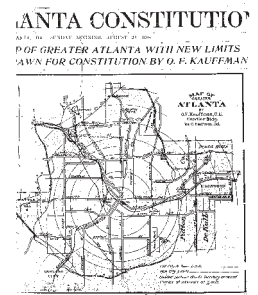


Northside Drive



Theme

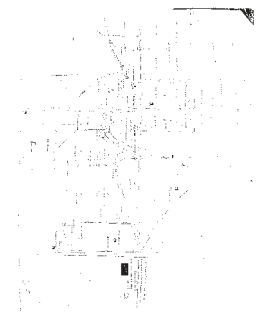
Thematically, the area is an historic example of how Atlanta City limits grew northward ñ how a growing city accommodated its increasing population through public administration of appropriate water supply; how residential areas developed to house white middle-class workers employed by surrounding industries and rail yards; how small commercial businesses developed to support these populations; and finally how the area ultimately became a light industrial center for the production and distribution of a variety of commercial products. Ultimately, the Northside Node illustrates how railroads followed by interstate highway programs and trucking as modal transportation of goods made an indelible impression on this area. These transportation systems encouraged the light commercial and industrial development which saturates this node with its multitude of single story, modest brick buildings with truck bays as a prominent feature of their fenestration and use.



Atlanta city limits, 1908

Developmental History

Historically, the neighborhoods and commercial development within the node did not begin until the 1920s with the majority of development being commercial building in the 1950s along Northside Drive and Howell Mill Road. Originally, the area of the whole node was part of a very large farm owned by John Whitely who obtained the land in 1835 by way of the original land lottery grant from the state. In 1847, Mr. Jessee Wood obtained the land. Mr. Wood immigrated to the United States with his family from Dublin, Ireland in 1800. His farm stretched from Peachtree Creek to the north, Atlanta Waterworks to the south, Howell Mill Road to the West and Spring Street to the east. Mr. Wood then split his land among his sons. E.H. Wood, Thomas Wood and J.N. Wood all received land and built personal domestic dwellings on these lots. Surrounding tracts were farm lands with the northern land belonging to J. A. Collier. This 1882 plat map indicates dwellings and farmland which all belonged to the Woods family. The area shown incorporates most of the Northside Node.



Executors Sale Map, 1882



Loring's Hill Marker Post

Civil War historians believe that several trench lines ran through this area because of its elevated topography and excellent vantage points to see northward. Three significant Civil War Historic Markers are found in the area indicating the Surrender of Atlanta at the intersection of Northside Drive and Marietta Street, identifying General Stewart's headquarters at the corner of Howell Mill Road and Bishop Street, and General Loring's Hill at the corner of Northside Drive and Trabert Avenue which was part of Atlanta's outer defense lines.

Although the majority of commercial buildings did not develop within this node until the 1950s, it is important to understand the variety of railroad infrastructure and industries which precede and surround the area. To the south of the node, early industries developed in the late 1800s and many integrate with the Marietta Street Artery Corridor which runs to the south and west of the node and parallel to historic Southern Railway lines. Many of these businesses had important ties to the railroads for distribution of industrial goods like cotton related machinery, retention and distribution of animal stock and steel manufacturing. Such industries include White Provision Company (1910), United Butchers Abattoir (1917), E. Van Winkle Gin and Machine Works/Murray Mill Complex (1889) and the Atlantic Steel Company (1901) just south of the node. Early on, the Northside node was flanked by a number of rail yards. Freight transfer yards like Inman Yards lie to the south and east of the node. To the south of Huff Road and west of Howell Mill Road, Howell Interlocking exists where four railroads interlocked and animal stock layovers occurred. Running adjacent to the Atlantic Steel Company is a series of rail lines creating a hub of railroad activity just south and west of Atlanta Waterworks and due south to Loring Heights neighborhood.



1919 Birdseye view of area

Prior to any significant building development directly within the area, the area was either farmland with few residential farm houses interspersed or dense hardwood forests. Early plat maps specifically indicate this area to be heavy with pine and oak woods. The first significant building development to occur within the node is the Atlanta Waterworks Hemphill Avenue Station which began development in 1892. The Atlanta Waterworks Hemphill Avenue Station was the second waterworks complex completed by the city. Even 1919 Birdseye view maps do not indicated any significant development in the area with the exception of the Atlanta Waterworks and the surrounding industries to the south.



Atlanta Waterworks Hemphill Pumping State c1950

In the early part of the 1900s, residences in the area were limited to farmhouses and residents primarily lived off the land or worked in nearby industries and railroads. Now non-extant, there was the Evan P. Howell Grammar School which was located on Bowen Street within the Berkeley Park neighborhood. There was a lumber yard located near the intersection of Howell Mill Road and White Street in the northern boundaries of the node close to where I/75 intersects. Sandwiched between the Southern Railway and north of Atlantic Steel Company, a coal yard which eventually became the extant Narjoe Lumber Yard also was in operation. Several churches were founded in the early 1900s including Northside Baptist Church (1907) on Howell Mill Road and Underwood Methodist Church (1914) at 1671 Howell Mill Road. Businesses in the area were limited to small businesses including garages, barber shops, restaurants and small grocery shops. In 1908, the Atlanta's city limits extended just south of the Northside Node with 14th Street being the northern most boundary.

The dearth of industry and activity in the surrounding southern areas created the need for housing for mostly white working class citizens within these businesses and the rail yards. These neighborhoods include the mill housing subdivision of Blandtown (originally called Sunset Heights), Berkeley Park and Loring Heights. In 1921, the neighborhood of Berkeley Park was platted for development outside the city limits. Residences were constructed from 1921 into the 1940s. It is an intact neighborhood and has a collection of mid-20th century house styles. This neighborhood is fine example of Atlanta's early planned subdivisions with nearby trolley lines that serviced the neighborhood. It is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



iSunset Height, Development platmap

The mill housing community of Blandtown is a little island of wood housing structures bound by Atlanta Waterworks to the east, Seaboard Air-line Rail to the north, Ellsworth Industrial to the west and Huff Road to the south. It was platted for development in 1925 and was originally coined iSunset Heights. A 1932 Sanborn Map shows that at one time Huff Road was called Blandtown Road from Howell Mill Road to the Huff Road railway underpass. The old Huff Road started at this railway crossing and headed west, ending up at Marietta Street during the Civil War era. Although it is likely that the neighborhood was originally planned for white working classes, the neighborhood eventually became a predominately African American community likely as a result of its isolated nature.

Another intact mid-20th century planned subdivision within the node is the Loring Heights neighborhood which is located to the east of Northside Drive. It was developed in 1939 by Ed Sims and at that time was outside the city limits of Atlanta. A majority of the homes were developed after World War II and most of the original homeowners were employed by the nearby Atlantic Steel Company just south of the neighborhood where the newly developed Atlantic Station is currently. Several of the street names in the subdivision were named for Civil War Generals Loring, Hascall and Geary. The community was originally platted to extend to the north to Collier Road, but was intervened by the construction of Interstate 75.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s comparatively few businesses developed compared to what will be seen in years to follow with the coming of the Interstate Highway System. Mainly businesses were interspersed along the main roads which interacted with the nearby rail lines. The Southern Railway and Seaboard Airline Railway lines encompassed the area and continued to provide transfer points for products. The main road arteries include Howell Mill and Old Chattahoochee Roads to the west and Northside Drive running through the heart of the node and Bishop Street flanking the node on its southernmost boundary.



1934 Atlanta Terminal Map



1911 Sanborn Map, Atlantic Steel Company

Prevalent commercial businesses consisted of whole meat companies, six of which were along Howell Mill Road and just south of the node, automotive repair, parts and filling stations, beauty shops and machine works companies. The most notable companies which are indicated on the Sanborn Maps of 1911-1935 include Westinghouse Electric Corporation, Atlanta Car and Wheel Corporation and the Gulf Oil Company along Bishop Street. Other businesses within the node included Southern Iron and Equipment; Southern Wheel Division Atlantic Steel Company, which continued to operate along with Narjoe Timber Company; Atlanta Braid Shoe Manufacturers; Georgia Lead Works and Jones Machinery. Trabert and Mecaslin streets were still considered just outside city limits with little to no commercial development occurring yet. Only one business, Nicholas Contracting, at 563 was located there.



1925 Sanborn Map, Westinghouse electric & southern iron and equipment

Also throughout the 1930s and 1940s Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and Atlanta City Directories indicate the following businesses in operation along Howell Mill Road: 1281 ñ City Water Works; 1491 ñ Elzeyís Service Station; 1525 ñ Nellís Beauty Shop; 1667 ñ Turner Thomas Filling Station; 1671 ñ Underwood Memorial Methodist Church.



1925 Sanborn Map, Narjoe Lumber

During the 1950s, development of the light commercial and industrial buildings began, which now permeate the node began. Commercial buildings between 1299-1570 Northside Drive continued to spring up along with several filling and automotive stations. 395-464 Bishop Street were all various commercial companies, including one coal company along Mecaslin Street flanking the southeastern boundary of Loring Heights. Trabert Avenue included additional business at 1675, the Campbell Coal Company.



1390 Northside Drive, Amoco Service Station, 1953



Texaco Filling State, Northside and Bishop, c1953



Unknown location, Northside Drive, 1953

television repair shops, and additional filling and service stations. Although substantial light industry and commercial buildings continued to be built along such major roads as Northside, Howell Mill, Bishop, Chattahoochee and Trabert, the continued appearance of the community-based small business began to knit the area together making the commercial and residential areas by default more interactive with one another.

By the 1960s, the interstate highway system was being developed around Atlanta. I-75 cut through north of the node just above Bellemeade Avenue resulting in more business development along the main corridors which depended on trucking transfer of goods. The interruption of I-75 razed homes in the Berkeley Park neighborhood including homes along (and the actual streets of) Kilgore Street and Holly Street. Northside Drive continued to boom with businesses extending from #1299 to #1575, which began to include more and more community businesses like beer and liquor stores, banks, radio and



Yancey Bros, Northside Drive, 1953

Up until the present, businesses changed ownership and sometimes functions. Being located directly off of the interstate, many of the light industrial and commercial businesses continued in operation and many of these buildings have remained fairly intact. Corporate office complexes were built in the area especially along Northside Drive. Closer to I-75, fast food restaurants saturate Northside Drive north of Chattahoochee and along Howell Mill Road at the I-75 interchange. Shopping complexes and storage facilities have also been built along these major arteries. Very recently, several townhome and apartment complexes have been erected supporting the growing need for affordable housing close to Atlanta's urban center.

Physical Description



Aerial view

The Northside node encompasses an area in the Northwest quadrant of Atlanta. It is bounded on the west by Old Chattahoochee Avenue, the historic neighborhood of Berkeley Park and the small residential community of Blandtown just a bit southwest of Berkeley Park; to the north by Interstate 75; to the east by the neighborhood of Loring Heights and to the south by Atlanta Waterworks, Huff Road and the historic Southern Railway line near Fourteenth Street. Running north to south, Howell Mill Road and Northside Drive are the two main corridors which intersect the node. Along these two main thoroughfares, commercial and light industrial development occurring since the mid-1900s is prevalent. Although several intact residential neighborhoods are within this area, the majority of historic resources are more modern commercial and industrial buildings which abut Howell Mill Road and Northside Drive or spur just off of them on streets roads like Trabert Avenue, Forrest Street, Bishop Street, Antone and Chattahoochee Avenue. Developing along these roads, these commercial buildings buffer the major traffic corridors from the residential areas and the two rail lines of the historic Seaboard Airline Railway and Southern Railway.

Currently, the Northside Node is a medley of intact residential neighborhoods buffered by commercial and retail buildings mostly dating from the 1950s. Interspersed are more contemporary buildings built since the 1960s and 70s which are primarily office complexes, storage facilities and a variety of small businesses. Businesses closer to the interstate access points are mostly fast food restaurants and other non-contributing resources.

Atlanta Waterworks is one of the most notable historic complexes still intact in the node. It provides the most obvious southern most boundary for this node and includes a significant amount of historic buildings and park-like land along large reservoir basins. The main transportation arteries within the node continue to be Northside Drive, Howell Mill Road, Chattahoochee Avenue, Trabert Avenue and Bishop Street. To the west of the node, Howell Yards is still an active rail yard involving mostly truck transfer of freight which still functions and operates through CSX. To the south, the old Southern Railway line also appears to be active. Just below the Southern Railway yard, the land on and surrounding the Atlantic Steel Company has been transformed into Atlantic Station, a 21st century model for smart growth and urban planning. It incorporates multi-use functions with residential, retail and office spaces working together as an entire community development.



Historic Southern Railway line with Narjoe Lumber in distance

Berkeley Park is an intact neighborhood of mostly residential housing built between 1920 and 1952. The community was planned around a grid pattern of streets with relatively smaller homes and land lots. The neighborhood boundaries are Howell Mill to the west, roughly Bellmeade to the north, jogging down to Antone Street to the east and running generally along the old Seaboard Airline and Forrest Street to the south. It includes some light commercial buildings within the boundaries which are closer to the main arteries. However, many of these commercial buildings are declared as noncontributing resources in its current listing on National Register of Historic Places of June 2003. The district includes two significant resources, Underwood Methodist Church located at 1671 Howell Mill Road and the No. 23 Fire Station built in 1948 on Howell Mill Road. Underwood Methodist Church is constructed with granite and raised mortar joints. It has a front gabled tine roof and the windows are stained glass with granite lintels.

Loring Heights is also an intact neighborhood of mostly residential housing. The area was developed in 1939 and laid out in a somewhat grid like pattern with several meandering streets intersecting the district north to south. The area is bound by I-75 to the north, Trabert to the south, Mecaslin and Loring Drive to the east and Northside to the west. Most of the homes are American small houses primarily constructed of wood siding with modest ornamentation, and side gabled asphalt shingle roofs. Many newly constructed two story homes are being built within the area, taking the place of the original residential resources. This neighborhood is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and further local protection should be considered. There is obviously much pressure for continued residential development because of the neighborhood's central location. There are a number of light industrial and commercial buildings interspersed within the district, many being along the Trabert Avenue, Mecaslin Street and several along Northside Drive or just off Northside Drive. These are either modest brick commercial buildings built during the 1950s or more contemporary brick commercial buildings built since the 1960s with modern design elements adorning their facades.



Blandtown residence, Boyd Street

Although likely once a more cohesive neighborhood, Blandtown consists of six streets with few intact historic homes still remaining. The neighborhood is bounded by Huff Road to the South, the west Atlanta Waterworks reservoir basin on the east, vacant land and rail lines to the north and Fairmont Street to the west. There is a community church on Boyd Avenue, roughly twenty residences throughout and a mix of light commercial businesses mainly along Boyd Avenue and Culpepper Streets which abut the rail lines. Mainly the residences are vernacular bungalows with wood siding, low pitched asphalt shingle or metal sheet roofs with wide overhanging eaves and bracketing. Many have modest front porches with simple wooden post balustrades.

Many of the lots are vacant and overgrown. Most notably, there is a large tract of vacant land just north of Blandtown where a new John Weiland residential community is planned to be built in the future.

Atlanta Waterworks is located on the largest plot of acreage in the node. It is bound to the west by Blandtown and historic Seaboard Airline rail lines, to the north by Berkeley Park, to the east by Northside Drive and to the south by Huff Road and historic Southern Railway lines. There are two large water reservoir basins surrounded by a rolling landscape. Access is limited to the site, but in observation, there appears to be nearly a dozen historic buildings associated with the operation of the facility. The largest and oldest of these buildings is the Hemphill Avenue Station located at Hemphill Avenue and Northside Drive. All of the Atlanta Waterworks buildings are constructed of brick and have impressive Victorian-era ornamentation including arched windows with many window lights, granite accents in window sills, keystones, belt courses, cornices and foundations. Additional detailing involves corbelled brick patterning; some have ceramic tile roofs, flat or low pitched roofs, some with over extending eaves with bracketing. Another very significant feature is a tall and round brick stack which has the letters 'AWW' worked into the brick patterning and can be seen from a fair distance. Historic photographs reveal this ornamentation. The Hemphill Avenue Station is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Narjoe Lumber Company

Other than Howells Yard, the only historically significant industrial site still visible within the node is the Narjoe Lumber Yard which is currently still in operation as Narjoe Timber Company. The site is just north of Atlantic Station and south of historic Southern Railway lines. To enter the yard, one must cross over the railroad tracks from Mecaslin Street in Loring Heights. Historic buildings which occupy the site include warehouses and open sheds mostly made of weatherboard and rusticated metal sheathing. The most impressive of all the buildings is a three story brick building with a gabled metal roof.

The brick is laid in common bond pattern and many of the joints have been repointed with Portland cement. Additions to the building include CMU buildings and open sheds with metal roofs. There are miscellaneous metal pipes extending from the roof of this building to the other nearby warehouses. Old woodworking machinery is still on-site and is in operation. While conducting a survey of this resource, the on-site workers at the lumber yard provided a historic photograph of the lumberyard which can be seen here.



Narjoe Lumber Company, historic aerial photo



Meyers Carpet, 1500 Northside Drive

Aside from residential areas, the most prevalent and notable historic resources within the Northside Node are commercial and light industrial buildings which line the main arteries of Northside Drive, Howell Mill Road, Chattahoochee Avenue, Bishop Street, Trabert Avenue and Mecaslin Street. With the exception of a few extant buildings along Bishop which were constructed in the 1930s, most of these buildings were built since the 1950s. Many of the significant and contributing buildings are mainly constructed between 1950 and 1960. They all share similar characteristics being simple square or rectangular brick buildings or groupings of buildings with flat roofs. Standard size or jumbo brick is the common construction material laid in a common bond pattern. Most brickwork is red brick, although there are several buildings which use yellow brick. Important features of these buildings include windows, doors and ubiquitous truck bays. Older buildings tend to have smaller truck bays and the more recent buildings have larger bays to accommodate today's standard freight trucks. Rarely are the front facades of the buildings overly ornate, with the exception of some accents around the front door by way of awnings, Bauhausian ribbon windows or clerestory windows with metal mullions, granite accents in window sills and foundations, or a more contemporary execution with extruded aluminum window and door frames. Several buildings exhibit characteristics of International or Art Moderne Styles. Many feature aluminum window and door frames, expansive spans of glass, and the use of glass blocks in the front facades or curved walls lending a more art modern styles.

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There are a few significant and unique filling or automotive stations within the node. Several are more modest buildings constructed of brick and glass with garage bays along the front fenestration. The most notable is located at 1390 Northside Drive, a vacant filling station which high style Art Moderne features including stucco coat construction with a severely curved side wall and substantial glass expanses. Historic photos reveal the building with more intact and architecturally significant features.



Historic filling station, 1390 Northside Drive



Northside Drive and 16th Street Bridge Underpass

There are two noteworthy structures associated with the Northside node and the rail activity which service the area. Near the southernmost boundary at the corner of Northside Drive and 16th street, there exists a concrete railroad overpass with arched concrete piers and a steel trestle above. The date of construction is unknown. In the north western most area just outside the node, there is on Chattahoochee Avenue is a poured concrete bridge overpass with minimal concrete insets. The overpass was constructed in 1948 and allows transport over the rail lines leading to Howells Yard.



Northside Drive Overpass

Conclusion

There is a dearth of significant historic resources within the node which are either residential, commercial or public infrastructure. Some of these are nationally recognized as being historic while a majority of the resources are not recognized or protected at all. Currently, Berkeley Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Some of the commercial resources near the district are located within the boundaries although many are currently considered non-contributing. It would be prudent to revisit these nearby commercial buildings and to consider including them within the district boundaries. Future implications to this neighborhood include the building of new construction residential housing which incidentally has already begun. Many out of scale and inappropriate housing styles are being built in place of historic homes or the historic homes are being inappropriately modified thus jeopardizing their historic qualities.

The Loring Heights neighborhood is a significant historic district that should be considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Like Berkeley Park which is listed, Loring Heights is significant through aspects of architecture, community planning and development, and its associated transportation facets. Local protection should also be considered for this district. Loring Heights has a distinct historic fabric with clear boundaries. Further, the commercial buildings nearby could also be contributed as part of an historic district. The majority of the contributing and significant commercial resources run along the main corridors within this node as well. Like Berkeley Park, future implications to this neighborhood also include the building of newly constructed residential housing which tend to exude inappropriate housing styles, massing and scale.

The Hemphill Pumping Station is the only building within Atlanta Waterworks which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The current National Register Listing Form does little to highlight the many ancillary buildings which are associated with the site. In fact, it seems that none of these buildings are officially protected under any national or local regulations. Atlanta Waterworks should be considered an historic district including all of the buildings on site along with the reservoir basins, surrounding operational equipment and park-like land which belongs to the City. Atlanta Waterworks as an entire district or site could likely qualify under both national and local significance.

Narjoe Lumber Company is also historically significant to the industrial development in Atlanta. The open tracts of land and prime location make this site a target for growth similar to that seen at Atlantic Station, just next door. There are several historic modest wood and brick buildings on-site which could be soon demolished.

Most importantly, light industrial and commercial buildings along the main arteries within the node



Rendering for Northside Node Redevelopment Plan

are likely the most threatened. Some buildings have been sensitively rehabilitated and still serve as community businesses. However, there are many buildings which although contributing and somewhat intact, are threatened by traffic and potential future development. It is likely that the lots which these buildings sit on will become more valuable than the buildings themselves being so close to the Beltline. Developers could target these properties as potential assemblage projects, buying the lots for the land alone and razing these structures for uses combining office, retail, and residential functions. Consideration should be made to either incorpor-

ating these buildings into nearby residential neighborhoods and obtaining local designation or treating them as buildings along an historic corridor. Like buildings running along the Marietta Street Artery just south of the node, commercial buildings running along the main arteries around this node could be grouped together as a potential historic commercial district.



Rendering for Northside Node Redevelopment Plan

Considering the substantial level of residential and multi-use development already occurring within or around the Northside node, like in Berkeley Park, Loring Heights or Atlantic Station, it is obvious that the historic resources within the node are currently threatened. Additionally, redevelopment plans already engaged for the Beltline are projecting high-density development and rezoning in the heart of this node. As one would expect, such high-to-medium density areas are being planned along the main arteries of the node where a number of these historic buildings are still extant. It is foreseeable that that the land would ultimately be considered more valuable to builders and developers thereby increasing the chances of demolishing most of these commercial buildings. To encourage sensitive development in these areas, thereby incorporating these historic structures into design plans, these areas should be considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, on national and local levels of significance. With such designations, these resources could be protected while also providing the opportunity for tax credits and multiple incentives which might further attract developers to the area. Ultimately such protection of these historic resources could help retain the aesthetic and sense of place that the Northside node provides thus alluding to a piece of Atlanta's developmental history overall.