

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER/GEORGIA REGISTER NOMINATION

1. Name: English Avenue School

2. Location: 627 English Avenue NW; Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia

3a. Description: English Avenue School is located northwest of downtown Atlanta in the English Avenue neighborhood. The building is situated on a 3.2-acre property comprising the majority of a city block. The school property includes the extant school building, the sidewalk, an asphalt-paved parking lot, a paved play area, and green space. The school is a three-part, two-story brick building with a partially subterranean ground level, due to the sloping topography of the lot. The original building, built in 1911, is framed by 1923 additions, all of which exhibits the Jacobethan Revival style. Exterior character-defining features include crenelated, as well as raked, parapets; window hood moulding with label stops; projecting pavilions with recessed, segmental arched entries and quoined surrounds; and education-themed decorative elements such as an owl figure, shields, shields-and-scrolls, and diamond bosses. The plan centers on a north-south double-loaded corridor that runs the length of the building, terminating in a stair at either end. There are classrooms on all three levels, and they retain original cloakrooms, shelving believed to date to 1923, and historic chalkboards. Most interior doors are original, as are most windows, which are steel and exhibit a variety of light patterns. Many door and window openings have been covered with plywood. The building also retains interior details including a fireplace, radiators, and original auditorium elements including a stage and proscenium arch. The building has been vacant since 1995, and has experienced interior deterioration due to water infiltration: ceilings and floors have collapsed in various areas such as rooms 0102 and 0113, and the roof has collapsed the southernmost portion of the 1911 section, affecting several rooms on the first and second floors. Despite this, the overall plan remains readable with most primary spaces intact.

3b. Period of Significance: 1911-1968

3c. Acreage: 3.2 acres

3d. Boundary Explanation: The boundary of the nominated property comprises the intact historic and current legal boundary of the school property.

4a. National Register Criterion: Criterion A

4b. National Register Areas of Significance: Education and Social History

4c. Statement of Significance: English Avenue School was constructed in multiple phases between 1911 and 1930 to accommodate growing enrollment and changing educational needs in Atlanta and more specifically, its surrounding neighborhood. It is significant in the area of education as a representative example of an urban public school, a significant school type in Georgia as defined in the statewide context *Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971*. It retains character-defining features of the type, including an urban location, masonry construction, two levels with a basement, spacious corridors, and classrooms with separate cloakrooms. The 1911 building was designed by the Atlanta firm of Edwards & Walter, which designed public school buildings across the state, and public buildings regionally. The building's 1923 additions were designed by the Atlanta firm of Daniell and Beutell. The English Avenue School is also significant 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 the development of educational facilities in Atlanta. As documented in the statewide context study, *Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in GA, 1868-1971*, new mill jobs in cities, such as Atlanta, led to substantial relocation by rural populations to urban areas to take advantage of jobs and better educational opportunities for their children between 1890-1930. By 1920, the population growth of Atlanta had resulted in an explosion of the student population. The number of schools had grown from three to 73, and the number of students from 2,090 to 41,337. English Avenue School was constructed when its surrounding neighborhood was annexed into Atlanta in 1910, bringing in large numbers of new residents whose children needed to be educated. Additionally, English Avenue School is significant in the area of social history for its association with demographic changes as well as shifting dynamics in public education in the city of Atlanta and across the south during the mid-20th century. After a decade of major demographic shifts in the surrounding neighborhood, the Atlanta Board of Education voted in 1950 to convert the school from a school for white children to a school for black children. On December 12, 1960, the day after the use of the school auditorium as the site of a prayer meeting prior to a segregation protest march, the school was the location of what has been called one of the worst racially-motivated bombings in the city of Atlanta. The English Avenue School is a rare extant location of a specific incident that illustrates the high racial tensions in Atlanta at the time.

4d. Suggested Level of Significance: English Avenue School is significant at the local level as a good example of an urban public school associated with significant population and demographic shifts that reshaped Atlanta during the early and mid-20th century.

5. Sponsor: The Atlanta Preservation Center sponsored the nomination and prepared the nomination materials.