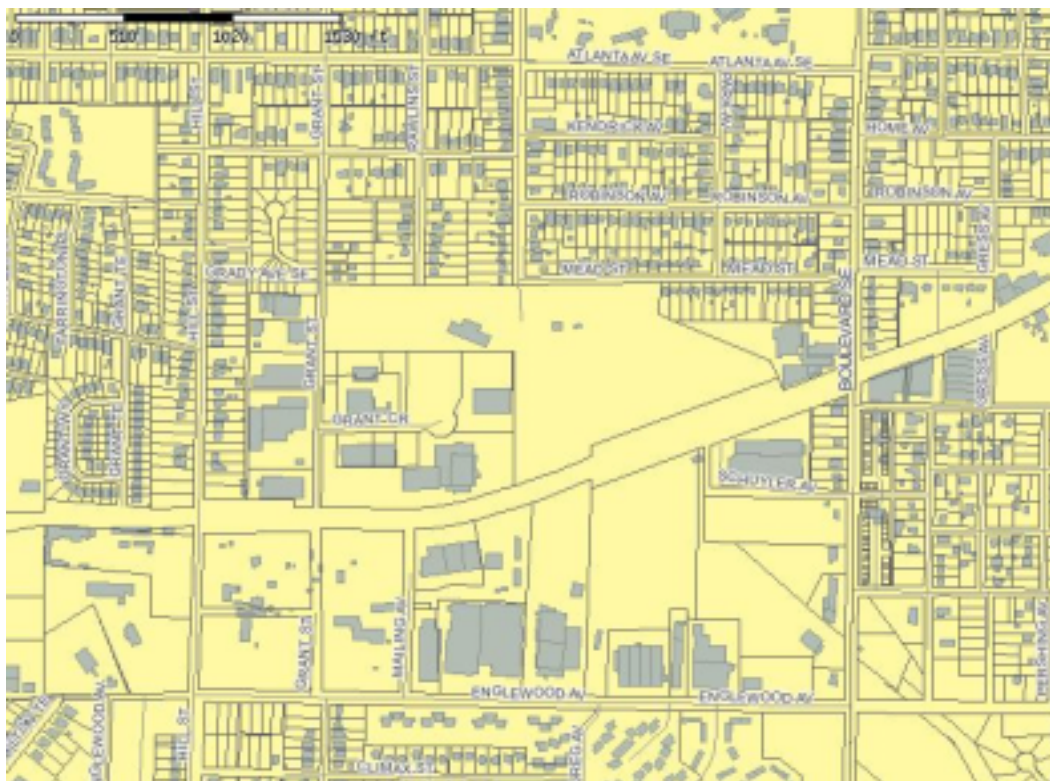


Boulevard Crossing



Theme

Boulevard Crossing proposed beltline development node is dominated by light industry associated buildings as well as small single-family homes and multi-family complexes. The extant structures provide many themes including those centered on transportation and residential development. Transportation development first occurred in the node with the construction of the beltline tracks. These tracks emphasize the importance of the railroad to the city of Atlanta as well as exhibit the growth of rail transportation around the city. A second phase transportation development that occurred almost simultaneously in the node was the laying of the electric street trolley tracks from downtown Atlanta to the Boulevard Heights neighborhood. Both of these developments brought new businesses and residences to the Boulevard Crossing Area. Industries located along the beltline evolved through the 1930s to the 1960s to become dominated by automotive and trucking services like tire recapping and distributing warehouses. Many of the extant structures have large truck bays to allow for tractor-trailer loading.

Residential development occurred mostly just outside the node boundaries through the early twentieth to mid-twentieth centuries. This development can be traced through residential types and styles. In addition to single-family neighborhoods the presence of the Gladstone Apartments illustrates the growth and development of Atlanta's subsidized-housing needs in the 1950s and through the later twentieth century.

Developmental History

The area of land associated with the Boulevard Crossing proposed development node until 1821 was territory of the Creek Indian Nation. In 1821 the land was divided into 200 acre lots and parceled by lottery. Most of the land was turned into dairy farms. In 1892 several farms were divided into 100 building lots as Atlanta began to grow south of downtown. A large development boom occurred in the early 1900s when the Atlanta Electric Light and Trolley Company laid tracks from downtown to the Old Civil War Soldiers Home (just to the southeast of the proposed node). Following the trolley line, the area saw a growth in small single-family homes. The area just east of Boulevard Crossing was annexed in 1922 to the city of Atlanta. A second building boom to the area occurred post World War II and can be seen in the proliferation of frame American small house types and brick ranches.

Within the boundaries of the Boulevard Crossing proposed development node major developments did not occur until after 1898 when the Atlanta and West Point Railroad was constructed between Hulsey Yard and Oakland City. Upon analysis of Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and City Directories it is clear that development in this area slowly moved south from Grant Park and quickly became a light to heavy industrial area due to its proximity to the beltline tracks. According to the 1911-1924 Sanborn Maps very little development has occurred around Boulevard Crossing. However, properties may have been unlisted due to the fact that the area was not yet incorporated to the city of Atlanta. Along Boulevard, just north of Mead Avenue (historically Grady Avenue) several dwellings had been erected on long, narrow lots. A handful of large lots with dwellings on them are indicated south of the beltline tracks and north of Englewood indicating that these properties had not yet been subdivided for development. These properties may have still functioned as farms. Boulevard is only documented in the City Directories between 1915 and 1920 as far south as Robinson Avenue, which lies approximately 2 blocks north of the proposed development node. Mead Avenue is documented only on one block east of Boulevard during this period of the Directories. As shown on the Sanborn Maps, residences can be found in these areas.

Between 1920 and 1930 the majority of information available for history of the area comes from the City Directories. The years between 1920 and 1925 see a small growth in the number of residences along Boulevard. In 1923 the listings first reach southward to the beltline tracks with three residences on the block immediately north of the beltline. In 1925 the first commercial listing is found with a listing for Arnold Brothers Transportation on Boulevard with an address directly adjacent to the beltline tracks. In the next five years the number of listings along Boulevard between Mead and Englewood grows significantly and neighborhood services such as the Ted Corley Grocery, the JP Childs Grocery and RL Craig Restaurant are listed. Also, the streets just to the north and south of Boulevard (Mead, Hamilton, and Schuyler) see a growth in residences. Englewood, the node's southern border by 1930 is listed as an existing road, but has no associated addresses.

For the period between 1930 and 1940 the area of Boulevard Crossing sees a significant growth in business and commercial use. Between Mead and the Beltline along Boulevard residences still exist and by 1933 the Corley Filling Station is listed indicating an increase in the amount of automobiles in the area. Between Hamilton and Schuyler residences are intermixed with the McCoy Amusement Devices, a Commercial Acetylene Supply Company and the headquarters for Boy Scout Troop 12 and a restaurant at 1047 Boulevard. Cross streets along Boulevard like Hamilton, Schuler, and Mead continue to see a small growth in the number of residences. Englewood continues to be listed but has no individual listings as of 1940.

Boulevard Crossing's commercial and industrial growth continues in the decade between 1940 and 1950. Three large industrial structures are shown on the Sanborn Maps in 1940 just south of the beltline and east of Boulevard. These structures are made of concrete, steel and iron and function as a tire warehouse, furniture warehouse, and a DuPont Company storage facility. All of these structures properties directly abut the beltline giving them quick access to rail transport. Along the west side of Boulevard and on the south side of the beltline the R.C. Clark Planing Mill is listed as existing just behind six small dwellings that face Boulevard. In addition to the planing mill a propane gas tank is shown adjacent to the south side of the beltline tracks. It is also on the 1940 Sanborn Maps that the Georgia Power substation first appears at the corner of Cherokee Avenue and Mead. The map indicates a brick generator room, oil tanks, and large areas of transformers.



Boulevard Crossing, 1949

In addition to the commercial structures the number of dwellings continues to grow and the Boulevard Heights Baptist Church is shown at the corner of Hamilton and Benteen. The Davis Restaurant is located at 1200 Schuyler in 1940 and a fruit stand is opened on Schuyler in 1950 indicating that the neighborhoods continue to thrive in the area. The areas south of the beltline, north of Englewood and east of Boulevard continue to be sparsely populated with structures of many sorts.



General Tire Co, 1958

Boulevard Crossing continues to see an increase in light industry through 1960 while residential growth slows in this decade. Neighborhood services such as grocery stores and restaurants have a continued presence along Boulevard, however, the number of residences on the blocks directly north and south of the beltline on Boulevard begin to decrease in response to an increase in number of industries. These industries include the General Gas Corporation and Tire and Rubber Company as well as the Dayton



Dayton Rubber Co, 1961

Rubber Company. At 650 Hamilton the Sterchi Brothers Furniture Warehouse is listed in the City Directory and remains there through the 1980s.



Sterchi's Warehouse, 1967

Dwellings are now concentrated in this area one block east of Boulevard and further east as well as on the north side of the beltline on Boulevard.

Multiple dwellings are also found along Mead west to Grant Street. Areas north of Englewood, south of the beltline and west of Boulevard continue to be large expanses of unoccupied land. In the 1950s in response to the need for public housing the city of Atlanta built the



Boulevard and Englewood, 1954

Gladstone Apartments along Park Avenue. These buildings made housing more accessible to the growing number of people working at the areas associated industries. The Gladstone Apartments have been continually occupied and used as public housing since their construction.



Boulevard, 1954

The developmental pattern for Boulevard Crossing in the 1960s continues to become increasingly industrial. In the 1960s listings for Englewood first appear in the City Directories. A Potato Processing Plant now occupies 1015 Boulevard while 1047 Boulevard continues to function as the Land Of Plenty Grill. By 1965 Peach State Distributing Company has taken over 1040 Boulevard from the Dayton Tire Company and continues to own the building today. The first listings in the City Directories for



460 Englewood, 1966

Englewood (west of Boulevard) include Edwards-Warren Tire Co. and Tropical Body Works Auto body repairs. Growth west on Englewood to Grant Street continues with the addition of the Empire Shirt Trimming Company at 410 Englewood, Smart Products Inc. belt manufacturers at 440, and Apex Linen Service at 460, Regal Brake Company at 510, and Transit Equipment and Parts Company at 540. These industries benefited from their properties location adjacent to the south side of the beltline. At this point in the node's history many of the buildings that exist today are present in on the 1962 Sanborn Map, including the contributing buildings discussed in the physical description.

Few changes have occurred in the Boulevard Crossing area since the 1970s. Industries located on Boulevard and Englewood have remained relatively stable changing hands only a few times in the past three decades. Companies in the area are majority automotive and trucking industries. Public Housing was erected on the south side of Englewood in the 1970s and increased in the 1980s. Only about half of the structures on Englewood today are occupied while those left vacant have been boarded up and decorated with graffiti. The Land O'Plenty Grill at 1047 Boulevard closed in 1976 and the building has been vacant since that date. The Peach State Distributing Company is at 1040 Boulevard is also vacant today with many of its windows smashed. Two grocery stores were located south of the beltline on the east side of Boulevard through the 1980s. Today, however, those structures were lost in a town home development that was constructed in the past three years.

During the 1970s and 1980s the neighborhoods in the Boulevard Crossing area experienced white flight just as much of other southeastern Atlanta neighborhoods. These neighborhoods became, and remain today, majority African-American occupied. During the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s saw a decline in growth, and it became poverty and crime stricken. In the last ten years or so new development and residents have begun to move back into the Boulevard Heights area, and the neighborhood is on the edge of gentrification.

Physical Description



1015 Boulevard

Publicly and privately owned including a Georgia Power right-of-way that runs just south of Grant Park and the Intrinchement Creek.

Adjacent to the beltline tracks on Boulevard are four contributing historic structures. At 1015 Boulevard is Cold Storage warehouse built in 1956. The warehouse and light industrial facility is constructed in brick and concrete masonry units is approximately two stories high with a flat roof and lies within one hundred feet of the beltline.



1040 Boulevard

Just to the south of 1015 Boulevard on the south side of the Beltline tracks is 1047 Boulevard, a currently vacant concrete masonry unit structure one story tall. Behind 1047 Boulevard is a large area of storage warehouses and parking lots that follow the drop in grade below the beltline tracks. Across from 1047 Boulevard is 1040 Boulevard which currently is owned by Peach State Distributing Company. 1040 Boulevard was constructed in 1959 of brick and concrete masonry units with metal casement and glass block windows and a flat roof. It is approximately one and a half stories with multiple trucking bays along the south facade. Just to the south of 1040 Boulevard is a new development of town homes that are not contributing to the district

but are important to note as one of the only residential developments on Boulevard between Mead Avenue and Englewood Avenue. The fourth contributing structure on Boulevard is the railroad relay box located on the south side of the beltline placed there in the 1940s.



1047 Boulevard



540 Englewood

As one travels south on Boulevard the grade drops significantly and bottoms out at Englewood Avenue before rising again. To the north of Englewood more large expanses of open land stretch up the hill until 540 Englewood Avenue, the Divine Automotive Center Inc. Divine Automotive was built in 1960 of brick and concrete masonry units. The south faÁade of the building is dominated by five large bays previously used for automotive repairs. This building is currently vacant and boarded. Moving west on Englewood next is 500 Englewood that is currently vacant and owned by the Trust for Public Land. 500

Englewood is a one story light industrial, warehouse structure constructed in brick built in the 1958. Like the other industrial buildings in the node the east wall has several large bays to serve trucking transport needs. Two other contributing structures exist on Englewood that currently functions as light industrial structures and



504 Englewood

warehouses with businesses including the National Dust Control Service and Boles

Auto Parts. The National Dust Control building was built in 1960 in brick in a late International style. The Boles Auto Parts building constructed in brick with corrugated metal siding was constructed in 1964. This building appears to have been modified with additions. The beltline tracks run just behind the Englewood structures, on the north side. On

the south side of Englewood is an existing subsidized-housing project, Englewood Manor. The units in Englewood Manor are two-story brick duplex units that stretch up the hill moving west on Englewood.

Located adjacent to the single-family homes on Grant Street is the Georgia Power Substation. Included inside the substation is a 1930s brick building with art deco elements. The building has a flat roof with three bays on each faÁade with stone lentils and window sills. Each faÁade is detailed with brick pilasters topped with inverted stone ziggurat patterns. The main entrance on the front faÁade is emphasized with a projecting pavilion detailed with the ziggurat patterns and the Georgia Power Seal.



Georgia Power Substation

The Boulevard Heights neighborhood is located on the east side of Boulevard just south of the beltline right-of-way and East Confederate Avenue. This neighborhood consists of mostly one and one and a half story Craftsmen bungalows, brick cottages, and post WW II American small house type frame residences. This neighborhood, like the surrounding neighborhoods, has sidewalks and street trees that create a pedestrian-friendly quality.

Traveling north on Grant Street just outside the node boundaries light industrial structures begin to change into single-family homes that make up the southwestern end of the Grant Park neighborhood. Most of these homes are small post WWII brick and frame houses. The neighborhood has sidewalks and street trees giving it a pedestrian-friendly quality.

To the west of the Georgia Power substation on Park Avenue are the Gladstone Apartments. The Gladstone Apartments were built in the 1950s and currently function as public housing units. Historically the apartments were one story brick structures built in series of two to seven units. Some of the units have been modified to become two story with the second levels clad in vinyl siding. The neighborhood is set on a rolling topography with meandering streets. Large yards with old-growth trees in combination with the topography create a picturesque setting in the housing development.

Conclusion

Upon first glance the Boulevard Crossing proposed beltline development node does not seem to have a great amount of historic resources. However, this is far from the truth. Many of the existing industrial and commercial structures maintain their historic fabric and aid in telling the industrial development of southeastern Atlanta. The industrial and commercial structures proximity to the beltline tracks emphasizes the importance of the railroad in the businesses successes. All of its contributing commercial and industrial structures should be considered important resources in the node. Most buildings are constructed in a relatively uniform style and material lending information to mid-twentieth century Atlanta building practices. In addition to their construction, their use is also important to the node's historical significance. Between 1950 and 1980 an increasing amount of industries in the node dealt with rubber and automotive services emphasizing the growing importance of the automobile in the Atlanta region. In addition to the industrial structures the Georgia Power substation generator building built in the 1930s is an important piece of the developmental history of the area. As the southeastern outlying areas of Atlanta transitioned from rural to urban in the early twentieth century needs for public amenities like electric power became important. The substation has been in continued use since the 1930s when it was first built.

The existing historic residential neighborhoods play a vital role in the significance of Boulevard Crossing. Boulevard Heights, which lies to the east of the node, retains a great deal of its historic fabric with many buildings undergoing very little change since their construction. This neighborhood is a resource that can be used to understand the development patterns of Atlanta. The first single-family homes followed the division of farmland into individual lots as well as the construction of electric trolley tracks that extended south from downtown Atlanta. Homes built in the early twentieth century reflect popular styles such as Craftsmen bungalows. The second wave of development can be seen in the presence of the American small house type frame cottages that also exist in the neighborhood that were built after World War II. The presence subsidized-housing development Gladstone Apartments in the southwestern section of Boulevard Crossing is important in telling the story of Atlanta's early efforts at providing affordable public housing. Many of the units in Gladstone retain their historic form. While those that have had a second-story addition have lost some of their historic fabric the two-story units remain important in interpreting the changes and adaptations Atlanta public housing has had to make to keep up with Atlanta's modern families.

The Boulevard Crossing node can be characterized as a diamond in the rough.¹ Its redevelopment potential seems almost endless. Its large areas of open spaces that are slated to become green space and parkland make it an area that local residents and other Atlantans are sure to find useful for recreation purposes. Green spaces and parklands created out of these open spaces will also give a much needed facelift to a currently unfriendly terrain. In addition to aesthetic benefits, green spaces could aid in improving environmental conditions in the Boulevard Crossing area.

Its extant historic commercial and industrial structures have the potential for mixed and residential use. The building at 1047 Boulevard could be rehabilitated as a commercial space while the structure across the street, 1040 Boulevard, could be converted into artists' lofts. The structures along Englewood have a similar potential. Since subsidized-housing exists on the south side of Englewood already mixed use commercial and residential could be considered for the large warehouse like structures on the north side of Englewood. The large interior spaces of these buildings lead to many possibilities for redevelopment. Placing these structures on the National Register of historic places qualifies them as eligible for both state and federal tax incentives. These incentives would be beneficial to potential investors as well as to the buildings beneficial.

The historic neighborhoods of Boulevard Heights and the Gladstone Apartments should maintain their historic attributes. The best way to ensure that these neighborhoods would retain their historic integrity would be to create local historic districts for each. Boulevard Heights's number of historic resources makes it an important part of southeast Atlanta history as well as its developmental history associated with transportation advances and population booms in southeast Atlanta neighborhoods. While designating a subsidized housing development as a local historic district is unconventional, its historical significance in the node and Atlanta cannot be denied. Local designation of these areas can ensure that new development that is quickly encroaching on the area will not disturb the neighborhood's historic character.

Together the green spaces, industrial structures, and residential neighborhoods provide a window into Atlanta's development patterns especially in the southeastern quadrant. The construction of the beltline aided in the development of industry, residential neighborhoods, and public amenities in the Boulevard Crossing area. The preservation and creation of green spaces and the preservation and rehabilitation of extant structures could create a wave of revitalization for the surrounding node areas that is much needed.