

SECTION 1

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Historic Name of Property (see Section 3.B.1.):** English Avenue School
2. **Location of Property:** Street name and number, or highway name and number (indicate whether highway is a federal, state, or county route): 627 English Avenue NW

City or vicinity of: Atlanta County: Fulton

Zip Code of the Property: 30318 Approximate distance and direction from county seat:

3. **Acreage of property to be nominated (approximate):** 3.2 acres
4. **Number of Historic Buildings or Structures (see Section 2.A):** One
5. **Has the building(s) been moved, reconstructed, or is it less than 50 years old?** No.
6. **Property Owner (NOTE: If owned by a company, organization, or agency, include the name and identify the contact person and their title)**

Name(s) of property owner(s): Westside Development Partners, LLC
Mable Able Thomas and Keven R. Patterson

Mailing Address: 3350 Riverwood Parkway, Suite 1900

City: Atlanta State: GA Zip Code: 30339-3372

Telephone—Monday-Friday daytime and/or work: 678-724-2429

E-mail: atenglishavenue@gmail.com

Do you want to be added to our mailing list to receive our e-newsletters? No.

Does the owner consent to nominating this property? Yes.

Does a federal agency (ex. U.S. Postal Service, General Services Administration) own the property?
No.

7. Sponsor of Nomination (if different than property owner) N/A

8. Form prepared by (if different than property owner)

Name: Boyd Coons, Chrissie Wayt, Nedra Sims Fears, Mable Thomas, Laura Drummond

Title and Organization or Company, if any: Executive Director, Atlanta Preservation Center (APC)

Mailing Address: 327 St. Paul Avenue SE

City: Atlanta

State: GA

Zip Code: 30312

Telephone—Monday-Friday daytime and/or work: 404-213-4120

E-mail: Boyd@preserveatlanta.com

Do you want to be added to our mailing list to receive our e-newsletters? No.

Date: June 13, 2018

What is your relationship to or interest in the property?

Supporting the preservation efforts of the English Avenue School in Atlanta is an embodiment of the mission of The Atlanta Preservation Center, a 501(c)(3) organization, which is to promote the preservation of Atlanta's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings, neighborhoods and landscapes through education and advocacy. This large neighborhood building was a school and community center throughout its entire history (1911-1995), and continues to be an important gathering and recreational space for the neighborhood. By preparing this nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, the Atlanta Preservation Center is acting as an advocate for the property and property owners, as well as the historic Westside neighborhood.

9. Reasons for Nominating the Property (Explain all that apply)

Recognition (explain): The school is a large and significant property in the neighborhood. Listing the property on the National Register will assist in efforts to preserve and rehabilitate this historic resource, revitalize the community, and confront the challenges of vacancy and abandonment in the neighborhood.

Grant Assistance (explain; have you inquired as to the availability of grants or received a grant application?): The property owner, Westside Development Partners, will pursue grants.

Tax Incentives (explain; have you inquired about the applicability of tax incentives or received application forms?): Westside Development Partners is interested in pursuing tax incentives once the property is listed on the National Register.

Protection (explain need): The property has been vacant since 1995, and has been vandalized. Attempts to keep it secure have been only partially successful. Also, ceilings/floors have collapsed in various areas (Rooms 0102, 0113), and the roof has collapsed in the central section of the west side (affecting Rooms 2113 and 1114). Repairing the roof and securing doors and windows are essential to prevent further damage to the interior. Once the property is listed in the National Register, Westside Development Partners will pursue funding to ensure the long-term viability of the historic property.

Part of a larger preservation plan (explain): N/A

Minority Resource (explain): The English Avenue School was constructed in 1911 as a primary school for the children of white mill workers in western Fulton County. In 1950, reflecting the demographic changes in west Atlanta, the school was converted to an African American elementary school. At that time, the two races did not intermingle in the Atlanta School System. The English Avenue School is a rare example of an existing school being converted into all black school. While not an equalization school, it functioned similarly as a school for the education of black children as part of the state's resistance to school integration, and in reaction to the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* requiring the desegregation of public schools.

Other public interest in this nomination (explain): N/A

SECTION 2

DESCRIPTION

A. Number and Type of Historic Resources on property: List each type of historic resource on the property and give the approximate date(s) of construction.

Buildings (house, barn, store, office, school, etc.): 1, original building 1911, side wings 1923

Structures (windmill, bridge, ship, corncrib, power plant, etc.): 0

Sites (prehistoric or historic: battlefield, ruin, cemetery, archaeological sites, landscape features, etc.): 0

Objects (sculpture, monument, statue, fountain, etc.): 0

B. Description

1. Summary Description

The English Avenue School (EAS) is in the English Avenue neighborhood on the west side of the city of Atlanta, in Fulton County, Georgia. The building is situated on a 3.2-acre property comprising the majority of a city block bounded by four streets and a concrete sidewalk. The school property includes the extant school building, the sidewalk, an asphalt-paved parking lot, an asphalt-paved play area, and green space. The original brick building was completed in 1911 by the architectural firm of Edwards and Walter. Three additions extended the original footprint in 1917, 1923, and 1931, although the 1917 and 1931 additions have been removed. Also, four temporary mobile classrooms (“trailers”) were placed north of the main school building between 1961-1964; they have been removed. EAS exemplifies the urban school type defined by the Statewide Context Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in GA, 1868-1971, as a three-story school organized by U-shaped double-loaded corridors and vertical stair halls. The original building is English Tudor Revival style and the additions followed this same style. The main entrance faces English Avenue on the west, but there are secondary entrances on the other three sides. (See Figure A-16 for floor plans.¹) Exterior character-defining features include straight crenelated, as well as raked parapets, window hood moulds with label stops, projecting pavilions with recessed entryways, limestone segmental arches and quoin surrounds, and decorative elements such as an owl figure, shields, shields-and-scrolls, and diamond bosses. Interior features include the 1911 plastered brick arch supports in the central corridors; the 1923 four-section central corridor dividers with doors, side panels, and transom windows; 1923 custom-built shelving in many classrooms; two-panel, single-light, and double-light wood doors; intact historic stairwells with rounded plastered corners; a 1923 brick fireplace; a 1923 stage in the auditorium/gymnasium; and metal windows of various configurations throughout the building. The exterior façade on both the original building and its 1923 wings is red brick laid in an unusual pattern of five-courses of running bond between single courses of alternating headers and stretchers. The school is a good example of an urban public school constructed in the early twentieth century for white

¹ The figures labeled “Figure A-1” through “Figure A-26” refer to items in the Historical Maps and Photographs file. All “Photos” refer to 2018 photographs of the property; see the Photographs and Photo Key folders.

elementary school students which, reflecting changing neighborhood demographics, in 1950 became an equalization school for African American children.

2. Narrative Description

English Avenue School is a single building located in Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia, at 627 English Avenue NW. The school is located in the late-nineteenth – early twentieth-century Western Heights neighborhood in northwest Atlanta. The property is a 3.2-acre parcel comprising the majority of a city block. That block is bounded to the north by Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway NW, east by James P. Brawley Drive NW, south by Pelham Street NW, and west by English Avenue NW.

The 1911 original, three-story brick and limestone building was centrally located on the block surrounded by Fox Street to the north, Chestnut Street to the east, Pelham Street to the south, and English Avenue to the north. (See Figure A-3.) Built in the English Tudor Revival style, it was an urban school type with double-loaded corridors and vertical stair-halls.² In 1917, a three-story brick annex was built on the school property east of the main school building. A corridor joining the two structures was built in 1931. In 1923, three-story wings were added to the north and south ends of the original building, resulting in a U-shaped plan which extended the school to its northern and southern boundaries. (See Figure A-4.) The 1923 additions are English Tudor Revival, and they generally continue the materials, design, and decorative elements of the 1911 original, including the towers with projecting entry pavilions. (See Figure A-13 for a sketch plan of the building's development.)

Today the English Avenue School consists of the original 1911 building with two 1923 wings. Both the 1917 annex building and 1931 adjoining corridor have been removed. The building is sited north/south on the parcel, with the main entrance facing west toward English Avenue, and the top of the U-shape facing east. (See Figures A-9 and A-10.) There is a ground level, which is partially underground, and two upper stories. The 1911 core of the building has 12"-thick load-bearing red brick walls. In the north-south 1911 corridors on all three floors are plastered brick arches which provide structural support.³ (See Photos 58, 99.) The 1923 wings are structural hollow clay tile with brick veneer exterior walls. The ground floor walls are 18" thick, while the first and second floor walls are 12" thick. (See Figure A-4.) The roofing on the flat roof sections of both the 1911 original and the 1923 wings is currently built-up tar, while the side gable roof over the auditorium/gymnasium is standing seam metal supported by steel trusses. (See Photos 53, 54, 57.) Both sections of the building were originally roofed with a non-combustible material. The 1949, 1960, and 1968 aerial photographs indicate that different roofing materials were at times used on the 1911 and 1923 sections, but in 1978, the entire school was re-roofed. (See Figures A-23 through A-26, and Photos 53-57.) On the west, east, and south facades are remnants of an interior gutter system on both the 1911 and 1923 sections, which have headers and partial downspouts. (See Photos 1, 6, 18, 21, 23, 24.)

The brick bond pattern on the entire building consists of five courses of running bond between single courses of alternating headers and stretchers, with the headers being slightly darker in color than the stretchers. The brick on the 1923 wings is darker than the original 1911 brick. (See Photos 7, 18, 31.) Two soldier courses encircle the building, one running beneath the first floor windows, and the other running beneath the limestone block water table. A decorative brick belt course, consisting of two courses of alternating soldiers and rowlocks, encircles the building above the second story windows, except on the north and south towers. The rowlocks are darker than the soldiers. (See Photos 2, 12, 18, 26, 29.) The limestone block water table encircles much of the building just above the ground-floor windows. (See Photos 4, 14, 21.) The two exceptions are on the east façade at the location of the south chimney before its removal, and the south façade where the first floor is at grade

² "Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in GA, 1868-1971," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Atlanta: Ray & Associates, October 2004), pgs. 24-25.

³ The arches are designated in the floor plans and photo keys with curved blue dotted lines.

as Pelham Street rises in elevation between English Avenue and James P. Brawley Drive. (See Photos 19, 23.) The belt course is fully visible on the west and south facades of the original 1911 building. (See Figure A-5.) It is not known when the chimney south of the main entrance on the south façade was removed. The rooms where a fireplace might still be visible (Rooms 0118 and 0115) are no longer accessible.

The **west façade** features the main entrance to the building centering a symmetrical seven-bay façade composition with an A B C D C B A rhythm. (See Photos 1-8.) The corps de logis of this composition (the C D C elements) comprise the original 1911 building. The A B elements at each end comprise the 1923 additions. The two end pavilions (A) are three-story one-bay compositions with raked and crenelated limestone parapets. The B elements are three-story six-bay compositions with straight crenelated parapets. The C elements are three-story five-bay compositions with a straight crenelated parapet centered by a raked parapet above the three central bays. The entry frontispiece (element D) centers on a slightly projecting pavilion with a recessed entry at the first floor level. The entry surround features a cast stone segmentally arched entryway capped by a label-moulded frieze panel ornamented by a central shield. This element is flanked by a small niches articulated with limestone quoining. The parapet features crenelation and centers on a raked pediment with a cast stone owl at its apex; rising vertically above the parapet a pair of expressed buttresses with limestone caps flank the window sill of the triple window composition above the main entrance. The window composition is capped by a stone label-moulded cornice and above this a band of decoratively laid brickwork serves as a transition to the Flemish gable above which has a shield and scroll in stone as its central feature. On either side of this central pavilion is a bay of grouped windows at the first and second levels. The ground floor windows below these are two bays. The first floor windows are tripartite, and the second floor windows are a grouping of two sashes capped by a label-moulded stone cornice. A secondary entrance in the north bay of the 1911 section leads into Room 0103; this is the only ground-floor entrance in the west facade.

The cornerstone is situated at the junction of the west and north facades of the northern 1923 addition. (See Photos 9-10.) The inscription on the west façade reads:

BUILDING COMMITTEE
OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION
— ◇ —
WILLIAM L. MCCALLEY, JR.
CHAIRMAN
A. C. MELXELL
J. C. MURPHY

William L. McCalley, Jr., the southeastern manager of National Surety Corporation, served as a commissioner on the Atlanta Board of Education in various capacities; in 1923 he was chair of the Finance and Building Committee. Commissioners A. C. Melxell and J. C. Murphy also served on the committee.⁴

⁴ Both Melxell and Murphy spoke at the dinner in the English Avenue School kitchen given by Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Burton in honor of Mayor Key, members of the board of education, and county commissioners. The dinner, given on December 14, 1921, was to express the thanks of the EAS staff and PTA for the good work done in getting an addition to the school approved. The ground-breaking for the school additions was scheduled for Monday, December 26; from “Mr. and Mrs. Burton Give Dinner at English Avenue,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 18, 1921, E7.

The inscription on the north façade reads:

LAID BY
JAMES D. HAMRICK
GRAND MASTER



F & A M
A · D · 1923 · A · L · 5923

James D. Hamrick of Carrollton, GA, was Grand Master of the Georgia Masonic Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons. “A. L.” refers to Anno Lucis, a dating system used in Masonic ceremonies meaning “in the year of light.” It is calculated by adding 4000 to the current Gregorian year. Hamrick would have presided at the cornerstone laying ceremony, which can be performed only on schools, public buildings, places of worship, or Masonic structures. Cornerstones are traditionally laid on the face of the building or at the northwest corner, as was done at EAS.

The **north façade** comprises the northern addition of 1923. (See Photos 10-15.) The west two-thirds of this façade is symmetrical centering on a three-story crenelated tower with a projecting entry pavilion which shelters the northern entrance to the building. This is the sole entrance on the north façade, and the double doors open onto the ground floor. (See Photo 76.) The three-story crenelated tower replicates the original tower on the north façade of the 1911 original building. That original tower was removed so the addition could be added to the north façade. The pavilion features a segmentally-arched opening articulated in limestone and a raked and crenelated parapet, accented with limestone finials. This element is flanked on either side by six-window bays at the first and second story levels and five-window bays at the ground floor level. At the eastern end of this mass, the façade steps back but continues the height of the main block at parapet level. This recessed element of the façade is devoid of fenestration save for one narrow bay of ground floor openings at its eastern edge, and a single window in each of the first and second floors at the western edge of the recess. A brick chimney topped with limestone coping extends above the recessed section.

The east façade is composed of three major elements: the 1923 projecting wings at the south and north ends (along with single-bay ells connecting the wings to the 1911 building), and a five-bay central façade which composes the original building of 1911. (See Photos 16-21, 42-52.) The facade has an A B C D C B A rhythm. The body of the original portion (elements C D C) includes two projecting pavilions framing two recessed central bays. The two-story three-window bays on the projecting pavilions are each topped with a single course of limestone blocks. Flanking the three-window bays on both upper levels is a narrow single window. The east entrance is centered between the two recessed central bays; it is plainer than the decorative English Avenue entrance. (See Photo 19.) It has a distinctive curved parapet in which is inset a limestone shield-and-scroll. The entirety of the eastern façade is capped by a crenelated parapet wall which is differentially treated above the projecting pavilions, and articulated with a Flemish gable over the entrance. A brick chimney, also with a crenelated parapet, projects from the façade north of the east entrance door. (See Photo 50.) There is a ghost mark of another chimney that once projected from the façade south of the east entrance door. Immediately north of the double entrance doors is a brick pony wall, and there is evidence that a similar wall was south of the doors. The bricks and mortar of the north pony wall do not match either the 1911 or 1923 brick, and is probably later. In addition, above the double doors are remnants and ghost marks of some sort of super structure above the doorway. (See Photos 19, 49.) No

documentation of this structure has been located, but it is probable that it, along with the side pony walls, were part of the 1931 corridor that connected the east entrance of the main building to the 1917 Annex. (See Figure A-13.) The corridor was demolished ca. 2010. Immediately north of the extant chimney is a set of concrete stairs leading down to a door into Room 0117 on the ground floor. (See Photos 46, 47.)

In front of the north pavilion (element C) is a modern, one-story brick utility/storage building with a shed roof of rolled asphalt roofing. (See Photos 18, 45.) It has a single window opening in the east façade, as well as a set of concrete stairs leading to the east door—the only exterior entrance into the building. The foundation is poured concrete, and the structure is brick veneer on wood framing; its date of construction is not known, but it is not visible in the 1949 aerials, and it is not depicted on the 1987 floor plans. No documentation of its construction has been located. Access to this building was not available, and it is not known if there is an interior connection to Room 0133.

The south pavilion (element C) once had a door in its north façade leading to Room 0114, but it has been bricked up. There are stairs leading down to the former opening, and metal framing supporting remnants of a corrugated metal roof covering this entrance. (See Photo 48.) It matches the structure of a similar structure over the north recessed entrance discussed in the next paragraph. (See Photos 43, 44.)

The 1923 north projecting wing (element A) has a crenelated parapet, and on the ground floor has a cant bay window consisting of a central group of three windows flanked by a single window on each of the canted sides. The north connecting ell (element B) features three windows on the first and second floors, with a central 6/6 window flanked by two 4/4 windows. There is a recessed secondary entrance on the ground floor which today is sheltered with metal tubular framing and a corrugated metal shed roof. Double doors lead west into Room 0120, while a north door leads into Room 0121. (See Photos 43, 44.)

The 1923 south projecting wing (element A) containing the auditorium/gymnasium (Room 1123) has a side gable roof, and therefore exhibits a gable parapet, framed by projections demarcated by crenelated parapets. On its north façade are stairs leading to a one-story front gabled entrance pavilion. (See Photo 51.) Inside the pavilion is the door into Room 1123. (See Photo 78.) There is a retaining wall east of the entrance and a set of concrete stairs leading east to James P. Brawley Drive. (See Photo 52.) This wing is devoid of fenestration on its east façade, but has a large metal vent. (See Photo 22.) The south connecting ell (element B), like its northern counterpart, has three windows on the first and second floors, but it has no entrance or fenestration on the ground floor. Much of the southern end of the east façade is covered with heavy vegetation.

The **south façade** comprises the 1923 southern addition, and is composed of three elements. (See Photos 23-31.) The western portion of the south façade is a two story, six-bay mass capped with a semi-crenelated parapet wall. It exhibits the same limestone detailing as the west (primary) elevation. This mass terminates in the central element of this façade, which is a projecting two-and-one-half story tower containing the southern entry vestibule. As was the case on the north façade, this 1923 tower replicates the original 1911 south façade tower which was removed to make room for the 1923 addition. (See Figure A-5 for a good view of the original 1911 south facade.) The red brick of tower is ornamented with limestone detailing, including: a segmentally arched entryway whose corner quoins have a batted finish; label-mould capping the vestibule and surrounding the second-floor window; and a shield and scroll centered on the wall above. The parapet wall is crenelated, also accented with limestone finials. The double-height, eastern portion of the façade contains the auditorium/gymnasium. It is composed of a main section of six bays, each housing a large three-order segmentally-arched window opening. Original window sash material is visible inside the building. (See Photo 81.) The easternmost portion of this façade is composed of a slightly projected end pavilion. The end pavilion is capped by a raked parapet. Due to the upward slope of the school property north-to-south, the main entrance on the south façade is on the first floor; the stairs from this entrance to the ground floor are

below grade.

Ground Floor Interior. The single, north-south double-loaded corridor opens onto classrooms, the kitchen, the lunch room (which sold food at cost), the electrical room, vestibules, bathrooms, the custodian's office, and various storage rooms, including the cloakroom associated with original classrooms. (See Photos 58-76.) The regular classrooms were designed as standard units having five windows and a seating capacity of 45 students. There is a brick fireplace in the north wall of Room 0122 in the eastern side of the 1923 north wing. The dark red and dark gray brick surrounds extend floor to ceiling, and feature patterns of headers, stretchers, and soldier courses. (See Photos 72, 73.) It is the only known fireplace in the building. Almost certainly there were fireplaces in Rooms 0117 and 0118 corresponding to the extant east façade north chimney and the now-removed south chimney; however, access to these rooms is currently blocked due to unsafe conditions so no investigation has taken place.

First Floor. This floor has a main north-south double-loaded corridor, and a single-loaded corridor on the north end. (See Photos 77-93.) The rooms include: classrooms—all of the 1911 classrooms have vestibules, and all of the classrooms have cloakrooms (storage on the 1987 floor plan), the library, teachers' lounge, boys and girls bathrooms, the medical room/clinic (where physicians would hold regular clinics to examine all children at no cost), the principal's and vice principal's offices, storage rooms, and other miscellaneous offices. The 1923 auditorium/gymnasium is the south wing of this floor. When built in 1923, it included a stage and "shower baths" for boys and girls. By 1987, the shower baths had been converted into a band room and a storage room. The stage, however, remains intact, and retains the wood moulding around the Tudor arch opening, the wood stairs, and some of the wood paneling on its front wall. (See Photo 78.)

Second Floor. The second floor has a main north-south double-loaded corridor, and a single-loaded corridor on the north end. (See Photos 94-110.) This floor is mostly classrooms—thirteen—more than the other two floors combined. The other rooms include: cloakrooms—one associated with each classroom (labeled storage in the 1987 floor plans), bathrooms, custodian storage, and vestibules.

Windows. All of the windows have exterior limestone block sills. Most are metal-framed. (See Photo 71, 92, 103.) Most of the windows do not have interior casings, and many of the aprons and stools have been removed. The windows are of a variety of types. A common window type found in most classrooms is a metal 6/3/6 with a fixed central three-light sash. The upper and lower sashes are six-light projected windows. (See Photos 103, 104.) A similar type window, but smaller, is in many of the cloakrooms; it is a metal 4/2/4 with a fixed central two-light sash and projected four-light upper and lower sashes. (See Photos 87, 96.) There are 4/4 projected metal windows in some classrooms. (See Photo 66.) In Room 0122, the east bay window has 4/4 metal projected windows, while the south wall has 6/6 metal projected windows. Some trim work remains on these windows. (See Photos 71, 72.) Both the north and south stairwells have pairs of 4/4 metal projected windows on every floor. (See Photos 12, 26, 110.) Room 0108, a bathroom, has three-light fixed windows with wood aprons and stools intact. (See Photo 60.) The auditorium/gymnasium south windows have 42 lights, and are set into three-order segmentally-arched brick openings. (See Photo 81.) In the interior corridors are wood hopper-style windows which open into the classrooms and library. Most are missing or have been boarded up. (See Photos 82, 86, 90, 101, 106.)

Doors, exterior. The ground floor north entrance double doors are wood doors with a single light window in the top half; however, the glass is gone from these doors, replaced with plywood. (See Photo 76.) The first floor south entrance double doors are modern, solid wood doors. (See Photo 28.) The east façade exterior ground floor door leading north into Room 0121 (a vestibule) is a historic wood door with two vertical single-light windows in its upper half. These windows, as well as the eight-light transom windows (some missing muntins) have been covered with expanded metal sheets for security. (See Photo 69 for the interior view and Photo 44 for the exterior view.) The east façade double doors lead west into Room 0120—a custodian's office). These are painted solid wood doors

and have been locked and nailed shut. (See Photo 43.) The main entrance double doors on the east façade are two-panel painted wood doors which open slightly at ground level with interior stairs leading to Room 1140 on the first floor. (See Photo 49.) An additional exterior door in this east central bay opens onto the ground floor; it is accessed via concrete stairs immediately north of the main double-door entrance, and opens into Room 0117. (See Photos 46, 47.) There is a segmentally arched brick entrance in the north façade of the auditorium/gymnasium. The door is covered and not visible, but it has an 18-light transom window, which matches the six segmentally-arched 42-light windows in the south wall of the auditorium/gymnasium, Room 1123. (See Photo 78.) None of the west façade doors were accessible from the interior due to unsafe flooring in the first floor's central corridor, and the ceiling cave-in of Room 0103; on the exterior, these doors have been covered with plywood.

Doors, interior. Historic two-panel wood doors are found throughout the building, though virtually all have modern nickel door knobs (except where knobs have been removed). (See Photo 107.) Many rooms are missing doors, or entrances have been covered with plywood for security. Many doors have transom windows, but most have been covered with plywood. (See Photos 86, 101.) In Photo 107, the west (right-hand) door leading to Room 2103 is historic, retaining even its historic hinges, but a small square single-light window has been cut into the upper half of the door. It has a modern nickel knob and escutcheon, and a historic brass single-cylinder deadbolt lock. The door leading into the library (Room 1103) is a modern "vision light" door with a small single-light vertical window with security glass. It also has a nickel knob. (See Photo 89.) The doors on the first floor east-west corridor in the 1923 north wing are historic two-panel painted wood doors with nickel door knobs. (See Photo 91.) However, the doors on the corresponding corridor on the second floor (Room 2133) are historic painted wood doors each with a single light window; all these doors have nickel knobs and escutcheons.

Interior walls. Most of the 1911 interior walls are brick covered with wood lath and plaster, although the loadbearing 12"- or 18"-thick exterior walls have plaster directly applied to the brick on their interiors. (See Photos 63, 97.) In the 1923 sections, interior walls are primarily hollow clay tile, although window and exterior door openings are framed with loadbearing brick. The wall surfaces are plastered. (See Photos 71, 78, 79, 81, 93). Room 2124, a second-floor classroom constructed in 1911, shows the junction between the 1911 and 1923 sections: the 1911 east wall has plastered 5-course American bond brick, and the 1923 south wall has plastered hollow clay tile. (See Photo 98.) A number of classrooms have a distinctive tripartite wood panel beneath the center window (of five) in their walls. (See Photos 83, 93, 103.) The library, Room 1103, has a modern partition constructed of wood framing, and covered on one side with plywood. It probably dates from the 1967 renovation and expansion of the library done at EAS as part of the \$22 million school bond issued in 1966. Two of the bathrooms, Rooms 0108 and 2132, have white tile walls that extend from the floor two-thirds of the way up the wall. (See Photos 60, 61.)

There are a few concrete block walls in the school. Three ground floor rooms have interior walls constructed from concrete blocks. Room 0121 is a vestibule with an exterior door, while Rooms 0122 and 0123 are classrooms. These walls have been painted; there is no plaster on any of their surfaces.⁵ These two classrooms (along with Room 0101—a classroom with no concrete block) are the only classrooms in the building which do not have adjoining cloakrooms. That suggests that their original uses were as something other than classrooms, and that the concrete block walls subdivided a larger space into classrooms and a vestibule.

Documentation for these changes in the building has not been located. Dating the installation of the concrete block walls is difficult, and the EAS concrete blocks could be original 1923 construction.

⁵ All of the other walls in the three rooms are plastered and painted, including the north, east, and south walls of Room 0122; the north and west walls of Room 0123, and both walls of the bathroom (Room 0124), which is in the northwest corner of Room 0123.

Concrete block began to be mass-produced with the Palmer block machine, patented in 1900. Sears-Roebuck had a DIY hollow concrete block machine in their 1908 catalog. Partition walls were constructed of plain-face concrete block prior to 1915. “Cinder block”—the first lightweight aggregate block—was introduced in 1917.⁶ Concrete block was in use in the Atlanta area well before the 1923 EAS additions. A construction date of 1923 does not *per se* rule out the use of concrete block, but other considerations suggest the EAS concrete block was not original to the 1923 expansion. The number of students attending continued to increase and the school quickly became overcrowded again. It is highly likely that Rooms 0122 and 0123 were converted to classrooms to accommodate the growing student body. Room 0101 has no concrete block, but it also appears to be a room pressed into use as a classroom as it lacks a cloakroom.

Concrete block was found in one other space, Room 2132, the north bathroom on the second floor. The eastern sections of both the north and south walls have concrete block build-outs, which were probably added for increased stability. Also, the south wall is concrete block. It is not known why the block was needed, but the wall between Rooms 2132 and 2129 was where the 1923 addition joined the 1911 original. Perhaps structural issues developed there over time. All of these additions of concrete block were certainly post-1923, but without further documentation, fixing a date of their installation is impossible as concrete block has been available since the first decade of the 20th century.

Corridor dividers. These distinctive, historic central corridor dividers mark the join between the 1911 original central section and the two 1923 north and south wings. They are constructed of wood, with four six-light fixed wood transom windows, two central wood doors with single-light windows, and two fixed side panels which are narrower but otherwise identical to the central doors. (See Photos 82, 88, 99). The divider in Photo 59 is missing its doors, but some of the hinges remain. There is security glass in the side panels. A single, modern corridor divider is on the ground floor. It is constructed of simple wood framing covered with gypsum board on both sides, and a single two-panel wood door. The use of gypsum board dates it to post-World War II. (See Photo 64.) All of the corridor doors open in the direction of the nearest north or south stairwell.

Flooring. The ground floor throughout is concrete. (See Photos 59-61, 65.) The upper floors in the 1911 section have wood subfloors supported by wood floor joists, and tile flooring over plywood. (See Photos 65, 98.) The upper floors in the 1923 wings have concrete joists supporting concrete subfloors. (See Photos 66, 67, 71.) In some areas the concrete is covered with plywood and tile flooring. In common areas (e.g., the corridors and the auditorium/gymnasium), the tiles measure 12”x12”. (See Photos 78, 80, 97.) In most classrooms and cloakrooms, the tiles measure 8”x8”. (See Photos 66, 87, 102.)

Ceilings. The 1911 section original ceilings were wood lath and plaster. (See Photos 59, 63, 64.) However, some of them have had the plaster and lath removed, and dropped acoustical tile ceilings installed beneath the original. Room 2140, the 1911 second floor central corridor also shows a dropped acoustical tile ceiling beneath wood floor joists. (See Photo 100.) Room 2124 is a 1911 classroom whose south wall joined the 1923 addition, and Room 103, the cafeteria, is in the 1911 section. Both have dropped acoustical tile ceilings beneath wood ceiling joists and a wood subfloor. (See Photos 65, 98). The 1923 sections of the building have concrete ceiling joists. In most rooms, the ceilings are plaster on expandable metal lath. (See Photos 66, 67, 71, 93.) However, the 1923 auditorium/gymnasium, Room 1123, has a dropped acoustical tile ceiling. (See Photos 78, 81.)

Stairs. The north and south interior stairwells have distinctive rounded plaster corners on both the interior walls and the closed railings. The closed railings are topped with dark-finished wood wall caps, and the double handrails are metal. (See Photos 77, 94, 108.) All the stairs are concrete. (See

⁶ Thomas C. Jester, ed., *Twentieth-Century Building Materials: History and Conservation* (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, 1995), 80-83. It should be noted that the entire building cannot be searched for the presence of concrete block, as many areas are no longer accessible due to hazardous conditions and safety concerns.

Photos 75, 109.) There are two 4/4 windows on the first and second floors in the north stair tower and two 4/4 windows on the second floor stair in the south tower. (See Photos 12, 26, 110.) The double doors leading from the stairwells to the corridors are historic wood doors with a single-light window. (See Photo 94.)

Custom-built Bookcases. In some of the 1923 classrooms are custom-built shelving units or bookcases. These were built to fit into niches in the brick or hollow tile walls. (See Photos 83, 105.) Room 1152 had its bookcase removed, but the niche remains. (See Photo 93.)

Systems. The 1911 building originally had steam heat, a fan system, and electrical lighting, which were continued in the 1923 expansion. (See Figures A-3 and A-4). However, the mechanical systems were updated through the years, though dates for the changes are difficult to document. In many rooms are runs for ductwork, while there are radiators and exposed pipes in others. (See Photos 70, 76, 83.) Many of the rooms have hanging fluorescent light fixtures, which would date to the late 1930s at the earliest. (See Photos 72, 84.) The fluorescent light fixtures in Room 0103, the cafeteria, and corridors 2133, 2139, and 2140 are more modern than the others. (See Photos 65, 106, 107, 100, respectively.) By 1977, the building had been air conditioned. The 1923 “shower bath” rooms at the rear of the auditorium/gymnasium have been converted to other uses, and the fixtures in most of the other bathrooms have been removed. (See Photos 60, 61.) However, there is one modern toilet in Room 105, one of the small bathrooms in the 1911 section. (See Photo 63.)

3. Grounds, including natural terrain, landscaping, and objects (describe major landscape features, mature trees, plantings, walls, walkways, driveways, agricultural terracing, vegetation, fields or field systems, forests, roadways, fountains, statuary, monuments etc.):

The English Avenue School occupies most of a city block, except for the northwest corner where a former city public library was constructed in 1922 (today occupied by a construction and engineering firm). (See Figure A-9 and Photos 40, 41.) The property gradually slopes downward moving north to south, but just south of Fox Street the slope rises, and there is a set of stairs leading from the east yard to James P. Brawley Drive just south of the intersection with Fox Street. (See Photo 42.) On the southeast side of the school the ground floor is complete below grade. (See Photos 23, 26) There is a retaining wall and set of stairs leading from the north side of the south wing. (See Photos 51, 52, and Figure A-10 which includes topographic lines.) At the southwest corner of the property is a concrete block retaining wall (three to four courses high) with brick coping. (See Photo 32.) It runs from the southwest side of the property along Pelham Street for several yards, turns the corner, and extends north along English Avenue ending where it intersects the concrete walkway into the school’s main (west) entrance. The entire block is surrounded by curbed concrete sidewalks.

The school building itself was once completely encircled by a chain link fence, topped in places with razor wire. (See 2014 photographs.) Recently, some of the fencing has been removed so the building is accessible. (See Photos 4, 5, 8, 12, 31). The school yard on all sides has grass and some mature trees, except the east side, which is treeless. The east façade of the building is overgrown in places with vines and shrubs. (See Photos 18-20, 51.) In 2017, the Greater Vine City Opportunities Program (GVCOP) installed wood planter boxes in the east yard. (See Photo 16). Occasional small shrubs are located throughout the property.

At the northwest corner of the building is an asphalt-paved parking lot, accessed through a curb cut on English Avenue. North of the parking lot is a strip of grassy area setting off a large asphalt-paved recreation area and basketball court extending east almost the entire width of the property. In 2017, GVCOP installed wood benches, wood planter boxes, picnic tables, a gazebo, an arbor, a small stage and seating area, a gravel walking path, and some outdoor lighting in the area north of the school building. (See Photos 33-38).

Dividing the northwest corner of the school property from the former library parcel is a stone retaining wall which serves to define that parcel’s south boundary. (See Photo 35.) The northeast

corner of the school property fronts onto Donald P. Hollowell Parkway NW (formerly Bellwood then Bankhead Avenue). This section of the school property, east of the library parcel, is a natural area with mature trees; it is surrounded on the west, north, and east by a chain link fence. North of the paved recreation area GVCOP in 2017 installed steps leading to the northeast corner wooded area, as well as colorful wood benches and concrete-block raised planting beds throughout the wooded area. (See Photos 39-40.)

On the south side of the property, the school building extends nearly to the lot line. There is a small strip of grass between the building and the sidewalk on the English Avenue end of the south facade, with a single mature tree at the southwest corner of the tower. A short concrete-paved walk curves from the sidewalk down to the south entrance to the building. Large trees from the properties across Pelham Street extend over the roadway, touching the school building. (See Photo 31.)

4. **Archaeological potential**, documented or observed (sites of previously existing structures, landscape features, or activities such as mounds or depressions, building materials or ruins, etc.):

None observed. Archaeological potential is unlikely as the property was cleared for multiple new construction (1911, 1917, 1923, 1931, and the asphalt parking lot and asphalt play area, whose dates of construction are not known but were constructed after 1968. (See Figure A-26).

5. **General character and appearance of the property's surroundings**, and relationship of property to its surroundings (rural, small town, commercial area, urban, etc):

Generally, the city block on which the school sits is surrounded by residential to the south and small commercial to the north. Along English Avenue west of the school is a mix of late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century one- and one-and-a-half story wood frame houses. There is a single two-story brick duplex dating from the second half of the twentieth century. On the north side of the property, across Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway is a large, concrete, two-story Boys and Girls Club building (earlier a Salvation Army building). At the northeast corner of the property, across James P. Brawley Drive (formerly Chestnut Avenue), is a vacant lot with a small, single-story commercial building to the east. The rest of the south end of the block of James P. Brawley Drive is similar to that of English Avenue: a mix of single-story wood frame single-family houses, and two-story brick multi-family buildings. South of the school, across Pelham Street, are one-story wood frame single-family houses with large trees along the street. The branches of these mature trees extend across the road, forming a shady canopy, yet also striking and abrading the brick exterior of the school's upper south façade.

6. **Changes to the property and the approximate date(s)**, including changes in land/land use, interior and exterior changes to buildings and structures, floor plan changes, nonhistoric wall materials, moldings, decorative features, alterations, additions, demolitions, and remodelings, and/or changes in the overall landscape. Include recent and/or upcoming rehabilitation or restoration work:

In 1917, an annex was added at the east side of the school (called the "Chestnut Annex" as it bordered Chestnut Avenue, now James P. Brawley Drive). At the same time, a wood covered walkway was built to connect the two buildings. In 1931, that wood walkway was replaced by a roofed, enclosed corridor. The annex and corridor were demolished ca. 2010.

In 1923, north and south wings were added to the original 1911 building, greatly expandable the footprint of the school. The exteriors of these additions match the original building in design, style, and decorative features. The brick on the wings is somewhat darker than the original red brick. On the interior, the new halls were connected, and can be discerned by partial partitions in the hallways on all three floors. Otherwise, the exterior wall division between the original building and the new wings remains intact, except for the library (Room 1103 on the first floor plan), whose original exterior north wall was partially removed. Also in the library, a wood-frame and plywood partition was installed in

the 1923 section. These changes to the library were probably made in 1967, when the space was expanded and upgraded.

In 1928, the school property was extended north to Bellwood Avenue (later Bankhead Avenue, now Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway). Fox Street was closed off, and the north end was purchased by the Atlanta Public School system. The west asphalt parking lot and the asphalt-paved recreation area were installed after 1968. Both of these areas are intact.

Several changes have been made to the building, interior and exterior, but their dates have not been fully established. Concrete block walls were installed in Rooms 0121, 0122, and 0123 to create additional classrooms. Concrete block walls were installed in Room 2132, probably to provide structural support. These changes were made after 1923. (See pages 10-11 for more details.)

EAS had air conditioning by 1977, and a new roof was installed in 1978.

The former south secondary entrance door on the east façade has been removed and the opening infilled with a lighter-colored red brick which does not match the historic brick. This entrance was shown as closed in 1987 floor plans. Both the north and south secondary entrances on the east façade have metal tubular shed roof structures covered with corrugated metal panels. These were constructed prior to 1987, and certainly pre-date the closing of the south entrance.

At some time before 1987, the 1923 shower baths behind the auditorium were converted into a storage room and a band room.

Prior to 1995, when the school closed, a utility/storage building was constructed onto the east façade. It does not appear on the 1987 floor plan.

The stairs on the south side of the 1923 north wing have been removed, and the doors to Rooms 1151 and 2133 have been replaced with windows. This change was made after the 1987 floor plans were drawn.

Ghost lines of the chimney and pony wall south of the east main entrance are visible on the east façade. There are also remnants of the junction where the 1931 corridor was affixed to the east façade. The corridor is on the 1987 floor plan, as are both east façade chimneys. The 1917 Annex and the 1931 corridor were demolished ca. 2010. It is possible that the south chimney and pony wall were removed at the same time.

When GVCOP acquired the property in 2010, efforts were made to secure the building more completely. This has proved to be an ongoing challenge, especially as the building continues to deteriorate. Between 2014 and 2018, increasingly more interior spaces are unsafe, and more rooms have been closed off completely. However, since 2014, sections of the razor wire-topped chain link fence have been removed, making the building more accessible. Some of the plywood covering windows on the ground floor have been painted. In 2017, GVCOP installed on the grounds of the school trash containers, recycling bins, benches, a gazebo and an arbor, a stage area, picnic tables, steps to the wooded area, planter boxes, and a gravel path.

7. **Brief description and date of construction for each non-contributing building and/or structure on the property. N/A**

8. **Boundary Description**

The boundaries for English Avenue Elementary School encompass the entire 3.2-acre parcel as shown on the Fulton County, Georgia tax assessor's map, parcel 14-011200080024. The parcel occupies the majority of the city block bordered by Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway NW to the north, James P. Brawley Drive NW to the east, Pelham Street NW to the south, and English Avenue NW to the west.

This boundary includes the school building, asphalt parking lot, asphalt-paved recreational area, and associated green space—the intact historic boundary of the property from the principal historic period of 1928 to the present. It encompasses the majority of a city block. It excludes the former public

library located at the northwest corner of the block (today occupied by a construction and engineering firm), which is on a separate parcel. The boundary choice matches the current legal boundary of the property owned by the Westside Development Partners, LLC.

The earlier time period, beginning in 1911, when the first school was built on English Avenue, until 1928, the boundary of the school property was smaller. The city block at that time was bordered by Fox Street to the north, Chestnut Street (now James P. Brawley Drive) to the east, Pelham Street to the south, and English Avenue to the west. In 1928, the section of Fox Street formerly north of the English Avenue School was closed, and the school property was extended north to Bellwood Avenue (later Bankhead Avenue, now Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway), reaching its current boundaries. This extension north added needed parking, recreational, and green space to the school grounds. Most of the grounds surrounding the original 1911 school building had been built over during the addition of the north and south wings in 1923.

SECTION 3

HISTORY

A. Summary of Historical Facts

1. **Original owner or occupant** (provide dates of occupancy): Atlanta Public School System, 1910-2010
2. **Subsequent owners or occupants** (provide dates of occupancy): Greater Vine City Opportunities Program, Inc., 2010-2017; Westside Development Partners, LLC, 2017-Present
3. **Original use of property** (give dates): Public school for white children in the City of Atlanta, 1910-1950
4. **Subsequent uses of property** (give dates): Public school for African American children in the City of Atlanta, 1950-1995. The building has been vacant since 1995. In 2017, the some rooms in the building were used to film a music video.
5. **Current use of the property:** Building is currently vacant and generally not in use, except that it is available for filming.
6. **Architect, engineer, builder, contractor, landscape architect, gardener, and/or other artists or craftsmen associated with the property:** Edwards & Walter, architectural firm (William A. Edwards and Frank C. Walter) with Anthony Ten Eyck Brown, supervising architect; Daniell & Beutell architectural firm (Sydney S. Daniell and Russell L. Beutell).
7. 7a. **Date of construction and source(s) used to determine date:** 1910 construction began; 1911 construction completed and building occupied. Sources: “Architects Appointed for School Buildings,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 29, 1910, 2; Kingsbery Family Papers, 1837-1941, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center, MSS 794; and Order of the Board, Atlanta Public Schools, *Thirty-First Report of the Board of Education* (Atlanta: Atlanta Public Schools, 1913).

7b. **Date(s) of significant/major alterations and/or additions:**

In 1917, a three-story brick annex was constructed on the east side of the building. It is sometimes referred to as the “Chestnut Annex” to distinguish it from the 1905 wood school building that was most often referred to as the English Avenue School Annex. A covered, wood walkway was constructed to connect the annex with the east entrance to the main school building, and a crosswalk to connect the wings of the main building. (See Figure A-4, the 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing the annex, the wood walkway, and the crosswalk.) The brick annex was demolished c.2010, but is still depicted on current Fulton County tax maps.

In 1922-23, north and south wings were added to the original building. Anthony Ten Eyck Brown was supervisor of the project for the Atlanta Public School system. The architects were Daniell & Beutell. Construction was completed in 1923. These wings remain.

In 1931, an enclosed corridor was constructed to connect the east entrance to the main building with the Chestnut Annex. The enclosed corridor replaced the earlier open, wood walkway. It is probable that the crosswalk was demolished when the corridor was built. No details are known about the design or architect of this feature. The corridor was demolished at an unknown date, but is still depicted on current Fulton County tax maps.

8. **Significant persons** associated with the property, other than owners; summary or brief account of their significance; dates of association with the property:

Lula LaRoche Kingsbery Wilson (1879-1971) of Carrollton, GA, was principal of the Western Heights School/English Avenue School for thirty-seven years. The school was named Lula L. Kingsbery School in her honor in 1934, while she was still principal.

9. **Significant events or activities** associated with the property, if different from routine historical functions; summary or brief account for their significance; dates of these events or activities:

On June 12, 1950, the Atlanta Board of Education voted to convert Kingsbery Elementary from a white to black elementary school, effective September 1, 1950. The school's name was officially changed from Lula L. Kingsbery School back to English Avenue School. The school became an equalization school, part of the State of Georgia's strategy to provide separate educational facilities to black students that were equal to those of white students. By building these new schools (or converting schools like EAS), the state hoped to avoid integrating all public schools, per the 1954 US Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

On Monday, December 12, 1960, at 2:20 a.m., dynamite detonated inside of the English Avenue School. It is very likely that the bombing was racially motivated as the school had been used as a base for a prayer meeting, followed by an anti-segregation civil rights downtown protest march on Sunday afternoon, December 11. This was the worst city bombing since the 1958 dynamiting of the Jewish Temple.

B. Name of Property

1. List all names by which the property is and has been known, and indicate the period of time known by each name (the preferred historic name should appear in Section 1, number 1).

Western Heights School, 1911-1912
English Avenue School, 1912-1939
Lula L. Kingsbery School, 1939-1950
English Avenue School, 1950-1966
English Avenue Elementary School, 1966-1976
English Avenue School, 1976-Present

2. Explain the source or meaning of each name (such as original owner or builder; significant persons or events associated with the property; original or subsequent uses of the property; location/address; innovative, unusual or distinctive characteristics of the property; and/or accepted professional, scientific, technical, or traditional name).

The original school names, West Side and Western Heights (which were used interchangeably by the Fulton County School System), were descriptive of the area of Fulton County, then outside the City of Atlanta boundaries. The first school for white children constructed in the area was named Western Heights (and sometimes West Side) School in 1905 at 185 Franklin Street. The area was annexed into the city and the Atlanta Public School

System in 1910. In 1911, a new brick school was constructed at the English Avenue location; it too had the name Western Heights School. In 1912, the name was changed to English Avenue School in honor of James W. English, Sr., a former mayor of Atlanta, and father of the developer of the area, James W. English, Jr. In 1939, the school's name was changed to Lula L. Kingsbery School to honor Lula LaRoche Kingsbery Wilson, the founding principal of the school located on English Avenue, and who worked there for thirty-seven years. The name was changed back to English Avenue School when it became a school for black children in 1950. In 1966, the name became English Avenue Elementary School, a change necessitated by the fact that the Atlanta Public School system proposed to build a new kindergarten through third grade school at 740 Kennedy Street (today 740 Cameron M. Alexander Boulevard). That school, which opened in 1968, was called English Avenue Primary School. After its closure in 1976, English Avenue Elementary School began again to be called the English Avenue School, although "Elementary" was sometimes included (e.g., in newspaper articles).

C. History of the Property

THE BELLWOOD / WESTERN HEIGHTS AREA EARLY DEVELOPMENT

The English Avenue School is located in Bellwood, an area of Fulton County, Georgia, that was immediately west of an industrial corridor in Atlanta running along the Western and Atlantic Railroad. The rail line, completed in 1837, ran northwest from Atlanta to Chattanooga. Predominantly rural, in 1881, the International Cotton Exposition was held at the north end of the corridor, leading to growth and development. The Exposition was the brainchild of Atlanta businessmen intent on promoting Atlanta and the southern textile industry. It was held at Oglethorpe Park, located in the northern part of Bellwood the railroad corridor and Marietta Street. On a current map, the Exposition grounds would extend from the intersection of Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard and Jefferson Street to the south, and north to the King Plow Arts Center at the intersection of Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard and West Marietta Street. After an immensely successful exposition that drew hundreds of thousands of people to Atlanta and boosted the confidence of local businessmen, the park and Exposition buildings were purchased from the city by a group of 29 investors. Four months later on April 5, 1882, they reopened as the Exposition Cotton Mills Company.”⁷ The mill was a major employer of neighborhood residents until 1952. Mule-drawn trolleys brought workers into the section starting in 1882; these were switched to electric streetcars by 1894. A trolley line ran on English Avenue. The area just east and north of English Avenue held factories and warehouses of various types (e.g., brick, furniture, stove manufacturing, cotton and upholstering mills, wood and coal yards) at which many of the residents were employed. Today's English Avenue area was known at different times as Bellwood, West Side, and Western Heights.

What is now the English Avenue neighborhood was purchased in 1891 by James W. English Jr. (1867-1914). He was the eldest son of Confederate Civil War veteran and Atlanta mayor James W. English (1837-1925, mayor from 1881-1883).⁸ James, Jr. was born in Griffin, GA, educated at Boys High School in Atlanta, and took engineering courses at Boston School of Technology. He was general manager of the Chattahoochee Brick Company, a very successful enterprise started by his father. He later became president of both Palmer Brick Company and the Lookout Coal and Iron Company.⁹ His new neighborhood development was created for white working-class residents.

WESTERN HEIGHTS SCHOOL AND WEST SIDE SCHOOL OPERATED BY FULTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR WHITE FAMILIES 1905-1912

On November 9, 1905, the Fulton County Public Schools (FCPS) founded and dedicated Western Heights School (WHS).¹⁰ The school was operated by the FCPS for four years, from 1905-1909, until the area was annexed by the city of Atlanta in 1910. WHS was an elementary school for grades one through eight. It served working class white families who lived west of the city of Atlanta in then-unincorporated Fulton County. (See Figure A-1.)

⁷ Exposition Cotton Mills Company, *The Exposition Cotton Mills Company, Seventieth Anniversary, 1882-1952* (Atlanta, 1952); Franklin M. Garrett, *Atlanta and Environs: A Chronicle of Its People and Events*, Vol. 2 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1954), 41-42; Megan W. McDonald, “The House by the Side of the Road: A History of the Andrew P. Stewart Center,” M.A. thesis, Georgia State University, February 2018.

⁸ Garrett, Vol. 2, 15, 37.

⁹ “Col. J. W. English, Jr., Dies in New York,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 23, 1914, 3.

¹⁰ “Dedicate School Tonight, The Jr. O.U.A.M. will conduct dedicatory exercises of Western Heights School,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 1905, 10.

WHS was built at a cost of \$800 by contractor Charles Garner.¹¹ Located at 185 Franklin Street (later Paynes, now Paines Avenue), WHS was a modest two-story, four-room, wood-framed and -sided building. It had four teachers for each of its classrooms. (See Figures A-1, A-2, and A-3.) Fulton County Public School officials interchangeably referred to the school as Western Heights School and the West Side School.

The number of white children in the area who attended WHS exponentially increased in just a few years. WHS was designed to serve 200 white neighborhood children. In 1906, enrollment increased 150% to 350 children.¹² To accommodate the overflow a secondary “room” known as West Side School¹³ was rented by FCPS to house the expanded population. The “room” was located at 193 Franklin Street. The two facilities were operated together from 1908-1910.¹⁴ By 1908, enrollment had increased to 425 students.¹⁵ The “room” was rented for a couple of years and then was vacated after the new brick three-story building on English Avenue was occupied in 1911.

When the city of Atlanta annexed the English Avenue area in 1910, Fulton County ceased operating WHS. Beginning with the 1909-10 academic year, the WHS building on the corner of Franklin and Pelham streets was operated by the Atlanta Public Schools (APS), which had purchased the building from Fulton County.¹⁶ During that same academic year, WHS enrollment decreased from a high of 425 in 1908 to 331 children in 1909-1910.¹⁷ Four teachers instructed the students during its first year of operations as an APS school: Lula Kingsbery, principal; Meta Scarlett, grades 3-5; Alice May Mackey, grade 2; and Emma Prichard, grade 1.¹⁸

The FCPS plans to build a new, larger WHS were taken over by the city of Atlanta’s expansion efforts. M. L. Brittain, then FCPS superintendent, in his 1908-1909 letter to the Grand Jury of Fulton County, complained that Fulton County “...had nearly \$2,000 pledged, and a good modern (Western Heights) school building was easily in sight when the city (of Atlanta) extension movement began, and nothing further could be done.”¹⁹ APS, like FCPS, recognized that the growing white population that flocked to the new area that was being developed by James W. English, Jr., needed a bigger school to accommodate the quantities of families that were occupying the newly-built Craftsman style bungalows, and requested two additional teachers for Western Heights School.²⁰

In response to overcrowding throughout Atlanta schools, APS secured funds through a \$600,000 bond issue to appoint architects to draw up the plans to build new school buildings. One was to be an eight-room new brick building for WHS in the Fifth Ward. The contract was awarded to architects Edwards & Walter, and the new school was to be on the block bounded by English Avenue, and Pelham, Chestnut, and Fox streets.²¹ The 22,896 square-foot two-story building plus a basement (the ground floor) is shown on the 1911 City of Atlanta Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. (See Figures A-3 and A-5.) This early building makes up the central section of the present two-story plus a basement (the ground floor), 50,000 square foot building. (See Figure A-4.)

¹¹ M. L. Brittain, *Fulton County Public Schools* (Atlanta: Fulton County Public Schools, 1905-1906). No additional information on Charles Garner could be located in newspaper accounts, city directories, Garrett, or online sources.

¹² Brittain, *Fulton County Public Schools*.

¹³ M. L. Brittain, *Report on Suburban and Rural Schools, Fulton County, GA* (Atlanta: Fulton County Public Schools, 1909).

¹⁴ *Atlanta City Directory, 1911* (Atlanta: Atlanta City Directory Company, 1911).

¹⁵ Brittain, *Report on Suburban and Rural Schools*.

¹⁶ Walter Bell, *Personnel Directory 1870-1900* (Atlanta: Atlanta Public Schools, n.d.); “City to Pay County \$3,000 for School,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 17, 1909, 9; “1,700 New Pupils in City Schools,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 4, 1910, 7.

¹⁷ Bell, *Personnel Directory*.

¹⁸ “Teachers Are Elected and Salaries Increased,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 5, 1910, A7.

¹⁹ Brittain, *Report on Suburban and Rural Schools*.

²⁰ “All City Schools are Overcrowded,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 25, 1910, E8.

²¹ “Architects Appointed for School Buildings,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 29, 1910, 2.

Edwards & Walter, Architects. This architectural firm was formed in Columbia, SC in 1901, as a partnership between William Augustus Edwards and Frank C. Walter. In January 1908, they moved to Atlanta, GA, where Atlanta architect C. D. Parnham joined the firm. The company name was changed to Edwards, Walter & Parnham, and had offices in the Candler Building. The firm designed public school buildings across state, including the English Avenue School in 1910. They also designed other public use buildings including churches and courthouses in Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. Several of their joint designs are listed on the National Register including the McMaster School in Columbia, South Carolina, and Walhalla Graded School in Oconee County, South Carolina. On July 14, 1910, the partnership was dissolved.²²

William Augustus Edwards (1866-1939) was born in Darlington, SC. He attended Richmond College (now University of Richmond) for a year, then University of South Carolina where he received a degree in mechanical engineering in 1889. He initially worked in Roanoke, VA, and Columbia, SC with Charles Coker Wilson, but in 1901, partnered with Frank C. Walter. After their partnership dissolved in 1910, Edwards kept all of the firm's assets and its office in the Candler Building in downtown Atlanta. He worked alone until he established another partnership with William J. Sayward (Edwards & Sayward), and later adding Joseph Leitner to the firm.

From 1905-25, Edwards was architect for the Florida Board of Control and designed many buildings in the Collegiate Gothic style, including for the University of Florida. On that campus, he designed many buildings in the Campus Historic District, listed in the National Register in 1989. Eight of the buildings within that district which Edwards designed are also individually listed.

In Atlanta, Edwards designed the Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium on Auburn Avenue (1913), University Homes public housing project (1938, demolished in 2008), and the Unitarian Church of Atlanta on West Peachtree Street (1915). In Decatur, Edwards designed Buttrick Hall (1930) and McCain Library (1936) on the campus of Agnes Scott College, as well as many of the original campus buildings of Columbia Theological Seminary. Edwards designed Fannin County Courthouse in Blue Ridge (1937), and Tift County Courthouse in Tifton (1912-13), which is listed in the National Register. He also designed nine county courthouses in South Carolina, six of which are listed in the National Register. (See Figures A-17—A-22.)

Frank C. Walter (1870-1953) was born in Alton, IL. His architectural training was an apprenticeship, eventually leading to his partnership with William A. Edwards in 1901. They dissolved the partnership on July 14, 1910, with Walter going into solo practice in Atlanta. By 1917, Walter had moved to Tulsa, OK, where he had a long architectural career (1917-47). He then returned to Georgia, where he was a building inspector in Augusta (1947-50). He was partner in the firm Edwards & Walter when they received the contract to design English Avenue School in 1910.

The English Avenue School was built to serve the white working-class community of the West Side neighborhood of Atlanta. The facility, constructed in the English Tudor Revival style, consisted of the central hall and two asymmetrical wings. (See Figures A-3 and A-5.) The reality that a new modern WHS was on the horizon was significant for local white residents as depicted in letters dated June 2, 1910, written by five local school children to APS officials. In all of the letters, the children proclaimed they were “going to have a new school” “by Christmas (1910),” and “it is not far from our old (wood WHS) school.” “It is going to be a fine one too. It will be fireproof.”²³

In 1911, the students moved out of the old wood-frame WHS (valued at \$2,000 in 1908), and into the new brick WHS three-story (two stories plus basement/ground floor) building at 95 English Avenue, which, with land and equipment, was valued at \$46,600—an exponential increase in property

²² John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The South Carolina Architects, 1885-1935*, (Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1992), 44-45.

²³ Kingsbery Family Papers, 1837-1941, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center, MSS 794.

value.²⁴ (See Figure A-3.) Per Walter Bell the APS historian, during the 1910-11 academic year, 354 children and seven teachers occupied the new Western Heights brick school.²⁵ (In newspaper articles folder, see Francis E. Price, “Constitution’s Page Devoted to Children,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 29, 1911, A6, for two large photographs of English Avenue School children posing and playing in front of their new school building.)

By 1912, the 1905 West Side school building was listed as “unused.”²⁶ However, the building continued to be used for classrooms until the 1923 additions to the English Avenue building were completed.²⁷ The 1916 City Directory called it the “English Avenue School” located at 193 Paynes Avenue, while the main school was also called the “English Avenue School” at 95 English Avenue. But the Paynes Avenue building was more commonly referred to as the “annex” until the new brick annex was constructed on the English Avenue property in 1917. After that time, the 1905 Paynes Avenue school building was called the “old annex.”

In 1912, the new brick Western Heights School was renamed English Avenue School to honor James W. English, Sr., the father of James W. English, Jr. who developed the area beginning in 1891. A major north-south thoroughfare was named English Avenue after the family. The growing neighborhood became known as English Avenue community.²⁸ “The construction of trolley lines and the Southern railroad heavily influenced the development of English Avenue. By 1912, the area was serviced by the Atlanta and Chattahoochee Railway Company. One line extended from Jones Avenue to Gray Street (Northside Drive), to Kennedy Street to English Avenue. (See Figure A-5 which shows the trolley lines on English Avenue in front of the English Avenue School.) The second line ran down Hunter (Martin Luther King Jr. Drive) to Ashby Street, ending on Bellwood Avenue (later Bankhead Avenue, now Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway). The new trolley and rail lines defined residential development patterns racially.”²⁹ Simpson Road (today Joseph E. Boone Boulevard, several blocks south of the English Avenue School) had long been a residential race barrier with whites to the north and blacks to the south.

AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE WEST SIDE / WESTERN HEIGHTS SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREA

Due to Georgia’s segregation laws and culture from 1905 through 1961, African American school children could not attend school with white children. There were two communities, one black and one white. The black and white families may have lived near or next to each other and resided in the same school attendance zone; however, their educational options were vastly different. The 1911 Sanborn Map shows St. Luke Methodist Episcopal Church (mislabelled as an “AME Church”), located at the intersection of English Avenue and Bellwood Avenue (now Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway). The presence of this church in the English Avenue neighborhood indicates the presence of African Americans residing nearby. (See Figure A-3.) The 1916 City Directory confirms that some blacks were beginning to move north of the Simpson Road racial divide. Chestnut Street from Greensferry Avenue to Simpson Road was exclusively black, and a majority of the residents on English Avenue between Fox and Bellwood were “colored.” However, Bellwood Avenue remained exclusively white, while

²⁴ Order of the Board, Atlanta Public Schools. *Thirty-First Report of the Board of Education* (Atlanta: Atlanta Public Schools, 1913).

²⁵ Bell, *Personnel Directory 1870-1900*.

²⁶ *Atlanta City Directory, 1912* (Atlanta: Atlanta City Directory Company, 1912).

²⁷ “Stewart Good Will Center Will Have Larger Quarters,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 22, 1923, E6.

²⁸ Urban Collage, Contente Terry, Grice & Associates, Market + Main, *English Avenue Community Redevelopment Plan Update* (Atlanta: n.p., 2006).

²⁹ *English Avenue Community Redevelopment Plan Update*.

Fox Street had only one black household.³⁰

The black children who resided in the Western Heights School / West Side School attendance area from 1905-1909 could not attend those schools. FCPS did not operate a black elementary school in the area.³¹ (See Fulton County School Map, 1908, Figure A-2.) African American children either did not attend school or walked long distances to black schools outside of their neighborhood. Some in the African American community mitigated these effects by attending private schools.³²

When the City of Atlanta annexed the Western Heights area in 1909, the new black residents of the City of Atlanta could then attend Gray Street School, which had opened in 1892. Located at Gray Street (Northside Drive) near Kennedy Street, it was the first school for black students built by the Atlanta Public School (APS) system. At the time of its construction, it was reported to be equal to if not superior to the white schools at the time. APS officials boasted that it had modern heating and ventilation systems.³³ Black children who lived near the English Avenue School had to walk approximately one mile and cross railroad tracks to attend Gray Street School. Seven teachers instructed students there from first through seventh grade.

There was a sizeable African American community, Vine City, directly south of the English Avenue neighborhood, north of Hunter Street (Martin Luther King Jr. Drive). This community was adjacent to the historically black colleges and universities that comprised the now Atlanta University Center (Spelman, Morehouse, Morris-Brown, and Atlanta University). The Gray Street School was staffed by graduates from these local Atlanta institutions.³⁴

ENGLISH AVENUE SCHOOL / LULA L. KINGSBERY SCHOOL AS A WHITE SCHOOL IN THE ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM 1913-1949

The early twentieth century was a time of expansion for the Atlanta Public School system, which struggled to keep up with the influx of new students as the city increased its boundaries through annexation. The English Avenue neighborhood mirrored the larger Atlanta metropolitan area and the national trend in the early twentieth century. In January 1913, the Bellwood Viaduct opened, allowing automobiles and pedestrians to cross the railroad line on Bellwood Avenue (later Bankhead Avenue, now Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway), bringing further development to the area.

Many Americans migrated from rural areas to urban centers during the first half of the twentieth century as the nation transitioned from an agrarian to an industrial society. The increasing mechanization of farms and the devastating effects of the boll weevil on cotton crops drove farm workers throughout the south to cities where they could find work in the growing numbers of factories. From 1900 to 1930, Atlanta grew from 15 to 30.8 percent of Georgia's population of 2,908,506.³⁵ It was in the 1920 census, that the United States overall for the first time became a nation primarily of urban, rather than rural, dwellers.

The local demand by white families with school age children continued to grow. To keep up with the need, the city of Atlanta expanded the school twice. (Compare Figures A-3 and A-4.) Although the new 1911 school was supposed to accommodate fully the neighborhood children, the original 1905 Western Heights School building, located at the corner of Franklin (later Paynes, now Paines Avenue) and Pelham Street, remained in use as an annex

³⁰ *Atlanta City Directory, 1916*, Vol. 40 (Atlanta: Atlanta City Directory Co., 1916), various pages.

³¹ Brittain, *Report on Suburban and Rural Schools*.

³² Herman Mason, *Politics, Civil Rights, and Law in Black Atlanta, 1870-1970* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub., 2000).

³³ Bell, *Personnel Directory*; and Order of the Board, Atlanta Public Schools, *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Board of Education* (Atlanta: Board of Education, 1892).

³⁴ *English Avenue Community Redevelopment Plan Update*.

³⁵ Ray & Associates, "Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971," National Register Multiple Properties Documentation Form, October 2004, 9.

The English Avenue School was one of many urban elementary schools built to meet the needs of the city's growing population during this era, but it was rapidly overwhelmed. In a 1913 inspection, Atlanta Mayor James G. Woodward found the English Avenue School to be overcrowded already, and proposed an annex to accommodate the four lower grades as a solution. He stated, "I found that the lower grades of the school are and have been crowded for some time. This is due to a peculiar condition of the district. Out there the children who attend the school come largely from the mill districts. They attend school until they reach the fourth grade, and then quit to go to work for their parents." He also criticized the old annex, especially for the location of the open closets near the front of the building. (See Figure A-7.)³⁶ At the time, Georgia's child labor law permitted a child of the age of ten to work in a factory for twelve hours a day, or a total of sixty-six hours a week with a half holiday on Saturday.³⁷ The age of ten was when most children began the fourth grade. During the first years of the twentieth century, the child labor and compulsory education laws were widely debated nationally and in Georgia.³⁸ In 1912, a compromise bill was passed in the state legislature under which, between 1912 and 1916, the age at which children would be allowed to work in mills was gradually raised to fourteen.³⁹

In 1916, a state law was passed that required all children between the ages of 8 and 14 years who lived in the state of Georgia to attend school for at least four continuous months per year.⁴⁰ That same year, the federal Keating-Owen Child Labor Act was passed curtailing the working hours of children and forbidding the interstate sale of goods produced by child labor, despite the fact that many southern legislators, including Georgia's, voted against the law.⁴¹ The combined effects of compulsory education legislation, limited child labor, and the rapidly growing Atlanta population resulted in a great demand for schools.

In January 1914, only three years after the building's initial construction in 1911, there were more calls for a new six-room annex.⁴² By November that same year, there were predictions that hundreds of children would be turned away from the public schools which were full beyond capacity. English Avenue School's "old annex"—the 1905 West Side School on Paynes (now Paines) Avenue—was singled out for criticism because it was heated with coal heaters, which frequently failed, leaving children to suffer in the cold.⁴³ A year later, attacks on the old annex intensified, as a community group, the Fifth Ward Organization, charged that the building, which had a single stairway, put the lives of children in jeopardy from fire. The group petitioned the fire chief for a review of the structure, and for the Board of Education to take action.⁴⁴

By January 1916, APS had made improvements to the old school annex building: painting the interior, cutting new doors in the rear façade so children could escape in case of fire, installing new heating stoves, and making improvements to the water facilities.⁴⁵ The measure was only a stop-gap, and by March of that same year, the Fifth Ward Improvement Club voted to condemn the old annex building, and petition the school authorities for it to be razed, and a new modern structure be built

³⁶ "Annex to English Avenue School is Favored by Mayor," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 17, 1913, 1.

³⁷ "State's Child Labor Law and Needed Amendments," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 21, 1907, 11.

³⁸ See the two predominant sides of the argument in "Women's Club News of Georgia: Compulsory Education from Two Viewpoints," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 22, 1908, E2. See also "To Start Fight on Child Labor Law: Atlanta Convention to Discuss Problem," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 25, 1911, 1.

³⁹ "Child Labor Bill Passed by House," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 17, 1912, 5.

⁴⁰ Jamil S. Zainaldin, and John C. Inscoe, "Progressive Era," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, 2015.

⁴¹ "Keating-Owen Child Labor Act of 1916," Our Documents, National History Day, National Archives & Records Administration, and USA Freedom Corps, www.ourdocuments.gov. Web. Accessed February 1, 2018.

⁴² "19 New Schoolhouses Asked for Atlanta," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 3, 1914, 9.

⁴³ "Hundreds of Children Will Be Turned Away From public Schools," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 22, 1914, 1.

⁴⁴ "Children's Lives Are in Danger," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 5, 1915, 9.

⁴⁵ Lilian Schultz, "Big Improvements Delight Pupils at English Avenue," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 16, 1916, A2.

adjoining the main school building on English Avenue.⁴⁶

In 1917, the school was expanded to accommodate more students. A two-story, 9,999 square feet brick building, known as the Chestnut Annex, was built east of the main 1911 building along Chestnut Street (James P. Brawley Drive), adding ten classrooms to the school.⁴⁷ An open, covered wood walkway connected the annex to the east entrance to the main school. (See Figures A-4, A-5, A-11.) The new addition, so long desired, was heralded by the *Atlanta Constitution* as one of the city's main achievements of 1917.⁴⁸

Despite the new space, the old annex continued to be used by EAS, and in 1920, there were calls for another annex to be constructed to completely *replace* the old wood annex (the original 1905 school building located at the corner of Paynes (now Paines) Avenue and Pelham Street, one block west of the main school). The three buildings then-comprising the EAS campus could still not accommodate all the students. Principal Lula L. Kingsbery noted that the auditorium and basement rooms in the 1911 main school building had to be used as classrooms, and the school was forced to hold double-sessions for four grades. On an inspection tour, Atlanta Mayor James L. Key (1867-1939, mayor from 1919-1923 and 1931-1937) found the old annex to be “totally unfit for school purposes,” while the EAS Parent-Teacher Association said the old wood-frame building was “nothing less than a fire trap.”⁴⁹

Less than ten years after the English Avenue School was built the school was roundly criticized for its poor functionality and construction materials. A 1921 newspaper article quoted Principal Kingsbery reporting that over the last eleven years the student population of English Avenue School had grown from 300 to 1,200, making it “the largest grammar school in [Atlanta].” English Avenue School had to turn away an additional 200 students at the beginning of the school year. Discussions were by then underway for another annex to be built, which would entail purchasing property extending north from the current school property line to Bellwood Avenue and closing Fox Street.⁵⁰

Concerned with how to keep up with the rapid growth of Atlanta's school age population, in 1922, the city of Atlanta commissioned public school facilities and expansion experts George D. Strayer, Nickolaus L. Engelhardt, and E. S. Evenden of Columbia University in New York. The educators surveyed Atlanta's public schools and wrote a report of their findings. Completed in just three months, the report was one of the most comprehensive study of educational facilities ever done in Atlanta. It consisted of two volumes presenting the doctors' observations and recommendations for the improvement of Atlanta's educational housing system. It publicized the extreme overcrowding, dilapidated and suffering facilities, poor lighting, and insufficient recreation areas throughout the system.⁵¹ English Avenue School was “the poster school” of the report, often referenced for having facilities that were poorly conceptually planned, constructed, and/or maintained. Volume I of the report specifically suggested that additions be made to the English Avenue School building because “at present about 500 children are housed under most unsatisfactory conditions.”⁵² (See Figure A-5 for a photo of the 1911 main building with a “portable” classroom building to its right, and a view of the 1917 brick annex in the rear.) Moreover the report's authors recommended English Avenue School for

⁴⁶ “Fifth Warders Object,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 17, 1916, 2.

⁴⁷ “School Bells Will Ring September 10,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 20, 1917, 5.

⁴⁸ “1917 in Atlanta is Marked by Splendid Achievements,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 117, 1.

⁴⁹ “English Avenue School Quarters Inadequate,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 5, 1920, 3G; “More Class Rooms Needed, Says Mayor At Two Buildings,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 8, 1920, 12; “Another School Added to System, Will be Near the Exposition Cotton Mills. English Avenue School Annex Called ‘Firetrap,’” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 9, 1920, 1.

⁵⁰ “Mr. and Mrs. Burton Give Dinner at English Avenue,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 18, 1921, E7.

⁵¹ Clifford Kuhn, *Living Atlanta: An Oral History of the City, 1914-1948* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 138-139.

⁵² George D. Strayer, Nickolaus L. Engleheart, and E. S. Evenden, *Report of the Survey of the Public School System of Atlanta, Georgia, 1921-22* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1922).

renovation because it had the largest elementary school enrollment of all the white elementary schools, and many improvements were needed in the original brick building to address outstanding health, safety, and functional concerns regarding children and staff.

In March 1922, the Atlanta School Board officially adopted the report's recommendations and moved to use a 1921 \$4,000,000 bond issue from the State of Georgia for school facility construction and revitalization.⁵³ (See Figures A-8 and A-12 for locations of the added schools between 1922 and 1938.) To pass the 1921 bond issue, the Atlanta School Board had solicited and received support from both black and white families. The black community gave its support upon the condition that schools for black children were built. The Atlanta School Board kept its promise to the black community, and built several new black elementary and the first black high school in Atlanta. Gray Street School was one of the new elementary schools that was built, replacing the 1892 structure. It served African Americans children who resided in the English Avenue School attendance area.

The Bond Commission in charge of distributing the associated money appointed prominent architect, Anthony Ten Eyck Brown, to oversee the entire project.⁵⁴ This marked the first time a cluster of schools were built under the supervision of one architect, who directed the design and build process. He was chosen as supervising architect because of his reputation for designing and supervising the construction of important public buildings.

Anthony Ten Eyck Brown (1878-1940) was born in Albany, NY, the son of an architect. He studied architecture at the New York Academy of Design, and worked in New York and Washington, DC before moving to Atlanta. He built houses in the then-developing suburbs of Atlanta: Ansley Park (1905-1910s, where he also had a home), and Druid Hills (1910s). By the early 1930s, he had completed a number of residences, apartment buildings, churches, and commercial buildings. Some of these included the Fulton County Courthouse (1911-14, listed on the National Register), the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta (1918, now the State Bar of Georgia Building), the Municipal Market (1923, now the Sweet Auburn Curb Market, a contributing building in the Sweet Auburn National Register Historic District), the Thornton Building on Pryor Street (1932, listed on the National Register), and, along with associate architects Alfredo Barili Jr. and W. Humphreys, the Federal Post Office Annex (1931-33, now the Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Building, listed on the National Register).⁵⁵

Brown and his team's duties included developing a plan for the rating and appointment of local architecture firms for all sites, carrying out recommendations from the educational engineers, reviewing preliminary design proposals for each project, and tracking each site construction. He consulted with the appointed architects regularly as well as educational engineers who had studied Atlanta's public schools over the previous year; and compiled preliminary and working drawings of the buildings.

The bond issue would result in the construction of sixteen new schools. Of the seventeen schools either built or renovated by the 1922 bond issue, only three schools are still in operation: Samuel Inman Middle School, Booker T. Washington High School, and Henry W. Grady High School. The other fifteen properties have been repurposed as apartments, office space, or have been abandoned.

EAS was one of three schools that would have extensive renovations or additions built through the bond issue.⁵⁶ (See Figure A-11 for the Sanborn map showing the completed additions to the

⁵³ Rodney Gary, *Documentation for the Thematic Nomination of the Atlanta Public Schools Constructed after the 1921 Bond Issue*, (1987), 5-7.

⁵⁴ "Will Discuss Plans for English Avenue School Addition," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 28, 1922.

⁵⁵ Craig, Robert M. "A. Ten Eyck Brown (1878-1940)." *New Georgia Encyclopedia*. December 7, 2016. Web. Accessed January 2018.

⁵⁶ "Here Is Complete School Building Program for City," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 16, 1922, 2.

English Avenue School.) Brown appointed the firm of Daniel and Beutell, Architects, to blend the new additions with Walter and Edwards' original structure.⁵⁷

Daniel and Beutell, Architects. This Atlanta architectural firm was a partnership between Sydney S. Daniell and Russell L. Beutell. They designed public buildings and private residences. During the 1930s, they designed a number of public schools and health clinics. In Georgia, they designed a number of buildings which are listed on the National Register, including the Gordon Avenue Apartments in Thomasville (1929), the Southwest Georgia Melon Growers Association Building (SOWEGA Building) in Adel (1930), Hartwell City School in Hartwell (1934), the Manchester Community Building in Manchester (1935), the Hall County Courthouse in Gainesville (1937), and City Hall in Monroe (1939). The Grand Theatre in Cartersville (1910) was designed by Daniell and Beutell. In Atlanta, they also designed the Madison Theatre (1928) on Flat Shoals Avenue, and Buckhead Theatre (1930) on Roswell Road. In 1921, they built the Wheat Street Baptist Church in the Gothic Revival style, replacing the nineteenth-century church which had been destroyed in the Great Atlanta Fire of 1917. It is a contributing building in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District, listed on the National Register.

Sydney S. Daniell (1889-1956) was born in Marietta, GA, and spent most of his life in the Atlanta area. He graduated from Alabama Polytechnic Institute in Auburn, AL. He worked in various architectural firms in Durham, NC, Oak Ridge and Bristol, TN, and Augusta, GA. Through much of the early twentieth century, he partnered with Russell L. Beutell until Beutell's death in 1943. Two years later, he became the chief architect for John J. Harte Company, an engineering firm in Atlanta. He was a long-time resident of Decatur.

Russell L. Beutell (1891-1943) designed the Joe M. Beutell House (1930) in Thomasville, GA, which is listed on the National Register. In addition to architecture, he was an ardent conservationist and outdoorsman. The 108 acres of land north of Helen which he purchased in 1930 is part of the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River. He built a home there, which burned in 1943. He died in that fire and is buried in Westview Cemetery in Atlanta. The land was sold in 2005 to the Georgia Trust for Public Land, which continues to preserve its pristine nature.

The English Avenue School expansion was designed and built by Daniell and Beutell. Contractors included Ed R. Hays & Son, Barge-Thompson Company, A. J. Krebs & Co., Allen Artley, Inc., Griffin-Hodges Company, Donaldson & Pearson, Griffin Construction Company, S. J. Warner, and Arthur Tufts Company.⁵⁸ EAS was the first project completed through the bond issue and served as a model primary facility for the other projects. The expansion was finished in 1923, and opened to 1,200 students in September that year. It eliminated the need for the school to use the old wood annex (which had been given to a Baptist women's association to use for a free day nursery), and "four negro shacks," since destroyed, which had been used for classrooms. The expanded building when completed included 31 standard classrooms, an auditorium-gymnasium with shower baths for 24 boys and individual shower baths for 16 girls behind the auditorium, an industrial arts room, a kindergarten, medical room, lunch room, library, administration rooms, and teachers' rest rooms. English Avenue was the first of the seventeen new/renovated school buildings completed.⁵⁹ (See newspaper article file, *Atlanta Constitution*, September 2, 1923, page 7, which has a photograph of the expanded English Avenue School. See Figures A-4 and A-9—A-11.) By 1923, kindergartens had been established at over thirty Atlanta public schools, including English Avenue.

In 1922, a community library was constructed at the corner of English Avenue and Bellwood Avenue (later Bankhead Avenue, now Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway), on the former site of the A. M.

⁵⁷David Clifton Ramsey, *Schools Constructed After the First Bond Issue and Under the Supervision of A. Ten Eyck Brown*, (1985).

⁵⁸"Many Architects Bid on Erection of City Schools," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 30, 1922, 7.

⁵⁹Stewart F. Gelders, "17 New Bond Money Schools Near Completion," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 2, 1923, 6. See McDonald for detailed information about the Baptist women's association free day nursery.

E. Church. (See Figures A-3, A-9, A-11.) It was the sixth branch of the public library in downtown Atlanta, and was constructed to serve the Fifth Ward. The location of the library, adjacent to the English Avenue School was so that the children could “go directly from school to the library for their books.”⁶⁰ The one-story plus basement brick and limestone building’s estimated cost was \$20,000, to which Fulton County appropriated \$12,700, and the City \$5,000. J. S. W. McCanby was the contractor. The library opened on July 17, 1922.⁶¹ A few months later, the City Council voted an appropriation of \$400 to pave English Avenue in front of the school and the branch library with a tar binder, as both institutions were receiving “clouds of dust from the street.”⁶² The library building remains today, but is now owned by an engineering firm. (See Photo 41.)

Between 1928 and 1930, the EAS campus was expanded to the north. As early as 1922, plans had been under discussion to close Fox Street, and purchase property in the next block north for use by the school. The purchase of property consisted of 278 feet on Fox Street, 153 feet on English Avenue, and 136 feet on Chestnut Street was completed for \$15,350.⁶³ By 1930, Fox Street was closed, and the resulting boundaries of the school property remain unchanged through today. (See Figure A-10 for a 1928 map of the area.)

In 1934, the school’s name was changed to Lula L. Kingsbery School to honor Lula L. Kingsbery, the founding principal of the school who would work there for a total of thirty-seven years. She was still acting as principal when she was so honored. Lula LaRoche Kingsbery Wilson (1879-1971) was born in Carrollton, GA. She was daughter of Joseph Kingsbery (1840-1929), a prominent Atlanta businessman, and organizer and president of the Gentlemen’s Driving Club (later the Piedmont Driving Club) in 1887.⁶⁴ Ms. Kingsbery attended Agnes Scott College, Emory University, and completed her teacher training at the State Normal School in Athens, Georgia. Beginning her tenure in the community in 1909, Kingsbery initially worked as a fourth-grade teacher in the 1905 four-room Western Heights schoolhouse located on Franklin Street (later Paynes, now Paines Avenue).⁶⁵ When the new brick Western Heights Public School opened in 1911 on English Avenue, she was named principal. While principal at Western Heights/English Avenue/Lula L. Kingsbery School, she advocated for equal salaries for female teachers, worked to improve and expand the facilities of the school campus, and promoted community political involvement. She was an advocate for the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to extend the vote to women. One of her teachers recounts how Miss Kingsbery led them all to register to vote.

And when we got the franchise, suffrage, Miss Lula Kingsbery was our principal and she said, “We are going to City Hall together and register to vote.” So we all went together in a body, and she was the first in line. The clerk said, “Your age?” and she said, “Over twenty-one.” And he said, “I have to know your age.” She said, “Young man, write over twenty-one.” And I guess he wrote over twenty-one.⁶⁶

Lula Kingsbery married Fred S. Wilson, and was a widow at the time of her death at the age of 91. She is buried in Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ “Mr. and Mrs. Burton Give Dinner at English Avenue,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 18, 1921, E7.

⁶¹ “Building Permits of the Past Week,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 25, 1921, 11. See “New Branch of Library Will Be Opened Monday,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 22, 1922, 14, for a photograph of the Italianate library building.

⁶² “Council Assures Plan to Improve Forsyth Street,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 26, 1922, 1.

⁶³ “Education Board Promises to Get Full Bond Value,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 10, 1922, 1.

⁶⁴ Garrett, Vol. 2, 136-45.

⁶⁵ Lula Kingsbery Attendance Ledger, 1909-1910, Box 3; Folder 4, Kingsbery family papers, Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center.

⁶⁶ Evelyn Witherspoon, oral history interview by Clifford M. Kuhn, March 13, 1979, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, Georgia.

⁶⁷ “Mrs. Lula Wilson, 91, Dies; Was Principal,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 29, 1971, 7A.

The English Avenue School was not only a school building, but also served as a community center. In the 1930s, newspapers reported on the communal gardens built on the school campus, community and “daddies” meetings held at the school to promote neighborhood improvements,⁶⁸ and the use of the school for one of William Hartsfield’s mayoral rallies. It was also a polling place for local, state, and national elections. Neighborhood schools were important centers of community activity and were pivotal to area residents because of the strong influence the schools had on their children.

ENGLISH AVENUE SCHOOL - AN AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOOL IN THE ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, 1950-1995

Between 1910 and 1940, the African American residents of the Vine City community gradually began moving north across Simpson Road and into the English Avenue neighborhood, causing consternation among white residents. In 1927, a special committee consisting of city councilmen and pastors issued a report on a proposed segregation of the races in the Fifth and First Wards (English Avenue was in the Fifth Ward). The report, which was “approved by leading negro real estate dealers, was adopted and restricted” various streets and sections of streets for white persons. Among the streets segregated for whites only were Chestnut Street (now James P. Brawley Avenue) and Bankhead Avenue (now Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway), which formed the northern and eastern boundaries of the English Avenue School property.⁶⁹ In 1941, two public housing projects opened in the English Avenue neighborhood.⁷⁰ The growing African American population in the public housing projects and surrounding areas created a demand for black-owned businesses. A new black commercial district emerged on Hunter Street (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard), replacing the formerly white-owned businesses.⁷¹

There was a major demographic transition between 1940 and 1950 in the English Avenue school attendance area. The Atlanta City Directory shows there were no “colored” residents living on a four-block stretch of English Avenue out of 49 total residential listings in 1940. By 1950 in that same four-block stretch, there were 52 “colored” residents out of 63 total listings.⁷² This four-block area, which also includes the English Avenue School, demonstrates that the demographics of the English Avenue neighborhood changed dramatically between 1940 and 1950.

A former English Avenue black resident (resident from 1958 to 1969) remembers seeing the transformation of the neighborhood from middle and upper to lower income black residents: “The English Avenue neighborhood was a middle-class black neighborhood with different sorts of businesses run by both black, white and Jewish, such as Parker’s drug store. Radio broadcasters and teachers lived within the community. Around the time that John F. Kennedy was shot (1963), over the next seven years, the neighborhood began to change; middle-class blacks moved out between 1966-68 for the suburbs and lower income black families moved in. The middle-class white families living across Bankhead in what was known as the Bellwood Community also moved away. Our family moved in 1969 for a better life in the suburbs south of Atlanta.”⁷³ While both white and black middle class families were part of the suburbanization movement, a disproportionate number were whites.

⁶⁸ “English Avenue Plants Gardens on School Yard,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 10, 1932, 5K; “English Avenue Daddies’ Meeting,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 10, 1932, 4K.

⁶⁹ “Schools of Fifth in Merger Fight,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 8, 1927, 16.

⁷⁰ “Vine City Neighborhood History.” Web. Accessed August 22, 2014.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Four blocks between where Kennedy intersects English Avenue to the Bankhead intersection; from *Atlanta City Directory*, 1940, 1950 (U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989).

⁷³ Gregory Walker, Sr., Oral history interview, November 8, 2016; notes on file at Atlanta Preservation Center, Atlanta, GA.

This mass demographic change is a classic case of “white flight” in which many white Atlanta residents left the inner city between 1940 and 1960 for the outlying suburbs. The suburbs expanded rapidly aided by affordable housing loans and the new highway system which bisected the central core of Atlanta displacing all residents living in its path. The city of Atlanta annexed an additional 82 square miles in 1952 and began constructing freeways to accommodate a growing suburban commuter population.⁷⁴ Large numbers of blacks had moved to the western side of Atlanta because of displacement by the new interstate highways, and by 1950, EAS was practically surrounded by black residents. As the whites moved out, so did their churches. The English Avenue Methodist Church, the Western Heights Baptist Church, the Fox Street Methodist Church, and other white churches in the area had, by 1950, been sold to African American residents of the neighborhood.⁷⁵

Simultaneously, Atlanta’s African American public schools were severely underfunded, substandard, and overcrowded.⁷⁶ For example, for the year 1947:

- School spending per unit physical plant was \$383 for white schools, and \$153 for black schools;
- School spending per unit instructional was \$143.75 for white students, and \$61.65 for black students.⁷⁷

This disparate cost structure resulted in the grossly inferior educational services. In 1948, African American parents, led by Professor Samuel W. Williams of Morehouse College, attended a Board of Education Meeting to complain about the poor conditions in their schools. A specific reference was made to English Avenue School, where there had been a steady decrease of white enrollees at the school, and a “steady influx of Negroes into the community surrounding it.”⁷⁸ The Board acknowledged that a study was being made at the school to determine whether it would remain for whites or be transitioned for use by African Americans.

In 1949, Georgia’s black school teachers sent copies of a resolution to the State Department of Education, the Board of Regents of the University System, and to County school superintendents. In the resolution, they requested equal school and college facilities, pupil transportation, curricula, school lunch programs, and pay for teachers for Negro students. They stated that despite the requirements of the U.S. Constitution, the boards of education had established and maintained a policy of denying the Negro youth educational facilities and services equal to those afforded white youth in the State of Georgia.⁷⁹

Also in 1949, local residents petitioned the Board of Education to transfer existing schools located in neighborhoods now occupied by African Americans to use by African American elementary school children. The Kingsbery School was located in the most critical of these areas.⁸⁰ The 600+ school-aged African American children living in the English Avenue neighborhood at that time had to enroll in black schools outside of their neighborhood. These schools were incredibly overcrowded, with a ratio of 51 pupils to a teacher and 77 children per room. The petition stressed the importance of taking “steps to accelerate the Negro school construction projects authorized by the 1946 bond issue.” On August 14, 1946, a \$40,400,000 joint Atlanta-Fulton County bond issue was passed, setting aside \$9,000,000 for the Atlanta city schools. Of that \$9 million, \$3,531,150 had been promised for African

⁷⁴ Jarod Apperson, “An Afterward to White Flight: Atlanta’s Return to Community & Long Road toward Integration,” *East Atlanta Patch*, February 10, 2013.

⁷⁵ “Board of Education Turns White School Over to Negroes,” *Atlanta Daily World*, June 15, 1950, 4.

⁷⁶ “Kingsbury School Little Help, Urban League Says,” *Atlanta Daily World*, June 25, 1950, 1.

⁷⁷ C. Lamar Weaver, “School Facilities Inadequate,” *Atlanta Daily World*, September 12, 1948, 1.

⁷⁸ C. Lamar Weaver, “Disturbed Parents Ask Board of Education for Adequate Facilities,” *Atlanta Daily World*, October 13, 1948, 1.

⁷⁹ “Negroes File School Aid Petition,” *Atlanta Constitution*, April 27, 1949, 3.

⁸⁰ Melvin W. Ecke, *From Ivy Street to Kennedy Center: Centennial History of the Atlanta Public School System* (Atlanta: Atlanta Board of Education, 1972), 299.

American new school buildings and improvements to existing schools, but three years later, that promise had not been fulfilled.⁸¹

The local African American Leadership including the NAACP, cited in the petition to the Atlanta School Board the following educational hardships African American school children had to endure:

- More than 85% of all Negro elementary school children were offered only half a day.
- The number of teaching positions in Negro Schools exceeded the number of Negro teachers employed in the schools for Negro children.
- Half days were necessary for Negro children.
- There were no kindergartens in the majority of Negro elementary schools.
- Auditoriums, gymnasiums, cafeterias and library rooms were lacking in the majority of schools for Negro children.”⁸²

These conditions were present at Gray Street School, the then-required school for blacks residing in the Kingsbery Elementary school attendance area. In 1948, Gray Street School had 837 enrolled students.⁸³ At the school, the school ran all double sessions; meaning that a student there received only 3½ hours of instruction per day. The plumbing was faulty; window panes were broken; and twenty-two railroad tracks covering fifty yards had to be crossed by many Gray Street students to get to classes. They were assisted only by fellow students acting as crossing guards.⁸⁴

On June 12, 1950, the Atlanta Board of Education voted to convert Kingsbery Elementary from a white to black facility, effective on September 1st. The school’s name was officially changed from Lula L. Kingsbery School back to English Avenue School. The school playgrounds were also immediately opened to the black children of the community (who formerly would not have been permitted to be on the grounds of a white school).

Many white residents of English Avenue were unhappy with the school conversion. One woman observed, “I remember a community meeting to protest the loss of the school to white children. There were more than 1,000 people present. But not one city official, not one member of the school board, was on hand to talk to the families, to explain what was happening, or to try to clarify the situation.”⁸⁵ On July 6, 1950, more than 400 residents of the area met at the Salvation Army gymnasium on Bankhead Avenue (across the street from the north end of the Kingsbery School property) to express their strong disapproval of the transfer of the school by the Atlanta Board of Education. They appointed a committee to make a survey of the number of white school-age children still living in the area to counteract the claims that there were not enough white children to keep the school white.⁸⁶ However, the enrollment of the Kingsbery School had dropped 353 students between June 1948 and June 1950. Since 1930, the white enrollment at the school had dropped 60%, and while other neighborhood schools were overcrowded and were holding double sessions, the Kingsbery School had only 13 students per classroom.⁸⁷

Despite the complaints of 25 white community residents at the July 12, 1950 meeting, the Atlanta Board of Education stood firm to convert Kingsbery to a black school. School administrators pointed out that less than 400 white students were being transferred out of the former Kingsbery

⁸¹ “Bonds Carried,” *Atlanta Daily World*, August 15, 1946, 1; “Bonds Win Majority,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 16, 1949, 14.

⁸² C. Lamar Weaver, “Officials Deny Discrimination Charge against Negro Children,” *Atlanta Daily World*, October 19, 1948, 1.

⁸³ C. Lamar Weaver, “School Facilities Inadequate,” *Atlanta Daily World*, September 12, 1948, 1.

⁸⁴ C. Lamar Weaver, “Hazards and Neglect Handicap To Students,” *Atlanta Daily World*, September 26, 1948, 1.

⁸⁵ Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 148.

⁸⁶ Dick Hodges, “School Shift to Negro Use Stirs Whites,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 7, 1950, 2.

⁸⁷ “Board of Education Turns White School Over to Negroes,” *Atlanta Daily World*, June 15, 1950, 4.

School, while 1500 black students had been assigned to English Avenue School for the coming fall term.⁸⁸ A spokesman for the Board of Education said, “The Board serves in the interest of all the people. We do the best job we can for the majority of the people, rather than for a small minority.”⁸⁹ He also said that the school would better serve the community as an elementary school for black students. The black leadership including that of the Atlanta NAACP and others, and local residents were very pleased with the conversion of the Kingsberry School from white to African American.

During the 1951-52 school year, the APS system was 70% white and only 30% black. Just ten years later, during the 1961-62 school year, the APS school system was 55% white and 45% black. By the 1972-73 school year, the APS school system was 77% black and only 23% white.⁹⁰ This shift in the racial makeup of the APS system occurred as the population of Atlanta changed from majority-white to majority-black. In 1950, Atlanta was 63% white. By 1970, it was only 48% white. That percentage would drop to nearly 30% by 1980.⁹¹

On Monday, December 12, 1960 at 2:40 a.m., dynamite detonated near the Pelham Street doorway of the English Avenue Elementary School.⁹² The explosion blew the doors off their hinges, damaged two classrooms and the auditorium, broke several windows, and destroyed the pavement surrounding the entry. The blast was heard ten miles away.⁹³ The *Meriden [CT] Record* speculated that the bombers were whites expressing anger and bitterness towards the school’s conversion from a black to a white facility. The bombing may also have been connected to an anti-segregation march that had occurred that Sunday afternoon. African American protesters had gathered at the English Avenue school for a mass prayer meeting before heading downtown to peacefully protest segregation.⁹⁴ Mayor William Hartsfield brought in the Federal Bureau of Investigation to find the bombers. Despite these efforts, no one was ever convicted of the bombing.

Mr. Gregory Walker, former student and resident, tells of being a young boy of age seven in the first grade at English Avenue school in 1960. His teacher, Anna Ruth Jones, “was known to be outspoken on matters of inequality in education for blacks such as lack of books and levels of funding.” The dynamite detonated adjacent to his first grade classroom. He remembers that classes continued within the school in spite of the damages to his classroom. While he personally had no fear, he was aware of “a division between the black and white neighborhoods with Bankhead Avenue (Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway) being the physical boundary for English Avenue residents. He recalled “white police officers walked the perimeter of English Avenue with dogs” demonstrating there was no crossing over into the white neighborhood on the other side of Bankhead and vice versa.”⁹⁵

During the 1950s and 1960s, blacks led sit-ins, boycotts, and peaceful demonstrations to protest segregation and racist Jim Crow laws as part of the Civil Rights Movement. The English Avenue School bombing illustrates the high racial tensions in Atlanta, a hotbed of Civil Rights activity at that time.

On June 3, 1961, the Atlanta city school system became the first system in the state to desegregate. Only ten black students (out of 134 who had applied) were selected to attend four high

⁸⁸ Herman Hancock, “Kingsberry [sic] Will Become Negro School in Fall,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 12, 1950, 16.

⁸⁹ “Board of Education Stands Pat on Kingsberry [sic] Decision,” *Atlanta Daily World*, July 12, 1950, 4.

⁹⁰ Michael Gannon, *From White Flight to Open Admissions: The Founding and Integration of Private Schools in the City of Atlanta, 1951-1967*, MA thesis, Georgia State University, 2004.

⁹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Georgia - Race and Hispanic Origin for Selected Large Cities and Other Places: Earliest Census to 1990.

⁹² Paul Delaney, “No New Leads in School Bombing,” *Atlanta Daily World*, December 14, 1960, 1.

⁹³ Westside Future Fund, Thadani Architects + Urbanists, APD Urban Planning and Management, Bleakly Advisory Group, and Zimmer Volk Associates, *Westside Land Use Framework Plan* (Atlanta: n.p., December 2017). Report prepared for the City of Atlanta.

⁹⁴ “Furtive Dynamiters Blast Big Atlanta Negro School,” *Meriden Record* [Meriden, CT], December 13, 1960, 10.

⁹⁵ Walker, Oral history interview.

schools on August 30.⁹⁶ The action was the first step to put an end to “separate but equal” legislation and the construction of equalization schools.⁹⁷ EAS retained a majority-black student body until it closed.

During the 1960s, the APS student population continued to grow, and, as a temporary measure, the school system was forced to add “trailers,”—air-conditioned mobile homes converted into classrooms—to accommodate the additional students. Between 1961 and 1964, the Atlanta Public School system added 77 trailers to various school campuses, including English Avenue School’s. Four trailers were in place in the school yard north of the main school building by 1968: three 24’ x 64’, and one 24’ wide, but shorter; it had a covered walkway connecting it to the north entrance pavilion (See Figures A-25 and A-26 for aerial images of the school in 1960 and 1968).⁹⁸

The trailers did not provide adequate relief for the overcrowded school system. By 1966, APS had about 115,000 students, of which 2,970 had to attend double sessions. A \$22 million bond issue for schools was requested. A new primary school, to be called English Avenue Primary School, was proposed, along with four other new schools. Located at 740 Kennedy Street (today 740 Cameron M. Alexander Boulevard), it was specifically designed to relieve the overcrowding at the English Avenue school, which the next ten years was called English Avenue Elementary School (EAES). The new primary school opened in 1968, and served grades K-3, after which the students attended English Avenue Elementary.⁹⁹ As part of the bond issue, EAES was one of 26 elementary schools which had libraries added in their existing facilities. Atlanta School Superintendent John Letson noted that “Many Atlanta elementary schools were built without libraries, but modern education requires a large variety and quantity of materials and resources.”¹⁰⁰ English Avenue had a library in its 1923 addition, but it was obviously upgraded, and expanded, in 1967. The superintendent went on to say that despite the construction of new schools and expansions of some existing schools, it would still be necessary to utilize “supplementary classrooms” (trailers). It is not known if the trailers were removed from EAES with the opening of the primary school, but they were certainly gone by 1976.

The English Avenue Primary School closed in 1976, as enrollment in the Atlanta schools dropped.¹⁰¹ English Avenue Elementary School reverted to the former English Avenue School, although the word “Elementary” was sometimes included (e.g., in some newspaper articles). A highlight for the school came on January 15, 1987, when U.S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett taught Mrs. Margaret D. Jackson’s third-grade class at EAS as part of the activities of King Week ’87. His textbook for the class lesson was *Martin Luther King, Jr.: His Life and Dream*, written by Christine King Farris, professor at Spelman College and sister of Dr. King.¹⁰² For the rest of its history as a school, EAS continued to function also as a community center, hosting the events of various organizations and associations, and serving as the meeting place for a church whose building had burned, as an election precinct, and as the home basketball court for several local teams.

English Avenue School maintained a majority-black student population until, in the fall of 1995, it was closed, along with 17 other schools in the APS system, due to low enrollment. Atlanta

⁹⁶ Raleigh Bryans, “10 Negroes Approved for 4 White Schools,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, June 4, 1961, 1.

⁹⁷ “Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971,” 17.

⁹⁸ Remer Tyson, “Those Classrooms Really Get Around Town These Days,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 7, 1964, 18. Georgia House Representative Mable A. Thomas (District 56, which includes English Avenue School), a long-time resident of the area, confirmed that trailers were at EAS while she was a student there in the early 1960s.

⁹⁹ Dick Hebert, “\$22 Million Bonds Asked for Schools,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 15, 1966, 1; “Projects in Bond Issue and the Cost of Each,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 16, 1966, 10.

¹⁰⁰ Joe Brown, “Atlanta’s Schools Need \$81 Million by 1969,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 16, 1966, 10.

¹⁰¹ Alexis Scott Reeves, “School Days,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 26, 1976, 5C.

¹⁰² “Secretary of Education Speaks Today in Atlanta,” *Atlanta Daily World*, January 15, 1987, 1; George M. Coleman, “King’s Last Speech Urged Goodwill,” *Atlanta Daily World*, January 18, 1987, 1 (see article for photo of Bennett teaching the EAS students); Ozeil Fryer Woolcock, “Mrs. Margaret Dabney Jackson Retires; Honored by Friends,” *Atlanta Daily World*, July 19, 1987, 3.

then had only 59,000 students while operating 106 schools. The closing of the schools would save \$20 million in city bond referendum money. After much controversy and community pushback, the Atlanta School Board voted to close only six schools, including English Avenue, whose students were transferred to Herndon and Fowler.¹⁰³ Some of the school's alumni include Gladys Knight, Georgia Representative Mable A. Thomas of District 56, which includes English Avenue School, and Herman Cain.

ENGLISH AVENUE SCHOOL CAMPUS AFTER ITS CLOSING AS AN EDUCATIONAL FACILITY

In 2010, the property was put out for bid, and GVCOP under the leadership of Georgia Representative "Able" Mable Thomas, purchased the building. Since that time, the organization has started a capital campaign to raise funds to renovate the structure into the English Avenue Campus and Global Community Center. The GVCOP secured the building, and in 2017, improvements were made to the grounds, such as installing wood seating, an arbor and a gazebo, a small stage, a gravel path, trash and recycling containers, and raised garden beds, which have served to make the school a recreational and social gathering place for community members.¹⁰⁴ EAS has also become a film site, including a music video for Young Thug's and Future's 2017 collaborative album "Super Slimey" (see Photo 74).

In October, 2017, EAS property was conveyed to the Westside Development Partners, LLC.

¹⁰³ "School Renovations, Closings Get Board Approval In 6-3Vote," *Atlanta Daily World*, May 17, 1990, 1; "Plan Reveals Closing 18 Public Schools Next Fall," *Atlanta Daily World*, March 26, 1995, 1; "School Board Votes to Close Six Schools; Archer-Harper to Merge," *Atlanta Daily World*, May 11, 1995, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Information about the English Avenue School, its history, and the GVCOP, were provided by Georgia House Representative Mable A. Thomas throughout the nomination process. Representative Thomas was born and has lived her entire life in the English Avenue/Vine City area, and is the long-time representative of District 56, which includes the English Avenue School. She and her niece attended English Avenue School.

SECTION 4

SIGNIFICANCE

A. Areas of Significance

From the list below, indicate the "areas of historical significance" that you believe may apply to the property. If you indicate "other" be sure to explain.

agriculture	industry
archaeology-historic	invention
archaeology-prehistoric	landscape architecture
<u>architecture</u>	law
art	literature
commerce	maritime history
communications	military
community planning and development	performing arts
conservation	philosophy
economics	politics/government
<u>education</u>	religion
engineering	science
entertainment/recreation	<u>social history</u>
ethnic heritage (e.g. African American)	transportation
exploration/settlement	women's history
health/medicine	other (specify)

B. Statement of Significance

The English Avenue School was constructed in two eras, between 1910-11 and 1922-23, to accommodate the growing enrollment and changing educational needs in the City of Atlanta. It was originally constructed in 1911 as a school for white children whose parents had moved to Atlanta from rural areas to get jobs in the new mills and factories in the city's west side. The school expanded in the 1920s to meet the needs of a burgeoning elementary school population as a result of the city's continued growth and the new compulsory education and child labor laws. In 1950, when the Atlanta Public School system remained completely segregated, the whites-only school was converted to a school for African Americans, reflecting the changing demographics in the neighborhood and Georgia's mid-20th century perpetuation of a segregated public school system.

Education

The school is significant under Criterion A in the area of education as one of the largest public elementary facilities constructed by the Atlanta Public School System to serve Atlanta's students during an important period of transition in educational facilities development Atlanta. As noted in the statewide context study, *Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in GA, 1868-1971*, new mill jobs in cities, such as Atlanta, led to a move by rural populations to urban areas to take advantage of jobs and better educational opportunities for their children.¹⁰⁵ The Fulton County section northwest of Atlanta's city limits had grown between the late 1800s into the 1920s, with the Exposition Cotton Mills as well as furniture and upholstery factories, brickworks, and warehouses providing numerous employment opportunities for former rural residents fleeing the devastation of the boll weevil on cotton farming as well as the increasing mechanization of agriculture. The English Avenue School was constructed when that section of Fulton County was annexed by Atlanta in 1910, bringing in large numbers of new residents whose children needed to be educated. As was typical for urban public schools, EAS was designed by architects specializing in school buildings who practiced in Atlanta and throughout the region.¹⁰⁶

Almost as soon as the school was completed (1911), there were calls for an annex or addition to accommodate the large numbers of students. As the statewide context study notes, by 1920, "the population growth of Atlanta had resulted in an explosion of the student population," and "the school system was forced to buy ten portable frame buildings of two rooms each for use at various school sites, when additional classrooms were needed."¹⁰⁷ EAS was by 1921, the largest grammar school in Atlanta, having classes in basement rooms, holding double sessions, and turning some students away as the school was beyond capacity. It was one of the schools equipped with one of the "portables" (see Figure A-5). The 1922 Strayer-Engelhardt *Report* discussed in the statewide context study singled out EAS as one of the schools seriously in need of improvements, and documented their findings with photographs of the school and its old, wood-frame annex (the original Fulton County 1905 West Side School located one block from the EAS at the corner of Paines Avenue and Pelham Street; see Figures A-5 through A-7).

After the 1923 north and south wings were added to the 1911 building, the school was substantially complete. The school board noted that it would not be possible to expand the school building any further, and if the neighborhood population became denser, another school would have to be constructed.

¹⁰⁵ Ray & Associates, "Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971," National Register Multiple Properties Documentation Form (Atlanta, October 2004), 9.

¹⁰⁶ "Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971," 10.

¹⁰⁷ "Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971," 9.

EAS is a representative example of a 20th century public school for elementary students in Atlanta, paid for by city bonds and property taxes. The building was constructed in 1911 (between the 1870 and 1920 dates cited in the statewide context study), with the north and south wings completed in 1923. The building's two phases of construction are each representative of the evolving needs and changing patterns of Atlanta's expanding educational system during the first half of the 20th century. It is eligible under Criterion A for its association with the history of education in Atlanta, specifically as an example of a school building constructed and used for education in Atlanta as the city significantly expanded its public education systems to meet the needs of an exponentially increasing student population during the early 20th century.¹⁰⁸

Architecture

The school is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an excellent example of the urban public school, a significant school type in Georgia as defined by the statewide context *Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971*. It is a representative example of this type, constructed from load-bearing brick in a then-popular revival style (English Tudor Revival), and exhibiting the type's character-defining features, including two levels and a basement, double-loaded corridors, and vertical stairhalls.¹⁰⁹ Its 1923 north and south wing additions resulted in a characteristic U-shaped plan, and carried on the design elements of the original rectangular 1911 building. Both the 1911 building as well as its 1923 expansion had entrances on all sides. The original main entrance facing west onto English Avenue is intact. The school yard was open, but shade trees (now mature) were planted around three sides of the building. The architects for the 1911 building, William A. Edwards and Frank C. Walter, designed public schools across Georgia, as well as other public buildings including churches and courthouses in the region. The architects for the 1923 north and south wing additions, Sydney S. Daniell and Russell L. Beutell, designed public buildings and private residences throughout Georgia. The supervising architect for the 1923 additions, Anthony Ten Eyck Brown, also oversaw all of the 1922-23 new school buildings and additions for the APS system. A prominent Atlanta and regional architect, Brown designed houses, residences, commercial and public buildings, as well as public schools across the south.¹¹⁰

The English Avenue School retains its historic integrity as an excellent example of an urban public school as described in the statewide context study. It is in its original location, bordered by a main thoroughfare to the north (Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway). The building retains its historic compact massing, form, and patterns of bays and fenestration. It is a two-story brick structure plus a basement, and has a combined auditorium/gymnasium. The classrooms all have multiple windows providing light and ventilation. The character-defining wide, double-loaded corridors are intact, as are classrooms with separate vestibules and cloakrooms. Teacher offices were in the original building, with additional staff spaces in the 1923 wings. The historic building materials remain intact on the exterior facades, including brick patterns, limestone quoins and decorative accents, as well as the characteristic crenelated and raked parapets.¹¹¹ Additionally, the interior of the school retain character-defining historic materials include a brick fireplace, a wood stage in the auditorium/gymnasium, concrete stairs and balustrades set in plastered stairwells with rounded corners, hollow clay tile walls, brick walls, ceilings and walls covered with plaster on wood lath (1911 original section) and expandable metal lath (1923 additions), wood interior doors, and metal windows with a variety of sizes and numbers of lights. The 1923 expansion further exemplifies the statewide context study as an example of the addition of classrooms and modern facilities (e.g., lunchroom, health clinic,

¹⁰⁸ "Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971," 24.

¹⁰⁹ "Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971," 23-25.

¹¹⁰ Brown is cited as a significant school architect for Atlanta in "Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971," 13.

¹¹¹ "Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971," 23-25.

kindergarten, showers) as the population of the area served by the school expanded. Such alterations to original school buildings were common among urban public schools.¹¹²

Social History

The school is significant under Criterion A in the area of social history as a good example of social and cultural changes as well as the shifting dynamics of public education in the English Avenue neighborhood, in Atlanta, in Georgia, and across the South. English Avenue School served as a bellwether for the examination of problematic issues affecting the local educational system, including: compulsory education and child labor laws, which were fiercely contested locally, statewide, regionally, and nationally during the 1910s; school overcrowding; teacher pay inequity; the urban to suburban movement of white populations (the “white flight” phenomenon) across the South of the 1950s-60s; the beginnings of Georgia’s equalization schools movement (an ultimately futile attempt to maintain segregated public schools in reaction to the US Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954); and finally, the gradual desegregation of public schools in Atlanta, begun in 1961.

The school was overcrowded from the start, but only in the lower grades (1-3), because by the age of ten (fourth grade) most children had gone to work in the mills. Fierce debates took place, as most employers and many parents (who needed their children to work to help support the family) were against both child labor and compulsory education laws. In 1916, both federal and state child labor laws were passed, and Georgia also enacted a law requiring all students up to age fourteen to attend school at least four consecutive months of school per year. The result of these actions on EAS was more overcrowding, resulting in the construction of an annex building in 1917 (now demolished), and the addition of two wings onto the main building in 1923.

Pay for female teachers was lower than that of the salaries of white males. Lula L. Kingsbery, EAS’s first principal, lobbied the Board of Education for higher teacher salaries. She also escorted all of her female teachers to City Hall to register to vote, once the franchise was extended to women in 1920. She was a constant critic of the inadequate space at EAS, and advocated relentlessly for better facilities.

There was a major demographic transition between 1940 and 1950 in the English Avenue school attendance area, a classic case of “white flight” in which many white Atlanta residents left the inner city for the outlying suburbs. The suburbs expanded rapidly, aided by affordable housing loans and the new highway system which bisected the central core of Atlanta, displacing the mostly black residents who lived in its path. Many of those displaced moved to the city’s west side, including into the English Avenue area.

In 1950, the Atlanta Public Schools Board of Education voted to convert the then-named Lula L. Kingsbery School from a white school to a black school, and renamed the school English Avenue School, reflecting the shift in the area’s population from predominantly white in 1940 to predominantly black in 1950. The conversion of the school into an African-American facility was part of a larger effort on the part of the Atlanta Public School system to make African American school facilities “equal” to white school facilities without integrating them. The process was called “equalization.”¹¹³

The quality of African American school facilities had always been inferior to the facilities for white children both in Atlanta and across the state of Georgia. In 1950, the majority of black schools were still housed in outdated one-room buildings, churches, or lodge halls,¹¹⁴ and their teachers had significantly less training than teachers at white schools.¹¹⁵

¹¹² “Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971,” 23.

¹¹³ Kamina A. Pinder and Evan R. Hanson, “360 Degrees of Segregation: A Historical Perspective of Segregation-Era School Equalization Programs in the Southern United States,” *Amsterdam Law Forum* (210): 49-61.

¹¹⁴ “Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971,” 16-17.

¹¹⁵ John Donohue III, James J. Heckman, and Petra E. Todd, *Social Action, Private Choice, and Philanthropy*:

Most of the equalization schools were new school buildings constructed in urban and rural African American communities. Five hundred of these schools were built in Georgia between 1952-62 as part of a statewide effort to create black schools that were “separate but equal;” that is, physically separate from white schools but equal to white schools in quality. The state intended that these new schools would sustain two racially segregated school systems, in the hope that blacks would accept segregation in exchange for improved school facilities.¹¹⁶

Though the English Avenue School was not constructed during this time period and therefore not an equalization school according to the statewide context *Equalization Schools in Georgia’s African-American Communities, 1951-1970*, it can still be considered associated with the equalization movement because of its total, formal conversion from all-white to all-black students in 1950, after the passage of the Minimum Foundation Program for Education, which sought to eliminate geographic, class, and eventually, racial disparities in education through improved curricula, better training for teachers, and a standards nine-month school term.¹¹⁷ When the school was converted, the district hired black teachers and staff to serve the all-black student population. Hiring black staff was central to the equalization school model.¹¹⁸

By 1960, it had become clear that the equalization schools were not going to put off complete racial integration of the public schools. In 1959, a U.S. District Court judge had ruled that Atlanta’s segregated public school system was unconstitutional. Massive resistance to the threat of fully-integrated schools came from whites across the south and Ku Klux Klan rallies were held in Atlanta.¹¹⁹ On Monday, December 12, 1960 at 2:40 a.m., after the use of the school auditorium as the site of a prayer meeting prior to a segregation protest march the previous day, dynamite detonated at the Pelham Street doorway of the English Avenue School.¹²⁰ This was described as the worst city bombing since the 1958 dynamiting of the Jewish Temple. During the 1950s and 1960s, blacks led sit-ins, boycotts, and peaceful demonstrations to protest segregation and racist “Jim Crow” laws as part of the Civil Rights Movement. EAS was a meeting place for prayer meetings and rallies. The English Avenue School bombing illustrates the high racial tensions in Atlanta, a hotbed of Civil Rights activity at that time.

The Atlanta Public School system was officially desegregated in 1961¹²¹ English Avenue School was integrated, but maintained a majority black student population until it was closed in 1995 due to the declining neighborhood population. Throughout its eighty-four year history as a fully functioning public school, EAS served its various communities, and exemplified the changing social, cultural, political, and educational norms of Atlanta’s people.

Understanding the Sources of Improvements in Black Schooling in Georgia, 1911-1960. National Bureau of Economic Research Paper No. 6418, February 1998.

¹¹⁶ Steven Moffson, "Equalization Schools in Georgia’s African-American Communities, 1951-1970," Atlanta: Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, September 20, 2010, 10, 25.

¹¹⁷ Moffson, 6.

¹¹⁸ Moffson, 21.

¹¹⁹ Moffson, 27.

¹²⁰ Paul Delaney, “No New Leads in School Bombing,” *Atlanta Daily World*, December 14, 1960, 1.

¹²¹ “Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971,” 17.

SECTION 5

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

A. Sources of Information

Indicate all the sources consulted. Put n/a beside the sources that were not available.

* Architectural Plans (cite the date, title or legend, and location)	<u>Yes</u>
Biographical Sketches (published in books or an obituary from the newspaper)	<u>Yes</u>
Census Records (Indicate the years of census records consulted) Population 1940, 1950	<u>Yes</u>
City and/or Telephone Directories	<u>Yes</u>
City Records at City Hall Building Permits City Tax Records City Council Minutes	<u>No</u>
County Historian (unpublished works, interviews)	<u>No</u>
County Histories/City Histories	<u>Yes</u>
County Records at County Courthouse or on microfilm at the Georgia Department of Archives and History Deeds Estate Records Tax Digests	<u>No</u>
Gazetteers	<u>No</u>
Insurance Records	<u>No</u>
Internet sources of information.	<u>Yes</u>
Interviews (who, when, where, by whom):	<u>Yes</u>
Gregory Walker, Gregory, Sr. Oral history interview by Chrissie Wayt and Boyd Coons, November 8, 2016, Atlanta Preservation Center, Atlanta, GA.	
Evelyn Witherspoon. Oral history interview by Clifford M. Kuhn, March 13, 1979, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, Georgia.	
* Maps and Plats (historic) - particularly useful are land ownership maps, bird's eye views, railroad maps, or privately-owned maps such as plats. Note location of the original.	<u>Yes</u>

* Newspapers (especially centennial or anniversary editions)—send photocopies and include date.

NOTE: send photocopies of obituaries for people associated with the property **Yes**

* Historic Photographs and Postcards—send photocopies and include date and location of the original

Personal/Family Papers (letters, diaries, recollections, business papers, and stationary) **Yes**

Periodicals/Magazines (professional business, popular) **Yes**

Place Name Data (explain the origins of any place names associated with property) **No**

* Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps **Yes**

Tax Digests **No**

Unpublished sources (thesis, dissertations, and/or family-owned papers) **Yes**

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CHECKLIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Before submitting your Historic Property Information Form, make sure that you have enclosed the following information. **Use this as a checklist and check (with an X) the items that you have included.** If you are unable to enclose an item, explain why on a separate page.

Bibliographical Information

- Bibliography
- Checklist of sources
- Supplemental research information (clear photocopies not originals)

Photographs (labeled and cross-referenced to floor plan and maps)

- Interior
- Exterior
- Historic (photocopies, not originals)
- CD/DVD of photographs
- Photo log

Floor plans (2 sets)

- One set without photographs marked
- One set with photographs marked

Maps (2 sets of each)

- Location map (one copy, Bing maps preferred)
- Sketch map (one copy without photographs and boundary marked)
- Sketch map (one copy with photographs and boundary marked)
- Tax map (one copy without boundary marked)
- Tax map (one copy with boundary marked)
- Photocopy of Sanborn Map(s) (if available)

Text

- Completed Historic Property Information Form (hard copy and CD/DVD)

Letter of Support

- Letter of support from property owner, if owner is different from preparer/applicant.

I have enclosed the above documentation with my HPIF/National Register form for the English Avenue School proposed nomination. I understand that if I do not include all of the required documentation, my application will not be processed until it is complete.

Preparer's Signature Jana M. Drummond **Date** June 13, 2018