

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 5 1986  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Avondale Estates Historic District

and or common

2. Location

street & number Along U.S. Highway 278 (Covington Highway) N/A not for publication

city, town Avondale Estates N/A vicinity of

state Georgia code 013 county DeKalb code 089

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Owners (more than 50)

street & number

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number DeKalb County Courthouse

city, town Decatur state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Structures Field Survey: DeKalb County has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1976  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Section

city, town Atlanta state Georgia

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Avondale Estates Historic District comprises the historic core, or about one-third, of the City of Avondale Estates, a planned suburban town with an "English Village" theme developed beginning in 1924. It is located seven miles east of downtown Atlanta and approximately a mile and a half east of Decatur, the DeKalb County seat. The district includes the town's commercial center, the historic portion of the town's residential area, several historic landscape features, a historic transportation corridor, two historic parks, and an entry gate, all tied together by the historically developed portion of the city's plan. The district is surrounded by mid-20th century residential and suburban development, some of which is within the city limits of Avondale Estates and some of which is in adjacent unincorporated DeKalb County.

Description of Plan Features

Overall, the Avondale Estates Historic District embodies planning and development features which reflect the planning principles and concepts promoted by developer George F. Willis in the mid-1920s. These ideas and features have guided the development of the historic district and the entire city ever since. They include a commercial center, a residential section, landscaped parks and other landscape features, and a transportation corridor, all zoned into compatible-use areas, and all linked by a vehicular and pedestrian transportation system.

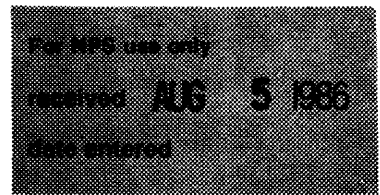
The commercial center stands today virtually as it did in the 1920s. It is located at the north edge of the historic district, along the north side of Avondale Road/Covington Highway, at what were historically the northern city limits. It consists of a relatively small yet architecturally impressive concentration of two-story commercial structures grouped around a major intersection.

To the south of the commercial center, occupying most of the land in the historic district, is the larger historic residential section of the community. Single-family suburban homes on informally landscaped lots predominate here. Two-thirds of the residential lots originally platted in this part of the city were developed by 1941; the remainder were developed with compatible but non-historic housing after World War II. The residential section is laid out in a modified grid of gently curving streets which follow the undulating contours of the Piedmont terrain. Originally intended to extend from Avondale Road/Covington Highway on the north all the way to Wiltshire Drive on the south, the residential section only developed historically to about Kingstone Drive and the Dartmouth/Clarendon loop; with the exception of a very few widely scattered houses, the remainder of the residential area did not develop until after World War II. The oldest and some of the largest houses in the community are clustered in an arc along the northern edge of the residential section (along Avondale Road, Avondale Plaza, and Covington Highway) and in the southern part of the historic district (around the Dartmouth/Clarendon loop and Fairfield Plaza). An interesting residential development pattern can still be seen along Exeter, Dartmouth, and especially Kensington Road in which every other lot was developed in the 1920s and early 1930s - presumably to spread out the improvements and increase the value and salability of lots - with the intervening

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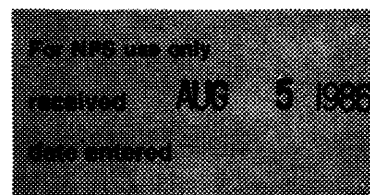
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lots developed subsequently, in the 1930s or after World War II. Another interesting development pattern can be seen along the west side of Clarendon Avenue between Avondale Road and Kingston Drive, where a group of ten non-historic (post-World War II) houses occupy much of the tract of land originally associated with a small dairy farm incorporated into the plan of the community.

Separating the commercial center and the residential section today, as it did in the 1920s and 1930s, is the transportation corridor, which runs along Avondale Road and Covington Highway in an east-west direction across the northern part of the district. The transportation corridor consists of two parallel historic roadways separated by a series of landscaped medians, the historic trolley-line route, and a network of sidewalks paralleling and crossing the roadways. The northern roadway is wider and serves as a thoroughfare and, near the center of the community, as a commercial artery; the southern roadway, narrower and tree-shaded, serves local residential traffic. The trolley line ran along the northern edge of the landscaped median; the tracks have been removed, but the right-of-way is still evident. The transportation corridor was intended to (and still does) focus and restrict heavy traffic to the northern part of the community, away from the residential section and convenient to the commercial center. It also served as the principal organizing spine for the planned development of the community.

Planned landscape features are located throughout the community, tied most directly to the transportation corridor, the street plan, and the residential section. They include the series of landscaped medians, traffic islands, and traffic circles along the transportation corridor but also elsewhere (e.g., Fairfield Plaza, the intersection of Kensington Road and Lakeshore Drive, and in the vicinity of the Dartmouth/Clarendon loop), three small parks in the interiors of residential blocks, two larger community parks, a network of streets bordered by stone curbs and lined with sidewalks, shade trees, and informally landscaped front yards, and several pedestrian paths designed to provide access to the interiors of blocks or to provide more direct access to Lake Avondale. The landscaped medians and traffic islands along the transportation corridor give added emphasis to this major plan feature and strengthen its role in separating the commercial and residential zones of the community. They also help buffer, both visually and acoustically, this heavily trafficked corridor. Both city parks were integral parts of the planning and development of the city. One, the smaller of the two, is located close in near the central part of the residential section; it contains a playground, swimming pool, and clubhouse, and was intended for (and still serves) heavy day-to-day recreational use. The other, located on what were historically the southeastern outskirts of the town, features a man-made lake and another clubhouse, and was intended for (and still serves) less intensive recreational activities. This larger park historically was somewhat separated from the rest of the pre-World War II suburban development by a tract of largely undeveloped land, some of which formed a wooded reserve at the north end of the lake, although it was integrally connected to the main

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portion of the development by the two historic streets which flank it (Lakeshore Drive and Berkeley Road) and by a historic mid-block pedestrian path between Berkeley Road and Clarendon Avenue, another important historic street in the community. Since World War II, the tract of land buffering the lake park to the north has been largely developed with housing, although a portion of the wooded reserve remains as do the two access streets and the pedestrian path. The three smaller parks in the interiors of residential blocks are virtually unique in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Also an original part of the plan for the city, they consist of a triangular-shaped tract in the block bounded by Covington Highway, Kensington Road, and Lakeshore Drive at the east edge of the district, a similarly sized and shaped tract in the block bounded by Kensington Road, Berkeley Road, and Kingstone Drive in the southeast part of the district, and a smaller, square-shaped tract in the block bounded by Kingstone Drive and the Dartmouth/Clarendon loop near the south edge of the district. Never developed intensively in the historic period, these small parks served as "common land" available to the residential properties nearby. Access to them, as well as to the lake park, was facilitated by grassed sidewalks on narrow rights-of-way running between residential lots.

Description of Architectural Features

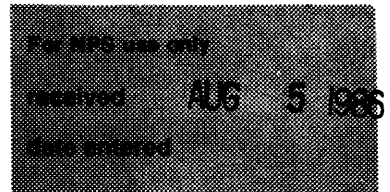
The commercial center of the district, located at the northern edge of the district, consists of three blocks of approximately fifteen stores arranged in a dense grouping along the north side of Avondale Road/Covington Highway on either side of Clarendon Avenue. The oldest structure, built ca. 1908, is located at the west end of the commercial row, west of Center Street. Predating the planned development of Avondale Estates, it is a typical two-story early 20th-century brick commercial structure with an altered storefront. To its east are the two blocks of commercial structures built in 1925 at the onset of the planned development of Avondale Estates. These blocks consist of more than a dozen attached row-type buildings, each with a store on the ground floor and office space above. The building blocks are designed in a Tudor Revival style, featuring multiple gables, half-timbering, multi-paned sash, tile roofs, and a picturesque roofline. They are built of brick, terra-cotta tile, and wood. Some storefronts and windows have been altered, as have most interior spaces, and some tile roofs have been replaced by shingled roofs. The buildings stand close to the street, separated from it by a concrete sidewalk, with no landscaping. The angular east side of the building at the northeast corner of Avondale Road-Clarendon Avenue intersection accommodates the historic right-of-way for the trolley line. To the rear of the ca. 1908 commercial building stands a utilitarian 1920s granite-block warehouse.

To the south of the commercial center is the residential area, laid out with curvilinear streets on hilly terrain. The majority of lots are small, narrow, and rectangular with some accommodation made for the irregular street pattern. Houses have consistent setbacks and are located at the front center of their lots. Historic houses in the district range from small one-story cottages to large two-story houses, with the majority falling into the former category. They date from 1924 to 1941. They are wood-framed and finished with weatherboards, brick, stucco, stone or a combination of several of these materials. Brick, wood, stone, and concrete are used for detailing. To fit in

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with the neighborhood's English village theme a great number of the historic houses are designed with mediaeval English references. Several of the larger houses, most of which are located facing the traffic islands at the northern rim of the residential area or along the Dartmouth/Clarendon loop to the south, are fully developed examples of the Tudor Revival style. Others are more eclectic. Many of the smaller houses are examples of English Cottage-style structures. Some have only a few references to an English style, such as half-timbered gable ends, a steeply pitched front gable, some stonework around the front entrance, and/or a round-arched doorway. Two houses have rounded eaves designed to make the roof treatment look like thatch. The Dutch Colonial Revival style is also well represented in the district. There are a few Craftsman/Bungalow-style houses, one fine Spanish Mission-style house and a number of eclectic houses with Victorian, Colonial Revival, and Spanish Revival references. A number of the properties still retain their original garages. These range from crudely constructed one-story, wood-framed "boxes" to large two-story structures consisting of a garage and living space above that are designed in the same style as the associated house.

Each of the two large parks in the district contains a main clubhouse. These structures emulate the English Tudor theme of the district's commercial buildings. Steep gable roofs, half timbering, and multi-paned sash are among the prominent architectural features of these revival-style buildings.

Description of Landscape Features

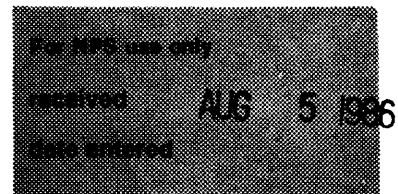
Historic landscape features in the Avondale Estates historic district consist of landscaped highway medians, traffic islands, and traffic circles, two landscaped parks, three interior-block parks, streetscaping, front-yard landscaping, and a ceremonial entrance gate. Each of these features derives from the early 20th-century planning and development origins of Avondale Estates.

Landscaped medians, traffic islands, and traffic circles are found primarily along the Avondale Road/Covington Highway transportation corridor in the north part of the district. West of Clarendon Avenue, a long, narrow landscaped median divides the two parallel roadways of North and South Avondale Road. This median is landscaped with an historic abelia hedge (recent cold winters and dry summers have required severe pruning of this 1930s hedge). Stone curbs, grassy borders, paved crosswalks, and several commemorative markers complete the landscaping of the median. A reconstructed trolley stand with a clock tower highlights the eastern end of the median at its intersection with Clarendon Avenue. East of Clarendon Avenue, the median broadens into two larger traffic islands. Each is landscaped with a broad expanse of lawn, ornamental trees (dogwoods and crepe myrtles), larger shade trees (including magnolia and pines), stone curbs, and an extension of the abelia hedge. Smaller landscaped medians are located in the center of Clarendon Avenue just south of its intersection with Avondale Road and in the center of Fairfield Plaza near the southwest corner of the district; these medians are planted with ornamental and shade trees (dogwood, crepe myrtle, magnolia, oak, and maple) rather than hedges. Historic traffic islands and circles are also

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located in the intersections of Kensington Road and Berkeley Road, Kensington Road and Avondale Plaza, and Berkeley Road and Covington Highway in the northeast quadrant of the district, in the intersection Kensington Road and Lakeshore Drive at the east edge of the district, and at Clarendon Avenue and Clarendon Place near the southern edge of the district. Designed primarily to slow and channel traffic through the residential section, they are also historic landscape points of interest featuring stone curbs, greenswards, shrubbery, ornamental and shade trees (especially dogwoods), and flower gardens. Contemporary highway signs are the principal non-historic aspects of these features.

The two major landscaped parks in the historic district are a smaller recreational area known as Willis Park at the southwest edge of the district and a larger reservation with a lake extending to the southeast. Willis Park, off Dartmouth Avenue, features a 1920s Tudor Revival clubhouse, a historic community swimming pool, a playground and playing field, paths, commemorative markers, and stone gateposts, all set in a naturalistic landscape of large shade trees. The lake park, bracketed between Berkeley Road and Lakeshore Drive which traditionally have provided access from the historically developed portion of the city, features Lake Avondale, a man-made lake created in the 1920s by damming Cobbs Creek at Wiltshire Drive, bordered by picturesquely landscaped banks and, to the north, a small wooded reservation. The lake park also features another Tudor Revival clubhouse set at the end of one of the northern reaches of the lake. Three smaller parks in the district are situated at the centers of three residential blocks (see discussion above, under "description of plan features"). These small, irregularly shaped in-holdings are essentially communal extensions of rear yards, held in reserve for community use.

Streetscaping in the district is widespread and pronounced, and based on the community's historic suburban design precedents. Provided originally by Avondale Estates' developers, and maintained and extended by the city government, streetscaping consists of streets bordered by stone curbs and lined with shade and ornamental trees (dogwoods, crepe myrtles, oaks, and maples), grassy shoulders, and concrete sidewalks. Many of the trees, dating from the founding of the community, are large and mature; others, replacements for diseased or damaged plants, are younger and smaller. Recent cold winters and dry summers have required severe pruning of some of the plants.

Front yards throughout the district are for the most part informally landscaped with broad lawns, shrubbery, shade and ornamental trees, and flower gardens. Some sloping yards feature stone or concrete retaining walls. Driveways and walks are paved with concrete; some are depressed and feature rounded concrete curbs. This informal-looking landscaping derives from design principals promoted by Avondale Estates' developers in the 1920s and from precedents established by the earliest 1920s residential development, as evidenced by historic photographs and promotional literature.

(Continued)



# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1924 - 1941      **Builder/Architect** Multiple; Arthur Neal Robinson (architect); Flagler Construction Company (builder); Robert Cridland (landscape architect); George F. Willis (developer).

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Summary Statement of Significance

Avondale Estates is the only documented example in Georgia and the southeast of an early 20th century planned "new town." The Avondale Estates Historic District, comprising approximately one-third of the city, encompasses the most intact historically developed portion of the planned community. Developed between 1924 and 1941, this portion of the community includes representations of all the significant planning and design characteristics of the new suburban town. It includes the historically developed portion of the community plan itself, with its distinct, planned commercial and residential zones separated yet linked by the central transportation corridor, it includes the historic recreational facilities planned into the community's residential zone, it includes the planned vehicular and pedestrian circulation system designed into both the commercial and residential zones of the community, and it includes the distinctive period landscape treatments given to the circulation and recreational facilities throughout the community. The district also contains good intact examples of early 20th-century suburban residential and commercial architecture. Much of this architecture represents the "English village" theme of the suburb; medieval English Tudor motifs dominate the district's architecture. Also represented are other suburban architectural design principles and construction practices which prevailed nationally during the 20th century. Perhaps most importantly, the historic district contains these historic planning, landscaping, and architectural features in the context of their historical developmental relationships. Each historic feature is singularly important, yet each is an integral part of the larger planned development. The historic district provides the immediate environmental setting in which the planning elements, the landscape features, and the architecture work together to create and maintain the overall early 20th century character and appearance of this historic suburb. Historic significance in the areas of community planning and development, landscape architecture, and architecture supports National Register eligibility in terms of National Register Criteria for Evaluation "A" and "C."

Community Planning and Development

Avondale Estates was promoted by George F. Willis (1879-1932), a self-made millionaire whose fortune was made in patent medicines. Realizing the tremendous money to be made in real estate development in mid-1920s Atlanta, Willis sold his patent medicine stock in order to finance a major real estate investment in the city. It was his intention to create a model city suburb with extensive residential, commercial, and recreational facilities.

(Continued)



# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 125 acres

Quadrangle name Northeast Atlanta, GA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	7	5	3	2	6	0	3	7	4	0	6	6	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

B 

1	6	7	5	3	5	6	0	3	7	4	0	2	4	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

C 

1	6	7	5	3	4	8	0	3	7	3	9	3	6	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

D 

1	6	7	5	3	2	3	0	3	7	3	9	2	1	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

E 

1	6	7	5	2	1	7	0	3	7	4	0	3	8	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

F 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

G 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

H 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary, outlined with a heavy black line on the enclosed maps, is described and justified in Section 8.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title a) Carolyn Brooks, National Register Researcher  
b) Richard Cloues, National Register Coordinator

organization Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Section date July 25, 1986

street & number 205 Butler Street, S.E.  
1462 Floyd Tower East telephone 404/656-2840

city or town Atlanta state Georgia 30334

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Elizabeth A. Lyon*  
Elizabeth A. Lyon date 7/25/86

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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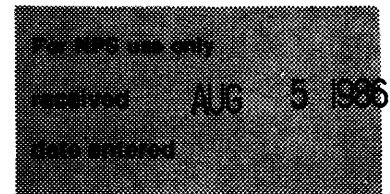
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*[Signature]* date 12/8/86  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief of Registration

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In January 1924, Willis purchased 1,000 acres of land in DeKalb County, just seven miles from downtown Atlanta. At the time, the land was occupied by several large farms and a small rural community named Ingleside. There were two deciding factors influencing his acquisition of this particular property. First, its fortunate location in relation to existing transportation routes made it ideal for a suburb. The land was located on an existing street car route, had a stop on the Georgia Railroad, and was bisected by the main Atlanta-to-Augusta highway. Secondly, in the previous year the inhabitants of the Ingleside school district had voted in a \$75,000 bond issue to build three new schools. By donating three acres of land for one of the schools adjacent to his planned development, Willis was able to influence the placement of this important community facility.

Willis selected prominent professionals to assist him in realizing his development. Credited with the layout of Avondale Estates is O.F. Kauffman (1876-1930), a civil engineer from Atlanta responsible for much of the second phase work on Druid Hills, Atlanta's premier, Olmsted-designed suburb, as well as other Atlanta suburbs including Brookwood Hills. Robert Cridland, a well-known landscape architect from Philadelphia who executed a number of projects in Atlanta, was in charge of landscaping.

By January 1926, Willis had laid out his development and constructed the commercial buildings, a park complete with pool, poolhouse, tennis courts, and playground equipment, and a lake for his community. A lakeside boathouse/clubhouse was in progress. Approximately fifty houses, many built by Willis, were in place. Another seventy-five houses were constructed before the Depression slowed development. In 1941, with the outbreak of World War II, development ceased. By this time approximately one-third of the total development envisioned by Willis had been completed; this development was concentrated in the area between Avondale Road/Covington Highway on the north and Kingstone Drive, Willis Park, and Lake Avondale to the south - the area encompassed by the historic district. After World War II the remaining two-thirds of the community was developed under land-use controls established by the city government which by and large followed the developmental intent of the community's founder; during this time the unimproved lots in the originally developed portion of the community (approximately one-third of the total number of lots in this area) also were developed with compatible residential development. Today the community is virtually completed and is often featured as one of the pleasantest and safest places to live in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

It had been Willis' intention from the beginning that Avondale Estates should be an independent city with its own government. In August 1926, its city charter was approved by the state legislature, and in January 1928, it became effective when adopted by the community in a referendum. In August 1928, Willis deeded all the parks, playgrounds, tree-beds, sidewalks, sewers, water mains, and lighting system to the city. Since that time the city government has diligently maintained the planned character and

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appearance of the community through a combination of public works programs and land-use regulations. Community residents also have formed associations which strive to maintain the early 20th-century suburban ambience of the community. The fact that Avondale Estates was incorporated makes it unique in the history of early 20th-century suburban development in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

In terms of community planning and development, Avondale Estates is unique in Georgia as the only documented suburban "new town" created as an independent political entity with a full range of residential, recreational, commercial, and transportation facilities. Conversations with other southeastern state historic preservation offices and a search of the literature of the history of city planning indicate Avondale Estates may be the only such community in the region. In Atlanta it can be regarded as one of an almost endless chain of suburban developments resulting from the city's unprecedented early 20th-century growth. However, its group of commercial buildings constructed by its developer at the time of its establishment, its "English village" theme, its city charter (closely patterned after the model charter written in 1917 for Kingsport, Tennessee), and its comprehensive development plan distinguish it from all other Atlanta suburbs. There are other important new towns in the southeast designed as mill towns (such as Chicopee, Georgia) and garden cities with large industrial components (such as Kingsport, Tennessee) but no others designed for middle-class suburban living. Avondale Estates is closer in character to some of the model 1910s and 1920s suburban communities developed in the north. Although lacking the philanthropic origins of Forest Hills Gardens, New York, it is similar in scale and in its layout and facilities to that community. Its English village theme relates it to many suburban developments in Westchester County, New York, where the fascination with English village models perhaps reached its zenith in the 1920s. Avondale Estates is very definitely in the mainstream of precedent-setting early 20th-century planned suburban communities in America, and especially in the southeast.

Virtually all the historic planning features that made Avondale Estates distinctive in the 1920s and 1930s are evident in the historic district today. Perhaps most obvious is the transportation corridor which cuts across the northern end of the district. Originally accommodating vehicular traffic, a trolley line, and pedestrians, the corridor still serves vehicular traffic and pedestrians, and the right-of-way of the old trolley line is evident in several places. North Avondale Road, although widened since it was first laid out, still serves as a central thoroughfare and a commercial artery. South Avondale Road remains as it was originally laid out: a narrow, tree-shaded residential street. The long traffic median with its abelia hedge and a series of landscaped traffic islands still separate the two parallel roadways, and the network of flanking sidewalks and crosswalks remains. In character, appearance, and function, the transportation corridor is today as it was in the 1920s and 1930s. By sorting, separating,

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and channeling various modes of transportation, the transportation corridor reflects the planning approach taken toward traffic management in suburban areas in the very late 19th and early 20th centuries. The transportation corridor also continues to subdivide Avondale Estates today, as it did when it was first laid out in the 1920s, into two major planned development zones. To the north is the smaller, more concentrated commercial center; to the south, protected physically as well as visually from intrusion, is the larger, more dispersed residential section. The commercial center is virtually as it was developed by George Willis in the mid-1920s, with only minor architectural alterations. The residential section contains virtually all the historic housing developed in Avondale Estates from the mid-1920s to World War II. This historic housing comprises approximately two-thirds of the housing in the district. The remaining housing, developed after World War II, is compatible with the historic housing and follows the plan for residential development established in the mid-1920s. Moreover, this non-historic housing in and of itself documents historic development patterns in the community: a row of ten non-historic houses along the west side of Clarendon Avenue delineates the former pasture of a small dairy farm integrated into the community plan, a pattern of alternating historic and non-historic houses along Kensington Road and other streets, and a concentration of the oldest houses along both the northern and southern edges of the district, illustrate how lots were originally marketed to enhance the viability of the development and to increase the value of the land in it, and a group of non-historic houses along Fairfield Drive helps demarcate the historic (and current) southwestward limits of this planned suburban development. This idea of subdividing planned developments into restricted or single-use zones was an important part of the most advanced approach to community planning and development in the 1910s and 1920s. Manifested in some communities through the new administrative tool of zoning, it was made most evident in Avondale Estates by physically and visually subdividing the city into two distinct environmental zones. These two zones were not completely isolated from each other, however. In fact, the two zones were related or linked by a network of landscaped transportation and circulation elements. These elements were organized around a gridiron street pattern modified in typical early 20th-century suburban fashion to accommodate and take advantage of the undulating natural terrain. In keeping with traffic management and community planning principles of their time, these streets were designed to provide easy access to residential properties while at the same time discouraging or controlling through traffic. Pedestrian traffic was accommodated by a system of sidewalks parallel to the streets but separated from them by a generous landscaped shoulder. Crosswalks and mid-block foot paths augmented the pedestrian circulation system. Advanced for its time and place, this circulation system foretold of subsequent suburban developments in which pedestrian and vehicular traffic systems would be entirely separated. A final planning feature strongly evident in the historic district is the provision of a variety of landscaped recreational facilities in the

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residential section of the community. Integrated into the development plan in a hierarchical way, these landscaped recreational facilities include the sidewalks found throughout the residential section, the three unique interior-block parks, the recreational Willis Park, and the secluded, picturesque lake park. The sidewalks running throughout the community served everyday social and recreational purposes in addition to purely practical transportation needs. The interior block parks served as communal back yards, as safe havens for small children especially, and foretold of subsequent suburban developments designed around extensive tracts of common land. Willis Park, at the edge of the residential section yet convenient to it, contained an assortment of facilities for active recreation. The lake park, focusing on man-made Lake Avondale (there are no natural lakes in Georgia), reserved from active development yet conveniently accessed by two major streets, sidewalks, and a mid-block pedestrian path, provided for passive recreation in a naturalistically landscaped setting. This range of recreational facilities, their location and integration into the community plan, and their landscape treatments reflect the most advanced recreational planning for residential communities in the early 1920s.

Landscape Architecture

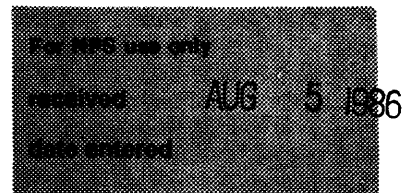
Avondale Estates is a thoroughly landscaped community. Public spaces, parks, yards, streetscapes, and roadsides all are compatibly landscaped in an informal but carefully planned manner with lawn, shrubbery, indigenous ornamental and shade trees, flower gardens, stone markers and gateposts, and stone curbs. The Avondale Estates Historic District includes a variety of historic landscaping dating from and derived from the planned mid-1920s origins of the community. Significant historic landscape features include landscaped medians, traffic islands, and traffic circles, two parks, streetscaping, and front yard landscaping. These features reflect suburban landscaping principles and practices prevailing in early 20th-century America. Widespread at that time, and distinctively characteristic of the period, they derive from the 19th-century works of Frederick Law Olmsted and Andrew Jackson Downing, and ultimately from 18th- and early 19th-century English landscape gardening.

Medians, traffic islands, and traffic circles all were functional elements of early 20th-century traffic management. But in Avondale Estates, as in other early 20th century suburbs, these functional elements were transformed by landscaping into landscaped points of interest in the community. Most of these elements were treated like small public parks; the ground was smoothed and planted with grass, and shrubbery, ornamental trees, and shade trees were planted in informal, picturesque arrangements. Indeed, only their raised stone curbs and locations in the middle of streets set these landscaped features apart from city parks. The long, narrow median between North and South Avondale Roads west of Clarendon Avenue was given a unique landscape treatment: its entire length was planted with a linear abelia hedge. This hedge, a major landscape feature in the community, provides a strong visual buffer between the commercial center with its heavily trafficked thoroughfare to the north and the residential section

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to the south. Recent cold winters and dry summers have required that the hedge be severely pruned, but with continued careful treatment by the City its long-term prognosis is good.

Both large parks in the historic district are landscaped in the naturalistic mode so popular during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Both take advantage of their natural settings as well. Willis Park, designed for more intensive recreation, has such historic structural improvements as a poolhouse, a swimming pool, tennis courts, playing fields, and a playground incorporated into its overall design and layout. The hilly natural terrain and a heavily wooded cover (some natural, some planted) give the park its overall historic naturalistic character. The lake park, with its artificially created lake (virtually unique in Atlanta's early 20th century suburban developments), its naturalistically landscaped banks, and its single structural improvement - a clubhouse - is more picturesque overall. Paved walks, commemorative markers, stone gateposts, and rustic benches are found in both parks. Both parks derive from local suburban landscaping principles and practices, as embodied in Frederick Law Olmsted's nearby and slightly earlier Druid Hills, and both derive ultimately from the city park landscaping precedents set by New York City's Central Park in the middle of the 19th century.

Historic streetscaping is found throughout the residential section of the district (the commercial center, in keeping with its more urban character, was never landscaped). This streetscaping consists of stone curbs along the edges of the streets, concrete sidewalks, a wide grassy shoulder separating the streets and the sidewalks, and ornamental and shade trees planted along the shoulders. This style of streetscaping was popular but not ubiquitous in the early 20th century; indeed, in the Atlanta metropolitan area, some suburban developments like Brookwood Hills carried this method to extremes, while others, notably Druid Hills and Ansley Park, de-emphasized the geometric patterning inherent in rows of street trees in favor of a more uniformly informal landscape character. In Avondale Estates, this mode of streetscaping was promoted by the suburb's developers as a way to enhance the salability of lots, raise property values, and increase confidence in the viability of the new town. It also was intended to mark the developing suburb with a quality landscaped character. Once established by the developer, this streetscaping has been maintained and extended by the city government which has jurisdiction over these public rights-of-way.

Historic front yard landscaping, like the historic streetscaping, is found throughout the historic district. Less obvious, perhaps, than the streetscaping, it is nevertheless a vitally important element in the overall historic landscaped appearance of the district. Consisting of broad expanses of lawn and informal arrangements of shade and ornamental trees, shrubbery, and flower gardens, highlighted by curbed concrete driveways and concrete walks, this landscaping is characteristic of that found all across Georgia, the southeast, and the nation during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Derived ultimately from the mid-19th century works of Andrew Jackson Downing, in Avondale Estates this landscaping was promoted by the suburb's developer who established

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a nursery and provided landscape gardening advice for the convenience of new homeowners in the community. In this way the entire historic residential section of the city was uniformly landscaped in a distinctively historic style.

A singularly important landscape feature in the historic district is the surviving brick and stucco entry gate on the south side of Avondale Road at the western edge of the city. Many early 20th-century suburbs featured entry gates, gate posts, signs, or fences at their principal points of entry, and this is a particularly good example of its type. Flanking the main highway and trolley entrance into the city, and aligned with a principal sidewalk through the city, this entrance gate clearly signaled the edge of the planned suburban community. It continues to do so today, in ways no less clear than they were sixty years ago.

The historic landscape architecture of Avondale Estates is significant as well for its associations with Robert Cridland, a Philadelphia landscape architect who authored a book on this subject (Practical Landscape Gardening, 1918). In ways that have not yet been fully documented, Cridland, working with Willis, is believed to be responsible for the overall historic landscaping in the community. Certainly the approach taken to landscape architecture in Avondale Estates is consonant with that promoted by Cridland in his book. Further research into new sources of information will be required to document Cridland's contribution to Avondale Estates' historic landscape architecture, however.

Architecture

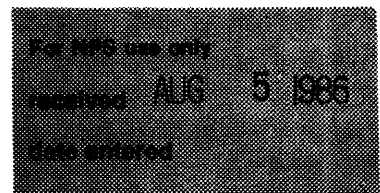
In terms of historic architecture, the Avondale Estates Historic District is significant for containing intact representative examples of three important early 20th-century suburban building types: commercial buildings, residential buildings, and recreational buildings. Architectural styles derive primarily from English medieval sources and the early 20th-century arts and crafts movement, although Colonial Revival influences and true eclecticism are also evidenced. Building materials and construction techniques represent those in widespread use across America in the early 20th century.

Architecturally, the Avondale Estates Historic District is significant for providing good intact examples of a variety of typical 1920s and 1930s architectural types and styles as they were interpreted by local architects and builders for middle-class, suburban housing in the Atlanta area. The one- and two-story houses in the district with their balloon frames and wood, stucco, brick, and stone finishes also document typical building materials and technology of the period. The Tudor Revival (photos #4, 7, 16) and English Cottage (photos #10, 12, 27, 29, 38) styles are particularly well represented in the district by many houses with pseudo half-timbering, steeply pitched gable roofs, jerkin-head roofs, and stone-trimmed doorways and porches. A few of these are relatively high style; the majority make a few references to the style. Of special interest are two houses with false thatch roofs (photo #41); these are the only two known examples in Georgia of this 1920s adaptation of a traditional English roof treatment. Examples of Dutch Colonial (photos #7, 20) and Craftsman/Bungalow (photos #8, 13) style houses are fairly numerous, in addition to a wide variety of eclectic houses with Victorian or

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classical detailing. One late-Victorian style house (photo #23)\* that predates the rest of the neighborhood and one fine, small Spanish Mission style house (photo #36) respectively document those styles. Many of the houses have associated historic garages which illustrate the wide range of detached automobile shelters built in the early years of automobile usage. These vary from crudely constructed wood-framed "boxes" to substantial two-story structures reflecting the architectural style of the associated house.

Of particular interest in the district is the use of the Tudor Revival style for recreational and commercial structures in addition to residential structures. The community poolhouse in Willis Park (photo #31) and the clubhouse near Lake Avondale (photo #53), both with steeply pitched front facing gables and half-timbering, make modest but clear reference to the style. The large two-story commercial buildings on Avondale Road (photo #1-3) provide excellent and unique examples of fully developed Tudor Revival commercial buildings in the state. Although not nearly as common as residential architecture designed in this style, Tudor Revival commercial buildings were built in many parts of the country during the 1920s and 1930s when English architectural models were so popular. These are Atlanta's and Georgia's only examples.

Arthur Neal Robinson (1886-1958), a prominent early 20th-century Atlanta architect, designed the recreational and commercial buildings in Avondale Estates. Robinson was primarily a designer of residences but is best-known in Atlanta for the First Church of Christ Scientist (listed in the National Register as part of the Ansley Park Historic District). The architects or builders responsible for the design of most houses in the district are unknown. The Flagler Company, a construction and engineering company still in existence in Atlanta, built many of the houses, but a conversation with the present owner confirmed that the company did not design the structures. Many designs may have been taken from the numerous architectural pattern books of the period.

Boundary Description and Justification

The boundary of the Avondale Estates Historic District circumscribes the intact historic core of the planned suburban community of Avondale Estates; approximately one-third of the city is included within the boundary. The boundary is drawn to scale and shown by a heavy black line on the attached historic district map. The boundary was drawn to include the most intact portion of Avondale Estates as it had developed from 1924 to 1941, to include virtually all extant representations of the historically significant planning, landscaping, and architectural features of this planned suburban community, and to include these important historic features in their historic environmental context so that their interrelationships - the way they work together to create a historic suburban character and appearance - is made clear.

The north boundary of the historic district is relatively simple and straightforward. For the most part it follows the northerly right-of-way of Avondale Road and Covington Highway, the principal thoroughfare in the historic transportation corridor. Although the paved travel surface of Avondale Road has been widened in recent years, it is still located within its historic right-of-way and still retains its historic identity as the major thoroughfare through the community. The district boundary extends north

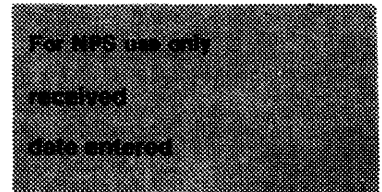
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beyond the right-of-way at two places: in the vicinity of Clarendon Avenue and Center Street, to include the historic commercial center of the city, and again near the eastern edge of the district, to include a partial block of historic houses across Covington Highway. Except for these two groups of historic structures, properties fronting on the north side of Avondale Road/Covington Highway contain relatively recent commercial structures or, in one instance, a small, non-historic apartment complex. Beyond these properties to the northwest is an area of historic and non-historic residential, commercial, and industrial structures, and beyond them to the northeast is a modest neighborhood of small, largely non-historic residences, both of which are unrelated to the historic planned development of Avondale Estates.

The west boundary of the historic district is likewise clear-cut. This boundary follows the historic western city limits of Avondale Estates as they were established in the late 1920s. Beyond this boundary is a non-historic, strip-type, shopping center and a large, non-historic apartment complex. To the southwest is an undeveloped tract of land associated with religious and philanthropic institutions in nearby Decatur.

The east boundary has been drawn in a seemingly irregular yet precise manner to include only the areas of relatively concentrated historic housing developed between 1924 and 1941 at the eastern edge of the city. Concentrated areas of non-historic housing along Covington Highway, Lakeshore Drive, Kensington Road east of Lakeshore Drive, and Stratford Road have been excluded. No historic houses in historic settings associated with the planned development of Avondale Estates are located in the area east of this boundary. A large tract of land south of Covington Highway and east of Lakeshore Drive was the site of the former 1920s bond-issue school; however, the school has been so altered and enlarged, and its grounds reduced and developed, that it has lost its identity as a historic resource. Beyond the school to the east is a large, non-historic church complex. North of the school and church, across Covington Highway, is a golf course unrelated to the planned development of Avondale Estates and intruded upon by large modern apartment and condominium complexes.

The south boundary of the historic district circumscribes historic Lake Avondale, its clubhouse, the rights-of-way of its two flanking streets (Lakeshore Drive on the east, Berkeley Road on the west), and the portion of Wiltshire Drive at the extreme south built on top of the historic earthen dam. Lakeshore Drive and Berkeley Road, although undeveloped residentially in the district's historic period (1924-1941), connected Lake Avondale with the historically developed portion of the suburb north of Kingstone Drive and provided convenient community access to the "remote" lake park during the historic period. No historic houses in historic settings are located along either street south of Kingstone Drive. The area just north of the lake between these two streets historically was a wooded reserve which was developed for non-intrusive single-family housing after World War II. The district boundary follows the southern edge

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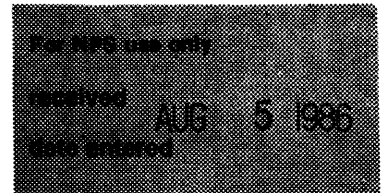
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of the mid-block pedestrian path running east-west between Berkeley Road and Clarendon Avenue; this path connects the Dartmouth-Clarendon loop area and the Fairfield Plaza area with Lake Avondale and provided another means of community access to the lake park during the historic period. The district boundary follows the rear property lines of the four historic properties along the south edge of the Clarendon Place loop near its intersection with Clarendon Avenue. The boundary then follows the south and west edges of historic Willis Park. To the south of the historic district boundary are blocks of mostly non-historic housing developed after World War II with an occasional speculator house dating from the late 1920s or the 1930s. South of Wiltshire Drive is an exclusively non-historic residential area and a historically unrelated golf course.

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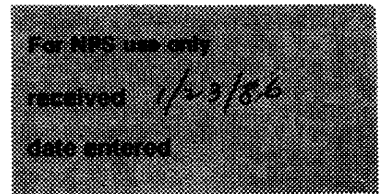
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Contributing/Non-Contributing Resources:

- 15 Contributing commercial buildings (row-type commercial structures in three blocks)
- 143 Contributing residential buildings
- XXX Contributing automobile garages (unable to inventory with verifiable accuracy)
  - 2 Contributing landscaped parks
  - 3 Contributing interior-block parks
  - 12 Contributing landscaped traffic medians, islands, circles
  - 1 Contributing transportation corridor (combines thoroughfare, residential street, trolley right-of-way, sidewalks, and landscaping)
  - 1 Contributing historic circulation plan featuring thoroughfares, residential streets, sidewalks, mid-block walkways, and streetscaping
  - 1 Contributing entrance gate
- 178 Contributing Resources
- 160 Non-contributing resources (all are non-historic, compatible houses)

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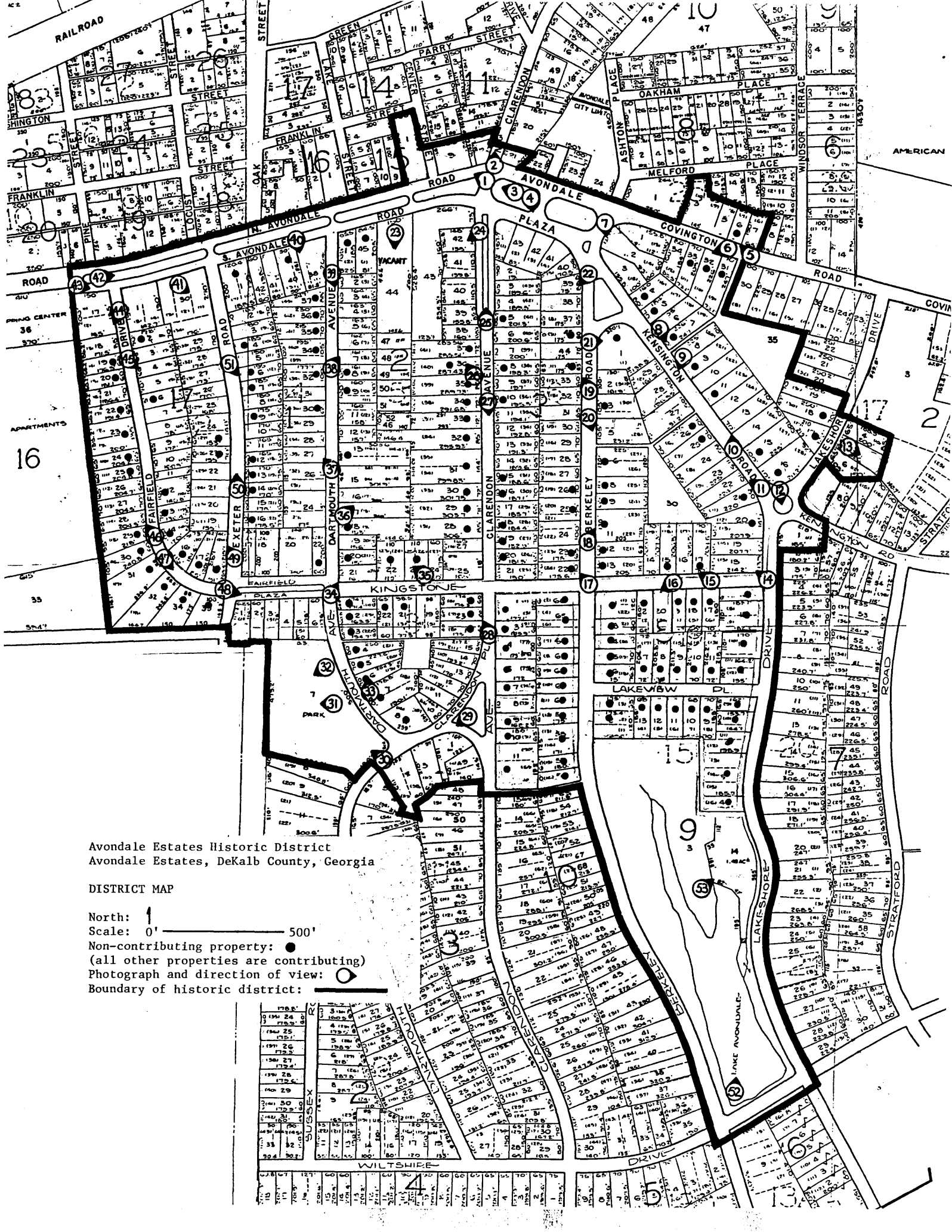
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Avondale Estates Historic District  
 Avondale Estates, DeKalb County, Georgia

DISTRICT MAP

North: ↑  
 Scale: 0' — 500'

Non-contributing property: ●  
 (all other properties are contributing)

Photograph and direction of view: ○

Boundary of historic district: —

