



503 Auburn Avenue, NE Historic Structure Report



September 2019
Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science Division
Southeast Region

503 Auburn Avenue, NE
Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park
Atlanta, Georgia

Historic Structure Report

September 2019

Prepared by:
Panamerican Consultants, Inc.
2390 Clinton Street
Buffalo, New York 14227-1735

Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.
330 Pfingsten Road
Northbrook, Illinois 60062

WFT Architects, PA
770 North State Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39202

Prepared for:
National Park Service
Southeast Regional Office
100 Alabama Street SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30303



**Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science Division
Southeast Regional Office
National Park Service
100 Alabama Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
(404) 507-5787**

About the front cover: View of the 503 Auburn Avenue, NE, looking south/southeast, April 2019.

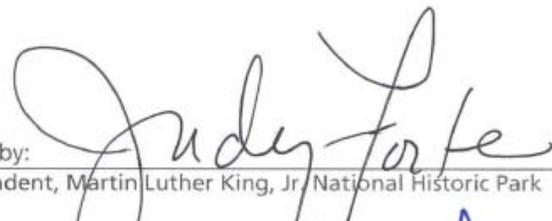
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503 Auburn Avenue, NE

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park

Atlanta, Georgia

Historic Structure Report

Approved by:  8/14/19
Superintendent, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Park Date

 9/4/19
Recommended by: _____ Date
Chief, Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science Division, Southeast Region

 9/18/19
Recommended by: _____ Date
Deputy Regional Director, Southeast Region

 9/24/19
Approved by: _____ Date
Regional Director, Southeast Region

Contents

List of Figures	vii
Project Team	xii
Foreword	xiii
Management Summary	
Historical Data	1
Treatment and Use	3
Administrative Data	4
Project Scope and Methodology	6
Developmental History	
Historical Background and Context	9
African Americans in Nineteenth-Century Atlanta	9
Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park	13
503 Auburn Avenue (LCS #090012)	15
Timeline 503 Auburn Avenue	26
Physical Description and Condition Assessment	
Site	29
House	31
Exterior Description	33
Condition Assessment	45
Interior Description	52
Condition Assessment	64
Structural System	66
Condition Assessment	69
Mechanical and Plumbing Systems	69
Condition Assessment	76
Significance and Integrity	
National Register of Historic Places	79
Significance Criteria	79
National Register Status of 503 Auburn Avenue, NE	80
Period of Significance	83
Character-Defining Features	83
Assessment of Integrity	84
Treatment and Use	
Requirements for Treatment and Use	87
Laws, Regulations, and Functional Requirements	87
Alternates for Treatment and Use	89
Ultimate Treatment and Use	90
Guidelines for Treatment	90
Recommendations	91
Exterior	91
Interior	92
Structural	93
Mechanical and Electrical Systems	93

Current and forthcoming work	93
Recommendations for Further Research	93
Resilience to Natural Hazards	94
Bibliography	97
Appendices	
Appendix A: Measured Drawings	

List of Figures

Management Summary

1	Map of Georgia showing location of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park (black star)	7
2	Aerial photograph of Atlanta show location of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park	8
3	Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park showing the location of 503 Auburn Avenue, NE	8

Developmental History

4	503 Auburn Avenue, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park, Atlanta, Georgia (circa 1895)	15
5	535 Auburn Avenue (circa 1895) has the same architectural plan and many of the same exterior decorative details of 503 Auburn Avenue	15
6	Decorative sawn woodwork in the upstairs bay on 503 Auburn Avenue	16
7	Decorative attic ventilation louver and sawn shingles in the gable topping the projecting bay on 503 Auburn Avenue	16
8	Fixed window with wide surrounds topped by a simple overhang in the first story of the projecting bay; note corner boards on 503 Auburn Avenue	16
9	Auburn Avenue Street Facades, HABS recordation 1985, Sheet II, showing the facade, north profile, of 503 Auburn Avenue	21
10	Existing and Historic Conditions, landscape at 503 Auburn Avenue	21

Physical Description and Condition Assessment

11	Overview of Auburn Avenue streetscape looking west at the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park	29
12	View of 503 Auburn Avenue site	29
13	Concrete driveway at west side of the site	30
14	Remaining portion of brick-paved drive	30
15	Concrete retaining wall along sidewalk and concrete driveway at west side of the site	30
16	Stair with stone treads	30
17	Brick walk extending between stone stairs and steps leading to front porch	30
18	Manicured hedges along property line	31
19	Mown turf at south end of lot	31
20	North elevation of 503 Auburn Avenue	31
21	East and partial north elevation of 503 Auburn Avenue	32
22	East elevation of 503 Auburn Avenue	32
23	South elevation of 503 Auburn Avenue featuring projecting gable bay and wood-framed deck	33
24	West elevation of 503 Auburn Avenue	33
25	Masonry pier foundation	33
26	Non-original supplemental wood posts at mid-span of floor joints	33
27	Concrete foundation wall	34
28	CMU infill between brick piers	34
29	Concrete retaining wall at bottom half of the foundation	34
30	Brick piers at front porch	34
31	Brick units at east pier	34

32	Brick infill at back deck set on concrete foundation slab	35
33	Exterior walls	35
34	Vertical trim boards	35
35	Horizontal wood trim band wrapping around base of wood-framed portion of building	35
36	Projecting wood cornice wrapping around eave of house	36
37	Decorative wood shingles at the projecting gable on the north elevation	36
38	Louver openings with wood trim and projecting cornice molding	36
39	Applied sawn-wood ornament at the upper floor of the octagonal bay on the north elevation	36
40	Front porch extending width of north elevation	37
41	Masonry piers and brick step at front porch	37
42	Tongue-and-groove wood porch floor	37
43	Square porch columns with decorative base	37
44	Wood balustrades and spindles	37
45	Columns supporting roof structure	38
46	Light blue, bead board porch ceiling	38
47	Bead board ceiling at porch with surface-mounted light fixture	38
48	Porch stair with concrete copings	38
49	South deck	39
50	South deck framing detail	39
51	Access to south deck	39
52	Main entrance door	39
53	Interior view of main entrance door	40
54	Non-original brass door hardware	40
55	Non-original brass push bar	40
56	Non-original automatic door closer	40
57	Back door	40
58	Back door interior trim	41
59	Back door hardware	41
60	Mounted light fixture adjacent to door	41
61	Fixed window opening at first floor of north elevation	41
62	Example of remaining windows	42
63	Vinyl track at sash	42
64	Brass steel window hardware	42
65	Painted steel window hardware	42
66	Typical window opening trim	43
67	Corner blocks at interior trim	43
68	Interior sill with contoured profile	43
69	Paired window openings at west elevation	43
70	Double-hung windows at first floor of north elevation	44
71	Ceramic tile wainscot at bathroom window opening	44
72	Roof areas covered with asphalt shingles	44

73	Sheet-metal flashing at chimneys	44
74	PVC intake vents with gooseneck tops	45
75	Typical brick chimney	45
76	V-crimp sheet-metal panels fastened to front porch roof deck	45
77	Gutters and downspouts	45
78	Erosion at concrete foundation below south deck	46
79	Bowing at south chimney at south end gable	46
80	Deteriorated joints at building corners	46
81	Loose brick units at infill walls	46
82	Eroded mortar joints at brick pier and infill wall	47
83	Cracked and open mortar joints at brick infill wall	47
84	Evidence of water leakage at attic masonry chimney	47
85	Curved configuration of masonry chimney in the attic	47
86	Defects in replacement siding	48
87	Siding stopping short of perimeter trim	48
88	Difference in paint coatings and build-up	48
89	Deterioration at wood guardrail of the south deck	48
90	Cupping observed at decking boards	48
91	Mild cupping at front porch decking	49
92	Decay at wood siding and trim	49
93	Displacement at siding and trim boards	49
94	Splitting at wood shingle siding at north end gable	49
95	Bowing at wood siding at east elevation	50
96	Cracking and peeling at south deck	50
97	Distress at wood siding near downspouts	50
98	“Walking out” of nails at horizontal siding	50
99	Gap between window sash and frame	51
100	Gap between window sash and frame	51
101	Broken glazing at north elevation	51
102	Paint on glass	51
103	Decay and deterioration at door trim	51
104	Staining and surface corrosion at porch roof	52
105	Insect holes at window molding	52
106	Bird’s nest at porch	52
107	Sanborn map – 1899	53
108	Sanborn map – 1932	53
109	Sanborn map – 1925	53
110	Typical ceramic tile wainscot	54
111	Typical ceramic tile wainscot in restrooms	54
112	Tile backsplash above the counter in the work room	54
113	Tile backsplash in the break room	55

114	Lay-in acoustical tile ceiling grid from the 1980s renovation	55
115	Second-floor office with original 9-foot-10-inch high ceiling	55
116	Current 8-foot-high gypsum board ceiling in the first-floor hall	56
117	Oak strip flooring in the first-floor foyer and hall	56
118	VCT flooring in the break room	56
119	Carpeted stair and second-floor hall	56
120	Typical black and white ceramic tile floor	57
121	Marble threshold at the transition from hardwood floor to ceramic tile floor	57
122	Fluted door casing, plinth block and baseboard	57
123	Typical fluted casing and corner blocks with rosette motif	57
124	Two-piece decorative apron below the window sill	58
125	Fluted casing, sill, and one-piece apron at second-floor windows	58
126	First-floor meeting room with chair rail and picture molding	58
127	Contemporary cabinetry in the break room	58
128	Contemporary base cabinets and solid surface countertops in the work room	59
129	Typical four-panel, hollow-core door	59
130	Labeled 20-minute, fire-rated door	59
131	French doors between the foyer and the chief's office	59
132	Latch set with lever trim. Note "Best" lock cylinder	60
133	Latch set with round knob trim. This type is not ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant	60
134	The dog-leg stair from the second-floor hall	60
135	The open dog-leg stair at the second floor	61
136	Server / IT space beneath the stair	61
137	Telecommunication equipment on the wall below the intermediate stair landing	61
138	Electric hot water heater in the server / IT space under the stair	62
139	First-floor restroom	62
140	Janitor's closet	63
141	Attic view of the south gable. Note (1) the original dark framing and the lighter wood bracing that was added in 2000. Also note (2) the plywood sheathing flanking the chimney at the gable end	63
142	Unusual curved configuration of the chimney rising through the attic from the original fireplaces (now concealed) in the workroom and office 4	63
143	Chimney rising through the attic from the original back-to-back fireplaces (now concealed) between the director's office and the meeting room on the first floor and offices 2 and 3 on the upper floor	63
144	The third masonry chimney is visible at the south gable end of the attic	64
145	Fiberglass insulation between ceiling joists. Also note the metal-clad electrical cables	64
146	Original trim at the front entry door	65
147	Decorative apron trim at bay window in chief's office	65
148	Non-original baseboards	66
149	Tarnished and scratched brass finish on door hardware	66
150	Paint on brass hinges	66
151	4x12 wood beams span center of building	67
152	View of 12x8 floor joists	67

153	Wood bridging at mid-span between joints	67
154	Roof of the house	68
155	Knee wall supporting the bottom of the hip roof rafters	68
156	Wood beam and diagonal bracing at the mid-span of the rafter at the hip roof and gable roof areas	68
157	2x4 collar ties between roof rafters at the hip roof portion of the structure	68
158	Supplemental bracing of ridge beams at hip roof	68
159	Front porch supports	68
160	Gaps at interface between roof and wall framing	69
161	Gaps at interface between roof and wall framing	69
162	Gaps at interface between roof and wall framing	69
163	Gas-fired furnace and fan unit in the attic	70
164	Insulated round HVAC ducts in the attic	70
165	Up-flow, gas-fired furnace and fan unit in the first-floor mechanical closet	70
166	Transfer grille in the first-floor hall	70
167	Return air grille in the ceiling	70
168	Condensing units on the east side of the house	71
169	Office with ceiling fan	71
170	Solid surface countertop and integral solid surface sink in the break room. Countertop and sink in the work room are similar	71
171	Hot water heater beneath the stair	72
172	PVC waste lines and insulated copper water lines in the crawl space	72
173	Gas meter and electric meter base at the northeast corner of the house	72
174	Electric meter base at the northeast corner of the house	73
175	Main breaker panel in the first-floor hall	73
176	Secondary breaker panel in the second-floor hall. Programmable thermostat is on the right	73
177	Non-original, vintage-style light fixture. Note incongruous compact fluorescent light bulb	73
178	Typical surface-mounted, fluorescent light fixtures	73
179	Metal-clad electrical cable	74
180	Insulated electrical wire not in conduit	74
181	Open junction and unshielded wires	74
182	Motion detector	74
183	Security system key pad in the foyer	74
184	Ceiling-mounted smoke and fire detector and illuminated exit sign on the second floor	75
185	Emergency light	75
186	Server and blue Cat 5e cabling	75
187	Typical data and VOIP jacks	76
188	The first four digits of the serial number of Goodman equipment indicate the year and month when the unit is manufactured. The first-floor unit was made in May 2000	76
189	Main electrical panel on the first floor 190. Delaminating insulation on copper water pipe in the crawl space	77
190	Delaminating insulation on copper water pipe in the crawl space	77

Project Team

National Park Service – Southeast Regional Office

Demetria Smith-Wilson, Contracting Officer
John Bennett, Contracting Officer (former)
Laurie Chestnut, Contracting Officer (former)
Ali Miri, PhD, Historical Architect, Project Manager, and Contracting Officer's Representative

National Park Service – Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park

Judy Forte, Superintendent
Leah Berry, Museum Technician
Rebecca Karcher, Chief of Interpretation

Panamerican Consultants, Inc.

Kelly Nolte, Project Manager / Historian
Christine Longiaru, Architectural Historian
Mark Steinback, Editor

Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.

Deborah Slaton, Historian / Conservator
Michael Ford, Historical Architect
Tim Penich, Historical Architect
Michael Horst, Structural Engineer
Weston Landis, Project Associate

WFT Architects, PA

Wayne F. Timmer, Historical Architect
Wes Harp, Historical Architect

Foreword

The telling of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and legacy is larger than the historic structures within the park and cannot be told just through the preservation of the historic buildings within the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park. However, Historic Structure Reports (HSRs) are important treatment documents that help with preservation efforts on the historic structures throughout the park, through architectural assessments, historic background information for context, and chronology of development and use, all of which condensed provides the park a tool for repair, rehabilitation and preservation for those homes that Dr. King knew in his childhood. The reports will give the reader a better understanding of the architectural landscape of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birth Home neighborhood and the people who lived there and helped shape the life of one of the greatest leaders of the civil rights movement.

This scholarly work is dedicated to the stewardship of thirty-five historic structures, four of which have historic significance as the places where Dr. King was born, lived, worked, and worshipped. These structures include 501 Auburn Avenue, the Birth Home of Dr. King, where he lived until he was twelve years old; Ebenezer Baptist Church, where his grandfather, father and later himself served as pastors; the Prince Hall building that housed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); and 234 Sunset Avenue where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King made a home and lived with their children, Yolanda, Martin, Dexter, and Bernice, from 1965 to his death in 1968 and until Mrs. King left the home in August 2004.

The HSRs began in 2016, when the park was awarded funds to complete thirty-one HSRs for historic buildings within the park's boundary.

We are grateful for the cooperation of all those who helped to make this document possible.

Judy Forte
Superintendent
Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park
2019

Management Summary

At the request of the National Park Service (NPS), Panamerican Consultants, Inc. and its subconsultants, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) and WFT Architects (WFTA), have developed this Historic Structure Report (HSR) for 503 Auburn Avenue at Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park in Atlanta, Georgia. Refer to Figure 1 through Figure 3 at the end of this chapter for maps showing the location of 503 Auburn Avenue and Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park. Figure 1 is a map of the state of Georgia showing the location of Atlanta and Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park. Figure 2 is an aerial photograph of Atlanta showing the location of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park. Figure 3 is a map of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park showing the location of 503 Auburn Avenue.

The residence at 503 Auburn Avenue and its granite front steps are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a contributing resource to the historic district that comprises Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, now Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park.¹ The property is important as an example of a two-story, single-family residence on the Birth Home block, the neighborhood surrounding Dr. King's birth home at 501 Auburn Avenue.

1. Robert W. Blythe, Maureen A. Carroll, and Stephen Moffson, *National Register of Historic Places Registration documentation for Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site*, certified by the Keeper of the National Register on May 4, 1994, (National Archives Identifier 93208246), Section 7-4 and 15, and Section 8-30.

Historical Data

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park is in the Sweet Auburn neighborhood and the Old Fourth Ward on the east side of the City of Atlanta. Sweet Auburn is centered on a mile and a half stretch of Auburn Avenue which includes residential, religious, and commercial buildings associated with Atlanta's African American community dating from the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century. At the time of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birth on January 15, 1929, Auburn Avenue was a thriving center of African American commercial, social, religious, and political activity. John Wesley Dobbs (1882-1961), an African American civic and political leader, coined the name "Sweet Auburn" in reference to the prosperity and opportunity afforded by the neighborhood.

The park commemorates the life and accomplishments of Dr. King as a prominent leader of the American civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s. Toward this end, the park

preserves, protects, and interprets for the benefit, inspiration, and education of present and future generations, the places where Martin Luther King, Jr. was born, lived, worked, worshiped, and is buried; while interpreting the life experiences and significance of one of the most influential Americans in the 20th Century [sic].²

2. National Park Service, *Foundation Document, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Georgia* (Atlanta: National Park Service, 2017), 5.

Much of King’s civil rights activities occurred outside of Atlanta, but he resided in the city from 1960 until his death in 1968. Also within the National Historical Park is Ebenezer Baptist Church, which is associated both with King’s childhood and his return to Atlanta as an adult. Earlier, in 1957, he established a base of operations in Atlanta for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) of which he was the first president.³

In addition to the national significance of the park for its association with Martin Luther King Jr., resources within the park include several late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century structures associated with development of the Sweet Auburn neighborhood and persons of local importance.

By the end of the nineteenth century, predominantly white, middle-class families had built new homes or moved into the recently constructed houses along Auburn Avenue east of Jackson Street.⁴ Built circa 1886, the oldest building on the Birth Home block stands at 521 Auburn Avenue.⁵ By 1899, most of the lots along Auburn Avenue between Jackson and Howell Streets were developed, although denser residential development remained to the west. Single-family, one- and two-story houses, principally line the avenue. Some multiple-family dwellings were constructed, but the housing tended to be single-family, the majority of which were large, modestly decorated houses. Many of the properties had stables and wood and coal sheds in the rear.

Residences in the Birth Home block are representative of vernacular adaptations of popular domestic architecture styles of the 1890s and the early twentieth century found in American cities. Most single-family houses on the Birth Home block erected in the 1890s exhibit Queen Anne-stylistic elements. The residences are mostly two-story wood-frame dwellings with one-story

rear extensions. Only two buildings on the block constructed in the 1890s are one-story, wood-frame dwellings—515 and 546 Auburn Avenue. Typical characteristics of these houses include irregular massing, projecting bays, broad front porches carried on columns or posts, contrasting surface areas of shingles and clapboard siding, and decorative millwork. In 1894, the Romanesque Revival-style Fire Station No. 6 was constructed on the southeast corner of Boulevard and Auburn Avenue.

In 1905, the Empire State Investment Company developed the northeast corner of Auburn Avenue and Boulevard with the construction of nine duplex buildings for speculative purposes.⁶ Occupying half of the block between Boulevard and Hogue Street, the one-story, frame, double-shotgun houses contrasted with the existing houses on the block, but were typical of the dwellings to the north. Inexpensive shotgun-type housing was a popular vernacular housing type built across the urban South.

By 1929, the African-American middle-class families in the neighborhood were in the minority among the total population of residents on the Birth Home block. During the Great Depression, Auburn Avenue and the Birth Home block experienced the subdivision of many single-family dwellings, the deterioration of its existing stock, and increased tenancy.⁷ Several multiple family dwellings were constructed on the Birth Home Block and adjacent streets. Apartment houses were built at 509 Auburn Avenue (1925) and 506 Auburn Avenue (1933), and a quadruplex was constructed at 54 Howell Street (1931), which subdivided an already crowded house lot. A *Real Property Survey* conducted by the Works Progress Administration in 1939 reported that 100 percent of the Birth Home Block was occupied by African Americans, though only 13.3 percent of the

3. Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson, *National Register documentation*, 2.
4. *Ibid.*, Section 7, 4.
5. *Ibid.*, Section 8, 14.

6. *Ibid.*, Section 8, 57.

7. Lucy A. Lawliss, *Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report: Birth-Home Block* (Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Region Office 1995), 14.

buildings were owner occupied and 67.4 percent needed major repairs or were unfit for use.⁸

The residence at 503 Auburn Avenue was constructed circa 1895. Given the popularity and availability of residential design books for local builders and craftsmen during the mid-to-late nineteenth century and extending well into the twentieth century, it is possible that many, if not all, the homes in the Birth Home block were constructed by local contractors who adapted designs and customized details that were published in these pattern books. Other houses on the block have similar floor plans and architectural detailing and date from about the same period, including: 535, 522, and 526 Auburn Avenue. The house at 503 Auburn Avenue and the house next door, 501 Auburn Avenue, the Birth Home, were constructed around the same time, share a driveway, and have the same front yard setbacks and deep back yards.

National Park Service records for the building indicate the earliest residents of the house were white people, and by 1910 the residents of the property were African American. By the mid-1970s, the City of Atlanta, Bureau of Cultural Affairs owned the house, but it is not clear how the building was used. In 1980, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change (the King Center) moved into the house and used it as office space.

In 1977, J.W. Robinson & Associates, Inc., and Jarodwin Construction Company, Inc., were contracted by the King Center to make \$64,711.00 in “restoration and alterations” to the property.⁹ J.W. Robinson & Associates had already completed the “restoration” on the Birth Home, next door. When the firm began the work at 503 Auburn Avenue, the building was a boarding house, and it was converted into office space with the outside retaining the look of a single-family home. The project included the replacement of windows, doors, and brick, as well as replacement

of the composition roof with a wood shingle roof. Finishes and fixtures were removed from the interior of the house, office and meeting spaces were created, and a suspended acoustical ceiling was added to conceal ducts and wiring.¹⁰

In October 1980, federal legislation created the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District. The purpose of the site was “to protect and interpret for the benefit, inspiration, and education of present and future generations the places where Martin Luther King, Junior, was born, where he lived, worked, and worshipped, and where he is buried.”¹¹ The building at 503 Auburn Avenue was still owned by the King Center and still used as office space. In the mid-1990s, the National Park Service began negotiating with the King Center to purchase the building. However, negotiations for its purchase fell through in the fall of 1994, and all talks ceased for the next four years.¹²

In 1998, the National Park Service purchased 503 Auburn Avenue for \$120,000 from the King Center with the intention to use it as office space.¹³ The building at 503 Auburn Avenue currently houses offices used by the park’s interpretation staff.

On January 8, 2018, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site was designated as Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park. John Lewis, noted civil rights activist and congressman from Georgia, sponsored the bill in Congress.¹⁴

Treatment and Use

The house at 503 Auburn Avenue is significant for its association with the neighborhood in which Martin Luther King Jr. grew up, is located within the Birth Home block, and is a contributing resource to the historic district. The building is part of the context of the Birth Home

8. Ibid.

9. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives *Martin Luther King, Jr. NHS Inventory*, January 1982.

10. Ibid.

11. Public Law 96-428, October 10, 1980.

12. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives, King Center.

13. Ibid.

14. Public Law 115-108, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Act of 2017.

neighborhood. It is anticipated to remain in use as office and meeting space by the National Park Service, and its exterior will continue to be interpreted as part of the historic neighborhood. The recommended overarching treatment for the structure is therefore *Rehabilitation*.

The house at 503 Auburn Avenue is generally in good condition, requiring maintenance-type repairs. The most significant distress noted was deterioration of the wood at the south deck. Use of the exterior door at the south deck was prohibited by the National Park Service when the site work for this study was conducted, pending repair of the deteriorated wooden deck.

Administrative Data

Locational Data

Building Name: 503 Auburn Avenue

Location: Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park, Atlanta, Georgia

LCS Number: 090012

Related Studies

Blythe, Robert W., Maureen A. Carroll, and Steven H. Moffson. *Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site Historic Resource Study*. Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Region Office, Cultural Resources Division, 1994.

_____. National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office. *National Register documentation for Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site*. Certified by the Keeper of the National Register on May 4, 1994.

Levy, Benjamin, Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service, Washington, DC (based on the work of Elizabeth Z. Macgregor and Carole A. Summers, Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, State of Georgia, and Joseph S. Mendinghall, Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation). *National Historic Landmark documentation for Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District*, January 5,

1976. The historic district was designated a National Historic Landmark on May 5, 1977.

Macgregor, Elizabeth Z., Architectural Historian, and Carole A. Summers, Coordinator, Historic Sites Survey, Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta. *National Register nomination documentation for Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District*, March 25, 1974. Entered in the National Register May 2, 1974.

Moffson, Steven H., Architectural Historian, Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, with John A. Kissane, Historic Preservation Consultant, Historic District Development Corporation, Atlanta, Georgia. *National Register documentation for Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation*. Accepted by the National Register on June 21, 2001.

Lawliss, Lucy A. *Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report: Birth-Home Block*. Prepared under Cooperative Agreement between National Park Service and Georgia State University. Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Region Office, 1995.

In addition to the above studies and other publications and archival documents noted in the Bibliography, *Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan* (2011) and *Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site Foundation Document* (2017) were referenced in preparation of this report.

Cultural Resource Data

In 1974, National Register of Historic Places documentation was prepared for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District, bounded approximately by Irwin Street, Randolph Street, Edgewood Avenue, Jackson Street, and Auburn Avenue. Although 503 Auburn Avenue was not specifically named in this documentation, the “Victorian Houses” that lined the Birth Home

block were indicated as contributing resources.¹⁵ This would include 503 Auburn Avenue.

National Historic Landmark documentation prepared in 1977 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District, including Auburn Avenue between Jackson and Howell Streets, included the residence at 503 Auburn Avenue in the accompanying inventory of individual buildings. The inventory noted the building was first occupied by white residents, and then after 1905 by African American residents. The inventory also noted that the building “is a well-preserved example of the Queen Anne style of architecture.”¹⁶

In October 1980, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District were established “to protect and interpret for present and future generations the area where Dr. King was born, where he lived, worked, and worshipped, and where he is buried.”¹⁷

In 1985, the Birth Home block street facades were recorded for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS, GA 62-ATLA, 49). The HABS drawings include the front, street, facade of 503 Auburn Avenue. Its location on the block was also

noted on a master Auburn Avenue Birth Home block map.¹⁸

In 1994, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, which comprises a historic district approximately bounded by Jackson, Howell, and Old Wheat Streets and Edgewood Avenue, was entered in the National Register. The documentation, certified by the Keeper of the National Register on May 4, 1994, indicated that the historic district is significant under Criteria A, B, and C, and Criteria Considerations A, C, and G. Areas of significance cited include the following: Ethnic Heritage, black; Social History, Commerce, and Architecture. The 503 Auburn Avenue residence was listed as a contributing building under historic contexts A and C.¹⁹

In 2001, a Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation were prepared for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District, for an area approximately bounded by Freedom Parkway and John Wesley Dobbs Avenue on the north, Decatur Street on the south, the Southern Railway line on the east, and Interstate 75/85 on the west.²⁰

On January 8, 2018, President Donald J. Trump signed into law H.R.267, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Act of 2017, designating Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site as Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park. Noted civil rights activist and congressman, John Lewis, sponsored the bill in Congress.²¹ The status of 503 Auburn Avenue remains a contributing resource to the historic district.

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15. Elizabeth Z. Macgregor, Architectural Historian, and Carole A. Summers, Coordinator, Historic Sites Survey, Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, *National Historic Landmark Documentation for Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District (Landmark)*, March 25, 1974; entered in the National Register May 2, 1974 (National Archives Identifier 93208244).
 16. Benjamin Levy, *National Historic Landmark Documentation for Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District (Landmark)* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1976); the historic district was listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1977. See also Joseph Scott Mendinghall, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Martin Luther King Jr. Historic District (Landmark)* (Washington, DC: Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation, 1973).
 17. Public Law 96-428, October 10, 1980.

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18. Historic American Building Survey, *Martin Luther King Jr., National Historic Site Birth Block Survey* (Washington, DC: HABS 1985), Sheet 11.
 19. Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson, *National Register documentation*, Section 8, 32 and 66.
 20. Steven H. Moffson and John A. Kissane, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation* (Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 2001).
 21. Public Law 115-108, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Act of 2017.

Period of Significance: circa 1895–1968.²² The period of significance of 1890–1968 begins with the date of construction of 503 Auburn Avenue, and ends with the death of Martin Luther King Jr. This period addresses the local historical and architectural significance of the residence, as well as its association with the neighborhood in which Martin Luther King Jr. grew up.

Proposed Treatment: Rehabilitation

Project Scope and Methodology

The goal of the Historic Structure Report is to develop planning information for use in the repair, maintenance, and preservation of this historically significant structure. First developed by the National Park Service in the 1930s, HSRs are documents prepared for a building, structure, or group of buildings and structures of recognized significance. They are developed to record and analyze the property's initial construction and subsequent alterations through historical, physical, and pictorial evidence; to document the performance and condition of the structure's materials and overall physical stability; to identify an appropriate course of treatment; and, following implementation of the recommended work, to document alterations made through that treatment.²³

This HSR addresses key issues specific to 503 Auburn Avenue, including the history and construction chronology of the building; the existing physical condition of the exterior envelope, structural systems, and primary interior spaces and features; and the historic significance and integrity of the building.

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22. Refer to the report chapter on Significance and Integrity for further discussion of the period of significance for 503 Auburn Avenue. Note that the park interprets the Birth Home Block to the period 1929–1941, Martin Luther King Jr.'s formative years in Atlanta.
 23. Deborah Slaton, *Preservation Brief 43: The Preparation and Use of Historic Structure Reports* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, 2005).

The following project methodology was used for this study.

Research and Document Review. Archival research was performed to gather information about the original construction and past modifications and repairs for use in assessing existing conditions and developing treatment recommendations for the building. Documents reviewed included maps, drawings, specifications, historic photographs, and other written and illustrative documentation about the history of construction and repairs to the building. The research for this study built upon prior historical and archival research completed by the National Park Service and others, as outlined in the bibliography provided with this report. Primary reference material for this study included documents available from Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park and records held at the National Park Service Southeast Region. Additional research material was obtained from the National Park Service Technical Information Center (TIC) in Denver, Colorado, and the Kenan Research Center of the Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, Georgia. The Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History was consulted as were multiple online sites associated with the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. and his family; the history of the City of Atlanta, Sweet Auburn and the Old Fourth Ward, and African American commercial activities and education in the South; and other pertinent cultural and social topics.

Condition Assessment and Documentation.

Concurrent with the historical research, a condition survey of the building was performed, and observations were documented with digital photographs, field notes, and annotations on baseline drawings. For purposes of the field survey, drawings were prepared by the project team. These drawings were further developed as measured drawings, which are provided in Appendix A. The condition assessment addressed the interior spaces and features of the building. A limited review of visible features of the electrical system was also included in the scope of work.

Development of History, Chronology of Construction, and Evaluation of Significance. Based on historical documentation and physical evidence gathered during the study, a context history and a chronology of design and construction were developed. This historical narrative includes a summary of the building's history. An evaluation of the significance of the building was also prepared, taking into consideration guidelines provided by *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.²⁴ This evaluation of history and significance provided the basis for the development of recommended treatment alternatives.

Guidelines for Preservation. Based on the evaluation of historical and architectural significance of the structure, guidelines were prepared to assist in the selection and implementation of preservation treatments.

Treatment Recommendations. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties guided the development of treatment recommendations for the significant exterior and interior features of the building. Following the overall treatment approach of *Rehabilitation* for the house, as previously established by the National Park Service, the specific recommendations were developed to address the observed existing distress conditions as well as the park's intended future use and long-term objectives.²⁵

Preparation of Historic Structure Report. Following completion of research, site work, and

analysis, a narrative report was prepared summarizing the results of the research and inspection and presenting recommendations for treatment. The HSR was compiled following the organizational guidelines of NPS *Preservation Brief 43: The Preparation and Use of Historic Structure Reports*, with modifications to organizational structure for purposes of this limited study.²⁶



FIGURE 1. Map of Georgia showing location of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park (black star) (not to scale). (Source: US Census Bureau, modified by the authors)

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24. National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 1997).
25. Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, 2017).

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26. Slaton.



FIGURE 2. Aerial photograph of Atlanta showing location of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park. (Source: Google Earth, annotated by the authors)

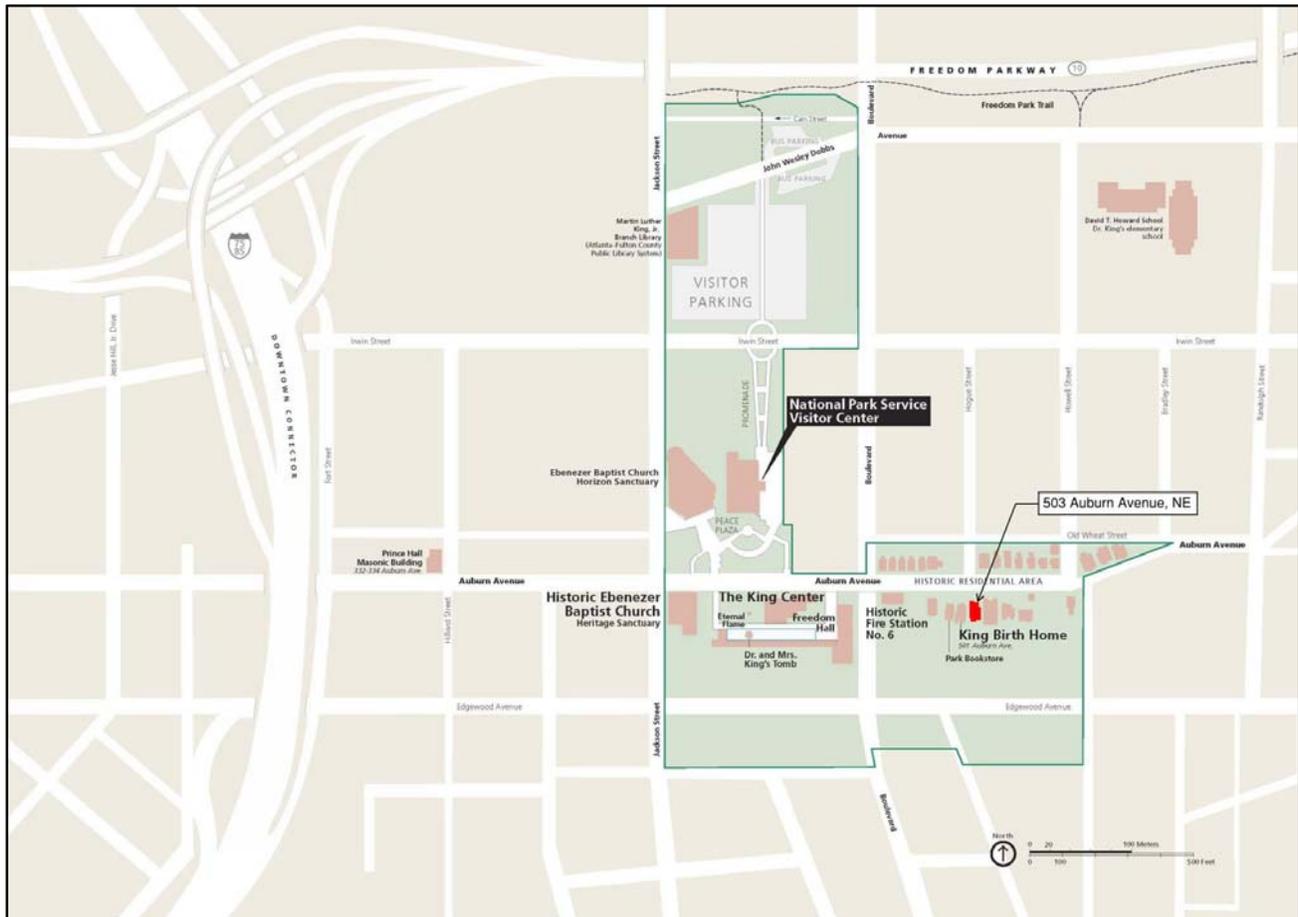


FIGURE 3. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park showing the location of 503 Auburn Avenue, NE. (Source: National Park Service baseline map, annotated by the authors)

Developmental History

Historical Background and Context

Situated in the Sweet Auburn neighborhood and the Old Fourth Ward on Atlanta’s east side, the residence at 503 Auburn Avenue is part of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park. The neighborhood comprises commercial, residential, and religious buildings associated with Atlanta’s African American community dating from the late nineteenth century through the middle of the twentieth century. At the time of Dr. King’s birth in January 1929, Auburn Avenue was a thriving center of African American commercial, social, religious, and political activity.²⁶

The National Historical Park is an irregularly-shaped tract roughly bounded by Jackson Street on the west (and now includes Prince Hall Masonic Temple, where the Southern Christian Leadership Conference established its initial headquarters), Auburn Avenue on the north from Jackson Street to Boulevard, Wheat Street on the north between Boulevard and Howell Street, Howell Street on the east, and the rear property lines on the south side of Edgewood Avenue (refer to Figure 3). The National Historical Park also includes 234 Sunset Avenue, the last home of Dr. King, located in west Atlanta. The neighborhood surrounding the Birth Home on Auburn Avenue includes a cohesive grouping of residential

buildings constructed from 1893 through 1931.²⁷ The block also contains Fire Station No. 6 and an extant circa 1920 store building.

African Americans in Nineteenth-Century Atlanta

In 1837, Western & Atlantic Railroad engineers staked a point at the end of the line they planned to build south from Chattanooga, Tennessee. First known as “Terminus,” a small community grew around the railroad crossroads, later becoming Marthasville and, finally, Atlanta. By 1846, the town had two other railroad lines which connected it to other areas of the state and the Southeast. The railroad spurred the town’s rapid early development. When incorporated in 1847, Atlanta’s municipal boundaries included a one-mile radius centered on the terminus, or the zero-mile marker.²⁸ Beginning in the same year, Atlanta’s City Council placed a number of restrictions on African Americans in the city that defined for them an inferior position and role in society.²⁹

During the period before the Civil War, Atlanta had a relatively small black population in comparison to older and larger southern cities, such as Savannah.³⁰ With only a few exceptions, enslaved persons in Atlanta were forbidden to engage in entrepreneurial activity unless their

26. A. Ambrose, V. Fort, A. Henderson, D. Rowley, C. Stevens, and B. Taggart, *Historic Resource Study Auburn Avenue Community of Atlanta 1865-1930* (Atlanta: Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District, n.d.), n.p.

27. For this context, the Birth Home Block includes the section of Auburn Avenue located between Boulevard NE and Howell Street NE.

28. Alexa Henderson and Eugene Walker, *Sweet Auburn: The Thriving Hub of Black Atlanta*. (Atlanta, Georgia: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1983), 3.

29. Ambrose et al., *Historic Resource Study*, 1-1.

30. *Ibid.*, 2-1.

owners or representatives were present.³¹ Most of the enslaved population in Atlanta worked as general laborers and domestic servants. Others served in skilled trades such as brick masons, carpenters, and blacksmiths.³² Free African Americans in antebellum Atlanta, though few in number, were also prohibited by law from participating in the city's commercial life. Census data reveals Atlanta's free black people did not own real estate or personal property.³³

In 1860, 1,939 African Americans were reported to be living within Atlanta's municipal boundary, only twenty-five of whom were free.³⁴ After the Civil War, the African American population of Atlanta increased as the newly freed from the surrounding countryside came to the city seeking opportunities for education and employment. By 1870, the city's 9,929 African Americans constituted more than 45 percent of the population.³⁵ Many in Atlanta's African American communities continued to live in the post-bellum period as they had during the years of slavery: in servant's homes or quarters located to the rear of a white person's residence. An increasing number of others began to settle in developing black tenements and settlements throughout the city. These clusters of African American settlements developed along railroads and in low-lying areas where land was less expensive and generally considered by the greater population as undesirable.³⁶ The railroad lines served as barriers between segregated neighborhoods. By 1883, at least six African American urban clusters were located in Atlanta's five wards. In the Old Fourth Ward, a large black community developed along Decatur Street east of Pratt Street in the formerly named Butler Street Bottoms, which is now the

general area of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park and Preservation District.³⁷

During the late nineteenth century, African Americans established a variety of successful retail trades and services. The most popular black-owned enterprises in the city included grocery stores, dry goods stores, and eating establishments. In the 1880s and early 1890s, the largest number of African American businesses operated along Marietta Street in the central business area with others scattered along Alabama, Broad, Forsyth, Peachtree, Pryor, and Whitehall Streets. Few black businesses were located on Wheat Street (Auburn Avenue) during this time, since it was still primarily a residential street; the few that did exist were mostly grocery stores. In 1896, the Old Fourth Ward had the greatest proportion of African Americans residents, who constituted 46 percent of the ward's population.³⁸

Atlanta experienced economic boom and growth during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, while during the same period, the city's African American community was in serious political and economic decline.³⁹ Retaliation by white supremacists at the end of Reconstruction and federal rule followed by the disenfranchisement of African American voters triggered a rise in racial segregation in the city. Booker T. Washington, president of Tuskegee Institute and an African American proponent of the "New South," gave his famous "Atlanta Compromise" speech in Atlanta at the 1895 International Cotton States Exposition.⁴⁰

In September 1906, Atlanta erupted into a three-day race riot, the Atlanta Race Riot, resulting in the deaths of at least a dozen African American citizens and a large number of injuries. The Atlanta Race Riot of 1906 significantly affected the city's black residential development. As the number of African American citizens residing in the city continued to grow, efforts to restrict them to well-

31. *Ibid.*, 1-1.

32. Andy Ambrose, Karen Leathem, and Charles Smith, "Antebellum Atlanta," Atlanta; A National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary. National Park Service, accessed May 1, 2019, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/atlanta/antebellum.htm>.

33. Ambrose et al., *Historic Resource Study*, 1-3.

34. *Ibid.*, 2-1.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*, 2-2.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*, 2-4.

39. Lawliss, 12.

40. *Ibid.* Information on the "Atlanta Compromise" speech gleaned from Lawliss.

defined areas of the city intensified. In 1913, Atlanta passed a segregation ordinance and became the first city in Georgia to legislate residential segregation.⁴¹ Two years later, the Georgia Supreme Court ruled against racial zoning ordinances.⁴² Increasing segregation during the years leading up to World War I resulted in the transformation of mixed neighborhoods such as Auburn Avenue into predominantly African American communities. Despite the earlier ruling, city officials focused on racial segregation, and it was again incorporated into the city's first zoning ordinance in 1922.⁴³ Even though the law was declared unconstitutional in 1925, zoning was authorized by the state legislature in 1927 and supported by a constitutional amendment in 1928.⁴⁴ The ordinance did not recognize the African American business and residential neighborhoods which had developed in the Old Fourth Ward.

Development of Auburn Avenue

Opening in 1853 as Wheat Street, Auburn Avenue extends east from Whitehall Street in downtown Atlanta.⁴⁵ Laura Lavinia (Kelly) Combs, a free black woman in pre-Civil War Atlanta, was the first African American property owner on Auburn Avenue.⁴⁶ One of two African American landowners in the antebellum period, Combs purchased a lot at the intersection of Wheat and Peachtree streets prior to 1854.⁴⁷ She sold the property in 1856 to buy her husband's freedom

from slavery.⁴⁸ Auburn Avenue and the surrounding area developed slowly until 1880 when John Lynch began subdividing his large landholdings, which encompassed property on both sides of Auburn Avenue between Jackson Street and Howland (now Howell) Street.

The area between Boulevard (then Jefferson Street) on the west and Randolph Street on the east and between Wheat Street on the south and Houston Street to the north was largely subdivided by the late 1870s and contained several dozen houses. Early residential development in the area occurred primarily north of Auburn Avenue. Several houses were constructed on and near Auburn Avenue in the 1880s, though only one house remains from the pre-1890 period. By 1892, the entire Auburn Avenue community was well established with the exception of a few sections. With increased development on Auburn Avenue, residents petitioned to have the street's name changed to a more stylish one out of concern that their street might be confused with the adjacent, and less desirable, Old Wheat Street.⁴⁹ The Atlanta City Council officially changed the name on April 17, 1893.⁵⁰

Expansion and improvement of Atlanta's transportation infrastructure in the late nineteenth century contributed to the commercial and residential development of the Auburn Avenue community. In 1884, Gate City Street Railroad Company constructed a horse-car line from downtown Atlanta along Auburn Avenue to Jackson Street, and then extending north on Jackson.⁵¹ Atlanta's first electric street railway line opened along Edgewood Avenue in 1889, and in the early 1890s, the horse-car lines were electrified, and new electric lines were built.⁵² By the mid-1890s, the Auburn Avenue community

41. John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 13–14. Information on the 1913 Atlanta Ordinance was gleaned from this document.

42. *Ibid.*, 14.

43. Ambrose et al., *Historic Resource Study*, 2-10.

44. *Ibid.*

45. Henderson and Walker, 5.

46. *Ibid.*, 6.

47. Paul K. Graham, "A Love Story Proved: The Life and Family of Laura Lavinia (Kelly) Combs of Atlanta and Augusta, Georgia," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 101 (December 2013):246-266.

48. *Ibid.*; Cathy J. Kaemmerlen, *The Historic Oakland Cemetery of Atlanta Speaking Stones* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013).

49. Lawliss, 21. Most of the information on Auburn Avenue and the Birth Home block is gleaned from this document.

50. *Ibid.*

51. Blythe et al., *National Register documentation*, Section 7, 3.

52. *Ibid.*

had direct transportation to downtown, where many residents worked and shopped.⁵³

In the period from the 1850s to 1906, Auburn Avenue “developed as a primarily white residential and business district that included a substantial black minority.”⁵⁴ The majority of African Americans in the community were working class, while its black middle class were proprietors of grocery stores, meat markets, restaurants, wood yards, and other businesses.⁵⁵ African American professionals were primarily teachers, ministers, doctors, dentists, and lawyers. From 1884 to 1900, the racial make-up of the area bounded by Old Wheat, Howell, Edgewood, and Jackson Streets (now a portion of the National Historical Park) remained substantially constant at approximately 55 percent white and 45 percent black.⁵⁶ An examination of Atlanta city directories from the 1880s and 1890s revealed the Auburn Avenue community was closer to integrated than almost any other southern community at the end of the nineteenth century.⁵⁷

During the years following the Atlanta Race Riot of 1906, nearly all African American-owned businesses vacated downtown Atlanta as African American businesses were forced to leave the central business district as a result of rising rents and increased hostility. By 1911, a Sanborn Fire Insurance map showed the Auburn Avenue community almost entirely built out. Auburn Avenue was residential west to Fort Street, although several commercial establishments were situated between Hilliard and Fort Streets. Industrial properties were located in the eastern section of the community along the Southern Railway, and Decatur Street to the south was primarily commercial with a few industrial facilities on Decatur toward downtown.⁵⁸ The

section of Edgewood Avenue at the east end of the community consisted of both commercial establishments and some residential development.

Auburn Avenue reflected “the changing nature of southern race relations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”⁵⁹ From 1910 to 1930, Auburn Avenue became the center of African American business, institutional, religious, and social life.⁶⁰ During the 1920s, some African Americans started to migrate to the west side of Atlanta.⁶¹ By the time Martin Luther King Jr. left in 1948 to attend Crozier Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, the majority of residential structures in the Auburn Avenue neighborhood had deteriorated. By the 1950s, the West Side had replaced the Auburn Avenue residential district as the preferred neighborhood.⁶²

Birth Home Block

By 1899, most of the lots along Auburn Avenue between Jackson and Howell Streets were developed.⁶³ Residences in the Birth Home block are representative of vernacular adaptations of popular domestic architecture styles of the 1890s and early twentieth century found in American cities.⁶⁴ Most single-family houses built in the 1890s exhibit Queen Anne-stylistic elements. The residences are mostly two-story, wood-frame dwellings with one-story rear extensions. Typical characteristics of these houses include irregular massing, projecting bays, broad front porches carried on columns or posts, contrasting surface areas of shingles and clapboard siding, and decorative millwork. In 1894, the Romanesque Revival Style Fire Station No. 6 was constructed on the southeast corner of Boulevard and Auburn Avenue.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., Section 8, 24.

55. Moffson and Kissane, 30.

56. Robert W. Blythe, Maureen A. Carroll, Steven Moffson, *Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site Historic Resource Study* (Atlanta: Cultural Resources Planning Division Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, 1994).

57. Moffson and Kissane, 30.

58. Ibid.

59. Blythe et al., *National Register documentation*, Section 8, 24.

60. Blythe et al., *Historic Resource Study*, 1-24.

61. Ibid., 2-21.

62. Ibid., 2-36, 2-39, and 2-21.

63. Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Atlanta, Georgia* (1899), accessed May 22, 2019, <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/sanborn/CityCounty/Atlanta1899/Sheet48.html>.

64. Blythe et al., *National Register documentation*, Section 8, 50.

The Empire State Investment Company developed the northeast corner of Auburn Avenue and Boulevard in 1905 with the construction of nine duplex buildings.⁶⁵ The smaller one-story, frame, double-shotgun houses contrasted with the existing houses on the block but were typical of the dwellings in the neighborhood to the north.

The first middle-class African American families to purchase single-family dwellings on the block were enticed by the appeal of living in one of the large attractive homes on Auburn Avenue.⁶⁶

Following the construction of additional double shotgun houses on the remaining undeveloped lots, the block acquired a distinct mix of African American socioeconomic classes where middle-class professionals lived alongside working-class laborers.⁶⁷ Martin Luther King Jr.'s maternal grandfather, Reverend A.D. Williams purchased the circa 1894 single-family house at 501 Auburn Avenue in 1909.⁶⁸ Dr. King was born in the Auburn Avenue house on January 15, 1929. He lived in the Birth Home until 1941, when his family moved three blocks away to 193 Boulevard near Houston Street.⁶⁹

By 1929, African American middle-class families in the neighborhood were in the minority among the total population of residents on the Birth Home block.⁷⁰ During the Great Depression, Auburn Avenue and the Birth Home block experienced the subdivision of many single-family dwellings, the deterioration of its existing stock, and increased tenancy.⁷¹ A *Real Property Survey* conducted by the Works Progress Administration in 1939 reported that 100 percent of the Birth Home block was occupied by African Americans, though only 13.3 percent of the buildings were owner occupied and 67.4 percent needed major work or were unfit for use.⁷²

Beginning in the 1950s, physical changes occurred to the Auburn Avenue setting. In 1954, two brick apartment buildings were erected at 531 Auburn Avenue on a lot formerly containing four wood dwellings of the Baptist Memorial Institute School.⁷³ The apartment buildings are no longer extant. During the 1970s and 1980s, the overall condition of Auburn Avenue area's historic housing stock continued to decline. Fire Station No. 6 closed in 1991, after being in service for nearly 100 years.⁷⁴

With more than thirty years of historic preservation efforts, the Birth Home block has become a highly intact historic residential area.

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District was established on October 10, 1980, to “protect and interpret for the benefit, inspiration, and education of present and future generations the places where Martin Luther King, Jr., was born, where he lived, worked and worshipped, and where he is buried.”⁷⁵ Historic resources within the park include the houses on the Birth Home block, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Fire Station No. 6, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, and commercial buildings along Edgewood Avenue.

The 1980 legislation creating the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site authorized a 23.78-acre park. The Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992, enacted October 30, 1992, expanded the park boundaries to include properties located between Jackson Street and Boulevard north to Cain Street. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Preservation District, also established by

65. *Ibid.*, Section 8, 57.

66. Lawliss, 17.

67. Blythe et al., *Historic Resource Study*, n.p.

68. *Ibid.*

69. *Ibid.*

70. Lawliss, 21.

71. *Ibid.*, 14.

72. *Ibid.*

73. Blythe et al., *National Register documentation*, Section 7, 9.

74. National Park Service, *General Management Plan & Development Concept Plan, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site & Preservation District, Atlanta, Georgia* (Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Region, 1986).

75. Public Law 96-428, October 10, 1980.

the 1980 legislation, adjoins the site (now National Historical Park) on the east, north, and west and embraces the larger Auburn Avenue African American community in which Dr. King grew up. The Preservation District links Dr. King's career to the African American business, religious, social, and political organizations that flourished along Auburn Avenue prior to and during his lifetime.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District was placed in the National Register of Historic Places on May 2, 1974, and it was designated a National Historic Landmark on May 5, 1977.⁷⁶ The Sweet Auburn Historic District was designated a National Historic Landmark on January 8, 1976⁷⁷. Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District (Landmark) included some portions of the Sweet Auburn Historic District. On May 4, 1994, the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site was administratively listed on the National Register of Historic Places.⁷⁸

In 2001, the original boundary of Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District was increased.⁷⁹ The purpose of the addition was to expand the district's boundaries to include contiguous and intact portions of the Old Fourth Ward neighborhood not included in the original National Register nomination. The boundary increase includes historically residential properties as far as the Interstate 75/85 corridor. The elevated interstate was rebuilt and widened three times its original width since 1980, and it is a large visual and physical barrier between Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District and the Sweet Auburn Historic District farther west. Historically, these two historic districts were once part of a single African American community. Sweet Auburn is now considered downtown, while the Auburn Avenue community is generally viewed as a residential neighborhood on the east side of Atlanta. Freedom Parkway forms the northern boundary of the historic district, and DeKalb Avenue forms the boundary on the south.

76. Macgregor and Summers; and Levy.

77. Blythe et al., *National Register Documentation*.

78. Ibid.

79. See Moffson and Kissane.

On January 8, 2018, President Donald J. Trump signed into law H.R. 267, the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Act which redesignated Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site a National Historical Park.⁸⁰ Additionally, H.R. 267 further modifies the boundaries to include the Prince Hall Masonic Temple, where the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) established its initial headquarters on Auburn Avenue in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1957. This will also "enable the National Park Service to provide technical assistance to the building's owners with respect to repairs, renovations, and maintenance to help preserve its historic integrity."⁸¹ Dr. King was one of the founders and first president of the SCLC, serving until his death in 1968.

Current land use within the National Historical Park is mostly residential on Auburn Avenue and largely commercial on Edgewood Avenue. The NPS has rehabilitated many of the dwellings on the Birth Home block, restoring the exteriors to the 1929-1941 period. The historic streetscape features and the major spatial relationships that define the streetscape within the Birth Home block have remained relatively constant since its development in the late nineteenth century. The residential buildings on the Birth Home block are used as park offices or private residences. The residence at 503 Auburn Avenue is now used by the park to house its Interpretation Division.

80. The White House, "President Donald J. Trump signs H.R. 267 in law," Statements and Releases, January 8, 2018, accessed January 12, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-signs-h-267-law>.

81. 115 Congress Senate Report 115-49, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Act 2017, May 9, 2017, accessed January 12, 2018, <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-report/115th-congress/senate-report/49/1?overview=closed>.

503 Auburn Avenue (LCS #090012)

The house at 503 Auburn Avenue and its granite front yard steps are a contributing resource to the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic District and are located on the Birth Home block within the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park (Figure 4). The single-family house was constructed circa 1895. The architect who designed the building and the builder or firm that constructed it are not known. Other houses on the block have the same architectural plan and detailing, including: 535, 522, and 524 Auburn Avenue (Figure 5). A 1981 National Park Service Inventory of the building describes 503 Auburn as a

two-story frame Queen Anne style house with single-story front porch, projecting octagonal bay, and shingled gable; transomed entry; 1/1 double hung windows. Panel with decorative sawn woodwork replaces central window of upstairs bay. Porch has brick piers supporting square columns.⁸²

The house exhibits many of the same architectural details found throughout the neighborhood including:

- Full-width front porch.
- Corner boards.
- 1/1 windows with wide surrounds topped by a simple overhang.
- Sawn decorative wood scroll-type applications (Figure 6).
- Decorative wood wall singles (Figure 7).
- Multiple steeply-pitched roof lines.
- Multiple window sizes and types (Figure 8).

The house at 503 Auburn Avenue and the house next door, 501 Auburn, the Birth Home, were constructed at the same time, share a driveway, have the same front yard setbacks, and have deep back yards.



FIGURE 4. 503 Auburn Avenue, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park, Atlanta, Georgia. (Source: All photographs by the authors unless otherwise noted)



FIGURE 5. 535 Auburn Avenue (circa 1895) has the same architectural plan and many of the same exterior decorative details of 503 Auburn Avenue.

82. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives, early park records of 503 Auburn, n.d.



FIGURE 6. Decorative sawn woodwork in the upstairs bay on 503 Auburn Avenue.



FIGURE 7. Decorative attic ventilation louver and sawn shingles in the gable topping the projecting bay on 503 Auburn Avenue.



FIGURE 8. Fixed window with wide surrounds topped by a simple overhang in the first story of the projecting bay; note corner boards on 503 Auburn Avenue.

The house plan and style of 503 Auburn Avenue, with some minor changes and additions, was used up and down Auburn Avenue, but its architect and builder are not known.

The house at 503 Auburn Avenue was purchased by the federal government for use by the National Park Service from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change (the King Center) on December 3, 1998, for \$120,000. At the time of its purchase the appraisal of the building stated

... the subject building [503 Auburn Avenue] is in fair condition, and is being used as office space for the King Center. According to the occupants, the roof leaks in several places and the floors are rotted in several locations. The appraiser observed water staining, and there are sections of the carpeted floors that are uneven or that sink when stepped on. In our opinion, the subject can best be compared to the lower end of range of good quality older home among the comparables.⁸³

Photographs of the building for the appraisal showed metal outbuildings in the rear of the yard.

Occupants of 503 Auburn Avenue. National Park Service records for the building indicate that the earliest residents of the house were white people, and, by 1910, the residents of the property were African American people. By the mid-1970s, the City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs owned the house, but it is not clear how the building was used at that time. In 1980, the King Center moved into the house and used it as office space. In 1998, when the National Park Service purchased the building, it intended to use the building as an office. The building at 503 Auburn Avenue currently houses the National Historical Park's Interpretation Division.

83. Warranty Deed for 503 Auburn Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia, Tract 101—37, Fulton County Tax Assessor Office, Georgia, February 10, 1999, Book 26137, Page 127, and a portion of the appraiser's report (the appraisers report completed by Pritchett, Ball & Wise, Inc. is not complete in these files), Land Records and Deed, Series 3, Subseries A, Subseries 1, Box 15, Folder 18.

Individuals residing in 503 Auburn Avenue by date and ethnicity include:

1900 W.M. Powell (W)⁸⁴
W.E. Johnson (W)

1905 Dr. William M. Powell (W)

1910 William Parks (C)

1915 William Parks (C)

1920 Knight Darden (C)

1925 J.K. Darden (C)

1930 Posey Robertson (C)
Sidney Simms (C)
Ossie Watson (C)

1936 Josephine Darden (C, Home Owner)

1940 Josephine Darden⁸⁵

1945 Josephine Darden

1950 Mrs. Josephine Darden

1955 Wheeler Washington

1960 Wheeler Washington
Clayton Shorter

1965 Wheeler Washington
503 ½ Auburn Avenue

1965 Paul Williams

1970 Paul Williams

Mrs. Artie B. Slaughter

1975 Paul Williams

Edward Johnson

1970 Mrs. Minnie B. Turner

1975 Mrs. Minnie B. Turner

By mid-1970s City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs

By 1980 Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change⁸⁶

1998 The National Park Service

The Darden's—James Knight Darden (1858-1926; son of Dock Darden and Millie Stone), James Knight Darden Jr. (1877-1915), and Josephine Darden (dates unknown)—appear to be the longest tenured residents at the property, more than forty years; they appear to be owners of the house.⁸⁷ According to *Georgia Marriages 1808-1967*, Knight Darden and Josephine were married June 7, 1877.⁸⁸ According to the 1910 federal census, the Darden's were living in Atlanta and, interestingly, their race was listed as “mulatto,” and James was a head waiter.⁸⁹ On December 26,

86. Martin Luther King, Jr, National Historical Park Archives, early general records of 503 Auburn Avenue, n.d.

87. Find a Grave, Memorial Page for Josephine Darden, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/147255906/josephine-darden>.

88. Excerpt in Family Search, online January 9, 2018.

89. *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910-Population, Georgia, Fulton County, Atlanta, Ward 4, Supervisors District No. 5, Enumerators District No. 70, Sheet No. 27B, Department of Commerce and Labor – Bureau of Census, April 25 and 26, 1910.* It is interesting to note that until 1960 census takers determined the race of each American they counted. In 1910, for census purposes, the term “black” included all persons who were “evidently full-blooded negroes,” while the term “mulatto” included all other persons “having some portion or perceptible trace of negro blood” (D’Vera Cohn, “Race and the Census: The ‘Negro’ Controversy,” Race and

84. Ibid. Census records of the time indicate ethnicity by letters: W = White and C = Colored.

85. No indication of ethnicity or homeownership indicates that records did not include this information.

1926, James Knight died of bronchial pneumonia, and apparently the house was left to his wife, Josephine. Josephine turned the single-family house into a boarding house, probably to make a living. By the 1940 census, five married couples and three individuals, a total of thirteen renters, were living at 503 Auburn Avenue.⁹⁰ According to National Historical Park records, Josephine Darden was in the house until 1955. The length of time the Darden family spent in the house, forty years, has led some to call the property “The Darden House.”⁹¹

The Darden’s are buried at South View Cemetery in Atlanta, long considered a cemetery of prestige among African American residents in Atlanta. The cemetery was founded in April 1886 by nine black businessmen who were tired of the disrespect and poor alternatives offered for burial of African Americans in the area. The new cemetery offered perpetual care and non-perpetual care areas with the non-perpetual care areas many times maintained by African American Burial Societies. Many famous African American persons and families are buried in South View, including the King family, John Wesley Dobbs, and Maynard Jackson, Atlanta’s first African American mayor. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was buried here until he was reinterred at the King Center.

The first African American to live in 503 Auburn was William Parks. Dr. King’s great grandfather was named William Parks. Parks was the father of Jennie Parks, Dr. King’s grandmother who lived with them at 501 Auburn Avenue, next door to 503 Auburn Avenue, after the death of her husband in 1931.

Parks was born in February 1825, and was married to Francis “Fannie” Parks, born about 1829, both living in Cross Roads, Cherokee County, Georgia, according to the 1870 census.⁹² By 1880, the Parks, and their thirteen children had moved to Atlanta where he was supporting them as a carpenter.⁹³ As listed in the 1900 census, William and Fannie Parks and several of their children were living at 141 Harris Street in Atlanta.⁹⁴ William does not appear on a census after that. It seems clear that the William Parks living next door to Dr. King when he was a child was not his great grandfather.

Information could not be found on any of the other named individuals, black or white, who had lived at 503 Auburn Avenue.

In 1965, National Park Service records indicate that 503 Auburn Avenue became 503 and 503 ½ Auburn Avenue.⁹⁵ The splitting of the address seems to last for only ten years, and then the house again became simply 503 Auburn. It is not clear why this happened or which part of the house constituted 503 ½.

As previously noted, 503 Auburn Avenue was purchased by the City of Atlanta for use by the Bureau of Cultural Affairs in the mid-to-late 1970s. In 1977, J.W. Robinson Associates, Inc., and Jarodwin Construction Company, Inc., were contracted to make \$64,711 in “restoration and alterations” to the property by the King Center.⁹⁶ J.W. Robinson & Associates, Inc., had already completed the “restoration” on the Birth Home, next door. The exact dates of occupation by the

Demographic Trends, Pew Research Center, accessed August 1, 2019, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/01/21/race-and-the-census-the-“negro”-controversy/>)

90. *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*, Population Schedule, Georgia, Fulton County, Atlanta, Ward 5, Block No. 31, Sheet 1B, S.D. No. 13, E. D. No. 160-241, Department of Commerce-Census Bureau, April 1, 1940.

91. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives, n.d.

92. Friends of NAS, “From the Roots of a Tree: The Genealogy of Martin Luther King, Jr.” National Archives at Atlanta, accessed August 1, 2019, http://friendsnas.org/education/S4_civilrights/Roots_of_MLK.pdf.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid.

95. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives, early general records of 503 Auburn Avenue, n.d.

96. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives, n.d.; although J.W. Robinson was hired to do a “restoration,” the interior of the house was not restored as the term is used in preservation today.

King Center and the city are not clear. Confusingly, a typed page in the 503 Auburn Avenue records indicated that “The house was acquired by the Martin Luther King, Jr Center for Non-Violent Social Change in the early 1970’s and was used as their first office. It now serves as office and program space for the King Center.”⁹⁷ The page is not dated.

Although the National Park Service did not purchase the house until 1998, it conducted an exterior survey of the property in 1981, and it noted the house had little to no alterations, its historical significance was as a contributing resource, and it was “over landscaped.”⁹⁸ The National Historic Site undertook planning for the exterior stabilization and preservation of 503 Auburn Avenue, including the replacement of the roof in 1993 and 1994, probably in preparation for the Olympics. The National Historic Site began to let contracts for the work while at the same time negotiating with the King Center for the purchase of 503 Auburn Avenue and 479 Old Wheat Street. However, the National Historic Site ended up canceling the contracts after it was “unable to negotiate [the] purchase of properties from the M.L. King Center.”⁹⁹ The reason for the failure of the negotiations is not known. In 1998, the National Park Service once again began negotiations with the King Center for the purchase of the house, and at the same time began plans for the stabilization and preservation of it. The house was purchased in December 1998 by the National Park Service.

Historical Recordation of 503 Auburn Avenue

In 1974, a National Register of Historic Places Nomination form was prepared for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District, and, although 503 Auburn Avenue was not specifically named in the document, the “Victorian Houses” that lined

the Birth Home block were indicated as contributing resources. The documentation stated,

Row houses, two-family dwellings built in 1920 are typical of property rented by Blacks during this period. They are located across the street from the birthplace. Others across the street from the birthplace were originally built as two-story single family dwellings in the 1880’s in a simple Victorian style the same as King’s birthplace.¹⁰⁰

The Victorian style houses on the block included 503 Auburn Avenue.

The 1976 Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic Site (Landmark) nomination listed 503 Auburn Avenue as a contributing resource and described it as

[a] building. . . first occupied by white residents. After 1905, a series of black residents lived here. The house is now owned and occupied by the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Non-Violent Social Change. This is a well-preserved example of the Queen Anne style of architecture.¹⁰¹

In October 1980, federal legislation created the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District to protect and interpret the area where Dr. King was “born, where he lived, worked, and worshipped, and where he is buried.”¹⁰² When the National Historic Site was created, 503 Auburn Avenue was owned by the King Center, as was the Birth Home (501 Auburn Avenue), and it was designated a contributing resource to the site.

In 1985, the Auburn Avenue Street Facades were recorded for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). During this recordation, 503 Auburn Avenue’s front, street, facade was drawn to scale, and its location on the block indicated on

97. Ibid.

98. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives, early general records of 503 Auburn Avenue, n.d.

99. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives, King Center, Series 5, Subseries F, Box 17, Folder 37.

100. Public Law 96-428, October 10, 1980.

100. Macgregor and Summers, 3.

101. Levy, 2.

102. *Foundation Document Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site*, 5.

a master Auburn Avenue Street Facades map (Figure 9).¹⁰³

The park's circa 1992 *Land Protection and Historic Preservation* plan created for and by the National Historic Site indicated 503 Auburn Avenue as a private building owned by the King Center and noted a \$110,000 rehabilitation project was planned for 1994.¹⁰⁴ This project did not occur.

A Cultural Landscape Report was initiated for the Birth Home block in 1993 by Lucy Lawliss, and the yard at 503 Auburn Avenue was included in the report (Figure 10).¹⁰⁵ In 1994, National Register documentation was completed for Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, and 503 Auburn Avenue was listed as a contributing building and described as

503 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895 (IDLCS #90012). A two-story house with Queen Anne elements. The house features a hip roof with a front-facing gable and an addition at the rear. Beneath the shingle-clad gable end is a three-sided cutaway bay with a jigsaw panel at the second story. A one-story porch supported on brick piers and square columns runs across the facade. One pier lacks a post, which may originally have been present. The front yard has five granite steps leading to the house from the sidewalk, built ca. 1895-1915.¹⁰⁶

Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson also completed a Historic Resources Study on the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site in 1994 and described 503 Auburn Avenue (circa 1894) as

A two-story house with Queen Anne elements. The house features a hip roof with a front-facing gable and an addition at the rear. Beneath the shingle-clad gable end is a three-sided cutaway bay with a jigsaw panel at the second story. A one-story porch supported on

brick piers and square columns runs across the facade. One pier lacks a post which may originally have been present. The front yard has five granite steps leading to the house from the sidewalk, built ca. 1895-1915.¹⁰⁷

Physical Changes of 503 Auburn Avenue

Several changes have been made to the house since its construction circa 1895. These include exterior and interior changes.

The earliest known changes, according to Park archival records, happened circa 1930, when the house was reroofed with a change from “shingle to composition,” and a rear addition was added across the back of the house.¹⁰⁸

Certainly, between the 1930s and 1981, the next known alterations, the single-family house must have undergone changes since it became a boarding house. In 1940, according to federal census records, five couples and three individuals were renting rooms in the house.¹⁰⁹ The addition of thirteen individuals likely called for changes to the house, but they are not known.

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103. Historic American Building Survey, *Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site Auburn Avenue Street Facades* (HABS 1985), Sheet 11.
104. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park, *Land Protection and Historic Preservation*, 2.
105. Lawliss, 118.
106. Blythe et al., *National Register documentation*, Section 7, 12.

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107. Blythe et al., *Historic Resource Study*, Appendix B.
108. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives, n.p.
109. *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*, Atlanta, Ward 5, Block No. 31, Sheet 1B.

Developmental History

In 1981, the King Center contracted J.W. Robinson & Associates, Inc., to complete a “restoration and alteration” of 503 Auburn Avenue.¹¹⁰ Tolson-Lee-Simpson Mechanical & Electrical Engineers and Jarodwin Construction Company also worked on the project. A project contract dated 1977 with attachments from 1981 was found in the National Historical Park records, but it is not clear if this was the actual contract issued for work completed for the King Center. The contract found that was issued to J.W. Robinson & Associates was for

... work consist[ing] of the restoration of the exterior and alteration to the house number 503 Auburn Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia. The demolition and / or restoration of certain parts, altering of certain parts; repairs of certain parts to sound usable condition and the construction of new parts; all as shown; indicated, specified and / or implied by the drawings and specifications.¹¹¹

However, the drawings are no longer attached to the contract. The demolition of certain parts of the house likely refers to the interior of the house, which was changed into offices and meeting rooms at this time, and to the rear of the house where an enclosed porch and a second-story porch were removed. The exterior of the house was maintained although some changes were made, including the replacement of windows and some doors, and the use of new brick on the foundation, porch, and steps.

The changes made to the house were extensive and included, but were not limited to the following:

- Replaced and rebuilt the chimneys
- Replaced existing foundation wall with brick
- Cleaned all masonry
- Replaced roof shingles with red cedar wood shakes

- Replaced all roof underlayments and made roof repairs
- Conducted rough carpentry related to all parts of the house
- Replaced all windows and caulked them
- Provided screens for windows and screen doors
- Provided shutters for windows
- Provided or reworked exterior doors
- Installed building insulation
- Installed metal porch rail
- Installed all new duct work for heating and air
- Finished and installed dry wall
- Installed resilient flooring
- Installed interior doors and cabinets
- Installed tile and Georgia white marble thresholds in bathrooms
- Painted interior and exterior
- Installed acoustical dropped ceilings
- Installed heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system
- Installed electrical system
- Connected to water and natural gas

The entire interior was altered to accommodate an office setting. The exterior was changed with the addition of new windows, doors, and brick. The whole yard, specially the back, was extensively landscaped with flowering crabapple, flowering cherry, azaleas, box bayberry, rockspray

110. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives.

111. *Ibid.*, contract, 1A-1.

cotoneaster, dwarf yaupon holly, Anthony Waterer holly, and Tam junipers.¹¹²

J.W. Robinson (1927-2000). J.W. Robinson was born in 1927 in Hartsville, South Carolina, where he attended public schools. In 1949, he graduated from Hampton Institute, Virginia with a B.S. degree in architecture. He moved to Atlanta in 1949, attracted by many post-World War II activities in the city, and studied at Atlanta University (later Clark University). He was denied employment as an architect because of his race, and began teaching at Booker T. Washington High School (1953-1968).¹¹³

While teaching, he also developed a practice designing residential properties. In Georgia, a license was not required to design houses, and during this period he created more than 200 homes. In the 1960s, he began working under an established architect and received his license. In 1970, he formed his own firm, J.W. Robinson & Associates. His first project was the design of Fire Station No. 38 for which he received an award from the Atlanta Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (A.I.A.).¹¹⁴

The achievements of J.W. Robinson & Associates included buildings designed for public and private clients. It was notable for the roles it played in Atlanta's first minority / majority joint ventures: the MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority) station, Concourses C and D at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and the Ashby Street MARTA Station. For the airport project, a group of African American architects formed the Minority Airport Architects and Planners, with Robinson as president.¹¹⁵

Robinson's leadership among African American architects included an early interest in preserving

places that represented the cultural life and accomplishments of African Americans. At a time when historic preservation was not the expected community-development process in black neighborhoods, Robinson was instrumental in preserving the Martin Luther King Jr. Birth Home and other buildings of the Martin Luther King Jr. and Sweet Auburn historic districts. Among his historic building projects are the Odd Fellows Building and Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on Auburn Avenue, and Friendship Baptist Church.¹¹⁶

After Robinson's death in 2008, the firm became J.W. Robinson & Associates, Inc. (JWRA). At present, it is a diversified practice of registered architects and project specialists working in every aspect of project design and management. JWRA has completed more than 1,000 projects, has more than forty-seven years of financial stability, and has won more than thirty design awards.¹¹⁷

In 1992, 1993, and 1994, a flurry of activity related to the exterior restoration and preservation of 503 Auburn Avenue appeared in the archives files. These plans were evidently made based on negotiations for the sale of 503 Auburn Avenue and 479 Old Wheat Street by the King Center to the National Park Service. Plans and contracts were made for a new roof and extensive repairs and changes to the exterior of the building. However, all of the contracts were canceled when negotiations fell through for the purchase of the house in the fall of 1994.¹¹⁸

In 1998, negotiations for the purchase of the house resumed, and the federal government was able to purchase 503 Auburn Avenue from the King Center for use by the National Park Service on December 3, 1998 for \$120,000.¹¹⁹ With deed in hand, the National Park Service began to prepare

112. *Ibid.*, 503 Auburn Avenue Landscape blueprint.

113. Elizabeth A. Lyon, "J.W. Robinson (1927-2008)," *Georgia New Encyclopedia*, last modified April 30, 2013, accessed August 1, 2018, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/j-w-robinson-1927-2008>.

114. *Ibid.*

115. *Ibid.*

116. *Ibid.*

117. J.W. Robinson & Associates, Inc., About Us, accessed August 1, 2019, <http://www.jwrobinson.com/>.

118. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives, King Center, Series 5, Subseries F, Box 17, Folder 37.

119. Warranty Deed for 503 Auburn Avenue, Book 26137, Page 127.

for a roof replacement. In 1999, plans were drawn for the stabilization of the roofs at 503 and 497 Auburn Avenue, and price quotes were solicited.¹²⁰ It was subsequently determined that the cost was prohibitive and only 497 Auburn Avenue would be reroofed.¹²¹ However, asbestos testing and removal was conducted at both 503 and 497 Auburn Avenue during this period by VATC Associates, and removal of material was completed at 503 Auburn even though the reroofing was not.¹²²

In 2000, funding became available for reroofing 503 Auburn Avenue, and Campbell Roofing's original 1998 bid was accepted to begin work on it immediately.¹²³ Campbell Roofing was, at the time, working on 497 Auburn Avenue and Ebenezer Baptist Church. The files implied some negotiation on price, and it is not clear to whom the project was awarded. Nevertheless, work began at 503 Auburn Avenue sometime at the end of June, and almost immediately stopped when the roofers ran into a problem summed up in a trip report by Dennis McCarthy, architect, NPS Southeast Support Office.

The contractor has removed the shingles from the roof. The sheathing (1x8 Boards) are still in place. The roof framing looks undersized, it is 2x6s at 24" on center, spanning to 16 horizontal feet. Lumber at this size and spacing should span approx. [sic] 8-10 ft. The chimneys,

particularly an internal one, look precarious due to crumbling mortar at the portions inside the attic. The contractor is concerned that the existing roof is backing the chimney and it may fall if disturbed. The contractor anticipated some framing replacement, but not complete replacement, nor chimney repair work. If the roof is completely replaced it will entail repairing / replacing the gable-end decorative work.¹²⁴

McCarthy offered several options for how to handle the problem. It was ultimately decided to add a change order to the contract that would remedy the problems.¹²⁵

Unfortunately, the change order did not solve the problems. Several on-site meetings, letters, telephone calls, and memos later, it was recommended that the National Historic Site change contractors since it was the middle of August and the problems of the roof were still unresolved.¹²⁶ It appears that FAS Development Company was contracted to complete the roof and was working on it in September 2000.¹²⁷ The last information on the reroof was a memo dated September 12, 2000, in which Dennis McCarthy identified many problems and concerns to a "Mr. Johnson."¹²⁸ The completion date for the reroofing of 503 Auburn Avenue is not known.

In 2002, funding was requested through PMIS, Project Identification No. 59099, for \$175,000 to "rehab the interior of 503 Auburn Avenue." The

120. US Department of the Interior, *Roof Stabilization of 497 and 503 Auburn Avenue, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site*, (Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Region, Architecture Division, May 1999) and Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives, Series 5 Subseries F Box Folder 1, Letter to Campbell Roofing re: Ebenezer Tower Louvers and Reroofing 497 and 503 Auburn Avenues, February 1, 1999.

121. Ibid. Series 5 Subseries F Box Folder 1, Letter to Campbell Roofing re: elimination of 503 Auburn from scope of work, July 21, 1999.

122. Ibid., Series 5 Subseries F Box Folder 1, VATC Bulk Sampling Sheet, Hygeia Labs Report, and DARI Asbestos Removal Proposal, May 1998.

123. Ibid., Memo to Frank Catroppa from Dennis McCarthy requesting Campbell Roofing's quote on roofing 503 Auburn," June 24, 1999.

124. Ibid., Dennis McCarthy Trip Report re: 503 Auburn Avenue, July 5, 2000.

125. Ibid., Cost Proposal for Change Order #1, n.d.

126. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park, Archives, Memo from Dennis McCarthy to Dianne Mitchell re: 503 Auburn Reroof – recommend changing contractors, August 11, 2000.

127. The records for the changes during this period are not complete, and the trip reports do not identify the firms working on the site. It may be that FAS Construction had the reroofing job all along and was able to work out the differences with the Park; the records are not complete on this matter.

128. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives, Letter to Mr. Johnson from Dennis McCarthy, September 12, 2000.

funding source was cyclic maintenance. A completion report was filed in July 5, 2005, indicating a change in condition from “poor to good,” and the superintendent, Frank Catroppa, certified it at this date. A component completion report with the PMIS form indicated, “The project consisted of removing the existing utility systems and installing new HVAC, electrical and plumbing. Resurfacing the walls and ceilings with sheetrock and repairing the floors where needed. The interior was then painted and carpeted.”¹²⁹ It is speculated that at this time the rear enclosed porch with its second story may have been taken off.

No archived paper files were identified for the period between 2000 and 2007, but improvements and small changes must have been made to 503 Auburn Avenue. Any changes to the house from 2007 to 2017 were recorded only in the Facility Management Software System, and no files or photographs were found. During this period preventive maintenance was carried out, generally in the form of regular gutter cleaning, power washing of the exterior, pest control, fire safety testing, mowing, etc. Although exterior painting and brick repointing were regularly requested and many times costed, they were regularly canceled. The same is true for interior painting and flooring although the interior was painted in 2010.

129. *Ibid.*, Project Identification – PMIS 59099 Form, n.d.

Timeline for 503 Auburn Avenue

Circa 1895	503 Auburn Avenue constructed as a single-family, two-story house.
Circa 1895-1915	Five granite steps added to the front walk up to the house.
Circa 1930	Reroofed with a change from “shingle to composition.” A rear addition added across the back of the house.
By 1940	Became a rooming house.
1965	House address became 503 and 503 ½ Auburn Avenue.
1974	Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District placed in the National Register of Historic Places with the “Victorian Houses” listed as contributing resources; this would include 503 Auburn Avenue.
1975	House address, once again, became 503 Auburn Avenue.
1977	Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District (Landmark) designated a National Historic Landmark; with 503 Auburn Avenue named as a contributing resource.
By mid-1970s	Owned by the City of Atlanta, Bureau of Cultural Affairs. For the first time it was not a residence.
By 1980	Owned by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change and used as offices.
1980	October, federal legislation created the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District; 503 Auburn Avenue named as a contributing resource.
1977-1981	Restoration and alterations made to 503 Auburn Avenue by J.W. Robinson & Associates, Inc., including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Replaced existing foundation wall with brick▪ Replaced and repaired all chimneys▪ Cleaned all masonry▪ Replaced roof shingles with red cedar wood shakes▪ Replaced all roof underlayments and made roof repairs▪ Conducted rough carpentry related to all parts of the house▪ Replaced all windows and caulked them▪ Provided screens for windows and screen doors▪ Provided shutters for windows

- Provided or reworked exterior doors
 - Installed building insulation
 - Installed metal porch rail
 - Installed all new duct work for heating and air
 - Finished and installed dry wall
 - Installed resilient flooring
 - Installed interior doors and cabinets
 - Installed tile and Georgia white marble thresholds in bathrooms
 - Painted interior and exterior
 - Installed acoustical dropped ceilings
 - Installed HVAC system
 - Installed electrical system
 - Connected to water and natural gas
- 1985 HABS for Auburn Avenue Street Facades recorded north, front, facade of 503 Auburn Avenue.
- Circa 1992 503 Auburn Avenue listed in the National Historic Site's *Land Protection and Historic Preservation* plan and was scheduled for \$100,000 rehabilitation in 1994.
- 1992-94 National Historic Site began plans to complete exterior stabilization and preservation and reroofing of 503 Auburn, but the sale of the house by the King Center to the NPS fell through; all contracts and plans ceased.
- 1993 Cultural Landscape Report begun for 503 Auburn Avenue yard with treatment recommendations for the yard.
- 1994 Historic Resources Study and National Register Nomination of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District completed; both of which named 503 Auburn Avenue as a contributing resource to the site and district, and eligible under Criteria A and C.
- 1998 The King Center sold 503 Auburn Avenue to the federal government for use by the National Park Service.
- 1999 Plans and drawings were made for reroofing of 503 Auburn, but it was determined to be too expensive and not undertaken; asbestos testing and remediation were completed.
- 2000 Reroofing began on the house, and after several starts and stops the project was halted because of historic materials concerns and a change of contractors; the project was eventually completed.

Developmental History

- 2002 PMIS request for \$175,000 for interior rehabilitation of 503 Auburn Avenue.
- 2005 Completion report for interior rehabilitation of the building prepared and included:
- Removing the existing utility systems
 - Installing new HVAC, electrical, and plumbing
 - Resurfacing the walls and ceilings with sheetrock
 - Repairing the floors where needed
 - Interior painted
 - Interior carpeted
- It is speculated that the enclosed rear porch and its second story are taken down at this time.
- 2001-2006 No archival written records could be found for this period.
- 2008 Preventive maintenance of the HVAC, alarm system, as well as general building, custodial, pest control, gas expenses, and sprinkler system maintenance.
- 2011 Some gutter replacement (location unknown) was completed.
- 2012 Mailbox installed, compressor replaced (which compressor not specified).
- 2014 Gutter cleaning, carpet cleaning, and power washing.
- 2015 Installation of portable heaters, repair of HVAC, replacement of the bottom of the window sash on a front window (window not specified), replacement of rear porch, repair of rear window sash (window not specified), removal and replacement of broken water line (location not specified), and replacement of flood lights all carried out as corrective maintenance. Installation of water shut-off valve, replacement of faucet initiator, and relocation of water shut-off valve carried out. Roof replaced. Gutter cleaning, pressure washing of the building, cleaning and maintenance of furnace were completed. Two rocking chairs were added to front porch.
- 2016 Back porch repaired, windows painted shut were opened, and installation of hand rails (location not specified) completed. Gutter cleaning, pressure washing carried out.
- 2017 IT equipment and furniture moved to 503 Auburn, front porch repaired, and bathroom faucet repaired.
- 2018 Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park created.

503 Auburn Avenue is currently in use by the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park as its Interpretation Division offices. The building is a contributing resource to the district under Criteria A and C.

Physical Description and Condition Assessment

Site

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park is located in the Sweet Auburn neighborhood and the Old Fourth Ward on the east side of Atlanta in Fulton County, Georgia. The 38.38-acre historical park consists of one- and two-story residential, commercial, religious, and National Park Service buildings. The site is roughly bound by Edgewood Avenue to the south, Old Wheat Street to the north, Howell Street to the east, and Jackson Street to the west (refer to Figure 3). Boulevard and Auburn Avenue run through the center of the district. In general, buildings are organized so that commercial structures are located along Edgewood Avenue, religious and National Park Service buildings, such as the Ebenezer Baptist Church, Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, and the NPS Visitor Center, are along the west end of Auburn Avenue, and residential buildings are concentrated along the east half of Auburn Avenue and Howell Street (Figure 11). The Martin Luther King Jr. Birth Home is located at the center of the residential portion of the historical park. In total, there are 67 historic structures within the park, most of which were constructed between 1890 and 1910.

The National Historical Park is surrounded by the Sweet Auburn Historic District which encompasses approximately 230 historic structures.

The building at 503 Auburn Avenue is situated at the east end of Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park. It is located next door to the Martin Luther King Jr. Birth Home. A non-original, wood-framed two-story apartment building is located to the east of the site. The building sits on a mown-turf lot, measuring

approximately 40 feet by 188 feet (Figure 12). The front of the house faces Auburn Avenue from which it is set back 20 feet and separated by an eight-foot-wide concrete sidewalk. A concrete driveway is located at the west side of the site and separates the house from the Martin Luther King Jr. Birth Home (Figure 13). At the east side of the lot is the remaining portion of what was a brick-paved drive (Figure 14).



FIGURE 11. Overview of Auburn Avenue streetscape at Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park, looking west.



FIGURE 12. View of 503 Auburn Avenue site.



FIGURE 13. Concrete driveway at west side of the site.



FIGURE 14. Remaining portion of brick-paved drive.

The existing portion of the drive measures approximately 5 feet wide by 7 feet long and extends from the concrete sidewalk.

The north end of the site has been built-up approximately 30 inches to create a relatively flat lot. A concrete retaining wall extends along the sidewalk and concrete driveway at the west side of the site (Figure 15). Along the driveway, the retaining wall is capped with concrete coping units. The front of the lot is accessed from the sidewalk by a stair with stone treads (Figure 16). A brick walk extends between the stone stairs and the steps that lead to the front porch (Figure 17).

The yard at the north side of the building has manicured hedges, approximately 3 feet tall, which extend along the north end of the property line and on the either side of the front porch stairs (Figure 18). The south end of the lot consists of mown turf (Figure 19). A small concrete slab

supporting two air condenser units is located to the east of the building.



FIGURE 15. Concrete retaining wall along sidewalk and concrete driveway at west side of the site.



FIGURE 16. Stair with stone treads.



FIGURE 17. Brick walk extending between stone stairs and steps leading to front porch.



FIGURE 18. Manicured hedges along property line.



FIGURE 19. Mown turf at south end of lot.

House

The structure at 503 Auburn Avenue is a two-story residential building constructed with influences of the Queen Anne Style (Figure 20). It has a brick pier foundation, wood clapboard siding, and an asphalt-shingle hip roof. It features an asymmetrical front elevation with projecting gable roof bays on the north and south elevations, decorative shingle siding, and applied wood ornament, a one-story front porch, and a wood-framed back deck. The house is situated on the site so that the main entrance at the first floor is accessed from the porch on the north elevation. The foundation is exposed to view and the crawl space is accessed from an access door at the west elevation of the building.



FIGURE 20. North elevation of 503 Auburn Avenue.

The building has a mostly rectangular plan oriented on a north-south axis with the main hip roof portion of the building measuring approximately 33 feet wide by 48 feet deep. The projecting gable roof bay on the south elevation extends 7 feet 7 inches, and the gable roof bay at the north elevation projects 23 inches beyond the rectangular footprint. There are small setbacks at the east and west elevations. An approximately 10-foot portion of the wall at the north end of the east elevation is set back approximately 5 feet. At the west elevation, a 13-foot 7-inch portion of the wall at the south end of the elevation is recessed approximately 1 foot. From roof ridge to grade, the building measures approximately 37 feet tall.

The north elevation is the primary, street-facing elevation for the house. It features a one-story porch which extends the full width of the building. A projecting octagonal bay, extending the full height of the building, is located at the west half of the elevation. The octagonal bay projects approximately 23 inches from the face of the building and is capped by the aforementioned north projecting gable. The end gable has a decorative surround at the louvered attic vent and wood shingle siding. The first floor of the north elevation has window openings at each face of the projecting bay. The center bay features a fixed window while the side bays each have a double-hung window. Immediately east of the projecting bay is the main entrance. A double-hung window is located east of the door. At the second floor, there are three double-hung windows; one at each side elevation of the projecting bay and one

Physical Description and Condition Assessment

centered on the adjacent wall area. Decorative wood work is located at the center bay of the projecting bay.

As previously described, the north portion of the elevation is set back approximately 5 feet (Figure 21). Double-hung window openings are located at the first and second floor of the setback. For the remaining elevation, there are four double-hung window openings at the first floor and five double-hung window openings at the second floor (Figure 22). The windows are vertically aligned between floors and have slight variances in size. The elevation also features a projecting cornice, wood trim, and a wood band that extends across the elevation and separates the wood-framed building from the brick foundation.

The south elevation features the projecting gable bay at the east half and a wood-framed deck on the west half (Figure 23). The projecting gable has a wood full gable return and an exterior-mounted brick chimney centered on the gable elevation. Double-hung window openings are located at the first and second floors at the west side of the projecting gable bay. At the far west corner of the wall area adjacent to the projecting gable bay, there is door opening that is accessed from the deck. As with the east elevation, there is a projecting cornice, wood trim, and a wood band that extends across the elevation and separates the wood-framed building from the brick foundation.

The west elevation consists of single and paired double-hung window openings that are vertically aligned between the first and second floors. At the north end of the elevation are single unit window openings, the center of the elevation has paired unit window openings, and the aforementioned recessed portion of the elevation has a paired window opening at the second floor and a single window opening at the first floor (Figure 24). The west-facing slope of the roof has brick chimneys. The elevation also has a projecting cornice, wood trim, and a wood band that extends across the elevation and separates the wood-framed building from the brick foundation.

The King Center used the house for office space in the early 1990s. In 1993–1994, the building was

stabilized and rehabilitated. The building has been owned by the National Park Service since 1998. In 2000, the roof was stabilized and replaced.



FIGURE 21. East and partial north elevation of 503 Auburn Avenue.



FIGURE 22. East elevation of 503 Auburn Avenue.



FIGURE 23. South elevation of 503 Auburn Avenue featuring projecting gable bay and wood-framed deck.



FIGURE 24. West elevation of 503 Auburn Avenue.

Exterior Description

Foundation. The building has masonry pier foundations. There are three different foundation systems—one for each portion of the building including the main house, front porch, and back deck. The main house foundation consists of perimeter piers, measuring 17 inches by 8-3/8 inches and averaging 2 feet tall, located along the perimeter of the house, and center piers, measuring 12 inches by 8-3/8 inches, located along the center of the plan (Figure 25). The piers are organized to form a grid, approximately 8 feet on center in the north–south direction and 16 feet on center in the east–west direction. The area between the perimeter piers has been infilled with brick. Brick units at the house portion of the building measure approximately 8-3/8 inches by 2-1/4 inches and have 3/8-inch bed joints and 1/2-inch head joints. The bricks have a smooth finish.



FIGURE 25. Masonry pier foundation.

Non-original supplemental wood posts, measuring 4 inches square, are set on concrete foundations and located at the mid-span of the floor joints (Figure 26). The posts support wood beams consisting of sistered 2x10s that span below the floor joints. Other alterations to the house foundation include the replacement of much of the foundation wall at the east elevation with a concrete foundation wall or with concrete masonry unit (CMU) infill between brick pier (Figure 27 and Figure 28). A concrete retaining wall has also been constructed that extends along the bottom half of the foundation wall at the west elevation (Figure 29). It was observed that approximately 50 percent of the floor joints have been replaced.



FIGURE 26. Non-original supplemental wood posts at mid-span of floor joints.



FIGURE 27. Concrete foundation wall.



FIGURE 28. CMU infill between brick piers.



FIGURE 29. Concrete retaining wall at bottom half of the foundation.

The front porch has brick piers measuring 17 inches square. The area between the piers is infilled with brick set in a common bond (Figure 30). With the exception of the east corner pier, the brick has a textured finish, measures 8 inches by 2-1/4 inches, and has 3/8-inch bed joints

and 1/2-inch head joints. Brick units at the east pier are modular and measure 7-5/8 inches by 2-1/4 inches with 1-3/4-inch head joints (Figure 31).

The back deck is supported on corner brick piers measuring 17 inches by 8-3/8 inches. The area between the piers is filled in with modular brick units, measuring 7-5/8 inches by 2-1/4 inches. The brick infill is set on a concrete foundation slab (Figure 32). The piers support the floor joints.



FIGURE 30. Brick piers at front porch.



FIGURE 31. Brick units at east pier.



FIGURE 32. Brick infill at back deck set on concrete foundation slab.

Walls. The exterior walls are clad with horizontal wood siding, painted light grey, with a 4-1/2-inch exposure and nailed with spiral nails spaced 16 inches on center (Figure 33). At the corners of the walls, there are vertical trim boards, measuring 4 inches wide, with rounded corner beads, measuring 1-1/4 inches in diameter (Figure 34). The trim is painted white.

A horizontal wood trim band wraps around the base of the wood-framed portion of the building on the east, south, and west elevations, and visually distinguishes the building from the foundation (Figure 35). The trim consists of a 7-inch-wide skirt board and a sloped molding that projects 2 inches, sloped to shed water away from the building.



FIGURE 33. Exterior walls.



FIGURE 34. Vertical trim boards.



FIGURE 35. Horizontal wood trim band wrapping around base of wood-framed portion of building.

A projecting wood cornice, measuring approximately 12 inches tall and projecting approximately 12 inches, wraps around the eave of the house (Figure 36). Below the cornice is a horizontal trim board measuring approximately 6 inches wide. At the octagonal and projecting bays, there are two projecting cornice bands: one that follows the profile of the gable roof, and one full horizontal gable return. At the projecting gable on the north elevations, the area above the gable return has decorative wood shingles painted light grey and arranged to create a pentagonal exposure which alternate by course facing upward and downward (Figure 37). The end gable also features attic louvers. The louver openings have wood trim, painted white, and projecting cornice molding (Figure 38). At the upper floor of the octagonal bay is an applied sawn-wood ornament of curvilinear design framed with trim around the opening. The

wood ornament and trim are painted white (Figure 39).



FIGURE 36. Projecting wood cornice wrapping around eave of house.



FIGURE 37. Decorative wood shingles at the projecting gable on the north elevation.



FIGURE 38. Louver openings with wood trim and projecting cornice molding.



FIGURE 39. Applied sawn-wood ornament at the upper floor of the octagonal bay on the north elevation.

Much of the exterior siding, trim, and ornamental woodwork appears to have been replaced or removed and reinstalled as part of exterior stabilization and alterations performed in 2002 and demolition of the rear addition circa 2002–2007.¹³¹

North Porch. The front porch extends the full width of the south elevation (Figure 40). It is a one-story wood-framed structure with asphalt shingle hip roof. The porch has a rectangular plan measuring approximately 8 feet by 29 feet. It appears that much of the porch was reconstructed as part of the 2002 stabilization and restoration.¹³²

The porch is supported on masonry piers with the finish floor approximately 40 inches above grade and is accessed from a brick step which is aligned with the brick walk (Figure 41). The floor framing consists of 2x8s with a perimeter skirt board, painted grey. The porch floor consists of 3-1/4-inch tongue-and-groove wood decking, painted grey (Figure 42). The boards are oriented north–

131. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Southeast Region, Architecture Division, “Roof Stabilization of 497 and 503 Auburn Avenue, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site,” drawing no. 489/80.021, Sheets 1 through 5, December 8, 1999. (Note that there are several similar sets of drawings dated December and January 1999.)

132. Ibid.

south and extend 2 inches over the south edge of the porch framing. A wood quarter-round trim conceals the joint between the decking and the main portion of the house.



FIGURE 40. Front porch extending width of north elevation.

The brick piers extend approximately 30 inches above the finish floor and support square columns, each measuring approximately 10 inches by 10 inches (Figure 43). The columns are painted white, and have a decorative concrete base measuring 19 inches square and a wood column cap. Mounted to the columns are wood balustrades consisting of 3x3 bottom rail, 1-1/2-inch square spindles spaced 4-1/4 inches on center, and a 2x6 top rail (Figure 44). The balustrade is 30 inches tall and painted white.



FIGURE 41. Masonry piers and brick step at front porch.



FIGURE 42. Tongue-and-groove wood porch floor.



FIGURE 43. Square porch columns with decorative base.



FIGURE 44. Wood balustrades and spindles.

The columns support the roof structure including the perimeter soffit and closed eave (Figure 45). The perimeter soffit measures approximately 17 inches tall by 5-1/2 inches deep and is painted white. A horizontal molding extends across the lower portion of the soffit. The roof eave is clad

with wood and extends approximately 11 inches beyond the soffit.



FIGURE 45. Columns supporting roof structure.

The porch ceiling consists of 3-1/2-inch bead board oriented north–south and painted light blue and perimeter molding, painted dark grey (Figure 46). The porch has two surface-mounted lights on the ceiling (Figure 47). There are also flood lights mounted to the soffit at either corner of the porch.

The porch stair is constructed of textured brick and consists of brick steps and wing walls with concrete copings (Figure 48). The steps have a 7-inch riser and 11-inch tread and are each constructed of two courses of brick, the top course set in a rowlock bond. The wing walls are 12 inches wide and have common bond brick. The walls are capped by a concrete coping, painted grey, that extends 1-1/2 inches beyond the face of the brick.



FIGURE 46. Light blue, bead board porch ceiling.



FIGURE 47. Bead board ceiling at porch with surface-mounted light fixture.



FIGURE 48. Porch stair with concrete copings.

South Deck. The south deck is located at the southwest corner of the building, adjacent to the west elevation of the projecting gable bay (Figure 49). It was constructed after 2000 when a previously existing non-original two-story enclosure was demolished. It has a brick pier foundation. The deck has a 2x8 framing with a 2x10 wood apron that wraps around the perimeter of the deck (Figure 50).

The deck has 3-1/4-inch deck boards, painted light blue and oriented north–south. At the perimeter of the deck is a wood-framed guardrail, measuring 26 inches tall, consisting of a 3-inch by 1-3/4-inch bottom rail, 1-1/4-inch square spindles spaced 5-1/2 inches on center, and a 3-1/2-inch by 1-3/4-inch top rail. At the corners and ends of the guardrail are 3-1/2-inch square end posts.



FIGURE 49. South deck.



FIGURE 50. South deck framing detail.



FIGURE 51. Access to south deck.

The deck is accessed from two concrete steps at grade and a wood-framed stair (Figure 51). The stair has a wood stringer supporting 10-1/4-inch treads and open risers, measuring 6 inches tall.

Exterior Doors. There are two doors on the building; one at the main entrance on the north

elevation and one on the south elevation. Both door openings have wood trim at the opening and a multi-panel door. The trim is located at the jambs and header of the openings.

The main entrance door is located at the west side of the north elevation and is accessed from the front porch (Figure 52). The door opening includes the door with transom and is surrounded by flat wood trim at both the interior and exterior. The exterior trim measures 4-3/4 inches wide, and the interior trim is 5-1/2 inches wide with a fluted profile. The exterior trim is capped by a projecting wood cornice. On the interior side, the trim includes wood corner blocks with bulls-eye details and plinth blocks measuring 10-1/2 inches tall (Figure 53).



FIGURE 52. Main entrance door.

The door is mounted on three hinges and is a left hand out-swing door. Painted white, it consists of two recessed panels at the lower half of the door, each measuring approximately 27 inches tall by 12-1/2 inches wide. The upper portion of the door, above the recessed panels, has a large insulated glass unit at the opening, measuring 27 inches by 35-1/2 inches. A venetian blind is mounted to the interior face of the door. The door has non-original brass hardware including a lever, escutcheon plate, mortise lock, brass push bar with panic hardware, and automatic closer (Figure 54,

Physical Description and Condition Assessment

Figure 55, and Figure 56). Above the door and separated by 7-1/4-inch wood trim is a single-light transom.

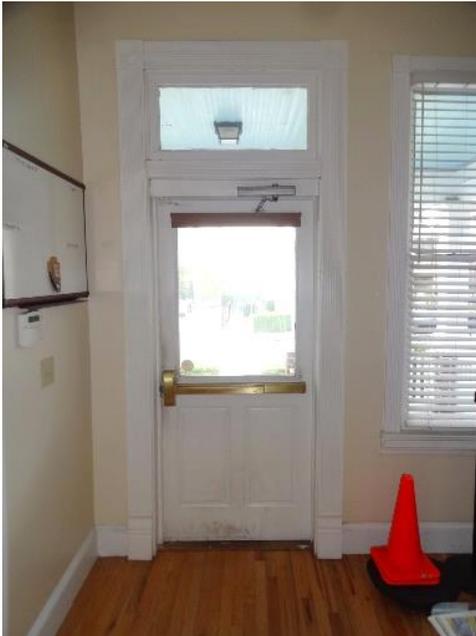


FIGURE 53. Interior view of main entrance door.



FIGURE 54. Non-original brass door hardware.

The back door is accessed from the deck (Figure 57). It has flat wood trim at the exterior, measuring 5-1/2 inches wide, and fluted wood trim at the interior, measuring 3-1/2 inches wide. The exterior trim is capped by projecting cornice molding. The interior trim has corner blocks with bulls-eye details and a 6-1/4-inch-tall plinth block (Figure 58).



FIGURE 55. Non-original brass push bar.



FIGURE 56. Non-original automatic door closer.



FIGURE 57. Back door.



FIGURE 58. Back door interior trim.

The back door is fiberglass, mounted on three hinges, and is a left hand in-swing door. The door has four faux panels; two on the upper half and two on the lower half. Hardware includes an aluminum threshold, vinyl door sweep, lever handles, deadbolt lock, and a brass bumper door stop (Figure 59). Adjacent to the door is a wall-mounted light fixture with twist-on glass shade (Figure 60).



FIGURE 59. Back door hardware.



FIGURE 60. Mounted light fixture adjacent to door.

Windows. The existing operable windows are non-original wood-framed units installed as part of the 2002 stabilization and repairs. In general, all window openings are framed with wood trim at the jambs and header and a projecting sill and cornice molding. The size of the window openings and trim vary throughout the building.

One fixed window is located at the first floor of the north elevation, centered on the octagonal bay (Figure 61). The window opening measures approximately 43-1/2 inches by 40-1/2 inches and has flat wood trim at the exterior, measuring 5 inches wide. Cornice molding is located above the header trim and projects approximately 2-1/4 inches. The opening has a wood lug sill that is 1-3/8 inches tall and extends 2 inches beyond the exterior trim. The interior trim consists of 3-3/4-inch-wide trim with a fluted profile, corner blocks with a bulls-eye design, an interior wood stool, and apron.



FIGURE 61. Fixed window opening at first floor of north elevation.

The fixed window has single pane glass and a wood sash measuring 3-1/4 inches at the bottom rail and 1-1/2 inches at the stiles and top rail.

The other windows on the building are wood-framed, one-over-one, double-hung with 1-inch-thick insulated glazing units. The sash framing includes a 2-3/4-inch-wide bottom rail and 1-inch-wide meeting rail. The remaining framing members are 2 inches wide (Figure 62). At all locations, the original sash weights have been removed from the opening and replaced with a vinyl track (Figure 63). Windows have either brass-plated or painted steel hardware (Figure 64 and Figure 65). All windows have venetian blinds that are mounted to the head of the window opening.



FIGURE 62. Example of remaining windows.



FIGURE 63. Vinyl track at sash.



FIGURE 64. Brass-plated steel window hardware.



FIGURE 65. Painted steel window hardware.

The typical window opening trim consists of flat wood trim at the exterior, measuring 5-1/2 inches wide. Cornice molding, which projects approximately 2-1/4 inches, is located above the head trim. The window opening has a wood lug sill that is 1-3/4 inches wide, projects 5-1/2 inches, and extends 2 inches beyond the edge of the trim (Figure 66). Typical interior trim is 3-3/4 inches wide and has a fluted profile. Corner blocks are located at the upper corners of the openings and have a bulls-eye design (Figure 67). The interior sill is approximately 1-3/4 inches tall and projects 2 inches. Below the sill is a wood apron, measuring 3-3/4 inches tall, that has an ornately contoured profile (Figure 68). The window openings vary in width and height depending upon their location on the building.



FIGURE 66. Typical window opening trim.

Three window openings at the west elevation are paired (Figure 69). The window opening has typical trim and double-hung window sash; however, the sash is separated by a vertical dividing mullion measuring 6 inches wide. Typically, window units at paired windows measure 22-3/4 inches wide by 78 inches tall.

Other window openings that differ from the typical include the three double-hung window openings at the first floor of the north elevation. These windows have slightly larger trim components including an exterior flat wood trim that measures 6-1/2 inches wide and an interior apron that is 4-1/2 inches tall (Figure 70).

At all bathroom window openings, the ceramic tile wainscot extends to the bottom of the window sill and there is no apron (Figure 71).

None of the windows were observed to have window screens.



FIGURE 67. Corner blocks at interior trim.



FIGURE 69. Paired window openings at west elevation.



FIGURE 68. Interior sill with contoured profile.



FIGURE 70. Double-hung windows at first floor of north elevation.



FIGURE 71. Ceramic tile wainscot at bathroom window opening.

Roof. The roof, gutters, downspouts, roof vents, and flashing were replaced in 2000 as part of the stabilization and repairs.¹³³ All roof areas are covered with asphalt shingles, including the hip roof at the main portion of the house and the projecting gable roofs at the octagonal bay and south elevation (Figure 72). The shingles have a diamond-shaped pattern. All ridges are covered with asphalt shingles and valleys are sheet metal with the asphalt shingle overlapped. Sheet-metal

flashing was also observed at the interface between the chimney and roof. Archival drawings indicate that the flashing was to be stepped and set into the mortar joints. However, the flashing at the chimneys consists of sheet-metal flashing wrapped up the sides of the masonry and secured with fasteners and sealant (Figure 73).



FIGURE 72. Roof areas covered with asphalt shingles.



FIGURE 73. Sheet-metal flashing at chimneys.

Roof features such as waste vents and attic fans are located primarily at the east and west-facing roof slopes and are not visible from the street. The intake vents are polyvinyl chloride (PVC), have gooseneck tops, project approximately 24 inches above the roof, and have rubber boots (Figure 74). The attic fans are located adjacent to the ridgeline and consist of low-profile fan boxes.

133. US Department of the Interior, "Roof Stabilization of 497 and 503 Auburn Avenue," dated December 8, 1999.



FIGURE 74. PVC intake vents with gooseneck tops.

There are three brick chimneys for the building. Two of the chimneys are located on the west-facing slope of the hip roof, measure 56 inches by 20 inches, and extend approximately 5 feet (Figure 75). The remaining chimney is centered on the gable of the projecting south bay. It is an exterior chimney measuring 36 inches by 16 inches and extending 24 inches above the roof peak. All three chimneys are constructed of clay brick masonry. None of the chimneys have a coping or flashing cap.



FIGURE 75. Typical brick chimney.

The front porch has a hip roof with sheet-metal cladding. The V-crimp sheet metal panels are approximately 2 feet wide and mechanically fastened to the roof deck (Figure 76). There are sheet-metal ridge caps at the roof ridges. The roof flashing appears to wrap up the siding, behind the wood clapboard siding.



FIGURE 76. V-crimp sheet-metal panels fastened to front porch roof deck.

At the asphalt shingle roofs and sheet-metal porch roof, the roof drains to half-round hanging sheet-metal gutters, supported on semicircular brackets; the gutters drain to circular sheet-metal downspouts that discharge at grade (Figure 77). The gutters and downspouts are painted white to match the wood trim.



FIGURE 77. Gutters and downspouts.

Condition Assessment

The following notable conditions were observed in August 2017 at the building exterior.

Masonry Foundation

- In general, the foundation is in fair condition. Observed distress conditions are typically located near the north porch and south deck and at infilled portions of the foundation wall.

Physical Description and Condition Assessment

- Erosion was observed at the concrete foundation and brick infill below the south deck (Figure 78). The dirt fill under this portion of the wall was missing, and there was a void that provided direct access into the crawl space. The mortar joints at the masonry infill wall were cracked but there was no significant displacement of the masonry.
- Bowing was observed at the south chimney at the south end gable (Figure 79). The upper 3-foot portion of the chimney, above the roof peak, appears to be leaning toward the east.



FIGURE 78. Erosion at concrete foundation below south deck.



FIGURE 79. Bowing at south chimney at south end gable.

- Deteriorated joints and loose brick units were observed at brick infill walls at the northeast and southwest corners of the building (Figure 80 and Figure 81). The joints were observed to be cracked or open. Some of the open joints

were as wide as 1 inch. At some locations, the brick units were displaced and out of plane.



FIGURE 80. Deteriorated joints at building corners.



FIGURE 81. Loose brick units at infill walls.

- Eroded mortar joints were observed at a brick pier and infill wall at the northeast corner of the building (Figure 82). The area was located adjacent to a roof downspout.
- Cracked and open mortar joints were observed at one brick infill wall between masonry piers at the front porch (Figure 83). The cracking had a stepped pattern that extended from grade to the top of the infilled wall area and was most likely associated with differential settlement of the wall.
- Evidence of water leakage, such as moisture staining and efflorescence, was observed at the portion of the brick masonry chimneys observed from the attic (Figure 84). The staining was most pronounced at the masonry

immediately adjacent to the roof sheathing. Some of the roof sheathing also exhibited moisture staining. It does not appear that moisture infiltration at this location is currently active.

- One of the chimneys on the west elevation was constructed in an unusual curved configuration (Figure 85). From the attic space, the chimney was constructed to shift significantly to the west over a several courses of brick. It appears that the chimney was constructed in this form to position it away from the roof ridge.



FIGURE 82. Eroded mortar joints at brick pier and infill wall.



FIGURE 83. Cracked and open mortar joints at brick infill wall.



FIGURE 84. Evidence of water leakage in the attic at the masonry chimney.



FIGURE 85. Curved configuration of masonry chimney in the attic.

- Previous repairs were observed at the foundation including replacement of some brick piers at the west elevation with a continuous concrete foundation wall.

Wood Elements

- In general, the wood elements are in good condition. Typical distress conditions include failure of surface coatings and mild to moderate deterioration of the wood. The most severe deterioration is located at the south deck and at areas where the end grain of the wood is exposed. Areas of previous siding replacement are evident due to the presence of more knots and defects on the newer boards, siding that stops short of perimeter trim at window and door openings, and differences in paint coatings and build-up (Figure 86, Figure 87, and Figure 88).



FIGURE 86. Defects in replacement siding.



FIGURE 87. Siding stopping short of perimeter trim.



FIGURE 88. Difference in paint coatings and build-up.

- Severe deterioration was observed at the wood guardrail of the south deck (Figure 89). The top rail and spindles were missing and the bottom rail did not appear to be well secured. The corner posts also appeared to have vertical splits that extended the full height of the post. The deck is approximately 3 feet above grade. The missing guardrail is a potential safety hazard.



FIGURE 89. Deterioration at wood guardrail of the south deck.

- Cupping was observed at approximately 50 percent of the decking boards at the south deck (Figure 90). Where cupping was present, the tongue-and-groove between the boards was disengaged, and the decking had buckled. The buckling was observed at a few locations and has the potential to be a tripping hazard. Mild cupping was also observed at the front porch decking but did not appear to be a tripping hazard (Figure 91).



FIGURE 90. Cupping observed at decking boards.



FIGURE 91. Mild cupping at front porch decking.

- Mild to moderate decay and deterioration was observed at some wood siding and trim (Figure 92). Typical distress included checking and splitting of wood near the end grain and along the bottom edge.
- Displacement was observed at localized siding and trim boards (Figure 93). The displacement was located at the ends of some wood siding members and at vertical trim members. Typically, the displacement was less than 1/2 inch.
- Splitting was observed at the wood shingle siding at the north end gable (Figure 94). There were approximately three shingles that had split and portions of the shingle were missing, exposing the underlying shingle. It appears that the distress occurred prior to the most recent exterior painting of the end gable.



FIGURE 92. Decay at wood siding and trim.



FIGURE 93. Displacement at siding and trim boards.



FIGURE 94. Splitting at wood shingle siding at north end gable.

- Bowing was observed at the wood siding at localized areas. The area of bowing was typically located at the east elevation and consisted of gaps between fasteners where the lower portion of cladding boards separated from the adjacent cladding boards (Figure 95). The gap was approximately 1/4 inch to 3/8 inch wide. The gaps were not covered by the paint coating.
- Cracking, debonding, blistering, and peeling paint was observed at wood siding, trim, porch decking, and decorative elements (Figure 96, Figure 97). The distress was most pronounced at the south deck and at the wood siding near downspouts and at the foundation wall.



FIGURE 95. Bowing at wood siding at east elevation.



FIGURE 96. Cracking and peeling at south deck.



FIGURE 97. Distress at wood siding near downspouts.



FIGURE 98. "Walking out" of nails at horizontal siding

Windows

- In general, the windows are in good condition. Minor distress conditions were observed at some window sash and exterior projecting molding.
- Gaps were observed between the window sash and the frame at three window openings: one at each of the south, north, and west elevations (Figure 99 and Figure 100). The gaps were typically 1/8 inch wide and indicate that the sash or the frame is not plumb. A cold air draft could be felt at the gaps in the window system.
- Broken glazing was observed at one window opening on the north elevation (Figure 101). The upper corner of the glass was cracked but remained in place.
- Paint was observed on the glass of many of the window sash (Figure 102). Full brush strokes of white paint were observed on the glass, indicating that the paint was accidentally applied during previous repainting of the windows.

- The walking out of nails was observed at the wood siding (Figure 98). The walking out of nails was most pronounced at the lower portion of the building at the south elevation and near the end of boards. The nail heads were projecting approximately 1/2 inch from the face of the wall.



FIGURE 99. Gap between window sash and frame.



FIGURE 102. Paint on glass.



FIGURE 100. Gap between window sash and frame.



FIGURE 101. Broken glazing at north elevation.

Doors

- The doors are in good condition.
- Mild to moderate decay and deterioration was observed at the wood door trim (Figure 103). Typical distress included splitting of wood and peeling paint near the end grain, and was located at the bottom of the trim, adjacent to floor level.



FIGURE 103. Decay and deterioration at door trim.

Roofing

- In general, the roof is in good condition; all gutters and downspouts were connected and secure at the time of the survey, and there was no evidence or report of active water leakage.
- Mild surface corrosion and staining was observed at the V-crimp sheet-metal porch roof (Figure 104). The most significant corrosion was located at a joint between sheet-

metal panels near the roof ridge. Corrosion staining extended down the slope of the roof to the gutter.



FIGURE 104. Staining and surface corrosion at porch roof.

Other Elements

- Pest infestations were observed at one exterior projecting window molding and at the soffit of the porch (Figure 105 and Figure 106). The infestation included small circular insect holes, measuring approximately 3/8 inch in diameter, at the underside of the projecting window molding. At the porch, there was a bird's nest. No evidence of termite infestation was observed.



FIGURE 105. Insect holes at window molding.



FIGURE 106. Bird's nest at porch.

Interior Description

The building at 503 Auburn Avenue is representative of the Queen Anne Style common to the period of its construction, circa 1895, and similar to the Martin Luther King Jr. Birth Home and other two-story structures in the 500 block of Auburn Avenue.

The interior of 503 Auburn Avenue retains little of its original fabric. The general floor plan configuration is like those found in Queen Anne-Style residential structures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Internally, the two-story house is organized around a main north-south hallway which bisected the floor plan and connects the various rooms (refer to Appendix A – Floor Plans). Primary living spaces (e.g., parlor, dining room and kitchen) were likely on the west side of the hall, and spaces such as circulation and support rooms occupied the east portion of the plan. This original plan arrangement is still expressed on the exterior. It exemplifies a common type of the Queen Anne Style characterized by a predominant hipped roof with lower cross gables that emphasized projecting rooms (refer to Appendix A – Roof Plan).

When it was first constructed, the two-story portion extended only two rooms to the south of its Auburn Avenue front elevation. At the rear, there was a one-story, shed-roofed portion with a small back porch at the southwest corner (Figure 107). Between 1925 and 1932, an upper floor was added to this single-story part of the

home, the back porch was partially enclosed and included a stair, and a new, shed-roofed porch was added across the rear elevation (Figure 108).

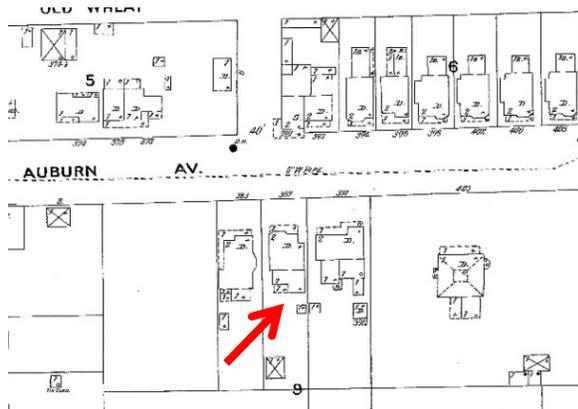


FIGURE 107. Sanborn map, 1899.

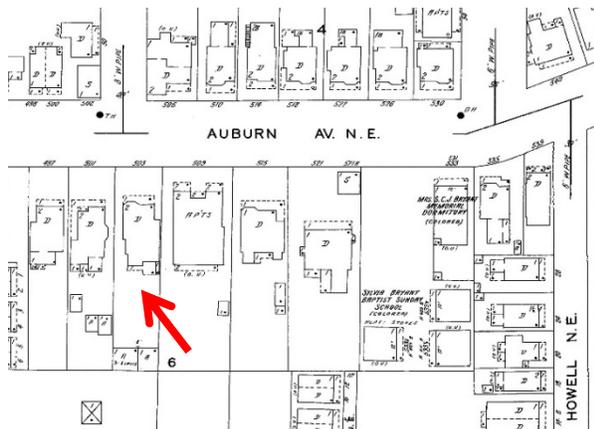


FIGURE 108. Sanborn map, 1932.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, a major “restoration and alteration” project was undertaken that included changes from the residential interior to office space for the King Center.¹³⁴ The results of that project were documented in as-built (or as-existing) drawings of 503 Auburn Avenue that are dated February 1993. Remaining original elements were the north-south central hall, primary rooms on the west side of the hall, and a stair and ancillary spaces to the east. Significant interior alterations included demolition of some original walls and construction of new walls on both floors for offices, a new dog-leg stair with an intermediate landing, and fireplaces concealed behind gypsum board partitions. In addition, plaster was removed

from the walls and replaced with gypsum board, and lay-in acoustical ceilings were installed along with new HVAC systems for each floor. The electrical and plumbing systems were also updated.

In 2000, after the National Park Service acquired the house from the King Center, roofing was replaced, and the roof framing was reinforced, according to Park records. Between 2002 and 2007, another interior renovation project was completed which also involved removal of the partially enclosed, two-story rear porch, and a two-story portion of the house at the southwest corner. Both were constructed about 1930 (Figure 109 and refer to Figure 108). The current interior configuration appears to be the product of that renovation (refer to Appendix A – Floor Plans).

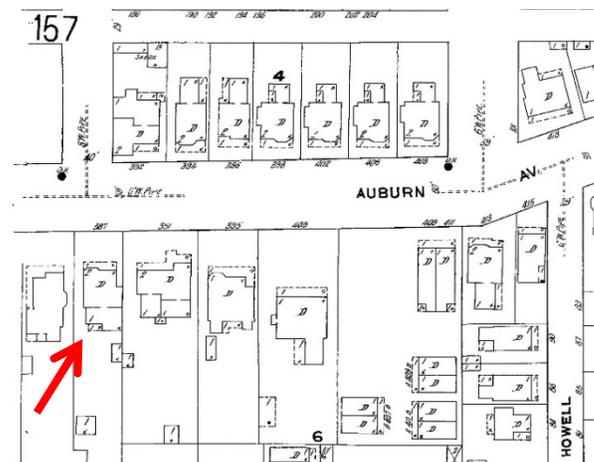


FIGURE 109. Sanborn map - 1925.

At the time of this building survey, 503 Auburn Avenue contained a foyer, six offices, a meeting room, a work room, a copy and mail room, and a break room for the site’s interpretive staff. Ancillary spaces include a men’s and women’s restroom on each floor, a small mechanical room on the first floor, a janitor’s closet above it on the second floor, and space beneath the dog-leg stair for a server, information technology (IT) equipment, and, oddly, a hot water heater. These spaces are arranged linearly along both sides of the main north-south hall on both floors, similar to the original 1895 floor plan.

134. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives.

General. Because the interior was recently renovated as described above, the materials, finishes, equipment, and systems are consistent for the first and second floors, with minor exceptions. Therefore, the following description and condition of those materials, finishes, equipment, and systems applies to both floors unless specifically noted otherwise. The attic is discussed separately.

Walls and Ceilings. Walls throughout the building are painted gypsum board that was first installed after the original wood lathe and plaster were removed during the renovation project in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Gypsum board walls in the first-floor bathrooms, second-floor restrooms and janitor's closet have non-original tile wainscots comprised of 3-inch by 6-inch white ceramic tile with a black bullnose cap and a single course of 3-inch by 6-inch black tile three courses below the top of the wainscot (Figure 110). Wainscots are approximately 3 feet 8-1/2 inches high (Figure 111).

There are 4-inch by 4-inch, glazed ceramic tile backsplashes above the countertops in the break room and work room on the first floor (Figure 112 and Figure 113). The wall tile at these backsplashes is not original and was likely installed during the last major interior renovation in the early 2000s.



FIGURE 110. Typical ceramic tile wainscot.



FIGURE 111. Typical ceramic tile wainscot in restrooms.



FIGURE 112. Tile backsplash above the counter in the work room.



FIGURE 113. Tile backsplash in the break room.



FIGURE 114. Lay-in acoustical tile ceiling grid from the 1980s renovation.

Available documentation is not definitive about the replacement of original lathe and plaster on the ceilings with gypsum board because lay-in acoustical tile (LAT) ceilings were installed during that project, presumably to conceal electrical wires and HVAC ducts. Demolition photographs from the 2002 renovation project show the LAT grid at the rear of the house (Figure 114). At the second floor, the LAT ceiling, electrical wiring, and old HVAC ducts were removed to restore the original ceiling height to 9 feet 10 inches by placing new HVAC equipment and ducts in the attic (Figure 115). On the first floor, the LAT ceilings and the old HVAC ducts were also taken out and

supplanted with a new HVAC system and painted gypsum board ceilings. However, to conceal the HVAC ducts, those ceilings vary in height from 8 feet in the central hall to 10 feet 10 inches in offices on the west side of the hall (Figure 116).

Generally, the gypsum board walls and ceilings are in good condition because of periodic cleaning and painting as indicated by park maintenance records.

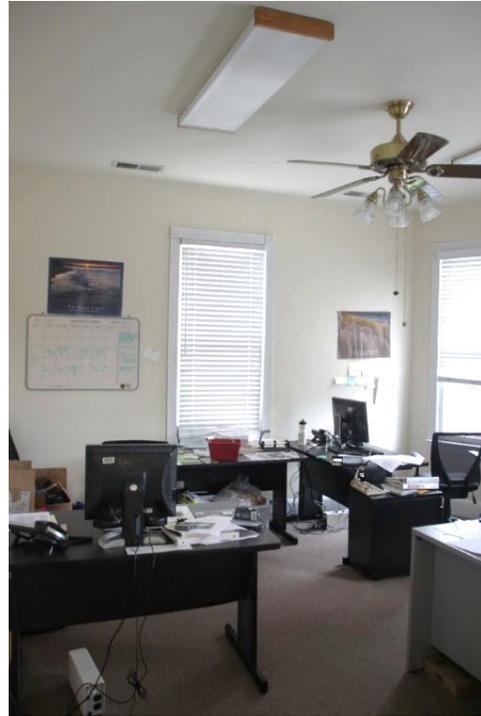


FIGURE 115. Second-floor office with original 9-foot-10-inch high ceiling.

Floors. There are several different flooring materials throughout the building, and none of them appear to be original. Materials on the first floor include oak strip flooring with a clear, high gloss finish in the foyer and central hall (Figure 117), carpet in the office and meeting room, and vinyl composition tile (VCT) in the work room and break room (Figure 118). Carpet is the predominant material on the upper floor including the stair (Figure 119).

Floors in the restrooms and janitor's closet have 2-inch by 2-inch, black and white ceramic tile set in a checkerboard pattern (Figure 120). Transitions from ceramic tile to other flooring materials are achieved with marble thresholds (Figure 121).



FIGURE 116. Current 8-foot-high gypsum board ceiling in the first-floor hall.



FIGURE 118. VCT flooring in the break room.



FIGURE 117. Oak strip flooring in the first-floor foyer and hall.

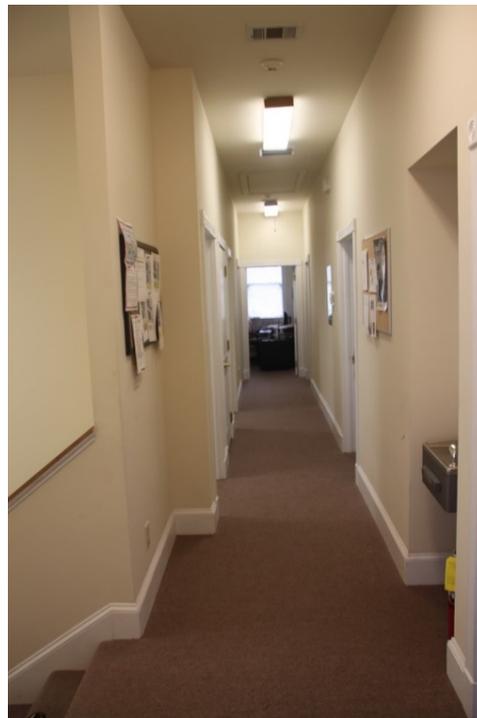


FIGURE 119. Carpeted stair and second-floor hall.



FIGURE 120. Typical black and white ceramic tile floor.

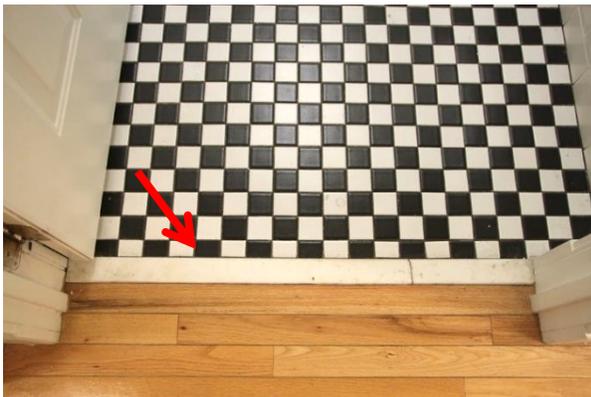


FIGURE 121. Marble threshold at the transition from hardwood floor to ceramic tile floor.

Woodwork and Trim. Painted interior wood trim, moldings, and woodwork are consistent throughout the house. Door openings are trimmed with traditional 3-1/2-inch wide, fluted moldings, plinth blocks and corner blocks with rosettes (Figure 122 and Figure 123). First-floor windows are also trimmed with fluted casings and corner blocks with rosettes, and they have 3/4-inch thick sills with rounded edges and a two-piece apron (Figure 124). Second-floor windows are also trimmed with fluted casings and corner blocks with rosettes, but they have 3/4-inch thick sills with rounded edges and an apron below with a

common cyma reversa profile (Figure 125). Only the first-floor meeting room has more painted wood trim than just described. In addition, it has picture molding and a two-piece chair rail with a molding profile that matches the window aprons (Figure 126).



FIGURE 122. Fluted door casing, plinth block, and baseboard.



FIGURE 123. Typical fluted casing and corner blocks with rosette motif.



FIGURE 124. Two-piece decorative apron below the windowsill.



FIGURE 125. Fluted casing, sill, and one-piece apron at second-floor windows.



FIGURE 126. First-floor meeting room with chair rail and picture molding.

Baseboards are 7-1/4 inches tall and have a traditional, top-edge profile (refer to Figure 122). Quarter-round base shoe is present in those spaces that have VCT.

Modern, manufactured cabinets line the north wall of the break room and the work room on the first floor. The same cabinets form the base of a large island in the center of the work room. They have a medium-tone, stained-wood finish, and the countertops and integral sinks are solid surface material (Figure 127 and Figure 128).



FIGURE 127. Contemporary cabinetry in the break room.



FIGURE 128. Contemporary base cabinets and solid surface countertops in the work room.

Doors and Hardware. Typical interior doors are modern, hollow-core units with four raised panels molded into each face (Figure 129). Doors that have labels identify them as Masonite Entergy Series doors with 20-minute fire ratings (Figure 130).



FIGURE 129. Typical four-panel, hollow-core door.



FIGURE 130. Labeled 20-minute, fire-rated door.

A pair of 36-inch-wide, ten-light, French doors open from the foyer into the chief's office on the first floor (Figure 131). Other historically significant Queen Anne-Style homes on Auburn Avenue have a pair of pocket doors where the French doors are in 503 Auburn Avenue, so it is reasonable to assume that original pocket doors were removed and replaced by French doors.



FIGURE 131. French doors between the foyer and the chief's office.

Interior door hardware is a mixture of passage and privacy latch sets with levers or knobs. None of the hardware is original or historic (Figure 132 and Figure 133). Best (manufacturer) cylinders were observed in locksets. Polished brass is the finish on door hardware, hinges, and the round cabinet pulls in the break room and work room.

The front and rear exterior doors are discussed in the Exterior portion of this section.



FIGURE 132. Latch set with lever trim. Note “Best” lock cylinder.



FIGURE 133. Latch set with round knob trim. This type is not ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant.

Fireplaces. According to the set of drawings that documented the condition of 503 Auburn Avenue in 1993, the remains of three original fireplaces were concealed behind gypsum board partitions

when the house was renovated in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Masonry foundations are extant in the crawl space, and the brick chimneys are visible in the attic and on the south elevation of the house. At the time of the site visit for this report, there was no visible evidence that any of the historic hearths, coal grates, or mantels exist behind the gypsum board envelopes.

Stair. An open, dog-leg stair with an intermediate landing connects the two floors of the house. The absence of drawings or historical photographs of the original interior of 503 Auburn Avenue requires inferences about the current stair that are based on field observations and documentation of other, similar Queen Anne houses in the park.

From observation, the existing dog-leg stair is constructed of dressed dimensional lumber, labeled with the wood species and grade, plywood, and a gypsum board partition between the two stair runs. The surrounding walls are also sheathed with painted gypsum board, and the treads, risers and landing are carpeted. A single oak handrail at each stair run is mounted to the wall with bright brass brackets. All are common characteristics of contemporary, residential stair construction that are not historical (Figure 134 and Figure 135).



FIGURE 134. The dog-leg stair from the second-floor hall.



FIGURE 135. The open dog-leg stair at the second floor.



FIGURE 136. Server / IT space beneath the stair.

Electronic Equipment Room. The electronic equipment room is actually the space beneath the stair. It was likely created during the renovation project in the early 2000s, because it does not appear on the 1993 as-built drawings. The walls and the sloped ceiling are finished with painted gypsum board, and the painted wood baseboards are identical to those throughout the house. Sheet vinyl, with a large, black-and-white checkerboard pattern, covers the floor (Figure 136). At the rear of the space, head room is low beneath the stair landing where most of the electronic equipment is located, including a server and the telecommunication board (Figure 137). A water heater is also tucked beneath the first-floor stair run in unusually close proximity to the electronic equipment (Figure 138).



FIGURE 137. Telecommunication equipment on the wall below the intermediate stair landing.



FIGURE 138. Electric hot water heater in the server / IT space under the stair.

Restrooms. Two modern restrooms are located on the east side of the central hall on both floors. Again, they were likely constructed during the renovation project in the early 2000s, because only one small restroom for each floor appears on the 1993 as-built drawings. Currently, there is a men's and a women's restroom on the first floor separated by a mechanical closet. Each first-floor restroom has a pedestal sink and a toilet (Figure 139). Upstairs, a second pair of restrooms has a pedestal sink, a toilet, and a fiberglass shower stall. A janitor's closet occupies the space between the two restrooms. All four restrooms are fitted with the customary accessories such as mirrors, paper towel dispensers, toilet tissue holders, and soap dispensers.

All four restrooms were renovated as part of the renovation project in the early 2000s, but neither one is in full compliance with the regulations of the revised Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) and ADA, although historic properties can, in some circumstances, receive waivers from strict compliance.



FIGURE 139. First-floor restroom.

Janitor's Closet. The one janitor's closet for the building is on the east side of the main hall on the upper floor. Black and white ceramic tile covers the floor and the walls up to wainscot height. A fiberglass utility sink sits in the right rear corner across from a plastic shelf unit (Figure 140). It appears that the janitor's closet does not regularly function for that purpose rather it seems to be a catchall for cleaning and restroom supplies, extension cords, and custodial equipment.

Attic. The attic is accessed by a pull-down folding ladder in the ceiling of the second-floor hall. The roof is stick framed, and the dark patina of original structural members makes them distinguishable from the newer, more recent wood braces and plywood sheathing added during a reroofing project in 2000 (Figure 141).¹³⁵ With a change order added to that reroofing project, merely replacing the shingles ultimately included installing additional framing to brace the original rafters and repointing crumbling mortar joints in the brick chimneys. Two of the chimneys extend through the attic and penetrate the roof on the

135. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park Archives, *Cost Proposal for Change Order #1*, n.d.

west side (Figure 142 and Figure 143). The third masonry chimney is also visible at the south gable end of the attic (Figure 144).

In the attic, thermal insulation is achieved primarily by blown-in fiberglass insulation that covers the ceiling joists; however, some paper-faced fiberglass batts were also observed (Figure 145).



FIGURE 140. Janitor's closet



FIGURE 141. Attic view of the south gable. Note (1) the original dark framing and the lighter wood bracing that was added in 2000. Also note (2) the plywood sheathing flanking the chimney at the gable end.

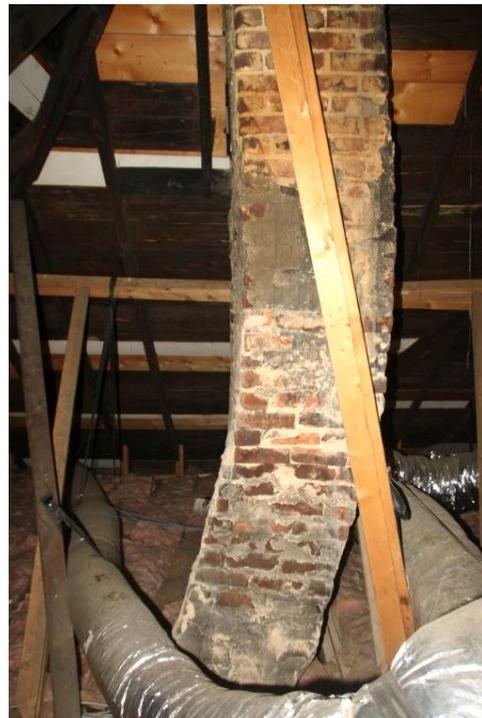


FIGURE 142. Unusual curved configuration of the chimney rising through the attic from the original fireplaces (now concealed) in the workroom and office 4.



FIGURE 143. Chimney rising through the attic from the original back-to-back fireplaces (now concealed) between the director's office and the meeting room on the first floor and offices 2 and 3 on the upper floor.



FIGURE 144. The third masonry chimney is visible at the south gable end of the attic.



FIGURE 145. Fiberglass insulation between ceiling joists. Also note the metal-clad electrical cables.

Condition Assessment

The interior of 503 Auburn Avenue is in good condition overall. The following items represent conditions that need periodic monitoring and cyclic maintenance or require attention and warrant corrective action.

Walls and Ceilings

- Gypsum board walls and ceilings are in good condition. No significant cracks at joints or extensive delamination of joint compound at fastener heads are evident. The last confirmed

cyclic painting occurred in 2010.¹³⁶ However, other National Park Service facility management records suggest interior and exterior painting may have been completed again in 2015. The good condition of painted surfaces inside the house points toward later date.

- Ceramic tile wainscots in the restrooms and janitor's closet are durable and require little maintenance. They remain in satisfactory condition.

Floors

- Floors are covered with wall-to-wall carpet except for the foyer and first-floor hall (hardwood strip); break room, work room, and office 1 upstairs (VCT); restrooms and janitor's closet (ceramic tile); server / IT space (sheet vinyl); and all other offices, the stair, and the copy / mail room (carpet). All flooring materials are contemporary.
- Generally, the carpet is soiled and worn from prolonged normal use.
- Non-original, oak strip flooring on the first floor is another hard-wearing material. It has a natural, high-gloss finish that is in very good condition despite being subjected to the most traffic. If any original hardwood flooring remains under carpeted areas, its condition could not be determined, but further investigation would contribute to recommendations for restoring original flooring concealed by the carpet.
- Ceramic tile floors were installed in wet areas like the restrooms and janitor's closet in the early 2000s and are relatively new. No major cracks or delamination were observed, and these floors have also held up well since they were put in. Because installation was done over a wood substrate, the type of waterproof membrane applied to the substrate will affect the long-term performance of these tile floors.

136. National Park Service, 2015.

Maintaining stiffness of the floor framing will also aid long-term performance.

- Vinyl composition tile is a floor covering that has been widely used in different formulations since the 1930s. It is inexpensive and easy to install, and it is available in a wide range of colors and patterns. The 12-inch-by-12-inch, tan, marbled tile in the break room and work room is in satisfactory condition, but does require periodic cleaning, waxing, and buffing to maintain a neat appearance. It can chip and crack when impacted and moving heavy furniture and equipment over it can scratch and mar the surface.

Woodwork and Trim

- Painted cased openings and door and window trim are consistent throughout the house but are mostly not original. Trim at the front entry door may be original, because it is very similar to historic wood trim found in other homes from this period on the Birth Home block (Figure 146). Some window trim in the foyer, the director's office, and the meeting room may also be original, particularly the decorative apron trim (Figure 147), which is repeated in the meeting room chair rail. Park records suggest that cyclical interior painting may have been done in 2015, and the condition of the woodwork and trim makes that likely. Besides the effects of normal wear and tear, the trim is generally in good condition.
- Baseboards are consistent throughout the house and are not historic (Figure 148). If there was an original base shoe, it was removed when wall-to-wall carpet was installed. Non-original, quarter-round base shoe is present in those rooms that have VCT flooring. Not surprisingly, baseboards and base shoe have been painted several times but are subjected to scratching and abrasion that have accumulated over time.



FIGURE 146. Original trim at the front entry door.



FIGURE 147. Decorative apron trim at bay window in chief's office.



FIGURE 148. Non-original baseboards.

Doors and Hardware

- All interior doors are modern, hollow-core units with four raised panels molded into each face. They probably date from the most recent renovation in the early 2000s. Doors that have labels identify them as Masonite Entergy Series doors with 20-minute fire ratings. These contemporary doors are in good condition and, under ordinary use, should require only cyclic painting.
- Generally, door hardware (locksets, latch sets, deadbolts, and hinges) is functional. Lever handles dominate, but there are a few round door knobs which are not in compliance with the regulations of the revised ABA and ADA. However, historic properties can, in some circumstances, receive waivers from strict compliance. None of the locksets and latch sets, however, are historic.
- The brass finish on the door hardware is tarnished and scratched, and brass hinges and strike plates are marred by excess paint (Figure 149 and Figure 150).



FIGURE 149. Tarnished and scratched brass finish on door hardware.



FIGURE 150. Paint on brass hinges.

Structural System

The previously described masonry pier foundation and supplemental posts support the wood-framed structure of the house. The structure consists of 4x12 wood beams with a 2x4 ledger that spans north-south at the perimeter wall and along the center of the building (Figure 151). The 2x8 floor joists span east to west and are spaced 16 inches on center (Figure 152). The ends of the floor joists are anchored to the beam and notched to rest on the ledger. There is wood bridging at the mid-span between joints (Figure 153).



FIGURE 151. 4x12 wood beams span center of building.



FIGURE 152. View of 12x8 floor joists.



FIGURE 153. Wood bridging at mid-span between joints.

During the survey, no inspection openings were made, and the existing wall framing was not visible. Thus, existing conditions could not be documented or assessed. However, based on conditions observed at other houses along Auburn

Avenue that are wood-framed structures of similar design and period of construction, 503 Auburn Avenue is most likely balloon-framed consisting of 2x4 framing spaced 24 inches on center. As is typical of balloon framing, second-floor joists would be set on a ledger strip and nailed to the continuous vertical wall framing.

As observed at residential structures on Auburn Avenue, there is evidence that portions of the exterior siding were removed and either replaced or reinstalled. This repair may have also included the installation of a weather barrier between the wall framing and the new siding.

The second-floor ceiling is constructed of 2x6 joists spaced 16 inches on center. The spaces between joists are filled with batt insulation. Some of the ceiling joists have been sistered.

The roof of the house is constructed of actual 2x6 rafters spaced 24 inches on center with 2x6 ridge beams and a 1x6 ridge beam at the gable roof portions (Figure 154). On top of the framing is 1x8 roof sheathing; however, large areas have been replaced with plywood. In addition to the plywood sheathing, stabilization repairs were observed and appear to have been installed during stabilization and rehabilitation efforts between 1993 and 2000. These include the construction of a knee wall out of 2x4s to support the bottom of the hip roof rafters, installation of a wood beam and diagonal bracing at the mid-span of the rafter at the hip roof and gable roof areas, installation of 2x4 collar ties between roof rafters at the hip roof portion of the structure, and supplemental bracing of the ridge beams at the hip roof (Figure 155, Figure 156, Figure 157, and Figure 158). All bracing consists of two 2x4s anchored together to form a "T."



FIGURE 154. Roof of the house.



FIGURE 157. 2x4 collar ties between roof rafters at the hip roof portion of the structure.



FIGURE 155. Knee wall supporting the bottom of the hip roof rafters



FIGURE 158. Supplemental bracing of ridge beams at hip roof.



FIGURE 156. Wood beam and diagonal bracing at the mid-span of the rafter at the hip roof and gable roof areas

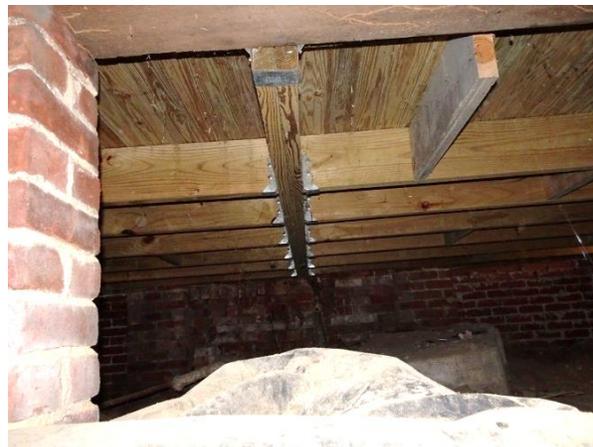


FIGURE 159. Front porch supports.

The front porch structure consists of 2x12 beams that span north-south and support 2x12 floor joists that are mounted to the beams with joist hangers (Figure 159). The porch roof is supported by posts encased in wood on the brick foundation piers.

Condition Assessment

- In general, the structure is in fair condition.
- Large gaps were observed at the interface between the roof and wall framing (Figure 160). While not visible from the exterior, sunlight and moving air were noticeable from the attic. The gaps were observed at the ceiling line and extended the full space between rafters.
- A continuous gap was observed at the joint between the south chimney and the adjacent wood-framed end gable (Figure 161). The joint was approximately 1/4 inch wide. While not visible from the exterior, sunlight and moving air were noticeable from the attic.



FIGURE 160. Gaps at interface between roof and wall framing.

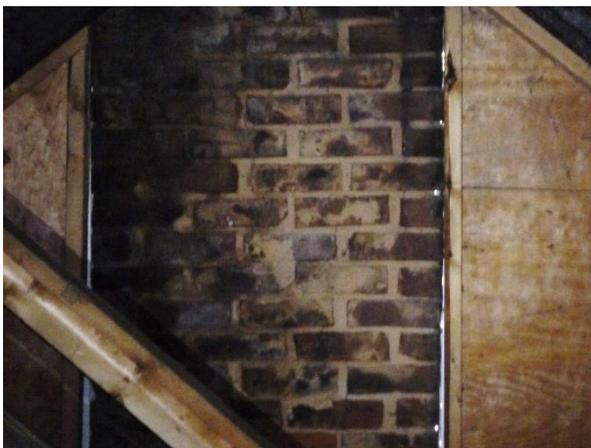


FIGURE 161. Gaps at interface between roof and wall framing.



FIGURE 162. Gaps at interface between roof and wall framing.

- Charred and previously burnt wood joists and sheathing members were observed at the roof structure (Figure 162). The charred members indicate previous fire damage to the roof. All structural members with evidence of fire damage appeared to have supplemental structural reinforcing.
- Moisture staining was observed at some plywood sheathing. The staining was located adjacent to chimneys. The moisture staining is an indication of moisture infiltration; however, there was no evidence of active water infiltration.

Mechanical and Plumbing Systems

The house is heated and cooled by two split (direct expansion [Dx]) systems. One gas-fired, horizontal-flow furnace and fan unit was installed in the attic and coupled with an outdoor condensing unit (Figure 163). Insulated ducts in the attic carry heated or cooled air from the fan coil unit to ceiling registers (Figure 164). A return air grille is in the ceiling of the central hall. The second gas-fired, up-flow furnace and fan unit was installed in the mechanical closet on the first floor and coupled with an outdoor condensing unit (Figure 165). Insulated ducts from this unit run in the interstitial space between the original ceilings and the lower, more recent, gypsum board ceilings on the first floor and distribute heated or cooled air to ceiling registers. There are also transfer grilles above the baseboards in the hall (Figure 166), presumably to facilitate the

Physical Description and Condition Assessment

movement of return air from the work spaces to the hall where the return air grille is in the ceiling (Figure 167). Condensing units for both split systems are located at grade on the east side of the house (Figure 168).



FIGURE 163. Gas-fired furnace and fan unit in the attic.



FIGURE 165. Up-flow, gas-fired furnace and fan unit in the first-floor mechanical closet.



FIGURE 164. Insulated round HVAC ducts in the attic.



FIGURE 166. Transfer grille in the first-floor hall.



FIGURE 167. Return air grille in the ceiling.



FIGURE 168. Condensing units on the east side of the house.

Each floor has a programmable thermostat centrally located in the main hallway (refer to Figure 176). In addition, ceiling fans augment air movement in the building and aid environmental comfort inside (Figure 169). All four restrooms are equipped with exhaust fans.



FIGURE 169. Office with ceiling fan.

Domestic plumbing in the house was also extensively updated during the early 2000s when the current restrooms replaced the small ones on both floors that existed since the late 1970s. The white plumbing fixtures are contemporary, and fiberglass shower units were incorporated into the second-floor restrooms. Other plumbing locations are the break room, which has a full-size kitchen sink integral with the solid-surface countertop, a

similar sink in the work room, and the upstairs janitor's closet that is fitted with a freestanding, fiberglass utility sink (Figure 170). An electric drinking fountain is located in a narrow niche in the main hall on each floor.

Drain and waste lines are PVC, and water supply lines are copper. Schedule 40 PVC pipe is code approved for most sanitary waste systems because of long-term performance and ease of installation. Domestic water is provided by the city of Atlanta through a meter on Auburn Avenue. A 40-gallon, low-profile, electric water heater is in the server / IT space under the stair. No records were found to document when the current water heater was installed, although, it was probably put in during the renovation project in the early 2000s (Figure 171). PVC waste lines are routed in the crawl space and, from there, to the public sanitary sewer system on Auburn Avenue (Figure 172).

Natural gas is only used to heat the building, as hot water is supplied by an electric water heater. The gas meter for 503 Auburn Avenue sits on the east side of the house near the front porch (Figure 173).



FIGURE 170. Solid surface countertop and integral solid surface sink in the break room. Countertop and sink in the work room are similar.



FIGURE 171. Hot water heater beneath the stair.



FIGURE 173. Gas meter and electric meter base at the northeast corner of the house.



FIGURE 172. PVC waste lines and insulated copper water lines in the crawl space.

Electrical System. According to Park records, the electrical system was updated and upgraded as part of the major renovation project in the early 2000s. Electrical service comes from the pole on Auburn Avenue to a weather head, conduit and meter base at the northeast corner of the house (Figure 174). The primary breaker panel is on the west side of the first-floor central hall, and a secondary breaker panel is positioned above it in the hall on the second floor (Figure 175 and Figure 176). In addition, new receptacles, switches, and light fixtures were installed. Currently, a few light fixtures and ceiling fans in the house have a vintage style but may not accurately represent fixtures from the period of significance (Figure 177). However, most light fixtures are conventional surface-mounted, 1-foot by 4-foot, fluorescent fixtures with wraparound plastic lenses (Figure 178). Lights are controlled by room occupancy sensors for convenience and energy savings.



FIGURE 174. Electric meter base at the northeast corner of the house.



FIGURE 177. Non-original, vintage-style light fixture. Note incongruous compact fluorescent light bulb.



FIGURE 175. Main breaker panel in the first-floor hall.



FIGURE 178. Typical surface-mounted, fluorescent light fixtures.



FIGURE 176. Secondary breaker panel in the second-floor hall. Programmable thermostat is on the right.

It is assumed that when the electrical system and electrical devices (receptacle, switches, fixtures, etc.) were last updated about fifteen years ago they complied with the requirements of the building code. For example, visible wiring in the attic and mechanical spaces is metal-clad (MC) cable (Figure 179), but some observed conditions did not have MC cable or conduit (Figure 180 and Figure 181).

There is a security system with the central monitoring station in the server / IT space beneath the stair. Sensors are dispersed throughout the house (Figure 182), and key pads are positioned in the foyer by the entry door and in the work room near the rear door. The date of installation is not known (Figure 183).



FIGURE 179. Metal-clad (MC) electrical cable.



FIGURE 181. Open junction and unshielded wires.



FIGURE 180. Insulated electrical wire not in conduit.



FIGURE 182. Motion detector.



FIGURE 183. Security system keypad in the foyer.

Life safety systems include electrically powered, ionization-type smoke and fire detectors, emergency lights, and lighted exit signs. However, the building is not sprinklered (Figure 184 and Figure 185).

Internet and telecommunications are supplied by overhead cable to a weather head and conduit attached to the northwest corner of the house. The conduit runs in the crawl space from that point to the server space on the east side of the house. Twisted-pair cable for computer networks and telephony (commonly referred to as Cat 5e or Cat 6 cable) runs from the hub in the server space to data and telephony or VOIP (voice over internet provider) jacks in all the offices and workspaces in the building (Figure 186 and Figure 187).



FIGURE 185. Emergency light.



FIGURE 184. Ceiling-mounted smoke and fire detector and illuminated exit sign on the second floor.



FIGURE 186. Server and blue Cat 5e cabling.

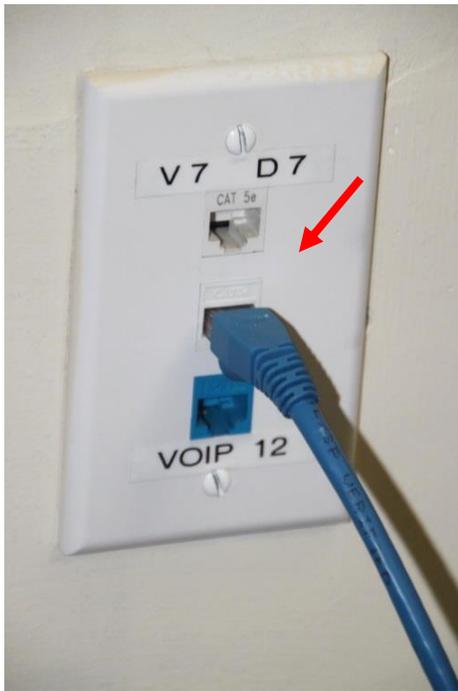


FIGURE 187. Typical data and VOIP jacks.

Condition Assessment

Mechanical and Plumbing Systems

- The house at 503 Auburn Avenue is heated and cooled by two Dx split-systems, with blower coil unit, gas heat, and outdoor condensing unit. According to the serial number on the unit that serves the first floor, it was manufactured in May 2000, and was most likely installed when the house was renovated in the early 2000s (Figure 188). Park records show periodic maintenance of HVAC units in 2008, 2010, and 2015. A date of manufacture or date of installation for the unit in the attic was not discernable, but facility management data for 2012 includes the cost to replace nine HVAC units. The unit that serves the second floor of 503 Auburn Avenue may be only five or six years old, if it was one of the nine new units. During the on-site visit for this report, no problems with the HVAC systems were mentioned by the park staff. Performing cyclic preventative maintenance will continue to extend the operation of both HVAC units.

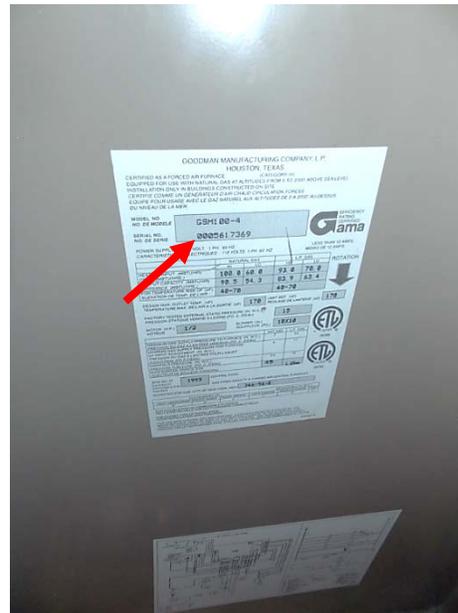


FIGURE 188. The first four digits of the serial number of Goodman equipment indicate the year and month when the unit is manufactured. The first-floor unit was made in May 2000.

Electrical Systems

- It is reasonable to assume that the existing electrical system was installed in compliance with the current electrical / building code in the early 2000s. Substantial changes to the building or a change in occupancy classification may require upgrades to bring the building and the electrical systems into compliance with present codes.
- The main and secondary electrical panels have the ample capacity and space for more circuit breakers (Figure 189).
- The server space beneath the dog-leg stair contains a host of electrical and electronic devices and equipment along with a hot water heater. The stair is constructed of combustible materials and is not a fire-rated assembly. In addition, the open stair is the only means of egress from the second floor.



FIGURE 189. Main electrical panel on the first floor.

Plumbing

- Plumbing in the house was replaced in the early 2000s. Copper domestic water lines are insulated in the crawl space and should also be insulated in exterior walls. Although copper is a proven, long-lasting material for domestic water piping, it is standard practice to insulate it to prevent freezing when it is exposed or installed above grade. Observation in the crawl space did reveal, in a few places, insulation delaminating on some water lines, a condition that could result in pipes bursting during cold weather (Figure 190).
- Sanitary waste lines are PVC. In the crawl space under the house, the main sanitary waste line is connected to the break room sink and work room sink waste lines, to waste lines from all four restrooms, to the utility sink, and to the electric drinking fountains. It is assumed that the main line exits from the crawl space at the east side of the house and ties into the public sewer line in Auburn Avenue. Schedule 40 PVC pipe is code-approved for most sanitary waste systems because of long-term performance and ease of installation.



FIGURE 190. Delaminating insulation on copper water pipe in the crawl space.

- From a city water meter along Auburn Avenue, the main domestic water line enters the crawl space and runs horizontally and then vertically to a 40-gallon gas water heater tucked under the dog-leg stair. From there, hot and cold water are distributed to sinks and restrooms. The water heater is in serviceable condition, but it does not have an insulation jacket. No leaks into the drain pan were noted. The questionable location of the water heater under the stair and in proximity to major electronic equipment was noted above.

Fire Protection and Life Safety

- Fire protection is limited to electrically powered, ionization-type detectors mounted on ceilings. At the time 503 Auburn Avenue was surveyed, operation of the smoke and fire detectors could not be determined. Records of installation, periodic maintenance, and detector replacement were not available except for vague work orders in 2007 and 2009 related to the fire-protection system. Portable fire extinguishers were purchased and placed in the house in 2012, according to facility management data.

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Significance and Integrity

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.¹³⁷

Properties are nominated to the National Register of Historic Places through preparation of documentation related to the historical development, current conditions, and historic integrity of its resources. National Register nominations also include a significance evaluation that identifies the important historical associations of the property, and comments on its architectural, archeological, and social values as they relate to the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. A property's significance is tied to a discrete period of time in which its important contributions were made and to relevant national, state, and local historic contexts.

Significance Criteria

In order for a property to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, it must possess significance under one of four criteria. The Criteria for Evaluation for listing in the National Register of Historic Places state:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties *will qualify* if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

- a. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or

137. National Park Service, "National Register of Historic Places" accessed May 22, 2019, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>.

- b. A building or structure removed from its original location but which is primarily significant for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
- c. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building associated with his or her productive life; or
- d. A cemetery that derives its primary importance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- e. A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
- f. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or
- g. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.¹³⁸

National Register Status of 503 Auburn Avenue, NE

National Register of Historic Places documentation pertaining to Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park reviewed for purposes of this project includes the following:

- *National Register nomination documentation for Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District*, bounded approximately by Irwin, Randolph, Edgewood, Jackson, and Auburn Avenues. Documentation prepared by Elizabeth Z. Macgregor, Architectural Historian, and Carole A. Summers, Coordinator, Historic Sites Survey, Historic Preservation Section,

138. *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 36, Part 60, "The National Register Criteria for Evaluation."

Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, March 25, 1974; entered in the National Register May 2, 1974.¹³⁹

The National Register form used at the time allowed preparers to select date ranges as significant periods. The preparers of the NHL documentation selected 1800—1899 and 1900—as significant periods. The form identifies areas of significance including Architecture, Education, Political, Religion / Philosophy, and Other: History. The nomination documentation cites several structures that together “comprise an identifiable and definable historic district”; these structures include Ebenezer Baptist Church, the gravesite of Martin Luther King Jr; King’s birthplace and boyhood home at 501 Auburn Avenue; shotgun row houses and Victorian houses on Auburn Avenue; the Alexander Hamilton House at 102 Howell Street; the Atlanta Baptist Preparatory Institute at 535 Auburn Avenue; Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church Mission; and Fire Station No. 6.¹⁴⁰ Although 503 Auburn Avenue was not specifically named, the “Victorian Houses” that lined the Birth Home block were indicated as contributing resources.¹⁴¹ This would include 503 Auburn Avenue.

- *National Historic Landmark documentation for Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District*, including Auburn Street between Jackson and Howell Streets. Documentation prepared by Benjamin Levy, Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service, Washington, DC (based on the work of Elizabeth Z. Macgregor and Carole A. Summers, Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, State of Georgia, and Joseph S. Mendinghall, Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation), 1973. The historic district was listed in the National

139. Macgregor and Summers. The nomination form notes that the Atlanta Baptist Preparatory Institute site was, at the time the nomination documentation was prepared, occupied by apartments.

140. Ibid.

141. Ibid.

Register on May 2, 1974. The historic district was designated a National Historic Landmark on May 5, 1977.

The National Historic Landmark nomination was prepared using a National Register form, as was the convention at the time. As noted above, the form allowed preparers to select date ranges as significant periods. The National Historic Landmark documentation cites the period of significance as 1800–1899 and 1900–, and relevant areas of significance as Architecture, Education, and Religion. An inventory of individual buildings provided with this documentation is entitled, “Martin Luther King National Historic Landmark – Inventory.”¹⁴² The building at 503 Auburn Avenue is included in the inventory with the following notation:

503 Auburn Avenue. ca. 1895. This building was first occupied by white residents. After 1905, a series of black residents lived here. The house is now owned and occupied by the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Non-Violent [sic] Social Change. This is a well-preserved example of the Queen Anne style of architecture.¹⁴³

- *National Register documentation for Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site*, which comprises a historic district approximately bounded by Jackson, Howell, and Old Wheat Streets and Edgewood Avenue. This documentation was prepared by Robert Blythe, Maureen A. Carroll, and Steven H. Moffson, National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, and certified by the Keeper of the National Register on May 4, 1994.¹⁴⁴

142. Levy, n.p. See also Mendinghall, n.p.

143. Levy, n.p.

144. Blythe et al., *National Register documentation*. Blythe, Carroll, and Moffson also prepared a *Historic Resource Study for the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site* that includes a significance assessment consistent with that provided in the 1994 National Register nomination documentation.

The 1994 documentation indicates that the historic district is significant under Criteria A, B, and C, and Criteria Considerations A, C, and G. Areas of significance cited include the following: Ethnic Heritage, black; Social History, Commerce, and Architecture. The period of significance is given as circa 1880–1968, and specific significant dates cited include 1929, 1968, and 1906. The documentation addresses three historic contexts, as follows:

- A. The Development of a Black Community and Leader: Atlanta's Auburn Avenue Neighborhood and Martin Luther King, Jr., 1906–1948
- B. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement, 1955–1968
- C. Architectural Resources of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, ca. 1880–1950

The 1994 documentation notes that the district lists thirty-five contributing buildings. It includes 503 Auburn Avenue as a contributing building and offers the following specific commentary:

503 Auburn Avenue, ca. 1895 (IDLCS #0090012). A two-story house with Queen Anne elements. The house features a hip roof with a front-facing gable and an addition at the rear. Beneath the shingle-clad gable end is a three-sided cutaway bay with a jigsaw panel at the second story. A one-story porch supported on brick piers and square columns runs across the facade. One pier lacks a post, which may originally have been present. The front yard has five granite steps leading to the house from the sidewalk, built ca. 1895–1915.¹⁴⁵

The building at 503 Auburn Avenue is included as a contributing building under Context A, “The Development of a Black Community and Leader: Atlanta's Auburn

145. *Ibid.*, Section 7, 12–13.

Avenue Neighborhood and Martin Luther King, Jr., 1906–1948.” Under this context, 503 Auburn Avenue and its granite front yard steps—together with other residences in the historic district—are listed as contributing to the historic district’s national significance.

In this documentation, 503 Auburn Avenue is also listed as a contributing building under Context C, “Architectural Resources of the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, circa 1880–1950.” This context addresses buildings within the historic district possessing local architectural significance. The documentation notes that although these buildings do not represent high-style architecture, they do “. . . represent residential and commercial buildings common in urban areas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,” and they also “serve as good examples of local adaptations of popular methods of construction which often incorporate elements of nationally popular architectural styles.”¹⁴⁶ The 503 Auburn Avenue building is also noted as a variation of the Queen Anne Style, with “jigsaw” wall panels. The granite front steps with thin marble cheek walls dated before 1915 are noted as distinctive landscape features.¹⁴⁷

The residence at 503 Auburn Avenue is included under the category “single-family houses with Queen Anne elements,” together with several other buildings nearby on Auburn Avenue.

The building at 503 Auburn Avenue and other neighborhood residences are not contributing under Context B, “Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement, 1955–1968.” This context includes as contributing resources the nationally significant Ebenezer Baptist Church and Martin Luther King Jr. grave site.

- *National Register documentation for Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District Boundary*

146. *Ibid.*, Section 8, 20–21.

147. *Ibid.*, Section 8, 55–56.

Increase and Additional Documentation, for an area approximately bounded by Freedom Parkway and John Wesley Dobbs Avenue on the north, Decatur Street on the south, the Southern Railway line on the east, and Interstate 75/85 on the west. This documentation was prepared by Steven H. Moffson, Architectural Historian, Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, with John A. Kissane, Historic Preservation Consultant, Historic District Development Corporation, Atlanta, Georgia. The documentation was certified by the National Register on June 21, 2001.¹⁴⁸

The documentation cites a period of significance of 1853–1968, beginning with the opening of Auburn Avenue (then called Wheat Street), and citing specific dates including 1906, the Atlanta Race Riot; 1917, the Atlanta fire; 1929, the birth of Martin Luther King Jr.; 1964, the strike at the Scripto plant and the opening of the Wheat Street Gardens I Housing Complex; 1968, the death of Martin Luther King Jr.; and 1976, construction of the Martin Luther King Jr. grave site.

The Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation indicates that there are 443 contributing buildings, 1 contributing site, and 1 contributing structure (not including 37 previously listed resources) and 79 non-contributing buildings. The building at 503 Auburn Avenue is not specifically addressed in this documentation, as it is within the boundaries of the previously established historic district.¹⁴⁹

In 2018, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site was designated Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park. The status of 503 Auburn Avenue remains a contributing resource.

The findings of this Historic Resource Study concur with those of previous National Register and National Historic Landmark documentation. The building at 503 Auburn Avenue is a

148. Moffson and Kissane.

149. *Ibid.*, n.p.

contributing structure to the historic district, as a part of the Sweet Auburn neighborhood and as a resource present during the years in which Martin Luther King Jr. lived, grew up, and visited in the neighborhood. The 503 Auburn Avenue building survives with sufficient integrity to convey its historic associations.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for 503 Auburn Avenue is associated with the development of the Auburn Avenue neighborhood and surrounding community, as well as with Martin Luther King Jr.'s life there. The park interprets resources including the residences on the Birth Home block to 1929–1941, representing Martin Luther King Jr.'s formative years living at 501 Auburn Avenue, NE. As noted above, National Register documentation prepared in 1994 identified a period of significance of 1880–1968, and a boundary increase and additional documentation prepared in 2001 identified a period of significance of 1853–1968, for the overarching historic district. A period of significance of circa 1895–1968 is relevant for 503 Auburn Avenue, as the building was constructed in 1895. This period addresses the local historical and architectural significance of the building at 503 Auburn Avenue, from its date of construction through of the death of Dr. King.¹⁵⁰

Character-Defining Features

The historic nature of significant buildings and structures is defined by their character, which is embodied in their identifying physical features. Character-defining features can include the shape of a building; its materials, craftsmanship, interior spaces, and features; and the different components of its surroundings.¹⁵¹

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150. Prior National Register documentation, including most recently the 2001 Boundary Extension and Additional Documentation, indicates a period of significance for the historic district ending in 1968, with the death of Dr. King.
151. Lee H. Nelson, FAIA, *Preservation Brief 17: Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual*

The following list identifies existing character-defining features found on the exterior and interior of 503 Auburn Avenue:

Exterior

- General configuration, massing, and orientation of the original portion of the building.
- Brick foundation walls.
- Bay window.
- Original horizontal wood siding.
- Decorative woodwork.
- Covered porch at north elevation.
- Wood-framed exterior doors (where original).
- Original double-hung wood windows.
- Gable and hipped roofs over the residence.
- Three masonry chimneys.

Interior

The interior of 503 Auburn Avenue was comprehensively renovated in the early 2000s by the National Park Service. No definitive documentation was found for the renovation project that was authorized and bid, thus it appears likely that the work was accomplished by the Park. The interior survey conducted for this study indicates that the interior was substantially renovated, including changes to the general floor plan configuration to accommodate NPS offices. Thus, the remaining character-defining historic features of the interior are very limited.

- First-floor plan configuration, limited to the foyer, the central hall, and the rooms on the west side of the hall: the meeting room, work

Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, 1988).

room, and the front (NW) room with an octagonal bay that faces Auburn Avenue.

- Masonry fireplace in the northeast corner of the first-floor work room, currently concealed by a gypsum board partition.
- Masonry fireplace between first-floor director's office and meeting room, currently concealed by gypsum board partitions.
- Second-floor general floor plan configuration, limited to the central hall and the front (northwest) room with an octagonal bay facing Auburn Avenue.
- Second-floor masonry fireplace and chimney in the northeast corner of office 4, currently concealed by a gypsum board partition, and masonry fireplace and chimney between office 2 and office 3, currently concealed by gypsum board partitions.
- Limited original wood trim and flooring, where present.

Assessment of Integrity

Assessment of integrity is based on an evaluation of the existence and condition of the physical features that date to a property's period of significance, taking into consideration the degree to which the individual qualities of integrity are present. The seven aspects of integrity as defined in the National Register Criteria for Evaluation are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. As noted in the *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*:

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. . . . Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. . . . Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. . . . Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. . . .

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. . . . Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. . . . Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.¹⁵²

The property must retain the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historical significance. The essential physical features are those features that define both why a property is significant (National Register criteria) and when it was significant (period of significance). The *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* defines integrity as "the ability of a property to convey its significance."¹⁵³

The historic integrity of 503 Auburn Avenue has been assessed within the context of its local architectural and historical significance, as well as a contributing resource within the historic district associated with the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr.

Integrity of Location. The residence at 503 Auburn Avenue retains integrity of location in relationship to its site. The location of the building has remained unchanged since it was originally constructed.

Integrity of Design. The building exterior retains integrity of design. Recent repair and restoration efforts have maintained the original exterior appearance of the building. Past exterior modifications have been constructed at the rear facade and have not affected the more visible elevations of the building. The integrity of design of the interior is diminished by the extensive previous renovation work; however, the exterior is considered more important as part of the context of the Birth Home block.

152. *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 44–45.

153. *Ibid.*

Integrity of Setting. The residence at 503 Auburn Avenue retains integrity of setting. The Sweet Auburn neighborhood continues to consist of single-family and multi-unit residences, as it did during the building's period of significance. Additionally, most of these residences date to the period of significance.

Integrity of Materials and Workmanship. The building exterior retains integrity of materials and workmanship. The restoration performed in the 1990s and 2000s reused existing historic materials where possible; however, replacement was performed for much of the original wood siding, brick masonry at the foundation and chimneys, and some windows and doors. The integrity of materials and workmanship of the interior is diminished by extensive previous renovation work.

Integrity of Feeling. The residence at 503 Auburn Avenue retains integrity of feeling. The structure was originally constructed as a residence and while it no longer retains that function today, the exterior of the building still reflects a residential building. Alterations to the building have not significantly altered the exterior character of the residence.

Integrity of Association. An important aspect of the significance of the residence at 503 Auburn Avenue is its association with the Sweet Auburn neighborhood during the time Martin Luther King Jr. resided in the area. The residence remains an integral part of the neighborhood and helps to strengthen the connection to the neighborhood's period of significance. As a result, 503 Auburn Avenue retains integrity of association.

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Treatment and Use

Requirements for Treatment and Use

The following discussion of treatment and use for the building at 503 Auburn Avenue has been prepared based on historical research, condition assessment, and discussion with the National Park Service to understand intended current and future use of the building. The house is considered a contributing structure to the immediate neighborhood of the Martin Luther King Jr. Birth Home and survives with integrity to convey its historic associations.

As such, treatment and use of the house should be considered within the context of the legal mandates and policy directives established by National Park Service Cultural Resources Management Guideline (Director's Order 28), as well as the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, for the protection of cultural resources. The building should be understood as a contributing context structure for the Birth Home neighborhood, although it is not in itself individually significant. The exterior of the house is therefore more important in providing historic context than the interior, although a few remaining original features of the interior are character-defining. The building at 503 Auburn Avenue is expected to remain in use as park offices and support space.

Laws, Regulations, and Functional Requirements

Key laws, regulations, and functional requirements that apply to the recommended work include the following:

- National Park Service Cultural Resources Management Guideline (Director's Order 28), which requires planning for the protection of cultural resources on park property.
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which mandates that federal agencies, including the National Park Service, take into account the effects of their actions on properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and give the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment.

Treatment of the building and site are also to be guided by the following:

- *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*
- National Park Service Management Policies, 2006
- Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS)
- International Building Code (IBC), 2018
- International Existing Building Code (IEBC), 2018
- International Plumbing Code (IPC)
- National Electrical Safety Code (NESC)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101: Life Safety Code (LSC), 2015 and NFPA 1 Uniform Fire Code
- NPS Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design

The State of Georgia has adopted the 2012 IBC with Georgia Amendments (2018) for statewide applicability. The State of Georgia has also permitted local jurisdictions the option of adopting the 2012 IEBC with Georgia State Amendments (2015); however, based on information available on the county web site, Fulton County has not adopted this code. (Based on the county web site, Fulton County has adopted the National Electrical Code [NEC] with Georgia State Amendments.) The National Park Service is self-regulating in terms of enacting and enforcing building code standards. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park is therefore not legally subject to local or state building code requirements. When undertaking repairs to buildings and structures, the National Park Service endeavors to have the work comply with model building code standards. At this time, the 2018 IBC is the model building code used by the National Park Service for design and construction. The NPS Denver Service Center also references the 2018 IEBC, with appendices and Resource A.

With historic structures, attempts to achieve strict conformance with model building code standards that are intended for new buildings can lead to destruction of the historic fabric. Alternative compliance procedures, such as Chapter 12 of the IEBC relating to historic buildings, should be referenced in determining code compliance. For 503 Auburn Avenue, alternatives to full prescriptive legislative and code compliance should be considered where such compliance would compromise the integrity of the structure.

The 2018 IEBC includes the following statements in Section 507, Historic Buildings:

507.1 Historic buildings. The provisions of this code that require improvements relative to a building's existing condition or, in the case of *repairs*, that require improvements relative to a building's pre-damage condition, shall not be mandatory for *historic buildings* unless specifically required by this section.

507.2 Life safety hazards. The provisions of this code shall apply to *historic buildings* judged by the building official to constitute a distinct life safety hazard.

507.3 Flood hazard areas. Within flood *hazard areas* established in accordance with Section 1612.3 of the *International Building Code*, or Section R322 of the *International Residential Code*, as applicable, where the work proposed constitutes *substantial improvement*, the building shall be brought into compliance with Section 1612 of the *International Building Code*, or Section R322 of the *International Residential Code*, as applicable:

Exception: *Historic buildings* need not be brought into compliance that are:

1. Listed or preliminarily determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;
2. Determined by the Secretary of the US Department of Interior as contributing to the historical significance of a registered historic district or a district preliminarily determined to qualify as an historic district; or
3. Designated as historic under a state or local historic preservation program that is approved by the Department of Interior.

507.4 Structural. Historic buildings shall comply with the applicable structural provisions in this chapter.

Exceptions:

1. The *code official* shall be authorized to accept existing floors and existing live loads and to approve operational controls that limit the live load on any floor.
2. Repair of *substantial structural damage* is not required to comply with Sections 405.2.3, and 405.2.4. *Substantial structural damage* shall be repaired in accordance with Section 405.2.1.¹⁵⁴

The IEBC exceptions noted above pertain to Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park as a property listed in the National Register. In addition, Executive Order 13693 issued in 2015 directs all federal agencies to implement sustainable design and construction practices,

154. International Code Council, Inc., *International Existing Building Code 2018* (Country Club Hills, Illinois: International Code Council, 2017).

including reducing agency building energy intensity by 2.5 percent annually through the end of fiscal year 2025, relative to the baseline of the agency's building energy use in fiscal year 2015, and reducing agency potable water consumption intensity by 36 percent by fiscal year 2025 through reductions of 2 percent annually through fiscal year 2025, relative to a baseline of the agency's water consumption in fiscal year 2007.¹⁵⁵

Also, newly installed electrical systems and components, including any significant alterations to existing electrical systems, should comply with applicable provisions of the NFPA 70: NEC.

Alternatives for Treatment and Use

The National Park Service has developed definitions for the four major treatments that may be applied to historic structures: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. The four definitions are as follows:

Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project. However, new exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment. The Standards for Preservation require retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric along with the building's historic form.

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or

features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. The Rehabilitation Standards acknowledge the need to alter or add to a historic building to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the building's historic character.

Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project. The Restoration Standards allow for the depiction of a building at a particular time in its history by preserving materials, features, finishes, and spaces from its period of significance and removing those from other periods.

Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location. The Reconstruction Standards establish a limited framework for recreating a vanished or non-surviving building with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes.¹⁵⁶

Of the four treatment approaches, *rehabilitation*, which involves making possible a compatible use through repair, alterations, or additions, is most appropriate for the 503 Auburn Avenue building. This treatment would allow for the repairs necessary to stabilize and preserve the building, while permitting minor renovation to meet the needs of contemporary park visitation, interpretation, and National Park Service management needs.

Preservation, which involves sustaining the building in its existing form, is to some extent in progress as a result of ongoing repair and cyclical

155. "Executive Order 13693: Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade," signed March 19, 2015.

156. Grimmer.

maintenance implemented by the park. Further, similar preservation efforts would be incorporated in the overarching rehabilitation treatment approach. *Restoration*, which would return the building to its appearance during the period of significance, is not supported by available documentation.

Retention of original materials and character-defining features during rehabilitation work is practical and appropriate, and will also assist in the use of 503 Auburn Avenue to interpret the Birth Home neighborhood to the public.

Ultimate Treatment and Use

Guidelines for Treatment

Guidelines and recommendations for treatment for 503 Auburn Avenue have been defined based on the preservation objectives and requirements for treatment and use outlined above. All treatment guidelines and recommendations were developed in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are as follows:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.¹⁵⁷

157. Ibid.

Guidelines for implementing the treatment recommendations provided herein are as follows:

- Undertake all work on the structure in compliance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.
- Retain the character of the historic structure and environs by protecting the structure and significant site features.
- Ensure that proposed new elements or construction are compatible with the historic character of the structure and its site.
- Protect adjacent natural resources during construction activities.
- Document through detailed as-built drawings, photographs, and written narrative all changes and treatments to the building and its immediate site. Maintain records of treatments and preserve documentation according to professional archival standards. Maintain a copy of records in the NPS archives.
- Retain features and materials at both the exterior and interior of the buildings that survive from the period of significance to the greatest extent possible.
- Incorporate sustainable design principles in all future projects that respect the preservation principles listed above.

Recommendations

The following specific recommendations for treatment of 503 Auburn Avenue respond to the overarching treatment approach *rehabilitation*, which involves making possible a compatible use for the building through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Exterior

- Access to the south deck was limited by the NPS at the time of site work for this study. As

discussed with representatives of the NPS during the site work, access should continue to be restricted until repairs to deteriorated wood elements and the foundation are implemented.

- Missing and severely damaged guardrails at the south deck should be removed and replaced with new code-compliant guardrails in concert with comprehensive repairs to the wood deck and foundation.
- Consider incorporating an ABAAS-compliant ramp or a lift for accessibility when repairing / rebuilding the south deck.
- The south deck, where the foundation has been undercut by erosion, should be temporarily shored and the masonry piers and infill wall removed. A new concrete foundation should be installed that extends a minimum 12 inches below the grade of the adjacent crawl space. New brick piers and infill wall should be reconstructed on the new concrete foundation.
- Open and deteriorated joints at the masonry foundation wall should be repointed. Localized areas with loose or missing brick masonry should be dismantled and rebuilt.
- Masonry construction that exhibits bowing, such as two of the three chimneys, should be examined close-up to determine if repairs are needed in the near term. If the masonry is found to be stable, the chimneys should be monitored for movement or displacement.
- Cupped, buckled, and deteriorated tongue-and-groove deck boards should be removed and replaced with matching boards. All boards should be primed on all faces prior to installation and painted to match existing.
- Displaced window sash and broken glazing should be removed, deglazed, repaired as required to make the sash square and plumb, re-glazed, and reinstalled.

Treatment and Use

- Areas of decay at wood siding, trim, and decorative elements should be removed and new wood dutchman installed. The dutchman should match the existing wood in profile and should be primed and painted to match the existing.
- Split, cracked, and warped wood siding and trim boards should be repaired where possible, or replaced with matching new boards.
- Open joints between dissimilar materials, such as between the wood siding and the masonry chimney, should be sealed with backer rod and sealant. Gaps between the wood siding and window opening trim may also be sealed with sealant.
- Loose nails at the wood siding and trim should be removed and replaced with stainless steel ring shank nails.
- Loose and displaced wood trim should be either re-secured, or removed and reinstalled with stainless steel ring shank nails.
- At locations where paint distress or loss is observed, the wood surface should be scraped, spot primed, and painted to match the original color scheme, using alkyd-based paints formulated for exterior wood.
- Window glass should be cleaned to remove paint coatings and markings.
- The asphalt shingle roof should be maintained and periodically monitored for indications of water infiltration. Plant debris that accumulates on the roof should be removed and gutters and downspouts should be cleaned and routed seasonally.
- The building should be inspected and treated regularly for termites and other insect pests that are endemic in the region.
- Insect nests should be removed from the exterior walls regularly.

- Consideration should be given to providing wood-framed screens at all operable windows, if determined to be appropriate to the historic character of the building exterior.

Interior

Guidelines and recommendations for interior conditions address issues resulting from general wear and tear. Because the interior has been substantially rehabilitated and altered at least twice in the past forty years, most of the original character-defining features and materials were not retained, and available documentation of the changes is deficient. Therefore, the guidelines and recommendations for interior conditions address issues resulting from general wear and tear while focusing primarily on sustained maintenance, essential repairs, and code compliance.

- Future interior alterations and changes should not contribute to the loss of the few remaining character-defining features and materials listed in the significance assessment that follows.
- Consider rehabilitation of the fireplaces that are presently concealed by gypsum board partitions during future rehabilitation of the interior.
- Preserve the character-defining floor plan configurations of both floors, which appear to be compatible with the current use of the building.
- Accomplish programmed cyclic maintenance and essential repairs, such as painting, carpet replacement, and cleaning.
- Conduct a code-compliance assessment of 503 Auburn Avenue and address compliance issues. Possible code issues include one open (stair) means of egress from the second floor, that stair is constructed of combustible materials, and the presence of electrical equipment and a hot water heater under that stair.

- An electric cooktop was observed in the break room. Current codes may require fire suppression at the appliance and adequate fire separation from adjacent spaces if the break room is classified as a kitchen. It is recommended that the cooktop be removed.
- Determine compliance with NFPA 101: Life Safety Code. Strobe lights and sirens and / or annunciators may need to be added to the building and tied into an upgraded fire detection and alarm system.
- Consider alterations and upgrades as needed to make the first floor accessible and to comply with the requirements of the ABAAS. For example, a ramp or a lift for first-floor accessibility (the second floor is not accessible without an elevator or a lift, but that may not be necessary depending of the use of the building and the second floor). The restrooms and the break room also need modifications to meet accessibility requirements.

Structural

- Consider a structural analysis of the building to determine the limit(s) for floor loads in the building. Concentrated loads from file cabinets were noted on both floors, and a structural analysis will aid in determining the capacity of the wood structure to support such loads.

Mechanical and Electrical Systems

- Accomplish programmed cyclic maintenance and essential repairs, particularly for mechanical and electrical systems, fixtures, equipment, and devices.
- Monitor HVAC equipment for proper and efficient operation and plan for replacement of failing equipment with modern, energy-efficient systems.
- Conditioning and dehumidifying the interior of historic structure can result in unexpected consequences that may accelerate the deterioration of interior materials and finishes and the potential for mold and mildew.

Consider factors such as air and moisture infiltration and vapor and moisture barriers at the building envelope when new HVAC systems are required.

Current and forthcoming work

Work currently in progress or planned by the park to be completed at the house includes the following:

- Repairs to the south deck.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Conduct finishes analysis of painted wood on the exterior of the house to identify historic original / historic color schemes.
2. Conduct a structural analysis of the building to determine floor load limits.
3. Conduct an accessibility study and code compliance analysis in support of recommendations noted above.
4. Further research should be conducted to identify sources and availability of additional archival materials related to 503 Auburn Avenue, such as photographs, documents, contracts, drawings, blueprints, landscape plans, illustrations, newsletters, brochures, etc. All current and former places of park storage, old administrative offices, former maintenance sites, and any location that may have served as some type of park administrative, interpretive, maintenance, or shop space should be searched for old files related to this structure. Consideration should be given to requesting the transfer of materials from other park departments to the main park archive. If items such as original drawings need to be retained in a department, then a copy should be made for the main archives with a notation as to the location of the original.
5. Files and information on maintenance, construction activities, furnishings, etc., should be researched at the King Center, and copied and added to the park archives. Their

location within the King Center archives should be noted.

6. Meeting notes, correspondence, photographs, drawings, specifications, and related construction documentation of the nationally significant Atlanta architectural firm of J.W. Robinson and Associates, which undertook the first rehabilitation of 503 Auburn Avenue, should be researched and any materials related to the house and the architect's work should be copied and filed with the park archives.

Resilience to Natural Hazards

Although the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park is located in urban Atlanta and is not sited in a coastal location, the site is still considered vulnerable to current and future threats associated with natural hazards.

Increasingly frequent strong storms and heavy rainfall have been noted for several years in the southeastern United States. Studies of effects of natural hazards on the State of Georgia and the Atlanta area have also indicated a predicted significant rise in average temperatures, coupled with periods of intense rainfall and associated flooding.¹⁵⁸ However, the more significant threat to the region may be drought, together with increased water demand in the Atlanta region.

Weather and climate-related threats to resources have already been felt in the Atlanta area. For example, the remnants of Hurricane Frances caused extensive damage estimated at \$41 million in the region, primarily from flooding, and 2007 saw a severe drought and the largest forest fire in over a century, with damage estimated at \$1 billion.¹⁵⁹

Although threats are more immediate to coastal historic sites, inland historic sites similarly require

identification of the resources anticipated to be threatened—both buildings and landscapes—and planning for protection as well as mitigation in the face of increased storms.

As loss of historic resource integrity may occur, suddenly or slowly, from conditions related to natural hazards, documentation is the first response to mitigate anticipated loss or diminishment, or to plan for the impacts associated with natural hazards. This Historic Structures Report, including the historical narrative condition assessment, and recommendations, together with photographs and measured drawings, is an important part of the documentation process.

As part of future efforts to build on and update the documentation provided in this Historic Structures Report, the National Park Service should consider such approaches as developing more detailed documentation resulting from new three-dimensional scanning technology, monitoring weather-related deterioration, updating emergency and disaster planning to address natural hazards-related issues, and implementing strategic planning for mitigation of the effects of natural hazards on park resources. The latter may include special protection, documentation, and interpretation measures to address resources that are especially vulnerable to damage or loss due to natural hazards.

In addition to threats to the historic resources, natural hazards will affect visitation patterns. A park-specific brief has been prepared on this issue, and notes the historical relationship between visitation and temperature, finding that temperature was a significant predictor of visitation. The brief further notes that understanding this relationship, and taking advantage of continued study, will help park management “adapt to the effects of natural hazards and remain effective resource stewards while promoting visitor experience.”¹⁶⁰

158. Judith Curry, “Local Warming: Consequences of Climate Change for Atlanta,” Georgia Tech University, accessed February 13, 2018, http://curry.eas.gatech.edu/climate/pdf/atlanta_rev.pdf.

159. *Ibid.*

160. National Park Service, “Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site: How might future

Efforts conducted for Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park, will benefit from coordination with other planning and documentation projects to address effects of natural hazards under consideration or in the process of being implemented by the National Park Service in the Southeast Region. Future severe weather events, rising sea levels, and other impacts related to natural hazards should be anticipated and considered in planning for protection and maintenance of the site and its resources.

warming affect visitation?" Park Visitation and Climate Change, Park-specific Brief (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Natural Resource Stewardship & Science, 2016).

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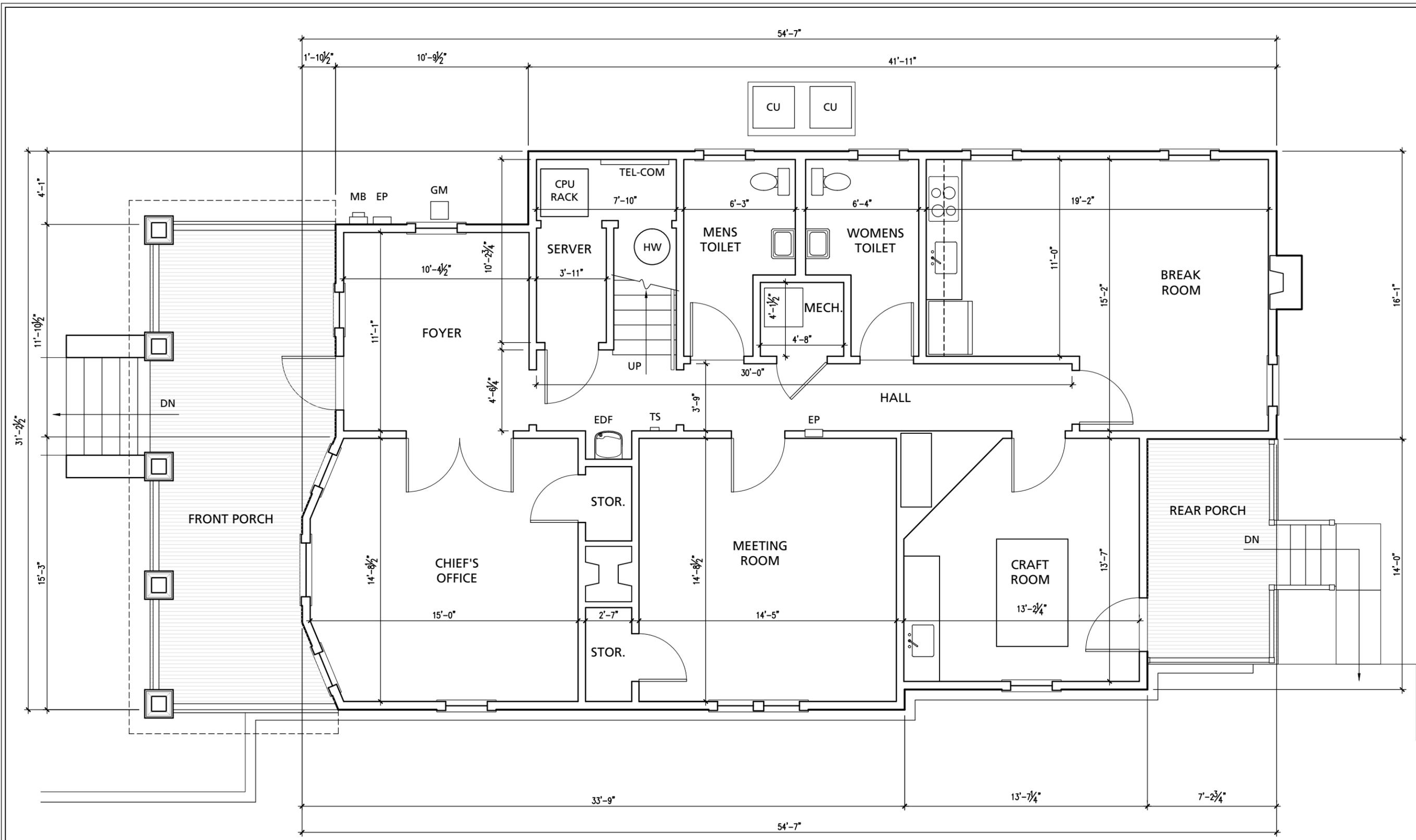
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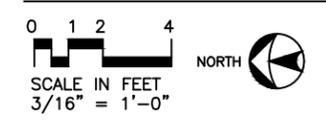
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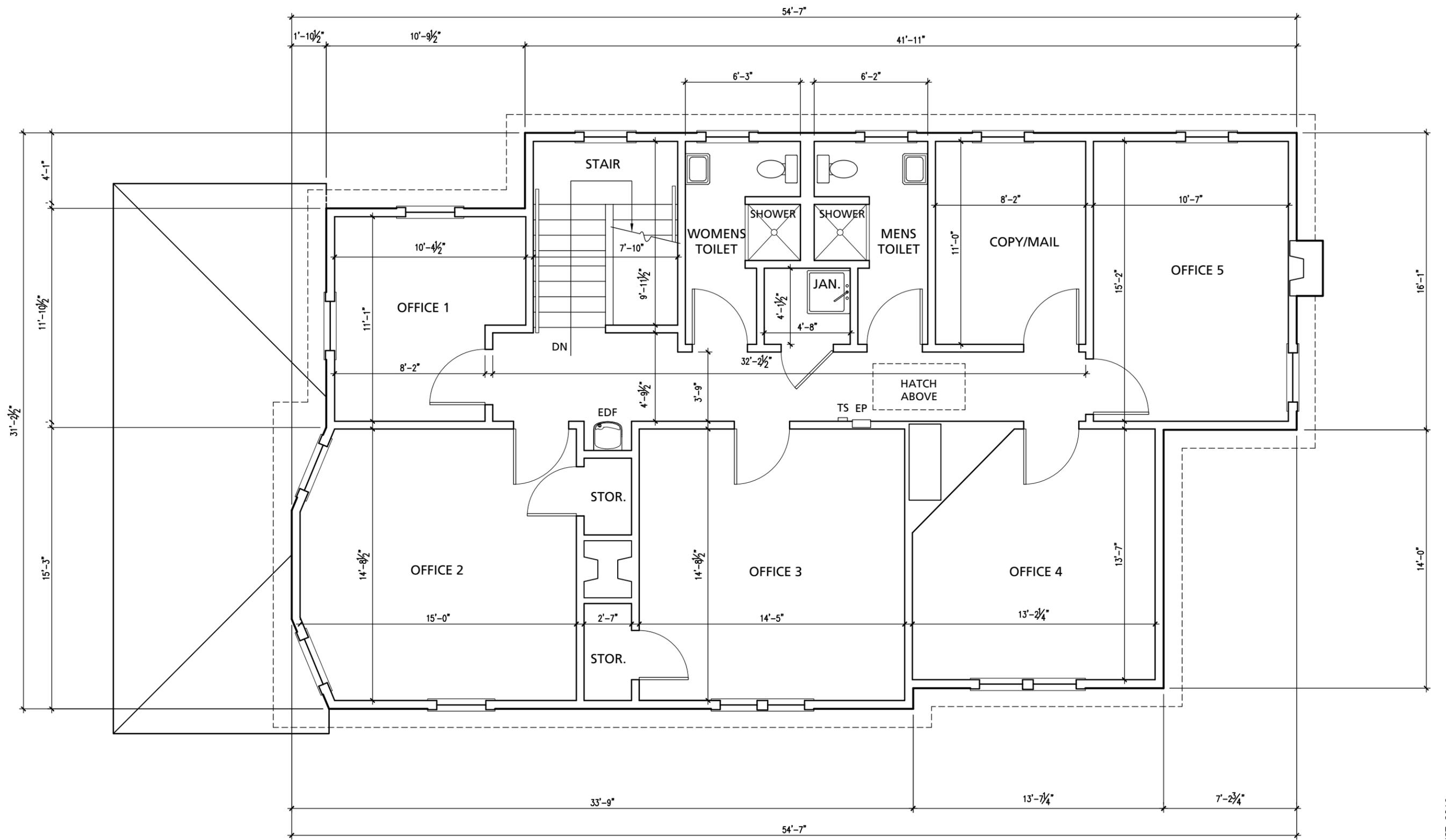
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Appendix A: Measured Drawings

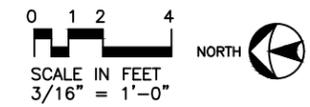


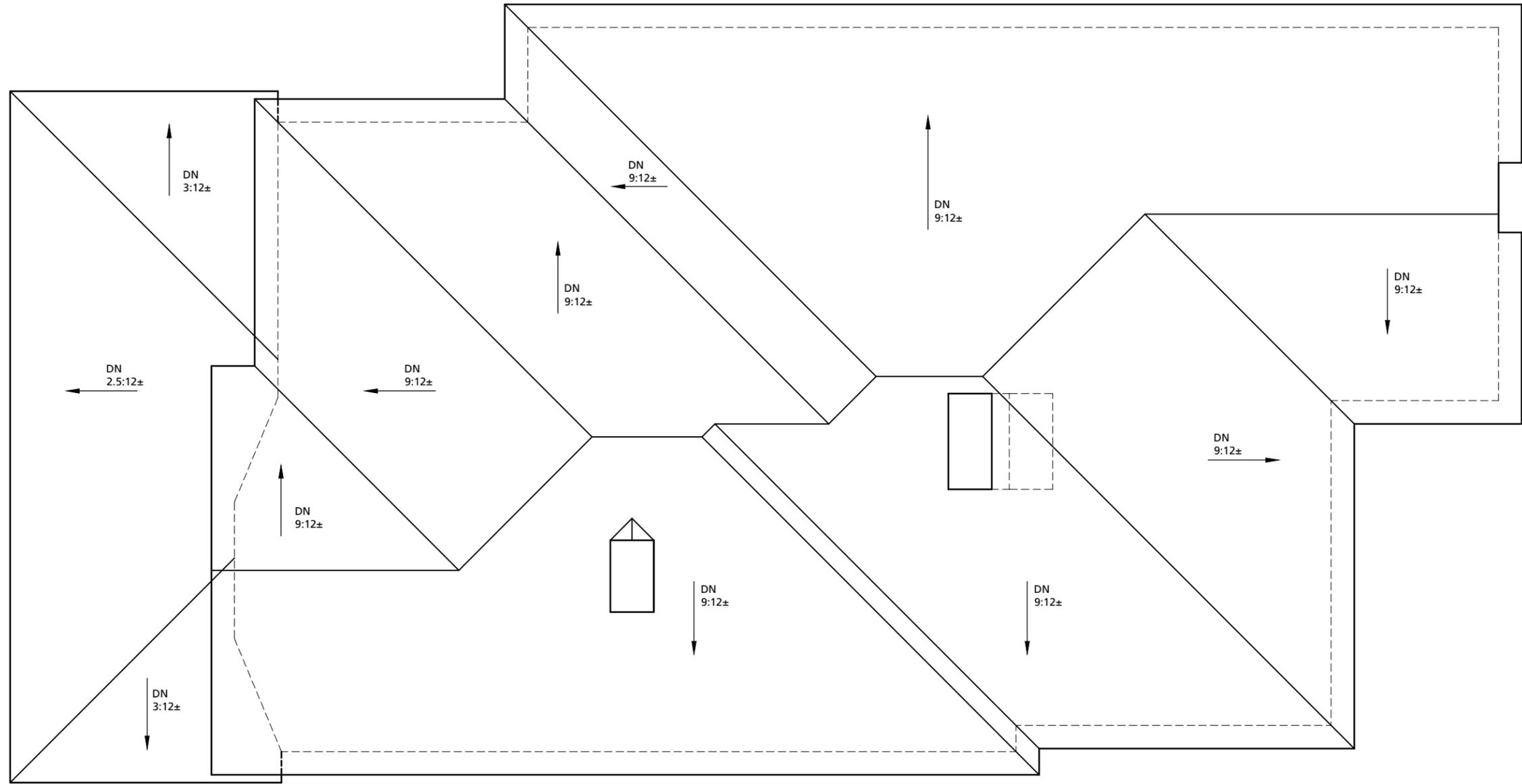
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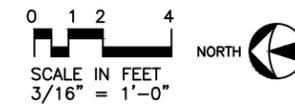


SECOND FLOOR PLAN





ROOF PLAN



DRAWN BY: WFTA, AUGUST 2019

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

ATLANTA
FULTON COUNTY

503 AUBURN AVENUE, NE
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

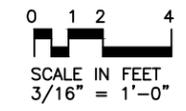
GEORGIA

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

SHEET
3 OF 7



NORTH ELEVATION



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SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

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FULTON COUNTY

503 AUBURN AVENUE, NE
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

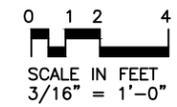
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HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

SHEET
4 OF 7



WEST ELEVATION



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503 AUBURN AVENUE, NE
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

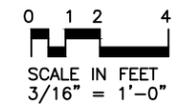
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SHEET
5 OF 7



SOUTH ELEVATION



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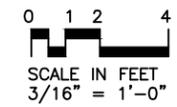
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SHEET
6 OF 7



EAST ELEVATION



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FULTON COUNTY

503 AUBURN AVENUE, NE
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GEORGIA

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

SHEET
7 OF 7

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

503 Auburn Avenue, NE
Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park
450 Auburn Avenue, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30312
www.nps.gov/malu