

STANDING STEADILY IN HISTORY

The Cultural Evolution of English Avenue, its Patrons, its Future.

In 1891 a twenty-four-year-old James English Jr., the son of former Atlanta mayor and President of the Chattahoochee Brick Company, purchased a large enough piece of land to create the English Avenue neighborhood. Its target audience was middle-class white families working in nearby factories and mills. Despite its origins, English Avenue has been intrinsically connected to African American history. Through generational wealth and nepotism, English Jr. amassed a fortune due to his father's ownership of half the enslaved labor in Georgia's convict leasing system. The English family would be the namesake of the main arterial running through the center of the neighborhood as well as the elementary school occupying the largest lot in the area. Since the late 19th century, the evolution of English Avenue has been dramatic, both socio-economically and demographically. English Avenue School, as the hub of various social movements in the surrounding area, including child labor laws, women's suffrage, and the civil rights movement, is emblematic of the entire neighborhood's development. Since its emergence in the 1970s, BIM (Building Information Modeling) has advanced the pairing of digital representation with quantitative data for the generation of new buildings and management of existing ones. Yet, the untapped potential remains in its implementation for heritage preservation to collect, organize, and augment the quantitative with qualitative and archival knowledge of a site over time. Using emerging BIM approach to historic preservation, a 3D digital model for the neighborhood of English Avenue integrates urban form derived from historic Sanborn maps with collected social narratives, photography, and ongoing digital (LiDAR and UAVs) and analog documentation of withstanding buildings to foster an understanding of the neighborhood's evolution and impart its critical social significance. This evidence and documentation will illustrate a pioneering workflow while contributing to the ongoing revitalization of the neighborhood to preserve its historic legacy of activism, resiliency, and agency.

Georgia Institute of Technology
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listkey=events
listdate=1891
listvalue=
Home of James N. English, Jr., the owner of this Atlanta home, purchased land that would become known as English Avenue neighborhood. Oversaw father's Chattahoochee Brick Company which employed half the free labor force. His development of English Avenue remained segregated until the 1940s.



listkey=events
listdate=post1891
listvalue=
Three-story brick English Tutor-revival school designed by William Edwards and Walter Frank.



listkey=events
listdate=1961
listvalue=
As a response to Brown vs. Board of Education, a portion of the grade-school was bombed with dynamite early on a December morning. Calprits were never charged or convicted. A small group of African American students integrated the following year.



listkey=events
listdate=2021
listvalue=
Portion of roof collapse reveals structural degradation is more extensive than initially believed and renders primary access corridor inaccessible.



listkey=events
listdate=2022
listvalue=
Additional region of roof collapses near the southeast bay of the original building. Interior spaces are covered in vegetation while water penetration/seepage is evident at various locations across exterior. The NPS grants \$500 million to Atlanta Preservation Center to help stabilize the building.



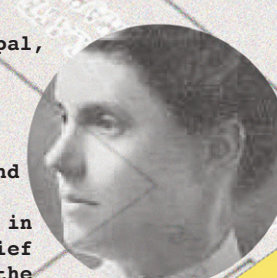
listkey=events
listdate=2022
listvalue=
Stone relief with Lula Kingsbery's name is exposed by dilapidated wood cover.



listkey=people
listdate=1921
listvalue=
After 1921 Georgia bond passed, the campus was expanded, increasing the student body from 300 to 1,200 and the addition of two new wings at the north and south ends of the existing school.



listkey=people
listdate=post1891
listvalue=
Original principal, Lula Kingsbery, held a 37-year tenure as lead administrator. Per public demand the school was named after her in 1934. Stone relief of her name at the school's primary entryway be seen from decay of the protective placard that once covered it.



listkey=people
listdate=post1952
listvalue=
Singer, performer, and former pupil of English Avenue Elementary. She was the first graduate of the school to establish celebrity status.



listkey=people
listdate=post1964
listvalue=
English Avenue along with Fine city termed "The Blue" for being an area of prevalent crime. Spelman alumna, Barbara Eloise Fisher Troup taught, clothed, and fed the students of English Avenue elementary.



listkey=people
listdate=1995
listvalue=
English Avenue Elementary permanently closed by APS. First grade teacher, Anna Ruth Jones ends a career of over 30 years. Started Cultural Educational Tour Inst. and organized the B.S. Burch Honor Society.



listkey=people
listdate=2010
listvalue=
Greater Vine City Opportunities Program, led by former state rep. and English Avenue alumna, "Abie" Moblie Thomas, purchases the building from APS with the intent of revitalization.

