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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Rosedale Park Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number roughly bounded by Woodcrest Place, 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. S, 18<sup>th</sup> St. S, and 25<sup>th</sup> Ct. S not for publication N/A  
city or town Homewood vicinity N/A  
state Alabama code AL county Jefferson code 073 zip code 35209

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility 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  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Elizabeth Ann Brown*  
Signature of certifying official

February 12, 2004  
Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register

- See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

*for* \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

*Daniel J. Ori* 3/31/04

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check only one box.)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>35</u>	<u>10</u> buildings
	<u>      </u> sites
	<u>      </u> structures
	<u>      </u> objects
<u>35</u>	<u>10</u> Total

Number of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>Single Dwelling</u>
	<u>Multiple Dwelling</u>
	<u>Secondary Structure</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>School</u>
<u>Industry/Processing/Extraction</u>	<u>Waterworks</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>Single Dwelling</u>
	<u>Multiple Dwelling</u>
<u>Religious</u>	<u>Church School</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

- Late Victorian: Romanesque
- Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movement: Bungalow/Craftsman
- Modern Movement:
- Other: Minimal Traditional

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation concrete block
- stone
- roof asphalt
- walls wood
- stone
- brick

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition on continuation sheet/s.)

USDI/NPS Registration Form

Property Name Rosedale Park Historic District  
County and State Jefferson County, Alabama

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

<u>Architecture</u>	_____
<u>Ethnic Heritage</u>	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Period of Significance** c. 1890 – late 1940s

**Significant Dates** N/A

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** N/A

**Architect/Builder** N/A

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- 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:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository  
Homewood Public Library; Birmingham Public Library

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** approx. 25 acres

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
1	16	519350	3705300	3	16	519640	3705070
2	16	519760	3705350	4	16	519460	3705010
				5	16	519340	3705100

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Pamela S. King, Consultant & Christy Anderson (AHC Reviewer)

organization PSKing Associates date 12-15-02

street & number 3307 Altaloma Way telephone 205-823-1679

city or town Birmingham state Alabama zip code 35216

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Name of Property:   Rosedale Park Historic District    
County and State:   Jefferson County, Alabama  

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**Addresses**

18<sup>th</sup> Place South

2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2526, 2529, No # (School/Muslim Center),  
2531

19<sup>th</sup> Place South

2533, 2534, 1536, 2537, 2540, 2544

19<sup>th</sup> Street South

2507, 2511

25<sup>th</sup> Court South

1832, 1900, 2530, 1816, 1818, 1820, 1822, 1824, 1825

26<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

1816, 1818, 1820, 1822, 1824, 1828, 1902, 1904, 1906, 1908, 1910, 1916

Highway 31

No #, No #

Woodcrest Place

2100

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Section 7 Page 2

Name of Property: Rosedale Park Historic District  
County and State: Jefferson County, Alabama

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**Narrative Description**

The Rosedale Park Historic District consists of approximately 25 acres in the northeastern most portion of Homewood in southern Jefferson County. Homewood sits just over Red Mountain in the Shades Valley portion of Shades Valley and is bounded on its southern edge by Vestavia Hills, to the east by Mountain Brook, and to the north by Birmingham. The District itself is bounded on the east by the Red Mountain Expressway, on the south by 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue, by the heavily commercial Montgomery Highway (US Highway 31) on its western edge, which bisected it from the rest of Rosedale (now Rosedale Historic District), and to the north by new commercial development. At least one-fourth of the historic resources were destroyed during the 1960s as part of the construction of the Red Mountain Expressway and the further commercialization of Homewood's primary commercial area along the Montgomery Highway.

The Rosedale Park Historic District contains all of the remaining resources in Rosedale Park, much of which was included in the Clifton Land Company's original purchase. Of the 45 resources, 35 are contributing, and 10 are non-contributing. All of the extant historic resources are residential with the very significant exception of the 1944 three story Rosedale School (Inv. # 24) which was constructed entirely of quarried rock prominently on a hill at the base of Red Mountain; and the excellent 1910 Romanesque-style Rosedale water pump station (Inv. # 45). The school has since closed and is now the Muslim Center.

The Rosedale Park Historic District contains some of the oldest resources in the entire Rosedale area (including what is now west Rosedale/Rosedale Historic District), including one built c. 1890 (Inv. # 1); four built c. 1900 (Inv. #s 3, 4, 16, 40) all of which are Victorian – era L-plan houses; and four that were built c. 1910s including two shotguns (Inv. # 17, 39), a central passage house (Inv. # 37), and the Romanesque Rosedale Pump station (Inv. # 45). The remaining were all built during the 1920s through the late 1940s including several c. 1920s Craftsman style bungalows (Inv. #s 13, 27, 28, 32, 35), a c. 1920s Craftsman style shotgun (Inv. 26), and the 1944 Rosedale School (Inv. # 24). The District includes six Victorian – era L-cottages which remains one of the best concentrations in the entire Rosedale area, four extant shotgun houses, five c. 1920s Craftsman style bungalows (Inv. #s 13, 27, 28, 32, 35), two c. 1920s duplexes, one Central Passage House, and one pyramidal house which is now non-contributing. The remainder are late 1930s – early 1940s bungalows and Minimal Traditional styles. There are no sidewalks, and many of the streets were not paved until after 1955.

Of the ten non-contributing resources, four are two story c. 1960s brick apartment buildings and represent the most significant intrusion into the neighborhood. The remaining are c. 1960s Ranch style houses, the completely remodeled Afton Lee Community Center (c. 1989) (Inv. # 30), and two c. 1920s-30s bungalows that were substantially remodeled (Inv. #s 2, 29). Many of the contributing resources include c. 1960s aluminum windows, and many have added c. 1960s-70s vinyl or aluminum siding. All of these, however, retain their historic styles and form.

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Name of Property: Rosedale Park Historic District  
County and State: Jefferson County, Alabama

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The Rosedale Park Historic District remains largely intact but is under extraordinary pressure from private developers who want to demolish the historic housing and replace it with new housing. The City of Homewood has recently completed a major public improvement/beautification project along the 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue boundary of the District that has provided a lush streetscape and gateway into the District.

**Archaeological Component**

Although no archaeological testing has been conducted, the potential for subsurface materials remains.

**Inventory**

1. House. 2507 19<sup>th</sup> St. (c.1890; c. 1960s).  
One and one half story Victorian house with basement, refaced with aluminum siding c. 1960s, with a gable on hip asphalt roof. There is one interior brick chimney, c. 1960s 2:2 double hung metal windows throughout, front porch with round wood columns, and a brick foundation with stucco.
2. House. 2511 19<sup>th</sup> St. (c.1920s; c. 1940s; c. 1960s).  
One story bungalow faced with c. 1940s asbestos shingles with a cross gabled asphalt roof. There is one central brick chimney; c. 1960s 2:2 fixed metal windows throughout, partial recessed front porch with c. 1960s wrought iron rails and stucco wall, and a stucco foundation.  
(NC)
3. House. 1832 25 Court South. (c.1900; c.1960s).  
One story wood Victorian-era L-plan house with a basement and cross hip asphalt roof. There is one central brick chimney, c. 1960s 2:2 double hung metal windows throughout, and a partial recessed porch with a shed roof, wood rafters, and c. 1960s wrought posts. There is also a stucco foundation.
  - A. Garage. (c.1920s).  
One story concrete block garage.
4. House. 1900 25<sup>th</sup> Court South. (c.1900; c.1960s).  
One story L-plan Victorian-era house, refaced with aluminum siding c. 1960s, with a cross gabled asphalt roof. There are 4:4 double hung wood windows throughout, full front porch with square wood columns, and a brick foundation.
5. House. 2530 25<sup>th</sup> Court South. (c.1930s-40s; c. 1960s).  
One story minimal traditional house, refaced with aluminum siding c. 1960s, with a spraddle asphalt roof with side hip. There is one central brick chimney, 1:1 double hung wood windows throughout, stoop porch with an entrance on the side, and a poured concrete foundation.

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Name of Property: Rosedale Park Historic District  
County and State: Jefferson County, Alabama

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6. House. 2534 19<sup>th</sup> Place. (c. early 1940s).  
One story rubble stone bungalow with a front gabled asphalt roof. There are metal casement windows throughout, full front porch with rock columns, and a rubble stone and rock foundation.
7. House. 2533 19<sup>th</sup> Place. (c. late 1930s- c. early 1940s; c. 1960s).  
One story bungalow, refaced with aluminum siding c. 1960s, with an asphalt roof with a low hip. There are fixed wood windows throughout, front porch, and a brick foundation.
8. House. 1536 19<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c. 1920s; c. early 1940s).  
One story bungalow faced with c. early 1940s asbestos shingles with a front gabled asphalt roof. There is one interior beige brick chimney, 6:6 double hung wood windows throughout, full front porch with simple square wood columns, and a concrete block foundation.
9. House. 2537 19<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c. 1940s).  
One story minimal traditional house faced with asphalt shingles with a side gabled asphalt roof. There are 6:6 double hung wood windows throughout, an entry porch with a gable and wrought iron posts, and a concrete block foundation.
10. House. 2540 19<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c. 1940s; c. 1960s).  
One story wood minimal traditional house with a hip asphalt roof. There are c. 1960s fixed metal windows throughout, a partial open front porch with wrought iron posts, and a concrete block foundation.
11. House. 2544 19<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c. 1960s).  
One story wood and brick Ranch house with a side gabled asphalt roof. There are 6:6 fixed metal windows throughout, an entry porch with wrought iron posts, and a brick foundation. (NC)
12. House. 2531 18<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c. 1940s).  
One story wood bungalow with a front gabled asphalt roof. There are 1:1 horizontal double hung wood windows throughout, a recessed front porch with a gable and wrought iron rail, and a brick and concrete block foundation.
13. House. 2526 18<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c. 1920s).  
One story weatherboard Craftsman style bungalow with a front gabled asphalt roof. There is one exterior brick chimney, 4:1 double hung vertical wood windows throughout, and a partial front porch with wood rafters and knee braces, and decorative wood trim. There is also a brick foundation.
14. Apartment Building. 2524 18<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c. 1960s).  
Two story brick apartment building with a side gabled asphalt roof. There are fixed metal windows throughout, an attached stoop porch with wrought iron posts, and a brick foundation. (NC)



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Name of Property: Rosedale Park Historic District  
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15. House. 2529 18<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c.1920s; c.1940s; c. 1960s).  
One story beige brick bungalow with a front gabled asphalt roof with a vent. There is one interior brick chimney, c. 1960s 1:1 fixed metal windows throughout, full front porch with c. 1940s wrought iron posts, and a brick foundation.
  16. House. 2522 18<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c.1900).  
One story weatherboard L-plan Victorian-era house with an asphalt gable on hip roof. There are 3:1 double hung vertical wood windows throughout, a partial recessed front porch, and a concrete block foundation.
  17. House. 2523 18<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c.1910s; c. 1960s).  
One story shotgun, refaced c. 1960s with aluminum siding, with a cross-gabled asphalt roof. There are c. 1960s fixed wood windows throughout, full front porch, and a concrete block foundation.
  18. Apartment Building. 2520 18<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c.1960s).  
Two story weatherboard and brick veneer apartment building with a front gabled asphalt roof. There are fixed metal windows throughout, a stoop porch, and a brick foundation. (NC)
  19. Apartment Building. 2521 18<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c.1960s).  
Two story weatherboard and brick veneer apartment building with a front gabled asphalt roof. There are fixed metal windows throughout and a brick foundation. (NC)
  20. Duplex. 2519 18<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c.1920s).  
One story weatherboard duplex with a front gable asphalt roof. There are two stoop porches with a gable over each entrance, and a poured concrete foundation.
  21. Duplex. 2518 18<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c.1920s).  
One story weatherboard duplex with a front gabled asphalt roof. There are two stoop porches with gables, and a brick foundation.
  22. House. 2516 18<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c.1920s; c.1950s).  
One story weatherboard L-plan Victorian-era house with a hip asphalt roof. There are c. 1950s fixed metal windows throughout, partial recessed front porch with rock piers and square wood columns, and a stone and rock foundation.
  23. Apartment Building. 2517 18<sup>th</sup> Place South. (c.1960s).  
Two story brick veneer apartment building with a front gabled asphalt roof. There are fixed metal windows throughout and there is a brick foundation. (NC)

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24. **Rosedale School/Muslim Center. No # 25<sup>th</sup> Court South. (1944; c. mid-1950s).**  
Three story cut stone school building with eight bays and a flat roof. There is one interior concrete block chimney, c. mid-1950s fixed metal windows with operable window panels divided into bays by cut stone pilasters, a recessed entrance at the eastern edge of the structure with a slight "H" and a rock foundation. There is also a stone foundation throughout and a stone wall surrounding a front parking area.
25. **House. 1816 25<sup>th</sup> Court South. (c.1920s).**  
One story weatherboard and cut stone bungalow with a front gabled asphalt roof. There are 6:6 double hung wood windows throughout, full façade front porch with massive stone foundation/wall, columns, and cheek walls, and stone pier with infill foundation.
26. **House. 1818 25<sup>th</sup> Court South. (c.1920s).**  
One story weatherboard shotgun with Craftsman influences with a front gabled asphalt roof with wood rafter tails. There is one central brick chimney, 2:2 horizontal double hung wood windows throughout, and a concrete block foundation.
27. **House. 1820 25<sup>th</sup> Court South. (c.1920s).**  
One story weatherboard and stucco Craftsman style bungalow with a multiple front gabled asphalt roof that has a very decorative wood vent and wood knee braces. There are 8:8 double hung wood windows throughout, a partial full porch with a gable, decorative wood shingles and stucco piers, and there is a brick foundation.
28. **House. 1822 25<sup>th</sup> Court South. (c.1920s).**  
One story weatherboard Craftsman style bungalow with a front gabled asphalt roof with wood rafter tails. There is one central brick chimney, 6:6 double hung wood windows throughout, and a brick foundation.
29. **House. 1824 25<sup>th</sup> Court South. (c.1920s; c.1960s).**  
One story bungalow, refaced with vinyl siding c. 1960s, with a pyramidal asphalt roof. There are c. 1960s fixed horizontal metal windows throughout, and a front porch with a gable that was enclosed c. 1960s. There is also a concrete block foundation. (NC)
30. **Lee Community Center. 1825 25<sup>th</sup> Court South. (remodeled c. 1980s).**  
One story concrete block building with a flat roof, fixed metal windows throughout and a poured concrete foundation. (NC)
31. **House. No # Highway 31. (c.1940s).**  
One story minimal traditional house faced with asphalt shingles with a side gabled asphalt roof. There are 2:2 double hung horizontal wood windows throughout and a concrete block foundation.

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Name of Property: Rosedale Park Historic District  
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32. House. No # Highway 31. (c. late 1930s; c. 1950s).  
One story Craftsman style bungalow faced with asphalt shingles with a front gabled asphalt roof and wood rafter tails. There are c. 1950s fixed metal windows throughout, full front porch with concrete block piers and concrete caps, and a concrete block foundation.
  33. House. 1816 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. South. (c. 1970s).  
One story brick Ranch-style house with a basement and a hip asphalt roof. There is one exterior brick chimney, fixed metal windows throughout, recessed front porch with brick piers and iron posts, and a brick foundation. (NC)
  34. House. 1818 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. South. (c. 1970s).  
One story brick Ranch-style house with a basement and a side gabled asphalt roof. There are 6:6 fixed metal windows throughout and a brick foundation. (NC)
  35. House. 1820 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. (c. 1920s-30s; c. 1960s).  
One story Craftsman style bungalow, refaced c. 1960s with vinyl siding, with a c. 1960s side addition and a front gabled asphalt roof with wood knee braces. There are double hung wood window on the side and fixed metal windows on the front, full front porch with c. 1960s wrought iron posts, and a stone foundation.
  36. House. 1822 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. (c. late 1920s).  
One story weatherboard bungalow with off center front gable roof with a wood vent. There are double hung wood windows, a recessed arched front porch with, and a brick foundation. There are also concrete steps leading to the street.
  37. House. 1824 26<sup>th</sup> Ave South. (c. 1910s; c. 1960s).  
One story central passage house, refaced c. 1960s with aluminum siding, with a side gabled asphalt roof. There are c. 1960s fixed metal windows throughout, full front porch with a shed roof, and a stone foundation.
  38. House. 1828 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. South. (c. 1920s-30s; c. 1960s).  
One story bungalow, refaced c. 1960s with aluminum siding, with a front gabled asphalt roof. There are c. 1960s fixed metal windows throughout, a full front porch with simple square wood columns and rails, and a stone foundation.
  39. House. 1902 26<sup>th</sup> Ave South. (c. 1910s; c. 1960s).  
One story weatherboard shotgun with a front gabled asphalt roof, c. 1960s fixed metal windows throughout, and a brick and concrete block foundation. There are also concrete steps leading to the street.

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40. House. 1904 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. South. (c.1900; c.1960s).  
One story L-plan Victorian-era house, refaced c. 1960s with vinyl siding, with a double front cross-gabled asphalt roof. There are c. 1960s double hung metal windows throughout, a recessed front porch, and a rock foundation.
41. House. 1906 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. South. (c.1940s-50s:1970s).  
One story brick minimal traditional house with a gable on hip asphalt roof and a wood vent. There is one interior brick chimney, c. 1970s fixed metal windows throughout, a partial recessed front porch, and a brick foundation.
42. House. 1908 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. South. (c.1930s; c.1960s).  
One story bungalow, refaced c. 1960s with aluminum siding, with a front gabled asphalt roof. There are c. 1960s 6:6 double hung metal windows throughout and a c. 1960s brick foundation.  
(NC)
43. House. 1910 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. South. (c.1930s; c.1960s).  
One story weatherboard shotgun house with a front gabled asphalt roof. There are fixed metal windows throughout and there is a concrete block foundation. There are also concrete steps leading to the street.
44. House. 1916 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. South. (c.1930s-40s).  
One story weatherboard bungalow with a front gabled asphalt roof. There are fixed metal windows throughout and there is a full attached porch. There is a concrete block foundation.
45. Rosedale Pump station. 2100 Woodcrest Place. (c. 1910).  
One story brick and limestone Romanesque style industrial building with a hip asphalt roof, and highly decorative brick and limestone details. There are arched multi-paned steel windows with limestone insets throughout, a brick foundation, and interior industrial machinery remains visible from the street.

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**Criterion A, Ethnic Heritage**

Rosedale Park, the eastern portion of Rosedale, is significant as the first suburb developed over Red Mountain in Jefferson County, Alabama, and, as such, the first African-American suburb likewise built. Planned in the late 1800s for white families, delayed transportation across the Mountain convinced developers that whites would not buy homes without access to transportation, and decided, instead to sell to black families who typically had fewer housing options. From then until 1927, Rosedale Park grew as a working and middle class African American neighborhood. In 1927, it merged with several white adjacent suburbs to form the City of Homewood, continuously one of the most prosperous municipalities in the County. Since then, Rosedale Park has remained exclusively African-American. Though surrounded by white suburbs, and not allowed to expand, Rosedale Park is significant as one of the most well established African-American neighborhoods in Jefferson County complete with Rosedale School, which was rebuilt in 1944 as a large, impressive quarried stone structure (Inv. # 24), as well as single family and duplex homes. While U.S. 31 ran through the neighborhood since the 1930s, later widening and ensuing noncontributing commercial development split the neighborhood in half.

**Criterion C, Architecture**

Rosedale Park is significant was its fine concentration of working and middle class architecture built by and for African Americans including Victorian L-plan houses, bungalows including several Craftsman style bungalows (Inv. #s 13, 27, 28, 32, 35), shotguns including one extant Craftsman style shotgun (Inv. # 26), and minimal traditional styles, and for its institutional architecture built for African-Americans, the 1944 Rosedale School (Inv. # 24). It also contains the outstanding c. 1910 Romanesque Rosedale Pump station, built to service the neighborhoods north of Red Mountain.

**HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

On December 31, 1886, a group of investors formed the Clifton Land Company and bought a large tract of land south of Red Mountain in Shades Valley, known then by some as Death Valley, with the dream of developing a new industrial town to compete with Birmingham and Bessemer (Birmingham News-Age Herald, 6-2-29; Hudson, p. 32; The Birmingham News, 10-12-79). Until 1892, the company assembled relatively large sections of undeveloped land including all of the Rosedale Historic District in addition to land southwest of it that has since been commercial. At the same time, the Theo Smith addition was purchased from Rosedale Street to Walnut Street (now 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue) in what became Rosedale Park; and from 1898-1899, the South Birmingham Land Company purchased additional land just north of these parcels(Summe, Homewood: The Life of a City, p. 17).

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On December 31, 1886, the land company formed the Red Mountain Railroad Company to begin service over the mountain, and on September 24, 1889, it opened its first line. The line ran against great odds as it climbed a very steep grade requiring two switchbacks to get the cars down the south slope, and did not run through to Birmingham. Two years later, the Red Mountain line gained rights to connect with the Highland Avenue and Belt line to provide service into Birmingham, but the line was never built and the rights were transferred to the Highland Avenue Company. Moreover, the Red Mountain line owned no rolling stock and had to lease cars from other companies. Within two years, according to transportation historian Alvin Hudson, the company went out of business (Hudson, p. 32).

Due primarily to this seemingly insurmountable transportation obstacle and the dragging pace of development over the mountain in Shades Valley, the Clifton Land Company, reorganized as South Birmingham Land Company, decided that white families would not buy houses with no access to transportation, and chose, instead, to sell the lots to black families who typically had fewer housing alternatives. By the turn of the century, there were a number of houses in Rosedale including one that remains extant in the Rosedale Park Historic District, a one and one half story house with basement, gable on hip roof, and a full front porch with round wood columns (Inv. # 1). Moreover, according to local historian Sheryl Summe, before the turn of the century, both whites and blacks lived in Rosedale Park and there were, likewise, schools for each. Black children, according to 1898 City Directories, attended Rosedale School where Sylvester Jones served as its principal (Summe, Chapter 4). Moreover, according to the 1900 census, 95% of Rosedale residents – were home owners who owned their houses “mortgage free;” and just over 35% of all residents, including renters, were laborers many of whom worked for the railroads, furnaces, or machine shops ( U. S. Census, 1900).

Black families continued to buy and build in Rosedale at the turn-of-the-century, and four houses remain from this period all of which a variety of Victorian – era L plan houses each with a different roof and window configurations (Inv. #s 3,4 16, 40). In 1909, Damon Lee whose family later included the first black, and first woman, councilor in Homewood and the largest landowners in Rosedale, came to Rosedale and opened a grocery store. Lee, born in 1870 to former slaves, had only a fourth grade education but a fiery determination to make something of himself. When the store first opened, according to his son Afton Lee who grew up in his father’s store and later became the first black councilman for the City of Homewood as well as vice president of Birmingham’s black-owned Citizen’s Federal Savings and Loan, the only two people who could make deliveries to the store were the kerosene man and the bread man. “The rest of the supplies,” he remembered, “we had to get ourselves.” “We had a mule and a wagon then. This whole valley was nothing but woods, and we had a dirt road running in front of the store” (The Birmingham News, 10-4-79; Our Valley).

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In 1909, the Edgewood line -- reportedly the first line in Alabama where its owners personally financed a line to their property and simultaneously doubled the value of their property adjacent to it -- of the Birmingham & Edgewood Electric Railway Company was built over the mountain and began to open up Shades Valley to further development. That same year, the Edgewood Electric Railway company incorporated which ran from the end of the South Highlands line in Birmingham to Edgewood over the mountain. The grade was too steep, at that time, for traction motors and the line would have to cross the Birmingham Mineral Railroad tracks that ran along the crest of the mountain at grade. Consequently, a 72-foot deep cut was made in the mountain with Jefferson County donating \$10,000 to the project in exchange for a 16-foot roadway through the cut (Birmingham News, 6-3-1911; Hudson, p. 127).

A newspaper article promised the new service in 1910, but the line did not finally open until June 1 1911, an accomplishment, according to one writer, "thought to be too gigantic to be undertaken." Operated by G. H. Harris, who was also general superintendent of the Birmingham Railway, Light and Power Company, the new line came right through the center of Rosedale and brought with it the first big opportunity for development. According to one newspaper account, the new line "will have a great deal to do with real estate values. . . . All along the new line, property will be advancing in value and will be rapidly building up. It is already in demand and holders do not care to sell at the customary figures" (Birmingham News, 6-3-11; Birmingham News-Age Herald, 6-1-1911; The Birmingham News, 10-22-79).

By that time, the area was predominantly black. According to 1910 U. S. Census, there were 916 residents in Rosedale including 763 blacks, 84 mulattoes, and 153 whites. (U. S. Census, 1910). By then, most houses in Rosedale were one story wood shotgun or Victorian style L-plan houses typical of others throughout Jefferson County. Three remain in the district including two shotguns (Inv. #s 17, 39), and a central passage house with a stone foundation (Inv. # 37). In addition, in 1910, in anticipation of a new wave of development, the Rosedale Pump station (Inv. # 45) was constructed in a remarkable Romanesque style just east of Rosedale Park's residential area facing what is today the Red Mountain Expressway (Summe, p. 96). From 1912 to the early 1920s, however, white families began to move into Shades Valley.

According to one observer who came to the area just prior to that in 1911, "practically all Negro residents of Rosedale are home owners and those who have kept their property are now quite well to do." In addition, he wrote, roads were "the old country road type," and there was only one "modern" house, the home of Stephen Smith, in the new white community of Edgewood. Ten years later, in 1921, the "old Edgewood" community had grown so much that it soon incorporated primarily so that it could adopt an ordinance prohibiting cows from running freely through the area that contained a number of dairies and hundreds of dairy cows who grazed there (Birmingham News-Age Herald, 6-2-1929).

By the summer of 1926, the town of Edgewood had grown so much that a series of public hearings began in order to discuss providing public improvements. Soon, residents approved a plan to improve streets, construct a municipal building, create fire and police protection, construct sanitary sewers, and increase school facilities.

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One year later, the white communities of Edgewood and Grove Park combined with African-American Rosedale to form the new City of Homewood with a total population of 6,000 and public coffers of \$3,000,000. The white and black communities existed side by side, but the original 110 acres of Rosedale would have no room for growth. From 1926 to 1929, according to a Birmingham News article, the City of Homewood provided a number of public improvements to its citizens including "many miles," of improved streets, curbs, gutters and sidewalks, and sanitary sewers were being installed throughout. In addition, the commercial area along Montgomery highway, brick buildings to house stores, banks, bakeries, restaurants, building and loan associations, theatres, and service stations, were going up on both sides of the street that were "all new, replac{ing} negro shacks." Many blacks who owned and sold this land, according to a 1929 newspaper article, "realized handsome profits on their investments." There was also an area of Rosedale known as a "bottleneck" by the Homewood City Council. In a decision to widen that portion of the street, it voted to "cut off the fronts of buildings and {built} on the back" (Birmingham News, 6-2-1929).

Throughout the 1920s, and by its incorporation into Homewood, both working and middle class black families built houses in the Rosedale Park Historic District. Most were one story weatherboard bungalows including one beige brick house (Inv. # 15), one weatherboard and cut stone bungalow (Inv. # 25), and several Craftsman style houses with knee braces or exposed rafter tails (Inv. #s 13, 27, 28, 32, 35). In addition, one L- plan house with a hip roof remains extant in the district (Inv. # 22), one c. shotgun (Inv. # 26), and two identical weatherboard duplexes (Inv. #s 20, 21).

New businesses also came to Rosedale at large including the Rosedale Hardware and Auto Supply Co. and a filling station both scheduled to be built in 1926 (Manufacturer's Record, 11-11-26). And by 1929, according to Sanborn maps, there were also many businesses on both sides of Montgomery Highway primarily filling stations, several dry cleaners, a railroad station adjacent to the extant Union Mission Baptist Church, and at least one restaurant most of which were removed by the 1960s. There was also a community center in Rosedale Park that no longer remains (Sanborn maps, 1929, "Memoirs of Rosedale," c. 1970). One year later, Damon Lee had completed a two-story building along 18<sup>th</sup> Street that was used as a hotel and boarding house, according to Adrienne Lee, and his sons operated the family coal yard (Shades Valley Sun, 3-23-45; Stewart, The Road South). Only the hotel/boarding house remains in the Rosedale Historic District.

Throughout the late 1920s, Rosedale citizens worked with the new City of Homewood to improve their neighborhoods. In August 1929, Ordinance No. 73 was approved to construct a storm water throughout the new city including the Central Avenue and the Smith Moorer Brewer Addition in east Rosedale; and assessments were approved for affected owners. At the October 21 meeting of the City Council, however, Afton Lee, Rosedale businessman and property owner land in Blocks 29 and 30 of the South Birmingham Land Company survey just west of Central Avenue, protested the assessment saying that the owners in that area were unable to pay the assessment. Unfortunately for Lee, the Council resolved the "the Council here considered the protests made to the final . . . approval . . . of Ordinance No. 75, and the Council being of the opinion that said protests are not well taken, the same {were} hereby in all respects disallowed." (Minutes Book of the City of Homewood, 1928)



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But, Lee and other Rosedale owners were not finished. To the very next order of business, adoption of Ordinance No. 74, identified as a "general drainage ordinance," Lee was joined by his father, Damon Lee, Mrs. O. L. Mulkey, Mrs. D. W. Lanison, C. A. Hallman, P. F. Fox, B. F. Fox, and Dick Mourer. They objected orally, to "doing this work during the period of depression . . . ." In addition, W. E. Campbell filed a written protest saying that "I am opposed to {the} storm sewer about to be passed on Central Avenue and all avenues and streets in Rosedale and Homewood." Again, however, after the Council determined that these owners represented only a "small fraction" of the affected owners, the protest was once again "disallowed" (Minute Book, 10-21-1928).

One week later, the City Council approved an ordinance to pave Montgomery Highway. It was noted that flooding there had cost the State Highway Department approximately " a million and a half dollars," and, because of that, the State "would be unable at this time to participate in paving the Montgomery Highway through Homewood, but that if the citizens and the City would go ahead with this project the State would later endeavor to do its full duty in this regard." To that, Dr. Elkourie of the newly annexed Hollywood section, and a "number of business men in the Rosedale section stated that in view of the situation as outlined by the State, they desired the City to go ahead with the paving at the expense of the property owners" (Minute Book, 10-28-1928).

Less than a month later, on November 19, 1928, the City passed Ordinance 17-A to provide primarily street improvements in eastern Rosedale in the Theo Smith addition to Rosedale; and the Smith Moorer Brewer Additions to Rosedale Park, and to assess the owners for the costs. In the Theo Smith Addition, the sum of \$12.50 was assessed to Mrs. A. F. Smith for one lot in Block 7; and \$12.51 each for two adjacent lots. Mrs. B. Lewis was also assessed \$12.50 for one lot in Block 8; C. L. Engel was assessed \$17.50 for one lot in Block 7; J. F. Cunningham was assess \$17.50 each for two lots in Block 8; and Luke Elmore was assessed \$12.50 for one lot in Block 15 (Minutes Book, 11-19-28).

At the same time, several owners were assessed in Block 15 of Smith Moorer Brewer Addition to Rosedale Park. Reuben and Glen Roberts were assessed \$29.75 for one lot, and J. B. Parrott was assessed the same for each of two lots. B. F. Cox was assessed \$34.74 for one lot, and just over \$29.00 for two additional lots; a Dr. Cobern was assessed nearly \$35.00 for each of two lots, and Mrs. Stella Parker was assessed \$34.65 for just one lot. Separate public improvements were approved at the same meeting mostly to Blocks 6,9,10, and 16 of Theo Smith Addition, but also to Mrs. A. F. Smith in the Smith Moorer Brewer Addition. Within a couple of weeks, the City published all additional owners affected by recently approved improvements. These were J. W. McDougal, T. Banks Grand, C. B. Parrish, Mrs. Warren H. Shedd, Mrs. H. Z. Reneau, Mrs. Elizabeth Porter for three separate lots, N. Resha, Joe Sharble, t. D. Parsons, P. E. Goree and wife, Mrs. Eula Truitt, T. R. Johnson, C. P. Thiemonge for two lots, M. C. Northington, Equitable Investment Co., Mrs. F. L. Wade, L. O. Parsons, Mrs. Annie Carney, B. C. I. & Land Company which had surveyed this area, Alec Eassnar, Geo. E. Johnston, and Mrs. Ora Snelling (Minutes, 11-19-28 and 12-2-28).

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In the early 1930s, Rosedale benefited from a variety of additional public improvement projects that significantly spurred its development and modernization. In April 1931, a portion of Montgomery Highway was slated to be widened by about 400 feet in order to "eliminate traffic danger hazards. . . {because} "one pedestrian had been killed and several injured" there. In addition, the Mayor added, widening the highway would also "develop the Rosedale business section. . . ." At the same meeting, Council approved the "installation of a bell to be placed in the business section of Rosedale to replace the telephone now in service from the Signal Service Company." "The charge," they continued, " would be \$42.50, including all equipment, and the Telephone Company would charge \$.30 each per year for the use of the poles. This price included two push buttons, one in the Clerk's office and one in the fire department" (Minute Book, April 1931).

During the same period, the City Council approved the construction of a sanitary sewer in the western part of Rosedale parallel with Central Avenue and, in the eastern part of the neighborhood, parallel to Rosedale Street. A third segment was approved for the Shades Height Grant's Addition to Rosedale, an area which was mostly demolished during the 1960s-70s to allow for the development of the city's commercial areas, as well as the expansion of Highway 31 and construction of the Red Mountain Expressway. About the same time, the Mayor requested that there be a one hour parking limit in the Rosedale business area along Montgomery Avenue, which was eventually widened to an 80 foot wide road, and that no parking occur there closer than fifteen feet from the fire plugs (Minute Book, 1930 and 1932).

Further improvements to Rosedale's business area occurred intermittently for the next several years including a new telephone booth in September 1932. In parts of the residential areas, roads were scheduled to be resurfaced but due to an inability to secure the necessary 2000 yards of rock crusher, the City Engineer appealed to Council to be able to substitute a different filler. To this the Council agreed and the work was approved. By the fall of 1933, Rosedale had garbage collection once a week. A few years later, in the midst of a particularly hot summer and nasty battle with mosquitoes, the City voted to spray the pests in order to avoid further "infantile paralysis" and that the service would be free to citizens "without regard for color or race." One week, white communities would be sprayed, and the next, black communities would be sprayed; this alternating schedule was to be followed throughout the program (Minute Book, 1932; 11-13-33; 8-3-36).

Accompanying these public improvements, new houses were built in Rosedale Park throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Most were one story bungalows (Inv. #s 7, 12, 32, 44) including one nice rubble stone house with metal casement windows, rock columns, and a rubble stone and rock foundation (Inv. # 6); and minimal traditional styles faced with weatherboard or asphalt shingles or brick, with hip or side gable roofs (Inv. #s 9, 10, 31, 41). One c. late 1930s-early 1940s shotgun also remains with a series of concrete steps leading to the street (Inv. # 43).

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But, by far, it seems, the most significant issue addressed in the 1930s concerning Rosedale had to do with its school, and, beginning in August, 1930, the Council addressed a variety of school-related issues. The first, but by no means the last, was to approve installment of a sanitary sewer to connect with "the colored school" (Minute Book, August 1930).

Until the 1920s, according to Homewood historian Summe, Rosedale children attended school at the home of B. M. Montgomery on Loveless Street. By the late 1920s, a brand new Rosedale School had been built on a hill in east Rosedale, in Rosedale Park, between Eighth Street (now Twenty-fifth Court) and Walnut Street (now Twenty-Sixth Avenue) near where the present 1944 building remains in the Rosedale Park Historic District (Inv. # 24; Sanborn Map, 1929). Being one of the few Negro schools in the County, moreover, it served black students from all over the county including Shannon, Sungo, Shades Mountain, Leeds, Lovett, Trussville, Irondale, Hammon Slope, Oak Grove, Mason City, Ishkooda, Oxmoor, and Overton. It was a large handsome two story wood frame school with a hip roof, central entrance with an awning, flanked by a series of five probably 3:1 double hung wood windows; on the second floor the central bay contained the same 3:1 double hung wood windows and two smaller windows on either side, flanked by a series of five 3:1 double hung wood windows. There was also a side entrance with an awning. A petition by Rosedale residents for the city to obtain a small area on Loveless Street for a playground area was received by City Council, but apparently never acted upon (Summe, p. 121).

By the early 1930s, according to Summe, in spite of the effects of the Great Depression, Homewood's schools fared better than most in Jefferson County in part due to its City Council's passage of an \$85,000 bond initiative for improvements. This money went towards improvements of all three Homewood schools, including Rosedale School and Edgewood School. Unfortunately, Rosedale School, along with other highly elevated city streets, had never received adequate fireplugs. As a result, the school burned at least twice during the 1930s, but once in response to the City's tardy rebuilding schedule, Damon Lee offered several lots that he owned on Loveless to build a new school. Soon thereafter, the City completed improvements at the burned school, and included improved street access, grading for a new playground, and landscaping the school grounds (Minute Book, 1930 and 1932; Summe, p. 120).

Rosedale School, at that time, had an impressive program offering some advanced-level classes including foreign languages. Moreover, in addition to its elementary curriculum, the school became, even during the economically strapped 1930s, one of the first black schools in the State to receive approval to establish a full secondary curriculum. The high school, in fact, had a band and a chorus that performed at city hall, one for black audiences and one for whites on April 2 and 3, 1936 (Summe, p. 120; Minute Book, 3-11-36).

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At least by early 1935, the members of the Colored Civic League of Homewood began to meet with the Homewood City County to request further improvements for Rosedale School. In November 1935, it was reported to the citizen group that the city engineer did not believe further improvements could be made to the existing playground site, but that there was land across the street that could be opened up for that purpose. It was decided that negotiations would proceed between the League and the City to try to accomplish that. In October, League spokesman, John Lewis, appeared before the City Council and requested again a "suitable place" for children to play so that they would not play in the streets. To that, the chairman of the City's Streets and Parks Committee said that they would work with Rosedale residents, and the city engineer, to open up the park (Minute Book, 1935).

Only a few months later, however, due to recent zoning changes in Homewood that threatened property values in presumably white neighborhoods close to Rosedale, a move began to build a new Rosedale School. The particular complainant at the February 10, 1936 meeting, maintained that new zoning had reduced his property values, and, if the Council would approve it, he would "be willing to move without cost, the present foundation and chimneys to such location as may be selected elsewhere." To that, the matter was referred to the Public Building, Health, and Sanitation committee to change the location of the school (Minute Book, 2-10-36).

Two weeks later, the Council reported that it had appeared before the Jefferson County Board of Education in an effort to change location of the Rosedale School. The Board, however, responded that there were no available locations within the City of Homewood, and that the "finances" of the Board of Education "were such that they could not expend such funds as would be required to secure available grounds for the school." Upon that, the Council accepted and approved the report; and within a couple of months, a new fireplug was approved for the present schoolhouse, which would be paid for by the Jefferson County Board of Education (Minute Book, 1936).

But, by summer 1936, the Homewood Colored Civic League as well as the Rosedale P. T. A. were pressing the city for better school and community facilities. In May, apparently at the close of a successful school term, Mamie C. Lee, president of the Rosedale P. T. A., appeared before City Council and thanked the City for expending the funds necessary to keep the school open for a "full term" of nine months (Minutes, August 1936).

In August, the League appeared before Council to embark on perhaps its most ambitious campaign to date asking the City to include Rosedale in its appropriation to be used to build a new civic center and recreational facility. The Council responded that, if the black citizens of Homewood would raise the money for a new facility (apparently to replace the existing one shown on the 1929 Sanborn map), "the city would be willing to do the same for them as it is for the white citizens of the community." Within several months, the Mayor agreed to review any sites the League had in mind for a civic center (Minute Book, 1936).

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Although the dream was not realized for a few more years, in August 1940, the Colored Community Civic Club had received \$8,000.00 from a sponsor to be a new N. Y. A. project. To that, the City Council said that "in order to go into it with the Civic Club," the property would have to be deeded to the City. At the same meeting, Professor B. M. Montgomery requested that Councilman Ben H. Walker read his committee's report to the council concerning the project:

In discussing the matter with Damon Lee, D. Labon, and John Lewis we are advised that the Committee for the colored people own now one and one half acres . . . ( 8 lots) of land near and partly joining the new school grounds. That about \$2,5000.00 cash is on hand for the project.

The Committee of colored people wishes to transfer land and cash on hand to the City so that the City can sponsor the project with the N. Y. A. or W. P. A. whichever one will {be} given approval to most favorable and beneficial (financial and otherwise) progress.

That a Committee from the Council be appointed to assist and advise with Committee of colored people in promotion and completion of the project; the colored people to have control of and approve plans and other matters pertaining to the project.

It is our recommendation that the Council vote approval for sponsoring the project and all assistance possible be given these progressive people. (Minute Book, August 1940)

In response, Councilman Roy Chapman recommended that the Council go on record by resolution enforcing and sponsoring the Colored Civic Community Center. He offered the following resolution:

. . . That the City of Homewood accept the proposition offered by the colored citizens of the City of Homewood toward building a Community Center for them with W. P. A. or any other federal funds the City is able to obtain in such manner as may be satisfactory both to the City of Homewood and to the colored citizens of Homewood, and that in the event the government {federal} will furnish such funds to the City of Homewood as may be necessary to build the Community Center proposed by the colored citizens then in that event the City of Homewood will accept the money and real estate offered by the colored citizens to be solely and exclusively for the purpose of the building and erecting of such Community Center.

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The resolution went on to say that the City Council will work with the "colored citizens" to procure the necessary funds from the federal government for this purpose. Upon conclusion, the Council voted unanimously to approve the resolution (Minute Book, August 1940).

By July 1941, it seems however, plans had changed significantly. By then, the proposed civic center project had become intertwined with another project, first discussed in 1938, to consider working throughout the new U. S. Housing Authority Act to conduct a "slum clearance" project . . . somewhere in the Rosedale" neighborhood. At the July 28, 1941 City Council meeting, the idea resurfaced where the City was considering the building of a "colored housing project" which would include a recreation center. Councilman E. C. Crely reported that "if they get this project approved it would not be necessary to build the colored center which has been considered for some time." He further advised that an application for the housing project had been filed in Washington. No additional references were made to this project in the remaining 1941 Minutes. It was not until 1953, however, that the Rosedale Community Center was completed which included a gym and activity rooms on the eight acres in Rosedale Park that Damon Lee had donated; two years later, a library was added (Summe, p. 204).

During the late 1940s, however, the Homewood City Council considered a variety of other issues concerning Rosedale including poor mail delivery, the approval of a liquor store in both the black and white neighborhoods, cleaning up certain ditches in Rosedale, and a problem concerning some black citizens who were living in an abandoned warehouse in the Rosedale neighborhood. To that, the owner of the warehouse agreed to move the building within ten days (Minute Book, 1946 and 1948).

Despite the controversies concerning the civic center and other mostly quality of life issues, the most important success in Rosedale was construction of the new Rosedale School in 1944. This "modern fire resistant building of native rocks and masonry" sat majestic at the base of Red Mountain, very near the Vulcan Statue, where it could be seen by travelers approaching from the south. The new three-story school provided elementary level classes, Latin to ninth graders for a while. During the same period, Homewood City Council also voted to increase the salaries of all its schoolteachers, including those at the new Rosedale School (Summe, p. 70; Minute Book).

By the 1960s, of course, it was the subject of racial segregation and integration of schools throughout the South that would grab – and keep – headlines for many years. Next door to Homewood, the City of Birmingham was becoming notorious as "Bad Birmingham" and "Bombingham" for its many bombings of black businesses, homes, and churches. In the same year and month of the vicious bombing of Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church by the Ku Klux Klan in September 1963, the Shades Valley Sun newspaper reported a " 'racially motivated' " bombing on Central Avenue in Rosedale (Summe, p. 218).

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But, compared to the decades of battles ahead of it, this seemingly isolated incident did little to destroy the integrity of Rosedale. As early as 1959, however, Rosedale became entrenched in a struggle to maintain itself against the onslaught of "progress." At that time, a study was underway to assess the physical condition of Rosedale and to ascertain its viability as a residential neighborhood. In a 1959 article in the Birmingham Post Herald entitled "Homewood Plans Slum Clearance, reporter said that a "\$25 to \$35 million slum clearance project, involving 110 acres – almost the entire Rosedale Negro section of Homewood has begun to crystallize." The Homewood Housing Authority, it said, had contracted with a firm out of Chattanooga to " ' determine the best possible use'" of the district. The Southgate development corporation, it went on to say, was going to "foot the bill" for the work including assessing the possibilities for "several thousand feet in the area for commercial business developments." Plans were also being made, it said, "to provide first-rate housing facilities for Negroes who have homes in the area under study." Residents in the existing area, it promised, would be evacuated for no longer than it takes to construct the houses, and the City's role would be to evacuate sewers and rights of way and to facilitate the "buying up process" (BPH, 6-18-59).

But, by February 1960, Rosedale was not so sure, and residents had come out swinging their political weight. At that time, white attorney and former mayor of Homewood, Ray Acton who represented the new Rosedale Civic League, appeared before the Homewood City Council along with sixty-five Rosedale residents and "parade" of prominent white residents. According to a Birmingham News article, Acton " raked {the council} over the coals," for the Southgate plans. He reported to them that " ' since the Negro citizens own more than 50 per cent of the property in Rosedale, neither the city of Homewood or Southgate can acquire the needed 85 per cent." In response to the "blighted conditions" in Rosedale, Acton admonished them that "{a} simple declaration by this council or the Homewood Housing Authority, does not make it so." He warned them also that, "land that they {Southgate} acquire from the people of Rosedale, will be acquired from the courts and nothing short of that" (Birmingham News, 2-9-60).

In addition, Acton equated the Rosedale fight with some of history's most epic struggles. "People live there, fine, aspiring, civic-minded home-loving, God worshipping colored people, who may never make of it a Kubla Khan pleasure dome or palatial modern residential glory in neon and terraced grandeurs but who call it home – and dear home. . . . This is the heart of it." "Self-respecting people live there, people who love it, who have dreams of their own about it and who can't understand why the government should take their dream away just because somebody with more money proposes a better dream for somebody" (BPH, 6-30-60).

Reverend Eulas B. Jones, pastor of Rosedale's Friendship Baptist Church, who led a seven-person committee against the Southgate plan, made similarly eloquently pleas. "We are a contented community. There have been no sit-ins, kneel-ins, and the like. . . We are not interested in boycotts or integration. We are interested in being left alone." "You let us alone, and we'll let you alone. . . You force us out, and you'll be forcing us in," Jones told them (BPH, 12-19-60).

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But, things being far from over, a Birmingham News article on the proposed Southgate redevelopment plans, reported one month later that the Jefferson County Health Department had recently completed a survey of Rosedale and given it a "penalty" rating of "Class C." According to the survey, there were 459 residential structures comprising some 600 units in Rosedale. The median income reported was \$150-\$199 per month, and rental rates were \$25-\$29.99 per month (Approximately one-third were owner occupied, a statistic this article did not report. BPH, 1-5-60). Of the 437 units inspected, 10 had their main access on an alley, and 11 had main access in a rear yard. Sixty units had outside toilets, and 41 shared a toilet with another unit. The study also said that 172 units had no bath facilities, 178 units had at least one substandard room, and there had been rats or other vermin observed in 36 units. Concluding, it maintained that only 51 units had no visible deterioration, but that 162 units showed minor or moderate deterioration and 129 units suffered from major deterioration. In what appeared to be a stunning turn-around, however, the Jefferson County Health Department, according to the Birmingham Post Herald, maintained that "Rosedale Not Slum, Says Health Department" (Birmingham News, 3-18-60; BPH, 3-25-60).

Not to be daunted by the controversy, the Southgate Corporation proceeded. In a 1960-61 proposal, it recommended that the City would condemn private houses in Rosedale Park, under the Federal Housing Authority Act, and allow the Southgate Urban Renewal Project to develop the land for profit. To that, however, Councilman Frank Hambaugh said:

The Rosedale section of Homewood is the oldest section, and the very large majority of these residents have made good citizens. They have the same love for their homes as the people of Grove Park, Mayfair, Edgewood, Hollywood, or any other section of Homewood. Our committee believes the entire council feels they have a humanitarian obligation to see that the Rosedale citizens are treated fair and given the rights that all free citizens deserve (Summe, p. 219).

Hambaugh, who stated that " ' the price and disregard for our Rosedale citizens are too great' " and that he also feared the large legal fees attendant to such sweeping condemnations, urged the Council to veto the proposal. Moreover, Afton Lee, called the plan of eminent domain "evil," and a "thinly veiled, cheap, petty threat against the people of Rosedale." Lee, Rosedale's largest property owner, concluded, "I am against it, as long as there is breath in my body" (Birmingham News, 1-10-61).

The Council finally agreed, as did the Mayor who had previously supported it; according to the Birmingham News, "Council Does about-face on Rosedale." Ultimately, though, a revised plan was submitted and later approved. According to many, this was the first major blow to the physical integrity of Rosedale and would be followed by and exacerbated by intense redevelopment and commercialization of historic residential and business areas of the neighborhood (Summe, p. 219).



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Troubles for Rosedale mounted in 1964 when the Homewood City Council created Homewood's Industrial Development Board and incorporated it in 1968 under the authority of the Wallace-Cater Act designed to recruit industry to Alabama by exempting certain types of commercial real estate from taxes. No doubt intended to boost Homewood's – and the entire Birmingham region's economy -- this proved to be a huge step toward the building of the Red Mountain. Two years later, construction of the expressway began when the international Birmingham-based Harbert Corporation was awarded the \$3.2 million dollar project. It would take approximately ten years to complete the one-half mile long six-lane highway through Red Mountain (Summe, p. 223).

In the midst of this chaos, there were several momentous *positive* changes occurring for the residents of Rosedale. In 1968, the first black council person, Afton Lee, was voted to the City Council, and by the 1970-71 school year, Homewood children, both black and white would attend together the new City of Homewood schools (Summe, p.239).

By 1978, the Jefferson County Development Consortium chose Rosedale for a pilot housing project. As a part of the conservation project, thirty-nine Rosedale homeowners would get from 10% to 50% public rebates on home improvements and repairs. By the end of 1979, rebates mounted to \$33,000, an additional \$14,000 had been spent by the Jefferson County Council on Economic Opportunity on eleven homes at Rosedale at no costs to the owners; and the City of Homewood had appropriated \$40,000 for street, curb, and gutter improvements mainly to ravaged Rosedale Park area (Summe, p. 235).

Rosedale had, by now, apparently positioned itself firmly toward fighting, however long it might take, for its survival. In stark contrast to earlier Birmingham News and Post Herald articles, a major 1978 Birmingham News story was headlined "Rosedale residents, Homewood officials seek ways to preserve historic community." Rosedale, it reported, was "one of the oldest and most historic over-the-mountain communities in Jefferson County." Rosedale, it continued, "was around here before Homewood was a city and 'Rosedale Clubs' composed of former residents of the district, have been formed in several major cities across the country" (BN, 3-16-78).

In a reference to Rosedale's remaining 277 units, down so dramatically from the 1959 numbers (with more demolition from 1978 - 2003), it pointed to the current "Neighborhood Conservation Project" to revitalize Rosedale and said it was considered "the first of its kind in the area." The project would be a "coordinated" effort between Jefferson county and the private planning/design firm of Kidd, Wheeler, and Plosser to "rehabilitate deteriorating structures and to conserve housing in the Rosedale area." It would also help formulate new city policies for Rosedale include a land use plan, ordinances and building regulations, and public improvements" (BN, 3-16-78).

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As the battle to save the rest of Rosedale virtually raged and pitted "progress" and the economic interests of a booming Homewood economy, the neighborhood continued to make additional activist strides. In 1978, the Rosedale Community Center was totally renovated, and in 1984, Adrienne Lee, daughter-in-law of Afton Lee was the first woman elected to the Homewood City County. Five years later, however, Afton Lee was murdered by two Rosedale men in his historic store (Summe, p. 239). Later that year, the Rosedale Community Development Corporation formed.

In the 1990s, Rosedale continued to keep its political nose to the grindstone. In 1995, private developers proposed a new plan for Rosedale, this one requiring rezoning so that garden homes and an office park could be built. To that, Dr. Bobby Wilson, president of the Rosedale Community Development Corporation, as well as professor of geography at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, responded that "{I}f you mean what you say about neighborhood preservation, then speak to it." With a vote of 5-0, the rezoning petition was denied. By the end of the decade, it had commissioned a consultant to survey and nominate Rosedale to the National Register of Historic Places; and to work with the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham to devise a major revitalization plan for the neighborhood, now two neighborhoods. Both efforts are being partially funded by the City of Homewood.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the Rosedale Park Historic District is shown on the accompanying map entitled "Rosedale Park Historic District," 2002.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary lines were drawn to include resources historically associated with the eastern part of the Rosedale neighborhood, also known as Rosedale Park in Homewood, Alabama. The boundary lines were drawn in such a way as to include as many contiguous contributing resources as possible and to exclude as many non-contiguous non-contributing resources as possible. Even though Rosedale has historically been considered as one neighborhood, it has always contained the west Rosedale area (now the Rosedale Historic District) and the east Rosedale/Rosedale Park (now Rosedale Park Historic District); and from at least the late 1920s, according to historic maps, the Montgomery Highway has traveled north and south through it. Since the 1960s, this highway has been continually widened so that now it creates a very large separation between these two areas of Rosedale. The Rosedale Park Historic District, therefore, contains all of the contiguous resources in Rosedale east of the Montgomery Highway.

**Photographs**

Rosedale Park Historic District, Homewood, Alabama

Pamela King, 2003

Negatives on file with Alabama Historical Commission

1. Rosedale Pump station, 2100 Woodcrest Place  
View of façade, stack facing northwest
2. 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Streetscape  
View facing northwest
3. 1904 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
View of front façade facing northeast
4. 1902 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
View of front facade facing north
5. 1822 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
View of front facade facing northeast
6. 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Streetscape  
View facing east
7. 2526 Mamie L. Foster Street  
View of front facade facing west
8. Rosedale School  
View of front/side facades facing northwest
9. 1816 25<sup>th</sup> Court  
View of front facade facing northwest

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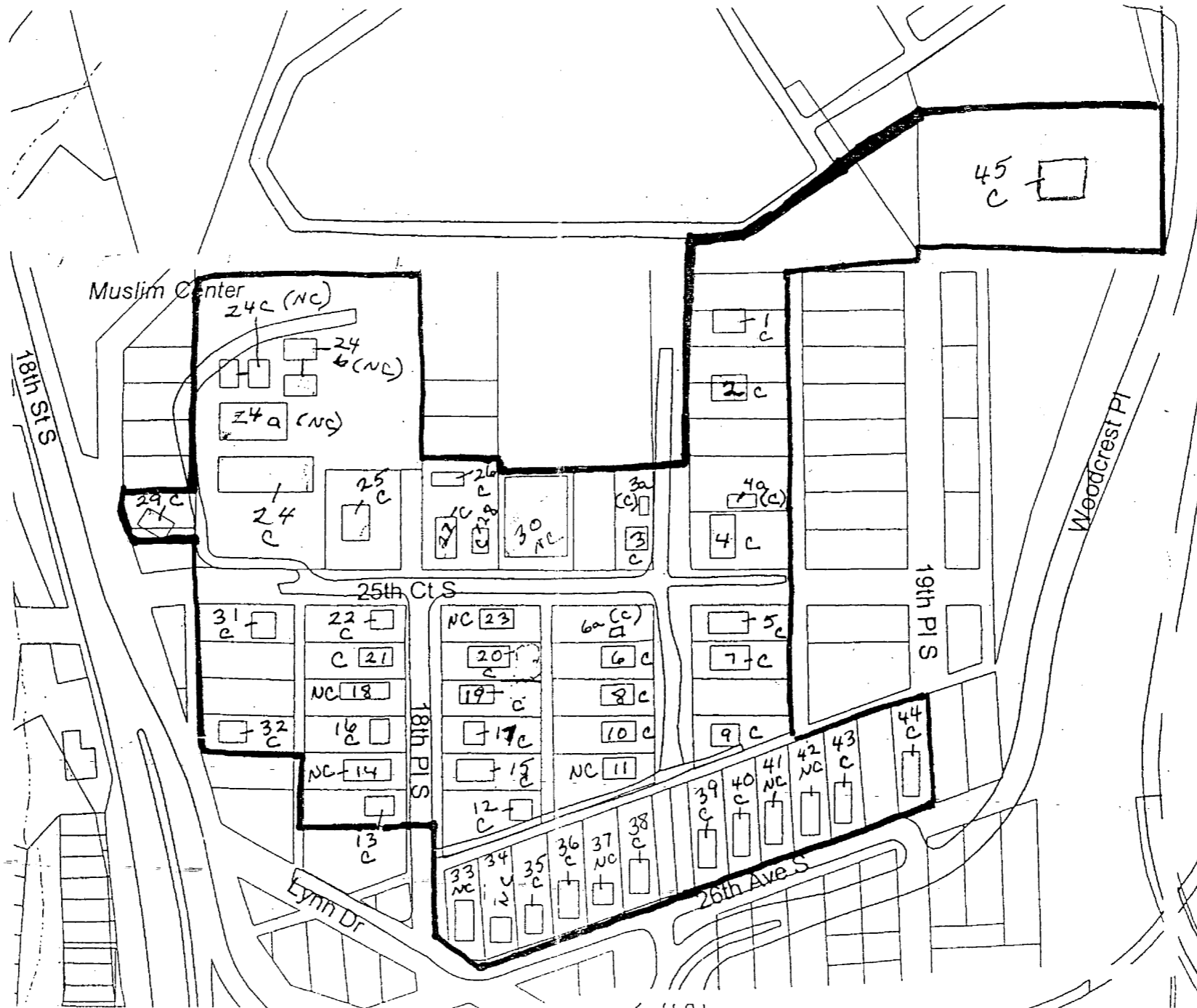
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10. Mamie L. Foster Street Streetscape  
View facing southeast
11. 1900 19<sup>th</sup> Street  
View of front facade facing northeast
12. 1816 and 1818 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
View of front facades facing northeast



Rosedale Park  
 Historic District  
 Homewood, AL  
 2003

C - Contributing  
 NC - Non-Contributing

↑ NORTH  
 Drawn 1" = 200'  
 To Scale 2003

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**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 04000235

Date of Listing: March 31, 2003

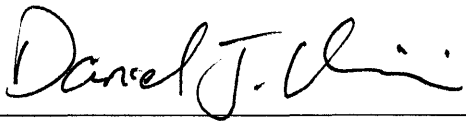
Property Name: Rosedale Historic District

County: Jefferson

State: Alabama

none  
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*for*   
Signature of the Keeper

March 31, 2004  
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8. Statement of Significance

The period of significance is hereby changed to ca. 1890-ca. 1950.

Ethnic Heritage: Black is hereby added as an area of significance.

The Alabama State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**