

Memorial Drive/Bill Kennedy Way



Theme

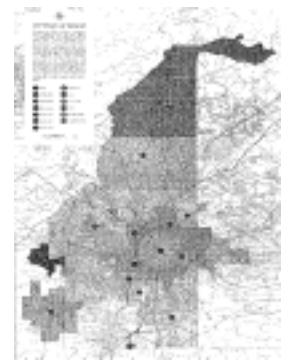
This development of this node parallels the nationwide and citywide growth patterns that have taken place since the mid-nineteenth century. It shows the growth and expansion brought about by the street car systems followed by the development of light industries that used the railway system for transportation of goods and services. It throws light on the social structure that was created by these industries and land-use patterns, not just locally, but also at a citywide level. It further shows change and adaptation to the new technology of automobiles and the trucking industry, first through the complimentary play of the rail and the road and then later, a complete shift towards automobiles and Interstates. These changes are reflected in the types of businesses that take precedence in the area and which characterize it even today.

Developmental History

Records indicate that this area comprised of low rolling hills started its early development on land that was ceded by the Creek Indians in 1821. This area was a part of Dekalb County where the area was heavily wooded and settlements were sparse. The 1850 US census for Dekalb shows that the settlers in this area came from neighboring counties and states and from countries like Germany, England, Scotland, Ireland, and others. By 1859, before the civil war, due to the proximity to the railway lines (Georgia Railroad) the people were employed as railroad workers while others were farmers, teachers, blacksmiths and laborers; all of them drawn to the promise of success of a fast growing and significant city of Atlanta and also to escape the problems and inconvenience of sharecropping and tenant farming.

In 1864, the Battle of Atlanta took place in this area., which at the time was still largely rural. It was a strategic location because of its topography, which consisted of some of the highest points in Atlanta. Streets like Holtzclaw Street were named to commemorate brave military leaders of the battle. After the Civil War, many freed slaves moved to the outskirts of the city due to the promise of jobs that were created for repairing the damaged rail lines and work in railroad shops. This trend was also influenced by segregation, as the African-American community found it difficult to find employment in the white sections of the city.

By the 1870s, Atlanta was rising back on its feet and rapid development raised real estate and construction costs in the city's downtown area. This became an impetus for the working class to also shift residence to the city edges. By 1866, the city had extended its limits to the west of the Beltline and further expanded towards the east between 1895 and 1904. The factor that allowed for this expansion and shift in working class residence was the development of the city's street car system. In 1882, the Metropolitan Street Railway Company's primary purpose was to build street car lines in the southeast portion of the city because this section had been slated for rapid development ever since Colonel Grant had donated vast acreage to the city for a park, the first of its kind in Atlanta. By 1894, the street car line was running along Fair Street (Memorial Drive), up through Estoria and east through the Reynoldstown neighborhood.



Map of City Annexation

Reynoldstown is a neighborhood that surrounds the node on the north and northeast. Known as Tin Cup Alley and The Slide, its first residents were the freed black slaves that worked for the Georgia Railroad and stayed close to it. Cabbagetown, another neighborhood northwest of the node, came into existence with the start of the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills in 1881. This mill and other industries located near the Georgia Railroad created an industrial atmosphere which discouraged middle-income residents from moving into the area. The land east of the mill was developed as housing for the mill workers and hence the area was characterized as a working-class neighborhood.



1892 birds eye view map

An 1892 birds eye-view of the city shows the pastoral setting of the area, created by vast empty expanses of land and trees. Houses were concentrated near the Georgia Railroad, the Cotton Mill and the street car lines that served the neighborhoods. By 1898 the Atlanta and West Point Railroad started construction on its rail line (the Beltline) that ran from Hulsey Yard (along the Georgia Railroad, north of the node) to Oakland City (southwest of the node) and completed it in 1899.



This Beltline bisected the Reynoldstown neighborhood in a north-south manner, and the African American population was concentrated to its northwest section, while the rest of the area was inhabited by the white working-class community. The 1894 map by Bayler and Latham show the city limits extending east of Pearl Street and the division of the land into plats.



Atlanta street railway system, 1912

By the end of the nineteenth century, racial tensions were on the rise in Atlanta, eventually giving rise to the 1906 Race Riot. The result of this was the organization of segregated neighborhoods through city ordinances passed in 1913 and 1916. These were annulled by the US Supreme Court in 1917, but the effects remained. The segregation caused a change of neighborhood composition in the city as well as the node. The neighborhoods around the node developed as a conglomeration of smaller subdivisions, segregated by race. The node was immediately surrounded by white residents who came to the area because of the street car lines, affordable land prices, employment opportunities and proximity to downtown Atlanta. The small African American population that resided in one part of Reynoldstown started suffering from a housing shortage in the 1910s that continued into the 1930s.

The white population was mostly employed by the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills located west of the node. No African Americans worked there. They were instead employed as laborers, cooks, domestic workers, painters and railroad workers. Many also owned small businesses within the neighborhoods, such as cafes and barbershops. Grocery stores owned by Jews were also part of the residential fabric that surrounded the node.

The Reynoldstown neighborhood and the area around it were annexed by the city of Atlanta in 1909. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the land comprising the node was primarily vacant except for residences at Cabbagetown and Reynoldstown. Fair Street was the only street paved with granite blocks while the rest were left unpaved. By the second decade, the five and a half mile long Beltline helped industries to avoid the congestion in Atlanta's downtown. Warehouses began to be built along it, creating the industrial atmosphere which still characterizes the node today. The A. M. Warren Coal Company coal yard and the Atlanta Mirror and Beveling Company were the industries located near this node. The coal yard lay north of the node where a spur of the Beltline connected it to the round house along the Georgia Railroad. There was also an orphanage named after Carrie Steel at the corner of Fair Street and Holtzclaw Street. It was a three story brick structure with a stone foundation. It later became the Carrie Steel School in the 1920s and then the Reynolds Elementary School.

The Atlanta and West Point depot was constructed at the intersection in 1914 as a passenger station and freight station. It was a brick veneer frame building with a concrete platform. It was built to serve the needs of the area and the growing industries and did so until 1960. This station is the only remaining railroad depot along the Beltline.



1922 tentative zone plan

Street car lines continued to provide access to the inhabitants as well as expand the city boundaries and areas of development. Segregation continued to remain an issue in the city. Even though the segregation ordinances had been overruled in 1917, the city used comprehensive zoning to segregate populations. The corridor along the Beltline was zoned as an industrial district and the neighborhoods around it as a dwelling house district with 2500 square feet per family, the structure being two and a half stories or 35 feet in height and a white race district.

Other than on tracts immediately adjacent to the rail line, the rest of the node still continued to remain mostly vacant. There were dwellings along Fair Street west of Pearl Street, two tiled dwellings with an auto house, two stories in height and a basement between Pearl Street and Delta Place that remained till the late 1940s and a framed dwelling as well as a framed shop that housed a restaurant and a grocer were located on east of Holtzclaw Street.

The American Service Company ran the T. K. Ice Company on the west of the tracks along Fair Street. This was a steel post and beam construction with walls made of brick, three stories in height and an adjoining framed office building one story in height. This building remained standing until 2005 after which it was demolished and the land lies vacant.



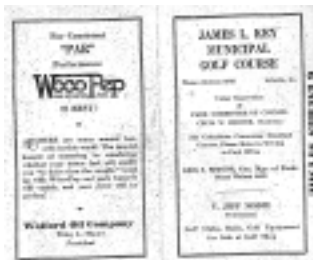
Sketched view of Warren Factory

working processes involved in the industry. An adjacent glass grinding structure was made of brick pilasters and a concrete floor and a saw tooth roof. A small framed building that served as the shop was located close to Fair Street. By 1928, the founder of the company, Virgil P. Warren who had bought interest in Harry Shannenís refrigerator business, opened up Americaís largest commercial refrigerator factory on the site.

The Warren Company Incorporated Cabinet Works was located on the east side of the tracks, south of and along Fair Street. The property consisted of a few framed dwellings for the employees, lumber piles, warehouses, offices, a brick and frame building with a raised concrete floor with sidelight that was protected by a sprinkler system for all the wood-



Sketch view of Warren Factory



Golf course score card

South of Old Flat Shoals Road was the James L. Key municipal golf course with its brick club house that continued to serve its community until the early 1950s. This was under the supervision of the Park Committee Council.

The Karwisch Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of hardwood floors was located along Delta Place, north of Northern Avenue with a building along the Beltline. There were also a few residences along Holtzclaw Street and Northern Avenue on the east of the Beltline. The residential character that surrounded the node continued to do so with few changes.



Across Fulton Terrace, which was still used for a street car line, ran a bridge that allowed the Beltline to pass over the street car right of way. Thought no records can be found at this point of time about the original bridge, the one that is present today is a steel trestle and concrete bridge built in 1927 by the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company.

The 1930s saw the start of the Great Depression, and this was reflected in Atlanta by the decrease in building activity. The street cars had started to decline while the road network was being enhanced by the nation to encourage automotive travel for personal and commercial use. This was the decade when industrial activity in the node increased and also made use of both, the rail lines as well as roads that were being used by the budding trucking industry. The construction of Georgiaís first four-lane super highway to Marietta in 1938 helped to bring the city out of its slump and also to establish it as an important regional trucking center. According to residents of Reynoldstown, men and women of both races were employed by all the light industries and businesses in the node. Some of the primary employers were the Great Atlanta and Pacific Warehouse, the Kraft Cheese Factory, the American Service Company (Atlanta Ice House), Atlanta Oak Flooring and Warren Refrigerators. The African American population was increasing in Reynoldstown, north of the node.



Development in this decade continued to leave most of the land along Fair Street vacant. Businesses that did develop mostly reflected the new and rising automobile related works. The northwest corner of the Chester Avenue and Fair Street boasted of one of the first few automobile service and filling stations. The southwest corner of the same intersection, created by a spur of the Beltline was home to a coal company and an auto repair shop. Industries and businesses from the previous decade continued to thrive. This spur from the Beltline serviced the Shell Petroleum Corporation Plant that was located along Chester Avenue. The oil warehouses were made of brick with steel trusses as were the auto truck garages which had a lumber and a concrete floor. The loading shed was made of metal and the southwest corner of the plot housed gasoline tanks in 7feet high concrete walls. This remained well into the 1950s.



Aerial photograph 1940

The Great Atlanta and Pacific Tea Company (A&P) was built in 1930 on the southwest corner of the Beltline and Fair Street. It functioned as a food warehouse, bakery and offices. It had direct rail access on its east side, where goods were unloaded and then loaded on to trucks and sent out from the building's west side. It was made of concrete (fireproof) frame construction with brick walls and a cold store in the basement. It was the southern regional headquarters for one of the nation's first grocery store chains. The Kraft Phenix Cheese Corporation was located on the northwest corner of the same intersection as the A&P Warehouse. This was constructed in 1930 and was designed to be a factory building with tiled curtain walls.

Between Chastain and Pearl Streets, along Fair Street, was a baseball diamond with a metal grand stand used mostly by the Cabbage Town residents known as "Red Hill". The Warren Company expanded its structures in this decade and also let its northeast corner for an auto junk shop and a metal and brick clad auto repair shop with a concrete floor. Towards the west of its plot the company also constructed the Warren Athletic Field with a metal grand stand. The Warren Arena was a framed structure with steel trusses on the south of the A&P Warehouse along Chester Avenue.

The Karwisch Manufacturing Company became the Karwisch Wagon Works, which stopped operating in the late 1940s. It was a metal clad frame building that contained an office, warehouse, planing mill and kiln along the railroad tracks. The southwest corner of Fulton Terrace and Chester Avenue had a metal motor freight station with a cinder block office, to the south of which stood a laundry and cleaner supplies building of brick, steel beams and a concrete floor.

As the years progressed, the number of businesses in this node increased. Vacant land was being developed to house offices and factories. Orientation towards the trucking industry was more prominent with a considerable increase in trucking companies. This reflected the trend of dependency on the growing nationwide road network and a decrease in the use of the rail network.

There were a few important new industries that took residence at the node. First were the many companies that catered to the leasing and maintenance of trucks and provided freight services. These were the Mack International Motor Truck Corporation in the 1940s, the GMC Truck and Coach Division, the Rutherford Freight Lines, Tempkins Motor Lines and Southeastern Freight Lines in the 1950s. They were all located either along Memorial Drive, the southern portion of Pearl Street and along Old Flat Shoals. They occupied large plots of land which were primarily left vacant so as to be able to hold the numerous fleets of trucks required for their business.

The Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company also located along Memorial Drive in 1946. The Atlanta Dairies Cooperative (Parmalat) had offices and its plant along this road. Companies that catered to industrial and chemical supplies were located along Memorial Drive and Chester Avenue. A large number of service and filling stations and auto repair shops came up across the node. Auto-oriented activities proliferated, such as a drive-in diner at the southwest corner of Chester Avenue and Memorial Drive. There were a few smaller shops that sold liquor, some restaurants and chemists. Holtzclaw Street, which had remained residential, had a rubber and tire wholesaler occupy some of the vacant space.



Aerial photograph, 1949

The local transportation system had also undergone changes. Trackless trolley lines were now the means of conveyance. 1949 was also the time when work on a \$40,000,000 project for Atlanta's expressway system was started. This certified the direction of Atlanta's growth and economy. By 1945 the "white flight" from central city neighborhoods to the automobile accessible suburbs had begun, and its effects were starting to be felt on the remaining communities, both physically and socially.

The construction of the interstate system in the 1950s and 60s affected the development of the node in a number of ways. First, it caused a near complete abandonment of the railroads. It shifted transportation to the trucking industry, which had been on the rise since the late 1930s and had now reached its zenith. Trucking became even more prominent in the node when I-20 was built right through the neighborhood, providing easy interstate access. The building of these road networks also helped to relieve downtown inner city congestion and traffic that had grown over the decades. I-20, which borders the southern portion of the node, was a salvation from downtown gridlock. These roads had been built with the thought that not only would they relieve congestion but they would also in turn help revitalize neighborhoods that were losing population because of the shift to the suburbs. In actuality, the building of these road systems heightened and increased the movement of white populations to the outlying suburbs, leaving a primarily black and low income population in the neighborhoods, which in turn caused a decline of these neighborhoods. The construction of I-20 isolated Grant Park to the south and Reynoldstown and Cabbagetown to the north by dividing the area into two portions.



Aerial photograph, 1960

During the 1960s, the Atlanta Dairies Cooperative expanded onto neighboring plots and also extended its plant up to Old Flat Shoals. The Kraft Phenix Building underwent many changes especially in the kinds of businesses it housed varying from the Georgia Association of Workers for the Blind, to American Frozen Foods and finally to a Motor and Salvage shop after which it remained vacant. The Atlanta Water Works located onto Holtzclaw Street while the southern portions of Chester Avenue continued to house a sports arena, later the Georgia Championship Wrestling Incorporation as well as a neon sign shop. By the 1990s, the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Factory made way for APD Transmission Parts that continued to use the historic building. Some mixed-use continue to locate along Memorial Drive and the street also housed the Fellowship of Love Church for a few years. Southern Bell (Bellsouth) came to be a part of this node in the 1980s along Chester Avenue and the water works became the City Water and Pollution Control office.

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Aerial photograph, 1972

Physical Description

The most influential character-defining feature of the node is the three lane Memorial Drive running through the center of the node. This road is one of Atlanta's most important east-west thoroughfares. The intersection of this street along with the Beltline forms the heart of the node, providing access along the now covered Beltline to the south to I-20. It could have been a prime focus of the area, but instead it lies neglected and dilapidated because of the neglect of the buildings and land surrounding it. The Beltline to the north of Memorial Drive is poorly maintained and is overgrown with brambles and plants.

Fulton Terrace is the historical route of the street car system that catered to this area. It runs under a steel trestle bridge that is part of the Beltline route. All the other roads in this node are two lane roads most of which have cars parked along their sides. The grid created by the streets is not dense allowing for large land lots that have been subdivided over time. This has allowed for the large industrial buildings and automobile related activities to locate there.

Pearl Street, Chester Avenue, Holtzclaw Street and Gibson Street run in a north-south direction. They serve as the feeder streets from the adjacent neighborhoods on to Memorial Drive. North of Memorial Drive, the streets are mostly lined by residential structures on one side and industrial structures on the other. This provides a very strong contrast in use and design. Old Flat Shoals is the only road that runs diagonally across it, at close to a thirty degree angle from Chester Avenue to I-20.

Memorial Drive provides a clear, straight vista that visually diminishes the vastness of the surrounding sprawled structures. The entire node projects open space that needs some reordering. The buildings do not occupy most of the land area since most of it is required for truck parking. There is no interactivity between the buildings and the sidewalks or the roads. The buildings appear to be very much isolated from the active traffic along the roads but when seen together, they compliment each other through their densities and uses. The node reflects its building occupants in terms of being automobile and road oriented and not a friendly, warm neighborhood.



Atlanta & West Point Railroad Depot

The Atlanta and West Point Railroad Depot was built in 1914 and served as a freight depot until 1960. It is a one story structure constructed of red brick and limestone with an overhanging red terracotta tiled roof. It is built in the Georgian Revival style. It has a concrete foundation and symmetrical short brick piers framing the entrance on which were housed stone urns at one point in time. The bricks are laid in American running bond. Limestone is used for staggered quoins for the corners of the building, for framing the entrance, for a continuous lintel that runs above and ties the door and windows together, for the window sills and for the entrance frieze above the door which has the name of the depot engraved in it. There is also a fluted limestone molding just under the roof level.

The A&P Lofts is a three story reinforced concrete frame structure with brick infill and steel factory windows. Windows on the first floor are staggered in elevation. The windows are mostly divided in three bays with the central glass that pivots open. It is based on a popular design used in the US during the 1920s and 1930s. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building has undergone rehabilitation work and is currently used as lofts for both residences and offices.



an industrial building from the 1930s is undeniable.

Kraft Phenix Cheese Factory was built in 1930. This three story concrete frame structure has its two longer elevations mostly dominated by large metal factory windows. These windows are divided into unequal bays and run floor to ceiling for each floor. The only brick infill between the concrete frame structure is along the roof parapet and the shorter facades. The front façade is symmetrical and is made prominent by the shallow pediment at the center. The concrete frame structure is revealed on the exterior. The parapet is capped with a limestone coping. Some changes appear to have been made to the building over the years, but its origins as



Parmalat building

The Parmalat is a brick structure built in 1945. Large white storage cylinders dominate its façade in sharp contrast with the single story low red brick building that runs along the length of Memorial Drive. The western corner of the building is smooth and curved. The windows as well as the coping are painted stark white that enhances the material of the walls. The windows are large panels of glass block, as well as plate glass cut to fit the curved western edge of the building. The large doors that lead from the street



Parmalat building

are framed in a red concrete frame. The long façade appears like a security wall with openings in it for some communication with its surroundings.



Nextran leasing industrial building

Nextran Leasing is a light industrial building was constructed in 1954. It is a frame construction with a glass curtain wall that covers the entire single story façade. The building has a very low brick foundation and also thin brick walls that protrude perpendicularly out of the façade. The bricks used are long and narrow. The roof is made visually heavy by the provision of a wide metal parapet.

The Nextran Truck Center building was designed in the 1940s to serve the purposes and needs of a trucking company. This building, like the Nextran Leasing building is also partial to the low and sprawling prairie style architecture. It is a single story red brick building whose main entrance is set back from the outer façade by a covered porch with a high brick parapet wall. Part of the front façade is made up of a wall of glass windows that run from the floor to the ceiling. A broad, metal overhang made of molded square panels ties the entire façade together. The entire building is tied together by a thin metal coping and a concrete strip just above the foundation. The windows of the building are short in height and are recessed from the brick façade. A large metal rolling shuttered door divides the front brick office building from the metal shed that is attached behind it. This structure has a curved metal roof.



Nextran Truck Center

APD Transmission is a 1946 building falls under the International style and has elements of Streamlined Moderne on it. Initially designed and built for the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, the building now houses an auto parts company. The building is a single story brick structure whose entrance is made prominent by scale and use of different material and color. The entrance is a small covered opening in a larger faÁade made of green glass panels that or divided geometrically by white frames. The front faÁade is broken up into different sections which have been given varying heights. Made of brick and painted a creamy color, the designer has used recessed rows of bricks to create a horizontal linearity to the building. The series of large garage door opening are distinguished by protruding columns in contrasted colors. The west portion of the faÁade has a large window opening that is filled with green glass panels. The edges of the faÁade are curved, matching the Parmalat building opposite it. The eastern portion of the building is a contrast to this main faÁade with its linearity and uniform rhythmic openings with green glass.



Located at 198 Chester Avenue, this 1940s single story building was designed as a metal motor freight station. The office building is made of concrete masonry units. All the openings in the building have been filled in and sealed shut but its original design and structure does not appear to be damaged. The roof is a metal pitched roof with a brick stepped gable at one end and a flat roof over the office building. The sealed openings start at the floor level and have a concrete sill each. The office building has two strips of concrete panels that run across the facades so that they provide the building with a layering effect.

Airgas Carbonic is a light industrial building built in 1943 is a single story structure made of concrete masonry units resting on a concrete foundation. The windows are square with two bays, each with nine over nine metal factory windows. It is a simple unadorned building whose starkness is enhanced by its painted white exterior.



Airgas Carbonic



Colgate building

The Colgate building is a single story brick industrial building built in 1955. Though most of the facades are brick surfaces, the openings are well defined by a white frame, and are proportionate to the building facades. The building has a thin white strip that runs across the top of the faÁade, just under the roof line as if limiting the building from further growth in height.

Conclusion

This node represents a significant historical area of Atlanta. Firstly, it is bound by two historically important neighborhoods of Cabbagetown and Reynoldstown. These residential areas have had immense influence on the workings and social construct of the node.

The node reflects the story of not only Atlanta's growth over the years but also the nation's development. The area has been able to adapt and provide for the changing trends in industry and transportation, from the street cars, to the railroads and finally to the interstate systems. The node has shown cohesiveness in the land use of the area. It represents the industrial development of the city that provided jobs for its residents, which in turn helped make the neighborhoods a self sufficient community. The node also reflects the social consequences of employment opportunities and patterns of settlements of the two races and of segregation. It narrates the influence of larger city projects of the Interstate system, the effects of the decline of the railroads, and racial segregation.

Architecturally, there are historic brick and concrete frame buildings that symbolize the industrial architecture used throughout the country. There is also some International Style that helps characterize this node with its inherently industrial use.

Clearly this node calls for a lot of attention, not only in terms of redevelopment but also in terms of preservation. Creation of an industrial historic district that is not only on the National Register but has local importance too would help towards preserving and controlling the quality of space and ambience that is offered by the area presently.

This group of resources is rare in the city. By allowing for complementary construction with new development over vacant lots, control can be maintained to a desired degree over the quality and design of new structures. New development in the area has been designed to compliment the industrial nature of the node. Rehabilitation opportunities like that provided by the A&P lofts are ample and can encourage mixed use development. This node would have a strong future if it were developed for community activities, retail and commercial and not necessarily of residential use. The uses should target the surrounding neighborhoods and communities. The development should revolve around the historic resources available and foci should be created using the Atlanta and West Point Depot. Further subdivision of land lots should be avoided because that would alter the basic nature of the area.

The node has immense potential to attract positive development and revitalization so as to make the area an active, economically beneficial and most importantly, a real life setting to tell the story of industrial development in Atlanta.