by the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government Comprehensive Plan. Distances shall be measured via a public street or alley access to the site from the arterial.

6. Excluding the business-owner's unit and the area of the structure it will occupy, there must be at least 400 square feet of gross interior floor space remaining per unit.

7. Traveler's accommodations are limited to no more than ten guest units.

L(4) = All restrictions of L(3), but limited to, no more than 15 guest units.

L(5) = Gross floor area not to exceed 2,500 square feet.

L(6) = Refer to section 9-15-19 for regulations governing personal care homes.

L(7) = A maximum of one detached residential unit, designed for and occupied by one family only. The structure must be accessory and subordinate to a single-family dwelling and located on a tract of land that is at least twice the minimum lot size for the district in which it is located, and conforms to the standards outlined in this title. The accessory dwelling structure must: (1) be located entirely in the rear yard of the principal residential structure; (2) have gross square footage that is 50% or less of the habitable square footage of the principal residential structure; and (3) have fewer bedrooms than the principal residential structure.

L(8) = Refer to section 9-15-21 for more information concerning halfway houses.

(Ord. of 12-5-2000, § 1; Ord. of 5-7-2002, § 1; Ord. of 8-1-2006, § 5; Ord. of 8-1-2006, § 4; Ord. of 4-3-2007, § 4; Ord. of 2-3-2009, § 3; Ord. of 2-3-2009, § 1; Ord. of 4-5-2011, § 5; Ord. of 12-4-2012, § 7; Ord. of 2-5-2013, § 5; Ord. of 2-4-2014, § 5)

Sec. 9-8-3. General regulations.

General regulations of the RM zones are contained in the table below:

Table 9-8-3	RM-1	RM-2	RM-3
Subdivision of less than 2 acres and/or fewer than five lots:			
Minimum lot area (square feet)	5,000	5,000	5,000
Minimum lot width and continuous linear street frontage (feet)[5]	50 For single-family attached units, the average lot width shall not be less than 25 feet.	50 For single-family attached units, the average lot width shall not be less than 25 feet.	50 For single-family attached units, the average lot width shall not be less than 25 feet.
Minimum lot depth (feet)	80	80	80
Minimum front yard (feet)[2]	15	10	10
Minimum side yard (feet)	6	6	6
Minimum side yard, adjacent to street (feet)	10	10	10
Minimum rear yard	10 feet, plus one foot for each foot of building height above 25 feet	10 feet, plus one-half foot for each foot of building height above 25 feet	10 feet, plus one-half foot for each foot of building height above 25 feet
The following limits apply to subdivisions of two or more acres and five lots or more in lieu of minimum lot requirements:			
Minimum lot width and continuous linear street frontage (feet)[3]	40 For single-family attached units, the average lot width shall not be less than 20 feet.	40 For single-family attached units, the average lot width shall not be less than 20 feet.	40 For single-family attached units, the average lot width shall not be less than 20 feet.
Maximum lot density	6.0 lots per acre	6.0 lots per acre	6.0 lots per acre
Minimum building separation	12 feet	12 feet	12 feet
Minimum front yard (feet)[2]	15	10	10
Minimum rear yard	10 feet, plus one foot for each foot of building height above 25 feet	10 feet, plus one-half foot for each foot of building height above 25 feet	10 feet, plus one-half foot for each foot of building height above 25 feet
The following limits apply to all lots:			
Maximum residential density (Units per gross acre)[1]	16	24	50
Maximum lot coverage	55%	65%	75%
Minimum landscaped area	45%	35%	25%

The following limits apply to all buildings:			
Maximum building height[4]	30 feet	35 feet	40 feet

[1] For the purposes of calculating RM density, unit values are determined by counting the number of bedrooms, as defined in Chapter 9-2, using the following method:

Studio/1 bedroom = 1 unit.

2 bedrooms = 2 units.

3 bedrooms = 3 units.

4 bedrooms = 4 units.

If the result of this calculation yields a fractional unit amount, only the whole number portion of the unit measurement shall be used to determine the total development density.

No more than 25% of the total number of dwellings within a multifamily development shall have four or more bedrooms per dwelling unit.

Lots of record existing prior to December 7, 2010 and proposed lots on subdivision plats submitted for approval prior to December 7, 2010 with calculated density less than three bedrooms shall be eligible to contain a maximum of three bedrooms provided that the lot meets the minimum lot size of 5,000 sq. ft. All other lots existing prior to December 7, 2010 which do not meet the minimum 5,000 sq. ft. lot size shall be eligible to contain a maximum of two bedrooms.

For subdivisions of two or more acres and five lots or more, in lieu of individual lot density calculation, the maximum density allowed for the entire development shall be calculated by multiplying the number of bedroom units allowed per gross acre by the total development acreage.

[2] Unless otherwise specified in section 9-15-9.

[3] The lot width shall be measured beginning at the front lot line and maintained for the entire depth of the front yard, except for lots entirely adjoining turnaround areas of cul-de-sacs, where the lot width shall be measured at the minimum required front setback line. Preliminary plats for residential subdivisions with ten or more lots may have a maximum of ten percent of such lots exempted from the minimum lot width and continuous linear street frontage requirements through the utilization of private drives and/or narrow lot widths and street frontages.

[4] Unless otherwise specified in section 9-15-22.

[5] Except for lots entirely fronting turnaround areas of cul-de-sacs, the lot width shall be measured beginning at the front lot line and maintained for the entire minimum lot depth. For lots entirely fronting turnaround areas of cul-de-sacs, the lot width shall be measured beginning at the minimum required front setback line and maintained for the remaining portion of the minimum lot depth.

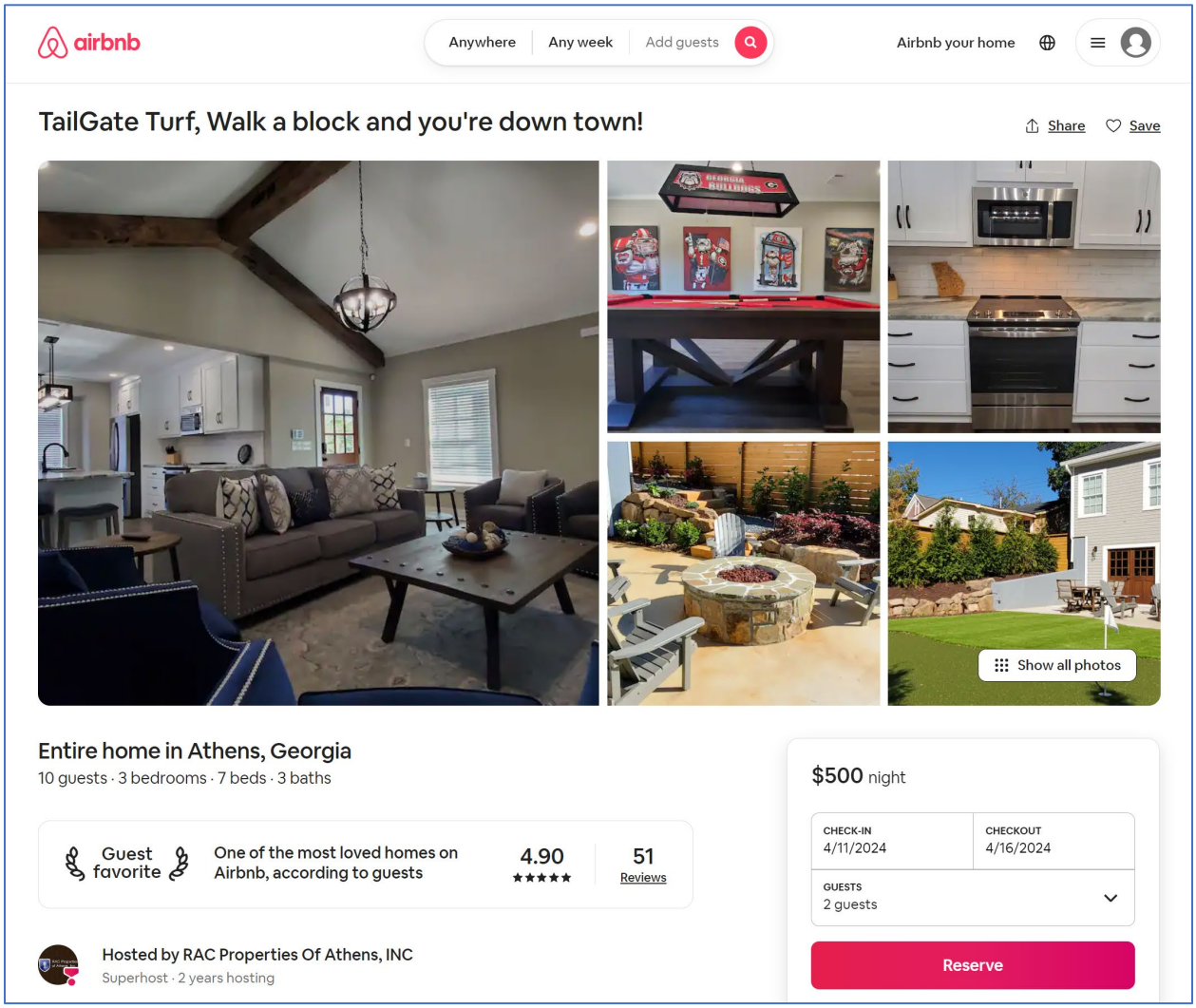
(Ord. of 12-5-2000, § 1; Ord. of 6-5-2001, § 10; Ord. of 11-6-2001, § 2; Ord. of 9-3-2002, § 2; Ord. of 12-2-2003, § 2; Ord. of 12-6-2006, § 1; Ord. of 2-3-2009, § 2; Ord. of 4-7-2009, § 3; Ord. of 12-7-2010, § 2; Ord. of 12-7-2010, § 5; Ord. of 12-1-2020(2), § 1)

APPENDIX L

SHORT-TERM RENTALS IN THE REESE STREET LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

229 N. Finley Street

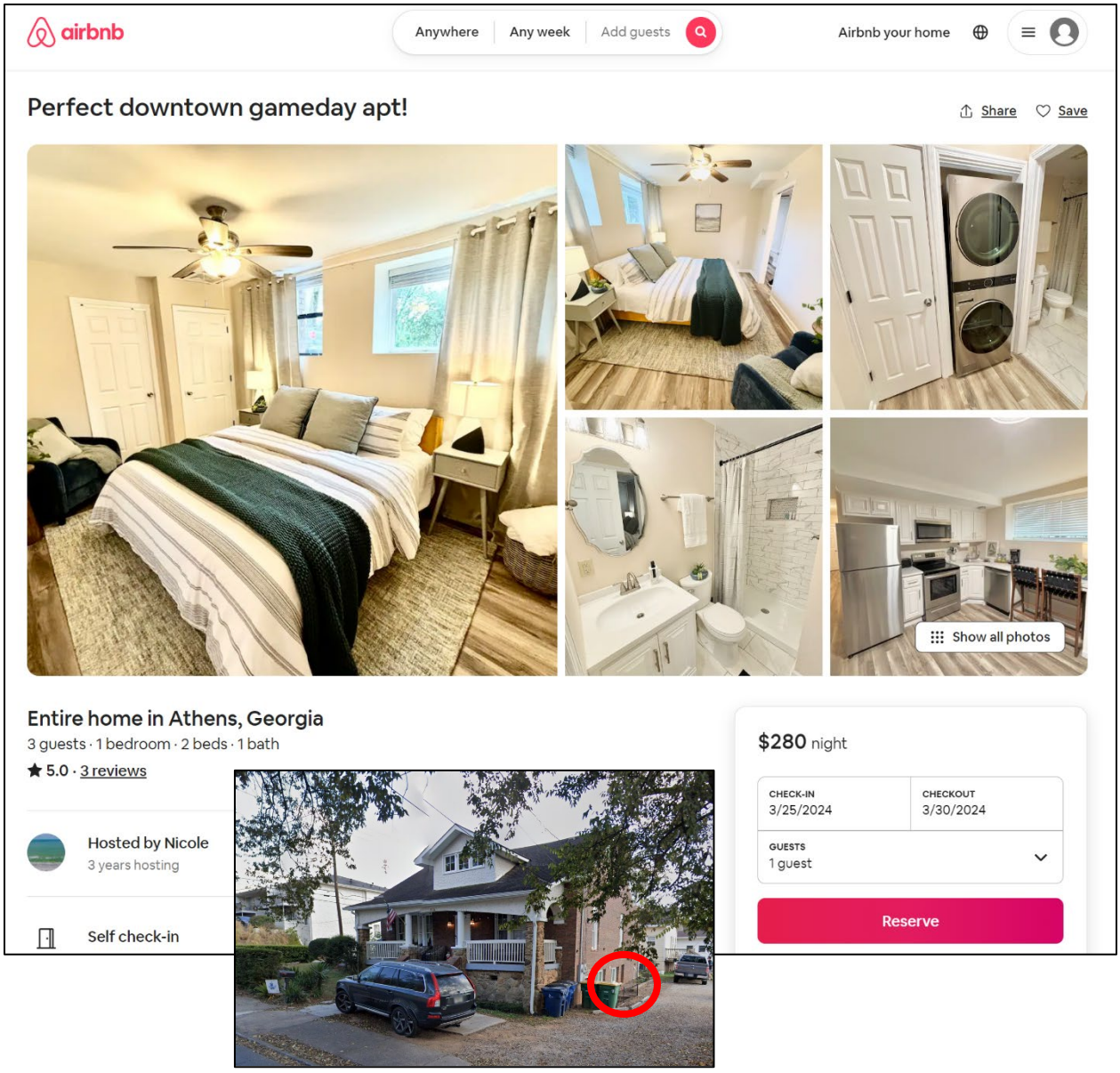
This property underwent a COA review (see Appendix H) for projects completed by both the original African American owner and the investor who eventually purchased it.[262]



[262] "TailGate Turf, Walk a Block and You'Re Down Town!" airbnb, accessed March 19, 2024, https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/53059977?adults=1&children=0&enable_m3_private_room=true&infants=0&pets=0&check_in=2024-04-11&check_out=2024-04-16&source_impression_id=p3_1711113628_CyOxqCqN0uUc%2FSth&previous_page_section_name=1000&federated_search_id=a836d91c-5ba6-4f13-9cce-6aff741add8d.

525 W. Hancock Avenue

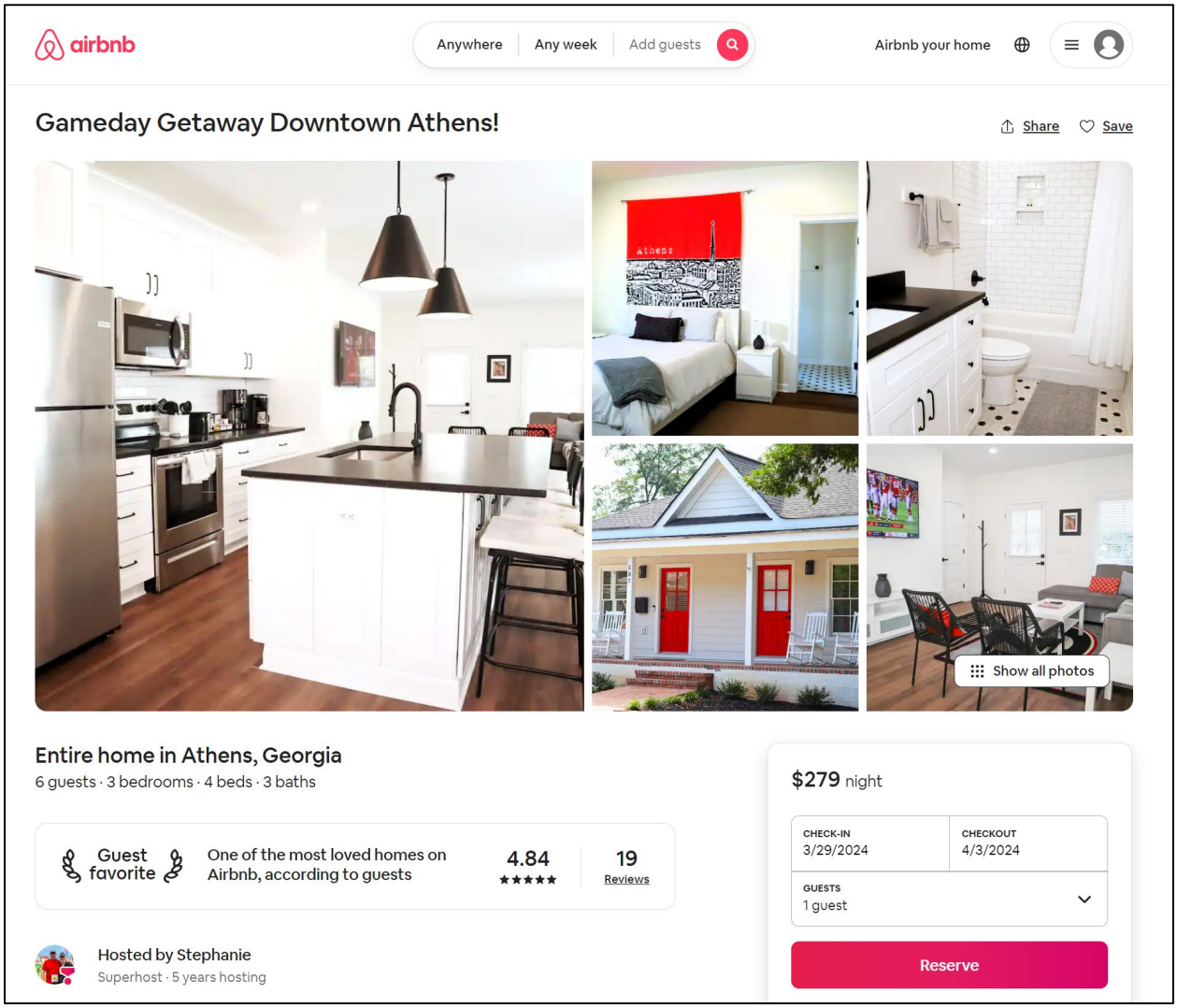
The short-term rental is a basement apartment accessed by an exterior door (noted by red circle below). The main floor and upper floors of the house (pictured below) are rented.[263]



[263] "Perfect Downtown Gameday Apt!" accessed March 19, 2024, airbnb, https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/954241131135169116?adults=1&children=0&enable_m3_private_room=true&infants=0&pets=0&check_in=2024-04-01&check_out=2024-04-06&source_impression_id=p3_1711113628_p78sIVRoFkkQONFO&previous_page_section_name=1000&federated_search_id=a836d91c-5ba6-4f13-9cce-6aff741add8d.

587 W. Hancock Avenue

This is a new build (2022) that took the place of a house the HPC allowed to be demolished due to its deteriorated condition.[264]



[264] "Gameday Getaway Downtown Athens!" airbnb, accessed March 19, 2024, https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/971633279721530742?adults=1&children=0&enable_m3_private_room=true&infants=0&pets=0&check_in=2024-04-01&check_out=2024-04-06&source_impression_id=p3_1711113627_NjIVg5KOLHlMAUml&previous_page_section_name=1000&federated_search_id=a836d91c-5ba6-4f13-9cce-6aff741add8d.