



Interoffice Memo

DATE: August 15, 2019

FROM: Ryan Jackson, Historian, Office of Environmental Services

TO: Files

SUBJECT: GDOT Project SR 8 at SR 155, DeKalb County;
P.I. #0016120:
Historic Resources Survey Report

Attached is the Historic Resources Survey Report for the subject project. This document describes the Department's efforts to identify historic properties located within the proposed project's area of potential effects and the evaluation of all identified properties through the application of the Criteria of Eligibility to determine eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, pursuant to the amended Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA) Section 12-6-9.

RMJ/

cc: Atlanta Regional Commission, w/attachment
Melissa Forgey, DeKalb History Center, w/attachment
David Cullison, DeKalb County Historic Preservation Commission, w/attachment
Aileen de la Torre, City of Decatur Planning and Zoning Division, w/attachment
Jessica Kern, GDOT NEPA
Lindsay Traylor, GDOT Project Manager, Office of Program Delivery

HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT

GDOT PROJECT SR 8 AT SR 155, DEKALB COUNTY

P.I. #0016120

The proposed project was field surveyed for historic properties in compliance with the Georgia Environmental Policy Act. The survey boundary and methodology were established using the *GDOT/FHWA Cultural Resources Survey Guidelines*. These guidelines were established as a result of past interaction with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and his staff and were agreed upon by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the SHPO.

The proposed project would take place on SR 155/Clairemont Avenue and SR 8/Scott Boulevard in DeKalb County (see attached location map). At this intersection, congestion is observed along all approaches during AM peak hour; downstream congestion also exists along SR 8 WB and SR 155 SB. Similarly, queuing is observed along all approaches during PM peak hour and downstream congestion exists along SR 8 EB, SR 155 NB and SR 155 SB. The proposed project would construct a right turn bay of 200 feet on SR 155 SB and a right turn bay of 120 feet on SR 8 WB. There would be approximately 4,500 feet of required right-of-way (ROW) along SR 155 and approximately 650 square feet of required ROW along SR 8.

The area of potential effects (APE), as defined in 36 CFR 800.16(d), is the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties if any such properties exist. Based on the nature and the scope of the undertaking, the guidance in the *GDOT/FHWA Cultural Resources Survey Guidelines* and past experience with similar projects, the Department has evaluated and defined the APE for this proposed project. As originally proposed in the Notification letter, the area of potential direct effects consisted of areas within the proposed ROW and the viewshed of the proposed project. However, because of the nature and scope of the undertaking, the area of potential direct effects now consists of areas within the proposed ROW and parcels on which construction activities are proposed. Due to the nature of the proposed project, the potential for direct effects is minimal outside of the parcels on which construction activities are proposed. No potential for indirect effects outside this corridor is anticipated as a result of implementation of the proposed project.

The review of existing information on previously identified historic properties revealed that no proposed National Register nominations, National Historic Landmarks, or bridges determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register in the updated Georgia Historic Bridge Survey (GHBS) were identified within the proposed project's APE. One listed National Register district, the Ponce de Leon Terrace-Ponce de Leon Heights-Clairmont Estates Historic District, is located just outside of this project's APE on SR 155/Clairemont Avenue south of SR 8/Scott Boulevard. One property 50 years old or older was initially identified within the proposed project's APE in the 1976 or 1989 Department of Natural Resources (DNR) DeKalb County survey. This site is identified in Georgia's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (GNAHRGIS) as Site #19453. Upon survey, this site was determined to be outside of the proposed project's APE.

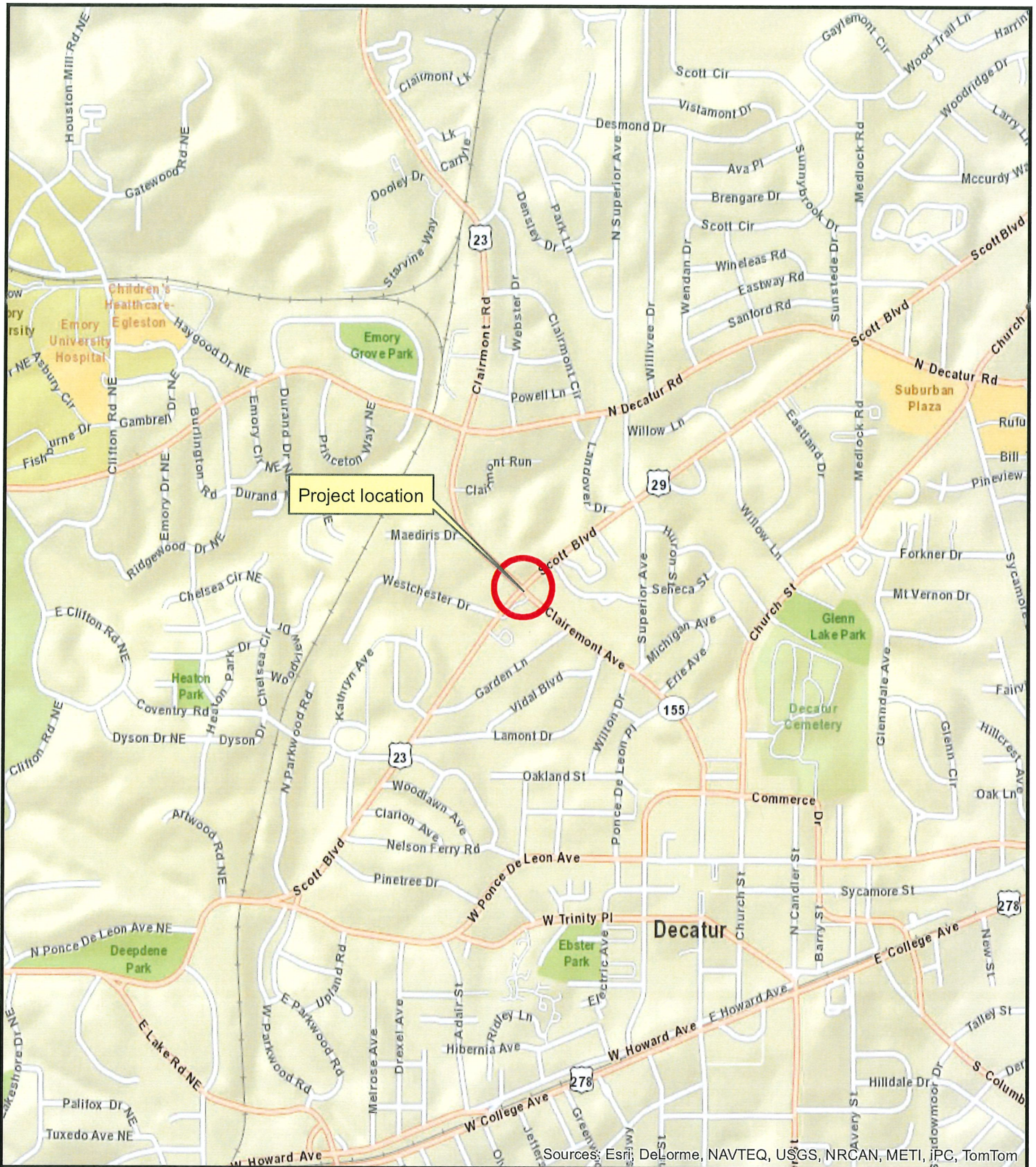
A total of one (1) additional property 50 years of age or older not identified in the DNR survey was identified within the proposed project's APE during the field survey. This property is listed in the following table:

Name of Resource	Date of Construction	Type and/or Style	Location	National Register Recommendation
The Merritt House	c. 1947	NAT/NAS	915 Clairemont Avenue, Decatur, GA	Eligible

Potential consulting parties were identified based on the nature of the undertaking and the guidance in the *GDOT/FHWA Cultural Resources Survey Guidelines*. The potential consulting parties invited to comment on the undertaking in accordance with Section 12-16-4(b) of GEPA were the Atlanta Regional Commission, the DeKalb County Historic Preservation Commission, and the DeKalb History Center. The consulting parties were informed of our efforts to identify historic properties by consulting existing information and the results of those efforts and asked to provide information on any unidentified National Register listed or eligible properties within the project's APE by a Notification dated February 28, 2019 (see Notification in Appendix). A response to the Department's invitation to comment on the undertaking in accordance with Section 12-16-4(b) of GEPA was received from the City of Decatur Planning and Zoning Division via an e-mail dated March 18, 2019 (see correspondence in Appendix).

For each property 50 years old or older identified within the APE, a Property Information Form with attached photographs has been prepared. The Criteria of Eligibility was applied to each property and a recommendation regarding National Register eligibility has been made. For those properties recommended eligible for listing in the National Register, a site plan sketch and proposed boundary depiction have also been attached to the Property Information Form.

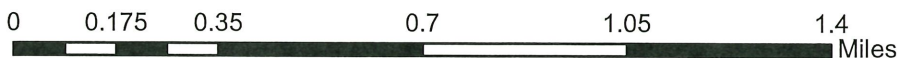
The one (1) property 50 years old or older that was surveyed and to which the Criteria of Eligibility was applied has been recommended eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.



Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, USGS, NRCAN, METI, iPC, TomTom



Project Location Map
P.I. #0016120, DeKalb County
SR 155 and SR 8 turn lanes





Resource Location Map
P.I. #0016120, DeKalb County
SR 155 and SR 8 turn lanes

Image not to scale



PROPERTY INFORMATION FORM

Property Identification: The Merritt House is also identified as Resource 1 in the field notes and on the project location map. This property was not identified in the 1976 or 1989 DNR DeKalb County Survey.

Location: The property is located at 915 Clairemont Avenue in Decatur (refer to resource location map).

Date(s) of Development: According to the tax assessor's record, the Merritt House was constructed in 1940. The Woodlands Garden of Decatur, Inc., who owns the parcel, lists the property as built in 1947. The earliest available aerial photograph from 1940 appears to show a building in this location, but it is unclear if it is the Merritt House or an earlier structure. The next clear aerial photograph is from 1955 and does appear to show the house in its current location. There do not appear to have been any major additions to the form of the house over the years, nor do there appear to be any significant alterations to exterior in terms of materials. There is some evidence of missing shutters and non-historic doors, and non-historic wooden stairs in the rear of the property. The Merritt House appears to have served as a single family residence for most of its history. No evidence was found that it has served as multi-family housing. In 2015, it was purchased by the Woodlands Garden, an adjacent, privately owned nature preserve, with the intent of developing this parcel to improve and increase that facility's parking and access. According to Woodlands Garden's master plan for these improvements (www.woodlandsgarden.org/construction), "the structure will retain its historic integrity. The house will be subdivided from the larger property and sold when Garden construction is complete."

Description: The Merritt House is a two-story brick house of no academic type or style (see attached photographs). It consists of a large, rectangular block under a hipped roof with a projecting, two-story gabled porch at the southern corner of the façade. The entire building is clad in a running bond brick veneer, and an interior brick chimney protrudes from the east slope of the roof. The front entrance is centrally located on the façade and is accented by a small gabled portico accessed via a set of brick steps. Both the portico and the two porch openings feature arched brickwork over their primary openings. The second story porch has a wooden balustrade in place; it is unknown if the ground floor porch previously featured a similar balustrade. The front door appears to be a non-historic replacement, but most of the windows on the house appear to be historic, 3/1 wooden sash windows. The façade features two sets of paired windows, one on each story, and two sets of two single windows within the porch enclosures. The western elevation of the building features several window configurations on each story, including four sets of paired, four individual, and one set of half-sized paired (all windows are 3/1 historic wooden sash). All windows have decorative brick soldier courses atop them, and the foundation line features a decorative course of alternating soldiers and headers in groups of three. The eastern and northern elevations were inaccessible due to active construction and barrier fencing on site, but could be partially viewed from a distance and from tax assessor photographs. The presence of 3/1 sash windows continues on these elevations, although primarily in individual form rather than paired. The rear (north) façade features a centered door accessed by wooden steps bypassing the raised foundation level. A brick-columned, gabled portico projects over the door, creating a small landing for the stairs, and the foundation level is faced with rough, cobbled granite and two small 6 light, fixed pane windows, indicating a basement. Several of the ground floor windows on both the front and rear facades are affixed with metal security bars.

The setting of the Merritt House is a mixture of suburban and forested. It stands on Clairemont Avenue in Decatur, a busy and well-developed thoroughfare consisting of historic and non-historic single family residences, historic and non-historic multi-family apartment buildings, and historic and non-historic commercial and institutional buildings. However, immediately to the north and east of the Merritt House's parcel is the Woodlands Garden of Decatur, a privately owned 7-acre nature preserve which features various native trees and plantings. This large natural area is adjacent to the house and serves to create a blended suburban and forested feel to the setting. Furthermore, Woodlands Garden purchased the Merritt House's parcel in 2015, and as of August 2019, is actively clearing some of the growth on the parcel to implement a master plan which includes increased parking and access.

The Merritt House is also located within, and considered contributing to, the Clairemont Avenue Corridor Local Historic District (LHD) which is a design overlay district for the City of Decatur. The primary goal for this LHD is to preserve the historic character of Clairemont Avenue as a residential, transitional transportation corridor featuring sidewalks, slow traffic, and heavy tree canopy leading into downtown Decatur. Thus, while not a National Register listed district to be taken into account for the purposes of this project, the LHD does reaffirm and emphasize the importance of this property in its larger setting.

National Register Recommendation: The property is considered **Eligible** for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

National Register Criteria and Level of Significance: The Merritt House was evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register using the National Register Criteria for Evaluation as outlined in 36 CFR Part 60.4. There are no known associations with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. There are no known associations with individuals whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented with this property. No associations were indicated or suggested as a result of background research on the project area, deed research on the property, or in any response to the Department's early consultation correspondence received from consulting parties. Therefore, there was no basis for evaluating the property under Criteria A or B. Also, there are no indications that the property is likely to yield information on important research questions in history or prehistory. This property does not appear to have the potential to be the principal source of important information. Therefore, there was no basis for evaluating the property under Criterion D.

The Merritt House was evaluated under Criterion C and appears to possess a local level of significance in the area of architecture. The property represents a house type not identified in Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings; however, it does retain full architectural integrity and is a representative example of postwar development along Clairemont Avenue in Decatur. It is the only historic building left at the intersection of Clairemont Avenue (SR 155) and Scott Boulevard (SR 8), while further down Clairemont in either direction are several early- to mid-20th century large single family homes, as evidenced by the National Register listed Ponce de Leon Terrace-Ponce de Leon Heights-Clairemont Estates Historic District, the border of which stops just shy of this project's APE. The Merritt House is also considered contributing to the Clairemont Avenue Corridor Local Historic District, a design overlay district for the City of Decatur. While this local district is not considered a resource for the purposes of this report, the Merritt House's inclusion is evidence of its architectural integrity and importance to the overall setting of the area. Therefore, the property is considered eligible under Criterion C in the area of architecture.

Integrity: The Merritt House has been determined to possess integrity in the areas of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The resource is located on its original site of construction and does not appear to have been moved. The design of the house does not appear to have suffered any major alterations or additions, and so retains its integrity. The house retains most of its original exterior materials and continues to display the workmanship of its era. Finally, the Merritt House retains the feeling and association of a large, simply detailed brick home from the 1940s due to its retention of the preceding areas of integrity. The Merritt House has been determined not to possess integrity in the area of setting. The immediate setting of the resource has been highly altered by the presence of large, non-historic apartments and a nursing home on the other three corners of the intersection. The parcel on which the house sits is also actively being cleared to make way for planned expansion by Woodlands Garden of Decatur.

Proposed Boundary (Justification and Description): Because the historic boundary is no longer intact and because there are no other features within the legal boundary that contribute to the architectural significance of the property, the proposed National Register boundary is a visual boundary, and contains approximately 0.08 acre. The proposed boundary contains all National Register qualifying characteristics and features of the property and includes the house and immediate surrounds (see attached boundary graphic).

UTM Coordinates: 7.5 Minute Series Topographic Map. NAD 27 Northeast Atlanta Quadrangle Zone 16. Easting 749620.32 Northing 3741690.35.

Prepared: Completed pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800.4(c) in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for GDOT P.I. #0016120, DeKalb County, by:

Ryan Jackson, Historian
Georgia Department of Transportation
Office of Environmental Services
One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree Street, NW, 16th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
(404) 631-1057

P.I. #0016120 – The Merritt House, aerial photography



Aerial photograph from 1940 appears to show a different building in place of Resource 1 (Image via the Georgia Aerial Photographs database: <http://dbs.galib.uga.edu/gaph/html>)



Aerial photograph from 1955 shows Resource 1 in its current location (Image via <https://www.historicaerials.com>)

P.I. #0016120 – The Merritt House, Representative photographs



Photograph 1: Resource 1 façade, looking northeast.



Photograph 2: Resource 1 façade oblique, looking northeast.

P.I. #0016120 – The Merritt House, Representative photographs



Photograph 3: Resource 1 west elevation, looking southeast.



Photograph 4: Resource 1 oblique showing rear (north) and west elevations, looking south.

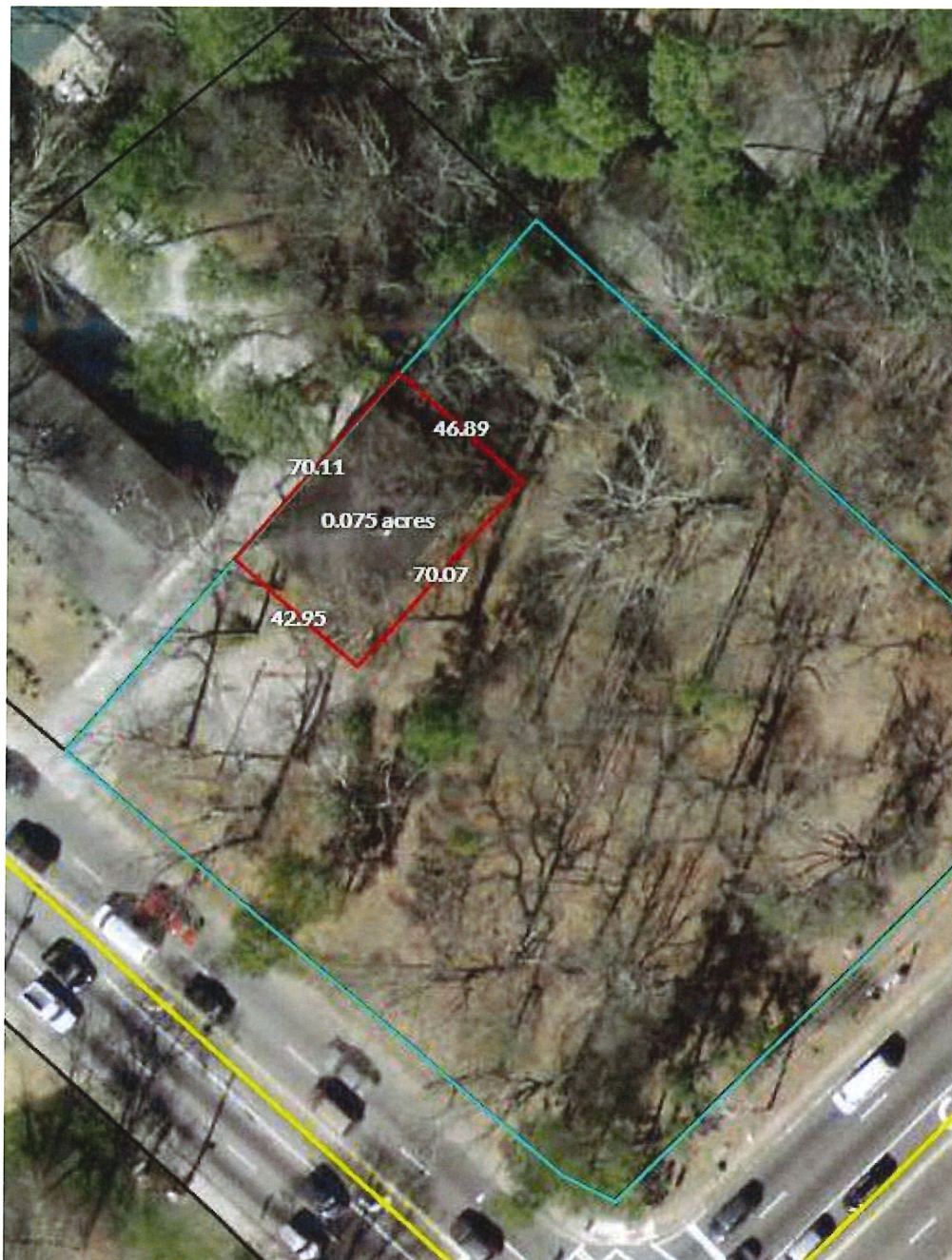
P.I. #0016120 – The Merritt House, Representative photographs



Photograph 5: Resource 1 oblique showing east (side) and rear elevations, looking west.



Photograph 6: SR 8 and SR 155 intersection (project area) showing Resource 1, looking north (Image via Google Streetview).



Note: Red line demarcates the NR boundary; Blue line represents the remainder of the current legal parcel boundary which has been omitted from the proposed NR boundary.



**National Register Boundary Map
The Merritt House
P.I. #0016120, DeKalb County**

Image not to scale



**APPENDIX
NOTIFICATION
AND
EARLY CONSULTATION CORRESPONDENCE**



Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree NW
Atlanta, GA 30308
(404) 631-1990 Main Office

February 28, 2019

**NOTIFICATION: Request for Information Concerning Historic Properties for
GDOT Project SR 8 at SR 155, DeKalb County
P.I. #0016120**

The Georgia Department of Transportation (Department) is in the beginning stages of project development for this proposed transportation project. The Department has determined that because of the nature and the scope of this undertaking, the proposed project has the potential to cause effects to historic properties if any such properties exist in the project area. The Department is attempting to identify historic properties already listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or the Georgia Register of Historic Places (GRHP) and any properties not already listed that would be considered eligible for listing that are located within the geographic area of potential effects (APE) of the proposed project.

The proposed project would take place on SR 155/Clairemont Avenue and SR 8/Scott Boulevard in DeKalb County (see attached location map). At this intersection, congestion is observed along all approaches during AM peak hour; downstream congestion also exists along SR 8 WB and SR 155 SB. Similarly, queueing is observed along all approaches during PM peak hour and downstream congestion exists along SR 8 EB, SR 155 NB and SR 155 SB. The proposed project would construct a right turn bay of 200 feet on SR 155 SB and a right turn bay of 120 feet on SR 8 WB. There would be approximately 4,500 square feet of required right-of-way (ROW) along SR 155 and approximately 650 square feet of required ROW along SR 8.

The APE of the undertaking is defined as "the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist" as defined in 36 CFR 800.16(d), the regulations which implement Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and after which the survey for Cultural Resources has been modeled.

The APE for the proposed project would include the areas within the proposed ROW and the viewshed of the proposed project. No potential for indirect effects outside this corridor is anticipated as a result of implementation of the proposed project.

Existing information on previously identified historic properties has been checked to determine if any are located within the APE of this undertaking. This review of existing information revealed that no properties listed in or nominated for listing in the NRHP or GRHP, no National Historic Landmarks and no bridges determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP or GRHP in the updated Georgia Historic Bridge Survey (GHBS) are located within the proposed project's APE. One property 50 years old or older was identified within the proposed project's APE in the 1976 or 1989 Department of Natural Resources (DNR) DeKalb County Survey. This survey site is identified in Georgia's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (GNAHRGIS) as Site #19453.

Field surveys for both historic properties and archaeological sites will be conducted and the Criteria of Eligibility as defined by the NHPA will be applied to determine if any of these sites are eligible for inclusion in the NRHP or GRHP.

Please advise us of any historic or archaeological resources of which you are aware that may be located within the APE for P.I. #0016120, DeKalb County. With your assistance, we can give these issues due consideration and integrate them into the development of the project's alignment and design. If you are

aware of additional organizations or individuals with information on cultural resources in your area, please forward their names to the following address:

Eric Duff
Georgia Department of Transportation
Office of Environmental Services
One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree Street, NW, 16th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

Attn: Ryan Jackson

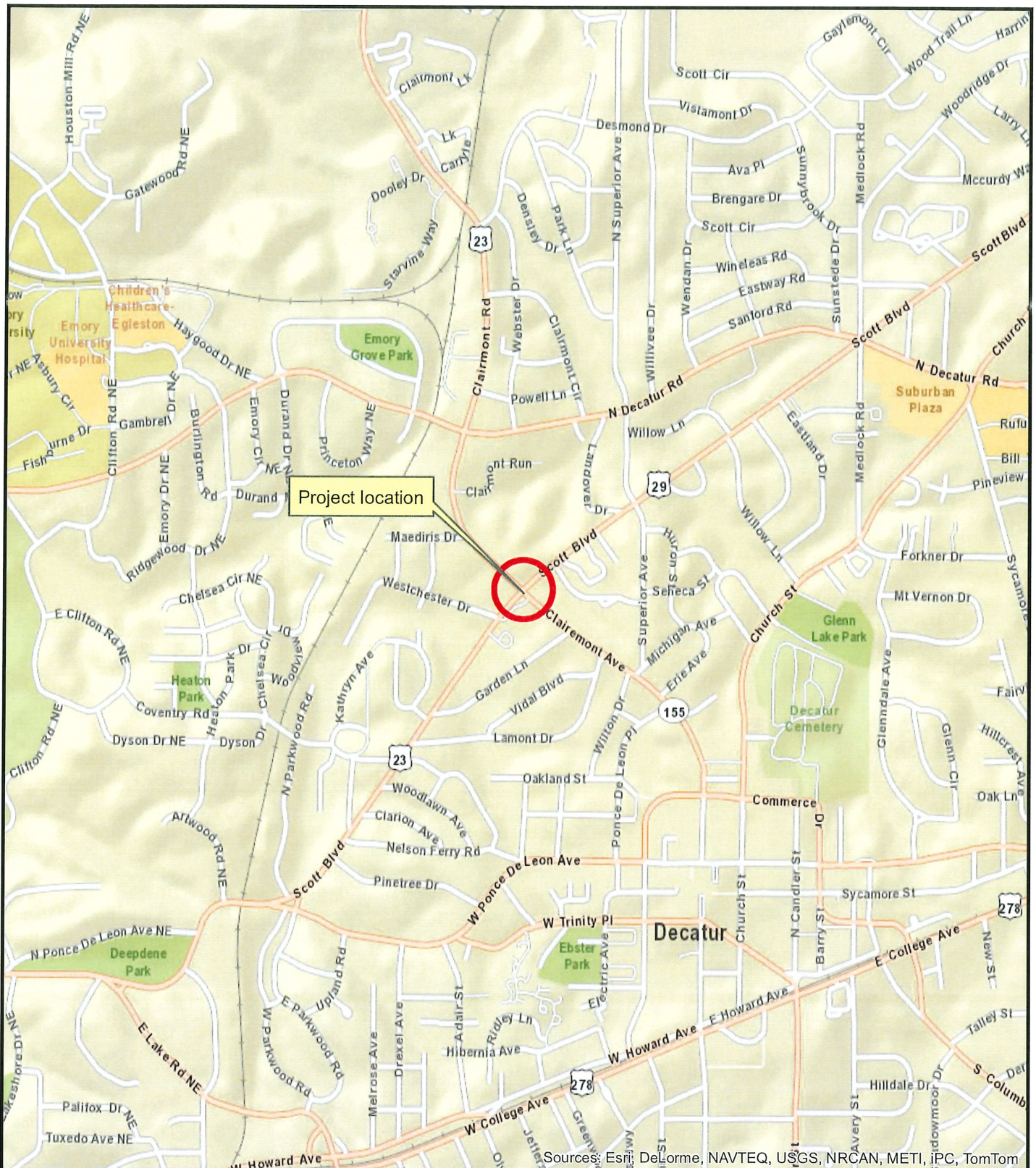
Also, the following tribal governments are invited to contribute to the cultural resource identification process for this project: Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, and the Cherokee Nation. Responses to this Notification regarding tribal concerns should be addressed to the attention of Heather Mustonen, the Department's American Indian liaison.

The Department will assess project effects to any identified historic properties as preliminary project plans become available, endeavor to minimize harm to all identified historic properties and produce an Assessment of Effects report.

If you have additional questions or concerns regarding cultural resources in the project area please direct them to the following individuals: historic resource concerns can be can be addressed to Ryan Jackson (404-631-1057 or ryjackson@dot.ga.gov); archaeological resource concerns, including cemetery and other human burials, can be addressed to Heather Mustonen (404-631-1166 or hmustonen@dot.ga.gov) of this office. Questions concerning general design or location issues may be addressed to Lindsay Traylor (678-802-1101 or ltraylor@dot.ga.gov) of the Office of Program Delivery. We appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Distribution List:

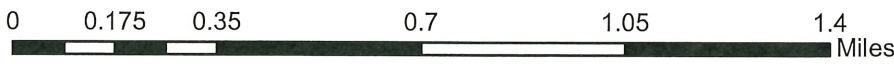
Atlanta Regional Commission
DeKalb County Historic Preservation Commission
DeKalb History Center
Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town
Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council
Poarch Band of Creek Indians
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
Thlopthlocco Tribal Town
Cherokee Nation



Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, USGS, NRCAN, METI, IPC, TomTom



Project Location Map
P.I. #0016120, DeKalb County
SR 155 and SR 8 turn lanes



Jackson, Ryan M

From: Aileen de la Torre <aileen.delatorre@decaturga.com>
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2019 1:52 PM
To: Jackson, Ryan M
Cc: Angela Threadgill
Subject: GDOT Project SR 8 at SR 155, PI #0016120

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Afternoon Ryan,

It has come to my attention that GDOT is planning work at the intersection of Scott Boulevard and Clairemont Avenue. At no time during the APE review did GDOT reach out to the City of Decatur, which has jurisdiction over this area. This part of the City lies within the Clairemont Avenue Corridor Local Historic District and the property at the northeast corner of the intersection, 915 Clairemont Avenue, is a contributing resource. Please contact me if you have any questions. I look forward to working with GDOT to mitigate any adverse effects this project may have on the district.

Aileen de la Torre

Planner
Planning and Zoning Division
Community and Economic Development



City of Decatur

509 N McDonough Street
P. O. Box 220
Decatur, GA 30031
678.553.6596

Jackson, Ryan M

From: Aileen de la Torre <aileen.delatorre@decaturga.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2019 6:45 PM
To: Jackson, Ryan M
Subject: GDOT Project SR 8 at SR 155, PI #0016120

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hi Ryan,

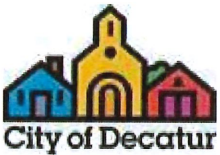
I apologize for the delay in my reply, I've had circumstances that have kept me out of the office for extended periods of time this past week. Per our phone conversation, here is some information regarding the Clairemont Avenue Corridor LHD.

Clairemont Avenue existed long before Europeans arrived as a Native American trail, and the primary significance of the district is in the public experience as a historic transportation corridor into the heart of downtown Decatur, which includes pedestrian as well as vehicular traffic. The preservation of its historic character as a residential transitional street with sidewalks, slow traffic, and heavy tree canopy leading into the primarily pedestrian downtown area is the main goal of the district. The contributing property located at the northeast corner of Clairemont and Scott will be part of Woodlands Garden, a heavily wooded community garden.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Aileen de la Torre

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Planning and Zoning Division
Community and Economic Development



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