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## 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 Midtown Historic District  
other names/site number Uptowne

### 2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Ponce de Leon Avenue, Piedmont Avenue, and Lakeview Avenue

city, town Atlanta ( ) vicinity of

county 121 code GA

state Georgia code GA zip code 30308, 30309

( ) not for publication

### 3. Classification

#### Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

#### Category of Property:

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

#### Number of Resources within Property:

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	722	168
sites	0	47
structures	1	0
objects	0	0
total	723	215

#### Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:

Edward C. Peters House at 179 Ponce de Leon Avenue; 705 Piedmont Avenue Apartments at 705 Piedmont Avenue; William P. Nicolson House at 821 Piedmont Avenue; and the Tyree Building at 673-683 Durant Drive.

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.

W. Ray Luce  
Signature of certifying official

1-5-99  
Date

*for* W. Ray Luce  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer,  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Edson H. Beall 2-12-99

( ) determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

( ) other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) see continuation sheet \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Keeper of the National Register Date

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## **6. Function or Use**

### **Historic Functions:**

DOMESTIC: single/multiple dwellings  
COMMERCE: specialty store  
EDUCATION: school  
RELIGION: churches

### **Current Functions:**

DOMESTIC: single/multiple dwellings  
COMMERCE: specialty store/professional/restaurant  
EDUCATION: school  
RELIGION: churches  
HEALTH CARE: clinic

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## **7. Description**

### **Architectural Classification:**

Queen Anne  
Craftsman  
Italianate  
Classical Revival  
Shingle Style  
Mediterranean Revival  
Colonial Revival  
Gothic Revival  
Renaissance Revival

### **Materials:**

<b>foundation</b>	Brick
<b>walls</b>	Wood
<b>roof</b>	Asphalt
<b>other</b>	Stone, Metal, Shingle, Concrete, Stucco, Slate.

### **Description:**

The Midtown Historic District is an approximately 360-acre residential neighborhood that developed north of downtown Atlanta. The historic district is located on the east slope of the Peachtree Street ridge. The neighborhood is mostly organized on a grid-iron plan and comprises a series of subdivisions that were laid out between 1885 and the 1930 (attachment 1). Buildings in the historic district include exceptional architect-designed buildings and commercial and residential resources that are representative of architectural styles and house types built throughout Georgia from the late 19th century through the first half of the 20th century. The historic district features plantings of mostly native species in private yards and on sidewalk strips and a tall canopy of water oaks above the streets.

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Development began in the historic district in 1885 with the construction of the Edward C. Peters House (Ivy Hall), built by Midtown developer Richard Peters for his son Edward (photo 1). Residential development proceeded after that time and most of the district's buildings date from the late 19th century to c.1930. Developed as a white middle- and upper-class neighborhood, the district consists of mostly residential buildings, but also contains a number of commercial and institutional buildings as well. Many of the earlier houses are large, high-style buildings (photos 3, 6, 7). Houses that were constructed later are smaller and less exuberant, reflecting the Craftsman influence of the 1920s. The district's commercial buildings are mostly concentrated along the southern and northern boundaries, but a number of small commercial buildings and institutional buildings are scattered throughout the district (17, 26).

Most of Midtown's subdivisions are laid out on a gridiron plan, however, Edwin P. Ansley's subdivision, "The Vedado," and the Glendale Terrace subdivision, feature curvilinear streets (attachments 2 and 3). Street widths were approximately sixty-five-feet wide, with fifty-feet of paved roadway. A grass strip on either side of the road separated the street from the sidewalk. It was customary to have identical landscaping on both sides of the street. In general, the same species of tree, often water oak, was planted along straight streets at equal intervals and on winding streets individual landscaping was generally preferred. In addition to the sidewalk strip of trees, Charles Allen Drive has a landscaped center median, the only one in Midtown (photo 39). This type of street layout is also known as an "elastic street." This "elastic street" was planned to accommodate the possible widening of the street. The median still survives and provides a park-like setting, although many original trees have been replaced with Bradford Pear trees. Most house lots are around 50-feet wide and between 170- and 190-feet deep, and could also be accessed through an alley in the back. Carriage houses and servant quarters are located in the back along the alleys. Setbacks for the houses were determined by the developer of each subdivision. The larger houses on Penn and Myrtle streets feature larger front lawns ( photos 11, 13, 18, 20) while the smaller bungalows constructed later are built closer to the street (photos 35, 36).

Most of the houses within the district are wood-framed and represent a wide variety of architectural styles and house types that were constructed in Georgia and throughout the Southeast from 1885 to 1930. The Midtown Historic District retains house types built during this period, including American foursquares (photos 12, 13) and bungalows (35, 26, 41, 43). Stylistic influences that can be found on these house types include Queen Anne (photo 1), Craftsman (photo 31, 35), Italianate, Classical Revival (photo 5), Shingle Style (photo 21), Gothic Revival, Mediterranean Revival (photos 9, 13), Colonial Revival (photos 13, 37, 56), Jacobethan Revival (photo 15), and Renaissance Revival.

The large collection of apartment buildings in Midtown that were built between 1915 and 1930 represents the trend in multi-family housing in Atlanta before World War II. During this period, many corporations relocated to Atlanta and well-designed intown living space was needed. The three main types of apartments to be found in Midtown are country house-type apartments, garden-style apartments, and hotel-style apartments. The building at 705 Piedmont Avenue (photo 5), which is individually listed in

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the National Register, and 790 Myrtle Street are excellent examples of country house-style apartments because each is designed to appear as large, single-family residence. Located on Ponce de Leon Avenue, the Massellton Apartments were constructed in 1924 by Massell Realty Company, and designed by their in-house architect Emil C. Seiz. The Massellton, also individually listed in the National Register, is an outstanding example of a garden apartment because it is low (only three stories) and features a courtyard which embraces the landscape. Another excellent example of the garden apartment is located at 907 Piedmont Road (photo 9). An example of a hotel-style apartment building, which is usually a large, rectangular block, is 691 Juniper Street, once known as the Juniper Terrace Apartments. Other examples include 332, 344, and 356-360 Ponce de Leon (photo 29) and The Tyree on Durant Place (photo 30).

Historic commercial buildings in Midtown are scattered throughout the neighborhood. The main commercial areas were along Peachtree Street, 10th Street and Ponce de Leon Avenue. These include a number of one- and two-building commercial blocks built in the 1920s (photos 46, 47, 50). Details include ornate cornices, urns, brackets and other elements reflecting the various styles of the period. Today, Ponce de Leon is characterized by houses which have been altered to accommodate businesses, and small commercial blocks and gas stations (photo 17).

The historic district's institutional buildings include church buildings and a school building. There are two active churches in the historic district: a small frame church on Monroe Drive called the Victory Tabernacle United Holiness Church (photo 48) and the large brick- and-stone Grace United Methodist Church on Ponce de Leon Avenue (photo 47). A third church building, the Ponce de Leon Avenue Methodist Church, has been converted to a restaurant called the Abbey (photo 2).

The large, brick Classical Revival-style Henry W. Grady High School was built in 1924 to consolidate Boys High and Tech High schools (photo 38). It was renamed Grady High School in 1947. The high school is a complex of buildings located in the northeast corner of the historic district. The main building is about half as long as originally designed by Hentz, Reid and Adler. It is a rectangular-shaped, two-story brick building with classrooms on both sides of a double-loaded corridor. In 1938, the Works Progress Administration provided funds for the construction of an auditorium and gymnasium, both designed by Hentz, Reid and Adler (photo 39). In 1949, new classrooms and a cafeteria were added.

That same year Richard Aeck of the architecture firm Aeck Associates consulted as structural engineer for the large, poured-concrete Football Stadium and R.O.T.C. Headquarters Building (photos 39, 40). The building seats 10,000 spectators in two sets of concrete bleachers. Locker rooms and restrooms are located below as well as a R.O.T.C. armory and rifle range. The large, poured-concrete light standards are cantilevered and fitted with B-29 gun sights for accurate positioning.

Landscaping in the historic district, much of it dating from the beginning of this century, is extensive

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(photos 11, 15, 44). The streetscape is planted with a wide variety of shrubs, shade trees, and flowering trees including water oaks, dogwoods, crape myrtles, flowering almond, and maples. Planted before the days of air conditioning, the dense foliage of poplars, magnolias and other trees towering over the houses in Midtown cooled the summer heat. Individual lawns are mostly small, grassy plots with towering mature trees and flowering shrubs along the edges. In some sections of the area, yards are encircled by brick and stone retaining walls.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally  statewide  locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

A  B  C  D

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

A  B  C  D  E  F  G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

Architecture  
Community Planning and Development

**Period of Significance:**

1885-1949

**Significant Dates:**

1885 - Edward C. Peters House (Ivy Hall) built.  
1900 - Midtown developments included within Atlanta city limits.  
1924, 1938, 1949 - Henry W. Grady High School and later additions built.

**Significant Person(s):**

Richard Peters

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

Haralson Bleckley  
W.A. Brightwell & Sons  
Mitchell & Conklin  
Lewis E. Crook  
Willis F. Denny  
Walter T. Downing  
C.E. Frazier  
Bruce and Morgan

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Gottfried Norrman  
Benjamin R. Padgett  
Emil Seiz  
Hentz, Adler & Shutze  
Bleckley & Tyler  
Harry L. Walker  
Lelia Ross Wilburn

**Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)**

The Midtown District is significant under the themes of architecture and community planning and development. The historic district comprises over a dozen subdivisions that were laid out between 1885 and 1930. Richard Peters and his son, Edwin C. Peters, formed the Peters Land Company and in 1885 developed the largest tract in the historic district. Richard Peters arrived in Atlanta in 1835 as a civil engineer for the Georgia Railroad. He co-founded the Atlanta Street Railroad Company in 1871, which established lines north to land Peters had purchased years earlier. Edward operated the development company and built his home, the first dwelling in the historic district, on Ponce de Leon Avenue. As early as 1892, two streetcar lines ran northward through the district, one along Peachtree Street, the other along Monroe Drive. Lots sold by the Peters Land Company and Hendrix, Mayson and Shelton east of Monroe Drive were developed as upper-middle-class neighborhoods. Through the first decades of the 20th century, numerous smaller subdivisions with smaller-sized lots were laid out along the north side of the district and in the center section between Argonne Avenue and Monroe Drive. The formation of Midtown as a collection of smaller subdivisions is a pattereden of development that occurred throughout Atlanta during the first decades of the 19th century in neighborhoods such as West End and Candler Park. This is unlike nearby Druid Hills, which is a large-scale, planned community. The development of Midtown represents the northward settlement of Atlanta's white upper- and middle-class residents between 1885 and the 1930s following the northward expansion of the street railway.

The Midtown Historic District is significant for its architecture because it features outstanding buildings designed by some of Atlanta's most important early 20th-century architects. Five of the six charter members of the Atlanta Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (Alexander C. Bruce, Walter T. Downing, Thomas H. Morgan, Gottfried Norrman, and Harry L. Walker) designed residences in Midtown. Other important Atlanta architects designed buildings in Midtown including, Padgett, Conklin, and Haralson Bleckley. This distinguished group of architects designed homes for many of the leading citizens of the day. Together, their work represents a potpourri of the different residential styles popular during this period.

The large majority of the houses in Midtown, however, are representative of vernacular architectural styles and types built in Georgia during the first half of the 20th century, most notably the Craftsman-style



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bungalow. As identified in *Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in their Landscaped Settings* (Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1981), bungalows are low and long house forms with irregular floor plans within an overall rectangular shape. Integral porches are common, as are low-pitched roofs with wide overhangs. Bungalows were very popular in all regions of Georgia between 1900 and 1930, both in rural areas and in cities in towns.

The Craftsman style was the most popular early 20th-century style in Georgia. It represented a break with popular revivals of historical styles and a movement toward the modern house. The Craftsman style was influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement and by the wooden architecture of Japan. The Craftsman style, often applied to bungalows, was built across the state in rural, small town, and urban settings from the 1910s through the 1930s. Entire neighborhoods of Craftsman style houses are common.

Developed largely during the first decades of the 20th century, Midtown features numerous small subdivisions with Craftsman-style bungalows set on small lots. Midtown is an excellent of a bungalow neighborhood because of the large number of bungalows constructed and because the houses retain a high level of historic integrity. Many of the elements characteristic of Craftsman-style bungalows survive, such as brackets, front porches supported by posts set on masonry piers, and multi-paned sash windows.

**National Register Criteria**

A and C.

**Criteria Considerations (if applicable)**

N/A

**Period of significance (justification)**

The 1885-1949 period of significance begins with the construction date for the Edward C. Peters House (Ivy Hall), the first building erected in Midtown and ends in 1949, the date by which most construction in Midtown was complete. The last historic addition to Henry W. Grady High School was in 1949. The original classroom building, designed by Hentz, Reid and Adler, was completed in 1924. Their successor firm, Hentz, Adler and Shutze designed the print shop in 1934 and the auditorium and gymnasium in 1938. In 1949, Shutze and Armistead designed additional classrooms and a cafeteria. That same year, Richard L. Aeck of Aeck Associates designed the poured-concrete Football Stadium and R.O.T.C. Headquarters, which received a juried Class I award from Progressive Architecture magazine.

**Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)**

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Contributing resources in the Midtown Historic District are those buildings and structures built between 1885 and 1949 that retain their historic integrity. Noncontributing resources are those constructed after 1949 and those which have lost their historic integrity. The largest category of noncontributing properties are historic houses that have been substantially altered as well as houses that have been built after the period of significance. Other noncontributing buildings include post 1949 commercial buildings, mostly along Ponce de Leon Avenue.

**Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)**

The years following Reconstruction brought important changes to the city of Atlanta. By the end of the 1870s the city's population had grown to 37,409 people, and brick, stone, and marble had become the building materials of choice. With the addition of a streetcar system in 1871, city waterworks in 1875, and the telephone in 1877, Atlanta was well on its way to recovery following the city's destruction during the Civil War.

The population of Atlanta doubled every 10 years until 1900, and the electric streetcar lines meant that areas which were once farmland or woods quickly grew into residential enclaves. The last two decades of the 19th century brought increased prosperity exemplified by the founding of Georgia Tech in 1885, Agnes Scott College in the 1890s, the Gentlemen's Driving Club in the 1880s, the invention of Coca-Cola in 1886 by an Atlanta druggist, and the completion of the State Capitol building in 1889. Finally, international attention focused on Atlanta in 1895 as the Cotton States and International Exposition was held in an open field that later became Piedmont Park. This Exposition was a catalyst for growth in the Midtown area as well as for the city.

In 1901, an event happened that would forever change the appearance of the city of Atlanta - the arrival of the first automobile. By 1903, Atlanta was the headquarters for many national and regional automobile manufacturing and distributing companies. In 1904, the land for Piedmont Park was purchased by the City and the city limits were extended to include that area.

As the city's population grew from 154,000 in 1910 to 200,000 in 1920, building activity was at a feverish pace. The 1920s saw transportation further Atlanta's growth with the birth of a municipal airport in 1925 and the arrival of Delta Air Lines in 1929. This decade also saw the automobile take its place of importance in the city and the paving of roads proceeded rapidly.

**Early Development in Midtown: 1885-1910**

Maps produced in the third quarter of the 19th century depict the Midtown area as very sparsely settled. The land appears as a high, hilly wooded area with several ravines and streams, walnut groves and vegetable farms. A lake was located in the southeast corner of the district for which Lakeview Avenue is

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named.

Much of the area we know as Midtown today, can be traced to Atlanta pioneer, Richard Peters, born in 1810 in Germantown, Pennsylvania. Peters came to Georgia in 1835 to work as a civil engineer for the Georgia Railroad. In 1845, he moved to Atlanta to run a stage coach line and began dealing in real estate almost immediately (Nellie Peters Black Personality file at AHC). Peters later acquired land in Gordon County and developed a thriving plantation, experimenting with new crops, livestock breeding and the cultivation of fruit. His nursery shipped seeds and plants throughout the region. During the Civil War he ran a successful blockade operation and began organizing the first street railway system for Atlanta.

Richard Peters purchased a little more than 200 acres of property in Atlanta in Land Lots 48 and 49 for \$5.00 an acre from Alexander Ratteree in the mid 1850s to use for timber to fuel the steam engines in his flour mill. The mill ran at a loss and the steam engines were sold to the Confederate government during the war.

However, his land investment later proved to be a successful venture when Peters began moving into real estate development. Land which he had purchased at \$5.00 per acre later sold for \$1,000 to \$2,000 per acre. In 1881, Peters sold his downtown home and built a mansion which encompasses the block bounded by Cypress, Fourth, Fifth, and Peachtree streets as part of his effort to attract Atlanta's elite northward. The success of his Atlanta Street Railroad Company, organized in 1871 in partnership with George W. Adair, had proved that streetcar lines were essential to real estate development. Following the streetcar lines, development in Atlanta proceeded northward as other developers realized the importance of locating their properties along the streetcar lines.

In his venture to lure Atlanta's elite to his property, Peters priced the lots to attract the white upper class. His son Edward C. Peters followed him in 1885 and built Ivy Hall at 179 Ponce de Leon on land given him by his father as a wedding present. Much of the land between Piedmont and Argonne avenues and North Avenue and 8th Street was owned by Peters Land Company as depicted on an 1894 map of Atlanta. Peters Land Company, headed by Edward C. Peters, was sold in 1951. Richard Peters' ventures in developing and building Atlanta establish him as one of the city's early pioneers.

Sam Walker, another pioneer citizen, bought land in the Midtown area in 1834. His son Benjamin F. Walker later acquired the land which today encompasses most of Piedmont Park and the Piedmont Driving Club. Benjamin Walker built a stone residence there in 1868. In addition, Walker owned land from what is today Piedmont Park east to Boulevard and south to Ponce de Leon Avenue, part of which was acquired through his marriage to Sarah Jemison Medlock. Although Walker sold most of the land in 1887 to the Piedmont Exposition, the Walker family still retained some parcels of land around Ponce de Leon Avenue and Monroe Drive in 1894.

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The Peters/Adair Atlanta Street Railway Company lines on Peachtree Street provided the impetus for growth in Atlanta to move steadily northward. The original city boundary (the one mile circle around the terminal stake) ran between 3rd and 4th streets. North Avenue was so named because it represented the northern boundary of Atlanta. In 1880, Boulevard (now Monroe Drive north of Ponce de Leon Avenue) was known as East Avenue, marking the east boundary of the city. By 1897, the city limits had moved north to 6th Street and in 1900, Piedmont Park formed the northern boundary of the city, which then included all of the Midtown Historic District.

Many of the plat maps for new areas opening up in the Midtown area show the streetcar lines, an indication of their importance. As early as 1892, streetcars were running on Peachtree Street and Boulevard. A line also ran out Ponce de Leon Avenue to the springs, which were located just east of the Midtown Historic District. Another indication of early development in the Midtown area was the presence in 1895 of sidewalks on Piedmont Avenue and the west side of Myrtle Street as far north as 6th Street. By 1902, the streetcars ran as far north as Piedmont Park.

As development continued, new streets were established and buildings lots were sold. With the Peters Mansion as its southern anchor, and the Piedmont Driving Club (built in 1887 as the Gentlemen's Driving Club) as its northern anchor, Piedmont Avenue rapidly became a focal point in Atlanta's social life. The Piedmont Driving Club was built far from the city's center so members could enjoy the fresh air. In 1904, the Driving Club sold all but nine acres of its land to the City of Atlanta for Piedmont Park.

In 1892, Calhoun Street was renamed Piedmont Avenue recognition of Atlanta's location in the piedmont area of Georgia. The Cotton States Exposition, which was held in Piedmont Park in 1895, provided additional impetus for the growth of the area. The southern boundary of the park at 10th Street forms the northern boundary of the Midtown Historic District. Many of the homes along Piedmont were built between 1885 and 1910 at a time when the city was emerging as the leading city in the South. After Piedmont was fully developed, the Peters Land Company sold lots to the east of Piedmont. Between 1905 and 1930, houses on Myrtle Street and Penn Avenue were built.

### **Later Development in Midtown: 1910-1930**

As Midtown became an increasingly desirable place to live, other developers followed the Peters land Company. With no planned street layout or pattern for development of Midtown, the central section grew into an area of irregularly laid out streets, similar to West End and Candler Park but different from other Atlanta neighborhoods of the same time, such as Ansley Park and Druid Hills.

The area of the historic district located east of Monroe Drive is known to current residents as Olde Midtown. This area was platted by three different developers during the same period that Piedmont Avenue was opened to development. St. Charles Avenue was a one-block street developed by Averill &

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Haskins at the end of the 19th century. Money was reportedly put up by Asa Candler, founder of the Coca-Cola Company. Perry Averill, a native of Connecticut who served in the Union Army, came to Atlanta in 1887. He worked for *The Journal* for several years and for the United States Postal Service before he built his house at 542 St. Charles in 1892. His was the largest house on the block. Joseph C. Willingham, one of Averill's friends, owned the lumber company that supplied the heart pine for the houses on St. Charles. He also built three of the houses on the street for himself and his family. According to an 1894 map of the area, the Willingham family owned several large parcels of land and a lumber company which supplied the wood for the houses.

Before the turn of the century there were only nine houses on St. Charles Avenue, but by 1910 the street was filled with large, Victorian-era homes. Architecturally, these houses form an interesting contrast to those built at the same time on Piedmont Avenue, which reflect the rising popularity of the Classical and Colonial Revival styles. Four or five carriage houses still remain on St. Charles Street, an unpaved alley between Saint Charles Avenue and Greenwood.

Greenwood Avenue, the next street north of St. Charles Avenue, followed much the same pattern of development as St. Charles. Greenwood is the only street in Midtown that crosses Monroe Drive; the other half of the street is in Edwin P. Ansley's development called "The Vedado." In an 1892 notice, J. C. Hendrix & Company, T. C. & W. W. Mayson, and T. A. Shelton & Company offered thirty-three lots for sale at Boulevard and Greenwood Avenue, an area that contains large 19th-century houses.

Another area east of Monroe Drive was platted in the 1920s by Seals and Peacock. Seal Place, named for its developer, features bungalows with mostly Craftsman details. Ponce de Leon Court and Lakeview Avenue also feature bungalows. East of Olde Midtown, on the former site of Ponce de Leon Lake, was located the Ponce de Leon Amusement Park and springs and a trolley line, since demolished, which carried Atlantans to the area for recreation. In later years, the Atlanta Crackers baseball park was located just east of Lakeview Avenue. This area, which lies outside the bounds of the historic district, is currently the site of several large shopping developments.

The middle section of Midtown from Argonne Avenue to Monroe Drive developed piecemeal from the early 1900s to the middle 1920s. During this period, the pattern of development in Midtown changed from "opening up" new areas to "filling in" between existing developments. Three subdivisions which exemplify development in this part of Midtown are The Vedado, Bedford Place, and Glendale Terrace.

Edwin P. Ansley, the developer of Ansley Park, also laid out "The Vedado" in 1906 (attachment 2). This subdivision consists of approximately fifty lots on Greenwood and Vedado Way on the west side of Monroe Drive. The Vedado is different in concept from the rest of Midtown, which was laid out on a gridiron plan, and is more akin to the curvilinear streets of Druid Hills. The Vedado displays a combination of large foursquares built c.1910-1911 and bungalows that date from the 1920s.

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Bedford Place, a subdivision which was not completed until the 1950s because of its hilly topography, was originally platted in 1909 by S. B. Turman and Company. Located at 8th and Argonne, Bedford Place consisted of only two blocks, from Argonne to Durant Place (Hunt Street) between 7th and 8th streets, and was typical of the small-scale developments that occurred in Midtown. The lots along Argonne Avenue sold quickly but the rest of the subdivision languished with only two or three lots sold. It was not until the late 1940s and early 1950s that Durant Place and Glendale Terrace were opened between 7th and 8th streets.

Glendale Terrace, platted in January 1925, represents the last large-scale opening up of an area in Midtown (attachment 3). One of the largest subdivisions in the historic district, Glendale Terrace comprised lots between Argonne Avenue and Charles Allen Drive and between 6th and 8th streets. According to the building permits, J. B. Richardson built many of the houses in this area in the late 1920s. This part of Midtown mostly features bungalows and some Colonial Revival-style houses (photo 34). Other building types include two-story duplexes and some apartment buildings.

The area between 8th and 10th streets was partly developed by George S. May. May Street (9th Street), appears on early plat maps. "Mayville" is depicted on a c.1892 plat map as an area between Ponce de Leon Avenue and Bleckley (10th Street) on Calhoun (Piedmont Avenue) above 7th Street. May and his wife, Florence, owned a large portion of land in Midtown. In 1881, May moved to Atlanta where he operated a business for twenty-five years. The 1894 *Atlanta City Directory* shows him as President of The Mantel Company on Mitchell Street. Another large land owner who played a part in the development of Midtown was William A. Hemphill, a native Georgian who came to Atlanta in 1867. Hemphill, along with J. H. Anderson, started *The Atlanta Constitution* in 1868 to voice the concerns of the state regarding Reconstruction. He later served as mayor of Atlanta and was a driving force behind much of the city's post-war progress. Hemphill owned land along Monroe Drive and Ponce de Leon Avenue.

The primary commercial center that served Midtown residents was concentrated along Peachtree, Juniper, and 10th streets. Ponce de Leon Avenue also became a commercial and entertainment center for residents of Midtown. Small commercial blocks also developed throughout the area to serve the growing neighborhood. Many of these buildings were built on corner lots for easy access. Pharmacies, a theater, bakeries, fillings stations, cleaners, and a garage served the neighborhood. The commercial blocks which lie in the middle of the district are good examples of the kind of smaller scale buildings which were constructed to serve the commercial needs of a large urban neighborhood.

### **Later Development: 1930-Present**

By the 1930, most lots in Midtown had been developed (attachment 4). A decade later, apartments had begun to replace some of the single-family houses as the nation dealt with World War II and the post-war

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housing shortage. In addition, large homes were divided into multiple-family dwellings. By the 1960s, the middle-class population had left the neighborhood and Midtown suffered economic decline. Houses were converted to commercial use and many properties were managed by absentee landlords who invested little in the maintenance of their buildings. The Peachtree Street corridor was almost entirely redeveloped and many of the residential buildings on Ponce de Leon were replaced by commercial buildings. However, the city's continued investment in Midtown during this period is evident in the numerous additions to Grady High School that were built from the late 1930s through 1949.

By 1970, a movement to revitalize Midtown had begun. Until this time, the area had no unifying name. Briefly called Uptowne, the name was changed to Midtown and the Midtown Neighborhood Association was formed, the first of its kind in Atlanta. Rehabilitation of buildings and increased interest by owners and residents slowly brought about a revitalization. Recently, increased political action by the neighborhood has helped thwart unwanted commercial development. Today, Midtown serves as an excellent example of Atlanta's thriving historic neighborhoods.

### Midtown Residents

Many people important in the history of Atlanta and the state of Georgia were early residents of Midtown. Wilbur Kurtz (1882-1967), artist and historian, had his home and studio on Penn Avenue for many years. Kurtz, a native of Illinois, arrived in Atlanta in 1912. He combined his love of history with his artistic talent and created many fine paintings and sketches of early Atlanta. His murals appear in civic and governmental buildings and in private collections. In 1952, Kurtz wrote copy for the Georgia Historic Marker Commission and later served as consultant in setting up the Little White House Memorial.

Italian musician Alfredo Barili moved to Atlanta after his marriage in 1877 and in his later years lived in Midtown. He was a brilliant pianist who made his musical debut at the age of eight. Upon his arrival in Atlanta, he worked for the Atlanta Female Institute and Washington Seminary before opening his own school of music, the Barili School of Music. From 1909 until his death in 1935, he lived at 167 Myrtle Avenue (now 743 Myrtle) in a two-story home designed by his son, Alfredo Jr. (photo 12). Another home on Myrtle Street was inhabited by both Julian L. Harris, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and son of Joel Chandler Harris, and later by Ralph McGill, famed publisher of *The Atlanta Constitution*.

Many residents of Piedmont Avenue were prominent citizens of Atlanta during the early 20th century. They included James S. Akers, Treasurer of the Georgia Tech Board of Directors (806 Piedmont Avenue); Judge Spencer Atkinson (730 Piedmont Avenue); H. C. Bagley, a well-known insurance salesman (793 Piedmont Avenue); and T. A. Hammond, attorney (785 Piedmont Avenue). One of the best known residents was Dr. William P. Nicolson, a skilled surgeon who performed the first appendectomy in the South. Nicolson lived at 821 Piedmont Avenue in one of the earliest (1892) homes

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built in Midtown. The Nicolson House, now the Shellmont Bed and Breakfast, is individually listed in the National Register.

**Architects Working in Midtown**

Architect Gottfried Norrman designed the first house in Midtown, the Edward C. Peters House (Ivy Hall), now called the Mansion Restaurant (photo 1). Norrman also designed the Reynolds House at 763 Piedmont and the Dargan/Crosby House next door at 767 Piedmont. Norrman designed a number of other buildings in Atlanta before committing suicide in 1909.

Many architects who worked in Midtown, like Walter T. Downing, were well-known locally. In 1894, Downing was awarded the contract to design the administration building for the Atlanta Exposition. Downing also designed several public buildings in Atlanta, including Trinity Methodist Church and Sacred Heart Church. The buildings for which he is best known are the houses he designed for Atlanta's upper class. Downing was known for his attention to detail and his selection of excellent craftsmen and artists. In Midtown he designed the Nicolson residence at 821 Piedmont Street and the De Soto apartment building on 7th Street between Piedmont Avenue and Juniper Street.

Another important figure who designed buildings in Midtown was Leila Ross Wilburn. She came to Atlanta with her family from Macon in 1890. She was an apprentice draftsman from 1906 to 1907 in the office of Padgett and Sons (also well represented in Midtown). She chose residential design as her specialty. In 1909, she opened her own office in the Peters Building. In 1920, Leila Ross Wilburn was one of only two female architects among the 118 registered architects in the state of Georgia.

Wilburn's work can be divided into two distinct periods, an early period from 1908 to 1920 and a later period from 1920 to 1967. In her early period, Wilburn designed at least eighty single-family houses, photographs of which were included in her first plan book. Her practice coincided with Atlanta's residential expansion and examples of her work can be found in Inman Park, Ansley Park and Midtown. She also designed at least six apartment buildings. Beginning in 1914, Wilburn expanded into the mail-order plan business. Her first of seven plan books was called *Southern Homes and Bungalows*, and contained seventy-nine buildings. Examples of her work in Midtown can be seen at 826 Penn and 315 10th Street.

Haralson Bleckley, son of Logan Edwin Bleckley, the well-known Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, originated and sponsored the "Bleckley Plaza" plan, a grand concept in the City Beautiful tradition which proposed a series of public parks covering the railroad tracks in downtown Atlanta. He also prepared a plan for his proposed Civic Center for Atlanta, whereby state, county, and municipal buildings would form a great civic center. However, only the placement of City Hall followed his plan. Bleckley designed many of Atlanta's public schools, hotels, churches, and the original Brookhaven Country Club.



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The Tyree in Midtown is one of the few surviving apartment buildings he designed in Atlanta (photo 30). The Tyree is individually listed in the National Register.

Benjamin R. Padgett was the principal in the firm Padgett and Sons, Architectural and Construction Firm, which offered design but was primarily known as a construction firm. Padgett first appeared in the business listing in the *Atlanta City Directory* in 1886. He was joined by his sons Ben Padgett Jr. and Hardy Padgett under the partnership "Padgett and Sons, Architectural and Construction Firm." They specialized in fine residences for Atlanta's upper middle class and were known to have built more homes in Atlanta than any other contractor. Midtown examples of their work include 700 Piedmont Avenue and 35 Vedado Way.

The partnership of Hentz, Reid and Adler, which designed Henry W. Grady High School in 1924 (photo 38), and the subsequent firm of Hentz, Adler and Shutze, which designed the Grady High School gymnasium in 1937 (photo 39), was a nationally recognized firm and included some the Atlanta's most prominent architects. Hentz, Reid & Adler and its successor firm designed public, institutional, religious, and residential buildings throughout the city during the first half of the 19th century.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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

- 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, Specify Repository: Atlanta History Center, Fulton County Courthouse

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

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## **10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property:** Approximately 360 acres

### **UTM References**

A) Zone 16	Easting 742530	Northing 3741050
B) Zone 16	Easting 743620	Northing 3741080
C) Zone 16	Easting 743800	Northing 3740180
D) Zone 16	Easting 742470	Northing 3739860
E) Zone 16	Easting 742500	Northing 3740530

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

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

### **Boundary Justification**

The boundaries for the Midtown Historic District encompasses the intact residential and commercial areas known as Midtown. Resources historically associated with Midtown which have lost historic integrity have been excluded from the district where possible. The Midtown Historic District retains a high level of historic integrity. Piedmont Park lies to the north; elements of the Old Fourth Ward are located to the south; the Virginia-Highlands neighborhood and the railroad gulch are located to the east; and the Peachtree Street corridor lies to the east.

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## **11. Form Prepared By**

**name/title** Steven H. Moffson, Architectural Historian  
**organization** Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**street & number** 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forsyth St., NW  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303  
**telephone** (404) 656-2840 **date** December 24, 1998

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

**name/title** Bamby Ray  
**organization** Ray and Associates  
**street and number** 328 7th Street, NE  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30308  
**telephone** (404) 607-7703

(OHP form version 12-08-93)

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Photographs

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**Name of Property:** Midtown Historic District  
**City or Vicinity:** Atlanta  
**County:** Fulton  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** December 1997

**Description of Photograph(s):**

1. Edward C. Peters House (Ivy Hall), photographer facing northeast.
2. Ponce de Leon Avenue Methodist Church (The Abbey), photographer facing northwest.
3. Ponce de Leon Avenue, photographer facing northwest.
4. Piedmont Avenue, photographer facing north.
5. 705 Piedmont Avenue, photographer facing northeast.
6. Piedmont Avenue, photographer facing northeast.
7. Piedmont Avenue, photographer facing northwest.
8. Piedmont Avenue, photographer facing southwest.
9. La Salle Court Apartments, Piedmont Avenue, photographer facing east.
10. Piedmont Avenue, photographer facing south.
11. Myrtle Street, photographer facing northwest.
12. Myrtle Street, photographer facing northeast.
13. Myrtle Street, photographer facing northeast.
14. Myrtle Street, photographer facing northeast.
15. Piedmont Avenue, photographer facing northeast.
16. Ponce de Leon Avenue, photographer facing northwest.
17. Ponce de Leon Avenue, photographer facing west.
18. Penn Avenue, photographer facing northwest.
19. Penn Avenue, photographer facing northwest.
20. Penn Avenue, photographer facing northwest.
21. Penn Avenue, photographer facing northwest.
22. 10th Street at Argonne Avenue, photographer facing southeast.
23. 8th Street at Argonne Avenue, photographer facing northwest.
24. 5th Street at Argonne Avenue, photographer facing west.
25. Glendale Terrace, photographer facing northwest.
26. Argonne Avenue at 5th Street, photographer facing northeast.
27. Argonne Avenue, photographer facing north.
28. 4th Street, photographer facing northeast.
29. Ponce de Leon Avenue, photographer facing east.

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Photographs

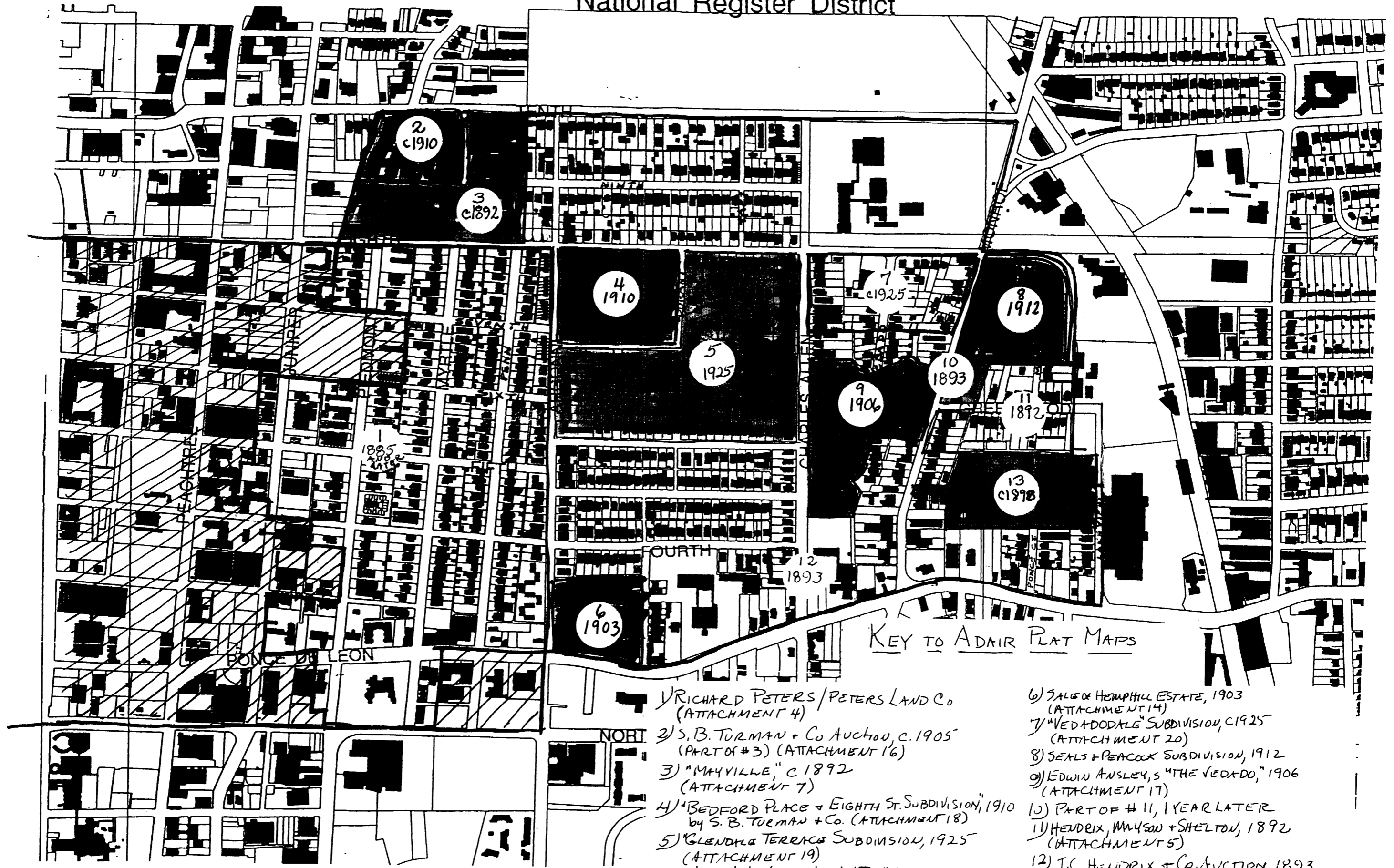
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30. The Tyree, Durant Place, photographer facing northeast.
31. 4th Street, photographer facing northeast.
32. 5th Street, photographer facing northeast.
33. Durant Place, photographer facing northwest.
34. 7th Street at Durant Place, photographer facing northeast.
35. 8th Street, photographer facing northwest.
36. 9th Street, photographer facing northeast.
37. 10th Street, photographer facing southeast.
38. Henry W. Grady High School, Charles Allen Drive, photographer facing northeast.
39. Henry W. Grady High School, gymnasium (right), stadium (center), photographer facing east.
40. Henry W. Grady High School, stadium, photographer facing northeast.
41. Vedado Way, photographer facing north.
42. Greenwood Avenue at Vedado Way, photographer facing west.
43. Vedado Way, photographer facing north.
44. Charles Allen Drive, photographer facing northwest.
45. Charles Allen Drive, photographer facing northwest.
46. Ponce de Leon Avenue at Charles Allen Drive, photographer facing northwest.
47. Ponce de Leon Drive, photographer facing northwest.
48. Victory Tabernacle United Holiness Church, Monroe Drive, photographer facing northeast.
49. Monroe Drive, photographer facing northeast.
50. Monroe Drive at 8th Street, photographer facing northeast.
51. Monroe Place, photographer facing north.
52. Seal Place, photographer facing east.
53. Greenwood Place, photographer facing northeast.
54. St. Charles Avenue, photographer facing northeast.
55. Ponce de Leon Court, photographer facing north.
56. Lakeview Avenue, photographer facing northwest.

# Midtown Neighborhood National Register District

Attachment 1

Current tax map showing how part of the area was subdivided, including dates and boundaries.

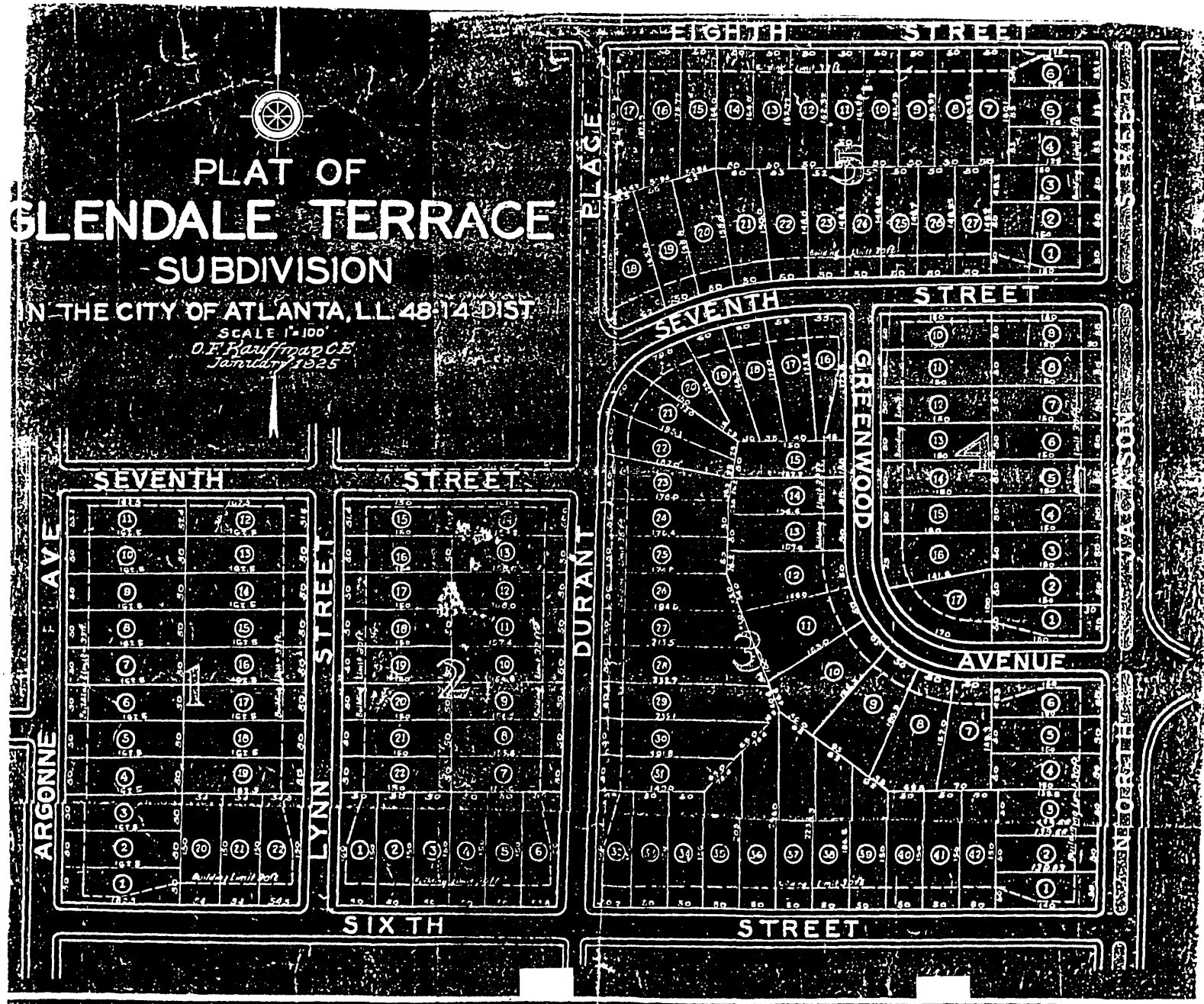


## KEY TO ADAIR PLAT MAPS

- 1) RICHARD PETERS/PETERS LAND CO (ATTACHMENT 4)
- 2) S.B. TURMAN + Co AUCTION, c. 1905 (PART OF #3) (ATTACHMENT 16)
- 3) "MAYVILLE", c 1892 (ATTACHMENT 7)
- 4) "BEDFORD PLACE + EIGHTH ST. SUBDIVISION", 1910 by S.B. TURMAN + Co. (ATTACHMENT 18)
- 5) "GLENDRORA TERRACE SUBDIVISION", 1925 (ATTACHMENT 19)
- 6) SALE OF HEMPHILL ESTATE, 1903 (ATTACHMENT 14)
- 7) "VEDADO" SUBDIVISION, c 1925 (ATTACHMENT 20)
- 8) SEALS + PEACOCK SUBDIVISION, 1912
- 9) EDWIN ANSLEY, "THE VEDADO", 1906 (ATTACHMENT 17)
- 10) PART OF #11, 1 YEAR LATER
- 11) HENDRIX, MAYSON + SHELTON, 1892 (ATTACHMENTS 5)
- 12) J.C. HENDRIX + Co. AUCTION, 1893
- 13) PLAT MAP OF ST. CHARLES SHOWING OWNERS, POST 1892 (ATTACHMENT 10)







Attachment 4 1928 USCG Survey showing the almost completely developed area, today called Midtown. Available at AHC.

