



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Decatur Downtown Historic District  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by North McDonough Street, East Howard Avenue, Hillyer and Commerce streets, and East Ponce de Leon Avenue. ☐ not for publication  
city or town Decatur ☐ vicinity  
state Georgia code GA county DeKalb code 089 zip code 30030

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  
\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local  
David C. Crass 3-28-12  
Signature of certifying official/Title: Dr. David C. Crass/Historic Preservation Division Director/Deputy SHPO Date  
Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:  
✓ entered in the National Register \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_ other (explain:)  
David C. Crass 5/23/12  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
103	32	buildings
1	1	sites
2	7	structures
13	14	objects
119	54	<b>Total</b>

### Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

4

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling; multiple dwelling

EDUCATION: school; library

COMMERCE/TRADE: business; department store;  
restaurant; professional; financial institution;  
specialty store

SOCIAL: meeting hall

GOVERNMENT: city hall; fire station; courthouse;  
post office

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

RELIGION: religious facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE:  
monument/marker

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related; road-related

LANDSCAPE: plaza

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

EDUCATION: school; library

COMMERCE/TRADE: business; specialty store;  
restaurant

SOCIAL: meeting hall

GOVERNMENT: city hall; fire station; courthouse

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

RELIGION: religious facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE:  
monument/marker

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related; road-related

LANDSCAPE: parking lot, park, plaza

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN:  
Romanesque; Second Empire

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:

Beaux Arts; Colonial Revival; Mission/Spanish  
Colonial Revival; Classical Revival; Late Gothic  
Revival

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:  
Commercial Style; Bungalow/Craftsman

MODERN MOVEMENT:  
Art Deco; New Formalism; International Style

OTHER: Stripped Classical

Modern

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE: granite  
BRICK

walls: STONE: granite; limestone; marble  
BRICK  
WOOD: weatherboard; shingle  
STUCCO

roof: ASPHALT  
STONE: slate  
METAL  
TERRA COTTA

## Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Decatur Downtown Historic District is located in Decatur in DeKalb County, Georgia, about six miles east of downtown Atlanta, the state capital. The district is roughly bounded by North McDonough Street on the west, East Howard Avenue on the south, Hillyer and Commerce streets on the east, and East Ponce de Leon Avenue on the north. The Decatur Downtown Historic District encompasses the concentration of historic commercial and residential areas in the core of the original land lot on which Decatur's county-seat plan was established in 1823. The town was laid out in a Sparta-type plan, with the courthouse on a rise and two streets leading into the center of the courthouse square. East and south of the courthouse square are one- and two-story brick commercial buildings, constructed between 1910 and the 1950s. The district is anchored by several important public buildings – the 1917 DeKalb County Courthouse, the 1935 former United States Post Office—Decatur, Georgia, the 1924 Pythagoras Lodge No. 41 of Free and Accepted Masons, the 1926 Decatur City Hall, several church buildings, and the 1892 Georgia Railroad depot. The depot is located along the southern edge of the district on an east-west granite ridge. Mid-20th-century public buildings in the district include the Decatur Library, the Decatur Recreation Center, Decatur Fire Station No.1, and the Decatur Presbyterian Church, all constructed in the 1950s. The 1965 Decatur High School, the Decatur First United Methodist Church (1956 and 1967), and the 1967 DeKalb County Courthouse were the last major public buildings constructed. The southeastern section of the district consists of houses, primarily dating from 1900 to 1928. The earliest house in the district is the 1830s Word-Williams-Evans House, known as the High House. Two apartment buildings, dating from the 1920s, are also located within the district.

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## Narrative Description

*The following description was prepared by Janet Barrickman, Laura Drummond, and Brandy Morrison, consultants, and edited by Lynn Speno, Historic Preservation Division. The August 20, 2010 "Decatur Downtown Historic District" Historic District Information Form is on file at the Historic Preservation Division, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.*

The Decatur Downtown Historic District is located in the metropolitan Atlanta area, roughly six miles east of downtown Atlanta. It encompasses the historic core of the original land lot on which the city of Decatur was incorporated in 1823, the same year it was designated as the DeKalb County seat. The district is anchored on the northwest corner by the historic 1917 county courthouse and courthouse square, which have always served as the nucleus of the community. From the courthouse square, the district extends south to the railroad and east to the eastern border of the original land lot. Within this area are historic churches, civic buildings, the public high school, commercial buildings, and houses.

The center of Decatur is the courthouse square. Beginning in 1823, five county courthouses were successively constructed on the square. The first was a log building, while the last, and current one, was constructed of Lithonia granite in 1917. Small businesses and residences historically surrounded the square, but as the city grew, the homes gave way to commercial development. Today, brick commercial buildings, dating from the 1910s to the 1950s, are located immediately east and south of the courthouse square.

Just south and west of the 1917 courthouse are two other historic civic buildings, including the 1967 county courthouse and the 1926 Colonial Revival-style city hall. The 1924 granite Pythagoras Lodge No. 41 of Free and Accepted Masons is located just north of the square. The majority of the areas north and west of the courthouse square are not included in the district as the civic and commercial development there dates from the last quarter of the 20th century.

A building boom of sorts took place east of the courthouse square in the 1950s, when the county library, the city recreation center, the fire station, and Decatur Presbyterian Church were all constructed within a block of each other. A number of historic structures were razed to make way for the new development. The mid-1960s brought further development to Decatur with the construction of several important community landmark buildings. At the northeast corner of the district on East Ponce de Leon Avenue, the Decatur Methodist Episcopal Church (now Decatur First United Methodist Church) constructed a complex of brick buildings between 1956 and 1967, most notably the main sanctuary with its 156-foot steeple. Near the southwest corner of the district on North McDonough Street, the Decatur High School was built in 1965; and just west of the 1917 courthouse, a new courthouse was constructed in 1967.

The southeastern quadrant of the district along Barry, Pate, and North Candler streets is composed primarily of historic houses. These wooded and quiet streets provide a striking contrast to the busier commercial area just one block to their west. Beyond the eastern boundary of Commerce Drive, and outside of the district boundary is a residential neighborhood.

Anchoring the south end of the district is the rail line, the 1892 train depot, and a small group of commercial buildings located south of the rail line. East of this commercial strip of buildings is an electrical power substation and some turn-of-the-21st-century condominiums, which are not included in the historic district. South and west of these buildings is the South Candler Street/Agnes Scott College Historic District (National Register listed in 1994).

Decatur's growth and changes over the years were brought about by population growth, urban renewal, efforts to compete with suburban shopping centers, and the construction of a new underground passenger rail line. Some of the areas surrounding the courthouse square were totally demolished, such as West Court Square, and the African-American community, historically located west of downtown. The area north of Ponce de Leon Avenue, also felt the brunt of changes as buildings were torn down and new high-rise commercial buildings were constructed beginning in the 1960s. The area immediately surrounding the 1917 courthouse square also underwent changes as planning for the MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority) rail line began in the late 1960s, with construction implemented in the 1970s. Some streets were closed to traffic and others turned into parking areas. Additionally, parts of East Ponce de Leon Avenue, east of Church Street, have seen new commercial and residential development in the last 20 years. While much has been lost, the remaining center of downtown Decatur retains much of its historic look and feel, and is the core of this nomination.



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Community Landmark Buildings

The **1917 DeKalb County Courthouse** (National Register listed in 1971) is a granite, Beaux Arts-style courthouse sited on a slight rise of land in the northwest part of the district (photograph 2). The courthouse is surrounded by a grassed lawn, trees, and walkways leading to the north and south entrances to the building. The three-story building was designed by architects Walker & Chase and is the fifth courthouse to occupy the site. The previous building, designed by Golucke and Stewart, was constructed in 1898 but suffered extensive fire damage on September 13, 1916. The current structure was built using the remaining exterior granite walls and columns from the burned courthouse. The prominent cupola of the fourth (1898) courthouse was not reconstructed. The 1917 courthouse features monumental north and south two-story porticos, each with four Corinthian columns supporting the large pediments. The interior of the building is decorated with Alabama marble. East and west wings were added to the building in 1935; second floors were added to the wings in 1950 by architect Daniel H. Bodin of Bodin & Lamberson. Today the 1917 county courthouse is home to the DeKalb History Center. The organization utilizes the upstairs former courtroom as meeting space. The building was designated a city landmark building in December 1994.

Ten contributing historic objects (monuments and markers) on the courthouse square include a cannon purportedly used by General Andrew Jackson to preserve order when white settlers first moved into Native American territory prior to the treaty of 1821. Originally mounted on wheels and pulled by manpower, not horsepower, the cannon was used in the Indian War of 1836. It was installed on the courthouse square by the Agnes Lee Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) on April 26, 1906 and was traditionally fired on the Fourth of July and at weddings and other celebrations. Another contributing object is an 1897 naval artillery gun. The 10.5 centimeter gun was manufactured by Friedrich Krupp AG Hoesch-Krupp in Essen, Prussia. It was originally mounted on a German ship during the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900. The gun was removed from its original ship and installed on a German civilian ocean liner in 1914. The ocean liner was captured by the Allies, re-christened the USS DeKalb, and served during World War I. After the war, at an unknown date, the U. S. Navy gave the naval gun to DeKalb County, Georgia, and it was mounted on the courthouse grounds.

The rest of the contributing objects include an obelisk erected in 1908 by the citizens of DeKalb County to the memory of the soldiers and sailors of the Confederacy; a monument erected in 1922 by the Agnes Lee Chapter of the UDC commemorating the Battle of Decatur on July 22, 1864; a historic sign "Unlawful to park wagon or buggies around this square," erected at the northeast corner of the square in 1900, and refurbished by the Decatur Lions Club in 1944; a steatite boulder taken from Soapstone Ridge in south DeKalb County was installed on the square by the Georgia Historical Commission in 1953; and a Georgia Historical Commission marker, installed in 1957, highlights Garrard's Cavalry Raid. There is a flat stone marker dedicated to the Camp Fire Girls program, dated 1928. The Baron DeKalb Chapter of the DAR erected a bronze plaque dedicated to Marion F. Wilson in 1928. A Blue Star Memorial Highway marker, sponsored by the DeKalb County Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc., is located on the northeast corner of the square. This program, after being adopted in 1945 by the National Council of State Garden Clubs, placed markers throughout the country to honor those who had served in the armed forces.

There are ten noncontributing objects (monuments and markers) on the courthouse square and a noncontributing structure (gazebo/bandstand.) The bandstand, built in 1996, is a steel and redwood structure with a poured concrete foundation. The initial design for the gazebo was by Thompson, Ventulett, and Stainback, but the architects who completed the final design were R. L. Brown & Associates and E. Terrel Meek.

The noncontributing objects are:

A monument to Baron DeKalb, donated by the government of West Germany, was erected in 1985. Also a bust of Baron DeKalb was moved from another location in downtown and installed on the courthouse square in 1985. A millstone from the Houston Mill, constructed in 1873 along the south fork of Peachtree Creek by Major W. J. Houston, was placed on the square in 2001. The bronze sculpture of an elderly couple seated on a park bench is titled "Valentine" and was created by George Lundeen. It was installed on January 22, 2008, in honor of William and Sydney Floyd for their contributions to the City of Decatur. Lundeen also created a sculpture of Thomas Jefferson, which was dedicated on October 23, 2000, to the memory of U. S. Senator Paul D. Coverdell. The monument to DeKalb County law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty was erected May 16, 1997. Four additional noncontributing objects include a 1981 bronze marker dedicated to James Cone, Director of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs by the Decatur Woman's Club; a 1990 granite marker to

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Ora M. Lyle by the Decatur Woman's Club; a marble bench installed in 2010 dedicated to the memory of Fred Orr; and a 1998 Camp Fire Boys and Girls marker.

The European-born-and-trained architect, Edmund G. Lind, designed the 1892 **Georgia Railroad depot** on East College Avenue. After a long career in Baltimore, Lind spent 10 years in Atlanta beginning in 1882, perhaps lured to the city by the upswing in the economy following the 1881 International Cotton Exposition, and the lack of architects in Atlanta at that time. He arrived in Georgia with a national reputation and membership in the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and gained commissions soon upon his arrival in Atlanta. His commissions included many residential, as well as, public buildings. One of his most notable, and still standing, commissions was for the Central Presbyterian Church on Washington Street in Atlanta.

The depot in Decatur that Lind designed replaced a smaller depot constructed in 1881. Similar to many of Georgia's late 19th-century railroad depots, the long building has low proportions and a gable-on-hip standing-seam metal roof with wide, overhanging eaves supported by decorative wood brackets. The building has a brick foundation and is wood-framed with vertical board-and-batten siding and bay windows (photograph 34). The depot was moved slightly back from the tracks when CSX deeded the depot to the city in 2001, however, the depot retains its setting and context adjacent to the tracks.

Local noted architect, William J. Sayward of Edwards & Sayward, designed the **Pythagoras Lodge No. 41, of Free and Accepted Masons**, a 1924 Beaux Arts-style building at the corner of East Ponce de Leon Avenue and Clairemont Road. The building has limestone walls on the ground floor and brick on the upper floors. The large entryway, with rusticated limestone and broken pediment, and the upper-story Ionic columns provide the primary design for the main Ponce de Leon Avenue façade. The building was listed individually in the National Register in 1982 (photograph 10).

The former **United States Post Office—Decatur, Georgia**, at 141 East Trinity Place, a 1935 Stripped Classical-style building, was listed in the National Register on July 5, 2000 (photograph 21). This former federal building was a Public Works Administration project and was designed by Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury, and Neal A. Melick, Supervising Engineer. Clad in marble, this one-story building has a stylized band of Greek fret detail above the windows that wraps around the building. Sold by the General Services Administration in 1987, the building is now in private ownership.

The 1926 Colonial Revival-style **Decatur City Hall** (photograph 15), located at 509 North McDonough Street, was designed by architect William J. Sayward of Edwards & Sayward. The brick building has a granite foundation and a side-gabled slate roof with a central cupola. A two-story central portico is supported by paired cast-stone Ionic columns and two Ionic pilasters. The beltcourse, as well as the jack arches over the first-floor windows, are also cast stone. In 2005 a two-story addition was built at the rear (east) of the building. Originally used as the city hall, jail, and library, the building today still serves as the center of Decatur's city government. Just outside the front door of city hall at the southwest corner of the building is a marker to "Decatur, Georgia, City of Homes, Schools and Churches". The contributing marker was erected by the Decatur Lodge BPOE 1602 in 1937.

The 1965 **Decatur High School** at 310 North McDonough Street was designed by Georgia architects Eugene Bothwell and Richard Nash of Bothwell & Nash (photograph 17). The main focal point of the school is the New Formalist-style elevated covered entrance. This elevated second-floor circular projection has a scalloped concrete roof and six single-light windows rising from the concrete beneath each scallop. The first floor is completely open and serves as a porch leading to the main entrance of the building. The brick main building consists of three wings. Other buildings within the school complex are located west and north of the 1965 building and were constructed after the end of the period of significance.

The 1950 **Decatur Library** (photograph 23) at 215 Sycamore Street is a Classical Revival-style building that serves as the main branch of the DeKalb County library system. The architectural firm of Bothwell & Nash designed the one-story brick building. It features cast-stone corner quoins and a standing-seam, metal, hipped roof with small, louvered, rounded dormers set in the roof. The central pedimented portico on the front façade is supported by four Ionic columns and has a circular window in the pediment. The 12/12 full-height windows have cast-stone surrounds. The library quickly outgrew the 1950 building and was expanded in 1954 with a rear addition, Cooper Hall, designed by the architectural firm of Francis M. Daves & Associates. A four-story rear addition and parking deck, designed by Kirkman Architects, Inc., was



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added to the building in 1992. A contributing object, located in front of the library, is a plaque honoring Thomas H. Chivers, M.D. and poet, who lived in the house "Villa Allegra" in Decatur. The Civitan Club of Decatur erected the plaque in 1931.

The 1958 **Decatur Recreation Center** at 231 Sycamore Street is one of several International Style buildings in the district (photograph 24). The two-story building designed by Bothwell & Nash is constructed of brick with cast-stone and cast-concrete details. The single-story entrance bay has a recessed glass wall of doors and windows. At the rear of the recreation center is a park, now called Cooper Park. The park has large hardwood trees, play structures, a community garden, and tennis courts. Located on the west side of the recreation center is a contributing object, a monument dedicating George Washington Scott Memorial Park on February 22, 1951. The site of the recreation center was formerly the home of the prominent Decatur citizen, George Washington Scott who founded Agnes Scott College.

The 1958 International Style **Decatur Fire Station No. 1** is located at 230 East Trinity Place (photograph 38). Designed by architect Clarence Glass of Glass & McCullough, the building has a two-story main block with one-story side wings. The building has buff-colored brick walls with cast-concrete cornice, copings, window hoods, and window sills. There are ribbon windows in the second floor of the main block, as well as in the single-story side wings. The first floor has three large central bays with openings for emergency vehicles. A concrete canopy supported by concrete brackets surmounts these doors. The building still serves as the fire headquarters for the City of Decatur.

The architectural firm of Bothwell & Associates designed the **1967 DeKalb County Courthouse**, located at 556 North McDonough Street (photograph 16). The marble-clad building has a central nine-story block with two, two-story wings. At the time it was built, it was the second largest courthouse in Georgia. The building's lack of ornamentation, emphasis on its basic geometric form, and use of modern materials reflects the period of late Modern architecture of the 1960s. On the main facades, slim marble piers, evocative of columns, are set between larger metal expanses that house windows. Other buildings in the Atlanta area similar in design include the First National Bank of Atlanta (1966) and the Trust Company of Georgia downtown bank building (1969). The concrete-and-glass courthouse annex, called the Judicial Tower, was constructed immediately west of the courthouse in 2004, and is not included in the historic district. There are three noncontributing objects in front of the courthouse, one pool and two monuments. The small reflecting pool has a plaque stating that all contributions will be donated to Scottish Rite Hospital. One of the monuments is a 2002 plaque in memory of Staff Sergeant Allan Callaway. The second monument is the "Flame of Freedom" erected by the American Legion in 1969.

The oldest church building in the district is the **Anderson Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South**, which formerly served as the main sanctuary of the Decatur Methodist Episcopal Church (now Decatur First United Methodist Church). Construction began on the Romanesque Revival-style building in 1897 and was completed in 1899. Designed by noted Atlanta architect, Gottfried L. Norrman, it is now used as a chapel and for other church activities. It is located at 318 Sycamore Street. The chapel's exterior is rough-cut, irregular-coursed Georgia granite, with granite window lintels and sills. A corner, square bell tower with arched entry and an eight-sided apse define the main façade (photograph 26). Most of the windows are 1/1, except the five lancet windows of opalescent glass in the front gable eave. Behind the pulpit at the north end of the building was the Eliza Pearce Memorial window, donated in her honor by her son, J. W. Pearce. This stained-glass window was made by the Tiffany Glass Company, and cost \$1,000 in 1897. In 1916 the two east-west transepts were added to the building. In 1922 the chapel was extended to the north to add offices and Sunday School space. At that time, the Tiffany window was relocated to its current position. In the mid-1920s, the church purchased the Filber property, located immediately west of the chapel. On that lot in 1949, the three-story, **Sycamore Building** was constructed with an arcade connecting it to the chapel. Designed by noted Atlanta architects, Ivey & Crook, the building has a square-cut granite Late Gothic Revival-style south facade facing Sycamore Street. The Sycamore Building now houses the church's kindergarten.

The **Decatur Methodist Episcopal Church** (today Decatur First United Methodist Church) expanded its campus in the 1950s to the 300 block of East Ponce de Leon Avenue. This part of the church complex, constructed between 1956 and 1967, was designed in the Classical Revival style. The Educational Building and Fellowship Hall, constructed in 1956, was designed by Ivey & Crook. This three-story brick building has 6/6 windows and a central, full-height, front-gabled protruding bay where the front entrance doors are located. This building houses church offices, classrooms, kitchen, and fellowship hall. Connected to this building is the main sanctuary, which was begun in 1964 and completed in 1967. Ivey & Crook were involved in the early planning of the building, but the final design was by Decatur architect Pope H. Fuller. The

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front-gabled brick sanctuary has a central bell tower with steeple (photograph 27). The front portico has a large pediment supported by six Ionic columns and two, square Ionic pilasters. The 1965 **Activities Building** is a separate building, located immediately north of the Educational Building. This two-story brick building has 6/6 windows with brick jack arches, a prominent cornice, and recessed double doors. The building houses the gymnasium and a number of offices.

The Late Gothic Revival-style main sanctuary of the **Decatur Presbyterian Church** (photograph 22) at 207 Sycamore Street was designed by the architectural firm of Bothwell & Nash and constructed in 1951. The main or north facade has a random course ashlar entrance with a stepped gable and central stained-glass window with stone tracery. A 115-foot tall, square bell tower is located at the southwest corner of the building and is topped with stone crenellations. Also completed in 1951 was the Scott Memorial Chapel located at the southwest end of the sanctuary building. This one-story brick building has a slate roof; tall, stained-glass, lancet windows; and buttresses with cast-stone copings. At the same time, the Late Gothic Revival-style **Bradley Building** was constructed south of the sanctuary along Church Street to house the Sunday School. It is a side-gabled brick building with cast-stone copings and lintels. In 1958 the **McGeachy Building** and colonnade were inserted into the space between the chapel and the Bradley Building along Church Street. Constructed to match the other buildings, this Late Gothic Revival-style building is a side-gabled, two-story, brick building with cast-stone copings that faces Church Street.

#### Commercial Buildings

Commercial buildings surrounding the 1917 courthouse square are primarily one- and two-story brick buildings. The buildings on East Ponce de Leon Avenue, East Court Square, and the former Sycamore Street, now plaza, are good examples of these commercial buildings (photographs 4-6). West Court Square buildings were demolished in the 1960s. Further east along East Ponce de Leon Avenue is another strip of one-story brick buildings (photograph 11). Character-defining features of these one- and two-story buildings include simple rectangular forms; fronts that face directly onto the sidewalk; large display windows; and architectural ornament primarily on the front facades. Most of the buildings are one story in height and brick is the most common material.

Along East Court Square is a strip of commercial buildings dating from the early to mid-20th century (photographs 6 and 12). Architect Francis Smith of Pringle & Smith designed the two-story First National Bank building at 133 East Court Square (photographs 12-14) in 1951. This limestone-clad building, with a granite foundation, has relief carvings on the front facade. The carvings were done by sculptor Julian Hoke Harris and represent "Industry & Agriculture" and "Learning & Culture." Harris, an associate professor at Georgia Institute of Technology, had a career in sculpture from the 1930s to the 1980s. Today the building is commercial on the first floor and residential on the second floor.

A two-story commercial building of buff-colored brick is located at 112-116 East Ponce de Leon Avenue adjacent to the Masonic lodge. This 1929 building, the Watkins Building, is named after its builder, F.O. Watkins. Historically, the building was retail on the first floor, while offices for lawyers, doctors, and dentists occupied the second floor.

Another good example of a 1920s commercial building is located at 408 Church Street (photograph 9). This buff-colored brick building has three main blocks, each with a large arched entryway.

The 1939 Blair-Rutland Building is a two-story, brick office building located at 215 Church Street. It is Art Deco in style and was listed in the National Register in 2002. It is the only Art Deco-style building located within the district.

A strip of 1930s brick and concrete block commercial buildings are located on East College Avenue. These small businesses are similar in style and character to the businesses around the courthouse square and were built in a prime location across the railroad tracks from the depot. Today, most of the buildings contain small shops.

There is one historic gas station located within the district. This 1938 gas station is located at 131 East Ponce de Leon Avenue. Designed in the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style, the building, covered with stucco, has a clay tile roof and parapets. It has been converted into use as a restaurant (photograph 7).

#### Residential Buildings

A few houses remain near the courthouse square and have been converted to commercial use. One of these is the 1905 Houston House, located at 418 Church Street (photograph 8). The two-story frame house is vernacular in style with a one-story rear ell and front porch. The oldest house in the district is the Word-Williams-Evans House (popularly known as the



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High House) at 309 Sycamore Street. It was constructed around 1830 and altered decades later with Folk Victorian ornamentation (photograph 25). Located on this same block of Sycamore Street are two houses constructed in the early 20th century, including an American Foursquare house built in 1920, and a Craftsman-style bungalow built in 1930.

A majority of the houses are located in the eastern portion of the district. Many of these houses date from 1900 through the 1930s. The majority of the buildings on Barry and North Candler streets were built in the early 1900s and represent a wide variety of historic house types, including bungalow, gabled-wing, New South, and American Foursquare. Most are vernacular in style, although the bungalows are typically Craftsman style. A 19th-century, wood, Folk Victorian-style cottage, called the Steward-Rowland House, is located at 218 Barry Street. One of the few New South cottages in the district is located at 129 Barry Street. Also on Barry Street (204) is a one-and-a-half story, gabled-wing cottage constructed in 1900.

A good example of a Craftsman-style bungalow is located at 125 North Candler Street (photograph 31). This house is a side-gabled, wood frame house with Craftsman details. A two-story American Foursquare house, constructed in 1911, is located at 209 North Candler Street.

Pate Street is a small east-west road divided by Barry Street. East of Barry Street are two American Small Houses built c.1930. The house at 119 Pate Street is a vernacular, side-gabled American Small House with asbestos siding.

The short section of Hillyer Place within the district has two houses, both built c.1900. One is a Craftsman-style bungalow. The other house, at 130 Hillyer Place, is a wood framed, hipped-roof Georgian cottage on brick piers.

The other residential area in the district is located south of East Trinity Place. Located on Church Street are several bungalows, an American Foursquare house at 208 Church Street, and a Georgian-plan house at 121 Church Street. Most of these frame houses are constructed in the Craftsman style and have granite foundations.

The George Walter House, also called the Marble House (photograph 18), located at 119 North McDonough Street, is the only example of the Second Empire style in Decatur. The house is stuccoed and scored to resemble marble.

East Maple Street is a short, one-block road running between North McDonough and Church streets. On this short street are three, two-story 1935 duplexes (Photograph 41), each with brick foundation and columns, wood siding, and large, open front porches. Each building contains two apartments, one per floor. Other house types on this street include a wood-frame gabled-wing cottage.

There are two contributing apartment buildings in the district. The c.1924 Columbus Court (now Candler Court) Apartments at 305 East Ponce de Leon Avenue contains elements of the Colonial Revival style with the low-hipped tile roof supported by brackets, Doric porch columns, and pediments over the entry doors (photograph 28). The U-shaped brick apartment building is a good example of the courtyard type of apartment building that was popular in the 1920s. The other apartment building is located at 221 North Candler Street. It is a two-story brick apartment building constructed in 1928 (photograph 29) with Spanish Revival elements including shaped parapets and a tile mansard roof.

Noncontributing buildings within the district include those buildings that have been significantly altered from their historic appearance or were constructed after the end of the period of significance. Examples include some apartment buildings constructed after 1967 at the corner of Church and Maple streets and several commercial buildings at the corner of Church Street and East Ponce de Leon Avenue that have been altered.

There are 14 contributing objects in the district, primarily markers and monuments located on the courthouse lawn. Other contributing markers are located in front of the library, recreation center, and in front of city hall. There are two contributing structures—the rail line and the Sparta-type town plan. The one contributing site is Cooper Park located behind the Decatur Recreation Center. The park has large hardwood trees, play structures for children, a community garden, and tennis courts. There are 14 noncontributing objects including 12 markers/monuments, a plaza, and a small reflecting pool in front of the 1967 courthouse. There are six nonhistoric parking lots and one gazebo that are counted as noncontributing structures in the district.

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Landscaping in the district varies. In the residential areas there are typically grass lawns, foundation plantings, numerous flowering trees, and mature hardwoods, especially along Barry and North Candler streets. Side yards are typically very small as the houses are close together, while backyards are larger. Retaining walls of granite are most common, although brick and concrete block walls can be found. There is little fencing, mostly wood pickets, with some metal fences. Throughout the commercial areas, landscaping consists of sidewalks and street trees to provide shade. A grassed lawn, large trees, and walkways surround the 1917 courthouse. On Church and North McDonough streets, which are primarily residential-turned-commercial areas, the driveways have been expanded, and parking lots installed in the front of the buildings. On Church Street and East Trinity Place, there are some small plantings and trees.

Just beyond the boundaries of the downtown district include areas that contain new construction and/or parking lots. The area to the north of the district includes new construction, especially along Sycamore Street and East Ponce de Leon Avenue. This area contains a mix of new residential, primarily condominiums, and commercial buildings, and parking lots. Northeast of the downtown district is the Ponce de Leon Court Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2011. Beyond the eastern boundary of the downtown district is a residential area of large, historic homes. West of the district are new government buildings and parking lots. The area south of the district, beyond the railroad tracks, consists of some new apartment buildings and the South Candler Street—Agnes Scott College Historic District (National Register listed in 1994).

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

TRANSPORTATION

### Period of Significance

1823-1967

### Significant Dates

1823 – city of Decatur incorporated; town plan laid out; county seat established

1967 – courthouse completed

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Arnold Construction – contractor

Bodin & Lamberson – architects

Bothwell & Associates - architects

Bothwell & Nash - architects

Daves, Francis M. – architect

Edwards & Sayward– architects

Farnell Blair Company - builder

Fuller, Pope H. – architect

Glass & McCullough - architects

Ivey & Crook – architects

Johnson, Jes R. -architect

Lind, Edmund – architect

Melick, Neal A. – engineer

Norrman, Gottfried L. - architect

Pringle & Smith – architects

Simon, Louis A. – architect

Walker & Chase- architects

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**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins in 1823 when the town was laid out and incorporated as the seat of government for DeKalb County and ends in 1967 with the completion of the 1967 DeKalb County Courthouse, the last public building constructed during the historic period.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Decatur Downtown Historic District is significant at the local level under Criteria A and C as the historic core of the city of Decatur, the DeKalb County seat. The Decatur Downtown Historic District is significant in the area of architecture because the commercial and residential buildings are representative of architectural styles and types built in Georgia cities from the end of the 19th century through the middle of the 20th century. The district is significant in the area of commerce because it represents the city's importance as a regional center of commerce from the late 19th to the middle of the 20th century. Typically the county seat filled this role and provided for the day-to-day commercial needs of nearby residents, such as retail stores and offices and professional services. The district is significant in the area of community planning and development for its development as a county seat with a Sparta-type plan. The major road orientation, street grid pattern, and railroad line remain intact from the historic period. As the county seat, Decatur is also significant in politics/government for the presence of buildings directly related to activities and events associated with government, such as the county courthouse and city hall. The district is significant in the area of transportation for the role of the railroad in the ensuing growth of the city, and for the 1892 depot, which served passengers and commerce until the 1960s. The Georgia Railroad line through Decatur was the main line running from Augusta to Atlanta.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Decatur Downtown Historic District is significant in the area of architecture because the commercial and residential buildings are representative of architectural styles and types built in Georgia cities from the end of the 19th century through the middle of the 20th century. Decatur has many good intact examples of commercial architecture that date from its period of greatest growth during the late 19th century into the 1960s. The central business district is concentrated in the blocks surrounding the courthouse as is common in many of Georgia's county seats. Commercial buildings in the district include both freestanding and attached one- and two-story brick buildings. Other character-defining features of the late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial buildings include simple rectangular forms; storefronts that face directly onto the sidewalk; a common setback; large display windows; and architectural ornament primarily on the front facades. Most of the buildings are one story in height and brick is the most common material.

The Decatur Downtown Historic District is also significant in architecture for its community landmark buildings including the 1917 DeKalb County Courthouse. The courthouse (National Register listed in 1971) is a three-story granite building (photograph 2) designed by the architectural firm of Walker & Chase. Arthur F. Walker and William J.J. Chase operated a successful Atlanta architectural practice from 1909 to 1919 before dissolving the partnership. The courthouse features monumental two-story porticos on the north and south sides, each with four Corinthian columns supporting the large pediments. East and west wings were added to the building in 1935; second floors were added to the wings in 1950 by architect Daniel H. Bodin of Bodin & Lamberson.

Some of the other early 20th-century community landmark buildings include the 1935 former United States Post Office—Decatur, Georgia (National Register listed in 2000), the 1924 Pythagoras Lodge No. 41 of Free and Accepted Masons (National Register listed in 1982), and the 1926 Decatur City Hall.



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The post office, designed in the stripped classical style, represents an especially deft treatment of this style at a time when the majority of post offices built in Georgia were designed in the Colonial Revival style of architecture. Stripped or starved classicism is a simplified classical style that is characterized by symmetrical massing, smooth expanses of unadorned planar surfaces, and reduced ornamentation. The Decatur post office is a low, rectangular mass clad in white marble, the only Georgia post office with a white marble exterior.

The 1924 Pythagoras Lodge No. 41 of Free and Accepted Masons, designed by the architectural firm of Edwards & Sayward, is a good example of a vernacularized Beaux Arts style, which is manifested in the overall composition of the front façade. The facade includes a raised podium that serves as the first floor, paired columns and central recessed porch on the second floor, and pedimented windows with stone quoins.

The only Art Deco building located within the district is the 1939 Blair-Rutland Building (National Register listed in 2002), a good example of the Art Deco style. Designed by Jes Johnson, the Blair-Rutland Building, with its monumental entrance and streamlined corners, is one of only two surviving Art Deco buildings in Decatur.

Decatur has several mid-20th -century community landmark buildings including the International Style Decatur Recreation Center and the Decatur Fire Station No. 1. Both are good examples of the use of the style with the use of clean forms devoid of ornamentation that is characteristic of the International Style.

The Decatur High School is a good example of the New Formalism style. The New Formalism style emerged in the 1960s as a way to update past styles with new technologies and design elements. New Formalist buildings utilize classical elements such as building proportion, colonnades, and entablatures, while making use of modern innovations in concrete design through the inclusion of umbrella shells and folded plates. The scalloped canopy entrance to the high school is a good example of this concrete design element.

Many prominent Atlanta architects designed buildings in Decatur including Bodin & Lamberson, Bothwell & Nash, Walker & Chase, Frances Daves, Edwards & Sayward, Pope Fuller, Ivey & Crook, Edmund Lind, Gottfried Norrman, and Pringle & Smith. Some of these architectural firms designed several buildings in Decatur.

Bothwell & Nash, a noted Atlanta architectural firm with a Decatur branch, designed the recreation center, high school, the Presbyterian church, and the library. Eugene Lovejoy Bothwell (1909-1985) and Richard Russell Nash (1905-1964) established a reputation for designing public buildings and completed many hospitals, churches, and schools in Georgia from the founding of their partnership in 1938. Some of the many Georgia commissions the firm completed are the Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, the First Methodist Church in Toccoa, Baldwin County Hospital, Oak Grove Elementary School in DeKalb County, and the Pickens County Courthouse. After the death of Richard Nash in 1964, Eugene Bothwell formed the firm of Bothwell & Associates, who designed the 1967 DeKalb County Courthouse.

Ernest Daniel Ivey (1887-1966) and Lewis Edmund "Buck" Crook, Jr. (1898-1967) were among the most prolific architects in Atlanta and the Southeast region from the early to mid-20th century. For the Decatur Methodist Episcopal Church (now Decatur First United Methodist Church), the firm designed the Sycamore Building and the Fellowship Hall/ Education Building on East Ponce de Leon Avenue. They also consulted on the design for the sanctuary at 300 East Ponce de Leon Avenue. The prominent firm constructed buildings across the Southeastern United States. Ivey & Crook (1923-1967), excelled at designing churches, schools, and residential buildings, demonstrating a high quality of execution and a thorough understanding of classical design. Some of the other local buildings designed by Ivey & Crook include Druid Hills United Methodist Church, the Candler Library at Emory University, Lullwater House at Emory University (formerly the Walter Candler residence), the Walters' Dormitory at Agnes Scott University, and the Crum & Forster Building in Atlanta.

William A. Edwards (1866-1939) and William J. Sayward (1875 -1945), designers of the Masonic lodge and city hall, formed their partnership, Edwards & Sayward, in 1912. Their architectural firm worked primarily in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina, designing many courthouses, office buildings, churches and schools. The firm specialized in educational buildings, including public schools and academic buildings for colleges, including some of the buildings at Agnes Scott College and Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur.

The district is significant in the area of commerce because it represents the city's importance as a regional center of commerce from the late 19th to the middle of the 20th century. Typically, the county seat filled this role, and provided for

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the day-to-day commercial needs of nearby residents, such as retail stores, offices, and professional services. DeKalb County was the second most populous county in Georgia in the 20th century. Its growth, fueled by its proximity to Atlanta and strong, local political leadership, transformed the once agricultural county into new residential neighborhoods amid pockets of industry. Decatur, as the county seat of this postwar boom, is significant as the historic commercial center of DeKalb County and the surrounding area, as was typical for a county seat. Commercial activity included the distribution of dry goods, general merchandise, clothing, produce, and other commodities to county residents. Along with retail activity, professional service providers, such as lawyers, bankers, and pharmacists, also utilized the downtown buildings. The early establishment of hotels, banks, and lawyers' offices downtown testifies to the importance of downtown as a crossroads for commercial activity. While these hotels are no longer extant, Decatur retained its role as a commercial center through the 1960s and beyond. Today, Decatur's commercial buildings located around the courthouse square are filled with a variety of retail shops and restaurants.

The district is significant in the area of community planning and development for its Sparta-type plan as defined in *Georgia Community Development and Morphology of Community Types*. The two major roads leading to the courthouse and the later addition of a rail line helped define the town's physical layout. When Decatur was established in 1823, the courthouse was constructed in the center of town in a dedicated courthouse square. Reinforcing the importance of Decatur as the county seat is the concentration of historic commercial and community landmark buildings located near the courthouse and along the principal streets. This created a distinct downtown or central business district. This pattern of development represents the traditional way in which Georgia's county seats grew and developed over time.

The major road orientation, street grid pattern, and railroad line remain intact from the historic period. Commercial buildings surround the historic courthouse square. The majority of the buildings date from the beginning of the 20th century to 1967 and represent the evolution of commercial development in Decatur. As the city grew, residential development moved away from the commercial core to the periphery of the downtown. The growth of Decatur away from the central business district reflects the major periods of community development influenced by various social and economic factors. Most of the oldest residential areas are located on main streets near the downtown. As the physical framework of the town expanded, later housing moved to the periphery.

As the county seat, Decatur is also significant in politics/government for the presence of buildings directly related to activities and events associated with government, such as the two county courthouses and the city hall. Throughout much of Georgia's history, the county has been the most important and powerful form of local government. County governments made and enforced laws through county commissioners, sheriffs, and judges, who were traditionally the most important local political figures. County governments also provided essential public services including building and maintaining roads and water/sewer systems. They were responsible for administering important aspects of the legal system such as the court system, birth and death records, wills and probate, and property deeds and taxes. Through county school boards, they provided for public education throughout the county. Local government buildings in Decatur include the city hall, the 1917 courthouse, the 1967 courthouse, the fire station, recreation center, library, and the high school.

The district is significant in the area of transportation for the role of the railroad in the ensuing growth of the city, and for the 1892 depot, which served passengers and commerce until the 1960s. Edmund Lind, a native Londoner, who moved to Atlanta in 1882, designed the depot. The Georgia Railroad line through Decatur was the main line running from Augusta to Atlanta. The arrival of the railroad in 1845 greatly contributed to Decatur's development and financial success. Warehouses and other businesses needing rail transportation sprang up near the depot, such as lumber stores, furniture stores, and a paper warehouse. Today the rail line is still used for freight trains. The depot is owned by the city and leased out.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)**

*The following developmental history was prepared by Janet Barrickman, Laura Drummond, and Brandy Morrison, consultants, and edited by Lynn Speno, Historic Preservation Division. The August 20, 2010 "Decatur Downtown Historic District" Historic District Information Form is on file at the Historic Preservation Division, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.*

Before the arrival of white settlers, the land today known as DeKalb County was inhabited by Native American tribes, primarily the Creeks. The area that would eventually become downtown Decatur was at the intersection of several major



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trails that were used by Native Americans. The Echota Trail ran along the ridge on which today's College Avenue (in Decatur) and Decatur Street (in Atlanta) are located. The Shallowford Trail, as it traveled south from the Chattahoochee River, became a portion of today's Clairemont Avenue. As the trail went south, past what would later become the courthouse square, its name became the Indian Springs Trail, later known as the McDonough Road. Sycamore Street is part of the Sandtown/Stone Mountain Trail, a trail connecting the Sandtown village on the Chattahoochee River with Stone Mountain. Native American trails were on high ground, normally following ridgelines. These early trails provided the basis for the important circulation routes of modern-day Decatur and DeKalb County as railroads, roads, and major highways followed these same routes.

The first white settlers began moving into the area which is now DeKalb County in the early 1820s after the 1821 Creek land cession, though it is likely that there were settlers in the area as early as 1816. The majority of the early settlers were farmers or skilled tradesmen of English, Scottish, and Irish ancestry. Many migrated from eastern parts of Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia, and settled on small to medium farms.

By 1822 the need for a new county was evident as more settlers arrived in the area. A new county, DeKalb, was created and approved by an act of the Georgia General Assembly on December 9, 1822. The land for DeKalb County was taken from sections of Henry, Fayette, and Gwinnett counties. The new county was named in honor of Baron Johann DeKalb (1721-1780), a German soldier who served as a major general in the Continental Army during the American Revolution.

An act approved on December 23, 1822 by the Georgia General Assembly appointed commissioners "to fix on a public site for the courthouse and jail to be as near to the center of DeKalb County as convenience will admit." The commissioners selected and purchased Land Lot 246 in the 15th District for the site of the new county seat, which was located on a knoll at the intersection of two ridgelines. On July 28, 1823, the newly-organized county court ordered that the official county seat be permanently located on Land Lot 246 of the 15th District, and that the small trading village that was already established at the site should be called Decatur. On December 19, 1823, Decatur was incorporated under an act of the Georgia General Assembly. DeKalb County's first town was named after Stephen Decatur (1779-1820), a distinguished naval veteran of the War of 1812. Decatur was founded 14 years before Terminus, or what would become the city of Atlanta, was identified as the end of the line for the state-sponsored railroad, the Western & Atlantic Railroad.

James Diamond, an early settler in the area, was the surveyor who is credited with laying out the town of Decatur, including the courthouse square. For the location of the courthouse square, he chose the site of the intersection of early trails. Though no map of the early city is extant, a map drawn from historical documents in 1965 shows that the city was laid out in a grid pattern. The original layout of the area around the courthouse square consisted of deep rectangular lots lining all four sides of the square, with the short end of the rectangle facing the street.

DeKalb County's first courthouse was a small log building erected in 1823 on the north side of the present courthouse square in Decatur. The courthouse was equipped with stocks in the yard for minor law offenders. As Adiel Sherwood reported in 1824 in *The Gazetteer of Georgia*, "Decatur, the Capital (sic), had a courthouse, jail, Academy, and approximately fifty houses and stores." That year all of DeKalb County had a free white population of 3,569. The population of the city of Decatur at that time was approximately 200. In 1829 a new brick courthouse building replaced the original log courthouse. At a cost of \$5,100, a large expenditure for that time, the courthouse was the most prominent structure in the county.

The early development of the city was driven by the fact that Decatur was the DeKalb County seat. Most of the first structures in the new city were government-related and soon government officials and attorneys settled on the square to be near the courthouse. Colonel Samuel T. Bailey and John W. Hooper were two of the first lawyers to settle in the area, serving Decatur and the surrounding areas in the 1820s and 1830s. Small businesses and retail stores soon followed, catering to the needs of the increasing numbers of workers, government officials, and residents. There were also residences constructed around the square, often with retail on the street level and living quarters above. Further out from the square, supporting businesses developed to serve the growing population. Some of these included blacksmiths, a tin factory, carpenter shops, and livery stables. In 1830 the first census for DeKalb County reported a total population of 10,042, which included 8,394 whites and free Negroes and 1,648 slaves.

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Reuben Cone, who was a judge of the Inferior Court of DeKalb County, built the first hotel in Decatur. The hotel was located on what is today Ponce de Leon Avenue, just east of the square. Mason D. Shumate, who was the first tavern keeper in Decatur, rented a section of the hotel. The wooden structure, which contained residential and commercial spaces, burned in 1846 in a fire that also destroyed other buildings around the square, including Colonel Thomas Akin's dry goods and grocery store, Thomas Dobb's office, a residence, and the post office on the corner of Clairemont and Ponce de Leon avenues. Most of the early buildings were constructed of wood, so fires were a constant hazard.

Religious congregations built houses of worship shortly after the city was founded. Initially, there was a group of men from different religious faiths, including Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians, that met regularly to worship together. When DeKalb County was created in 1822, there was a provision giving the Inferior Court the ability to provide religious congregations in Decatur a town lot on which to build. The Decatur Methodist congregation, organized sometime between 1823 and 1826, were the first to erect a building devoted entirely to worship. This early structure was later replaced by a wooden building with steeple that was in use until the granite church was completed in 1899. Although the Presbyterian congregation organized in 1824 as Westminster Presbyterian Church, by 1827 the congregation had changed its name to Decatur Presbyterian Church. By 1869 the Baptist congregation had erected a small church after years of meeting in people's homes. Also the Episcopal congregation constructed their church in the early 1890s.

Two early schools were the Hannah Moore School for Girls, which before the Civil War operated above a store on Sycamore Street, and an academy for boys established in the 1820s, referred to as the Male Academy. These private schools were for white children only. In 1892 the Donald Fraser School for Boys, operated by the Presbyterian Church, made use of the brick building just vacated by the denomination upon completion of their new church building. This school originally accepted boys as young as eight years of age, but after a decade became a high school only. As public education became more widely available, this school ceased operation in the early 20th century.

The oldest house remaining in the district is the Williams-Ward-Evans House (1830), also known as the High House, because, according to local tradition, it was the only two-story building in Decatur when it was constructed. Additions were made to the house before the Civil War and then a later remodeling added the Victorian-style porches and detail work.

The arrival of the railroad in the 1840s had an immediate impact on trade and commerce in the city. Decatur business activity increased as the merchants and farmers had ready access to supplies and shipping. During the early 1840s, the Georgia Railroad (now CSX Transportation) began constructing a line connecting Augusta to Atlanta. The line, following a natural ridge, was designed to pass through Decatur just south of the city center. In September 1845, the rail line was completed and the first train, a freight train from Augusta to Atlanta, passed through Decatur. Since the rail line was a distance away from the courthouse square, the city commissioned the construction of a road that would provide better access to downtown from the depot. That early road, Depot Street, is now East Trinity Place.

In 1842 a fire destroyed the brick courthouse, along with several wood buildings around the square, and most of the city and county records were lost in the fire. In 1847 a third courthouse was completed on the site. The 1850 U.S. Census recorded 744 residents in the city, an increase of 544 from 1823. During these years, the main occupations of DeKalb County residents were related to agriculture, mining, or timber. Decatur provided goods and services to the growing population, as well as administrative and legal services for the county government. In 1853 Fulton County was created in part from the western section of DeKalb County and some of the need for legal affairs and administrative duties in DeKalb County decreased. This need was based upon Atlanta's growth as two other railroad lines connected through the city shortly after the Western & Atlantic line was finished.

At this time there were several private residences, including one on East Court Square and three on the street south of the square (Sycamore Street/Atlanta Avenue). On the north side of the square (now Ponce de Leon Avenue) were the homes of early prominent residents, including Ezekiel Mason, Milton A. Candler, and Levi Willard. There was also a post office on the north side of the square located at the intersection of Ponce de Leon and Clairemont avenues. On the west side of the square was a Masonic hall and a tin shop. There were two hotels around the square in 1866: the Washington Hotel on what is now the MARTA plaza, and the Reynolds Hotel on West Court Square. There were three saloons, as well as a hat shop, several dry goods stores, and two blacksmith shops. None of these buildings, located around the courthouse square, are extant today.



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Except for the devastating economic effects on the entire region, the Civil War and Reconstruction did not materially affect the city of Decatur. During the days leading up to the Battle of Atlanta, Union Brigadier General James B. McPherson was given orders by Major General William T. Sherman to destroy sections of the Georgia Railroad from Decatur to Stone Mountain. On the actual day of the Battle of Atlanta (July 22, 1864), Confederate cavalry general, Joseph Wheeler, arrived in Decatur from the south by way of Fayetteville Road (now McDonough Street). Wheeler drove the Federal forces from the railroad, across the courthouse square, and northwards out of town. Unlike other areas of Georgia, Decatur did not experience large amounts of damage or destruction. An 1866 map shows that most, if not all, of the approximately 100 buildings in Decatur were intact at the end of the war.

The years immediately following the end of the Civil War were times of hardship and economic stagnation for the city of Decatur, as with the rest of the South. According to the 1870 census, the population of the city of Decatur declined from 744 in 1850 to 401 in 1870. Several factors contributed to the decline including the establishment of Fulton County in 1853, the Civil War and the lingering economic effects of Reconstruction, and the establishment of Atlanta as the new state capitol in 1868. Many residents of Decatur moved to Atlanta seeking new opportunities. However, the physical boundaries of the city of Decatur were actually enlarged during this period. In 1871 the city limits were extended to include all of the land within one-half mile of the courthouse.

In 1892 a new railroad depot was constructed at East College Avenue, at a cost of \$3,500 replacing the earlier, smaller depot constructed in 1881. Edmund G. Lind designed the depot for the Georgia Railroad (now CSX Transportation). The depot is one of a series of 19th-century Georgia Railroad depots, each designed differently, many of which no longer exist. The Georgia Railroad came to Decatur in the 1840s, after the town was already established. The rail line did not run through the center of town. Instead, the rail line followed a granite ridge that runs east-west at the southern edge of the district and the depot was built on the north side of the tracks. In order to connect the depot with the courthouse square, a new road was constructed. Originally called Depot Street, it is today East Trinity Place. Today the street has a couple of brick office buildings and the 1935 former U.S. Post Office.

The rail line and depot provided a focal point for postbellum growth. Though not in the downtown district, by the late 1880s, a prosperous residential neighborhood had developed south of the railroad tracks near the intersection of College Avenue and South Candler Street. This neighborhood is adjacent to the southern boundary of the district, and its development, including Agnes Scott College, had a positive impact on Decatur. Originally established in 1889 as a primary school for girls, Decatur Female Seminary, the school would grow into Agnes Scott College, named after the mother of the school's benefactor, Colonel George W. Scott. Located just across the rail line from the depot, many of the students arrived by rail.

The rail line also provided access for those traveling to and from Atlanta for work or shopping. Businessmen from Decatur embarked on the "Accommodation Train" which left from the depot for the commute into Atlanta. In January 1909 President Taft was received at the depot as he passed through town from Aiken, South Carolina, to Atlanta. The station received dry goods and other merchandise and played an important role in the lives of the citizens of Decatur. For many years a gristmill was conveniently located across from the depot, just north of the railroad tracks. Directly south of the depot, where a row of commercial buildings are located today, was the home of Lucy Howard, who would later become the wife of Asa Griggs Candler, the founder of the Coca-Cola Company.

During the years from 1870 to the end of the 19th century, there were steady increases in the city and county populations. Census records show that the city grew from 401 residents in 1870 to 1,418 in 1900. A business directory from the year 1876 lists several businesses around the courthouse square including a furniture store, three dry goods and general merchandise stores, and one cotton ginner.

One of the large 19th-century homes built near the railroad tracks remains. Built by George Walter, a wealthy cotton broker from Savannah, the Second Empire-style house faced the railroad just west of Depot Street. The large fenced property had room for a water tank and a herd of Jersey cattle. Located across the railroad tracks from the new seminary, the Walter home was made available for boarding students beginning in 1890.

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Though the advent and expansion of the railroads had an important impact on Decatur, the streetcar system also provided needed transportation for the local citizens. In the spring of 1891, the Metropolitan Street Railroad Company extended a street railway service (initially non-electric) from downtown Atlanta to College Avenue across from Decatur's railroad depot. This line was known as the South Decatur line. A few years later, the Atlanta City Street Railway Company secured a franchise to build a line from Atlanta to Decatur. It started in downtown Atlanta, ran along DeKalb Avenue to Howard Street and up McDonough Street to the Decatur courthouse square. This electric streetcar line was listed on some maps as the Main Decatur Line.

With the exception of the streetcar tracks that were laid on the square, the expansion of these early transportation systems did not directly affect physical development on the courthouse square. Rather, the area on the square and immediately surrounding it remained a mixture of retail, commercial, and residential, all of which benefited from the general prosperity and economic growth that followed the expansion of the transportation systems.

Due to growth in the county, in 1898 the courthouse was demolished to make way for a larger courthouse that was constructed on the same site. This new courthouse was a large structure made of Lithonia granite and had an elaborate cupola with clocks on all four facades. At the turn of the 20th century, Decatur was firmly established as an important regional center, with a population of 1,418. Between 1900 and 1940, Decatur experienced the greatest population growth in its history. With expansion of the city limits in 1900 and 1907, the size of the city nearly doubled and the population increased. Decatur saw a 73 percent increase in population from 1,418 residents in 1900 to 2,466 in 1910.

Though the direction of residential development from the 1880s through the turn of the 20th century was mainly to the areas east and south of the square, a historic map shows that there were still several residences on the courthouse square in 1912, including the home of Dr. W.J. Houston (1865-1932). Houston, a physician, was the son of Major Washington Jackson Houston, Sr., manager of the Georgia Railroad. W.J. Houston, Jr. began practicing medicine in the late 1800s, and after building his house on East Court Square, he maintained his medical practice there. In 1924 the home was moved to the back of its lot and turned around to face Church Street. Two commercial buildings were built in its place facing the courthouse. Dr. Houston died in 1932 and family members lived in the house until the late 1980s.

Commercial establishments on the square in 1912 include Johnson Brothers store, Dr. Estes' office, the Bank of Decatur and on East Court Square was the DeKalb County Bank. Near the courthouse square, at the corner of the current North McDonough Street and East Trinity Place, was an office of the Georgia Railroad and Electric Company, a precursor of Georgia Power. None of these buildings are extant.

As the size of the city grew, so did the demand for city services. Washington J. Houston built the county's first electric plant around 1900 (outside of the district) and he soon activated the county's first electric light in his home. Three years later, Houston's company, Decatur Light, Power, and Water, supplied electricity to the city of Decatur. In 1906 the city of Decatur purchased 42 acres of property north of the city (outside the district) for the Decatur Waterworks, which provided water to city residents until 1940.

In 1909 the Decatur City police force was organized with M. D. Googer serving as first chief. At the same time, Googer also served as fire chief, head of the sanitary department, and was in charge of the cemetery. A police court was established around 1909, with the mayor serving as judge. In 1913 A. S. Turner opened a funeral home on the square.

Until 1914 the city relied on a volunteer fire department. In July of that year, a paid fire department was established with six firemen. The firemen were not paid salaries but were paid \$2.50 for every fire to which they responded. The city's first fire truck was purchased in 1917 for the sum of \$8,000.

Upgrades to transportation routes continued during this period. In 1914 East Ponce de Leon Avenue was paved and in 1913 a streetcar line was constructed that connected Atlanta to Stone Mountain to the east by way of Decatur. In 1917 the first regular city mail service began, with Mrs. William D. Kirkpatrick serving as postmistress.

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In 1916 once again the courthouse was damaged by fire and a new courthouse was constructed. The granite walls of the courthouse survived the fire and were reused in the new courthouse, which was completed in 1918 at a cost of \$110,000.

The charter for the Decatur chapter of the Masons was granted on October 7, 1844. The earliest known home of the Decatur Masons was located on the north side of the courthouse. The Masons occupied this location from 1844 to 1848. Their second home (1848-1900) was also located by the courthouse, on West Court Square near the Reynolds Hotel. Their next location (1900-1907) was in a two-story brick building on the corner of South Court Square and McDonough Street. Their fourth home (1907-1924) was located directly across McDonough Street on the corner of South Court Square. In 1924 the Masons constructed their present building on the same site as their first lodge, on the corner of Clairemont Avenue and East Ponce de Leon Avenue. The cornerstone was laid May 10, 1924 and the building was dedicated on January 19, 1925. Thus after 80 years the Masons went back to their original 1844 location. The Daughters of the Eastern Star also meet in the building today.

The city population continued to increase to 6,150 in 1920; 13,276 in 1930; and 16,651 in 1940. As the population grew, so did the expansion of city services beyond basic utilities. In 1926 the Decatur city library was established and space allocated in the new Decatur City Hall building. The building, completed in 1926, replaced a former city building that was located next door.

To accommodate the many travelers and businessmen visiting Decatur, in 1927 the Candler Hotel built by Walter T. Candler, opened on the northwest corner of Church Street and Ponce de Leon Avenue. The hotel was designed by local architect, William J. Sayward, who was responsible for many important public and civic buildings built during that time period. There was seen a need for upscale accommodations for visitors to Agnes Scott College and newcomers to Decatur. The dining room provided meeting space for civic groups from the 1920s to 1970 when the hotel converted to residential use. The hotel is no longer extant.

The invention of the automobile and its availability to the middle class changed the fabric of American life, and Decatur was no exception. One result was the demand for gas for automobiles and several auto service stations appeared near the square. One extant example is the 1938 gas station located at 131 East Ponce de Leon Avenue, built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

As evidenced from an annexation map of the city of Decatur, the years from the 1920s until the mid-20th century were years of rapid development outward from the city center. These new residential neighborhoods illustrate a demographic change in the district during this time, as the central district no longer experienced major residential development.

In 1945 the streetcar tracks around the courthouse square were taken up and parking meters installed. By 1949 all streetcar tracks were removed in the city and trackless trolleys were installed. Also in the post-World War II era, increasingly better roads and the rise of the automobile culture, meant that train travel declined, and passenger service was discontinued. In 2001 CSX Transportation gave title of the depot to the City of Decatur, and in 2002, the building was moved 28 feet north of the railroad tracks. It was rehabilitated in 2006 and is now leased. The line is still used for freight traffic.

In 1949 Annie Scott Cooper donated land on Sycamore Street for a new library, which opened in 1950. Annie Scott Cooper donated the land for the library as a memorial to her father, George Washington Scott (1829-1903), who was a Confederate colonel, a City of Decatur Commissioner, and the founder of Agnes Scott College.

The buildings around the courthouse square remained true to their original configuration and uses through the middle of the 20th century. There were professional offices, often on the upper floors of commercial buildings, with retail establishments on the street level. Lawyers, physicians, and dentists had offices in the Pythagoras Lodge No. 41 of Free and Accepted Masons building on East Ponce de Leon Avenue. On East Court Square there were hardware stores, real estate offices, barber shops, jewelers, and a grocery store. Along West Court Square, there was a concentration of automobile dealerships, including DeKalb Motor Company, Medcalf Pontiac, Holinshead Motors, and the Golden Eagle



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auto accessory store. Grocers, clothing stores, insurance offices, and other small businesses filled the streets just off the square. As is often the case with commercial buildings, the owners and occupants of these buildings changed over the years but the uses generally remained the same. At one time, the Watkins Building housed two grocery stores, the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, and Rogers grocery, and there was a bank on every corner. First National Bank of Atlanta, located at 133 East Court Square, was their third location on the square. Then in the 1960s, First National Bank of Atlanta and Decatur Federal moved their operations several blocks away from the square where they built the first two high-rise buildings in Decatur (outside of the district.)

Decatur from the mid-20th century forward felt intense growth pressure and a renewed interest in comprehensive planning and zoning. During this period, the city saw large-scale changes, including the construction of new government buildings and significant changes in transportation patterns.

Decatur and DeKalb County were simultaneously experiencing intense suburban growth. Decatur had grown from 13,276 residents in 1930 to 21,635 in 1950, and DeKalb had grown from 70,278 residents in 1930 to 130,395 in 1950. The city of Decatur was in need of new facilities. In 1955 a new recreation center, designed by Bothwell & Nash, was constructed at 231 Sycamore Street replacing the historic house built by Charles Murphey. This was followed in 1958 by a new fire station at nearby 230 East Trinity Place.

A new Decatur High School, designed by Bothwell & Nash, was constructed in 1965 at 310 North McDonough Street. The new school replaced a warren of school buildings constructed between 1909 to 1942, located on the same lot. Before 1921 when Decatur constructed its first high school, education beyond the primary grades was provided by private schools. Separate high schools for boys and girls were common, as was the case in Decatur. Schools were also segregated by race. A Presbyterian minister, Reverend Allen Wilson opened the first school for African-American children in 1902 in the St. James Presbyterian Church on Herring Street. The first public school for African-American children, Herring Street School, was constructed in 1913. Neither of these schools is extant and their location is outside of the district. It was not until 1954 that another African-American school, Beacon Elementary School, would be approved for construction by the city of Decatur. This school building is also located outside of the district.

Decatur's historic African-American community was located just west of downtown behind where the Decatur High School is located today. The community centered around several streets, a couple of churches, and its school. Most of the businesses were located along Atlanta Avenue, including a café, movie theater, and grocery stores. Beginning around 1938, this area, called Beacon or Beacon Hill, came under attack from urban renewal. The residents were displaced over time and the buildings torn down.

During this period, Decatur's leaders and businessmen became concerned that it was losing business to the strip shopping centers and automobile suburbs springing up around the metropolitan area. Attempts were made to rebrand downtown Decatur. One idea that surfaced was to make Decatur a competitive mini-metropolis, complete with skyscrapers and parking lots. This was defined in a rendering of the city's future design in a 1963 city manager's report, which envisioned the downtown completely replaced with a "modern" mall-like atmosphere. At the center of the debate, and at the center of the city, stood the historic county courthouse. Since the town's distinctive Sparta plan placed it at the center of several roads, the courthouse square was a valuable spot for community development and a challenge for traffic planners. Feelings of animosity toward the courthouse were so intense that a 1966 newspaper article declared "The United States has its Cuba, Russia has its Albania, and Decatur has its courthouse square." In 1960 DeKalb commissioners voted to widen East Court Square, but the plan was shelved when residents opposed it, concerned about the erosion of the east side of the historic square. In 1961 a proposal was made to replace the courthouse with a road, but this plan was shelved in the face of public discontent with the plan. Then in 1965 Decatur Mayor Jack Hamilton proposed constructing a public park on the site of the courthouse because he felt that the building had become an eyesore. This, too, was ultimately defeated, and no more serious threats faced the courthouse. In 1968 the DeKalb History Center moved into the building and restored it to its current condition.

A major impact in the 1960s came from the installation of new government buildings to serve the growing county. The City of Decatur and DeKalb County leaders envisioned a thriving city of small skyscrapers along the western edge of the



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square, with government buildings as an integral part. One of these buildings was a new high-rise courthouse completed in 1967 just west of the 1917 courthouse.

Another impact arose from traffic and transportation issues. Grappling with increased automobile traffic, the city looked for ways to ease congestion and provide parking for downtown. Commerce Drive, a loop road around downtown Decatur, was completed in the mid-1970s. In order to provide for more parking, much of the African-American community west of downtown was demolished for parking lots. The biggest transportation impact on downtown Decatur was the installation of the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) rail line. The plan, approved in 1968 and implemented in the 1970s, called for the rail to run underneath Sycamore Street, with access from Church Street. It required the closing of Sycamore Street and the demolition of buildings on the north side of Sycamore Street. A surface bus station installed on the western end of the station encroached upon the grounds of the 1967 courthouse, and the north end of North McDonough Street was converted to a parking area. On Saturday, June 30, 1979, electric rail transit returned to the Atlanta area with the opening of the MARTA rail line and Car 114 from Decatur Station was one of the four MARTA cars that ran on opening day.

Disheartened by years of planning that did not reflect the wishes of the majority of residents, Decatur's citizens began to take a proactive approach to planning in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The first big step in community engagement in the planning process was the Decatur Town Center Plan, adopted in 1982 and implemented in 1983. In this plan, Decatur's unique character began to be seen as an asset rather than a hindrance. Decatur realized that it could capitalize on its small town charm and historic preservation began to find its way into planning documents. In response to concerns that downtown Decatur had lost merchants to shopping malls, the new planning director stated in 1986 that "downtown merchants should act like a mall in working as a unit to attract customers, but not look like one." To assess the full breadth of historic resources in Decatur, the city commissioned a citywide historic resources survey conducted in 1990; and in 1996 the first design guidelines were adopted by the city to help preserve the character of historic buildings. A strategic plan, adopted in 2000, identified means to not only increase mobility, but to do so while preserving greenspace, enhancing the quality of life, and incorporating historic preservation efforts into the city.

While the late 20th century saw numerous changes in Decatur, ultimately, the citizens determined to keep the small-town community of the past, avoiding many of the more intrusive alterations proposed. For all the growth pressure in this period, the city and its citizens laid out a blueprint for the preservation of the unique character of downtown Decatur. A goal of Decatur today is to maintain a livable, walkable community, characteristics which lend themselves well to preserving the historic commercial district.

Decatur Downtown Historic District  
Name of Property

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Barrickman, Janet, Laura Drummond and Brandy Morrison. "Decatur Downtown Historic District." *Historic District Information Form*, August 20, 2010. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Clarke, Caroline McKinney. *The Story of Decatur 1823-1899*. Atlanta: Higgins-McArthur, 1973.

Price, Vivian. *The History of DeKalb County, Georgia, 1822-1900*. Fernandina Beach, FL: Wolfe Publishing Company, 1997.

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
☒ previously listed in the National Register:  
DeKalb County Courthouse  
Pythagoras Lodge No. 41 Free and Accepted Masons  
United States Post Office—Decatur, Georgia  
Blair-Rutland Building  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 68.5

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	749880	3740420	3	16	750940	3740080
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	750940	3740840	4	16	750280	3739760
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundary is indicated with a heavy black line on the attached National Register map, drawn to scale.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the intact, contiguous, historic resources associated with the development of downtown Decatur.

Decatur Downtown Historic District  
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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lynn Speno, National Register Specialist

organization Historic Preservation Division, GA Dept. of Natural Resources date March 2012

street & number 254 Washington Street, Ground Level telephone (404) 656-2840

city or town Atlanta state GA zip code 30334

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Decatur Downtown Historic District

City or Vicinity: Decatur

County: DeKalb State: Georgia

Photographer: Charlie Miller, Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources

Date Photographed: December 20, 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1. North McDonough Street. Photographer facing north.
2. 1917 DeKalb County Courthouse. Photographer facing north.
3. MARTA plaza. Photographer facing west.
4. MARTA plaza. Photographer facing east.
5. Plaza along former Sycamore Street. Photographer facing southeast.



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6. East Court Square. Photographer facing northeast.
7. East Ponce de Leon Avenue. Photographer facing southwest.
8. W.J. Houston home at 418 Church Street. Photographer facing west.
9. 408 Church Street. Photographer facing west.
10. Pythagoras Lodge No. 41 of Free and Accepted Masons on Ponce de Leon Avenue. Photographer facing northeast.
11. East Ponce de Leon Avenue. Photographer facing east.
12. First National Bank building on East Court Square. Photographer facing east.
13. Carving representing "Learning & Culture" on First National Bank building. Photographer facing east.
14. Carving representing "Industry & Agriculture" on First National Bank building. Photographer facing east.
15. Decatur City Hall. Photographer facing northeast.
16. 1967 DeKalb County Courthouse. Photographer facing northwest.
17. Decatur High School. Photographer facing west.
18. George Walter House. Photographer facing northwest.
19. North McDonough Street. Photographer facing northeast.
20. Church Street. Photographer facing west.
21. U.S. Post Office (former). Photographer facing south.
22. Decatur Presbyterian Church. Photographer facing east.
23. Decatur-DeKalb Library. Photographer facing southeast.
24. Decatur Recreation Center. Photographer facing south.
25. Word-Williams-Evans House. Photographer facing south.
26. Anderson Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Photographer facing north.
27. Decatur Methodist Episcopal Church. Photographer facing north.
28. Columbus Court Apartments at 305 East Ponce de Leon Avenue. Photographer facing south.
29. Apartments at 221 North Candler Street. Photographer facing northeast.
30. North Candler Street. Photographer facing northwest.
31. North Candler Street. Photographer facing north.
32. East Howard Avenue. Photographer facing northeast.
33. East College Avenue. Photographer facing south.

Decatur Downtown Historic District  
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- 34. Central of Georgia depot. Photographer facing west.
- 35. East Howard Avenue. Photographer facing west.
- 36. East Howard Avenue. Photographer facing northeast.
- 37. Barry Street. Photographer facing north.
- 38. Decatur Fire Station No. 1. Photographer facing north.
- 39. East Howard Avenue. Photographer facing northwest.
- 40. Church Street. Photographer facing west.
- 41. Maple Street. Photographer facing northwest.

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**Property Owner:**

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

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Decatur Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

DeKalb Co., GA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 12000281


Date Listed: 5/23/12

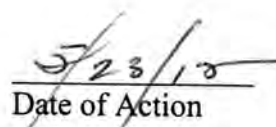
Property Name: Decatur Downtown Historic District

County: DeKalb

State: GA

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

  
Signature of the Keeper

  
Date of Action

-----  
Amended Items in Nomination:

This SLR is issued to amend the registration form to clarify the noncontributing resource count.

Section 7

On page 2, the 1970s MARTA plaza is considered a noncontributing structure bringing the total noncontributing resource count to 55. The district map has also been corrected to reflect this change.

The State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

**National Register property file**

**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Decatur Downtown Historic District  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: GEORGIA, De Kalb

DATE RECEIVED: 4/06/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/27/12  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/14/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/23/12  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000281

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: Y  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 5/23/12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*low level of significance  
POS 1823-1967.*

RECOM./CRITERIA A.C.

REVIEWER W. A. C.

DISCIPLINE Historic

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 5/23/12

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



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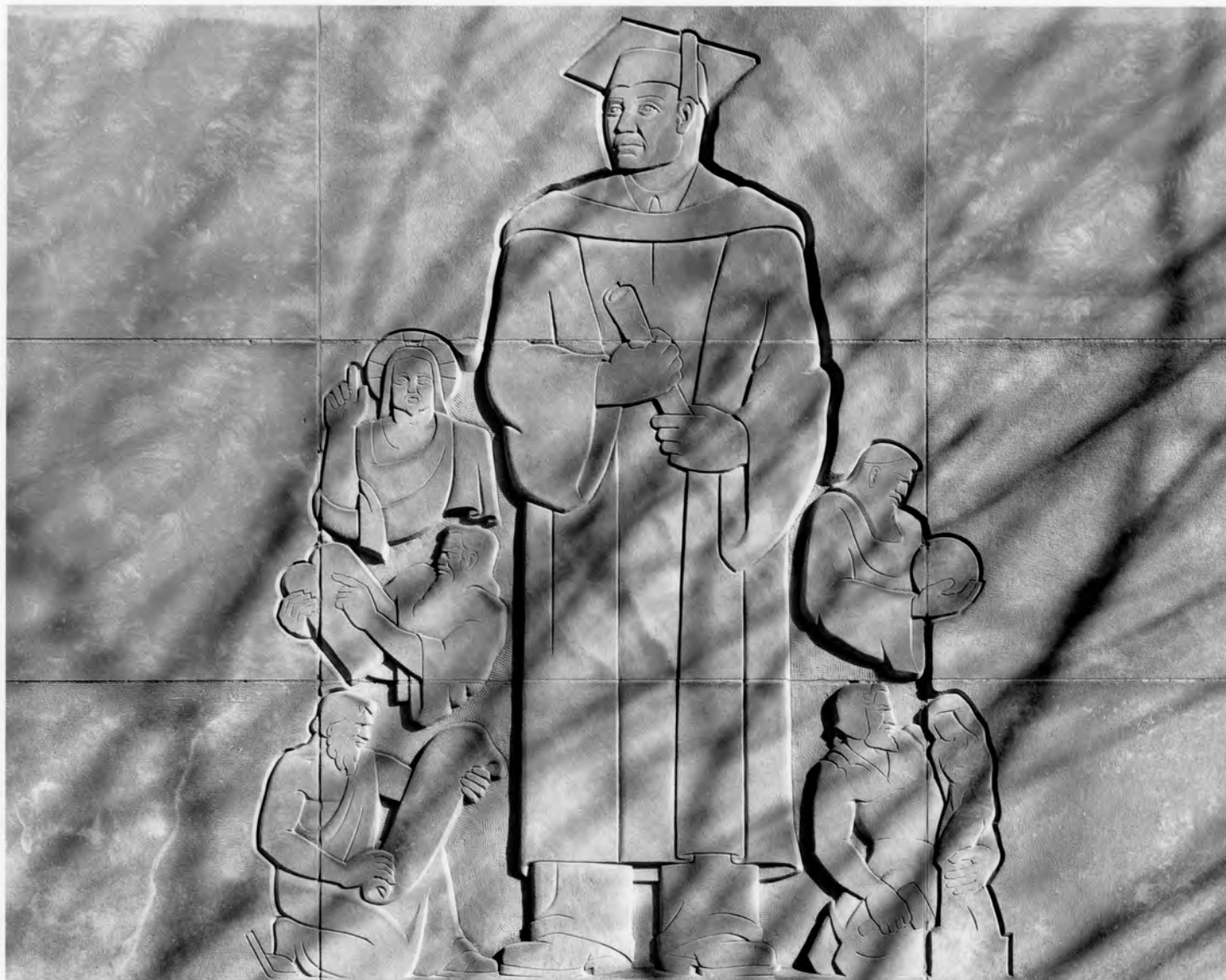


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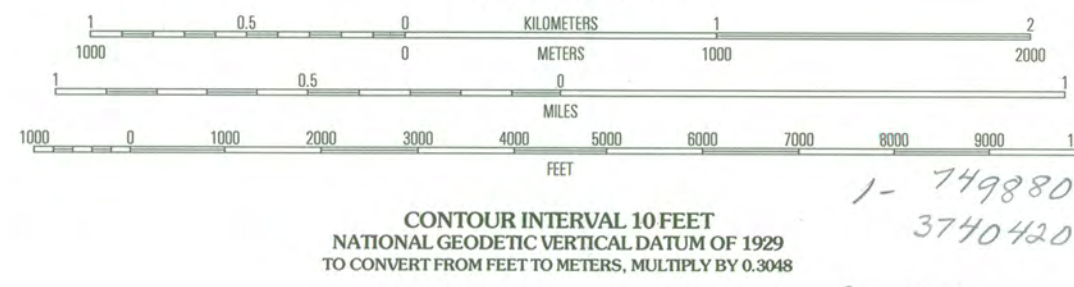
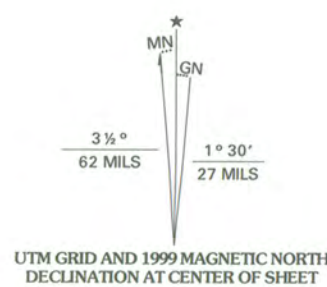


**Decatur Downtown Historic District**  
**DeKalb County, Georgia**  
**Photograph 41 of 41**





Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Derived from imagery taken 1993 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery taken 1997; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control current as of 1991  
Boundaries, other than corporate, verified 1999  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 16  
10 000-foot ticks: Georgia Coordinate System of 1983 (west zone)  
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



3-750940  
3740080  
4-750940  
3739760  
1-749880  
3740420  
2-750940  
3748840



**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

Primary highway  
hard surface .....  
Secondary highway  
hard surface .....  
Light-duty road, hard or  
improved surface .....  
Unimproved road .....

Interstate Route  
U.S. Route  
State Route

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

Decatur Downtown Historic District  
DeKalb County, Georgia

**NORTHEAST ATLANTA, GA**  
1997

NIMA 4151 IV SE-SERIES V845







**Decatur Downtown Historic District  
DeKalb County, Georgia  
National Register Map**

National Register Boundary:   
North:   
Scale: 1 inch = 100 feet  
Source: DeKalb County  
Contributing:   
Noncontributing: or Parking  
Vacant:   
Photograph/Direction of View:





**HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION**

MARK WILLIAMS  
COMMISSIONER



DR. DAVID CRASS  
DIVISION DIRECTOR

March 28, 2012

J. Paul Loether  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W. 8th floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Please find enclosed the following nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for your consideration:

**Decatur Downtown Historic District, DeKalb County, Georgia**  
**Summerville Commercial Historic District, Chattooga County, Georgia**

Sincerely,

Gretchen Brock  
National Register & Survey Program Manager