

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The University Park-Emory Highlands-Emory Estates Historic District is significant under the themes of architecture, landscape architecture, and community planning and development. In the area of architecture, the historic district is significant because it features a variety of architectural styles and types built in Georgia during the first half of the 20th century. Small, Craftsman-style bungalows and English Vernacular-style cottages are the most common house types, although larger, two-story Colonial Revival-style dwellings are also located in the district. These house types are found throughout west DeKalb County and in neighboring Druid Hills.

The University Park-Emory Highlands-Emory Estates Historic District is significant in the area of landscape architecture because its plan, developed in three phases from 1916 to 1943, features many design elements that are characteristic of neighboring Druid Hills, which was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and the Olmsted Brothers. Curved elements on Burlington Road and Emory Circle (photos 10 and 24) and two landscaped traffic islands indicate the influence of the Druid Hills plan (photo 24). In addition, the mature plantings, sidewalks with planting strips, and granite curbs in the University Park-Emory Highlands-Emory-Estates Historic District are also design elements found in Druid Hills.

However, unlike Druid Hills, lots in the University Park-Emory Highlands-Emory-Estates Historic District are both smaller and uniform in size. Although the roads feature curved elements, they are laid out on a north-south axis (photos 15 and 16) unlike those in Druid Hills, which are truly curvilinear streets.

In addition, the historic district is significant under the theme of community planning and development because its smaller lot sizes and uniform layout reflect the increased demand for moderate housing at the beginning of the 20th century. West DeKalb County experienced an increase in the construction of housing to support not only those who worked four miles to the west in downtown Atlanta but also residents that worked in nearby Decatur. Emory University grew significantly during the first half of the 20th century, further establishing a need for moderately priced houses for its faculty and staff. The historic district represents the emergence of west DeKalb County and Emory University as an economic center in suburban Atlanta.

National Register Criteria

A and C.

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Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification)

The 1916-1943 period of significance begins in 1916 with the development of the first tract of land as University Park and ends in 1943, when the last houses in the historic district were constructed. City Directories indicate that the last houses were built along Ridgewood and Durand drives in the early 1940s. The intent of this period of significance is to include those dwellings located in the historic district that are associated with the University Park, Emory Highland, or Emory Estates developments.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

Contributing resources in the historic district are those constructed between 1916 and 1943 that are architecturally significant and/or represent a historic theme and retain historic integrity. Noncontributing resources are those constructed after 1943 and those that have lost their historic integrity. The contributing structure identified in the historic district is the plan of the development, including the layout the streets.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

Between 1889 and 1936, Joel Hurt's Kirkwood Land Company and later Asa G. Candler's Druid Hills Company developed neighboring Druid Hills according to plans laid out by Frederick Law Olmsted and the Olmsted Brothers. The Olmsted designs for Druid Hills featured curvilinear boulevards and narrower secondary roads, large irregular-shaped lots, and landscaped medians and parks. In 1908, the Druid Hills Company, which had purchased the Kirkwood Land Company's holdings in Druid Hills, relieved the Olmsted Brothers and made several changes in the planning and development of the Druid Hills suburb. Between 1908 and 1911, the Druid Hills Company, under the direction of O. F. Kauffman, replatted areas to include smaller-sized lots, realigned intersections and roadways, and shelved plans for two lakes.

In 1916, the Druid Hills Company purchased a tract of land bounding the northeast corner of the Druid Hills suburb. University Park, named for its proximity to Emory University, was laid out by O. F. Kauffman and featured approximately 65 lots along Emory and Ridgewood drives. Extending south from North Decatur Road, the lots along Emory Drive are generally uniform in size and shape,

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roughly 60 feet by 200 feet. The lots along the bend on Ridgewood Drive are pie-shaped but appear uniform from the street. Some of the restrictive covenants are contained in the deed when the Druid Hills Company sold the development to H. D. Thomson in the 1921. The covenants include minimum 60-foot lot widths, minimum \$2,500 building costs, and residential use restrictions.

In 1923, Kauffman laid out Emory Highlands, a neighboring tract east of University Park. Emory Highlands consisted of 58 lots along Burlington Road and Ridgewood Drive between University and North Decatur Road. In 1925, J. T. Nash laid out Emory Estates for the Empire Trust Company in Atlanta. The third phase of development, Emory Estates, features 73 lots on Emory Circle and Durand Drive. Although the lots were laid out in 1925, houses continued to be built in the historic district through 1943.