NPS Form 10-900
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

116

OMB No. 1024-0018

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Alexander, Cecil and Hermione, House
other names/site number Shenandoah

2. Location

street & number 2232 Mt. Paran Road, N.W.
city, town Atlanta ( ) **vicinity of**
county Fulton **code** 121
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 30327

( ) **not for publication**

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

(X) **private**
( ) **public-local**
( ) **public-state**
( ) **public-federal**

Category of Property:

(X) **building(s)**
( ) **district**
( ) **site**
( ) **structure**
( ) **object**

Number of Resources within Property:	**Contributing**	**Noncontributing**
buildings	1	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	1	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A
Name of previous listing: N/A
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

Richard C Cloues — 2.11.10

Signature of certifying official — Date

Dr. David Crass
Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property ( ) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

(✓) entered in the National Register — Joi Lollins — 3/25/10

( ) determined eligible for the National Register

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register

( ) removed from the National Register

( ) other, explain:

( ) see continuation sheet

Keeper of the National Register — Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Domestic: single dwelling

Current Functions:

Domestic: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Modern Movement: International Style

Materials:

foundation	Concrete
walls	Brick
roof	Asphalt
other	Glass

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Cecil and Hermione Alexander House is a modern house with a circular plan designed by Atlanta architect Cecil Alexander as his family's residence. Completed in 1957, the house is located on a hilltop site in northwest Atlanta between the Chattahoochee River and Interstate 75. The Alexander house is among the first modern houses in Atlanta and has curved brick walls, flat roof, and no references to past architectural styles. The house is organized around a central court and covered with a folded-plate (accordion) roof, which floods the interior with light. The court is ringed with metal posts that support the roof. According to Alexander, the circular plan "is so arranged that the family at least once or twice a day has to get together, just by necessity." The living and dining rooms arc across the north side of the house and are lined with floor-to-ceiling plate-glass windows. The kitchen, entry hall, bedrooms, and children's playroom are pie-shaped rooms of varying sizes. Interior walls are clad with walnut panels and red-brown brick, which forms the exterior walls. The landscape plan, prepared by Atlanta landscape architect Edward Dougherty, uses trees, shrubs, and rock outcrops to create a naturalistic setting.

Description:

The following description derives from Stephanie Cherry in "The Alexander Residence." Historic Property Information Form. November 8, 2008. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

The Alexander House is located at 2322 Mt. Paran Road in northwest Atlanta, Georgia. The house sits on a rise above the wooded property in a suburb of Atlanta (photos 1-4 and 9-11). The circular, one-story house rests on a basement with windows across the east side. (The term "side" is used

loosely to describe portions of this circular house.) The main floor plan includes various projections that extend beyond the main circular form, including a carport, office (originally a maid's quarters), kitchen projection that functions as a dining area, deck on the south side of the house, a guest room (which projects approximately five feet from the main façade on the southwest side of the house), a bathroom (which projects approximately five feet on the north side of the house), and a small deck on the north side of the house, which was added in a rehabilitation in 2006.

The brick-and-concrete foundation supports the post-and-lintel structural system, which is composed of steel beams and columns, many of which are visible on the interior. The flat, built-up roof projects five feet and with a molded fiberglass fascia, which replaced the original cedar fascia in the 1980s. The overhang protects the expansive plate-glass walls. The underside of this overhang is finished with a brushed-white plaster that is also used as the ceiling material in the living and dining areas and the entrance hallway (photo 7). The folded-plate roof above the central court is made of sheets of plywood ("The Architect's Family as Client" 1959, 134). The folded-plate roof is supported by a steel cable that is threaded through the bottom corners of the plywood. Each of the ten tent-shaped folds contains a fixed-pane that brings light into the court. A circular skylight in the center of the folded-plate roof also contains a skylight (photos 15-17, 22, 31-32, and 35-36).

The exterior walls are constructed of mottled tan-colored St. Joe-type brick laid in running bond (photos 6-7). This brick was popular during the mid-20th century and is also used throughout the interior of the house (Pound 8/21). Walnut paneling was used on the east side of the house.

The main entrance features a short walk and two steps built of north Georgia flagstone. The doorway features double doors made of lacquered walnut, carved to appear like sections of interior vertical paneling. Alexander was inspired by a trip to Scandinavia, where he admired similar doors (Alexander 10/23, 16). The entrance includes sidelights and a transom framed in wood. A skylight is located above the westernmost sidelight (photos 7-8).

The carport is entered from the west, and originally had an east wall, which was replaced with the wood rail that now delineates the east edge of the space. On the south, the wood columns that originally supported the roof were removed and replaced with three Doric columns composed of St. Joe brick (Alexander 11/10). These columns support the three massive wood ceiling beams. The southeast corner of the carport had a storage closet, which has been removed.

The square-shaped terrace is adjacent to the carport. It is smaller than the deck and laid in flagstone. It was described in the original plans as a "service yard," which adjoined the deck that was called the "dining terrace." In the original arrangement, this space housed a laundry rack (Alexander 11/10). The west and north walls that delineate this space are constructed of half-height wood panels and ribbon windows. The deck is constructed of steel-and-concrete posts with cypress planks. A planter located between the deck and the service yard was removed.

The east side of the house is two stories because the property slopes downward from west to east (photos 11-13 and 28). The wall that curves around the east and southeast sides of the main floor is composed of floor-to-ceiling sheets of glass that measure 9-feet wide and 11-feet long. The glass is

framed in cypress wood. This faceted-glass wall, which follows the curved, brick basement wall below, is shaded by the overhanging flat roof. Sliding-glass doors on the southeast side provide exterior access to the basement. In 2006, five square windows were added to bring light into the basement.

The master bedroom suite on the north side of the house is represented on the exterior by a faceted wall of glass windows. These windows were added in 2006 when the bedroom was enlarged and the deck was constructed. Alexander designed the windows to be shaded by the overhanging roof. The alteration resulted in the windows brought flush with the flat roof.

The northwest and west sides of the house feature the facades of the children's bedroom, playroom, and guest bedroom (photo 35). This side of the house is formed by a curved brick wall punctuated with large, three-part picture windows. The children's room and playroom windows are sheltered beneath the overhanging roof. The guest bedroom projects to the edge of the roof and includes a vertical window facing north and a stack of hopper windows adjacent to the main entrance.

The interior plan of the Alexander house consists of wedge-shaped public and private rooms organized around a central court (photos 15-17). The entrance hall enters the court from the south (photo 23). The court, which forms the geographical and social center of the house, provides access to nearly every room. Stairs to the basement are located on the south side of the court (photo 33). Light enters the court through the folded-plate roof and the sheet-glass windows in the living and dining rooms to the east. A ring of thin steel posts support the roof and forms a screen between the court and the living and dining areas. The curved walls on the north, south, and west sides are covered with walnut paneling (photos 16-17, 29, and 33). The raised brick walk forms an arc around the north side of the court to provide access to the bedrooms on the north and west sides of the house (photo 17).

Though an indoor space, the court has many qualities of an outdoor space as the architect had originally envisioned (photos 16-17, and 22). The court is laid in flagstone and flooded with natural light. Irregularly shaped planting beds, which feature rock outcrops, are planted with *aspidistra eliator* (also known as "cast iron plant") and potted jade and ficus plants. These are similar to plants the Alexanders included in the outdoor planting beds.

The court opens onto the living and dining rooms on the east side of the house (photos 15-16, 18-21, and 28). The living and dining rooms are a single open space, the largest room in the house. These rooms have views across the wooded property through the large sheet-glass walls. The freestanding fireplace is the focus of the living room. It consists of a circular stone hearth and a conical-shaped hood formed from riveted sheets of copper. The brick end wall on the north side of the living room, which projects through the glass wall at one end and past the living room ceiling at the other end, appears as a thin plane. The end wall on the south side is built of walnut paneling and separates the dining room from the kitchen. The south wall includes an entrance to the kitchen and a pass-though, which can be concealed by sliding doors. Like the brick north end wall, the walnut south wall projects beyond the glass wall.

The kitchen, located on the south side of the house, was completely rebuilt during the rehabilitation in 2006. It was expanded to include space that had served as the Alexander's kitchen, laundry, and sewing rooms (Smith 1969, 17). The maid's quarters south of the kitchen were redesigned for use as a bathroom and office.

The master bedroom suite includes the master bedroom, bath, and closet on the north side of the house. The master bedroom is a wedge-shaped room with a brick wall across the east side of the room (photos 26-27). In the 1980s, a circular skylight was added in the center of the room. In the 2006 rehabilitation, the north wall was rebuilt to the edge of the projecting roof, which added 125-square feet to the room, and an exterior wood deck was built. The bathroom was rebuilt and a study and two closets were combined to create a walk-in closet for the master bedroom. The closet door features a copper plate with mosaic tiles created by Israeli artist Perli Pelzig. It was one of a pair affixed to the front doors of the house (Alexander 10/23, 16). Alexander became associated with Pelzig when he designed mosaic floors for the Jewish Community Center on Peachtree Street in 1955 (Alexander 10/23, 16).

The children's suite is adjacent to the master bedroom on the north and west sides of the house (photos 24-25). These rooms, designed for Alexander's two daughters, includes two bedrooms (one is now called the playroom) joined by a small bathroom. In the 2006 rehabilitation, two bathroom closets were redesigned as a laundry room. The children's suite opens directly onto the central court.

The guest bedroom, described on a 1959 plan as "guest/library," on the southwest side of the house includes a bedroom and bathroom. The walls are built of drywall, except the south wall, which is laid in St. Joe brick. The guest bedroom can be entered from the entrance hall and the central court ("The Architect's Family as Client" 1959, 135). This room was placed adjacent to the entrance hall to permit ease of access for Hermi Alexander's father, who was in poor health and a regular visitor to the house ("The Architect's Family as Client" 1959, 134 and Pound 8/21). The room served as a nursery when the Alexander's third child was born in 1959.

The lower level is located under the east side of the house (photo 30). The west side and the area beneath the central court is unexcavated. The lower level includes the recreation room, which is the largest room, a bathroom, storage room, and mechanical room. The size and shape of the recreation room mirrors the living and dining rooms above. The recreation room is lit by three, square windows and sliding-glass doors. Lamps are located in a curved, freeform recession in the ceiling. Walls and piers are laid in St. Joe brick. A fireplace is located on the north wall. Originally used by Alexander as storage, the lower level was rebuilt as part of the rehabilitation in 2006. Shelves and cabinets were removed and additional windows were added.

The relationship of the house to the site and the landscaped setting was important to Alexander, who emphasized the harmony between the interior plan and exterior setting (photo 1). In a 1958 article, landscape architect Edward Daugherty said of the landscape and site, "This is a landscape that evolved out of the site. It is an acorn-shaped hill, and the house was set just below the crest, not on top, which would have suggested superiority to the surroundings. The arrangement of spaces was

based on function, and how they related to the house. We attempted to sculpt the land" (Richards 1958, 35).

The property that surrounds the house is mostly wooded and natural. The Alexanders were not avid gardeners, and wanted landscaping that would be self-sustaining (Daugherty 2005, 19). Granite boulders, which were native to the site, were emphasized. Native trees and shrubs, such as pine, oak, dogwood, hydrangea and azalea, which required little maintenance, were planted throughout the property. In his landscape plan, Daugherty used plantings typical of mid-20th-century landscapes, such as loquat, dogwood, vinca, yucca, photenias, and aspidistra. The driveway loop, which was redesigned in the 1990s, is planted in pine, oak, sorrell, and hickory trees. Dogwood trees are located throughout the property. Additionally, Daugherty designed the garden beds of the central court to include *Aspidistra Eliator*, also called "Cast Iron Plant," due to its hardiness as noted on plans by the landscape architect. Jade is mentioned repeatedly in Daugherty's plans and seen in a photograph of the interior court that appeared in *Atlanta at Home* in 1979.

In 1994, two acres of the original Alexander property were sold, which resulted in the rerouting of the driveway to the northwest. The new driveway is graded into a steep sloping hill and its walls are lined with stacked stone (photo 37).

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

( ) **nationally** (X) **statewide** ( ) **locally**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

( ) **A** ( ) **B** (X) **C** ( ) **D**

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): (X) **N/A**

( ) **A** ( ) **B** ( ) **C** ( ) **D** ( ) **E** ( ) **F** ( ) **G**

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture

Period of Significance:

1957

Significant Dates:

1957—Cecil Alexander completes his family's house on Mt. Paran Road in northwest Atlanta.

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Alexander, Cecil (architect)
Polychrone, Demetrios (engineer)
Daugherty, Edward (landscape architect)
May, Florence (interior designer)
Adams and Willis (general contractor)

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Cecil and Hermione Alexander House is significant in the area of architecture as the work of a master architect and because it is an outstanding example of modern architecture in Atlanta and Georgia. In 1957, Cecil Alexander, a leading modern architect in Atlanta, his wife Hermione, and their children moved into their new home in northwest Atlanta. Designed by Alexander, the modern house is striking for its circular plan and its sensitivity to the wooded hilltop site. The Alexander house is a significant work of modern architecture because of its circular plan, innovative use of space, and its use of modern materials and technology, such as sheet-glass walls and the folded-plate roof. The Alexander house is among the state's best examples of modernism constructed in the decades after World War II. The Alexander house was featured in *Progressive Architecture* in 1959 and *LIFE* magazine in 1957 and 1959.

The Alexander house is among a small group of houses in Georgia designed by modern architects in the middle of the 20th century. These unusual houses served as laboratories for architects to experiment with new ideas in materials, form, and methods of construction. These houses include elements of modernism, but can seldom be described as International Style. Paul M. Heffernan, director of the School of Architecture at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta (Georgia Tech) from 1956 to 1975, redesigned a Craftsman-style bungalow to serve as his campus residence and as a showplace for his philosophy of modern architecture. Macon-architect Ellamae Ellis League was among the few women architects in Georgia before World War II. League trained through correspondence courses and operated her own small architecture office. The split-level house she designed for her family in 1940 is clad in California redwood siding and reflects her knowledge of residential building traditions that were popular on the West Coast, though not so well known in Georgia. Mark Garrison Hampton, an internationally renowned Florida architect, designed a house at 5614 Sweetbriar Circle in the Fairway Oaks subdivision of Savannah in 1959. Designed for Albert Weis, who owned and managed a local movie theater chain, the house reflects the philosophy of the Sarasota School of Architecture, which was practiced along the Gulf Coast of Florida in the 1950s. The boxy, steel-framed house features glass-curtain walls, sliding doors, wood sunshades, verandahs, and patios, and is representative of a regional style of modernism sometimes called "Florida Modern."

Cecil Alexander was born in Atlanta in 1918. He studied architecture at Georgia Tech, Yale University, and the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University, where he studied under modern masters Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer. In 1948, Alexander returned to Atlanta where he worked for the firm Toombs and Creighton on the Rich's Store for Homes, one of the city's first International Style buildings. That same year, he formed a partnership with Bernard Rothschild. In 1958, Alexander and Rothschild merged with Finch, Barnes and Paschal to form FABRAP, one of the most progressive architectural firms in Atlanta. FABRAP specialized in corporate headquarters and large-scale venues, such as sports stadiums. In 1985, FABRAP merged with the Rosser engineering firm to form Rosser FABRAP International.

In 1985, Cecil Alexander retired as a full-time architect. He periodically collaborated with Atlanta architect John Portman, including projects associated with the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

Alexander's lifelong interest in racial equality is reflected in his proposed design for the Georgia state flag in 2000. Alexander's design, which removed Confederate imagery, was controversial and served as the state flag for only two years from 2001 to 2003. In 2000, the American Institute of Architects presented Alexander with the Whitney M. Young, Jr. award for his achievements in race relations. Cecil Alexander lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

National Register Criteria

C

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification)

1957

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The Cecil and Hermione Alexander House is the only contributing resource associated with this nomination. There are no noncontributing resources.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

The following history derives from Stephanie Cherry in "The Alexander Residence." Historic Property Information Form. November 8, 2008. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Cecil Alexander's Early Life and Career

Cecil Alexander, architect of the Cecil and Hermione Alexander House, was born Henry Alexander, Jr., on March 14, 1918, in Atlanta, Georgia. His father, Cecil Alexander, Sr., ran J. M. Alexander and Company, a downtown Atlanta hardware store founded by his grandfather, Julius Alexander in 1865, after his service in the Civil War. By the time of the younger Cecil's birth, J. M. Alexander and Company was a flourishing enterprise and the Alexanders became prominent members of Atlanta society and more particularly, Atlanta Jewish society (Garrett 1954, 307). Cecil's father was a charter member of the Atlanta Athletic Club and an early member of the Standard Club, the Civitan Club, the Atlanta Historical Society, and was active in community affairs (Garrett 1954, 307). Henry Alexander, Cecil's uncle, was a defense lawyer in the Leo Frank case. Cecil Alexander was named after this uncle, who was scheduled to serve overseas in World War I. However, Henry Alexander sustained injuries during training and never fought in the war. He married and had a child named Henry so his

five-year-old nephew Henry became known as Cecil (Alexander 2000).

Cecil Alexander grew up on St. Charles Place in the Virginia-Highland neighborhood, one of Atlanta's early streetcar suburbs. He speaks fondly of the city at that time, which he has described as a great deal "more manageable" (Alexander 2000). St. Charles Place was undergoing initial development at that time, and Alexander enjoyed watching the development and even scrounging lumber from local building sites to build a clubhouse and model airplanes. Mostly, he had no early inclination toward architecture. He attended local Atlanta schools, including Highland Elementary, Bass High School, Marist, and Boys High School (Alexander 2000).

Upon completing high school, Alexander was faced with a difficult choice. He excelled in art and aspired to be an artist, but his father felt that this was not a lucrative aspiration and directed him to choose a different career. He enrolled at Georgia Tech in 1935, taking the basic freshmen curriculum. After two difficult weeks in chemistry class, he transferred to the architecture program because it did not require chemistry. Alexander felt that architecture was the major closest to art that was offered at Georgia Tech (Alexander 2000).

Alexander excelled in architecture, although he criticized some of the practices of Tech's School of Architecture, which was focused on the Beaux-Arts methods of design rather than modernism. Alexander observed that the architecture program did not incorporate elements of urban planning or landscape design. It focused on building design. In addition, Georgia Tech followed the Beaux-Arts practice of establishing a *parti*, the central idea of a design and then refining it, but never abandoning it. Georgia Tech students were directed to complete an initial rendering of a design. Students were not permitted to discard their original ideas or to discuss ideas with one another, which Alexander saw as having been a great disadvantage to students (Alexander 2000).

Alexander remained at Tech for one year, before he transferred to Yale University in 1936. He repeated his freshmen year again at Yale, as the school did not recognize credits from Georgia Tech. Alexander enjoyed Yale as it took him away from Atlanta and allowed interaction with students and faculty from throughout the U.S. and the world. At Yale, Alexander was in the company of classmates, such as Henry Ford II and McGeorge Bundy, who later became National Security Advisor to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Alexander recalled many talented classmates, though (except for one black classmate, with whom Alexander became friends and credits as having influenced his views on race relations) all were white and male. At Yale, he studied architecture, but found it was dominated by the Beaux-Arts tradition, and only occasionally included the Modern Movement. Alexander was influenced by the modern architect Eliel Saarinen, who was a guest lecturer. His first foray into modern design occurred when he designed a modern school as part of his class work at Yale (Alexander 10/23, 13). Cecil also benefited from Yale's proximity to New York, where he worked two summers with the architectural firm Kahn and Jacobs, who were known for their modern skyscrapers (Alexander 10/23, 13).

Alexander graduated from Yale with a bachelor's degree in architecture in 1940, and immediately entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's graduate program in architecture and industrial design. However, he was disappointed in MIT and found some of the professors and even the dean

uninspiring (Alexander 10/23, 13). He completed one year at MIT.

One of Alexander's earliest aspirations was to become a pilot. He learned to fly as part of the Civilian Pilot Program at Roosevelt Field on Long Island, New York, during his summer employment session with Kahn and Jacobs. He obtained his commercial pilot's license in 1940. The next year he joined the Navy, partly as a result of an encounter with a Jewish couple who had escaped Nazi Germany (Alexander 10/23, 14). He trained at Naval Air Stations located at the DeKalb-Peachtree Airport, Jacksonville, Florida, and Fort Worth, Texas. For four months, he flew DC-3s for Penn Central Airlines in Washington, D.C. Alexander served 16 months overseas before returning to the U.S. and attending engineering school in Memphis, Tennessee, to complete his military career.

In 1942, he met a young Smith College student named Hermione "Hermi" Weil, whom he married in California in 1943. In 1945, Alexander entered Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, which was directed by Walter Gropius. Gropius was the first director of the Bauhaus in Germany, the school of art and architecture where many of the principles of modern architecture were established. Gropius, who taught at Harvard from 1937 until 1952, incorporated the Bauhaus design philosophy into the Harvard curriculum, which was popular with the students. Marcel Breuer, who taught furniture design at the Bauhaus, taught at Harvard from 1937 until 1946. Gropius and Breuer were instrumental in ending the Beaux-Arts tradition of architectural education in the United States. Alexander described his years at Harvard as "probably the top architecture experience of all time" (Alexander 2000). The teachings of Harvard formed the basis of Alexander's own architectural theory. He recalled Breuer as his most influential instructor and the only critic he ever trained under that would work with a student's own ideas, inspire him or her, and encourage him or her to get the best out of each idea (Alexander 10/23, 20). At Harvard, Cecil trained with inspiring faculty and talented students, including I. M. Pei. (Alexander 2000).

In 1947, Alexander graduated from Harvard and struck out on his own in New York. He began at the office of J. Gordon Carr, but the next year returned to Atlanta. Alexander joined the firm Toombs and Creighton as a draftsman and at night taught design at Georgia Tech (Alexander 10/23, 20). At Toombs and Creighton, he participated in projects throughout the Southeast, although when plans for the Federal Reserve building in Jacksonville, Florida, were put on hold he left the firm.

In 1948, Alexander and Bernard Rothschild, a fellow Atlanta architect, formed Alexander and Rothschild. The firm began in an upstairs bedroom of Rothschild's in-law's house on Waverly Way in Atlanta. Charles Massell, a boyhood friend of Alexander's, convinced his uncle, Ben Massell, who founded the Massell Realty Company, that "[Cecil] had gone to Harvard and knew everything" (Alexander 2005). Ben Massell hired Alexander and Rothschild to design the Peachtree-Seventh Building in Atlanta. Completed in 1949, this was the second-largest office building in Atlanta (Pou 1951), and was featured in *Architectural Record* (Pou 1951; Alexander 2001). It is significant as an early example of the International Style in Atlanta.

The Peachtree-Seventh Building helped Alexander and Rothschild rise to architectural prominence in Atlanta. The firm soon had residential and commercial jobs throughout Atlanta, including the Peachtree-Baker Building, completed in 1956 (Craig 2007), which features an early use of a glass-

curtain wall in Atlanta (Craig 2007; Alexander 10/23, 5) and the Jewish Community Center at 1745 Peachtree Street N.E. in Atlanta. In 1957, Alexander was named president of the Georgia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (Alexander 11/10).

Alexander designed only eight houses in his career. These houses are modern and located in Atlanta. Alexander found that "house clients, otherwise sane, go bonkers while designing their houses" (Alexander 10/23, 4). Alexander did not enjoy residential design because projects were built as often stripped-down, scaled-down versions of his designs. He would often have to tell clients that what they desired to incorporate was going to far exceed their budget, at which point the clients would then request removal of most, if not all, of the best elements of the designs (Alexander 2005, 14). As his own client, Alexander built a house for his family on Mt. Paran Road in which he was able to maintain his vision of a modern house that incorporates a circular plan, innovative use of space, and modern materials and technology.

The Alexander House on Mt. Paran Road

Cecil and Hermione Alexander purchased a 6.52-acre lot on Mt. Paran Road in northwest Atlanta on February 27, 1953. Alexander discovered the Mt. Paran property during the search for a site for client Alvin Ferst's residence. When Ferst decided against the property, Alexander purchased it (Alexander 10/23, 11). The Alexanders then began planning their house to take advantage of the hilltop site, which offered views beyond the wooded property. The Alexanders named their house "Shenandoah," a Native-American term meaning "daughter of the stars." As Cecil Alexander explained, "Lying on the floor, looking up through the oculus in the center of the roof revealed a circle crowded with stars. Thus the name." (Alexander 10/23).

Alexander designed the house to meet two overarching needs. First, the Alexanders were fond of entertaining and wanted a house suitable for hosting small and large groups ("The Architect's Family as Client" 1959, 134). The open-floor plan, in which large spaces flow into one another, was perfectly suited for entertaining. In addition, the design included a pass-through between the kitchen and dining area, which served as a bar or buffet, or could be closed to isolate the kitchen from congregating guests.

Second, the house had to meet the needs of the Alexander family, which included Cecil, Hermi, and their two daughters, 11-year-old Terri and 8-year-old Judith. (The Alexander's son Doug was born in 1959.) The house went through multiple design incarnations. Original sketches by Alexander show the house as rectangular or square shaped. According to Alexander, he began with the idea of an L-shaped house. He then progressed to the shape of a rectangle, then a square, and finally a circle (Alexander 10/23, 11). The circular plan evolved out of a year of planning in which the Alexanders decided that more conventionally shaped designs wasted too much space. Alexander believed that they included too many "lost corners" (Richards 1958, 35). Furthermore, the Alexanders wanted a design in which family unity was the focus of everyday life and which recognized each member of their family as an individual. They felt this was best achieved with a circular plan. In a 1958 speech to the Georgia Chapter of American Institute of Architects, Alexander explained that, "The house is

so arranged that the family at least once or twice a day has to get together, just by necessity" (Richards 1958, 35). In a 1959 feature in *Progressive Architecture*, Alexander further explained that, "It was our conception that the family should feel itself a unit—thus, the circular plan. . . .The central covered and sky-lighted court has constituted a constant place of meeting. At the same time, each individual should be recognized, thus the rooms are all oriented out toward their own view."

Alexander originally planned the court as an outdoor space that encircled a large oak tree on the site. However, these plans were changed early in the design process when the tree, which was struck by lightening, was removed (Salter 1969, 17). The court was redesigned as an interior space that was inspired by the Pantheon in Rome, which Cecil and Hermi visited in 1953 (Alexander 10/23). The folded-plate roof that covers the court enabled Alexander to bring more light into the space. Alexander first used this roof system on his own house and later on a house on West Wesley Road. Finally, Alexander envisioned the raised brick walk that occupies the north side of the court as separated from the planting beds by vertical panels, as seen in one of his early sketches, but Hermi convinced him to leave the court an undivided open space (Alexander 10/23, 16).

Alexander designed the house to be built of poured-in-place concrete, but this "scared all contractors" so that Alexander chose to use steel and wood with a brick veneer. Alexander maintained that the design was much more "honest" in concrete (Alexander 10/23, 5). Hermi wanted used brick, but Alexander did not approve because he felt one could not control the final appearance of used brick (Alexander 2008). They settled on St. Joe brick from Hermi's home state of Louisiana. Additionally, the circular plan intimidated some contractors, but Alexander refused to alter his plans. Alexander hired the contractors Adams and Willis to build the house. Adams personally supervised the construction (Alexander 10/23, 10).

The Alexander house exhibits the architect's philosophy of modern architecture. The design is conveyed through the circular plan and the use of modern materials and construction techniques. There is no ornament on the house, which features large expanses of unadorned wall surfaces. Steel and glass are used to integrate interior spaces with the wooded landscape. The house is organized around the central court, which includes indoor plants and a rock garden. The east wall of the house is composed of floor-to-ceiling sheet glass, which opens up the interior to the exterior landscape. Alice Richards, writing in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, explained, "The design doesn't stop with the house. Trees become a part of the furnishings. You see a wall of trees rather than glass walls" (Richards 1958, 35). The Alexanders even lit the exterior as one might illuminate an interior space by placing lights in the surrounding trees in order make them visible from house at night (Salter 1969, 17). The free-standing fireplace is the only feature that Alexander designed as a barrier between the interior and exterior. Alexander placed it in the center of the living room to serve as a "visual and psychological barrier with the outdoors as a background—similar to the caveman building his fire at the mouth of the cave" (Salter 1969, 19).

In 1957, a week before Interstate 75 opened northwest of Atlanta, the Alexander family moved into their house on Mt. Paran Road. Alexander submitted plans and photos of the house to *Architectural Record*, which published a story on the house (Alexander 10/23). The house received national attention when it appeared in *LIFE* magazine on November 11, 1957 in a feature entitled,

"Tomorrows Life Today: Man's New World, Part II." The story, which was about technological advances in the home, included a photo of the Alexander residence with the caption, "Creased roof, on a house in Atlanta, is made of laminated plywood folded around plastic skylight and held together by cable threaded through lower edge. Light and cheap, it provides unsupported span for modern, uncluttered interior" (*LIFE* magazine 1957, 133). Alexander later explained that the plywood roof was not "cheap."

In April 1958, Alexander, landscape architect Edward Daugherty, and interior designer Florence May spoke about planning the house during a seminar sponsored by the Georgia Chapter of the AIA (Richards 1958, 35). That same month, *The Florida Architect*, the official journal of the Florida chapter of the AIA, featured an aerial photograph of the house on the cover of its Regional Conference Program issue. The accompanying article included several photos and a floor plan of the house, which they toured as part of their regional conference that was held in Atlanta ("Home on a Georgia Hill, 1958, 13). In November 1959, the house was featured in *Progressive Architecture*, which devoted five pages to the house in an article entitled "The Architect's Family as Client." This article featured photographs, plans, and information on four self-designed architect's residences ("The Architect's Family as Client" 1959, 134).

In his book, *The South Builds: New Architecture in the Old South*, Edward Waugh explored what was "most characteristic and most striking" in schools, institutional buildings, industrial buildings, and houses in the southeastern United States. The book describes the Alexander house as having "an incredible sense of living in the open," and as "one of the rare examples in which an architect has taken a powerful constructivist form and used it with skill to dramatize, without letting the form dominate the entire space enclosed" (Waugh 1960, 38). Throughout the 1960s, the house was publicized in local newspapers and was repeatedly acclaimed for its kitchen storage (Salter 1969, 19), and master bathroom design ("Four Luxuries that will Brighten your Routine of Bathing and Dressing"). The house was also featured on an Atlanta Art Association tour of "Atlanta's Finest Homes," offered to conference attendees in the 1960s. In 1962, Alexander's house won an honorable mention for design excellence at the AIA's South Atlantic Regional Conference.

Engineers, contractors, and landscape architects that worked on the Alexander house include:

Demetrios N. (James) Polychrone, engineer for the Alexander house, received his undergraduate education at Pomona College, a master's degree from the College of Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1947, and another degree in structural engineering from MIT in 1949. He founded the firm Demerios N. Polychrone & Associates in Atlanta and taught structural engineering at Georgia Tech in the 1950s (Alexander 11/10). In 1964, he became the director of the School of Architecture at Auburn University (Varner 2008).

Adams and Willis were the contractors for the Alexander house. E. B. Adams and R. H. Willis graduated from Georgia Tech in 1941 ("Phi Epsilon Pi Fraternity Begins Modern Building" 1950). They were the contractors for the Xi Chapter of the Phi Epsilon Phi Fraternity's "ultra modern design" fraternity house at 6th Street and Techwood Drive, built in 1950. Adam and Willis won the Alexander house commission with the lowest bid of $93,000 (Alexander 11/10).

Edward Daugherty, landscape architect for the Alexander house, is one of the most significant mid-20th-century landscape architects in Atlanta and the Southeast. He designed the grounds of Georgia Tech, the Atlanta History Center, the Georgia Governor's Mansion, and the Atlanta Botanical Gardens. He is noted for his attention to scale and his dedication to the client's experience in his landscapes. His designs are often naturalistic and self-sustaining with plants that were popular during the mid-20th century. Daugherty received a master's degree at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, where he trained under Bremmer Pond, W.G. Holford, and Walter Gropius. While at Harvard, he acquired an appreciation for the comprehensive and collaborative design process (Daugherty 2001). In 1953, Daugherty returned to Atlanta and opened an independent landscape architecture practice (Catron 2008). Alexander and Daugherty met as classmates at Harvard. Later, they worked together on the Peachtree-Seventh Building (Alexander 10/23, 15). Alexander recalls that he "never considered anyone else" for the landscape design of his house on Mt. Paran Road (Alexander 10/23). Daugherty is best known for his institutional landscapes, but he also designed the grounds of many houses, including the Comstock, Hale, and Childress houses. He was made a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1971. The next year he received an Honor Award in Landscape Architecture for the Historic Walk section of Marietta. In 1987, he received an Award of Excellence for Lifelong Contributions to Landscape Architecture in Atlanta from the Atlanta Urban Design Commission.

Cecil Alexander and FABRAP

In 1958, Alexander and Rothschild merged with the Atlanta architectural firm Finch, Barnes and Paschal to form FABRAP. Bill Finch, whom Alexander had known as a student at Georgia Tech, had been practicing architecture in Atlanta for 20 years and was an associate professor at Georgia Tech's School of Architecture. He had partnered with fellow Georgia Tech alum Miller Barnes in 1948 to form Finch and Barnes. The firm was well known for their modern designs. Finch designed commercial and industrial projects and built several houses in the Golf View subdivision in Atlanta. Caraker Paschal, a Georgia Tech alum, joined Finch and Barnes as an associate in 1950 and became a partner in the firm in 1957 (Craig 2007). FABRAP, an acronym for the names of the five principal architects, Finch, Alexander, Barnes, Rothschild, and Paschal, became one of the largest and most prominent architectural firms in Atlanta and Southeast in the second half of the 20th century.

FABRAP's commissions include some of the best-known buildings in Atlanta. The firm was organized in a team system in which a principal in the firm and a project architect were placed in charge of each project from initial design until the building was completed (Gauphin 1979, 108). Alexander served as principal designer for the Peachtree Street headquarters of the Georgia Power Company in 1958. Alexander recalled that the firm wanted to design this building to suit the needs of Georgia Power. After the winning the commission, Alexander went to the Georgia Power offices to interview a dozen Georgia Power officials about their desires for the new building (Alexander 10/23, 4). FABRAP earned a reputation for modern buildings tailored to the needs of the client.

Alexander became increasingly involved with urban renewal and civil rights. He believed that "architects have an obligation to humanity and . . . should have an impact on society" (Gauphin 1979, 110) and in January 1958, he became the leader of Atlanta's Citizen's Advisory Committee on Urban Renewal, the first ongoing biracial committee in Atlanta (Darmer 2000). By year's end, Mayor William B. Hartsfield and Urban Renewal Coordinator Colonel Malcolm Jones credited Alexander as "largely responsible for securing enthusiastic backing for city redevelopment in Atlanta" (Central Atlanta Association 1959, 1). The committee was modeled on the Allegheny Conference in Pittsburgh, a city entrenched in urban renewal. The Allegheny Conference had been successful because it convinced Pittsburgh's leading citizens to participate. Alexander followed this approach and by 1965, three of the five renewal projects that the committee had proposed were underway. These projects included work on 26,000 acres in Atlanta ("Atlantan Outlines Renewal Project" 1965). Alexander also served as vice chairman of the Atlanta Metropolitan Planning Commission and as the national director of the National Council for Good Cities ("Atlantan Outlines Renewal Project" 1965).

In 1966, Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr., appointed Cecil Alexander as chairman of the Housing Resources Committee, which was charged with the construction of 16,800 public housing units by 1970. Between 1966 and 1970, Alexander directed the completion of 13,714 units and planned another 5,812 (Pennington 1970, 9).

In the 1960s, Alexander became active in the American Civil Rights Movement. He served as the representative from Georgia on President Lyndon Johnson's Civil Rights Committee. Alexander suggested the formation of the committee to the president's attorney Hobart Taylor, whom Alexander met in Atlanta in 1965 at a dinner held in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., who had received the Nobel Peace Prize the previous year.

Alexander's work in civil rights and urban renewal nearly cost FABRAP several important projects. The "closest call" Alexander recalls came in 1965, when the firm was selected to design Atlanta's First National Bank Building, a 40-story tower, the tallest in the Southeast (Gournay 1993, 22). James Robinson, chief executive officer for the bank, caught wind of Alexander's civil rights activities and requested that the firm be dropped from the job. Alexander's friend Lou Oliver, head of Sears-Roebuck's southeastern division and First National Bank board member, convinced Robinson to stay with FABRAP. Alexander received recognition for his work in civil rights and in 2000, the AIA presented him with the Whitney M. Young, Jr. award for his achievements in race relations.

FABRAP prospered as they shaped the skyline of Atlanta in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1964, the firm designed the Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium on land cleared for urban renewal. FABRAP designed the stadium with the Atlanta firm, Heery and Heery. The spin-off firm, Finch-Heery, developed a national reputation for large facilities, such as stadiums and convention centers. In 1969, FABRAP designed Phipps Plaza, which was Atlanta's first multi-level mall. They also designed the Urban Life Building at Georgia State University, MARTA's Five Points rail station (in joint venture with Heery and Heery), and the Richard B. Russell Federal Building, which was completed in 1979.

Cecil Alexander participated in projects for corporate headquarters buildings in Atlanta. In 1979, the firm designed the Coca-Cola headquarters building on North Avenue. Alexander recalls that Jim

Robinson, who in the 1960s objected to Alexander's racial activism, introduced Alexander to the chief executive of the Coca-Cola Company (Alexander 10/23, 9). In 1982, the firm, in partnership with Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, designed the Southern Bell headquarters on West Peachtree Street. Its location adjacent to the MARTA station on North Avenue led to the building's distinctive inward taper at its base.

FABRAP established a national reputation throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. They designed the Dinkler Hotel Chain, the Medical College of Georgia and in 1968 the University of South Carolina stadium in Columbia, South Carolina. Alexander oversaw the design of the Gulf States Paper Company headquarters in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He was also the principal in charge of the IBM offices in Huntsville, Alabama, the Georgia Power Building in Macon, and the Federal Building at the World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1982. FABRAP designed buildings for Culboro Tobacco Company in Bloomfield, Connecticut, the headquarters building for Black and Decker in Maryland; Cincinnati Riverfront Stadium, built in 1970; and Rich Football Stadium (now Ralph Wilson Stadium) in Buffalo, New York, completed between 1972 and 1973. In 1985, FABRAP merged with the Rosser engineering firm to form Rosser FABRAP International.

Cecil Alexander and the Death of Hermi Alexander

On October 25, 1983, a few yards from their home, a drunk driver hit Cecil and Hermi in a head-on traffic collision. Cecil was seriously injured and spent several months recovering in the hospital. Hermi was killed. In response to his wife's death, Alexander organized the non-profit Committee to Combat Drunk and Drugged Driving. The committee was instrumental in passing a Georgia law in 1984, which enforced tougher penalties for juveniles driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol (Alexander 2008, unpublished manuscript). Several months later, the National Uniform 21 Minimum Drinking Age Act was signed into law.

After Hermi's death, the Alexander house was never the same to Cecil. In 1987, he married Helen Eisemann, a family friend. That year, the architect decided to sell his house because there were, "too many memories about that house," for Alexander and his second wife (Alexander 10/23, 18). Gerry Hull, an inventor who had visited the house on a previous occasion, purchased the property on April 6, 1987. (Alexander 10/23, 17). The Hull family owned the house until 2005, when they sold the property to Theodore E.G. and Susan H. Pound. The Pounds, who purchased the house in April 2005, rehabilitated the house from August 2005 to May 2006. Architects David C. Fowler and Busman Studios directed the rehabilitation and Cecil Alexander consulted on the work. The Pound family moved into the house in May 2006.

The Alexander house presently sits on 3.68 acres of land. The property originally included 6.52 acres. In the 1970s, the Alexanders purchased a two-acre lot abutting their property to the south. Upon selling the house to the Hulls in 1987, Alexander retained ownership of this second lot, which he later sold for residential development. In 1994, Gerry Hull sold the two southernmost acres of the original Alexander property, which reduced the property to its current acreage. The Hull sale reduced the buffer between the house and its neighbors so that development is now visible on the south side

of the house. This also resulted in the rerouting of the driveway to the northwest, whereas it originally approached the house from the southwest. When the driveway was redesigned it was made shorter in length with additional parking and, because it's graded into a steep sloping hill, its walls are lined with stacked stone.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) **N/A**

( ) **preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
( ) **preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued**
date issued:
( ) **previously listed in the National Register**
( ) **previously determined eligible by the National Register**
( ) **designated a National Historic Landmark**
( ) **recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #**
( ) **recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #**

Primary location of additional data:

(X) **State historic preservation office**
( ) **Other State Agency**
( ) **Federal agency**
( ) **Local government**
( ) **University**
( ) **Other, Specify Repository:**

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.68 acres.

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 737140 Northing 3749140

Verbal Boundary Description

The historic district boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached map, which is drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the property and all of the intact resources historically associated with the Cecil and Hermione Alexander House.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Steven Moffson, Architectural Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 254 Washington Street, Ground Level
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30034
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** February 10, 2010
e-mail steven.moffson@dnr.state.ga.us

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) ( ) not applicable

name/title Stephanie Cherry
organization Graduate student, Heritage Preservation Program, Georgia State University
mailing address N/A
city or town N/A **state** N/A **zip code** N/A
telephone N/A
e-mail N/A

( ) **property owner**
( ) **consultant**
( ) **regional development center preservation planner**
(X) **other:**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Theodore E. G. and Susan H. Pound
organization (if applicable) N/A
mailing address 2322 Mt. Paran Road, N.W.
city or town Atlanta **state** GA **zip code** 30327
e-mail (optional) N/A

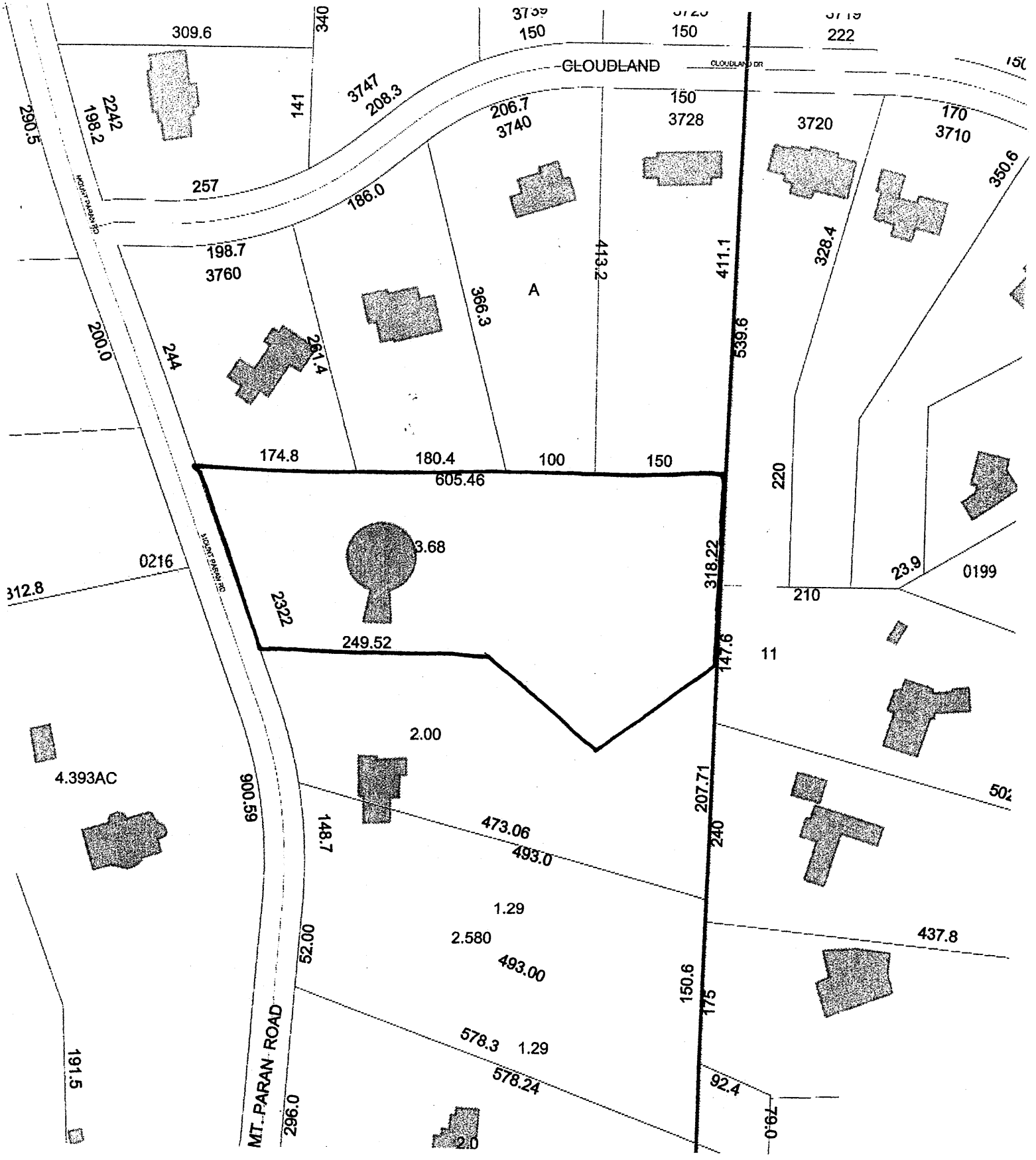
Name of Property: Cecil and Hermione Alexander House
City or Vicinity: Atlanta
County: Fulton
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: June 2009

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 37

1. Main entrance, photographer facing northeast.
2. Main entrance, photographer facing northeast.
3. Main entrance, photographer facing east.
4. Main entrance, photographer facing northeast.
5. Main entrance, photographer facing east.
6. Main entrance, photographer facing northeast.
7. Main entrance, photographer facing north.
8. Main entrance, photographer facing north.
9. East side, photographer facing west.
10. East side, photographer facing west.
11. East side, photographer facing west.
12. East side with terrace steps, photographer facing northwest.
13. East side, detail, photographer facing north.
14. East side, second-floor terrace, photographer facing northwest.
15. Interior, atrium with view to living room, photographer facing northeast.
16. Interior, atrium with view to living room and dining room, photographer facing east.

17. Interior, atrium, photographer facing west.
18. Interior, dining room with view to living room, photographer facing north.
19. Interior, dining room, photographer facing north.
20. Interior, atrium with views to living room and dining room, photographer facing east.
21. Interior, dining room with view to kitchen, photographer facing southwest.
22. Interior, atrium, elevation detail, photographer facing south.
23. Interior, entrance hall, photographer facing southwest.
24. Interior, bathroom corridor, photographer facing northwest.
25. Interior, playroom, photographer facing west.
26. Interior, master bedroom, photographer facing north.
27. Interior, master bedroom, photographer facing northeast.
28. South side with view to dining room and living room, photographer facing north.
29. Interior, atrium with stairs to lower level, photographer facing south.
30. Interior, lower level, recreation room, photographer facing northeast.
31. Interior, atrium, detail of roof.
32. Interior, atrium, detail of roof.
33. Interior, atrium, detail of wall and handrail, photographer facing south.
34. Interior, alcove in atrium with material collected on Alexander House, photographer facing west.
35. West side, photographer facing east.
36. West side, detail of roof, photographer facing northeast.
37. Drive with view to Mt. Paran Road, photographer facing northwest.

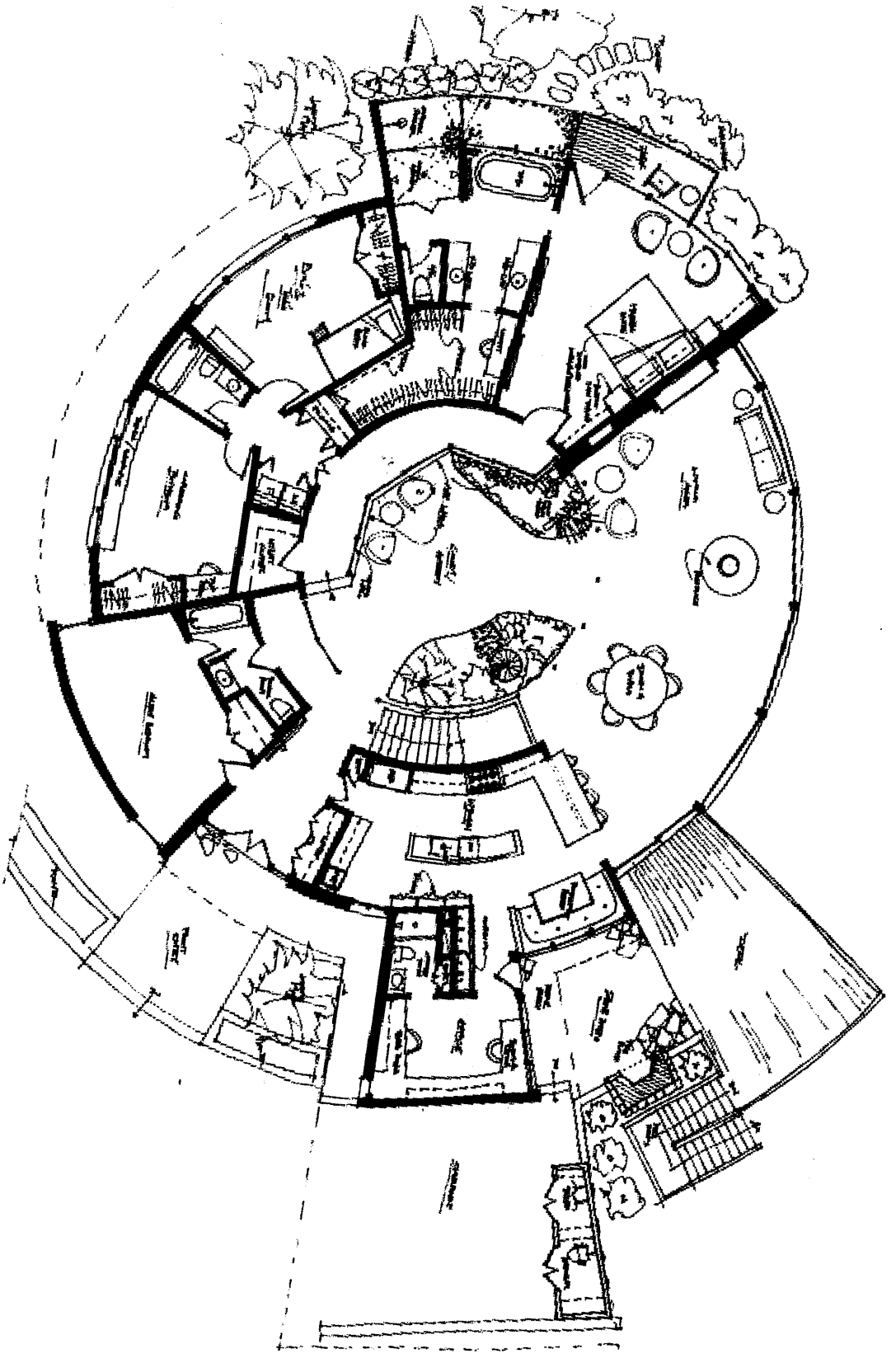


Cecil and Hermione Alexander House
2322 Mt. Paran Road, N.W.
Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia

National Register boundary

Approximate scale: 1 inch = 150 feet

N



Cecil and Hermione Alexander House
2322 Mt. Paran Road, N.W.
Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia

Main Floor Plan, 2006

No scale.