

# Georgia Department of Natural Resources

## Historic Preservation Division

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **Collier Heights Historic District Listed in National Register**

ATLANTA (June 29, 2009) –The Collier Heights Historic District was listed in the National Register on June 23, 2009. This historic district in Atlanta is bounded by I-20 to the south, I-285 to the west, Hamilton E. Holmes Drive on the east, and Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway to the north. The Collier Heights Community Association sponsored the nomination and graduate students in the Heritage Preservation Program at Georgia State University prepared the nomination materials. The Collier Heights district was listed at the national level of significance because of its preeminence nationally as a mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century African American residential suburban development.

Collier Heights is among the foremost mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century African American suburbs in Atlanta and the nation. In terms of community planning and development, African American heritage, and social history, at the local level it represents the culmination of westward African American residential development from downtown Atlanta past Atlanta University Center and Washington Park to the western fringes of the city. This was made possible by negotiation among private land-development organizations and public planning agencies during a period of strict residential segregation.

Nationally, Collier Heights is unique in terms of its size, diversity of residents, and the principal role played by African Americans in its development. Its distinctive nature is attributed to a unique combination of local factors including African American population growth, political and civic leadership, financial institutions, available land, and land-development expertise. Collier Heights housed a broad spectrum of Atlanta's mid-century middle and upper class African American populace. The neighborhood was highly promoted to a regional audience by the *Atlanta Daily World* newspaper as *the* mid-century African American suburban

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neighborhood in Atlanta, and it was featured in national publications including *Ebony* magazine, *Time* magazine, and *The New York Times*. Recently, Collier Heights has been identified as the nation's preeminent mid-century African American-developed suburb in the book *Places of Their Own* by Columbia University professor Andrew Weise.

In the area of architecture, the district is significant for its exceptionally intact collection of mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century houses. Many of these houses were built from plans provided by the Atlanta Home Builders Plan Service and W. D. Farmer; others were custom-designed by several of Atlanta's earliest professional African American architects including Joseph Robinson. Collier Heights contains nearly 2,000 houses in 55 small, interrelated subdivisions developed primarily between 1941 and 1979. The earliest houses are along Holmes Drive. Mid-century suburban development occurred from Holmes Drive westward and from I-285 eastward. The majority of houses are mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century Ranch houses, along with a smaller number of Split Levels and a few two-story houses; also included are a few early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Craftsman Bungalows and some mid-century American Small Houses. Virtually every size and type of Ranch house is represented, from small and compact to large and rambling, and from the simple linear to courtyard and other complex forms. Architectural styles include Colonial Revival and Contemporary with a few examples of Modern. Most of the houses are wood-framed with brick veneer; many have a combination of brick, stone, and wood exteriors. Windows are of varied types and sizes and include a wide range of picture windows. Many of the houses feature large chimneys; most have integral carports or garages. Landscaping is informal with open lawns, large pine and hardwood trees, and ornamental shrubbery; plantings around foundations and front terraced entries or rear patios are common.

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources serves as Georgia's state historic preservation office. Their mission is to promote the preservation and use of historic places for a better Georgia. HPD's programs include archaeology protection and education, environmental review, grants, historic resource surveys, tax incentives, the National Register of Historic Places, community planning and technical assistance. For more information, call 404-656-2840 or visit their Web site at [www.gashpo.org](http://www.gashpo.org).