A.G. GASTON MOTEL
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

City of Birmingham, Alabama
April 19, 2019

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A.G. GASTON MOTEL

Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument

CULTRUAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Prepared for

Historical Preservation Authority of the City of Birmingham

Prepared by

WLA Studio

APRIL 19, 2019

Cover Image: A.G. Gaston standing in the parking court of his recently completed motel in Birmingham, Alabama (Birmingham Civil Rights Institute)

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Introduction

Management Summary

This Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) is for the A.G. Gaston Motel site in Birmingham, Alabama. Named for the motel's owner and developer, A.G. Gaston, the motel is an icon of the Civil Rights Movement due to its association with the protest campaign aimed at desegregating Birmingham during April and May of 1963, known as Project C. The protests transformed the racial politics of the city, and influenced the national conversation concerning civil rights, including the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The motel is also a significant part of "Black Birmingham," a term used by scholars for the geographic location of the collection of businesses, social clubs, churches, and other community fixtures that served the needs of African Americans during the period of segregation in the city.[1] Gaston, who amassed a fortune over his lifetime, was a primary financer and developer of Black Birmingham. His obituary in the New York Times noted, "Gaston's wealth and quiet approach made him a liaison between white moderates and civil rights demonstrators."[2] The significance of the property today is thus linked to these pivotal moments in United States history.

Constructed in 1954, the A.G. Gaston Motel offered accommodations to African Americans, who were not allowed in most lodging facilities in the segregated city.[3] During Birmingham's civil rights activities that were associated with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Alabama Christian Movement of Human Rights (ACMHR) campaigns, the motel served as host to strategy meetings and press conferences and lodging for participants. Following desegregation, the motel's business declined. In an effort to stimulate business, Gaston made major improvements to the motel in 1968. These proved unsuccessful and in 1982, Gaston repurposed the property for senior housing, known as A.G. Gaston Gardens. In 1996, Gaston Gardens closed, and the property has remained vacant since that time. The city of Birmingham purchased the property in 2015.

In 1992, the city of Birmingham officially recognized the importance of the Civil Rights Movement with the local designation of a six-block area as the Birmingham Civil Rights District, the opening of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI) and the rededication of Kelly Ingram Park. With the BCRI to the north and the park in the block to the east, the A.G. Gaston Motel is an integral part of this district. The national significance the local area was recognized with the National Register listing of the Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District in 2006.

In 2017, an approximate four-block area within the National Register district became the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument by a Proclamation from President Barack Obama. The A.G. Gaston Motel is part of the national monument. The proclamation describes changes to the ownership of the A.G. Gaston property, totaling .88 acres. The proclamation states the conveyance of .23 acre in fee simple and .65 in a historic preservation easement to the "Federal Government for the purpose of establishing a unit of the National Park System (Figure 1.1)." Per the proclamation, the National Park Service would

[1] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 164, 173, 190, 201 and 220.
[2] David Stout, "A.G. Gaston, 103, a Champion of Black Economic Advances," *The New York Times*, January 20, 1996.
[3] Victor H. Green, *The Negro Traveler's Green Book: The Guide to Travel and Vacations, 1954 Edition,* (New York: Victor H. Green & Company, 1954), 8.

administer the national monument as a new unit of the National Park System.[4] The actual donation and legal transfer of the Motel site were separate actions from and prior to the proclamation.

With this introduction to the CLR in Chapter 1, a description follows of the other chapters and their content. Chapter 2: Site History provides an overview of the A.G. Gaston Motel. The Site History borrows from primary and secondary sources of information, including documents gathered by Lord Aeck and Sargent in a Historic Structure Report for the motel's buildings. Strategic research in repositories in Birmingham occurred as part of a site visit on July 23-25, 2018 by WLA Studio staff. Chapter 3: Existing Conditions provides a comprehensive description of the current conditions at the A.G. Gaston Motel site. Fieldwork identified extant cultural resources and non-contributing resources. Chapter 4: Analysis of Integrity uses criteria developed by the National Register and the *Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* to evaluate the historic integrity of existing landscape resources. Chapter 5: Treatment Recommendations provides guidance for future management decisions related to the site's historic landscape resources within the context of the historic district and the national monument.

Scope of Work and Methodology

This document is a companion report to the Historic Structure Report (HSR) prepared by Lord, Aeck and Sargent for the Historical Preservation Authority of the City of Birmingham, dated October 31, 2016. WLA Studio is a subconsultant to LAS in the preparation of the CLR. Historical data and treatment recommendations for the structures in the HSR have been utilized and incorporated into the CLR.

Following the HSR and for ease in describing the location of various site elements, north is in the direction of the alley at the rear of the site. This is a slight adjustment from true north. Looking into the site from 5th Avenue North, the true north orientation is at the right rear corner of the property.

The CLR follows guidelines established by the *Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. Findings and treatment recommendations are based on observations during the site visit, historical research, and the analysis and evaluation of this information.

Description of Study Boundaries

The study boundaries include the .88-acre site acquired by the city of Birmingham in 2015. The proclamation divided the site into three separate parcels, illustrated on Figure 1.1. The National Park Service owns in fee simple the .23 parcel on the west, which includes the 1954 Guest Room Wing and lobby. The city of Birmingham owns the two remaining parcels with buildings dating from 1954 and 1968, totaling .65 acre. These two parcels contain the historic preservation easement held by the National Park Service.

Historical Overview

A.G. Gaston (1892-1996) was born in the small town of Demopolis, Alabama.[5] The son of a cook and the grandson of formerly enslaved farmers, Gaston's background could have easily foretold a path of lifelong

[4] U.S. Department of the Interior, Presidential Proclamation, "Establishment of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument," January 13, 2017.

work in the region's fields, mines, or factories. Instead, Gaston envisioned a life where through hard work and a keen business sense, he could own businesses and elevate his financial prospects, as well as those of other African Americans. After a truncated stint of education in one of Birmingham's premier schools for African Americans, Gaston enlisted in the Army and served in World War I. Upon return, he found unsatisfying work with a coal and iron manufacturer, but while employed there, started the first solo businesses of his career: a lunch catering business and a micro-loan operation. With the profits generated by these ventures, Gaston rose to prominence in the city of Birmingham. Gaston's empire eventually included insurance companies, radio stations, a business school, a funeral home and numerous real estate investments, including the motel. He lived to be 103 years old.

Gaston developed his businesses based on what Birmingham's black community needed. As such, after his time as a laborer, Gaston entered the funeral business, first selling burial insurance and then establishing a funeral home operation. Gaston bought a large corner lot on Fifth Avenue North in downtown Birmingham for his funeral home, and over the next several years, purchased several lots to its west. He did not initially develop the properties, but when he recognized the need for a motel to cater to black travelers coming to the segregated city, he had the A.G. Gaston Motel constructed in 1954. The motel offered accommodations that rivaled those of the whites-only motels in the city, providing modern high-end furnishings, an on-site restaurant, and musical entertainment. The motel quickly became a fixture of the African American community.

In 1963, the leaders of the SCLC and ACMRH, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy, and the Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, formerly pastor of Birmingham's Bethel Baptist Church, used the motel as their base of operations for planning and conducting the protest campaign aimed at forcing the desegregation of Birmingham's businesses. Specifically, the motel served as the location for daily strategy sessions, as well as the news conferences the movement's leaders held throughout the campaign. Other notable events related to SCLC/ACMR campaign included the motel's use as the starting point for the first march of the campaign, serving as host to the announcement of the Birmingham Compromise, and being the target of a terrorist bombing.

After the campaign ended, the motel experienced a decline in business. Gaston attempted to revive the operation by expanding its offerings to include a new accommodations unit and an adjacent banquet hall and meeting space. This effort did not produce the desired effect, and in 1982, Gaston converted the property into the A.G. Gaston Gardens, which provided residential housing for seniors. This venture lasted until 1996. Afterward, the property sat vacant. In 2015, the City of Birmingham purchased the property in recognition of its historic significance.

Presently, the A.G. Gaston Motel property possesses a fair degree of historic integrity. The boundaries of the site have remained unchanged since its creation. The 1954 building block and orientation within the site reflects 1954-1963 conditions. Though the materials of the site have been significantly altered, the property nevertheless remains strongly associated with the national movement for civil rights and the development of Black Birmingham.

The Site History, provided in Chapter 2, organizes the site into periods of development. These periods, constructed from the research for the CLR, reflect developmental changes to the property and changes in management of the site.

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[5] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 4.

These periods are:

Period 1: Regional American Indian History (1000 – 1815)

Period 2: European Settlement and the Founding of Birmingham (1815 - 1871)

Period 3: The Growth of Birmingham's Black Community (1871-1954)

Period 4: The Civil Rights Era and the A.G. Gaston Motel (1954-1964)

Period 5: Desegregation and Economic Change in Birmingham (1964-1990)

Period 6: Civil Rights Commemoration in Birmingham (1990-2018)

Summary of Findings

An assessment was made of character-defining landscape features to inform future management decisions that may affect significant cultural landscape features. Treatment recommendations were created to guide future management decisions related to the Gaston Motel's historic landscape resources. The landscape treatment recommendations work in concert with the treatments prescribed in the HSR, including restoration of the 1954 building and rehabilitation of the 1968 addition.

A combination of treatments is recommended for the landscape at the A.G. Gaston Motel. Reconstruction of the courtyard and elements, contained within the former footprint of the one-story garage, removed from the site between 1960 and 1962, is possible using photographs, maps and aerial images. Elements occupying the site of the former garage in 1963 included an adjacent walkway, a row of angled parking and a driving lane, which appears to allow access to the alley at the north.

Restoration of the balance of the parking court on the southwest side of the site is recommended. Restoration will complement the reconstructed area, described above, by completing the original scene from 1963. This approach is possible through documentation and extant elements, including the architecture of the 1954 guest wing and the associated concrete walkways, curbs, and possibly the paving beneath the porte cochere. Restoration is the treatment for the front façade of the 1954 building, facing 5th Avenue North.

Rehabilitation is recommended for the balance of the site and applies to the east section of the parking court. The former footprint of the two-story garage and apartment buildings noted for removal in the construction plans for the 1982 conversion to A.G. Gaston Gardens; the architecture of the 1968 additions; and the open spaces in between are in this area. Restoration applies to the front façade of the 1968 addition, facing 5th Avenue North.

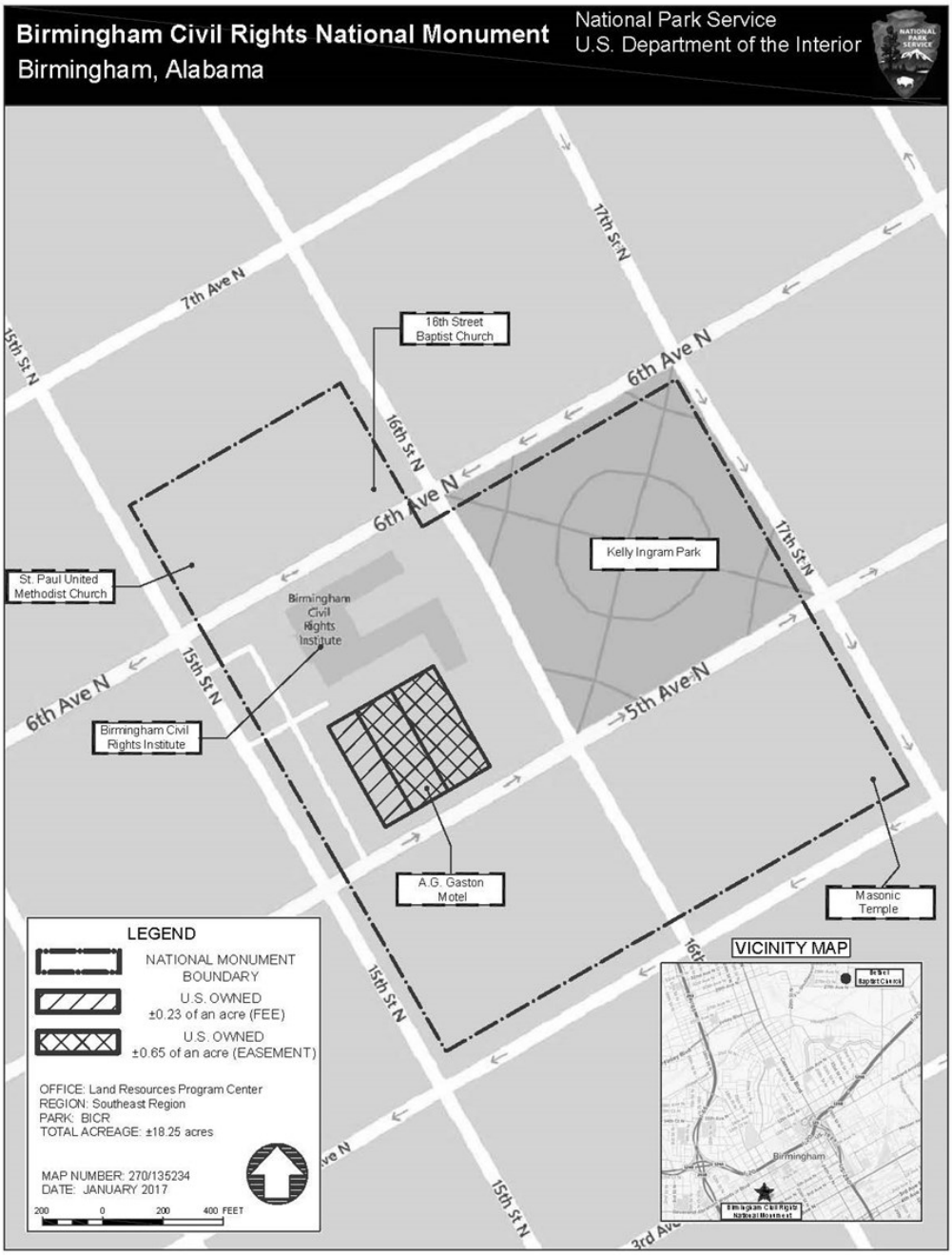

Figure 1.1: Map of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument area, included as an attachment to the 2017 Presidential Proclamation.

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Site History

Introduction

The A.G. Gaston Motel reflects a critical, tumultuous time in the struggle for Civil Rights in the United States.

Five broad developmental periods organize this section:

Period 1: Regional American Indian History (1000 – 1815)

Period 2: European Settlement and the Founding of Birmingham (1815 - 1871)

Period 3: The Growth of Birmingham's Black Community (1871-1954)

Period 4: The Civil Rights Era and the A.G. Gaston Motel (1954-1964)

Period 5: Desegregation and Economic Change in Birmingham (1964-1990)

Period 6: Civil Rights Commemoration in Birmingham (1990-2018)

Regional American Indian History (1000 – 1815)

The development of Birmingham is a direct result of the ancient geological history of the region (Figure 2.1). Located at the southern extent of the Appalachian Mountains and "bordered on both sides by a range of hills as high as one thousand feet, lies a valley, from side to side about seven miles."[6] The hills surrounding the valley contain mineral deposits that served as the foundation of Birmingham's industrial economy and explosive growth. Long before such development took place however, local American Indians inhabited the area.

Though human use of the valley likely extends back much further, American Indian presence in the area dates to at least 1000 CE, as evidenced by the Talley Mound site located 15 miles southwest of present-day Birmingham. The Talley Site—comprising three mounds and a village that may have supported around 1,000 people—was one of many mound sites constructed in eastern North America during the Mississippian Period.[7] The small chiefdom that occupied the area likely featured a socially-stratified society embedded in a landscape characterized by extensive agricultural fields, ancient forests, and a tight cluster of homes. Within a few hundred years, due to a combination of factors including "overpopulation, depletion of soil fertility due to intensive agriculture, shortages of wood resulting from deforestation, climate change (the 'Little Ice Age'), [and] warfare" many Mississippian chiefdoms collapsed.[8] At this point, American Indians abandoned the Talley Mound site.[9] When the Spanish began their invasion of

[6] John C. Henley, Jr., *This is Birmingham*, (Birmingham, Alabama: Birmingham Publishing Company, 1960), 4.
[7] Barnett Wright, "'One of the most historic sites in Jefferson County' should be preserved, state official says," AL.com, Updated June 16, 2014 at 8:08 AM; Posted June 16, 2014, https://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2014/06/jefferson_county_urged_to_pres.html.; Eric E. Bowne, *Mound Sites of the Ancient South: A Guide to the Mississippian Chiefdoms*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 15.
[8] Reed F. Noss, *Forgotten Grasslands of the South: Natural History and Conservation* (Washington DC: Island Press, 2013), 65.
[9] Barnett Wright, "'One of the most historic sites in Jefferson County' should be preserved, state official says," AL.com, Updated June 16, 2014 at 8:08 AM; Posted June 16, 2014

the southeast in the sixteenth century, American Indians in the region had established, or were in the process of establishing, a new "multicultural and multilingual" social order.[10]

Deep South American Indians who survived the collapse "integrated into what became known as the Creek."[11] While the British had assigned the name "Creek" to the group, adding "Lower" or "Upper" depending on their location, "the Creeks themselves tended to view their nation as a confederacy consisting of three distinct provincial groups: the Ochese or Coweta of the Chattahoochee River basin, the Tallapoosa of the lower Tallapoosa River, and the Abeika of the upper Tallapoosa and Coosa rivers."[12] From around 8,000 in 1730, the total Creek population rose over the course of the 1700s, reaching around 20,000 by the end of the century and the peak of colonial activity in the region.[13] By then, the Creek Confederacy controlled an expansive swath of territory, encompassing large parts of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida.[14] Given their proximity, it is likely that the Abeika maintained control of the valley environment, though it does not appear any villages were established there. Instead, the area served as a seasonal hunting ground.[15]

Throughout the colonization process, relations between Europeans and the Creeks varied. Some Creeks, aligned closer with the Europeans, willfully adopting Western forms of political structure, marriage, land ownership, and economy.[16] Others sought to maintain independence and retain traditional control over their homelands. Their resistance aligned them with enslaved people of African descent, who provided valuable resources, information, and additional numbers. As part of a continuum of hostilities since European invasion, the division resulted in the outbreak of civil war between the two groups.[17] Soon United States militias became involved, waging war on the traditionalists and their black allies.[18] The war left scores of people dead and the continuation of American Indian presence in the South in jeopardy.

The war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Fort Jackson in 1814 in which the United States government forced both groups of Creeks to cede an immense piece of land containing much of central and southern Alabama and Georgia to the United States (Figure 2.2).[19] As a result, the Creek occupied only a fraction of their former territory, a small area straddling the Alabama-Georgia border. In 1830, with the signing of the Indian Removal Act, the United States government seized all remaining American Indian lands in an attempt to force the complete removal of American Indians from the southeast.

[10] Charles Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun: Hernando de Soto and the South's Ancient Chiefdoms* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 30.
[11] Beth Wheeler Byrd, *Horseshoe Bend National Military Park Cultural Landscape Report*, (National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 2013), 7.; Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1999), 19.
[12] Steven C. Hahn, "The Creeks in Alabama," Encyclopedia of Alabama, website, last updated 2007. http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1088
[13] Steven C. Hahn, "The Creeks in Alabama," Encyclopedia of Alabama, website, last updated 2007. http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1088
[14] Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1999), 12.
[15] Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1999), 12.
[16] Steven C. Hahn, "The Creeks in Alabama," Encyclopedia of Alabama, website, last updated 2007. http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1088
[17] Beth Wheeler Byrd, *Horseshoe Bend National Military Park Cultural Landscape Report*, (National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 2013), 13.
[18] Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1999), 270.
[19] Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1999), 272.

European Settlement and the Founding of Birmingham (1815 - 1871)

Post-Creek Settlement of Jones Valley

Almost immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Fort Jackson, immigration into central Alabama began. In 1815, the first wave of settlers of European decent established homesteads in the valley, many of whom were War of 1812 veterans from Tennessee and North Carolina.[20] That year, the settlers constructed a simple fort for protection from any remaining Creeks, but it was "seldom occupied" due to the diminished threat of conflict after the treaty.[21] The fort was located in close proximity to the Talley Mound site. One of the first settlers, John Jones, served as the namesake for the fort, the growing settlement (Jonesboro), and the valley (Jones Valley).[22]

In 1819 Alabama became an official state of the United States, with new counties established therein. Jefferson County, created at that time, included Jones Valley within its boundaries. By 1823, additional towns had developed along a roadway at the southern end of the county, and included Salem, Carrollton (aka Carrollville), and the county seat, Elyton (Figure 2.3). Most early settlers were engaged in farming for their livelihoods, some of whom used enslaved laborers for their operations. Over the course of the next several decades, the population of Jones Valley grew, and along with the growth, came new types of workers such as industrialists, merchants, lawyers, and doctors.[23] On the eve of the Civil War, Jefferson County had developed an economy based on agriculture, coal, and manufacturing iron.[24]

The Civil War disrupted the agricultural economy of the county. Afterward, many capitalist investors recognized the potential for a robust extractive and manufacturing industry in the county, leading to a period of land speculation led by wealthy railroad, industry, and real estate executives.[25] It was initially unclear if the physical investments to begin the project would be based in one of the county's preexisting towns or in another location. After negotiations between interested parties, the industrial capitalists decided to establish a new town to serve as the hub of the industrial development.[26]

Founding of Birmingham

The City of Birmingham was established in 1871 by the Elyton Land Company, a group of ten investors who foresaw the wealth to be derived from the deposits of coal and iron ore in the area.[27] In July of that year, the company purchased 4,150 acres of forest and farmland "where the South and North Alabama Railroad was expected to cross an existing railroad, the Alabama and Chattanooga."[28] Soon, Major M.P. Barker, a civil engineer, "began the important work of laying off the streets, avenues, alleys, reservations for churches, parks, and the railroads, already here, and others to come" (Figure 2.4).[29] Town boosters,

[20] George M. Cruikshank, *A History of Birmingham and Its Environs, A Narrative Account of Their Historical Progress, Their People, and Their Principal Interests*, (Lewis Publishing Company, 1920), 325.
[21] John Witherspoon DuBose, Jefferson County and Birmingham, Alabama: historical and biographical, 1887. (Birmingham, Alabama.: Teeple & Smith, 1887), 54.
[22] John Witherspoon DuBose, *Jefferson County and Birmingham, Alabama: historical and biographical, 1887.* (Birmingham, Alabama.: Teeple & Smith, 1887), 54.
[23] John Witherspoon DuBose, *Jefferson County and Birmingham, Alabama: historical and biographical, 1887.* (Birmingham, Alabama.: Teeple & Smith, 1887), 54.
[24] John Witherspoon DuBose, *Jefferson County and Birmingham, Alabama: historical and biographical, 1887.* (Birmingham, Alabama.: Teeple & Smith, 1887), 62-63.
[25] George M. Cruikshank, *A History of Birmingham and Its Environs, A Narrative Account of Their Historical Progress, Their People, and Their Principal Interests*, (Lewis Publishing Company, 1920), 77.
[26] George M. Cruikshank, *A History of Birmingham and Its Environs, A Narrative Account of Their Historical Progress, Their People, and Their Principal Interests*, (Lewis Publishing Company, 1920), 91.
[27] Charles E. Connorly, *"The Most Segregated City in America": City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980*, (University of Virginia Press, 2005), 13.
[28] Charles E. Connorly, *"The Most Segregated City in America": City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980*, (University of Virginia Press, 2005), 13.
[29] John Witherspoon DuBose, Jefferson County and Birmingham, Alabama: historical and biographical, 1887. (Birmingham, Alabama.: Teeple & Smith, 1887), 151.

who periodically gathered the news media to showcase ongoing development in Birmingham, routinely promoted the city.[30] Successive development booms resulted in the rapid construction of industry and housing alike. Over the next two decades several more railroads were extended into the city.[31] With the addition of new factories, mills, and furnaces, coupled with the network of rail lines, the city took on a distinct industrial character, in reflection of its English namesake (Figure 2.5).

The Growth of Birmingham's Black Community (1871-1954)

Race, Labor, and City Development

Writing while slavery was still legal before the Civil War, the chief engineer for the South and North Alabama Railroad stated in a report that "cheap black labor would be a key contributor to Alabama's competitiveness in manufacturing."[32] Though slavery was now abolished, the engineer's statement still held true for the burgeoning manufacturing hub of Birmingham. As factories, foundries, mills, and mines became established in the city, the owners of these industries sought to exploit the existing racial and class hierarchy in order to increase the profitability of their operations.

In 1880, Birmingham's total population was 3,086, but by 1890, it had grown to 26,178, a staggering 748% rate of growth. The black community in the city made up around 43% of the 1890 population but made up roughly 90% of those employed in the city's furnaces, with similar situations in other industries (Figure 2.6).[33] Company executives segregated the workforce from the outset, contending that African Americans were "better suited" for dangerous and difficult working conditions; the same argument was previously made to justify the use of enslaved labor on agricultural plantations.[34] This is not to say that black laborers were not skilled at these jobs—they were—but rather to highlight the baseless argument used to maintain these hierarchical labor relations. Most of these industrial workers were men, as women "had few employment choices beyond the home or farm: substantial numbers of black women worked as domestics, or maids, in white homes." White women faced similar prospects. Though an increasing number of women found work in local textile mills, the majority remained household workers.[35]

Further industry justification for workplace segregation centered on controlling low-wage white laborers. While black people overwhelmingly worked the more difficult positions, some whites also performed dangerous work for little pay throughout the city and its surroundings. The line of reasoning was that "by relying on black workers to do the most unpleasant, physically demanding jobs, Birmingham industrialists believed they also made their white workers more manageable."[36] Thus, workplace segregation was also a means to dissuade solidarity between the lower-class black community and the lower-class white community and inhibit any unionization attempts.[37] On occasion, white and black workers organized

[30] George M. Cruikshank, *A History of Birmingham and Its Environs, A Narrative Account of Their Historical Progress, Their People, and Their Principal Interests*, (Lewis Publishing Company, 1920), 90.
[31] George M. Cruikshank, *A History of Birmingham and Its Environs, A Narrative Account of Their Historical Progress, Their People, and Their Principal Interests*, (Lewis Publishing Company, 1920), 191.
[32] Charles E. Connorly, *"The Most Segregated City in America": City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980*, (University of Virginia Press, 2005), 13.
[33] Charles E. Connorly, *"The Most Segregated City in America": City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980*, (University of Virginia Press, 2005), 15.
[34] Charles E. Connorly, *"The Most Segregated City in America": City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980*, (University of Virginia Press, 2005), 15.
[35] Brian Kelly, "Organized Labor in Alabama," Encyclopedia of Alabama, accessed April 8, 2019, http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1835.
[36] Charles E. Connorly, *"The Most Segregated City in America": City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980*, (University of Virginia Press, 2005), 15.
[37] Charles E. Connorly, *"The Most Segregated City in America": City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980*, (University of Virginia Press, 2005), 17.

around "common interests," but despite some noteworthy examples of racial and class solidarity, workplaces maintained segregation.[38]

Industrialists also turned to the convict-lease system to avoid paying wages at all. The system allowed state and local governments to lease out convicts to labor in mines, farms, and factories, effectively continuing slavery throughout the south. After emancipation, states and municipalities throughout the south passed "an array of interlocking laws essentially intended to criminalize black life."[39] These laws and ordinances resulted in the arrest and conviction of thousands of African Americans, creating a labor pool from which industrialists could draw from and exploit. "The vast majority of Alabama convicts worked for private enterprises and generated substantial amounts of revenue to the state and counties. By the 1880s, nearly all of the several thousand state and county prisoners working under the convict-leasing system labored in coal mines located around Birmingham," while "[m]any of the state's female convicts performed forced labor on state-run prison farms."[40]

Beyond simply an economic-oriented system, the convict-lease system also functioned as a means of social policing through the control of African American life and labor.[41] As with slavery, the convict-lease system had little regard for the laborers as people. As Mary Ellen Curtin states, convicts generally lived and labored in "utter filth," and "were poorly fed, suffered torture and cruel punishments, and had no protection whatsoever from the labor contractors who hired them."[42] The sexual exploitation of black women on the prison farms was commonplace and often went unpunished.[43] These unjust conditions were well known, but despite repeated calls for the end of the convict-lease system in Alabama, the state maintained the system until 1928.[44] It was the last state in the country to end the practice.

In the face of entrenched white supremacy and horrid labor conditions, black residents of Birmingham developed a robust civic life, with various businesses, associations, churches, and retailers catering to the black community. As segregationist policies confined black life to limited geographical areas within the city, these areas became ground-zero for the growth of black self-empowerment in the city. From this foundation of black mutual aid and self-determination, Birmingham's black community laid the groundwork for the civil rights movement to come.[45]

Segregation and Self-Empowerment

While many people became rich during the initial boom period in Birmingham, much of that wealth was concentrated in the hands of the city's white elite, who controlled both its politics and economy.[46] Such control manifested in racial segregation practices that extended beyond the factory walls and mine shafts to include every aspect of life in the city. Often referred to as Jim Crow laws, a number of city and state codes and ordinances regulated the employment, housing, shopping, and basic living conditions of black people and others of color. Despite the challenges that the black community in Birmingham faced because of these laws, they were still able to establish a thriving community that was physically rooted in the fabric of the city.

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[38] Kelly, "Organized Labor in Alabama."
[39] Douglas A. Blackmon, Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black People in America from the Civil War to World War II (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 53.
[40] Mary Ellen Curtin, "Convict-Lease System," Encyclopedia of Alabama, accessed April 8, 2019, http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1346.
[41] Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black People in America from the Civil War to World War II*, 53.
[42] Curtin, "Convict-Lease System."
[43] Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black People in America from the Civil War to World War II*, 193–94, 309.
[44] Curtin, "Convict-Lease System."
[45] Charles E. Connorly, *"The Most Segregated City in America": City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980*, (University of Virginia Press, 2005), 16; Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 164, 173, 190, 201, 220.
[46] Charles E. Connorly, *"The Most Segregated City in America": City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980*, (University of Virginia Press, 2005), 16.

Within the city's urban core, in an area containing Third, Fourth, and Fifth Avenues North from 15th to 18th Street, a black business district developed. Though wages of the working class were meager, black-owned business flourished here, as did churches, places of entertainment, and other establishments typical of cities. As Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines explain, "beginning in 1890, a distinct black middle class began to flourish in Birmingham. There were black lawyers and doctors, contractors and architects living and working in the city. By the turn of the century, the black community had their own bank, as well as construction companies and began to take an interest in living among other middle-class black citizens who conceivably shared their values and interests."[47] They also established black fraternal organizations. These groups along with the churches and other charitable groups facilitated investments into new businesses, educational endeavors, and other outlets. These investments resulted in the growth of the black community's educational and business opportunities that subsequent generations could take advantage of. There is perhaps no better representative of this investment process than A.G. Gaston, the "Black Titan," who would become one of the wealthiest black people in the United States.

A.G. Gaston

Arthur George (A.G.) Gaston was born in Demopolis, Marengo County, Alabama, in 1892 (Figure 2.7).[48] In his early youth, his maternal grandparents raised Gaston, as his dad had died working for a railroad company and his mother, Rosie, found work in nearby Greensboro cooking for a wealthy family, the Lovemans.[49] He grew up in the log house that his formerly-enslaved grandparents built thirty years prior. The hard work and determination that allowed his grandparents to own their property made an impression on the young Gaston.[50] A self-described "square," Gaston was not much of a risk taker when it came to the games that young boys played. Instead he thought of ways to succeed in the world through work, though this cost him friends and he grew lonely.[51] His prospects would change however when in 1905 the Lovemans relocated to Birmingham. The Lovemans invited Rosie, a valued employee, to move there and continue working for the family; she accepted the offer. The new arrangement allowed 13-year-old A.G. to join his mother in the city.

Rosie and A.G. lived on the Loveman estate located in a growing upper-class white neighborhood. From here Rosie was able to watch and learn how white elites managed their affairs. She knew that for A.G. to avoid toiling in the mines and furnaces he would need to further the education he began in Demopolis.[52] Specifically, he would need to receive an education from black instructors who could provide insight into becoming successful in apartheid conditions. Therefore, not long after arriving, Rosie sent A.G. to the Tuggle Institute, the new all-black school located in one of the growing black middle-class neighborhoods of the city. Under the tutelage of "Granny Tuggle," A.G. continued his education while also learning directly from black luminaries such as Dr. Booker T. Washington. While at the Tuggle Institute, A.G. also picked up as many various jobs as he could, developing an "unparalleled" work ethic.[53]

In 1910, Gaston decided to leave the Tuggle Institute in order to better take advantage of opportunities outside of school.[54] Upon leaving, he wanted to join the Army but was too young to enlist. Therefore, for the next three years he concentrated on working full time, which took him to Mobile, Alabama. When he did come of age, he enlisted in the Army and was stationed at Fort Riley in Kansas. He remained there for

[47] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 38.
[48] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 4.
[49] A.G. Gaston, *Green Power: The Successful Way of A.G. Gaston*, (Birmingham, AL: Big City Brands, LLC, 2013), 14.
[50] A.G. Gaston, *Green Power: The Successful Way of A.G. Gaston*, (Birmingham, AL: Big City Brands, LLC, 2013), 14.
[51] A.G. Gaston, *Green Power: The Successful Way of A.G. Gaston*, (Birmingham, AL: Big City Brands, LLC, 2013), 14-16.
[52] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 30.
[53] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 39.
[54] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 42.

several years until his Ninety-second Division was deployed to France to fight in World War I. Eventually, Gaston's division found itself on the front lines of the fighting. Here, Gaston displayed a notable bravery, which earned him a medal.[55]

After the war, 27-year-old Gaston returned to Jefferson County, where, despite being an educated veteran, he still faced the clear disadvantage of being a black man in the South.[56] After a spell of unemployment, he found work with a dry-cleaning company. Discontented with the menial work, the position did not work out, so jobless, he turned to the mines for employment.[57] He found work at steel mill in Fairfield, Alabama. He moved into the company village, and his mother and grandmother soon joined him there. It was while he was employed at the mine that Gaston took the first concrete steps at building his future wealth. Seeing that his fellow workers longed for home cooked lunches, using his mother's experience in cooking and catering, he began selling meals and saving the earnings. He then turned to lending, offering high-interest loans to his coworkers who could not secure loans elsewhere. The operation served to expand Gaston's wealth, which "took on a snowball effect, compounding biweekly."[58] With this money and his growing reputation, Gaston set out to build his fortune.

Gaston began with establishing the Booker T. Washington Burial Society, a burial insurance company.[59] The venture proved successful, and later became the Booker T. Washington Insurance Company. In 1923, Gaston married Creola Smith, the daughter of business associate and family friend, A.L. "Dad" Smith. Then, after roughly two decades of not living in Birmingham, in 1938, Gaston purchased a residential property at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Sixteenth Street—in the middle of one of the city's segregated areas—and opened the Smith and Gaston Funeral Home (Figure 2.8).[60] That year, however, Creola as well as her father A.L. Smith both died. Gaston eventually remarried, wedding Minnie Gardner, a dear family friend.[61] From this point forward, the businesses that Gaston started continued to be successful, allowing him to create or invest in new ventures. As always, he spent his money only if he saw a need and he knew he would make money from his investment.

The A.G. Gaston Motel (1954)

For much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the future site of the motel—the north side of 5th Avenue North—was divided into six separate lots that were predominately residential in character (Figure 2.9 - Figure 2.10).[62] An alley ran east-west along the rear (north) of the lots, separating it from the rest of the block. A 1930s "redlining" map of Birmingham shows the site as part of a swath of downtown labeled "negro concentration," reflecting its segregated status (Figure 2.11).[63] After the Great Depression, the character of the street began to evolve, and over the course of the 1940s the street lost its residential

[55] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 48.
[56] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 62.
[57] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 64.
[58] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 72.
[59] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 77.
[60] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 114.
[61] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 132.
[62] Birmingham, Alabama, City Directory, 1946 (Birmingham, AL., 1946).
[63] According to the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, "a federal agency, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) created 'Residential Security' maps of major American cities. These maps document how loan officers, appraisers, and real estate professionals evaluated mortgage lending risk during the era immediately before the surge of suburbanization in the 1950's. Neighborhoods considered high risk, or 'Hazardous' were often 'redlined' by lending institutions, denying them access to capital investment which could improve the housing and economic opportunity of residents." Bruce Mitchell and Juan Franco, *HOLC 'redlining" maps: The persistent structure of segregation and economic inequality*, NCRC, Last Modified March 20, 2018. ttps://ncrc.org/holc/

character. A 1945 Sanborn map shows only two residential buildings and the Smith Gaston Funeral Home along the stretch of six lots (Figure 2.12). Figure 2.12 includes lot numbers, which are also in the HSR on Figures 1.22 – 1.25.

Photographs and documentation of the site reveal that between January 1945 and November 1946 a two-story garage building with apartment units on its second floor was built on lot 19 (Figure 2.13). The building featured a half-height portico, six windows, two entrance doors on its south façade and a flight of stairs on its west side. A straight walkway connected the building to the sidewalk on Fifth Avenue to the south. The building contained six apartment units. Residents at this time included Wallace Barnett, Daniel Fike, and J.B. Winbush, with the other apartments listed as vacant.[64]

Between March 1947 and November 1948, a second garage building was constructed on the site, immediately west of the two-story garage/apartment building (Figure 2.14). The unadorned one-story brick building featured a flat roof and a large entry door, filled with brick in the photo. By 1951, the north side of Fifth Street North featured a used auto sales office and lot, one remaining dwelling, the two garage buildings, and the Smith and Gaston Funeral Home.

The changes to the area may have been related to the Booker T. Washington Insurance Company's purchase of four of the lots along the street (numbers 17, 18, 19, and 20) between 1942 and 1953.[65] It is likely that Gaston initially made the purchases for speculative real estate purposes. However, in 1950, Gaston learned of a major African American Baptist convention slated to be held in Birmingham in 1954. Recognizing that there was a lack of quality motel options for black travelers, Gaston decided to construct a motel across the acquired lots. He incorporated a new business—A.G. Gaston Motels, Inc.—and consolidated the lots under its ownership.

The 2016 Historic Structure Report on the motel summarizes the planning and design process:

> In 1953, Gaston engaged African American and Birmingham architect Stanley B. Echols to design the motel. Echols co-founded the architectural firm of Burnham, Echols, and Smith along with Brooke Browning Burnham (b. 1887 - d. 1962) and Nelson Smith (b. 1910 - d. [unknown]) Echols appears to have designed the motel independently from his firm; his name as sole practitioner is shown on the blueprints for the project (Figure 2.15). This rendering shows the 1954 building, which followed this design. The addition to the east was never realized in this form.
>
> Echols is also known to have designed several other buildings for Gaston, including a home for senior citizens located in the Brownville Heights subdivision of Birmingham. Steel City Construction Company, of Birmingham, served as the general contractor. Planning for, and the design of, the motel was already underway by the time the Booker T. Washington Insurance Company sold the parcels to A.G. Gaston Motels, Inc. in March of 1954, as the earliest sheets from the extant drawings are dated February 1954. The formal grand opening for the motel was held on July 1.[66]

The completed motel was built in a colorful mid-century modern style reflective of the era, standing in contrast to the two garage buildings that were retained on site (Figure 2.16 - Figure 2.19 and Illustration 2.1). The L-shaped, single loaded corridor building unit that housed the accommodations—arranged north-south on the edge of Lot 17—stood two stories tall. The short wing extension met the north end of the building at a 90-degree angle. The construction drawings for the motel show that it contained 29 guest rooms, with a single master suite containing two separate bedrooms. Promotional material published in 1954 however stated the motel had 32 rooms and the Sanborn map from the period labels the motel as

[64] Birmingham, Alabama, City Directory, 1946 (Birmingham, AL., 1946).
[65] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 2.
[66] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 3.

having 33 rooms (Figure 2.20).[67] Each room featured high-end furnishings in keeping with attempts to make the A.G. Gaston Motel "as well furnished and well decorated as most of the white motels and hotels."[68] Lastly, a flight of metal stairs located at the north ell portion of the accommodation building provided access to the elevated covered walkway that spanned across the second story of the building.

In addition to the accommodations unit, the motel also featured a lobby, coffee shop, and porte cochere that extended east-west from the southern end of the accommodation building unit along 5th Avenue North. The initial build-out only included the lobby and coffee shop. Between July and October of 1954, Gaston added a small kitchen on the north side of the coffee shop. In December, he added a restaurant building on the east side of the coffee shop and expanded the kitchen.[69] The expansion appears to be in keeping with the original concept drawing by Echols.

Aside from the buildings, five main site features characterized the motel site: a courtyard, parking court, raised tree planter, and wall-mounted motel sign, and planters integrated into the front façade. The planters are named "planting boxes" in the 1954 architectural plans. The ground-level courtyard existed directly south of the north ell wing of the motel and west of the garage building, enclosing it on the north, east, and west. It featured brick pavers, a small landscaped island, and outdoor furniture. The landscaped planting island was flush with the west side of the one-story garage building. There is limited documentation of the courtyard from the early period the motel exists. The most extensive information is found in images, photographs and film, associated with the Civil Rights campaign activities in the early 1960s. The same lack of documentation also applies to the raised tree planter. No image of the full extent of the planter has yet been located, but a portion of it is shown in several period images (Figures 2.15-2.18 and Figure 2.21). The circular brick planter was located immediately north of the coffee shop kitchen. It contained a mature tree of unknown species, but potentially an oak. Given the size of the tree, it is evident that it was intentionally retained during the construction process. In Figure 2.21 sparse ground cover plantings appear to surround the tree trunk in a concentric pattern. Lastly, a prominent Z-shaped motel sign was mounted to the south wall of the motel above the lobby area (Figure 2.22). The sign contained the text "A.G. GASTON / MOTEL / AIR CONDITIONED." Neon lighting of unknown color outlined the lettering and outside edge of the sign.

Figures 2.15-2.17 document the four planters on the 5th Avenue North façade of the 1954 building. Figure 2.15 is an architectural rendering, which shows the brick planter at the west end of the façade at approximately four feet high. Based on the 1954 photo (Figure 2.16), the c. 1955 post card (Figure 2.17) and the 1954 architectural plans, included as an Appendix in the HSR, the brick planter was built as designed and envisioned by the architect.

The other three planters were constructed of stone. Two were located to each side of the porte cochere and the third to the east of the central doorway, later removed. In the Figure 2.16 photograph, the stone planters appear about eighteen inches to two feet in height. These measurements are different than the 1954 architectural plans and rendering, which show the three planters less than one foot high, slightly higher than the concrete curb. On the post card, only the two planters to each side of the porte cochere are shown and appear close to their constructed height. These planters are shaded in dark red, contrasting with the brick of the building and the taller brick planter to the west. Vegetation in all planters immediately after construction are small evergreen shrubs, likely pruned in their round forms. Winter images from 1954 confirm that these plants were evergreen. The low resolution of the images and the distant views do not allow identification of the plant species.

[67] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 14.
[68] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 195.
[69] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 19.

Over the course of the next decade, the A.G. Gaston Motel continued to offer black travelers to Birmingham high quality accommodations, food, and entertainment. As Jenkins and Hines explain, because "blacks were not allowed to patronize Birmingham's downtown restaurants, Gaston added a restaurant and lounge to the motel as well. Top entertainment act such as 'Little' Stevie Wonder, The Temptations, and Little Richard performed there regularly."[70] In this way, the motel became a fixture of the black business district in Birmingham. With such prominence in the community, coupled with its amenities and location, the motel served as the logical choice to use as the "home base" for the planning and enactment of the largest civil rights campaign in the city's history.

The Civil Rights Era and the A.G. Gaston Motel (1954-1963)

The Modern Civil Rights Era in Birmingham

The modern civil rights movement developed over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, with key events that included the diner sit-in protests in Greensboro, North Carolina, the Montgomery bus boycott, and the Freedom Riders' travels though the deep South (Figure 2.23). In the face of harrowing adversity, the participants of the modern civil rights movement secured key victories, such as the desegregation of public spaces and the right to vote. While distinct, the modern civil rights movement can be viewed as a continuum of resistance among African Americans and allies dating back centuries.[71] From work-slow downs and self-liberations during slavery, to the radical reforms demanded during Reconstruction, the modern civil rights movement continued the fight for equal rights in the face of violent state repression. While various social movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were able to "put tremendous pressure on the ruling class" and secure a number of important gains in women's, children's, and labor rights, civil liberties for blacks were not as easily secured.[72] Within the first couple decades of the twentieth century, multi-racial coalitions advocating for radical political and social change were established from New York City to rural farm communities.

Established in 1909, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) grew to become one of the country's most well-known, successful, and controversial civil rights organizations.[73] Led by Ida B. Wells, W.E.B. Du Bois, William Monroe Trotter and others in its early years, the group targeted issues ranging from educational opportunities to lynching, employing a "litigation and lobbying" strategy by "working within the established [legal and political] system."[74] For decades, the NAACP lobbied for equal treatment under the law, perhaps most famously in *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 1952, the group brought suit on behalf of Linda Brown who was barred from integrating an all-white elementary school in Topeka, Kansas.[75] The NAACP, with Thurgood Marshall serving as chief attorney, contended that "separate but equal" policies legalized by *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) were unconstitutional. After two years of deliberations, in 1954 the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Brown and the NAACP, overturning *Plessy v. Ferguson*.[76]

The ruling sent white-dominated state governments and their supporters scrambling for ways to maintain segregation in the South. To continue its enforcement, they employed both legal and extralegal tactics. One tactic to slow desegregation was to bring multiple challenges to *Brown* to local courts, knowing they

[70] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 163.
[71] Herb Boyd, "Radicalism and Resistance: The Evolution of Black Radical Thought," *The Black Scholar* 28, no. 1 (1998): 43.
[72] Bobby M. Wilson, *Race and Place in Birmingham: The Civil Rights and Neighborhood Movement*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2000), 8.
[73] Gilbert Jonas, *Freedom's Sword: The NAACP and the Struggle Against Racism in America, 1909-1969* (London: Routledge, 2005), 10.
[74] Martin N. Marger, "Social Movement Organizations and Response to Environmental Change: The NAACP, 1960-1973," *Social Problems* 32, no. 1 (1984): 18, https://doi.org/10.2307/800259.
[75] "NAACP | NAACP Legal History," accessed April 9, 2019, https://www.naacp.org/naacp-legal-team/naacp-legal-history/.
[76] William J. Cooper Jr., Thomas E. Terrill, and Christopher Childers, *The American South: A History*, Fifth Edition, vol. II (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), 790.

would lose in state and federal courts.[77] The other tactic employed by segregationists was outright intimidation and terrorism. Following Brown, the Ku Klux Klan experienced a resurgence and new organizations such as the White Citizens' Councils drummed up widespread support.[78] By reviving the tradition of vigilance committees such as the KKK, segregationists drew from a legacy of racial terror that had existed in some form since at least the 1830s.[79] Racist violence was commonplace throughout the South, but especially so in Birmingham, where a spate of over 50 bombings targeting the black community between 1947 and 1963 resulted in the city receiving the inglorious nickname "Bombingham."[80]

By mid-century, segregationists were not the only people who lobbied against the NAACP. A growing dissatisfaction with the NAACP's gradualist approach resulted in the creation of a number of new civil rights groups. These new groups did not shy away from confrontation, and advocates for change utilized various forms of demonstration and disobedience to accomplish their aims. From sit-ins at lunch counters, to business boycotts, to marches, these actions were as strategic as they were dangerous. Coordination within the organizations' ranks was necessary to limit the harm done to the protestors by police and counter demonstrators, to gain media attention, and recruit the large number of people necessary for protest campaigns. The Southern Christian Leadership Committee (SCLC), the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Women's Political Council (WPC), the Congress of Racial Equity (CORE), and, in Birmingham, the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) are just several of the new civil rights groups that eschewed the gradualist approach to improving the lives of black people in favor of direct confrontation, boycotts, and demonstrations.[81] Though male leaders of the civil rights movement have received the bulk of attention due to their national campaigning, it should be noted that "[m]any African American women leaders operated at the local level, establishing the links and connections with grassroots organizations that provided the mass support for civil rights goals and objectives."[82]

In Birmingham, the Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth was a key figure in organizing resistance to segregation and discrimination within the city. In 1956, Shuttlesworth founded the ACMHR, in part to fill a hole left when the state of Alabama banned the NAACP from working in the state under trumped-up charges of operating illegally as a "foreign corporation" and connections to communist organizers.[83] Shuttlesworth also differed from the NAACP in terms of tactics, believing that direct confrontation was the only way to ensure freedoms for blacks in the city. Beginning that year, the "fiery" Shuttlesworth organized weekly "mass meetings" to coordinate direct protest actions against those who enacted and supported segregation in the city.[84] The meetings consisted of a "network of fifty-five working class churches…often drawing three hundred to four hundred people each week, and eventually thousands."[85] In doing so, Shuttlesworth countered the traditional approach of gaining civil liberties, much to the chagrin of other prominent local black community leaders.[86]

[77] Andrew M. Manis, *Fire You Can't Put Out: The Civil Rights Life of Birmingham's Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 92.
[78] Cooper Jr., Terrill, and Childers, *The American South: A History*, II:790.
[79] Keri Leigh Merrit, "Keeping Poor Whites & Blacks Apart: A Southern Tradition," The Bitter Southerner, accessed April 9, 2019, https://bittersoutherner.com/from-the-southern-perspective/miscellany/what-you-dont-know-about-the-south.
[80] Manis, *Fire You Can't Put Out*, 80.
[81] Birmingham Historical Society, "Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District," (National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, 2006), Section 8, page 12.
[82] Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin, "Introduction: In the Whip of the Whirlwind," in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*, ed. Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 3–4.
[83] Manis, *Fire You Can't Put Out*, 92.
[84] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 184.
[85] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 184.
[86] Manis, *Fire You Can't Put Out*, 94.

In 1962, these meetings led to the next phase of protest action—the city-wide boycott of segregated merchants. The boycott was led by the Anti-Injustice Committee (AIC), whose membership was made up of local college students headed by Korean War veteran and Miles College student Frank Dukes.[87] The AIC, with the support of Shuttlesworth, issued the boycott, dubbed the "Selective Buying Campaign," after negotiations between the merchant community and the AIC and black business leaders failed. Though contentious amongst the black upper and middle class, the boycott proved successful. As Andrew M. Manis states, the boycott "proved to both white and black leaders in Birmingham that economic pressure could be brought to bear on the racial status quo. Perhaps even more significant, it developed a cadre of previously uninvolved students who became potential activists for a major direct action campaign the next year."[88]

By 1962, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. saw Birmingham as the next logical stage for massive direct action. King was quite aware of the racial conditions in Birmingham:

> There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case.[89]

King joined with Shuttlesworth and other civil rights figures, who together conceived of a plan for massive demonstrations, the likes of which had not been seen in Birmingham (Figure 2.24).

Project C and the A.G. Gaston Motel

In September 1962, King "called a three-day retreat and planning session with S.C.L.C staff and board members" at their training center in small town of Dorchester, near Savannah, Georgia."[90] Along with Shuttlesworth, Rev. Ralph Abernathy (SCLC secretary), and Wyatt Walker (King's Chief of Staff), they began initial discussions concerning what would happen in Birmingham the following year. The organizers knew that only a well-organized protest campaign based on repeated meetings, discussions, and debates would bring about Birmingham's desegregation. Further, it was clear that the conservative approach of behind-closed-doors politicking of local officials and businesspeople for eventual desegregation was not going to deliver freedom with any great speed or even certainty. The organizers also recognized the emblematic value of a desegregated Birmingham, and therefore opted for more rapid approach. They called the campaign "Project C," with "the 'C' [standing for] for Birmingham's Confrontation with the fight for justice and morality in race relations."[91]

King later wrote that "[b]ecause of the significance of the job to be done in Birmingham, we decided that the most thorough planning and prayerful preparation must go into the effort."[92] The person in charge of the such preparation was Wyatt Walker. As Taylor Branch notes, "King presided over the business sessions at Dorchester, but the initial presentation belonged to Walker," who as chief architect of Project C, developed a four-stage strategy for the campaign:[93]

> First, they would launch small-scale sit-ins to draw attention to their desegregation platform, while building strength through nightly mass meetings. Second, they would organize a generalized boycott of the downtown business section, and move to slightly larger demonstrations. Third, they would move up to mass

[87] Manis, 304.
[88] Manis, 309.
[89] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), 87-88.
[90] Martin Luther King Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), 56.
[91] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), 56.
[92] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), 56.
[93] Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 689.

> marches—both to enforce the boycott and to fill the jails. Finally, if necessary, they would call on outsiders to descend on Birmingham from across the country, as in the Freedom Rides, to cripple the city under the combined pressure of publicity, economic boycott, and the burden of overflowing jails.[94]

King wrote that Birmingham had been the country's "chief symbol of racial intolerance," and felt strongly that the desegregation of the city would "set forces in motion to change the entire course of the drive for freedom and justice."[95]

Though the initial planning stages for the protect campaign occurred in Dorchester, organizers needed a Birmingham location in which they could coordinate the protest campaign. The A.G. Gaston was the logical choice and in Room No. 30 leaders held their regular Project C strategy sessions (Figure 2.25). While there were other black-only hotels and motels in the area, Gaston's motel offered its customers unrivaled accommodations. In their remanences of the time, several of the civil rights leaders recalled how well-furnished and professional the motel was, and how it was in many ways equal to whites-only motels.[96] King himself referred to Room 30 as "my room" and the room that "housed" him and Abernathy.[97] As a result of the "daily news conferences announcing plans and successes" that took place in the motel's patio area, the motel became "as well known to America in 1963 as any other Birmingham landmark."[98]

For his part, A.G. Gaston was also involved with the civil rights movement, but his approach was far more conservative, mirroring that of Birmingham's black middle class and clergy.[99] For years, Gaston sought to elevate the financial and professional standing of black people through education and employment. Immediately prior to King's arrival in the city, Gaston was involved in many negotiations with city officials and merchants concerning phased desegregation.[100] He viewed the impending protests in Birmingham with distrust, knowing it would give Bull Connor, the Commissioner of Public Safety for the City of Birmingham, Alabama, free reign to retaliate forcefully. Gaston, an exemplar of the rags-to-riches story, still "knew what black Birmingham meant when it called for 'equality,' even if he didn't always agree with the methods used to secure it."[101] Gaston was also not shy about letting it be known he opposed such methods, and was unwilling to verbally support the SCLC due to their confrontational tactics.[102] The accommodationist position of Gaston and the majority of Birmingham's upper classes was ill-received among various civil rights leaders.[103] Gaston's stance earned him an "Uncle Tom" label that stuck with him for years.[104] Nevertheless, Gaston offered a modest lodging discount to the organizers and provided additional meeting space in his nearby office building.[105]

Numerous photos of the motel exist from this time due to these conferences and meetings. As such, a clearer understanding of the motel landscape from this period can be discerned (Illustration 2.2). By the time Project C began in 1963, the site had undergone at least one significant alteration with the removal of

[94] Branch, 689–90.
[95] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), 56.
[96] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 195.
[97] King Jr., *Why We Can't Wait*, 57, 124.
[98] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 195.
[99] Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963*, 691.
[100] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 188.
[101] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 179.
[102] Glenn T. Eskew, *But For Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 231.
[103] Eskew, 231.
[104] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 235.
[105] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 196.

the one-story garage building adjacent to the motel (Figure 2.26). It is currently unknown when it was demolished, however based on existing documentation, it was removed sometime between 1960 and 1962 (Figure 2.27 - Figure 2.28). The absence of the building significantly changed the spatial organization of the site, allowing vehicles to park on the footprint of the former building. The additional parking space was likely important while the Birmingham Campaign was ongoing, as the site was a hub of constant activity.

At a smaller scale, the removal of the garage meant that the courtyard space was no longer enclosed, altering the intimacy of the space. The patio remained intact however, and its planting island appears well-maintained in period photographs. The patio featured a brick surface in a running bond pattern oriented north/south. In image 2.29, the brick paving appears to be flush with the parking lot pavement and in images 2.26 and 2.29 set slightly below the concrete corridor in front of the motel rooms. Outdoor metal furniture consisting of a round table and chairs provided seating for press announcements. The planting island, immediately east of the patio, was flush with and extended across the building's façade at the north. Extending south, curvilinear on the west and straight on the east, the bed was edged with pavers in a saw tooth pattern. Plantings of scattered shrubs and a birdbath decorated the space (Figures 2.29 – 2.35).

Also, within the footprint of the former garage, a concrete walkway bordered the planting bed. In two images, Figures 2.31 and 2.32, the walkway functioned as an observation platform for press conference audiences. A ground mounted linear parking stop separated the angled parking from the walkway. There is also parking south of the courtyard with approximately seven spaces, perpendicular and flush to the 1954 Guest Room Wing.

Lastly, what appears to be a chain link fence woven with two different color inserts ran along the north side of the property. A driving lane immediately east of the parking spaces with a truck facing north likely allowed egress through the fence into the alley at the north (Figure 2.26 and 2.34-2.35). All parking and driving lanes were paved, likely in asphalt.

The elevation of the courtyard space in relationship to the surrounding parking court appears mostly level. The brick patio is approximately four inches lower than the surrounding corridor walkways, as shown in Figures 2.29 and 2.33.

The mature tree, preserved in the original construction in a raised brick planting island, does not appear to be part of the scene in 1963. There are leaves on a tree's branches in the upper left corner of a 1963 image looking toward the porte cochere, but this appears to be a street tree. There is also clearly a street tree in the background center of the photo (Figure 2.36). There are two photographs from December 1954 appearing to document both street trees. One image, looking west, likely shows the street tree pictured at center in 1963 (Figure 2.37). A second image, looking east, appears to document in the background the second street tree on the left side of the 1963 image as well as the central tree in the foreground (Figure 2.38). Earlier images clearly show the location of the raised planter as slightly west of the porte cochere opening and extending east along the rear façade of the coffee shop (Figures 2.17-2.19 and 2.21). Figure 2.36 confirms its removal by 1963. Photographs also show that by this time, the porte cochere was one-way, only allowing traffic entering from the street. An exit for the patrons as well as a pickup location for "to go" food orders was located to the east of the restaurant portion of the motel. As noted above, there likely was an exit at the north between the guest wing and courtyard space and the two-story garage and apartment building.

In April 1963, Project C began by occupying lunch counters, resulting in a small number of arrests. The modest start was strategic as to slowly build the momentum of the movement.[106] Soon more sit-ins took place, as did limited marches. Then on Good Friday, King and Abernathy led a group of fifty marchers in

[106] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), 64.

defiance of a court order barring demonstration. They made it several blocks before police arrested the marchers and took them to the Birmingham Jail. Here, after a day in solitary confinement, King wrote his seminal "Letter from Birmingham Jail."[107] After the Good Friday march, however, organizers realized that support for the campaign was waning and they had to develop an innovative approach.

The new tactic employed Birmingham's black children who, beginning on May 2, began a series of Children's Marches throughout the city. Marching from Kelly Ingram Park towards City Hall and the Retail District, the marchers were met with outright brutality by Bull Connor and the Birmingham police force (Figure 2.39 - Figure 2.40).[108] Connor unleashed both police dogs and water hoses on the young demonstrators, trying to contain them in Kelly Ingram Park.[109] Scores of children were arrested. The news media was present to document the scene, and the "photographs and televised coverage of the brutal hosing of children sickened viewers and gained a new visibility for civil rights issues."[110] The marches continued for six more days, until on May 8, a temporary moratorium was issued by the campaign in order to negotiate a solution.

Throughout the protests, A.G. Gaston was frustrated. Desiring a more peaceful solution, Gaston wanted to hash out differences through meetings and negotiations.[111] However, when he saw the children getting blasted with water by the police, Gaston was incensed, "turning him from a reluctant participant in the rush toward desegregation into a powerful, visible broker of peace in his city."[112] This did not mean Gaston would participate in the remaining marches, but rather found other ways to help, including paying over $160,000 to bail out scores of jailed protesters.[113] Further, Gaston was instrumental in pushing for the compromise that developed following the cessation of demonstrations.

Partial Victory

On May 10, 1963, "King, Abernathy, and Shuttlesworth held a news conference in the courtyard of the Gaston Motel, officially announcing the truce that had been negotiated on the 7th."[114] The truce produced a watered-down version of the original list of demands issued by the campaign a month earlier. The original list called for *immediate* desegregation of lunch counters, restrooms, and other facilities. The compromise however provided "no 'immediate' moves in any direction."[115] Instead, a months-long timetable replaced the stronger language. Shuttlesworth, who had been hospitalized after injuries sustained during the protests, was not a part of the final negotiations and was unhappy with the concession, as it contained no language requiring the merchants to pressure the city government to support desegregation as well.

While the main parties involved reluctantly accepted the truce, the white terrorist elements of the city—principally the National States' Rights Party along with Bull Connor—did not agree whatsoever with the deal. "The group picketed stores that desegregated lunch counters, and Connor had frequent meetings

[107] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), 85.
[108] Birmingham Historical Society, "Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District," (National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, 2006), Section 8, page 28.
[109] Birmingham Historical Society, "Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District," (National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, 2006), Section 8, page 28.
[110] Birmingham Historical Society, "Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District," (National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, 2006), Section 8, page 28.
[111] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 173.
[112] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 171.
[113] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 212.
[114] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 212.
[115] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 212.

attacking those who showed any willingness to accept desegregation."[116] The day after King announced the truce, terrorists attacked the A.G. Gaston Motel, detonating a bomb on the west side of the accommodations building. The bomb targeted Room 30 in an attempt to assassinate King and Abernathy. However, the leaders had just left for Atlanta, and the room was empty, though four people were slightly injured.[117] Photos of the bombing's aftermath show several destroyed metal camper trailers along the western wall of the building, a portion of the western wall damaged, as well as damage to the interior of the motel (Figure 2.41). After the bombing, a major uprising transpired in the city. Thousands of participants gathered in Kelly Ingram Park and proceeded to protest the bombing and their lack of freedom. The police descended on the protestors, severely beating them with clubs and corralling many of them in the motel parking lot (Figure 2.42). These demonstrations in Birmingham inspired hundreds of solidarity protests throughout the country over the next ten weeks.[118]

Over the summer of 1963, more bombings and attempted bombings took place throughout the city. In September, the Gaston residence was fire bombed, terrifying Minnie and nearly destroying their house.[119] While the bombing of the motel, the Gaston residence, as well as all the other bombings the city had experienced were traumatic, they paled in comparison to the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, in which four girls were killed and many others injured. Afterward, King and Gaston were emotionally devastated, but again, both approached the situation differently. King wanted federal troops and more demonstrations, Gaston wanted to hash things out internally, without "outsiders" like King involved.[120] Without the support of the black elite in the city, King backed off.

Desegregation and Economic Change in Birmingham (1964-1990)

After the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November 1963, Lyndon Johnson became president. He continued Kennedy's push for equal rights for black citizens, and less than a year later was able to gain enough support for the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act. The act made segregation of public places—including motels—illegal. The act did not result in immediate action among white politicians and police in the South, and the violence against the black community continued for several more years. When the violence subsided, and desegregation was underway, the black population in Birmingham and elsewhere in the South faced daunting economic prospects.

Post-Desegregation Economy

The civil rights movement, especially as it transpired at the local level, often focused on broader rights issues such as segregation, and not as much on the economic system that exploited communities of color. While King began to advocate for economic issues shortly before his assignation in 1968, saying famously that "the evils of capitalism are as real as the evils of militarism and evils of racism," it was not a movement-wide concern. As Jenkins and Hines explain,

> Blacks now had the right to sit at lunch counters in towns and cities across the nation, the guaranteed right to vote—and much more. But on the issues of employment and, critically, money, few answers seemed forthcoming. In neglecting to ask and answer the question of what, economically, the black community

[116] Bobby M. Wilson, *Race and Place in Birmingham: The Civil Rights and Neighborhood Movement*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2000), 98-99.
[117] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 213.
[118] Birmingham Historical Society, "Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District," (National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, 2006), Section 8, page 32.
[119] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, *Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 217.
[120] Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963*, 901.

> would require to raise itself out of its chronic un- and underemployment, movement leaders had set the stage for a revolution that refused to ignore the importance of class in the name of racial solidarity.

In Birmingham, the decline of the mining industry started before and continued throughout the civil rights era.[121] A deep-set poverty plagued the city, "with more than a third of black families living in poverty by 1970."[122] After desegregation, black-owned businesses could not compete with the white-owned businesses, as "blacks were free to take their business anywhere they chose, and to the detriment of the black business community, many black citizens chose to spend their money where they could get the best deals–which was more often than not in white-owned stores, whose larger financial bases and backing generally allowed them to offer deeper discounts and broader selection than their black competitors."[123] The issue at hand—that desegregation would not solve all of local black community's issues and that economic security was essential—was one that Gaston had been focused on for decades.

Evolution of A.G. Gaston Motel

Despite his foresight, Gaston could not counter the economic decline befalling the city, and the A.G. Gaston Motel became a victim of the times. In the last half of the 1960s, the motel was operating at a loss.[124] In order to remedy the financial downturn, Gaston sought to diversify the motel's offerings. In order to do so, Gaston launched a major renovation of the site. In 1968, Gaston added a second motel structure containing additional guest rooms, plus another building containing a 300-seat dining area and meeting rooms (Illustration 2.3).[125] Unfortunately, research did not reveal the existence of any drawings or plans for these changes, but period photographs and existing conditions provide insight into the new development (Figures 2.43 - 2.45).

The new two-story motel building was oriented north-south in the same manner as the 1954 accommodations building. Sited in the northeast corner of the site, the 14 rooms of the new building faced the interior parking area to its west. Each story contained seven rooms. Overall, the new building was constructed in the modern style of the era in keeping with the 1954 motel building. The exterior of the building featured "a blend of dark and lighter beige face brick set in a common bond."[126] The new motel block featured metal stairs and railing that were "similar to the 1954 straight-run stairs and railings."[127] The new building's overall style and material finishes tied it to the existing buildings on site.

Gaston sited the second new addition in the southeast corner of the property. Flush with the restaurant building to its west, the new addition faced 5th avenue to its south. The new building was constructed to share "the east wall line of the former one-story restaurant, but the common wall itself was removed to create a large hall on the first floor."[128] Gaston had "twelve additional guest rooms accessed from a double loaded corridor" added to the second floor of the new banquet hall.[129] The building was clad in brick and featured four bays on its south façade, with two rows of four windows across the south façade.

Further changes occurring to the preexisting buildings at this time included "the addition of an enclosed walkway atop the roof of the lobby, porte-cochere, and former coffee shop wing to provided covered,

[121] Eskew, *But For Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle*, 326.
[122] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 234.
[123] Carol Jenkins and Elizabeth Gardner Hines, Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black Millionaire, (New York: Ballentine Books, 2004), 246.
[124] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 8.
[125] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 16.
[126] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 26.
[127] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 24.
[128] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 16.
[129] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 16-17

though not conditioned, access between the 1954 and 1968 second floor wings of the motel."[130] Additionally, the south façade of the 1954 restaurant building was altered, "enclosing the bank of windows in a new wall and adding an entry with faux-mansard roof above, as well as changes to the kitchen including reconstructing the exterior walls to their present configuration with the chamfered corner."[131] Figures 2.43 and 2.45 document alterations to three of the original four planters and the addition of a planter constructed in stone on the front façade of the 1968 addition. The height of the stone planters to each side of the porte cochere and the stone planter east of the central doorway, as well as the new planter, is now identical to the brick planter at the far west. Vegetation in the planters at this time remained evergreen shrubs.

City directory records for 1970 show that the property contained what was called the "Gaston Apartments."[132] A total of 12 apartments were listed, numbered 54-65. These apartments are likely those that located in the new building along 5th Avenue. The directories also show the diversified use of the site by listing the A.G. Gaston Restaurant (1970) and later the A.G. Gaston Bar and Lounge (1978) alongside the motel and apartment uses.[133] At some point around the expansion of the restaurant operation, likely as part of the 1968 improvements, a large ground-mounted sign was installed near the porte cochere. The new sign stood over two stories tall and featured a three-part design: the top was a circle with the text "A.G. GASTON," the large middle section contained the word "MOTEL" above "RESTAURANT," and the bottom section was a blank marquee (Figure 2.37). A flared central pillar united the three parts. At this time, lettering was affixed to the south façade of the restaurant building identifying "Gaston's Lounge / Dining."

The addition of the two new buildings transformed the spatial organization of the property by creating a mostly continuous U-shape arrangement of buildings extending along the eastern, southern, and western property lines. The new arrangement thus created an enclosed interior parking lot, as opposed to the more spatially open lot that existed beforehand. It is probable that the chain-link fence on the north side of the property was replaced with a CMU (Concrete Masonry Unit) wall at this time.[134]

The diversified use of the motel was not enough to save it from closure however, by 1978, Gaston was exploring options for the sale of the motel.[135] No sale occurred, and in 1982 the company decided to convert the property into the A.G. Gaston Gardens, an apartment complex for elderly and disabled residents (Figure 2.38 and Illustration 2.4).[136] While no new building constructions were a part of the conversion, the switch to residential use altered many of the site's features. The interiors of the motel units were reconfigured for permanent residency, altering the historic layout and furnishings. Though undergoing changes in the 1968 expansion of the site, as part of the 1982 renovations, the south building façade received "a facing of random-course sandstone and Roman brick," as well as tongue-and-groove cladding "installed over the wooden windows of the motel lobby and coffee shop, as well as in all infill locations," again changing the building's appearance along Fifth Street.[137] The Z-shaped sign along the street was removed at this time though the ground-mounted sign near the porte cochere was retained, with the words "MOTEL" and "RESTAURANT" replaced by "GARDENS." Lastly, the site redesign into the Gaston Gardens necessitated the removal of the two-story garage and apartment complex.

[130] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 17.

[131] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 17.
[132] Birmingham, Alabama, City Directory, 1970 (Birmingham, AL., 1970).
[133] Birmingham, Alabama, City Directory, 1978 (Birmingham, AL., 1978).
[134] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 30.
[135] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 9.
[136] Andrew Kilpatrick, "Era ends for Gaston Motel; will house elderly and handicapped," Birmingham News, November 1, 1982.
[137] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 17; Birmingham Historical Society, "Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District," (National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, 2006), Section 7, page 4.

Civil Rights Commemoration in Birmingham (1990-2018)

Potential commemoration of the civil rights movement in Birmingham had begun in the late 1970s, with calls for the establishment of a museum dedicated to the era. Naturally, proponents of the idea identified the downtown district containing the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Kelly Ingram Park, and the A.G. Gaston Motel as the location for commemoration. When Gaston was exploring the possible sale of the motel in the late 1970s, people already knew of its significance.[138] Ever the businessman, Gaston did not want to simply hold onto the building for "sentimental" reasons however, and tried to sell the property to accommodate the construction of a proposed library.[139] When the sale fell through, Gaston converted the property into the Gardens complex in 1982.

The push for a civil right museum in the district continued throughout the 1980s, then in 1990,

> during the early stages of planning for the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Mayor Richard Arrington attended a Mayors' Institute on City Design session hosted by Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he presented the project to professional planners. The group, led by Tulane Regional Urban Design Center director Grover Mouton, quickly identified the potential of using the open space of Kelly Ingram Park as a major component of a larger Civil Rights District. The concept evolved into redesigning the park as "A Place of Revolution and Reconciliation.[140]

Grover-Harrison-Harrison, P.C. were landscape architects in the park's redesign. This firm also served as the prime consultant, leading a team of architects and engineers (civil, structural, electrical, and mechanical) in a more comprehensive project, which in addition to the park, included streetscape improvements throughout the district.

After a decade of planning and fund-raising, in 1992, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI) opened. The BCRI was located immediately north of the motel and combined with the redeveloped park and the still-active Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, formed a continuous district (Figure 2.47).

Closure of the A.G. Gaston Gardens and Future Plans

After 14 years in operation, in 1996 the A.G. Gaston Gardens closed. The property then sat unused, boarded up, and subject to deterioration (Figure 2.48 - Figure 2.50). Several proposals were put forth concerning the property throughout the 2000s, but all fell through. Then in 2015, the City of Birmingham acquired the property, with a goal of renovating the property and incorporating it into the larger district.[141] As part of this effort, in 2016, Lord Aeck Sargent completed a Historic Structure Report for the motel property. In 2016, the city partnered with the National Trust for Historic Preservation in pursuing the creation of a national monument to commemorate the civil rights movement in the city. Their advocacy, along with that of other groups and individuals paid off, and in 2017, President Barack Obama created the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument by executive order. The A.G. Gaston Motel property is presently co-owned by the National Park Service (NPS) and the City of Birmingham. The city owns the restaurant wing, 1968 addition and most of the parking court on the east side of the site. The NPS owns the 1954 accommodations building on the west side of the site.

[138] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 9.
[139] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 9.
[140] "Kelly Ingram Park," BHAM Wiki, Last Modified March 28, 2017, https://www.bhamwiki.com/w/Kelly_Ingram_Park
[141] "A.G. Gaston Motel," BHAM Wiki, Last Modified August 17, 2018, https://www.bhamwiki.com/w/A._G._Gaston_Motel

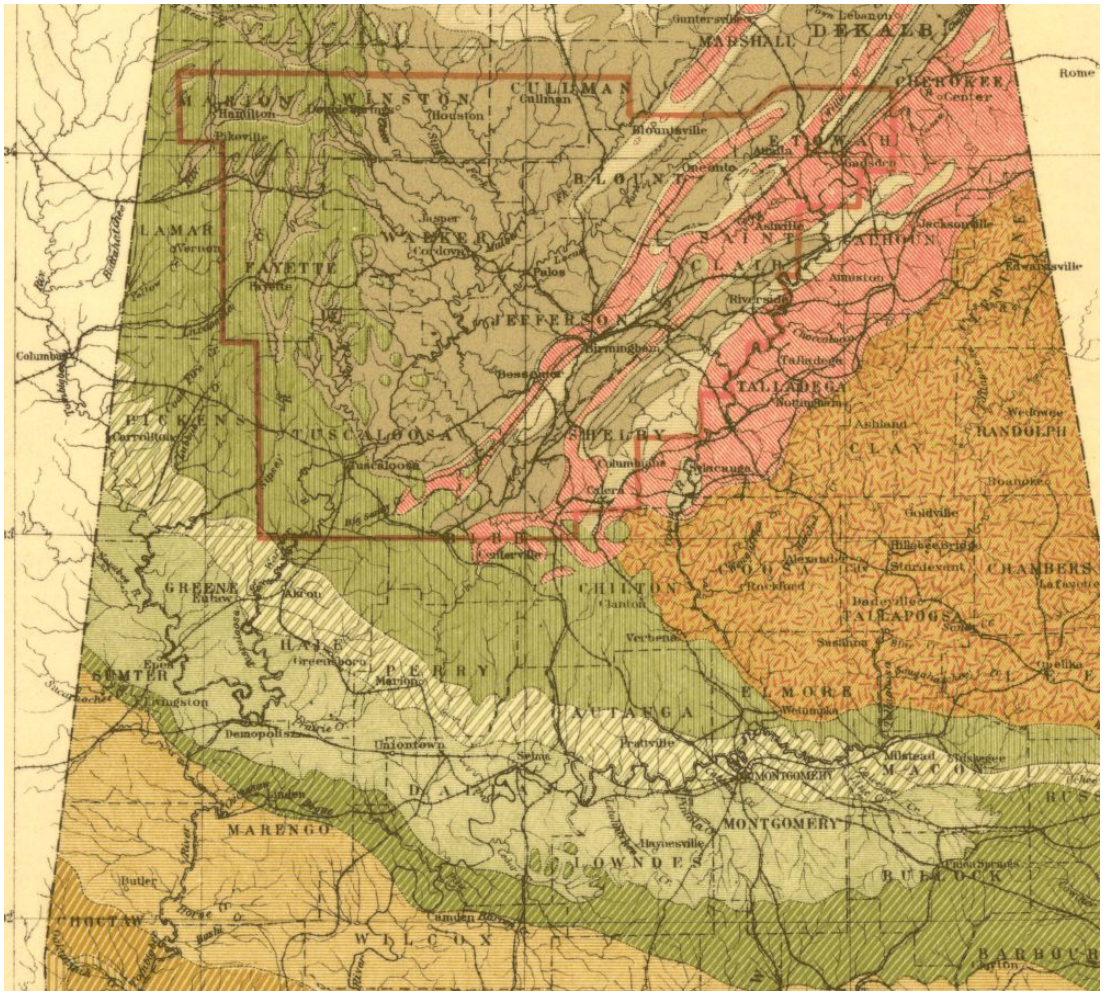

Figure 2.1: Alabama geology. Note the iron ore deposits (colored pink) extending through Jefferson County in center of map (Eugene Allen Smith, "A Geological Map of Alabama," 1904. http://cartweb.geography.ua.edu/lizardtech/iserv/calcrgn?cat=Special%20Topics&item=Geology/alabama1904c.sid&wid=1000&hei=900&props=item(Name,Description),cat(Name,Description)&style=simple/view-dhtml.xsl).

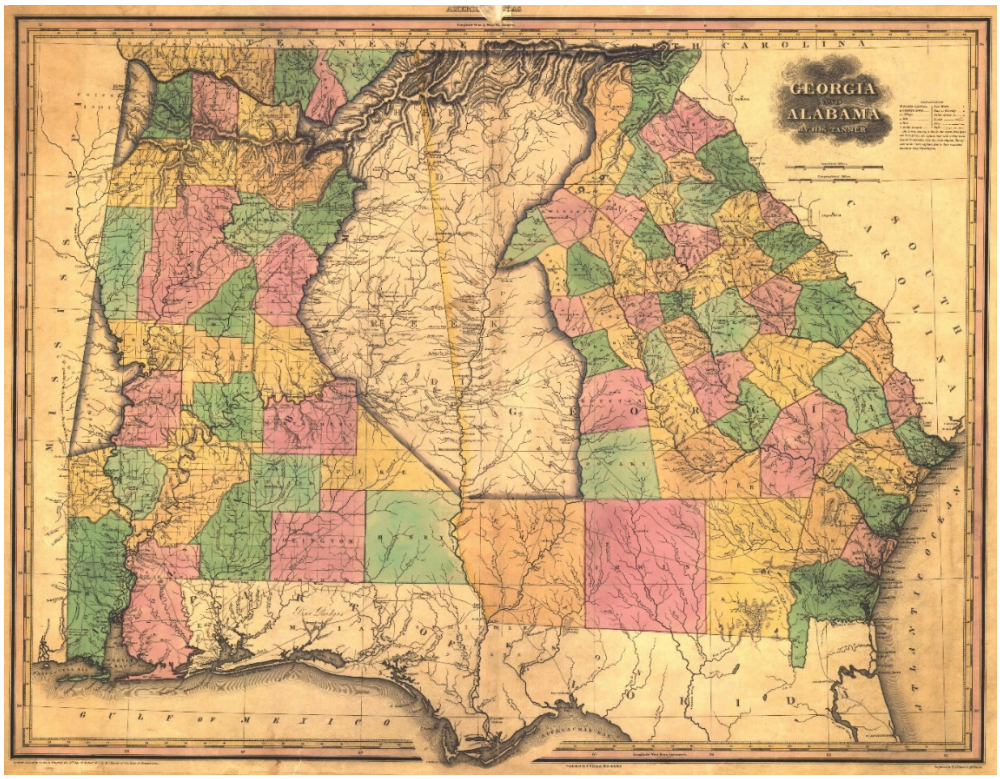

Figure 2.2: 1823 map of Georgia and Alabama showing American Indian lands after a period of cessations. (Georgia and Alabama By H.S. Tanner. Published by H.S. Tanner, Philadelphia. Engraved by H.S. Tanner & Assistants. Entered ... 20th day of August 1823, by H.S. Tanner... Pennsylvania. American Atlas.)

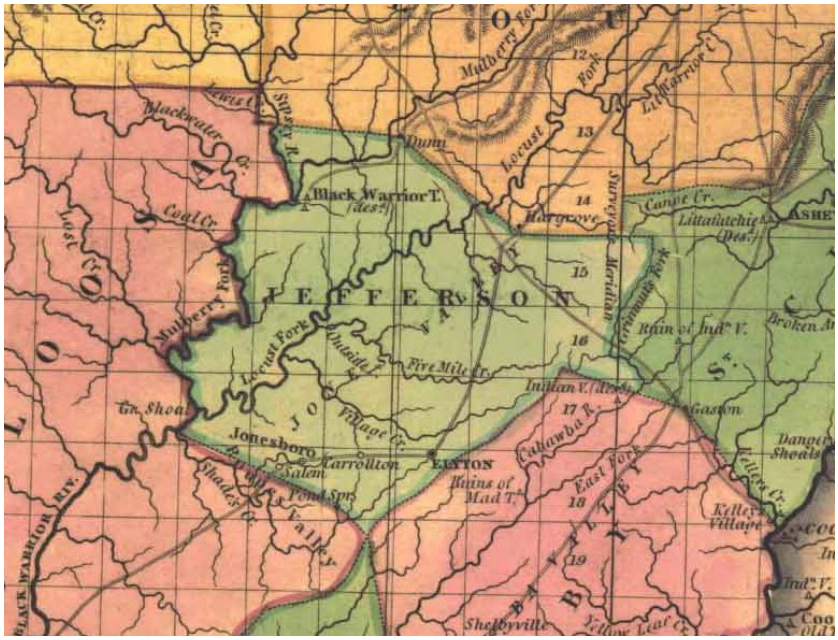

Figure 2.3: Portion of 1823 map of Georgia and Alabama showing Jefferson County. (Georgia and Alabama By H.S. Tanner. Published by H.S. Tanner, Philadelphia. Engraved by H.S. Tanner & Assistants. Entered ... 20th day of August 1823, by H.S. Tanner... Pennsylvania. American Atlas.)

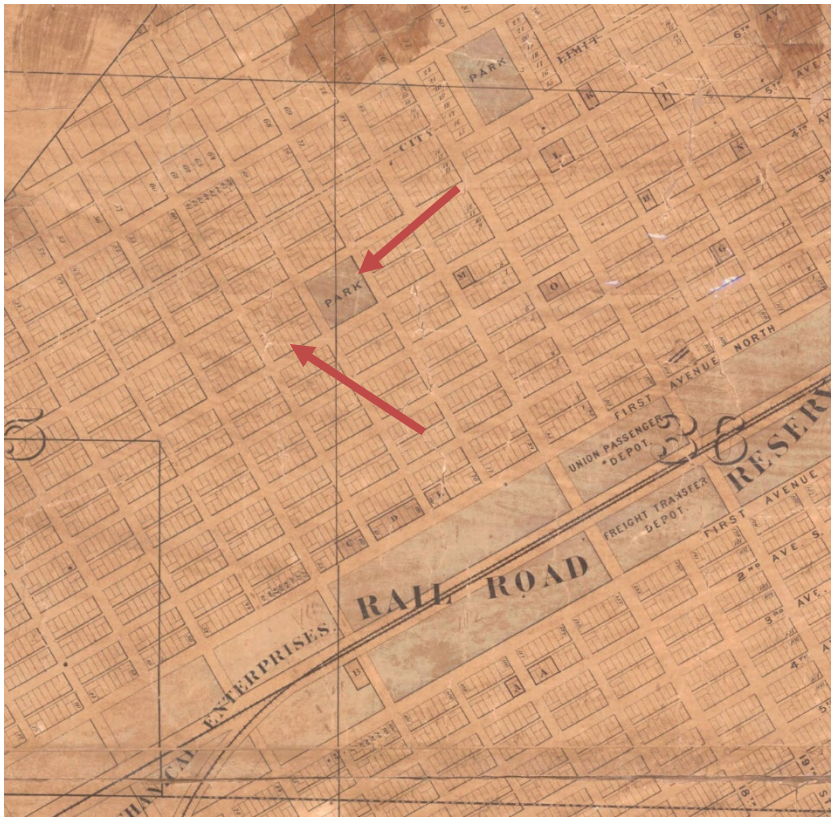

Figure 2.4: Portion of 1890 reproduction of 1871 plan of Birmingham. Arrows indicate the present locations of Kelly Ingram Park and the A.G. Gaston Motel site. (William P. Barker, *Map of the City of Birmingham Alabama and the adjacent property: of the Elyton Land Company,* 1890).

Figure 2.5: 1937 photograph showing the industrial scene on the outskirts of Birmingham. (Arthur Rothstein, photographer. Industrial scene. Many occupants of the Resettlement Administration homesteads came from homes like those in front of this steel mill. Ensley, Alabama. Alabama Ensley. Jefferson County United States, 1937. Feb. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017775568/.)

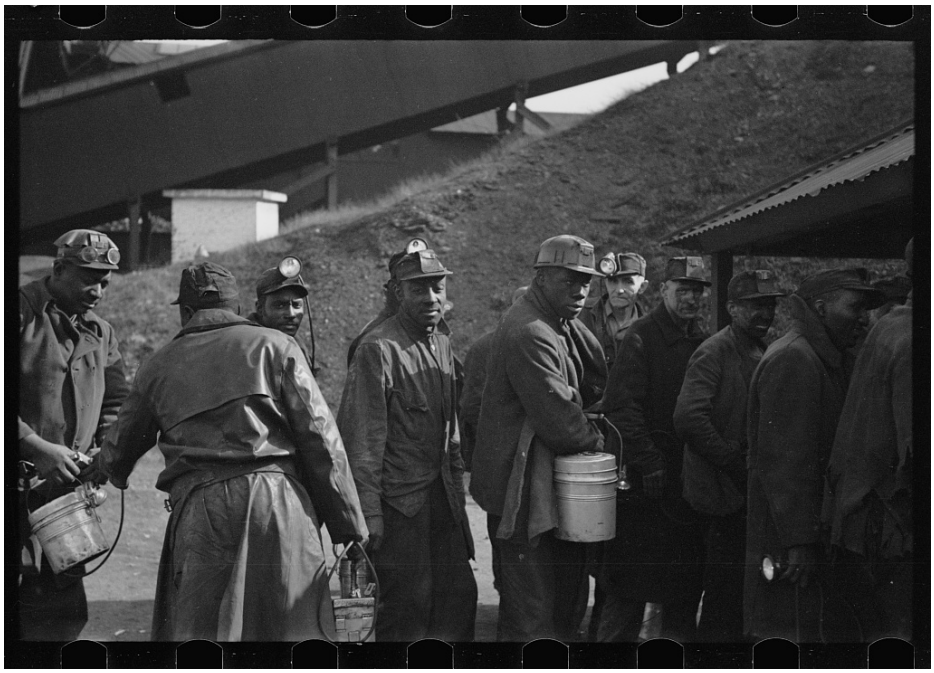

Figure 2.6: 1937 photograph showing the African American coal miners in Birmingham. (United States Resettlement Administration, Rothstein, Arthur, photographer. Untitled photo, possibly related to: Coal miners, Birmingham, Alabama. Alabama Birmingham. United States, 1937. [Feb] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017722148/.)

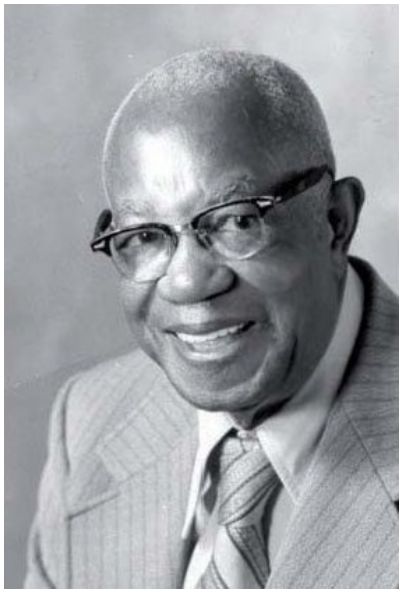

Figure 2.7: Portrait of A.G. Gaston, no date (Birmingham Public Library).

Figure 2.8: Smith and Gaston Funeral Home, no date, Jefferson County Board of Equalization Records, (Birmingham Public Library).

Figure 2.9: Detail of block 34. (*Birmingham, Alabama* / Beck & Pauli lith., Milwaukee, Wis. Alabama Birmingham, ca. 1885. Milwaukee, Wis.: Norris, Wellge & Co. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/92508993/).

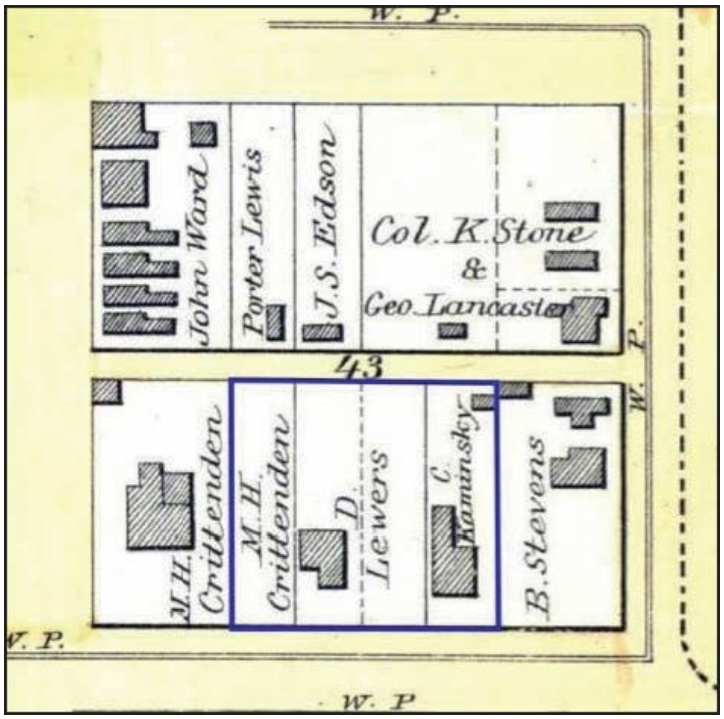

Figure 2.10: Detail from Atlas of the City of Birmingham and Suburbs (New York: Beers, Ellis, & Co., 1887), sheet A; (Birmingham Public Library Cartography Collection).

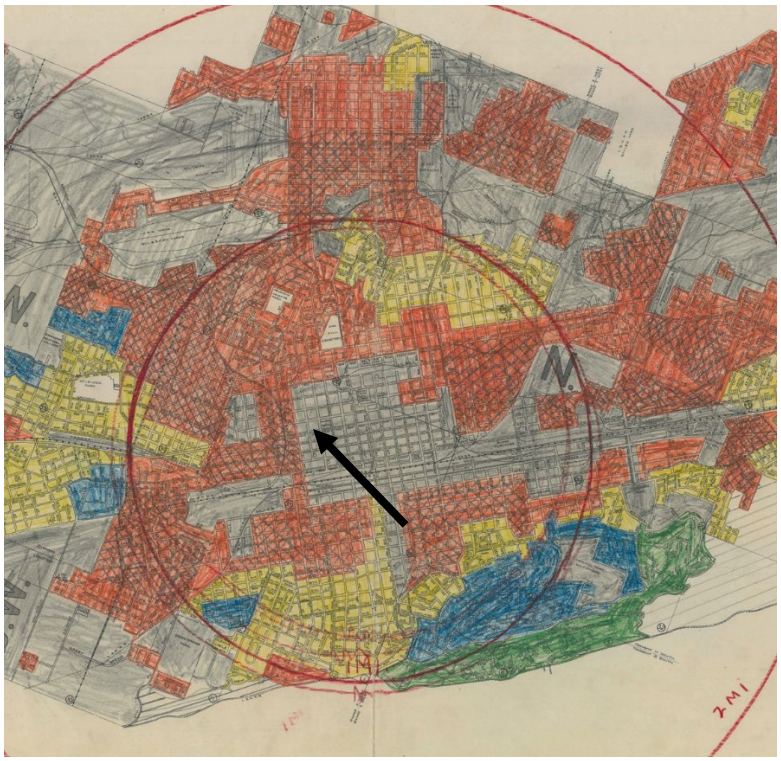

Figure 2.11: Portion of 1930s "redlining" map for Birmingham. Industrial areas and "negro concentrations" are colored in gray. Present location of A.G. Gaston Motel indicated by arrow. (https://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2015/06/old_birmingham_map_outlined_ne.html).

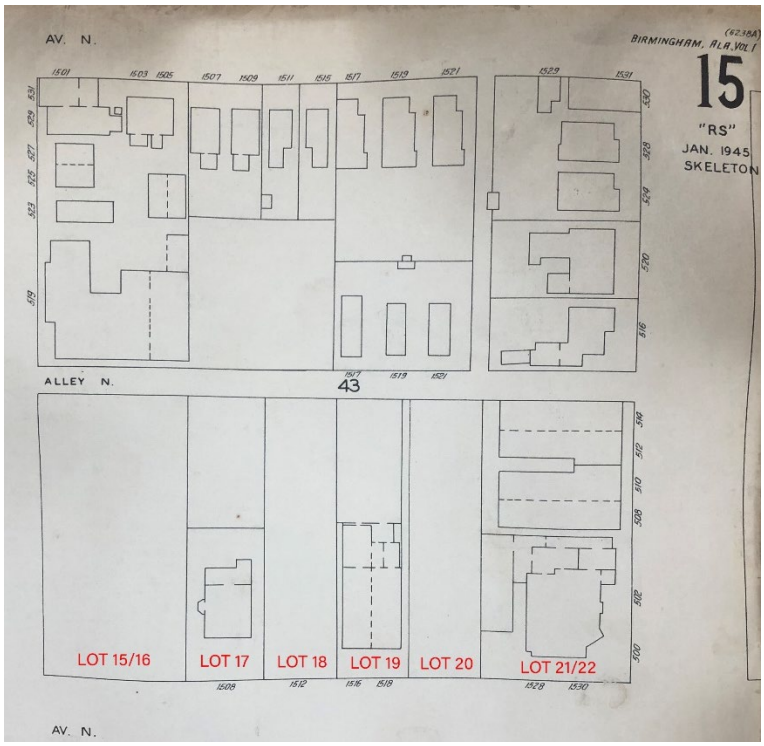

Figure 2.12: 1945 Sanborn "RS" skeleton map for the block with lot numbers added. (Birmingham Public Library).

Figure 2.13: Apartment/Garage Building on Lot 19. Photo taken 10/10/1946. (Source: Birmingham Public Library).

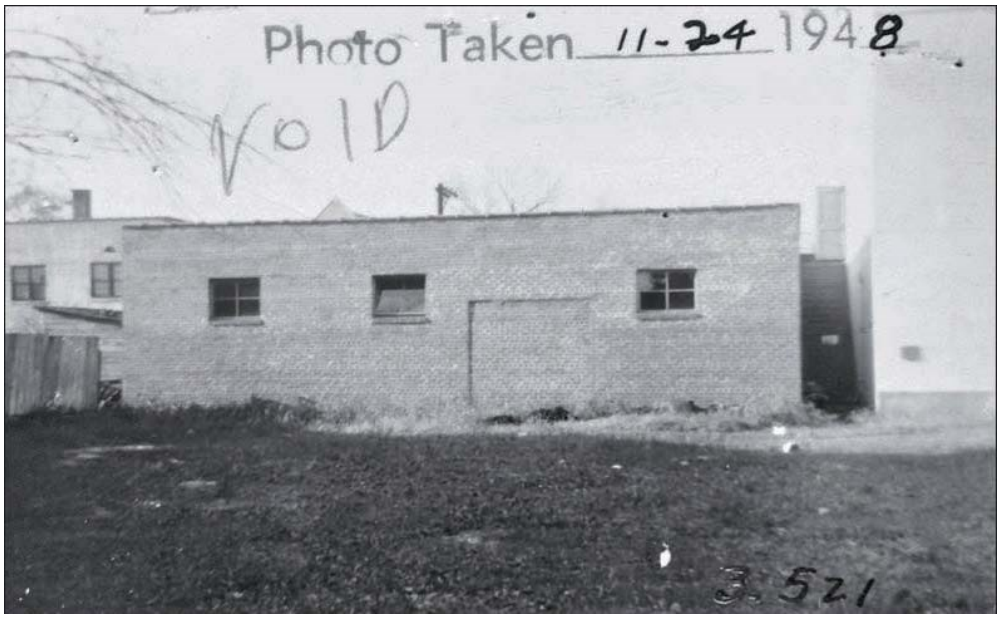

Figure 2.14: Garage building on Lot 18. Photo taken 11/24/1948. (Source: Birmingham Public Library).

Figure 2.15: Original rendering for motel. (Source: Birmingham Civil Rights Institute).

Figure 2.16: 1954 *Birmingham News* file photo of the newly opened A.G. Gaston Motel in Birmingham, Alabama.

Figure 2.17: Folding postcard featuring views of the Gaston Motel, c. 1955. Courtesy of Marie Sutton.

Figure 2.18: Folding postcard featuring views of the Gaston Motel, c. 1955. Courtesy of Marie Sutton.

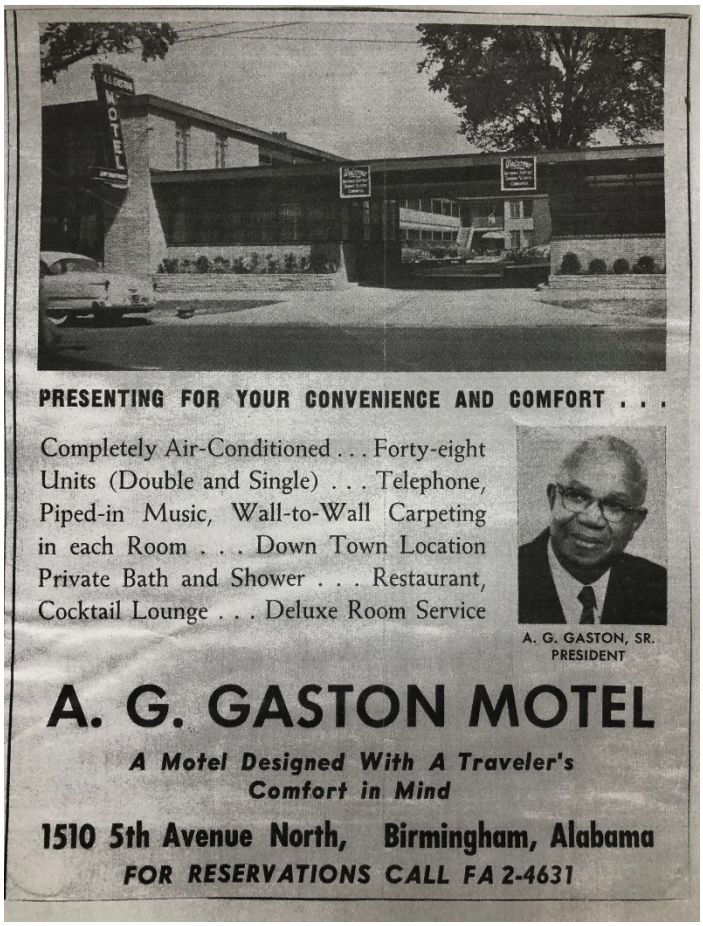

Figure 2.19: Undated advertisement for the A.G. Gaston Motel, c. 1955. (Birmingham Civil Rights Institute).

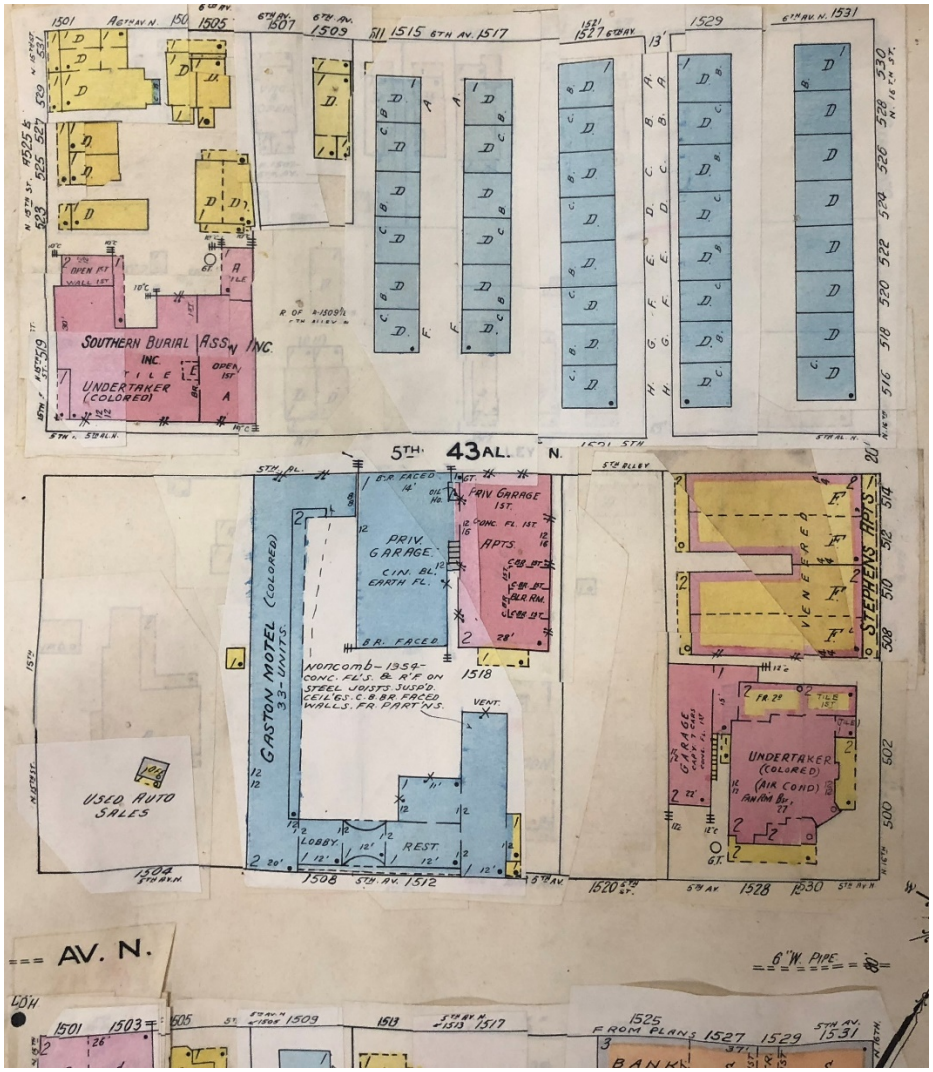

Figure 2.20: Sanborn Map showing relation of motel to garage buildings and the other buildings present on the block, circa 1960. (Source: Birmingham Public Library).

Figure 2.21: A.G. Gaston and R.A. Hester in the motel's courtyard, no date (1954-1961). (Birmingham Civil Rights Institute).

Figure 2.22: 1954 *Birmingham News* file photo of the newly opened A.G. Gaston Motel in Birmingham, Alabama.

Figure 2.23: A Greyhound bus used by the Freedom Riders was firebombed by terrorists outside of Anniston, Alabama on May 14, 1961. (Birmingham Civil Rights Institute).

Figure 2.24: Rev. King, with the Rev. Abernathy (center) and the Rev. Shuttlesworth in Birmingham, 1963. (Birmingham Public Library).

Figure 2.25: 1954 *Birmingham News* file photos of the two-room master suite. 54-5022 "A.G. Gaston's New Motel"

Figure 2.26: "Young civil rights demonstrators speaking at a press conference at the Gaston Motel during the Children's Crusade in Birmingham, Alabama." Note the absence of the one-story garage building and the addition of the chain link fence on the north side of the property. (May 8, 1963, Photo by Dean Norman, Alabama Department of Archives and History).

Figure 2.27: November 1960 aerial of the site. It appears that the two late-1940s buildings are still present at this time. By 1962, the one-story garage was removed.

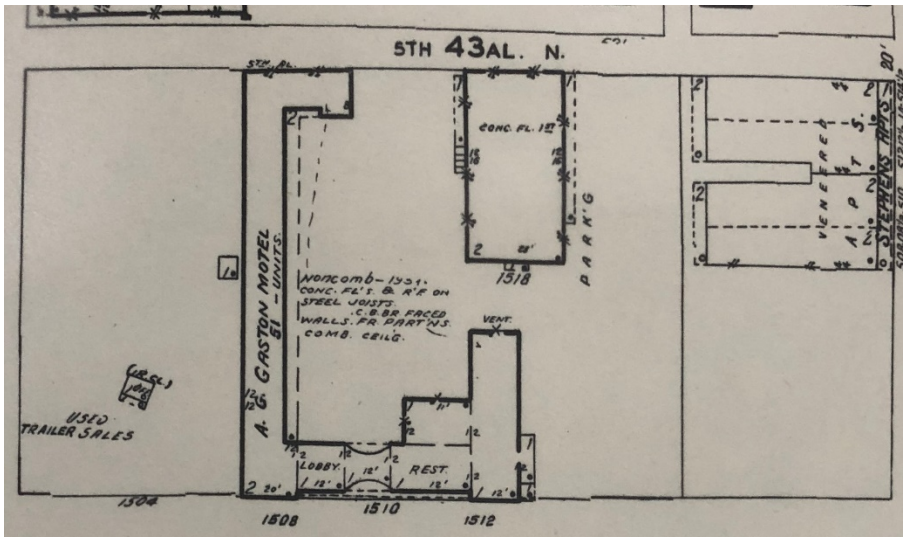

Figure 2.28: 1962 Sanborn map of the site. Note the absence of the one-story garage (Birmingham Public Library).

Figure 2.29: 1963 photo, showing close-up view of courtyard space. Note metal table and chairs and brick paved surface.

Figure 2.30: 1963 photo showing close-up view of courtyard space. Note metal table and chairs and brick paved surface. (Tom Self, The Birmingham News)

Figure 2.31: Screenshot from 1963 footage of the site during a news conference. (Source: Associated Press, C-SPAN https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4678921/lead-kings-arrest-birmingham-al)

Figure 2.32: Screenshot from 1963 footage of the site during a news conference. (Source: Associated Press, C-SPAN https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4678921/lead-kings-arrest-birmingham-al)

Figure 2.33: Screenshot from 1963 footage of Reverend King giving announcements from motel balcony. (Source: Original footage source unknown, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1AepPbYwP4)

Figure 2.34: Screenshot from 1963 footage of Reverend King giving announcements from motel balcony. (Source: Original footage source unknown, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1AepPbYwP4)

Figure 2.29: "Audience at a press conference held by Martin Luther King Jr. and others at the Gaston Motel in Birmingham, Alabama." (May 10, 1963, Photo by Tom Self, Alabama Department of Archives and History).

Figure 2.36: "Martin Luther King Jr. and others holding a press conference at the Gaston Motel in Birmingham, Alabama." Note the planting island in the bottom left corner of the photo. This photo confirms the removal of the former planting island containing the mature tree north of the coffee shop by the date of this photograph, 1963. (May 10, 1963, Photo by Tom Self, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

Figure 2.37 1954 view of front façade looking northwest, note street tree at west end. 12.27.1954. Jefferson County Board of Equalization Records, from Birmingham Public Library.

Figure2.38 1954 view of front façade looking east, note street tree in foreground at west end and second street tree beyond the motel on east. 12.27.1954. (Jefferson County Board of Equalization Records, from Birmingham Public Library).

Figure 2.39: "Civil rights demonstrators and policemen with dogs in Kelly Ingram Park in downtown Birmingham, Alabama. A young African American man is waving his shirt at one of the dogs. Sixteenth Street Baptist Church is in the background." (May 1963, Photo by Birmingham News, Alabama Department of Archives and History).

Figure 2.40: Birmingham Fire Department spraying children demonstrators with high-pressure water hoses (May 1963, Photo by Birmingham News).

Figure 2.41 Bomb-damaged camper trailers at the Gaston Motel. Note the hole in the motel's west wall. (Trikosko, Marion S., Library of Congress).

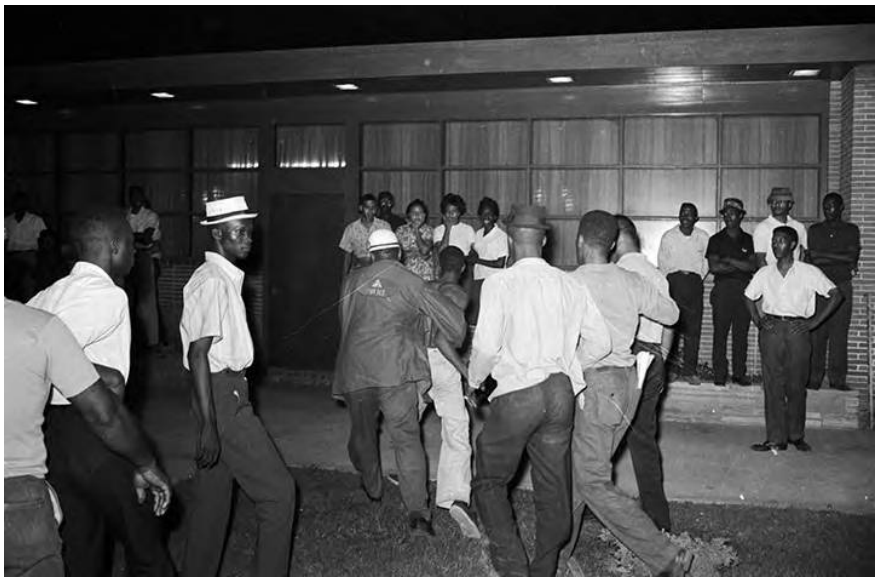

Figure 2.42: "African American Civil Defense officer restraining a young man in front of the Gaston Motel in Birmingham, Alabama, after the building was bombed. (May 11, 1963, Photo by Dean Norman, Alabama Department of Archives and History).

Figure 2.43: Circa 1970 image of updated A.G. Gaston Motel Complex. (Source: From *The A.G. Gaston Motel in Birmingham: A Civil Rights Landmark* by Marie A. Sutton, courtesy of Chris McNair of Chris McNair Studios, pg. 100, The History Press, 2014).

Figure 2.44: 1970 aerial of the motel site.

Figure 2.45: The A.G. Gaston Motel in 1973 (Birmingham News, File photo by Anthony Falletta).

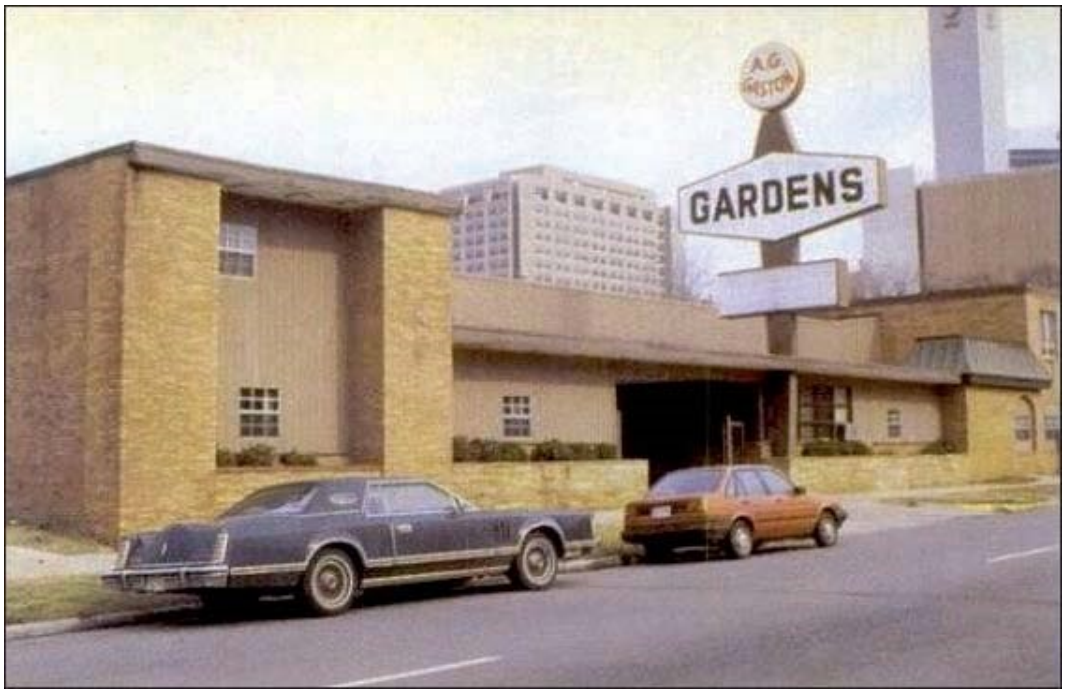

Figure 2.46: A. G. Gaston Gardens, Ebony magazine, June 1987, p. 56.

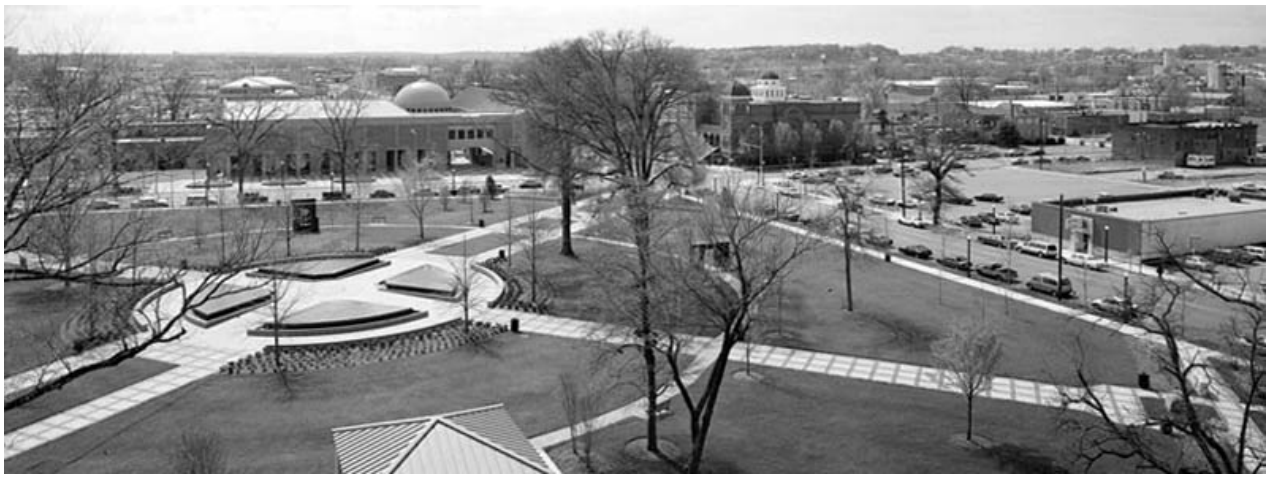

Figure 2.47: Birds-eye view of Kelly Ingram Park from the Historic American Buildings Survey. Taken in the Spring of 1993 by Jet Lowe. Title: 1. ENVIRONMENTAL VIEW ACROSS KELLY-INGRAM PARK SHOWING CHURCH (RIGHT BACKGROUND) AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE (LEFT BACKGROUND), LOOKING WEST - Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, 1530 Sixth Avenue North, Birmingham, Jefferson County, AL, HABS ALA, 37-BIRM,33--1

Figure 2.30: A.G. Gaston Motel in 2010. (Highsmith, Carol M, photographer. A.G. Gaston Motel, Birmingham, Alabama. Alabama Birmingham. United States, 2010. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2010636969/).

Figure 2.31: A.G. Gaston Motel in 2010. (Highsmith, Carol M, photographer. A.G. Gaston Motel, Birmingham, Alabama. Alabama Birmingham. United States, 2010. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2010636968/.)

Figure 2.50: 2018 conditions of the motel site (WLA Studio).

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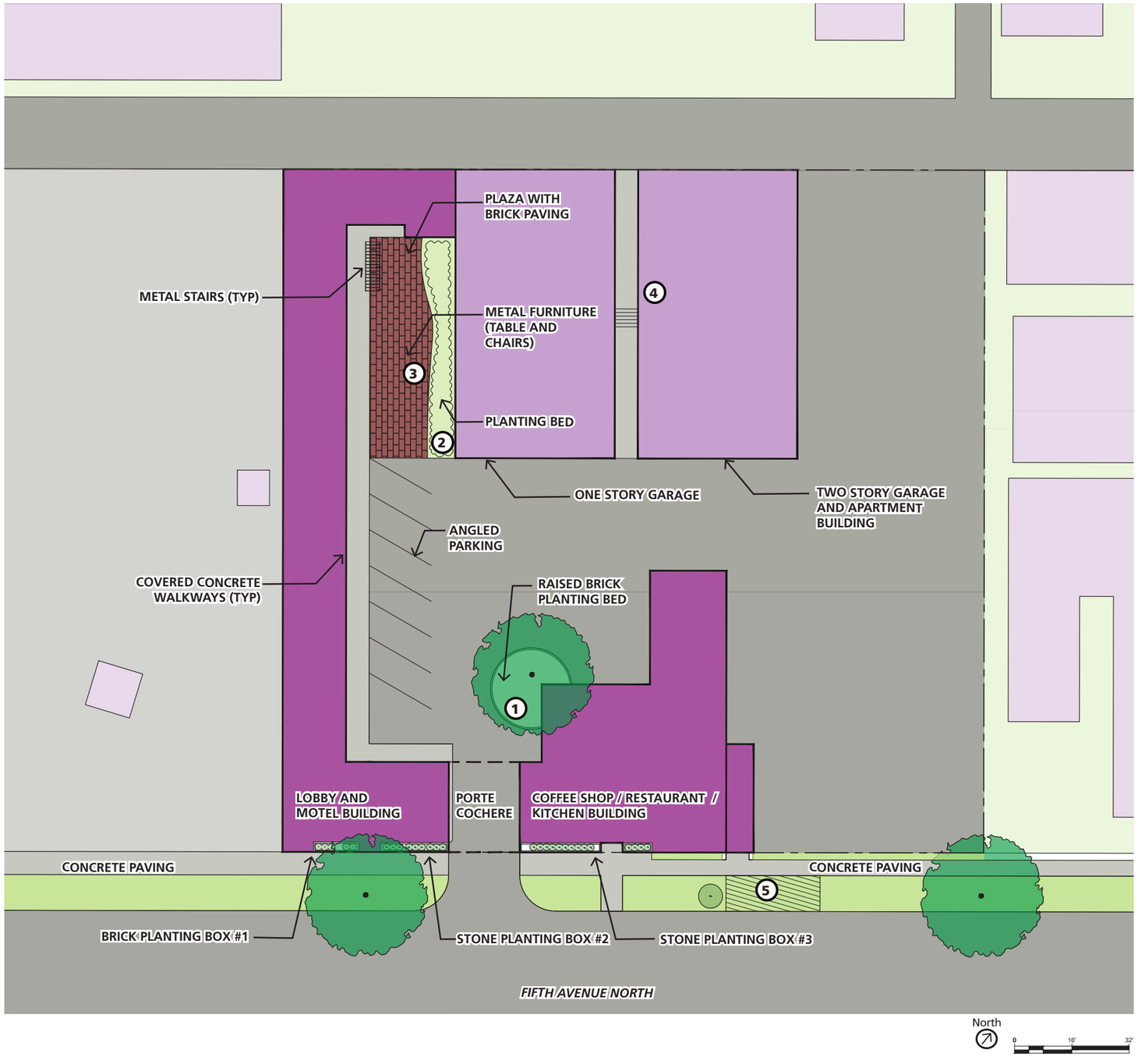

LEGEND

- DECIDUOUS TREE
- SHRUB
- BRICK
- Pre-1954 BUILDINGS
- 1954 BUILDINGS
- ASPHALT
- CONCRETE
- TURF / VEGETATION

NOTES

1. Research did not reveal evidence for the full extent of the circular raised brick planting bed. The 1954 postcards and one photograph of the feature do not show its eastern side. The planter and tree were removed by 1963.

2. A planting bed existed between the one-story garage and the brick-paved plaza area. The only period photographs of the courtyard are distant views and do not contain sufficient detail for plant identification.

3. A set of outdoor furniture consisting of metal tables and chairs was located in the plaza area. The set contained umbrellas for shade.

4. Access to the apartments on the second floor of the garage was via a flight of stairs between the two buildings..

5. Entry into the motel complex was through the porte cochere, which was one-way. It is likely that vehicles exited the site to the east of the restaurant building onto 5th Avenue.

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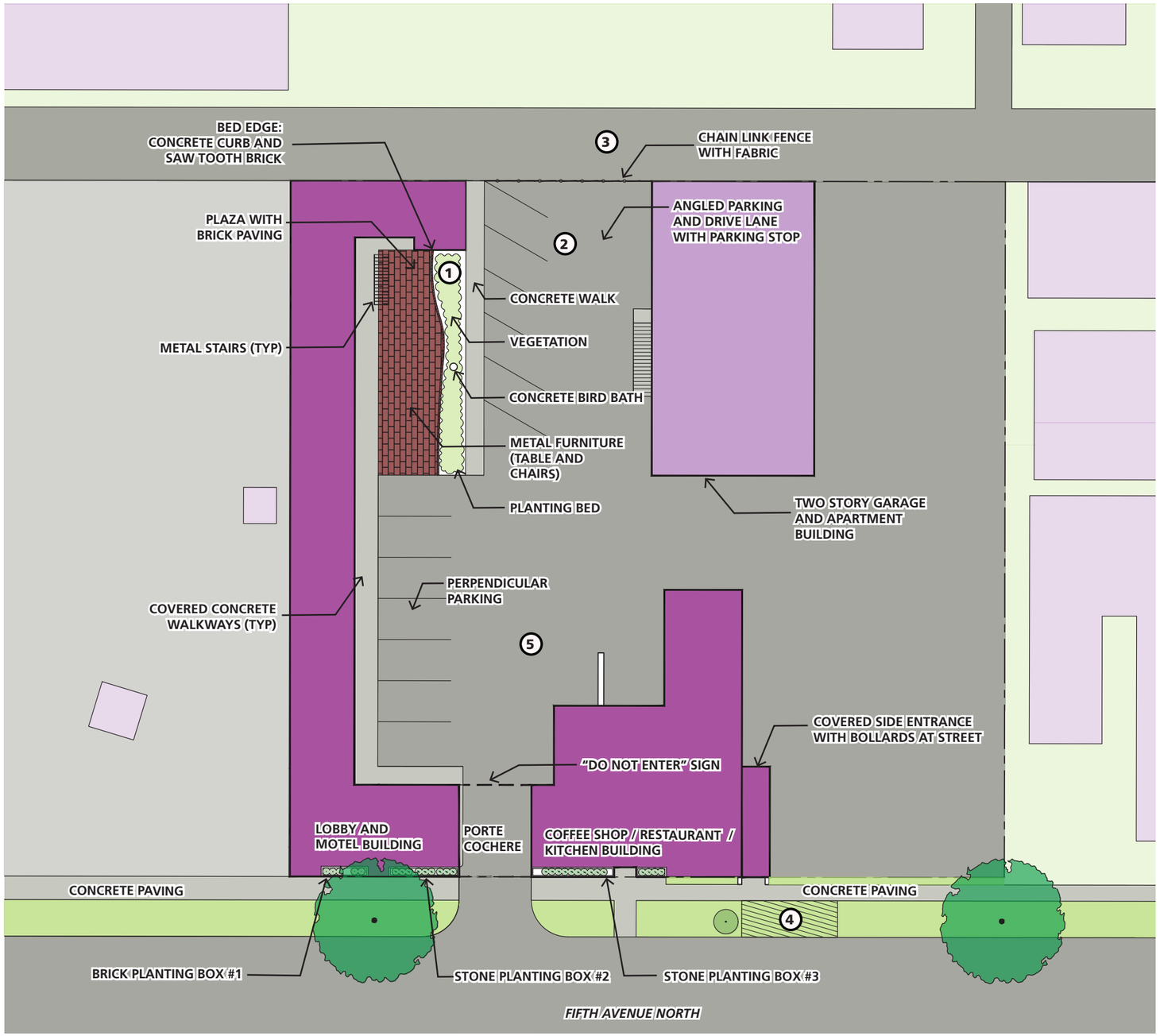
A.G. GASTON MOTEL
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

DATE
04.15.2019

RECORDED BY:
DJ, MF, SD

SCALE:
see graphic scale

2-1
1954
PERIOD PLAN



LEGEND

- DECIDUOUS TREE
- SHRUB
- BRICK
- Pre-1954 BUILDINGS
- 1954 BUILDINGS
- ASPHALT
- CONCRETE
- TURF / VEGETATION

NOTES

1. Images from 1963 reveal detailed information about the character of the planting bed in the northwest corner of the site. It is unconfirmed these conditions reflect 1954 conditions (Period Plan 1) or represent a post-1954 condition. From the photograph of the planting island (Figure 2.21) dating from sometime between 1954 and 1961, there is vegetation shown on the east side of the courtyard and metal furniture placed on the west side, the same arrangement confirmed in images from 1963. Period images from 1963 show a gently curving, linear planting bed, edged in sawtooth brick. The west side of the planting bed was bordered by the brick-paved patio. The east side of the planting bed was bordered by a concrete walkway associated with the adjacent parking area. The plant material in 1963 appears young and not fully formed enough for proper identification. A concrete bird bath (2.5' diameter) decorated the space.

2. A new parking area was created with the removal of the one-story garage building. The space featured angled parking and possibly a drive that allowed access to the alley.

3. A chain link fence covered in a diamond-shaped, decorative fabric spanned the area between the motel building and two-story garage/ apartment building on the north side of the site.

4. By 1963, entry into the motel complex was through the porte cochere, which was one-way. It is presumed that vehicles exited the site to the east of the restaurant building onto 5th Avenue. The 1954 building featured a small extensvion on the southeast corner that included a covered space with an enclosure to the rear. Concrete paving extends from the addition to the street and a well-worn ground immediately east, possibly indicates the drive. An access to the alley behind the angled parking at the northwest corner is a second potential exit.

5. By 1963, the raised brick planter in the vicinity of the parking area was removed. The parking immediately east of the motel building was altered from angled parking to perpendicular spacing.

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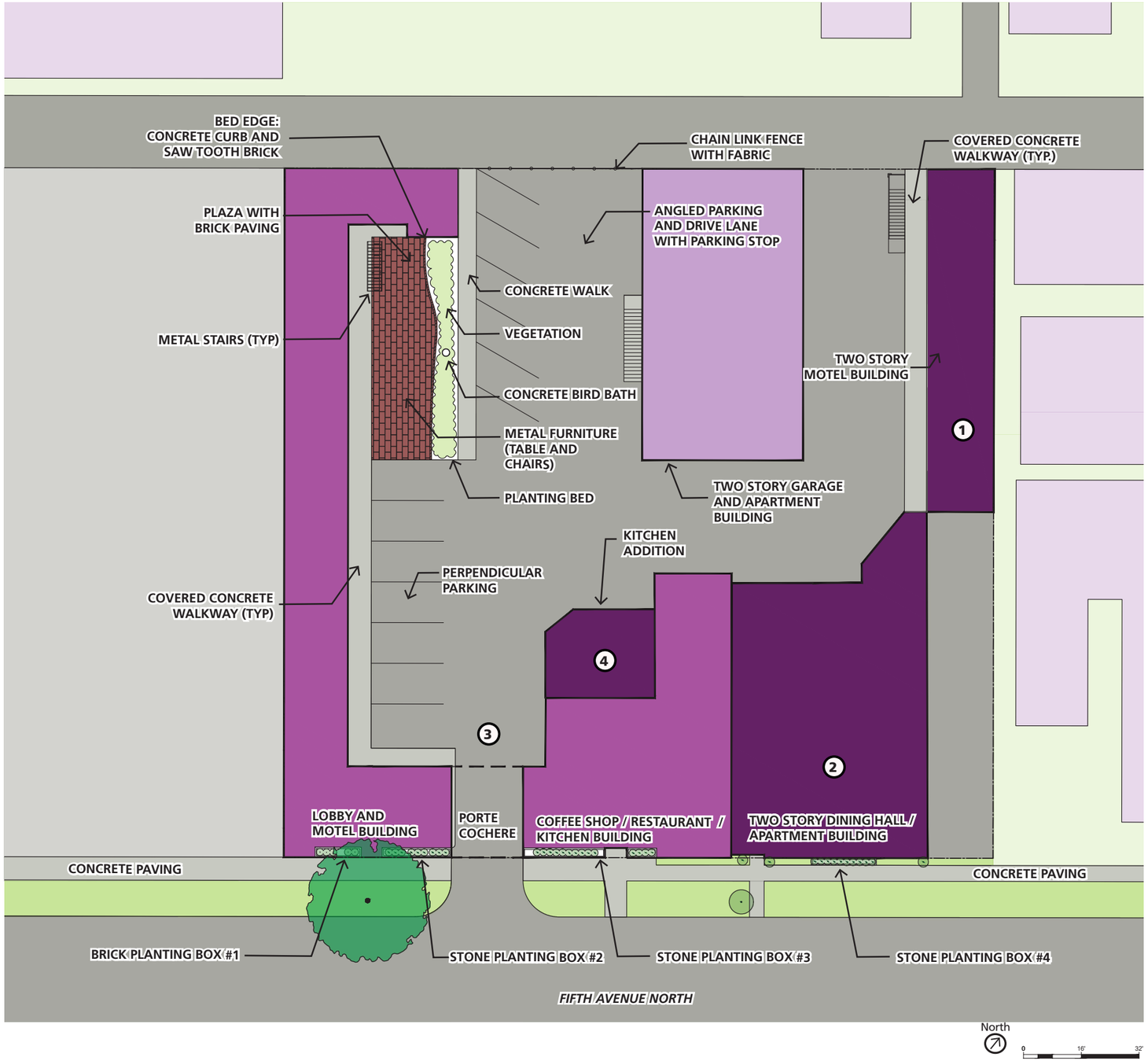
A.G. GASTON MOTEL
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

DATE
04.15.2019

RECORDED BY:
DJ, MF, SD

SCALE:
see graphic scale

2-2
1963
PERIOD PLAN



LEGEND

- DECIDUOUS TREE
- SHRUB
- BRICK
- Pre-1954 BUILDINGS
- 1954 BUILDINGS
- 1968 BUILDINGS
- ASPHALT
- CONCRETE
- TURF / VEGETATION

NOTES

1. In 1968, Gaston added a two-story motel building in the northeast corner of the site. The new building reflected the modern style of the 1954 motel building.

2. In the southeast corner of the site, Gaston also added a two-story dining hall that contained 12 apartments and additonal meeting spaces. The building sat flush with the preexisting building facing 5th Avenue North. An additional planting box was added at this time.

3. The new buildings constructed in the eastern portion of the site altered circulation through the site. While a gate may have still existed through the chain link fence on the north side of the site, the new buildings blocked the former exit east of the restaurant building. As such, it is possible that the entrance through the porte cochere became two-way at this time.

4. Gaston also had the kitchen expanded at this time.

5. Based on documentation of site information in the 1982 architectural plans, the landscape, including courtyard space and parking configuration is believed to have remained the same as in 1963.

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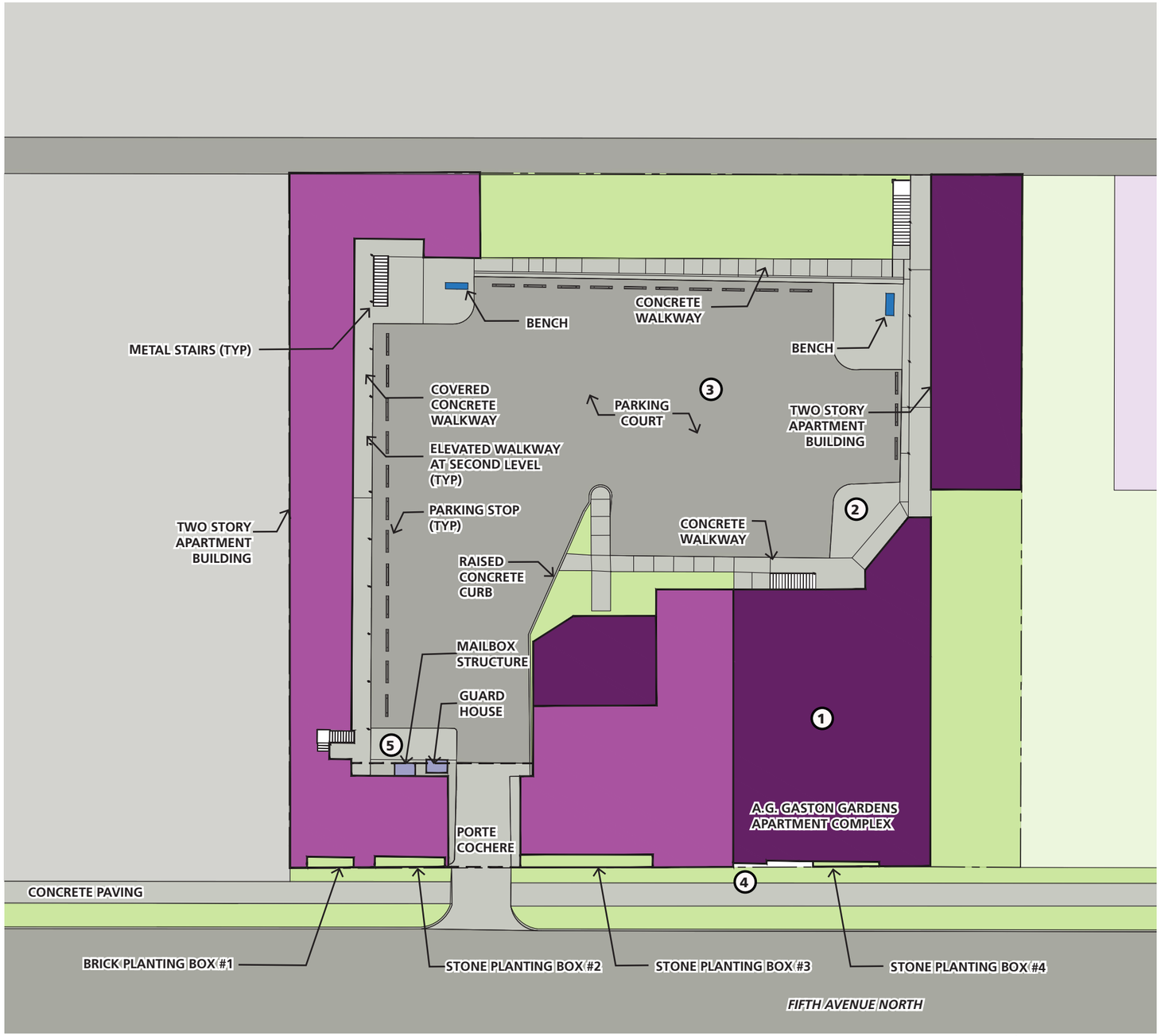
DATE
04.15.2019

RECORDED BY:
DJ, MF, SD

SCALE:
see graphic scale

2-3
1968
PERIOD PLAN



LEGEND

- DECIDUOUS TREE
- SHRUB
- BRICK
- Pre-1954 BUILDINGS
- 1954 BUILDINGS
- 1968 BUILDINGS
- 1982 BUILDINGS
- ASPHALT
- CONCRETE
- TURF / VEGETATION

NOTES

1. In 1982, Gaston converted the motel complex into thirty-nine apartments for elderly and disabled residents, called A.G. Gaston Gardens.

2. In addition to alteration of the building interiors, the landscape underwent major changes, including the construction of a extensive walkway system that rings the expanded parking area.

3. During constuction in 1982, workers removed the two story garage and apartment building. Its removal resulted in the presence of a significantly larger parking court.

4. During the renovation of the site, workers unified “stone planting box #3” into one continuious planter.

5. The only buildings added to the site during this period were a mailbox structure and a guard house, which were both located in the southwest corner of the parking court.

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A.G. GASTON MOTEL
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
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DATE
04.15.2019

RECORDED BY:
DJ, MF, SD

SCALE:
see graphic scale

2-4
1982
PERIOD PLAN

Existing Conditions

Introduction

This section of the report provides a comprehensive and detailed description of the current conditions at the A.G. Gaston Motel site. Photographs of these conditions, included as figures, and plan view maps of the site with multiple symbols and notations, included as illustrations, expound on the observations. Site inspections occurred during July 23-25, 2018 by staff members from WLA Studio. The site visit with additional strategic research forms the basis for this section of the CLR.

The site's north arrow points to the rear right corner of the property. For ease in conveying the site conditions, the orientation was adjusted slightly. The rear property line is the north side of the site and 5th Avenue North is the southern boundary of the site with east and west on the two sides of the property. Chapter 1 noted this slight adjustment in orientation.

The site reflects three primary building periods:

- The original construction by July 1954 with further additions completed in October and December of 1954;
- A major expansion of the motel in 1968 with building additions; and
- The repurposing of the existing buildings and site to senior housing in 1982.

Through all these phases, changes occurred to the buildings and landscapes. Today's landscape includes traces from all of these construction phases.

Landscape Characteristics

Natural Character

Birmingham, Alabama is in the north central section of the state. The city is part of Jefferson County Alabama, which is within two of the state's five physiographic zones. Both zones extend east to west diagonally across the county with the Cumberland Plateau to the north and the Alabama Valley and Ridge to the south. Birmingham's location is slightly south of this dividing line. Situated in Jones Valley and flanked by mountain ridges, this area is rich in mineral resources. Due to the high clay content in soils, the region's vegetation is characterized by the presence of pine-dominate plant communities.[142]

The A.G. Gaston site does not contain any natural systems or features, due to the highly disturbed condition of this property.

[142] "Geography and Environment," Encyclopedia of Alabama, 2005-2016, accessed September 22, 2018, http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/category/GeographyandEnvironment.

Land Use and Context

The A.G. Gaston Motel is located at 1510 5th Avenue North, Birmingham, Alabama 35203. The site has been in residential and commercial-residential land uses for most of its history, including the Gaston Motel beginning in 1954 and later adaptively reused for senior housing as A.G. Gaston Gardens in 1982.

Gaston Gardens closed in 1996. Afterward, the site sat vacant and unused, which reflects the site's current condition. Presently, the City of Birmingham and the National Park Service own the site and plan to develop the site for heritage tourism, commemoration, and interpretation.

The site is part of both the Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District and the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument with public use and ownership on three sides and private commercial development on the fourth side. Tax records show that the Historical Preservation Authority owns the parcels to the east, north and south, all within the same block. The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI) is immediately north of the site with parking for the BCRI to the west and a passive park area with tables, seating and children's play structure to the east. Kelly Ingram Park is located within the block to the east and is owned by the Historical Preservation Authority with the city's park and recreation division as an additional owner. Kelly Ingram Park, the block to the north containing the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, and the block to the south are part of the Civil Rights National Monument. The block to the south facing 5th Avenue North contains exclusively commercial uses, including housing, a drugstore, and the A.G. Gaston Building, with all parcels privately owned (Figure 3.1).

Images of the site from multiple vantage points provide a comprehensive overview of the site and serve as references for the following discussion of the site's landscape characteristics (Figure 3.2-3.14).

Views/Vistas

The site is open within the parking court, allowing expansive views across the site from numerous vantage points, including the upper levels of the two guest room wings and the banquet hall/meeting space addition from 1968. The site's front façade faces 5th Avenue North with views along its entire expanse from the street. There are limited views to the parking court from 5th Avenue North through the porte-cochere. Exterior views of the east and west exterior facades are brick walls. Two rows of maple trees are in the adjacent open space to the west and rows of evergreen in the open space to the east. Figures 3.2 – 3.14 provide comprehensive panorama views of the interior of the site and Figures 3.12-3.14 and 3.19-3.22 provide views of exterior facades. These images offer visual references to the other existing condition descriptions, which follow.

Spatial Organization and Clustering

The site's primarily two-story buildings are in a U-shaped configuration around the asphalt parking court with an open area at the north, enclosed by a single concrete masonry wall. Additions at the rear of the 1954 building that included the coffee shop, kitchen and restaurant are one-story facing the parking court. The 1954 and 1968 motel room wings are in linear forms, one room deep with recessed corridors on both floors in front of the access doors. East of the porte cochere and oriented to 5th Avenue North, building regimes dating from 1954, including the lobby, coffee shop, two additions to the kitchen and restaurant, and the 1968 addition, which also included a third kitchen expansion and a banquet hall and meeting space, appear as one continuous structure. The only access into the site is from 5th Avenue North through the porte-cochere on the front façade.

Cultural Traditions

Current cultural traditions reflected by the site pertain to the efforts to promote heritage tourism and commemoration of the site's associations with the Civil Rights movement through the rehabilitation and restoration of this site and its buildings.

Topography and Hydrology

(Illustration 3.1)

The topographic elevations at the A.G. Gaston site range from a high point of 591 feet at the southeast area of the parking court to a low point of 588.84 feet at the top elevation of the site's single catch basin, located beneath the porte-cochere.

The entire site is virtually flat. There is a 2.16 feet elevation change across the property with slopes not exceeding two percent. All of these factors make proper storm water drainage problematic. During the July 2018 visit, site drainage issues were evident after a small rain event. The catch basin within the site, described more fully below, was slow to drain withstanding water remaining 18 hours later (Figures 3.15 and 3.16).

Another drainage problem was observed at the northwest corner of the site immediately east of the 1954 guest room ell. Runoff collects at the corner of the parking lot and drains north across the concrete sidewalk to an opening in the concrete masonry wall at the property line. The concrete walkway appears to have been lowered to facilitate drainage, but this modification was unsuccessful. There is a variety to rip rap materials placed between the concrete walkway and the wall, possibly to create a rock/brick-lined swale to direct the water. A few of the bricks in this collection had "Graves Block" engraved on their top side. "The Graves Shale Brick Company" was a manufacturer of building and paving bricks founded by William Graves in 1902. The bricks provided materials for speculative building projects by Graves, an attorney and real estate developer. His company was later a major supplier of bricks to the City of Birmingham's street paving department. The company, later named Graves-Matthews Paving Company, closed around 1920.[143] (Figures 3.17 and 3.18). Possible solutions to addressing this drainage issues might be resolved with changes to the planting bed immediately north of the masonry wall, including replanting as a "rain garden" to handle the runoff.

These collective drainage issues would be best resolved in a comprehensive redesign of the site's drainage system.

Drainage Structures

The single catch basin is located at the vehicular entrance to the site, immediately below the north side of the roof of the porte-cochere. This inlet is at the low point of the site (588.84 feet). A 4" PVC pipe, noted on the survey, links the inlet to the street where it daylights at the curb. The reason for the existing drainage issue is unknown. Inadequate pipe size, obstruction, or insufficient slope are some potentials reasons. The origins of the catch basis are unknown. It is not considered important to the period of significance. As noted above, a comprehensive redesign of the site drainage is recommended.

The survey notes additional drainage structures, two four-inch steel drains that extend from the building and daylight in the curb at the street. These drains extend from the brick columns on each side of the

[143] "Graves Birmingham Alabama," last modified March 13, 2011, accessed September 22, 2018, http://brickcollector.blogspot.com/2011/02/graves-bham-al.html

planter at the east end of the 5th Avenue North façade. Later illustrations in this section, Figures 3.27, 3.28 and 3.29, show the daylighting condition on the face of the curb.

Gutter System Downspouts

There are multiple downspouts on the parking court facades of the buildings and on the exterior façades directing runoff from the various roofs to the ground. Downspouts either drain at the surface or extend below grade. All of the downspouts on the original 1954 building and its additions in that same year are surface drainage, while the majority of downspouts from the 1968 additions extend underground. Recent investigations by LAS and city staff confirmed that these downspouts link to a pipe system that drains under the stairs at the northeast of the site. This is not reflected on the topographic survey.

Vegetation

(Illustration 3.1)

Existing Vegetation

As a highly disturbed urban site, the A.G. Gaston site does not contain any natural vegetation. All plantings were likely added within the site in the 1982 improvements or later. Additional plantings located immediately outside the site date from the early 1990s improvements associated with the Kelly Ingram Park. The plant list and illustration provide an inventory of existing vegetation. Within the planting palette, there are only three shrubs used and all are evergreen. The majority of the tree species are deciduous. Of the 11 plants used, only four are native species. Additional summary comments and observations follow using the common name for plants.

Vegetation, on the periphery of the site, and dating from the 1990s includes the following:

- a bosque or grove of Silver Maples, immediately west of the site;
- Shumard Oak street trees along the 5th Avenue North frontage;
- a single row of Nellie R. Stevens Holly immediately east of the 1968 banquet hall/meeting space addition; and
- a single row of Leyland Cypress immediately north of the Nellie R. Stevens Holly and east of the 1968 guest room wing
- a grouping of shrubs and three Crape Myrtles, bordering the north façade of the 1954 guest room wing, extending along several parking spaces, and buffering a trash dumpster with bollards set on a concrete pad northwest of the site (Figure 3.19);
- three Sugar Maples on the northeast adjacent to a depressed loading area for the BCRI; and
- six Chinese Holly at the northeast corner.

The silver maples within the bosque to the west are in extremely poor condition with several missing from the original planting and several extant trees with damaged trunks. Silver maples are known to be a weak tree. As fast-growing trees, their wood is softer and more brittle than other slower growing deciduous trees and easily damaged in storms. Silver maples have a shallow root system, which can be invasive to underground utilities and building foundations (Figure 3.20). Likewise, on the northeast, the Leyland Cypress are in a similar state, with nine trees lost since the original planting (Figure 3.21). In contrast, the

Nellie R. Stevens Holly are in excellent shape and provide a lush evergreen edge along the 1968 banquet hall/meeting space building (Figure 3.22). Nevertheless, both the cypress and hollies can pose damage to building foundations.

Within the site, plantings are thinly-dispersed and of limited-diversity. Dwarf yaupon is the only shrub used within the motel's parking court and it is a native plant. Almost all plantings within the parking court are in one area, the southeast section, with two Arborvitaes in the northwest section (Figures 3.0 and 3.0). All of these plantings likely date from 1982, and, other than Dwarf Yaupon and Arborvitae, all are in fair to poor condition.

The planter boxes contain Chinese and Burford Hollies, both non-native evergreen shrubs, with mono-plantings of one species in each box. Planter boxes 1 and 3 contain Chinese Holly and Planter boxes 2 and 4 contain Burford Holly. Other attributes of the planters are described more fully in the small-scale features section of this chapter.

Plant list of vegetation with the site and immediately adjacent to the site is below:

Plant List - Existing Vegetation
AG Gaston Motel Site

27-Sep-18

Key	*#*	*Botanical Name*	*Common Name*	*Native Plant*	*Notes*
Trees					
AR	4	Acer rubrum	Red Maple	*	1 AC in courtyard in poor condition
AS	11	Acer saccharinum	Silver Maple	*	Weak tree species; all in poor condition
CL	5	Cupressus leylandii	Leyland Cypress		Est 9 CL lost from orig planting; extant CL in poor condition
IAF	8	Ilex attenuata 'Fosteri'	Foster Holly		
INRS	14	Ilex 'Nellie R. Stevens'	Nellie R. Stevens Holly		
LI	3	Lagerstroemia indica	Crape Myrtle		
QFS	8	Quercus falcata 'Shumardii'	Shumard Oak	*	Street trees
TO	2	Thuja occidentalis	Arborvitae		
Shrubs					
IC		Ilex cornuta	Chinese Holly		
ICB		Ilex cornuta 'Burfordii'	Burford Holly		
IVN		Ilex vomitoria nana	Dwarf Yaupon	*	

Buildings and Structures

(Illustration 3.2)

A.G. Gaston Motel Buildings

Primary buildings within the site reflect two different construction periods from 1954 and 1968 and extensive remodeling in 1982. The site also contains two small auxiliary buildings, a guard booth and mailbox structure, likely dating from the 1982 improvements.

1954 Building

The original 1954 building, located on the west side of the site, includes a two-story L-shaped structure containing guest rooms with a one-story section facing 5th Avenue North serving as the front façade. A porte cochere within the front façade allows vehicular access to the parking court and separates the lobby, clerk's office, and clerk's room on the west from the coffee shop on the east. Exterior façades feature brick with tongue and groove siding on most of the façades facing the parking court. Exterior facades are

mostly brick. The original building officially opened on July 1, 1954 with two one-story additions completed within the same year. All surfaced in brick, the first addition included a small kitchen at the rear of the coffee shop and the second addition included an expanded kitchen and a restaurant. Completed in December 1954, the restaurant addition expanded the motel's front façade on 5th Avenue North.

1968 Building

A building with two sections was added to the site in 1968, expanding the motel development into the eastern section of the site. The first section is a two-story brick structure, originally containing banquet hall/meeting space and guest rooms. This structure, immediately east and built flush with the1954 restaurant addition, expanded the south façade of the motel along 5th Avenue North. The second section, a two-story guest room wing, followed the design of the 1954 guest room building with a brick exterior and mostly tongue and grove siding on the parking court façades. The exterior is primarily brick. The guest room wing is located at the northeast corner of the site. Its parking court façade is in line with the exterior and east façade of the banquet hall/meeting space addition with a five feet long brick wall linking the buildings.

Guard Booth

A small freestanding frame guard booth (5' x 3.5') is located at the entrance, immediately north of the former lobby space and to the west of the porte cochere access. The rectangular-shaped structure features a doorway on its front façade, which faces the parking court, wood siding, and a sloped roof. A small window on the east façade allows visual access from inside the guard booth to the entry through the porte cochere.

Cluster Mailbox Structure

A small frame cluster mailbox structure (5' x 3') is located immediately west of the guard booth. This structure is flush to the motel structure and features a gabled roof, wood siding and a recessed section at the center of its front façade. This section includes 45 cubbyholes that served as mailboxes during the site's senior housing use.

Both the guard booth and mailbox structure are on the southwest corner of the parking court and placed on a concrete "bump-out" (Figure 3.25).

Utilities

(Illustration 3.3)

There are two large collections of utility boxes on the motel buildings. One is on the north façade of the 1954 guest room wing and the other is on the diagonal wall facing the courtyard at its southeast corner. A smaller grouping of utilities boxes is on the north façade of the 1968 guest room wing. There is a single utility box at the northeast corner of the courtyard, mounted on the front façade of the ell of the 1954 guest room wing.

There are number of power poles surrounding the site at the following locations: (1) one at the northeast corner, immediately north of 1968 guest room wing; (2) two poles to the northeast of the 1954 guest room wing; and (3) two poles at the northwest corner of the building.

Other utilities such as telephone, electric, potable water and sanitary services formerly existed at the site, but all are now inactive.

Small-Scale Features

(Illustration 3.2)

Concrete Masonry Wall and Chain Link Fence

A concrete masonry unit (CMU) wall and chain-link fence extend along the northern property boundary. The CMU wall is six feet high with a four-inch thick concrete cap. There are six 16" wide posts in front of the wall integrated into the wall construction, dividing the fence into 16'x8" wide panels. A silver metal chain link fence, augmented with V-shaped barbed wire topping with a coiled razor wire in the middle, runs along the BCRI's side of the CMU wall.

This combination of fences secures an area of the site between the 1954 and 1968 guest room wings. The CMU wall was constructed pre-1982 as the drawings for the senior housing development note its existence at this time. The chain link fence may date from the time of the city's ownership (2015), likely added as a security measure (Figure 3.26).

Steel Gate at Porte Cochere

A black steel security gate extends under the entire porte cochere opening. The gate contains narrow metal vertical posts set in rectangular metal frames, creating a single person pedestrian gate adjacent to the original restaurant and two hinged leaves, that open in the center to allow vehicular access. The approximate nine feet high gate has two large posts at each side of the porte cochere providing support for the center gates. A temporary locking mechanism secures the gate. A "No Trespassing" sign is mounted in the center of the vehicular portion of the gate to discourage access.

Ground-mounted Motel Sign

A ground-mounted sign, over two stories high, stands at the entrance to the motel. The sign is placed immediately east of the porte cochere opening within the raised planter on the front façade. It features a metal pylon that widens from its base to display three distinct sections. The top section is a circular element with "A.G. GASTON" letters in a dark faded color on a white background, the letters following the curvature of the sign. The middle piece is an elongated vertical section with a point at its top and the bottom element, a rectangle. These sections have no signage and are painted dark brown (Figure 3.27).

Interpretive Sign

An interpretive sign, which is part of the "Birmingham Civil Rights Heritage Trail" system, is located within the public right-of-way, placed in the green space between the sidewalk and the building, immediately in front of the exiting motel sign, described above.

The interpretive panel features a flat piece of metal, approximately six feet tall, supported by a single pole at one side. Sign graphics include an orange box at the top, identifying this panel as "C," and narrative interpretation at the bottom under the title, A.G. Gaston Motel, with images above. The interpretive panel is visible at the base of the motel sign in Figure 3.27.

Planting Boxes

There are four raised planters along the 5th Avenue North façade. Three date from the original construction in 1954 and the fourth planter was part of the 1968 addition. All are self-supporting. The planters, described individually below, are numbered 1-4 from west to east along the façade.

Planting box 1 is different from the others. It is made of brick, while the other three are stone. This brick planter is located within a recess of the front elevation at the west end of the south façade. This planter

features Roman brick set in a stacked bond pattern in multi-shades of red, brown, and beige capped with a header course of dark red brick. The planter is almost four feet high with a two-inch brick cap. It is in its original condition. It contains a metal vent at its center. The brick wall exhibits structural failure (Figure 3.28).

Planting boxes 2, 3 and 4 are ashlar stone with a two-inch high stone cap. The stone is likely Alabama limestone. Planters 2 and 3 are approximately three and one-half feet high. Planter 2 extends west across the reception lobby to the porte cochere opening (Figure 3.29). Planter 3 extends from the porte cochere opening to the east end of the first section of the 1954 building (Figure 3.30). A door originally divided planter 3 into two sections, but later, likely 1982, it became a single planter. The original architectural plans and the rendering show planters 2 and 3 proposed low to the ground in contrast with the much higher brick planter. Originally built taller than the proposed plans, additional stone increased the height of boxes 2 and 3. In both planters, new stone was added on top of the existing original stone wall. On close inspection, subtle differences exist in the color and arrangement of the new stone. The changes likely occurred as part of the 1968 improvements, when Planter 4 was added. Planters #2-#4 are three and one-half feet high with a two-inch brick cap. Planter 4 is located almost at the center of the 1968 façade addition (Figure 3.31). Evergreen shrubs in all planter boxes fill the approximately 26 inches wide planting space.

Bench

Two metal benches with wood slats are located in the concrete "bump-outs" at the northeast and northwest corners of the parking court. These likely date from the 1982 improvements.

Light Standards

Light standards feature a fluted metal pole at pedestrian height with an acorn shaped luminaire, a modern replica of historic fixtures. These period lights line the sidewalk on the 5th Avenue North frontage of the site, located within the public right-of-way. These light standards were part of the early 1990s improvements within the Birmingham Civil Rights District.

There is one roadway luminaire on 5th Avenue North. This fixture consists of a black metal pole (approximately 25-30' high) with a cobra head light extending over the edge 5th Avenue North. Located in the public right-of-way, this light standard is adjacent to the curb and near the center of the façade.

A large-scale security light is located immediately north of the site. Placed on a pole (approximately 25' high), two directional lights provide security illumination to the site.

Circulation

(Illustration 3.2)

Pedestrian

The pedestrian network within the site is concrete with paths approximately five feet wide and consisting of two different types—covered concrete walkways and uncovered concrete walkways. The first, a covered concrete walkway extends under the roofline and along the first-floor parking court frontage of both guest room wings (1954 and 1968). The covered concrete walk at the 1968 guest wing has a sloped concrete curb, separating the walk from the parking court. The sloped curb is flush at the south end, raising to six inches at the north end. The concrete walkway along the façade of the 1954 building is flush with the pavement. Both guest wing buildings also have covered elevated walkways on their second levels. Access between the two floors is via metal stairs at the northwest, southwest and northeast corners and proximate to the southeast corner on the north façade of the banquet hall/meeting space addition. The

metal stairs feature a metal guardrail, which continues along the elevated walkways of the guest room wings. The guardrails date from the construction date of each building but are almost identical in materials and appearance.

The second type is an uncovered concrete walkway. One walk borders the parking court on the north and links the 1954 and 1968 guest room wings. This walkway has a raised concrete curb and gutter on its south, which elevates this walkway from the parking court with a grassed open space on the north. There is a depressed section of the walkway, flush with the pavement, at the northwest end. As noted previously, this modification likely addressed the drainage issue in this area, as shown in Figure 3.17. A second uncovered walkway extends from the southeast corner of the parking court along the north façade of the 1954/1968 building containing the lobby, restaurant, and banquet hall. This walkway is mostly flush with the parking court's asphalt pavement with a single raised curb at its west end.

Sidewalks in the public right-of-way of 5th Avenue North date from the early 1990s improvements within the Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District. These concrete walks are five and one-half feet wide and have a brick band every 30 feet. The brick band, a variation of a herringbone pattern, is comprised of multi-color shades of red brick surrounding a bright beige header bricks accenting the center. Used throughout the Civil Rights Historic District, including Kelly Ingram Park, this sidewalk and the adjacent period lights are common design elements (Figure 3.31).

Vehicular Circulation and Parking Court

The current asphalt parking lot configuration dates from the 1982 improvements. All four sides of the parking court have parking spaces perpendicular to the facades of the buildings on the east, south and west and the concrete walkway and open space on the north. Existing parking spaces total 31 spaces. There is no painted designation for ADA spaces and no stripes for parking spaces.

Concrete parking stops prevent vehicles from encroaching into the adjacent pedestrian walkways. Parking stops play an important role, as a majority of paving between walks and parking lot is flush.

The single ingress and egress to the site is through the porte-cochere from 5th Avenue North.

All four corners of the parking court feature "bump-outs," which are paved extensions of the adjacent walkways. Bump-outs create small gathering, plaza-type zones in utilizing leftover space in the parking lot configuration. As noted previously, two of the bump-outs include metal benches.

Archeological Resources

This report does not attempt to identify or quantify the existence of archeological resources. It can be presumed, considering the highly disturbed nature of this site that archeological resources, both historic and pre-historic, may have existed but if intact, would be under the site's hardscape.

Figure 3.1: Context Map – Site Location

-

Figure 3.2: 1954 Guest Room Wing, view to southwest.

Figure 3.3: 1954 Guest Room Wing, view to west.

Figure 3.4: 1954 Guest Room Wing, view to northwest.

Figure 3.5: 1954 Guest Room Wing, view from southeast corner of Parking Court to the northwest.

Figure 3.6: North side of Parking Court (west end) with 1954 Guest Room Wing on left.

Figure 3.7: North side of Parking Court (east end) with 1968 Guest Room Wing on right and one-story 1968 Kitchen Expansion in foreground.

3.8_1968 Guest Room Wing, view to east.

Figure 3.9: 1968 Guest Room Wing, view to northeast from southeast corner of Parking Court.

Figure 3.10: 1968 Guest Room Wing at left, two-story 1968 Banquet Hall/Meeting Space addition at center, and one-story 1954 Restaurant and Kitchen addition at right.

Figure 3:11: Two-story 1968 addition at left, one-story 1954 building with 1968 Kitchen at center; Porte Cochere entrance from 5th Avenue North and 1954 Guest Room Wing at far right.

Figure 3.12: 5th Avenue North façade at east end of Motel buildings.

Figure 3.13: 5th Avenue North façade at west end of Motel buildings.

Figure 3.14: 5th Avenue North façade with Porte Cochere opening, allowing glimpses into the Parking Court.

Figure 3.15: The single Catch Basin, located under the Porte Cochere, with water pooling around it after storm event.

Figure 3.16: Catch Basin is slow to drain, as 18 hours after storm event, traces of runoff remain.

Figure 3.17: Drainage issue at northwest corner of Parking Court. Note that portion of concrete walkway was likely lowered to facilitate drainage.

Figure 3.18: Enlargement of rip rap used to prevent erosion in drainage channel immediately north of the sidewalk at northwest corner. A "Graves Block" within rip rap.

Figure 3.19: Plantings located immediately north of 1954 Guest Room Wing and outside A.G. Gaston Motel property boundary.

Figure 3.20: Silver Maple Bosque is to the west of A.G. Gaston Motel site open green space between the motel structure and a parking lot associated with Birmingham Civil Rights Museum. Many trees are in poor condition with many dying since original planting in early 1990s.

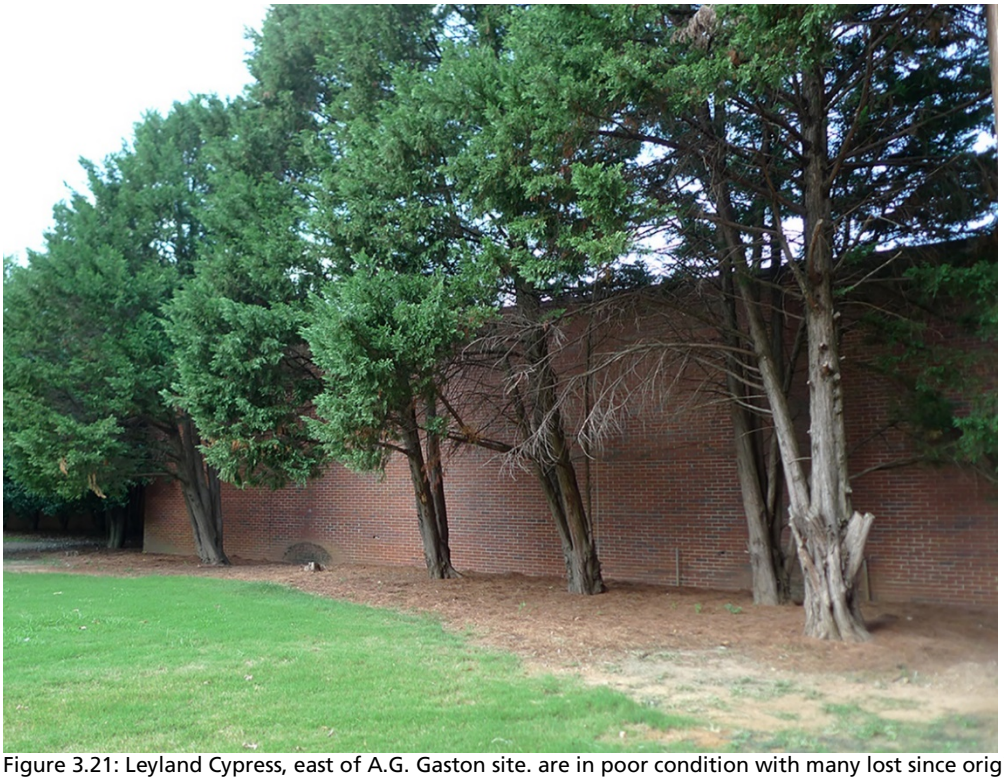

Figure 3.21: Leyland Cypress, east of A.G. Gaston site. are in poor condition with many lost since original planting in early 1990s.

Figure 3.22: Row of Nellie R. Stevens Holly on the east side of A.G. Gaston Motel site along the 5th Avenue North frontage. These trees are in good condition and date from early 1990s improvements.

Figure 3.23: Two Arborvitaes within the site, north side of Parking Court and east of 1954 Guest Room Wing.

Figure 3.24: The most extensive plantings within the site are at rear of 1954 one-story additions and one-story 1968 Kitchen expansion at far right.

Figure 3.25: Guard House (L) and Cluster Mailbox Structure (R) were additions to site during 1982 conversion to senior housing.

Figure 3.26: Concrete Wall and Chain Link Fence at north property boundary of site.

Figure 3.27: Ground mounted sign, dating from around 1968 with expansion of dining space. Sign modified when motel repurposed for senior housing, named A.G. Gaston Gardens, in 1982. Note the daylighting of the 4" pipes in the face of the curb, left of the Porte Cochere. These pipes include two steel pipes outlets at left and one PVC pipe outlet linking to the Catch Basin at right.

Figure 3.28: Front elevation of Brick Planter (#1) illustrates the daylighting of the two 4" pipes in the face of the curb. These two steel pipes extend from the base of the columns on each side of the planter and extend to the curb.

Figure 3.29: Brick Planter (#1) is in original condition with some structure failure in lower section of wall and damage to vent in center.

Figure 3.29: Stone Planter (#2) was altered with an increase in its height, likely as part of the 1968 additions. Note the horizontal change in the size of stone blocks at approximately two feet, likely reflecting the beginning of more recent stone construction. Note also in the face of curb, the daylighting of the 4" PVC pipe linking to the Catch Basin, immediately north of the porte cochere.

Figure 3.30: The height of Stone Planter (#3), like Planter 2, was increased. Also, this planter, which had originally been in two sections with a door in the middle, was further altered to create a single planter with the removal of the door in the 1968 additions.

Figure 3.31: In contrast to Planters 1-3, Stone Planter (#4) is not integrated into the building. This planter was part of the Banquet Hall/Meeting Space addition in 1968 and placed on the front façade facing 5th Avenue North.

Figure 3.32: Concrete sidewalk with decorative brick bands and the Period Lights (background on right) are located in the public right-of-way. The walks and light standards were part of the improvements to the Civil Rights District in the early 1990s.

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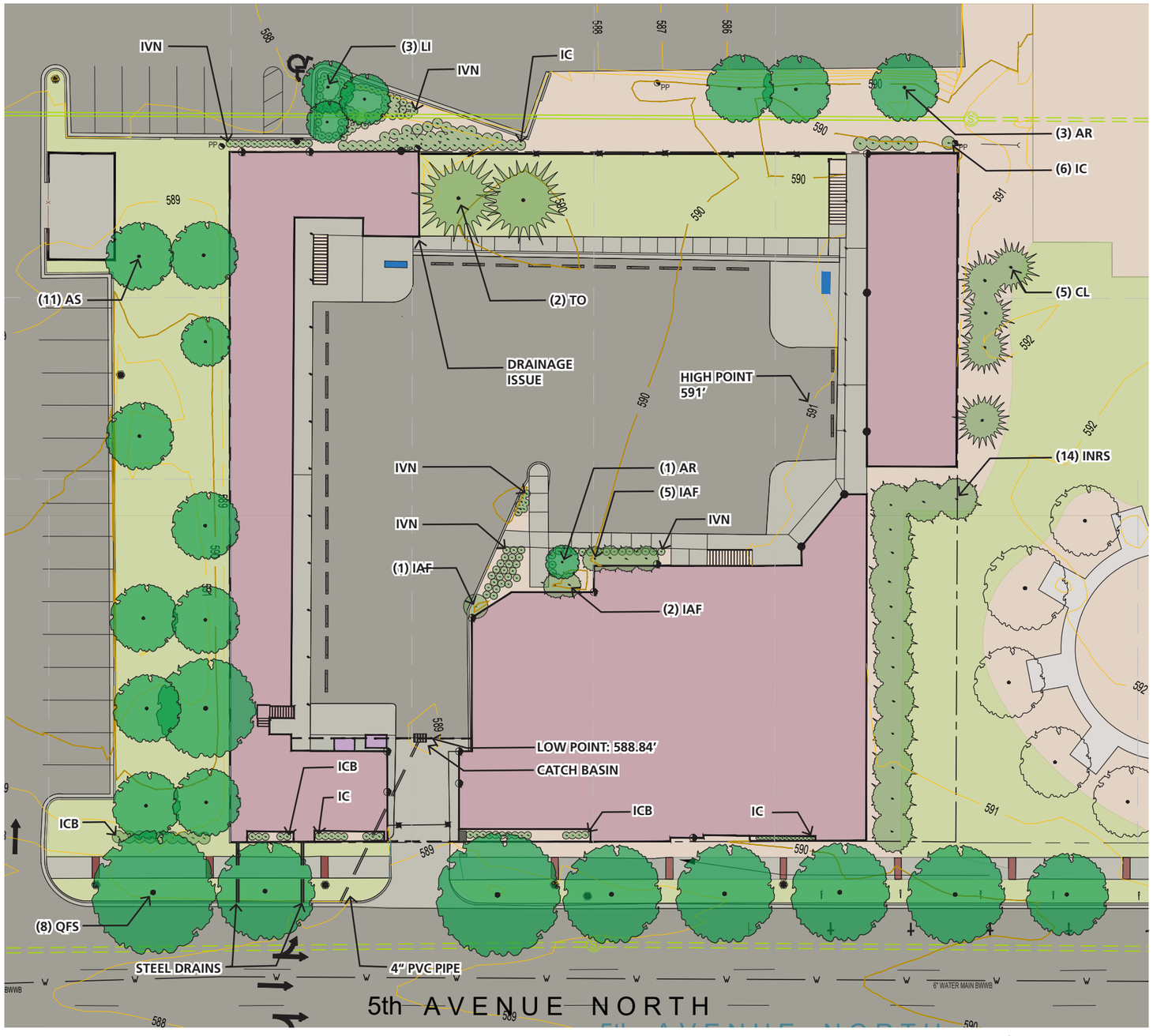


LEGEND

DECIDUOUS TREE

EVERGREEN TREE

EVERGREEN TREE FORM SHRUB

SHRUB

DOWNSPOUTS (UNDERGROUND)

DOWNSPOUTS (SURFACE)

PLANT LIST

Trees	
AR	Acer rubrum, Red Maple
AS	Acer saccharinum, Silver Maple
CL	Cupressus leylandii, Leyland Cypress
IAF	Ilex attenuata 'Fosteri', Foster Holly
QFS	Quercus falcata 'Shumardii', Shumard Oak
TO	Thuja occidentalis, Arborvitae
Shrubs	
IC	Ilex cornuta, Chinese Holly
ICB	Ilex cornuta 'Burfordii', Burford Holly
INRS	Ilex 'Nellie R. Stevens', Nellie R. Stevens Holly
IVN	Ilex vomitoria nana, Dwarf Yaupon

wla STUDIO
WLA STUDIO
675 PULASKI STREET
ATHENS, GEORGIA
30601

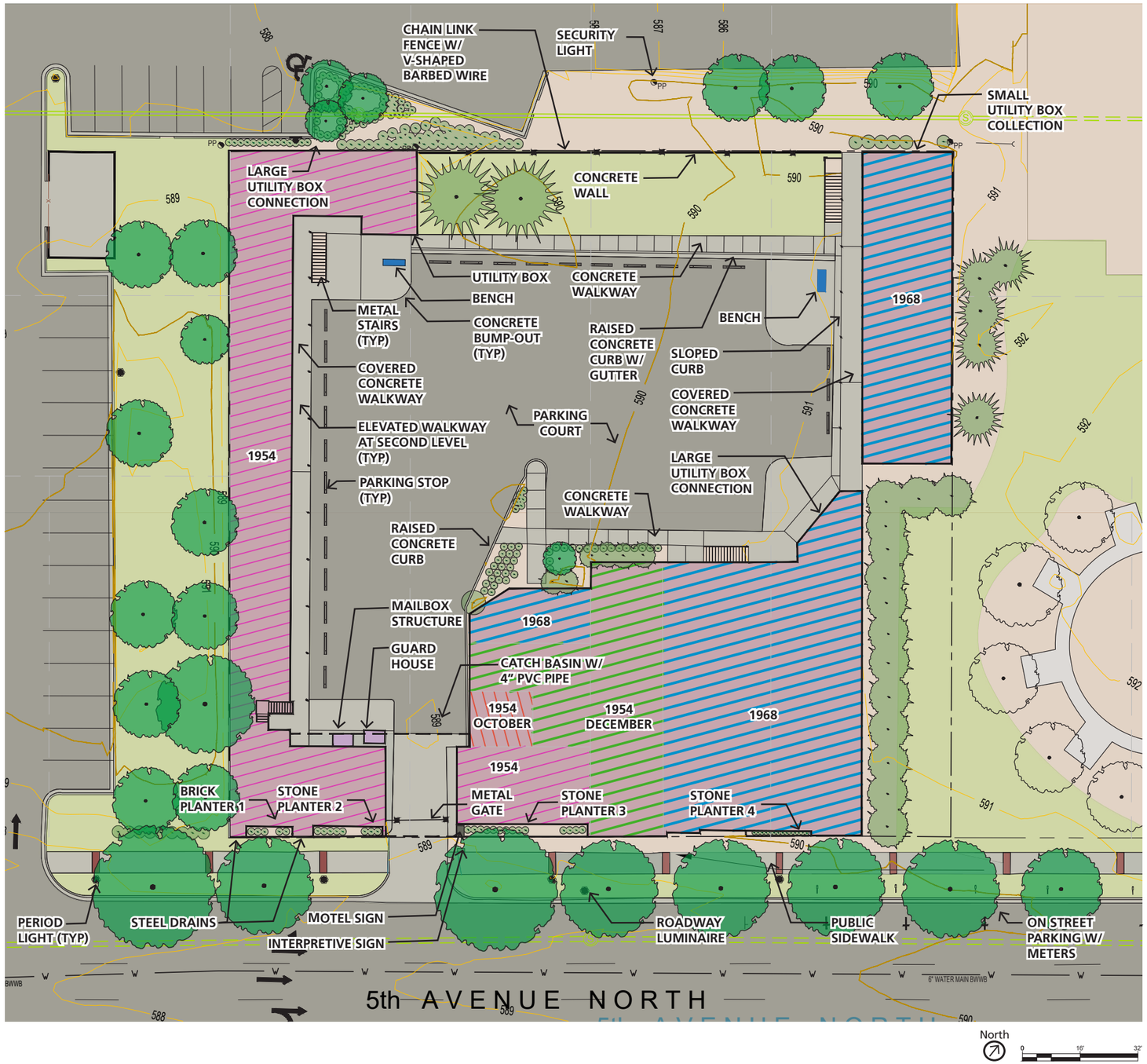
A.G. GASTON MOTEL
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

DATE
09.26.2018

RECORDED BY:
DJ, SD, MF

SCALE:
see graphic scale

3-1
TOPOGRAPHY, HYDROLOGY AND VEGETATION



LEGEND

1954
29 GUEST ROOMS
LOBBY
COFFEE SHOP

1954 (OCTOBER)
KITCHEN ADDITION

1954 (DECEMBER)
KITCHEN EXPANSION
RESTAURANT

1968
KITCHEN EXPANSION
26 GUEST ROOMS
BANQUET HALL / MEETING SPACE

ASPHALT

CONCRETE

TURF / VEGETATION

WLA STUDIO
675 PULASKI STREET
ATHENS, GEORGIA
30601

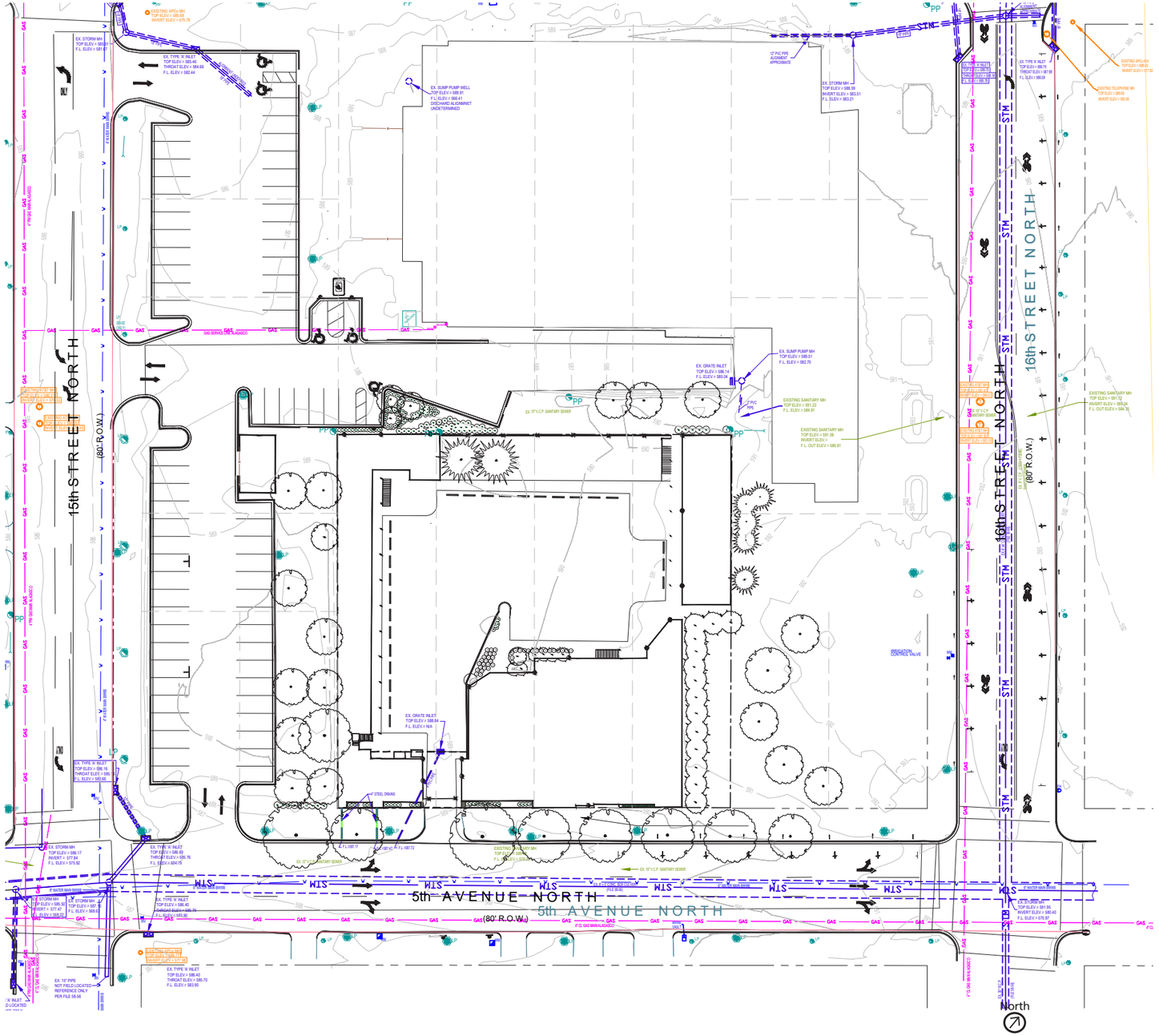
A.G. GASTON MOTEL
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

DATE
09.26.2018

RECORDED BY:
DJ, MJ, SD

SCALE:
see graphic scale

3-2
BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, SMALL SCALE FEATURES, CIRCULATION



UTILITIES LEGEND

- TELECOMM
- GAS
- POWER POLE
- LIGHT STANDARD
- WATER
- SANITARY SEWER
- STORMWATER

wla STUDIO
WLA STUDIO
675 PULASKI STREET
ATHENS, GEORGIA
30601

A.G. GASTON MOTEL
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

DATE
11.12.2018

RECORDED BY:
DJ, MJ, SD

SCALE:
see graphic scale

3-3
UTILITIES

Analysis and Evaluation

Introduction

This chapter is an analysis of the integrity and physical character of the landscape at the A.G. Gaston Motel Site in Birmingham, Alabama. The first section utilizes the methodology and criteria developed by the National Register of Historic Places as the framework for developing the statement of historic significance, period(s) of significance, and identifying contributing or non-contributing resources. Contributing resources (C) were developed or constructed during the period(s) of significance. Non-contributing resources (NC) were developed or constructed during a time other than the period of significance. The other two categories of the historic resources are either missing (M) or undetermined (U).

In the second section, the status of the cultural landscape at the A.G. Gaston Motel site includes a review of the historic integrity of the individual landscape features. The analysis of the existing conditions of the site identifies which resources are character-defining features of the landscape. This evaluation considers the spectrum of time that defines the period of significance as a continuum wherein the significance of certain features, constructed outside of the period of significance, may be integral to the historic character of the cultural landscape. This approach accounts for any alterations to the landscape, developed outside of the period of significance, which may have become historically significant over time. As such, the consideration of historic character is an accumulation of features that individually, or collectively, contributes to the historic significance of the property. An analysis of each landscape feature according to the seven aspects of integrity defined by the National Register of Historic Places completes the evaluation of historic integrity. These aspects are: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

National Register Status

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, established the National Register of Historic Places, which comprises the official list of the historic places and landscapes designated worthy of preservation. The National Register of Historic Places coordinates and supports public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archaeological resources. To achieve National Register status, a property must meet the National Register criteria for evaluation. The evaluation criteria examine a property's age, integrity, and significance. For qualification as a historic property designation to the National Register, the date of original construction of a property must be at least fifty years past. To possess integrity, a historic property cannot be altered to the point that the original historic appearance is lost. The property must also be significant according to National Register criteria defined below:

- **A.** Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- **B.** Association with the lives of significant historical figures; or
- **C.** Embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- **D.** Yielding or the potential to yield significant archaeological resources that are significant to history or prehistory.

The A.G. Gaston Motel is part of the Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 19, 2006. An earlier study in 2004, a Multiple Properties Document, "Birmingham Civil Rights Movement, 1933-1979," informed the development of the National Register nomination.

The A.G. Gaston Motel is also part of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument, created on January 12, 2017 by a Presidential Proclamation, by then President Barrack Obama. The Monument is a much smaller area than the National Register district, encompassing slightly over a four block area and includes many civil rights landmarks, such as Kelly-Ingram Park, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and two properties originally owned by Gaston, the A.G. Gaston Motel and the A.G. Gaston Building, an office structure in the International Style. The more recent Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is also within the Monument area.

Statement of Significance and Period of Significance for the Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District

The Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District was listed under Criterion A in two categories. These include Ethnic Heritage associated with African Americans and Social History. The nomination states, "The Birmingham Civil Rights District in Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama is eligible under Criterion A for the National Register of Historic Places as a nationally significant property associated with the climax of the civil rights struggle."[144]

Though not included in the National Register nomination, a case could be made for the Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District to be eligible under C. Under Criteria C, the district's outstanding architectural and landscape architectural resources "embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period and method of construction" and collectively "represent a significant and distinguishable entity."[145] The district's unique and numerous collection of buildings, designed by African American architects, is one obvious example.

Within the nomination form, the period of significance is 1933-1970 with 1963 a significance date. However, Supplementary Listing Record (SLR) to the nomination, states that "The period of significance is hereby changed to 1956-1963."[146]

The A.G. Gaston Motel as well as its owner A.G. Gaston are referenced multiple times in the nomination's statement of significance. The following section elaborates on the important role the A.G. Gaston Motel played within this larger context.

Statement of Significance and Period of Significance for the A.G. Gaston Motel

The HSR offers a summary statement of significance for the A.G. Motel on pages 33 and 34. This conclusion of the property's importance applies equally to the landscape element. Rather than summarize or repeat this information, this section focuses on the values associated with the site and landscape features.

[144] Birmingham Historical Society, "Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District," (National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, 2006), Section 8, 12.
[145] U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, "National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Evaluation, "accessed November 7, 2018, https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_2.htm.
[146] Birmingham Historical Society, "Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District," (National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, 2006), first page of document, no page number.

For purposes of the CLR, the period of significance (POS) is 1954-1968. This period is a slight revision to the POS for the larger National Register District to recognize the original construction in 1954 and a major expansion in 1968. The primary period of significance of 1963, as recommended in the HSR, is also applicable to the landscape. 1963 was pivotal in the civil rights movement for Birmingham as well as the United States. The 1968 additions to the motel represent the culmination of Gaston's vision for the property and for African American-oriented lodging in the city.

The POS for the A.G. Gaston Motel begins with the original construction of the motel in July 1954. The period continues to encompass the activities associated with the Birmingham Campaign and culminates with the compromise announcement and bombing on May 11, 1963. With a major expansion of the motel in 1968 to provide space for additional housing and group gatherings, the motel's complete construction marks the POS end.

The A.G. Gaston Motel is significant under criteria A and B. Under Criterion A, the A.G. Gaston Motel is important for its association with the Civil Rights Movement, a milestone in the evolution of the United States. The leaders of the movement who were present at the A.G. Gaston Motel during Birmingham operations are recognized as "significant historical figures," providing significance under Criterion B.[147]

Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth best summarized the significance of the movement in Birmingham in his words to President John F. Kennedy at a planning meeting at the White House in the summer of 1963: "But for Birmingham, we would not be here today." The meeting's focus was to plan what would become the Civil Rights Act of 1964 fulfilling "the promise of freedom and equality given in the Declaration of Independence."[148]

Dr. Martin Luther King also recognized the important role that Birmingham could play in the movement, in stating that "as Birmingham goes, so goes the South."[149] During the civil rights movement in Birmingham, the A.G. Gaston Motel was host to several of its activities. The motel functioned as the headquarters for the SCLC and ACMHR campaigns in Birmingham, called "Project C" for confrontation. The campaign brought many movement leaders to Birmingham, beginning in the spring of 1963. During the SCLC/ACMHR campaigns, the A.G. Gaston Motel served the following roles:

- Lodging for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Reverend Ralph David Abernathy of the SCLC, among other leaders of the civil rights movement, as well as the location for Project C strategy meetings;

- The starting point for the first march of the campaign began in the courtyard of the A.G. Gaston Motel on April 6, 1963 with plans to reach city hall; Protestors were stopped in Kelly Ingram Park by the "canine corps" of the Commissioner of Public Safety, T. Eugene "Bull" Connor;

- The site of daily meetings of a 25-person advisory committee appointed by Dr. King and established to review daily plans in response to some reluctance about the movement by local African American leaders following the march, including A.G. Gaston;

[147] U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, "National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Evaluation, "accessed November 7, 2018, https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_2.htm.
[148] Birmingham Historical Society, "Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District," (National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, 2006), Section 8, 12.
[149] U.S. Department of the Interior, Presidential Proclamation, "Establishment of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument," January 13, 2017.

- The location where King, Abernathy, and Shuttlesworth were served an injunction against further marches and other demonstrations on April 10th which led to King's arrest during the Good Friday March on April 12th and while in jail, wrote his famous "Letter from the Birmingham Jail;"

- The site of a press conference on May 10, 1963 to announce a compromise between local white business leaders and civil rights advocates that included the release of peaceful protestors, integration of the city's lunch counters, and the promise for white businesses to begin hiring African Americans; and

- The midnight bombing following the compromise announcement at the motel's southwest corner targeting Dr. King, who was not in town at the time.[150]

All of the above activities collectively illustrate the profound role the A.G. Gaston Motel played in the civil rights movement in Birmingham, specifically the SCLC/ACMHR campaigns and the property's eligibility under Criteria A.

Under Criterion C, the A.G. Gaston Motel is significant as a distinctive style of architecture. Project architect, Stanley Echols, used the "most current hospitality design trends of the time."[151] The motel was described in the Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District National Register nomination as "ultramodern." [152] Echols' original design reflects many characteristics of the International style, including its flat roof, smooth wall surfaces, and large expanses of windows on its front façade. Echols was one of many African-American architects, who designed buildings throughout the National Register historic district.

Landscape Characteristics

Overview

As part of a discussion of the individual landscape characteristics, architectural plans from 1954 and 1982 provide insights into the site's evolution. Unfortunately, redevelopment plans from 1968 are not available.

There is no site plan in the 1954 plans, but the First Floor Plan on Sheet A-1 provides limited information, including the location of the existing garage (highlighted in red) immediately east of the new motel building **(Figure 4.1)**. The garage's footprint extended approximately 85 feet into the site, bordering the courtyard and creating an alcove in this space. Notes on this drawing document "cement drive not in this contract" under the porte cochere and a one foot wide "cement curb" on the west side of the lobby space under the porte cochere. This same cement curb is located on the east side of the porte cochere adjacent to the restaurant. Figure 3.16 documents the existence of the original concrete curb on the west side of the porte cochere and possibly original cement paving beneath the porte cochere. The original concrete curb on the east has been replaced and enlarged, likely in 1982 improvements

On the west side, the cement surface extends around the corner, now five feet wide and turns north creating a linear covered walkway along the frontage of the 1954 Guest Room Wing. The cement surface,

[150] U.S. Department of the Interior, Presidential Proclamation, "Establishment of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument," January 13, 2017.
[151] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 34.
[152] Birmingham Historical Society, "Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District," (National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, 2006), Section 8, page 12.

noted as "Passage" on the drawing, is five feet wide and located beneath the roofline and the second story elevated walkway above. In Figure 4.1, cement walks are highlighted in yellow.

The 1954 plan shows four planters, highlighted in red, on the front façade facing 5th Avenue North with the cement curb extending to the side of each planter at the porte cochere. A doorway separated the two planters located in front of the restaurant. An enlargement of the 1954 plan provides more detail of the paving and planters at the front of the motel site (Figure 4.2).

The 1982 architectural plans possibly offer information of the site prior to the conversion to A.G. Gaston Gardens, including site features dating from the 1968 motel expansion project. Within the construction plans, divided into the disciplines of architecture, plumbing and mechanical, there are two site plans on plumbing and mechanical drawings **(Figures 4.3 and 4.4)**. Both use the same base map and show three landscape zones. These include (1) the original courtyard; (2) a green space at the north of the parking court that remains present today; and (3) an area with walkways and likely planting beds on the south side of the parking court. The zone for the courtyard appears similar in size as scaled by the garage's footprint on Figure 4.1 dating from 1954. With the two story garage and apartment building in place, the area of walkways and planting beds could have co-existed as this building and the garage were almost identical in length.

The 1982 plans do not reflect the presence of the two-story garage and apartment building, which existed in 1968. The plans also show a parking lot layout with the greenspace on the north that was not possible with the garage and apartment building in place. Since this building was demolished as part of the 1982 project, this may explain the absence of its footprint and the redesign of the parking lot in this drawing. Both plans contain notes reflective of the disciplines, including location of existing and proposed utilities and notations for new services.

The first sheet of the A.G. Gaston Gardens 1982 construction plans (A-1) includes a site plan, reflecting closely today's existing conditions (Figure 4.5). There is a larger version of this same 1982 plan at the end of the construction set on an untitled and unnumbered sheet (Figure 4.6).

The 1982 site plan has 27 spaces in comparison to today's 31 spaces. The 27 total parking spaces includes three accessible spaces. On the east side of the parking court today, there are three spaces in contrast to two shown on these plans. These two spaces designated on the 1982 plans as "H.C." were likely "handicap" spaces. This seems probable as the sloped curb is flush at these spaces. On the south side at the east end, the 1982 plans show a third "H.C." space. Again, this is feasible, as the curb is flush at this space. These drawings also note "39 Total Units."

The note "EXISTING BUILDING TO BE REMOVED" directs the demolition of the garage and apartment building. A hand-written note on the first sheet states that "Demolition Permit Req'd prior to Demolition Work and Prior to Issuance of Certificate of Occupancy."

An "EXISTING WALL" note along the north property line and states that "NEW WALL TO MATCH EXISTING" in the location of the former rear wall of the two-story garage and apartment building.

"NEW PARKING" is noted on the north and south of the parking court. Note that the parking at the southwest corner of the parking lot is not noted as "new." This confirms the existing perpendicular row of parking spaces shown in Figure 2.36.

The "NEW PARKING" notation on the west side of the parking court confirms the former location of the former courtyard. Based on the 1970 aerial, Figure 2.44, and this drawing, it appears the courtyard remained a part of the motel site until the conversion to A.G. Gaston Gardens.

Other notes on these two 1982 plans include:

- "NEW SIDEWALKS" with arrows pointing to the raised concrete walkway on the north and the flush concrete walkway system on the south of the parking court;
- "GARDEN AREA N.I.C." notes the open area to the north of the parking court between the concrete walkway and the wall (N.I.C. = Not in contract);
- "MAILBOXES" notes where today's Guard Booth and Mailboxes are located;
- "GATE" notation in the current location of the gate under the porte cochere with "IN" and "OUT" arrows showing the two way traffic flow; and
- A puzzling note, stating to "REMOVE EXISTING GUARDRAIL" extending from the front façade of the garage/apartment building to the rear façade of the building to the south (1954 restaurant/kitchen and 1968 banquet hall/meeting space).

A column of notes on the A-1 Sheet adds that "ALL PLANTINGS, GATES, SIDEWALKS AND CURBS ARE NOT IN THIS CONTRACT" and "PAVING IS EXISTING, REPAIR AND EXTEND PAVING AS SHOWN ON THIS PLAN. THIS WORK IS NOT IN THIS CONTRACT."

The "Not in Contract" note for the majority of site-related items explains the lack of detail in these plans for the landscape elements.

Landscape Resources Evaluation and Analysis and Contributing Features

The Landscape Resources Summary Chart (Chart 1) provides information on the topics discussed previously in this report in Section 3: Existing Conditions. The chart includes the name of each feature; identification if it is located outside the site; the date origin; the date of removal; and the status and condition of each feature. Status identifies contributing and noncontributing resources as well as those that are missing or undetermined. Condition ratings are good, fair and poor.

Aside from the motel buildings and select other resources, the majority of the historic landscape features present on the site in 1968, the end of the period of significance, are no longer present. For this reason, the following is a summary of the extant contributing features and a discussion of the missing features important in conveying the visual qualities of the site in 1963. The missing features of Natural Character, Land Use and Context, and Cultural Traditions, the numerous small scale features added to the site after the POS (post 1968) and the non-contributing cluster mailbox structure, guard booth and utilities, described in Chapter 3: Existing Conditions, are included in the summary chart but are not discussed further in this chapter.

Buildings and Structures

During the historic period, the overall character of the site was defined its buildings. While the site contained two older buildings when Gaston began to develop the property in 1954, his additions to the site in that year began a period of development that continued in several phases until 1982. During the

period of significance, the site reflected the mid-century design style common during that era. The 1954 motel building's form and orientation are in keeping with this style, which is characterized by minimal architectural embellishments, straight lines, and simple arrangement of features. Site details that reflect this design and style include both the 1954 and 1968 motel buildings, the buildings' stairs and railing, and orientation to the interior parking area; all of which are retained today. The HSR comprehensively covers the 1954 and 1968 buildings as well as the changes made in the 1982 conversion to senior housing.

One historic building now missing from the site and important to the period of significance is the two-story garage and apartment building. As noted in the Section 2: History, only the garage/apartment building remained in 1963 with the demolition of the one-story garage. The enclosed courtyard space, originally flush with the west façade of the garage, opened visually with the removal of this structure. Many images associated with the press conferences in 1963 document that the former site of the garage was now a parking area with a concrete walk, separating the parking from the courtyard.

Spatial Organization and Clustering and Topography

In 1968, the L-shaped footprint and form of the 1954 buildings changed to a U-shaped configuration, resulting in a new sense of spatial enclosure. This configuration remains intact today as a contributing feature. The removal of the one-story garage, estimated between1960-1962, and the apartment building in 1982 completely opened the interior of the site.

The almost level topography of the site with less than two-percent slope across the entire site is reflective of its condition during the POS. This is a character defining feature, remaining virtually unchanged since the original construction in 1954.

Circulation

The covered and elevated walkways and metal stairs associated with the 1954 and 1968 buildings are existing contributing resources. These features include: (1) Concrete Walkway at 1954 Guest Wing; (2) Elevated Walkway at 1954 Guest Wing; (3) Concrete Walkway at 1968 Guest Wing; (4) Elevated Walkway at 1968 Guest Wing; (5) Metal stairs at 1954 Guest Wing; and (6) Metal stairs at 1968 Guest Wing and Banquet/Meeting Space.

There are other segments of original concrete paving. A one-foot wide section of concrete paving is adjacent to the lobby on the west side of the porte cochere opening. Also, the pavement beneath the porte cochere is possibly original. (Figures 3.15 and 3.16). A five feet section of the concrete paving immediately north of the lobby, where the Guard Booth and Mailbox structures are located, is original. Shown as five feet on the original drawings, today's score line reflects this original measurement. Additional concrete paving (non-contributing) was added to create a bump out at this corner in 1982 (Figure 3.25).

The asphalt paving in the parking court is also a contributing feature. Documentation of the asphalt surface exists in images from the early 1960s as well as the view of A.G. Gaston and R.A. Hester pictured in the parking court at the parking island, sometime between 1954 and 1961 (Figure 2.21). It is difficult to confirm the extent of the asphalt paving in the east sections of the site due to the absence of photographic documentation. It could be assumed that the parking court was completely paved in asphalt based on aerials from 1960 and 1970 (Figures 2.27 and 2.44), which show the entire area in the same color.

During the primary period of significance (1963) access into the site was from 5th Avenue via the porte cochere. At this time, signage on the building indicates this served as an entrance only. Between 1954 and 1967 (prior to the 1968 expansion of the site), traffic would flow through the port cochere, into the parking area, and exit on the east side of the restaurant building to 5th Avenue North.

In terms of parking in 1968, a row of perpendicular spaces lined the east side of the 1954 motel building, and with the removal of the one-story garage, visitors could park in a row of angled spaces on its

footprint. Based on the presence of a truck in Figure 2.34, a drive may have also existed, allowing access to the alley. With the addition of the 1968 buildings, it is likely that the port cochere served as both an entrance and exit, as the new buildings blocked the original 5th Avenue North exit. If an alley access did exist as speculated in 1963 and remained, this drive could have allowed one-way vehicular circulation to continue until 1982. Site drawings on the architectural plans from the conversion to senior housing document a single point of ingress and egress through the porte cochere.

Non-contributing circulation features include the concrete walkways on the north and south sides of the parking court, added in 1982, along with the parking stops and paved "bump outs" at the parking court corners. The sidewalk frontage on 5th Avenue North dates from the early 1990s as part of the improvements in the Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District.

Small-Scale Features

- **Planting Boxes**

The four planting boxes on the front façade are extant features from the POS. Planter #1 at the west end of the façade is the only planter constructed of brick. All others utilize stone. Planter #1 dates from the original construction in 1954 and remains unchanged today. Planter #1 from 1954 and Planter #4 at the east end from 1968 retain their original design. Planters #2 and #3, constructed in 1954, increased in height with the addition of additional stone during the 1968 improvements. Planter #3 was originally two planters, combined into a single planter in 1982 with the removal of the front door in the restaurant conversion. Figure 2.43 provides a front façade view of the original 1954 planters. Dating from after the 1968 addition, this figure clearly shows the original height as a "ghost line" in a darker shade in planting boxes #2 and #3.

Vegetation in the four planters today is non-contributing, likely added in 1982 or later. Vegetation includes two different plants, Burford Holly and Chinese Holly. Illustration 3.1 provides a plant list and notes the specific species in each planting box.

Historically, small evergreen shrubs are the only type of plant materials used in the planting boxes, based on a review of images during and immediately after the POS. Figure 2.16 provides documentation soon after construction in 1954. In this image, the two sections of planter #3, are planted identically with five evergreen shrubs approximately one and one-half feet high spaced equally in the center with two slightly taller evergreen shrubs, estimated at two to two and one-half feet in height, at each end. Figure 2.37 provides a view of planters # 2 and #3 in December 1954, confirming that the plants are evergreen and findings in planter # 3 from Figure 2.16. In the December view, planter #2 appears to have a mono-planting of evergreen shrubs, approximately two and one-half feet high. A second December 1954 images from the opposite direction along the 5th Avenue North façade shows approximately six evergreen shrubs in planter #2, all at the same approximate height noted above. This image also shows planter #1 with a mono-planting of the small evergreen shrubs. Collectively in the images during the POS, the shrubs in planter # 3 appears to be pruned into rounded shapes, while the shrubs in planters #1 and #2 have more natural shapes.

An image almost 20 years later from 1973, Figure 2.45, shows a continuation of small evergreen shrub vegetation. In this image, planters #2, #3, and #4 have evergreen shrubs pruned to the same height, approximately two feet high. Planter #1 is shown with three larger shrubs in a scattered placement.

- **Courtyard**

The courtyard was the focal point outdoor space at the A.G. Gaston Motel. It was likely a place of respite for visiting guests in less turbulent times, while also playing a pivotal role in the early 1960s as the site of press conferences associated with the Birmingham campaign. Today, any vestige of the original courtyard is gone, replaced with asphalt surfaced parking spaces and a concrete plaza with a wood bench in the northeast corner of the parking court. As noted previously in this section, it is possible to document the

general measurements of the courtyard space via architectural plans. Images, (Figures 2.21, 2.26, and 2.29-2.36) from Chapter 2: History, provide photographic information that could inform a possible reconstruction of the courtyard.

- **Motel Sign**

The extant motel sign, ground-mounted and east of the porte cochere, today reflects closely its original appearance. Added to the site around 1968, only the words within the center piece of the three-parts design changed. "Motel" and "Restaurant" were replaced with "Gardens" in 1982 with the conversion to senior housing.

A second sign, the 1954 original Z-shaped sign, mounted at the top of the façade at the west end of the 5th Avenue North frontage, was removed in the 1982 conversion. Its location today is unknown. With the recommendation of the HSR to restore the front façade of the 1954 building to its original appearance, the 1968 sign, though a contributing element, cannot remain in its current location.

Views and Vistas

The building's orientation to the public roadway, 5th Avenue North, remains intact, thus retaining historic views and vistas along the front façade, dating from 1954 and 1968 (Figure 3.27 and Figure 3.30).

Today, views within the interior of the site, the parking court, are more open than in the early 1960s, when the two-story garage and apartment blocked views to the east from the courtyard. The removal of the one-story garage, sometime between 1960-1962 (Figures 2.27-2.28), produced a notable change in spatial organization. Views from the courtyard space, previously blocked by the flush façade of the one-story garage, were more open. The two-story garage remained an impediment to unobstructed views to the east from the courtyard during the POS. Views across the entire parking court became completely unobstructed in 1982 with the demolition of the two-story garage and apartment building. The 1982 repurposing of the motel for senior houses also included the demolition of the courtyard space, replaced with parking spaces and a concrete paved area at the northwest corner of parking court.

At ground level today within the parking court, the two-story U-shaped footprint formed by the buildings terminates views at the building facades to the west, south and east (Figures 3.2-3.4, and Figure 3.10). Only the higher branches of the surrounding hardwood trees are visible above the rooflines.

Views, from the perspective of the recessed corridor on the second floor and across the parking court, are more expansive than at ground level. To the north, views extend over the CMU wall and beyond the site. During the POS, the Sixteenth Street Baptist was visible to the north. Today, the massive scale of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute obstructs this view (Figure 3.6). To the north and northwest, contemporary and large scale skyscrapers are now part of the scene (Figure 3.7 and Figure 3.8), replacing the low rise buildings surrounding the site in the early 1960s.

Vegetation

Today, there is no contributing vegetation on the site. Much of the existing vegetation surrounds the site, immediately adjacent to the property boundaries, and dates from the early 1990s public improvements throughout the Civil Rights Historic District. The only plantings within the site are the cluster of shrubs and trees at the southeast of the parking court, two Arborvitaes in the open space north of the parking court, and the two types of holly shrubs in the planters on the front façade. All of these plantings likely date from 1982 or later.

Historic vegetation of note included the mature tree within the parking court located in a raised brick island and plantings associated with the courtyard. The Small-Scale Features section below provides additional information about vegetation in the planters and the courtyard.

Evaluation of Landscape Integrity

The National Register of Historic Places identifies seven aspects that define the integrity of a historic property. These include location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The analysis of landscape integrity in this CLR compares the historic character of landscape features with the present ability of these features to convey historic significance. To be listed in the National Register, the historic identity of a cultural landscape will be evident because of the survival of sufficient characteristics from the period of significance. While it is not necessary for all seven qualities to be present for a landscape to retain overall integrity, a property should retain enough physical fabric to evoke its historic appearance. Cultural landscapes reflect a continuum of history. As such, the accumulation of historic features includes those that date to the period of significance as well as those features added subsequently but that have retained historic significance in their own right.

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 within and surrounding a 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; and

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

In order to retain historic integrity, a property must possess at least several of these seven aspects of integrity. Evaluating historic integrity involves first determining the historic significance of a property and then identifying the existing features that contribute to our ability to recognize and understand this significance. Character-defining features are the physical qualities that make a property unique. They are the individual parts that make the whole place worthy of recognition as a historic site.

Location

The A.G. Gaston Motel site remains in its original location.

Design

Though site resources were significantly altered after the period of significance, surviving resources still reflect key aspects of their original design. The 1954 motel building retains its original form and orientation. Additionally, the style of the complex is in keeping with mid-century design standards, which are characterized by minimal architectural embellishments, straight lines, and simple arrangement of features. Site details that reflect this design and style include both the 1954 and 1968 motel buildings, the buildings' stairs and railing, and orientation to the interior parking area.

Other notable design elements that relate to the period of significance include the four planting boxes along the south side of the motel buildings. Planter #1 at the west end of the façade is the only planter constructed of brick. All others utilized stone. Planter #1 dates from the original construction in 1954 and remains unchanged today. Planter #1 from 1954 and Planter #4 at the east end from 1968 retain their original design. Planters #2 and #3, constructed in 1954, increased in height with the addition of additional stone during the 1968 improvements. Planter #3 was originally two planters, combined into a single planter during the removal of the front door in the restaurant conversion in 1982.

The various renovations to the site's buildings between 1954 and 1968 are within the period of significance. The 1982 renovations of the site, while impactful, still retained the overall design of the site.

Setting

The motel's setting remains fairly intact with slight changes in land use since 1968. The addition of the BCRI to the north and its support parking lot to the west and staging spaces to the east are the major changes. The site's front orientation to 5th Avenue North is intact as well as many of the commercial land uses to the south, including the A.G. Gaston Building to the southeast. Kelly Ingram Park, a landmark site in the civil rights movement, remains in the block to the east, as well as other landmarks, including the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, two blocks north.

Materials

The loss of original materials, especially the courtyard space with brick paving, the large planting bed and its brick edging, the concrete walk that separated the courtyard from parking spaces and a drive, and the fence covered in fabric with a gate allowing access from the alley, have resulted in a diminished level of integrity of materials for this cultural landscape. Concrete paving for walkways remains today, but most is located within the building footprint. Asphalt paving in the parking court is assumed to be original, while recognizing that it has been repaired and resurfaced.

Workmanship

The 1982 conversion of the property to senior housing impacted severely the original workmanship of site features with the removal of the courtyard and the redesign of the parking court.

Feeling

The historic sense of this property is retained in the U-shaped layout of buildings and the exterior spaces created within this form.

Association

The site retains its associations with the important role the site played in the civil rights movement in Birmingham, which in turn was a catalyst for the movement nationwide. Even with major changes to the landscape, there remain tangible links to the past conveyed by the site.

Integrity of the Site as a Whole

The A.G. Gaston Motel site retains integrity of location, setting, feeling and association for its period of significance (1954-1968).

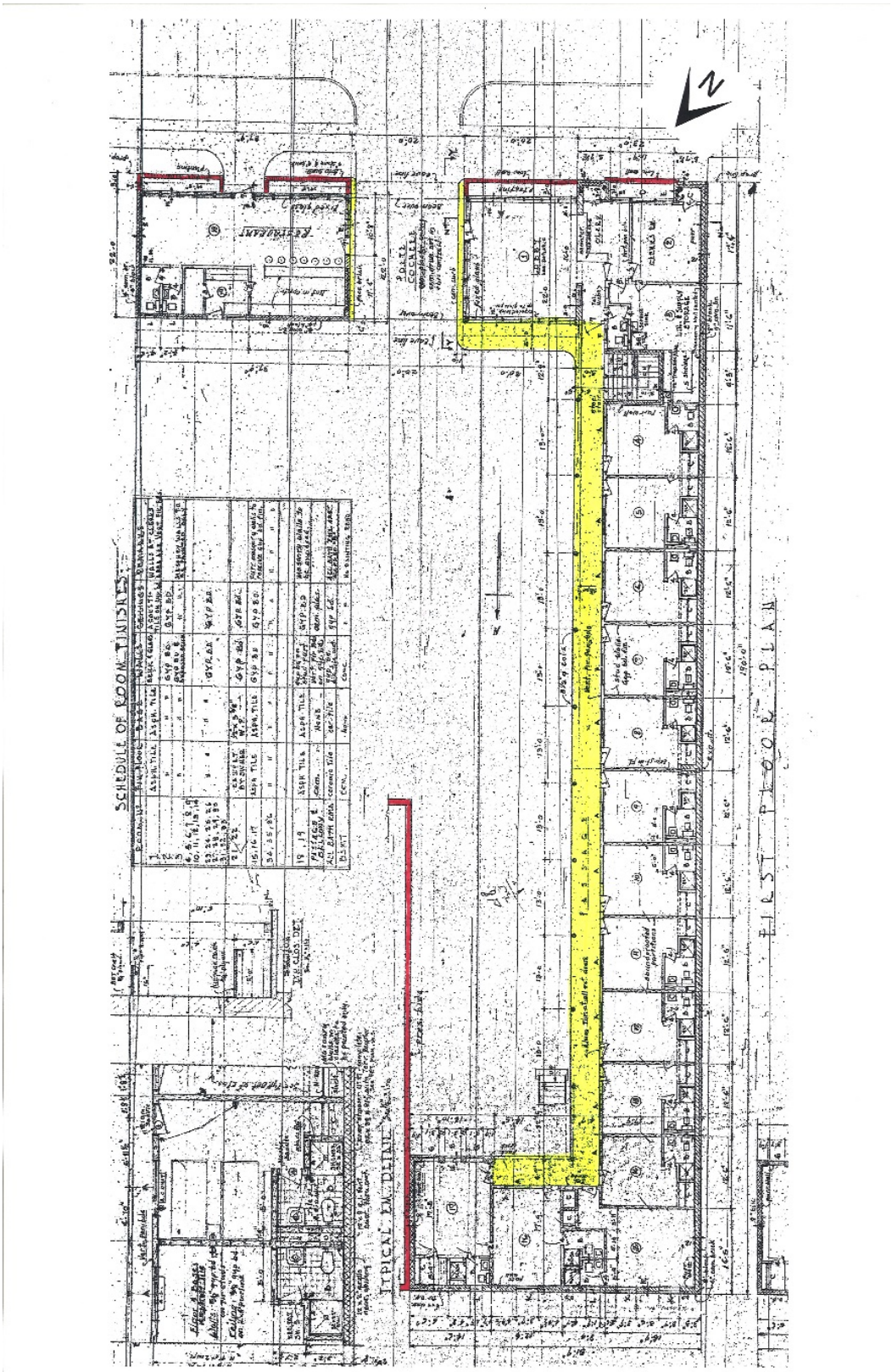


Figure 4.1: 1954 Architectural Plans provide plan view of First Floor Plan with concrete paving in yellow and one-story garage west façade footprint and planters on front façade in red.

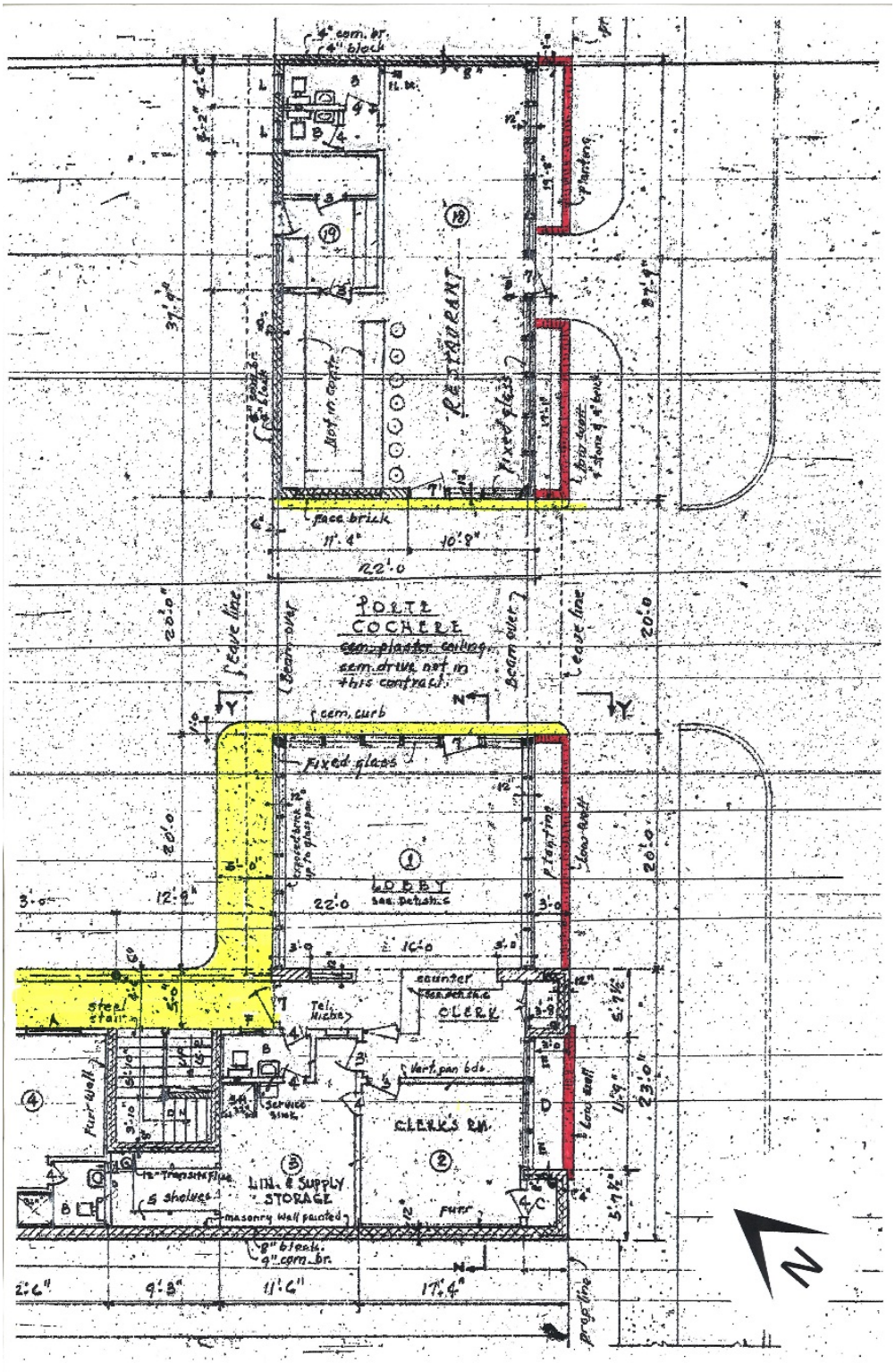


Figure 4.2: 1954 Architectural Plans enlargement of Figure 4.1 with concrete paving in yellow and planters on front façade in red.

.

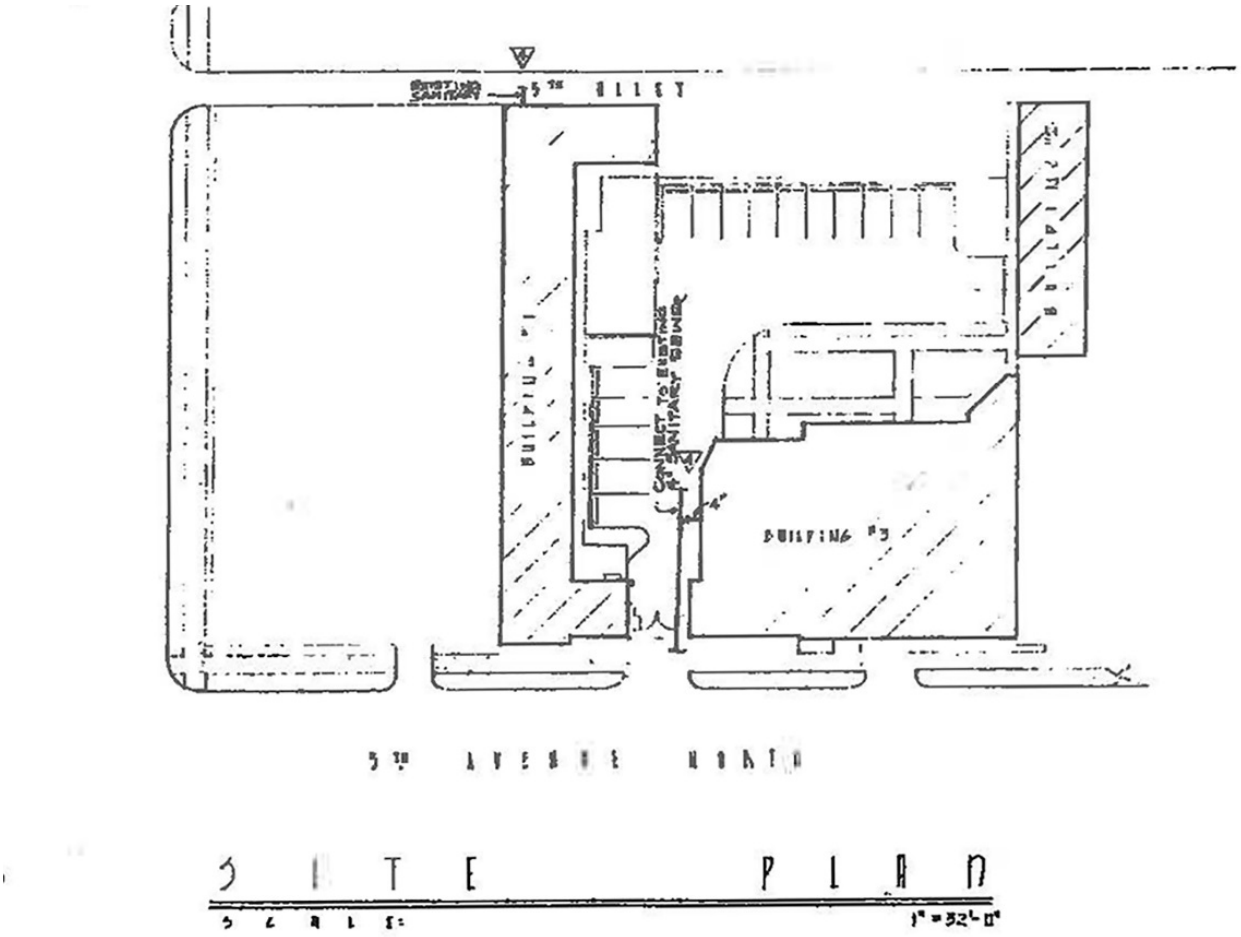


Figure 4.3: 1982 Architectural Plans for A.G. Gaston Gardens. Sheet P-1 may show elements that were part of the site until 1982. This includes the courtyard space, shown as rectangle in the northwest corner of the parking court, the row of parallel parking spaces immediately south of the courtyard, and possibly an expanded planting area in the southeast section of the parking court.

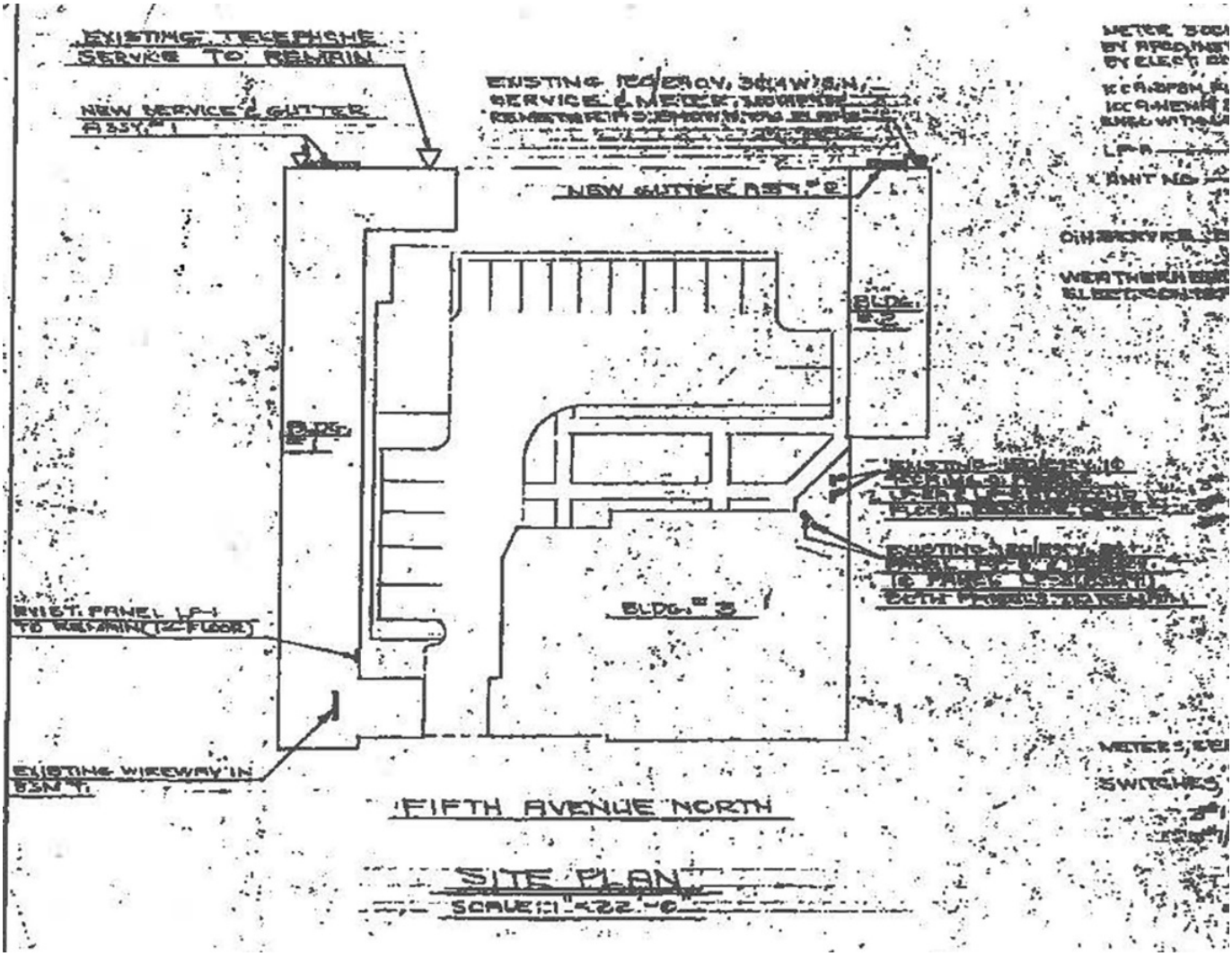


Figure 4.4: 1982 Architectural Plans for A.G. Gaston Gardens. Sheet E-1 may show elements that were part of the site until 1982. This includes the courtyard space, shown as rectangle in the northwest corner of the parking court, the row of parallel parking spaces immediately south of the courtyard, and possibly an expanded planting area in the southeast section of the parking court.

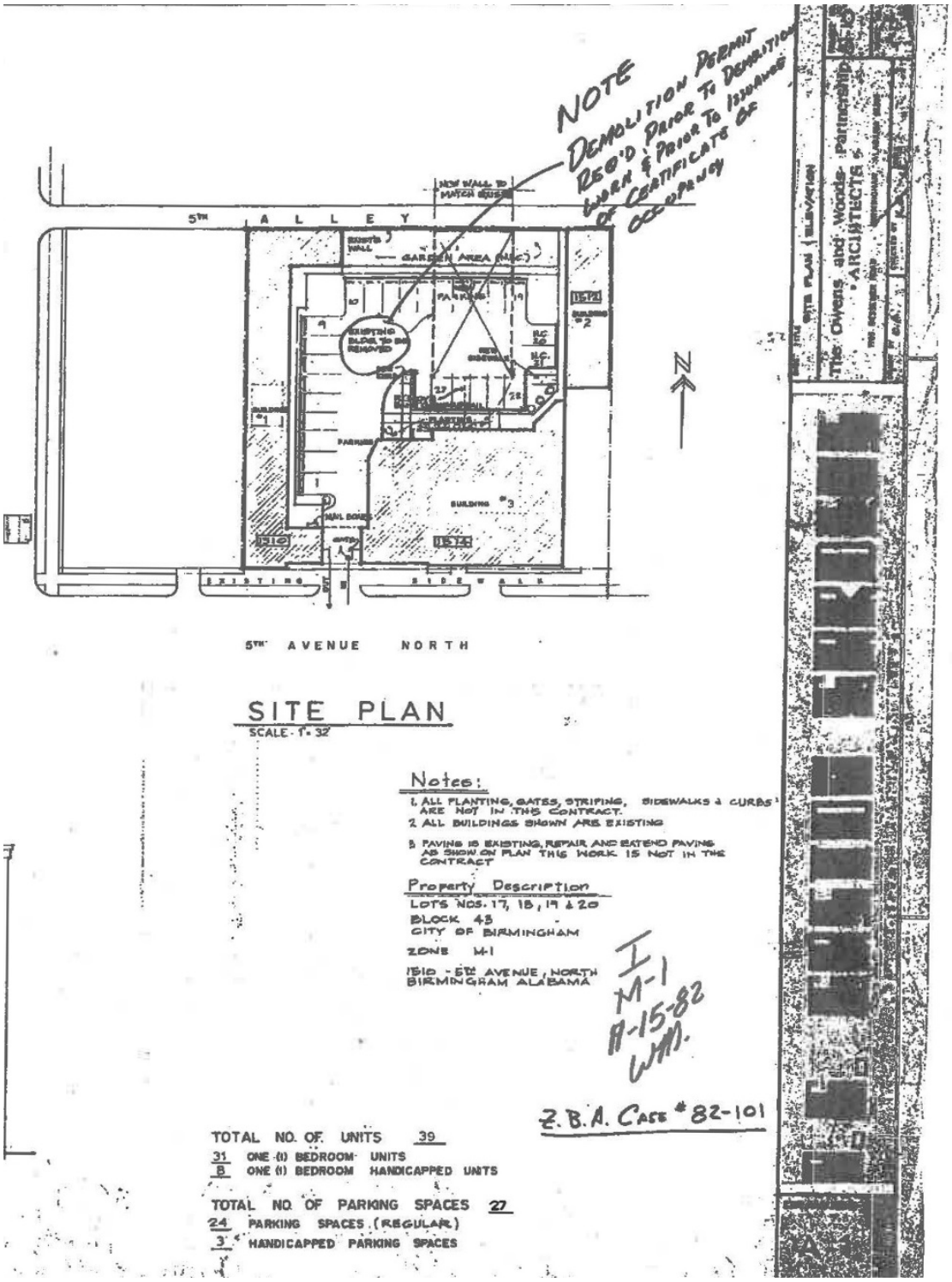


Figure 4.5: 1982 Architectural Plans for A.G. Gaston Gardens. Sheet A-1 shows site plan for 1982 conversion.

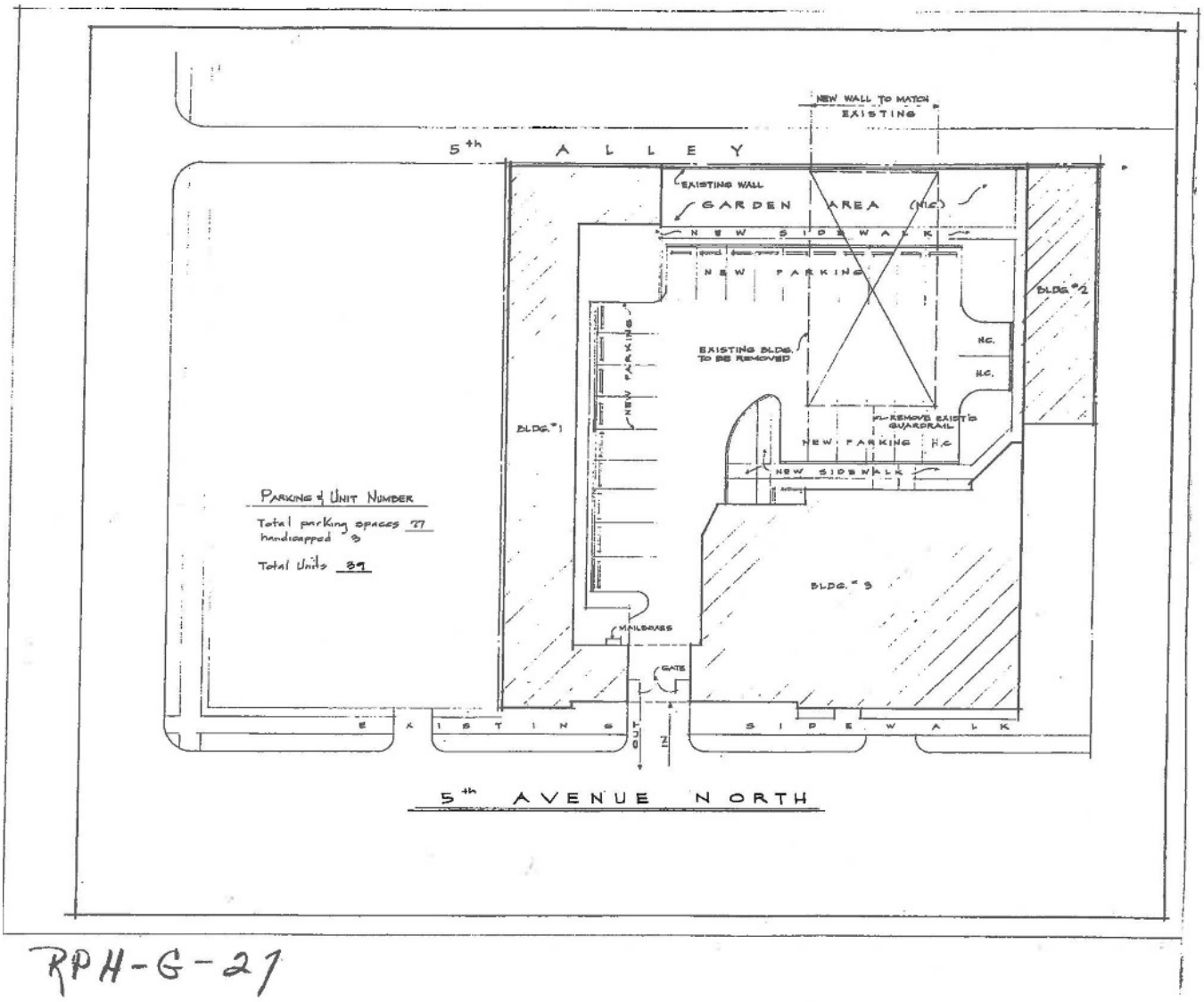


Figure 4.6: 1982 Architectural Plans for A.G. Gaston Gardens. Sheet with no number or name shows site plan for 1982 conversion and footprint of the two-story garage and apartment building, slated for demolition.

Feature Name	Outside Site	Date of Origin	Removal Date	Status of Feature C-Contributing NC-Noncontributing M-Missing U-Undetermined	Condition G-Good F-Fair P-Poor
Revised April 17, 2019					
Natural Character					
None Present					
Land Use and Context					
Proposed Heritage Tourism / Commemoration / Exhibit					
Missing Land Use and Context					
Residential				M	
Commercial (motel)				M	
Commercial (dining)				M	
Commercial (entertainment)				M	
Views and Vistas					
Views into site from 5th Ave North		1954 and 1968		C	G
Views into site from Elevated Walkways		1954 and 1968		C	G
Views upward from Parking Court to Elevated Walkways		1954 and 1968		C	G
Views across Parking Court		1954 and 1968		C	G
Spatial Organization and Clustering					
Open character with removal of one-story garage		1960-1962		C	
Open character with removal of two-story garage and apartment bldg		1982		NC	
Enclosed parking lot formed by U-shaped arrangement of buildings and north wall		1968		C	G
Orientation of site to 5th Ave North and porte cochere		1954 and 1968		C	G
Missing Spatial Organization and Clustering					
Open character of site on north and east		1954	1968	M	
Courtyard Elements (see Small Scale Features)		1954 & early 1960s	1982	M	
Building clustering formed by two garage buildings		pre-1954	1960-1962 & 1982	M	
Greenspace at north of site		1982		NC	
Cultural Traditions					
Heritage Tourism / Commemoration				NC	
Missing Cultural Traditions					
African American travel accommodations during segregation				M	
African American dining and entertainment during segregation				M	
Topography and Hydrology					
Flat topography		1954 and 1968		C	G
Drainage Structures					
Catch basin		U		U	F
Steel drains		1954		C	F
Gutter system downspouts		1954 and 1968		C	P
Missing Topography and Hydrology Features					
Vegetation					
Silver Maple Bosque	*	early 1990s		NC	P
Shumard Oak Street Trees	*	early 1990s		NC	G
Nellie R. Stevens Holly Row	*	early 1990s		NC	G
Leyland Cypress Row	*	early 1990s		NC	P
Cluster of Shrubs and Crape Myrtles (NW)	*	early 1990s		NC	G
Sugar Maples (NE)	*	early 1990s		NC	F
Chinese Hollies (NE)	*	early 1990s		NC	F
Shrub and Trees Cluster (SE Section Parking Court)		Est1982		NC	P
Arborvitaes (NW Section Parking Court)		Est 1982		NC	G
Hollies in Planter Boxes		Est 1982		NC	F
Missing Vegetation					
Planting island within courtyard		1955-1963	1982	M	
Shrubs in planting boxes at 5th Ave North		1954 and 1968	altered 1982	M	
Vegetation in planting bed in courtyard		1954**	altered 1982	M	

Chart 1: Landscape Resources Chart (1)

Feature Name	Outside Site	Date of Origin	Removal Date	Status of Feature C-Contributing NC-Noncontributing M-Missing U-Undetermined	Condition G-Good F-Fair P-Poor
Buildings and Structures					
1954 Building		1954		C	F
Guest Room Wing, Lobby, Clerk's Office, Clerk's Room and Coffee Shop		July			
Kitchen Addition (1)		October			
Kitchen Expansion (2) and Restaurant		December			
1968 Building		1968		C	F
Kitchen Expansion (3), Banquet Hall/Meeting Space and Guest Room Wing				C	
Other Buildings and Structures					
Guard booth		1982		NC	P
Cluster mailbox structure		1982		NC	P
Utilities	*	1982 and more recent		NC	G-F
Missing Buildings and Structures					
Two-story garage / apartment building			1982	M	
One story garage			1960-1962	M	
Residential building			pre 1954	M	
Small Scale Features					
Concrete masonry wall (Concrete Masonry Unit)		Pre-1982		NC	G
Chain link fence		Estimate 2015		NC	G
Steel gate at porte cochere		1982		NC	G
Ground-mounted motel sign		1968		C	F
Interpretive sign	*	Estimate 2017		NC	G
Planting box 1 - brick		1954		C	P
Planting box 2 - stone		1954 & 1968		C	F
Planting box 3 - stone		1954,1968 &1982		C	F
Planting box 4 - stone		1968		C	F
Bench		1982		NC	F
Period light	*	early 1990s		NC	P
Roadway luminaire	*	early 1990s		NC	G
Security light	*	estimate 2015		NC	G
Missing Small Scale Features					
Raised brick parking lot island with tree & ground cover plantings		1954	Before 1963	M	
Courtyard and its site features		1954	1982	M	
Plaza with brick paving		1954	1982	M	
Metal furniture		1954	1982	M	
Planting bed		1954	1982	M	
Bed edge: concrete curb and saw tooth brick		1954	1982	M	
Concrete bird bath		1954	1982	M	
Vegetation		1954	1982	M	
Z-shaped sign		1954	unconfirmed	M	
"Do Not Enter" sign at porte cochre		1954	unconfirmed	M	
"Welcome" sign flanking entrance		1954	unconfirmed	M	
Chain Link Fence		est 1962	est 1968 or 1982	M	
Circulation					
Covered conc walkway at 1954 Guest Room Wing		1954		C	F
Elevated walkway at 1954 Guest Room Wing		1954		C	F
Covered concr walkway at1968 Guest Room Wing		1968		C	F
Elevated walkway at 1968 Guest Room Wing		1968		C	F
Metal stairs at 1954 Guest Wing		1954		C	F
Metal stairs at 1968 Guest Wing and Banquet/Mtg		1968		C	F
Sections of Concrete Paving					
One-foot wide/adj Lobby/west side Porte Cochere		1954		C	F
Pavement beneath Porte Cochere at Catch Basin		1954		C	F
Five-feet wide/north of Lobby		1954		C	F
Asphalt parking court		1954, 1968 & 1982		C	F
Concrete walkways (north and south of parking court)		1982		NC	G
Sidewalk along 5th Avenue North Frontage	*	early 1990s		NC	G
Concrete parking stops		1982		NC	F
Concrete "bump-outs"		1982		NC	F

Chart 1: Landscape Resources Chart (2)

Feature Name	Outside Site	Date of Origin	Removal Date	Status of Feature C-Contributing NC-Noncontributing M-Missing U-Undetermined	Condition G-Good F-Fair P-Poor
Missing Circulation Features					
Concrete walk (NW area of parking court)		est 1962	1982	M	
Angled parking and drive lane (potential) (NW)		est 1962	1982	M	
Parking stop (NW)		est 1962	1982	M	
Perpendicular parking (SW corner of parking court)		1954 & early 1960s*			
Archeology					
None Identified					
Notes					
**Perpendicular parking in 1954 was angled; exact date of change to perpendicular is unknown, but is documented in a photo in 1963*					
***It is assumed that vegeation was installed in planting bed in courtyard in 1954 with the likelihood of replacements in future years*					

Chart 1: Landscape Resources Chart (3)

Treatment

Introduction

The treatment recommendations for this Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) propose a preservation strategy for long-term management of the cultural landscape based on research, inventory, and analysis. The appropriate preservation approach considers the evolution of the landscape alongside significance, existing conditions, and current use. The CLR combines the site history and analysis with input from the current site managers to formulate an appropriate treatment and management philosophy.

Recommendations follow National Park Service policy, including the Director's Orders No. 28: *Cultural Resource Management Guidelines* and *the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. These documents identify four types of treatment: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Each treatment ranges by level of physical intervention and includes specific guidelines and standards.

> **Preservation** is the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the on-going maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, 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.
>
> **Rehabilitation** is the act or process of making possible a compatible use of a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.
>
> **Restoration** is 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 historic 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 the property functional is appropriate within a restoration project.
>
> **Reconstruction** is the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and details of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, or objects for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time in its historic location.[153]

[153] Charles A. Birnbaum, ed. The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1996, 9, 18, 48, 90, 128.)

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment

Standards for Preservation:

- A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
- The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
- Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.
- 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.
- Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

Standards for Rehabilitation:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- 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 supported by documentary and physical evidence.
- 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.
- Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

- 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.
- 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.

Standards for Restoration:

- A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that reflects the property's restoration period.
- Materials and features from the restoration period will be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period will not be undertaken.
- Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve materials and features from the restoration period will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
- Materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods will be documented prior to their alteration or removal.
- Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the restoration period will be preserved.
- Deteriorated features from the restoration period 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 from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically.
- 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.
- Archeological resources affected by a project will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
- Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

Standards for Reconstruction:

- Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when sufficient documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture and when such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.
- Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
- Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.
- Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements supported by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-

create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture.

- A reconstruction is clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

Management Philosophy

The A.G. Gaston Motel is part of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument, a new unit of the National Park Service. The monument was created by presidential proclamation in 2017. This document states that the "Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) shall manage the monument through the National Park Service" and requires "a management plan, with full public involvement and in coordination with the city of Birmingham, within three years of this proclamation."[154] At this time a management plan is not in place. Based on the proclamation a management plan is not required until 2020.

Treatment Period

The period of significance is 1954-1968 with 1963, the primary date of significance. On May 10, 1963, the marches, demonstrations and other activities associated with the CLC/ACMHR campaigns in Birmingham in a truce between the protestors and the local officials. The period of significance reflects the original construction of the A.G. Gaston Motel in 1954 and its final building campaign in 1968, as well as the site's association with civil rights activities of the CLC/ACMHR campaigns and lodging for African Americans during segregation.

Treatment Recommendations

Primary Treatment

(Illustration 4)

The CLR recommends a combination of treatments including reconstruction, restoration and rehabilitation. Specific recommendations include: (1) Reconstruction of the original courtyard space and the adjacent area previously occupied by the one-story garage; (2) Restoration of the parking court, the porte cochere, and the planting boxes on the 1954 façade along 5th Avenue North; and (3) Rehabilitation of the balance of the site, primarily the eastern section of the parking court. The front façade with its planters within the building's façade is recommended for restoration.

Architecturally, all building façades will reflect their original appearance based on the HSR recommendation for the "preservation and restoration of the extant exterior and structural portions of the 1954 motel" and "rehabilitation of all portions of the 1968 buildings."[155] Complemented by the landscape treatment recommendations, the courtyard space as well as the west section of the parking court will be returned to 1963, the pivotal year in the civil rights activities in Birmingham. The remainder of the site in a rehabilitation treatment will enrich the setting with tangible as well as interpretive elements that continue to tell the story of this site through 1968 and beyond.

[154] U.S. Department of the Interior, Presidential Proclamation, "Establishment of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument," January 13, 2017.
[155] Lord Aeck Sargent, A.G. Gaston Motel Historic Structure Report, (Atlanta, Georgia, 2016), 45.

General Treatment

The following provides details on each treatment approach with a listing of the non-contributing elements to be removed from the site. Overlays of the historic plans from 1954 and 1982 (Figures 4.1- 4.6) on today's site plan are included in the appendix as reference (Appendix 1). Illustration 5-1 provides a plan view of treatment recommendation zones. The footprints of the former garage and two-story garage/apartment building are important factors in the delineation of treatment zones. The approximate location of both buildings, outlined in the field using chalk, are shown in site photographs within the context of the treatment zones (Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2).

Illustration 5-2: Treatment Plan illustrates the details within each treatment zone and provides a listing of improvements in the realization of the treatment plan. Illustration 5-3 a list of non-contributing features to be removed.

Chart #2: Landscape Resources and Treatment Recommendations expands on the chart in Chapter 4 with the addition of two additional columns to include (1) Status for Treatment to determine contributing or non-contributing and (2) Treatment Recommendation to select reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation or Removal.

Since much of the site, currently and historically was predominately in hardscape, core samples of concrete and asphalt taken early in the design process at strategic locations could inform future decisions. Core samples would allow an understanding of the depth and condition of existing pavement. Additional core samples in the former courtyard space, specifically in the location of the brick plaza, might unearth extant bricks or fragments of bricks, allowing a closer match in reconstruction.

The architectural character of the A.G. Gaston Motel is one of simplicity with straight lines, geometric arrangements, and minimal details. The style of new elements should be inspired by mid-century modern prototypes, minimalist in design as a complement to the motel structure and its site. This design approach is particularly important in the area proposed for rehabilitation where the addition of new visitor amenities is recommended. This design guideline would also apply to utilitarian features, such as a gate at the porte cochere and some type of enclosure across the northern property line.

Illumination at A.G. Gaston should follow the minimalist principles described above, since there was never any decorative lighting standards. Illumination historically at Gaston was utilitarian. Lighting design in the site's future use should be subtle and used first, in the security of the site, and secondly as a means of highlighting important features. In future use consideration, anticipated site uses at night will dictate additional lighting requirements.

Reconstruction

Within the landscape at the northwest, adjacent to the 1954 Guest Room Wing and including the footprint of the one-story garage, it is possible to return the site to 1963 by using photographic (Figures 2.13, 2.14, 2.16, 2.21, 2.22, 2.26, 2.29-2.38) and mapping/aerials/design plans documentation (Figures 2.27, 2.44, and 4.1-4.6) and the overlays in the Appendix. The goal of reconstruction is to return the appearance of the courtyard to May 10, 1963, when King, Abernathy, and Shuttlesworth held a news conference in the courtyard of the Gaston Motel, officially announcing the truce that had been negotiated on May 7th between city officials and the leaders of the CLC/ACMHR campaigns.

Elements within the reconstruction zone include:

- **Metal Stairs and Covered Concrete and Elevated Walkways**
  The metal stairs and covered concrete walkway, considered part of both of the landscape and the architecture, are retained and repaired as necessary. The stairs, walkway and façade of the surrounding 1954 building provided a backdrop for the courtyard. Repairs for the stairs are part of the HSR and included in the current LAS construction design project.

- **Courtyard**
  The courtyard is located in front of the north ell of the 1954 Guest Room Wing. The space is 27 feet wide and extends approximately 72 feet south from the covered concrete corridor and the façade of the north ell of the 1954 wing. Based on a number of images, especially photographic documentation from 1963 (Figures 2.26 and 2.29-2.36), there is adequate documentation to reconstruct this space. Replicate the appearance of the courtyard as it appeared on May 10, 1963.

  Reconstruct the courtyard to original dimensions of 27' wide x 72' long, measured from the front edge of the covered walkway to the west and north and façade of north ell. Refer to the following narrative for specific treatments for the two sections that comprise the courtyard, plaza zone and planting bed and the features within each.

  Plaza with Brick Paving - The plaza space is paved with brick in a running bond pattern, oriented north to south. Situated in the northwest corner of the parking court, the brick plaza is approximately four inches below the elevation of the surrounding corridor (Figure 2.33) and the brick appears to be set in a sand base, based on the uneven surface and no sign of mortar joints (Figure 2.29). Photographs from this period are in black and white, making it impossible to determine the exact color of the brick. From color post card views coupled with the color intensity of bricks in black and white photographs, it is assumed the bricks are red. In the reconstruction, a red-colored brick in a shade that is compatible with the multi-color bricks used in the façade is recommended.

  Reconstruct plaza with brick paving to match original, set elevation at approximately 4" below surrounding covered walkway. Place brick in a running bond pattern, oriented north-south, and set on a compacted gravel base with sand joints. Select a red color that is complementary to bricks used on façade of the buildings.

  Metal Furniture – On May 10, 1963 and in other photos associated with other press conferences, there is a single round metal table with approximately eight metal chairs, all in a light color based on black and white images (Figures 2.29-2.34). The metal furniture is the only moveable object within the courtyard. The table, approximately four feet diameter, has four narrow metal round pipes at the center of the table, which flare and extend outward at the bottom to create a base. The seat and back of the chairs are made of solid rectangular pieces with the back slightly reclined and round pipe arms on each side extending to the ground and forming an open rectangle to support the chairs. The round metal pipes in both table and chairs are estimated at one inch or less in diameter. In the reconstruction, metal furniture should replicate the original. It is likely that this exact design will not be available commercially, requiring a custom design. Select a color in a light shade to complement the surrounding brick façades and paving.

  Planting Bed – To the west of the plaza space, a planting bed with a curvilinear border extends from the brick façade of the north ell to the southern end of the courtyard. The planting bed is

located immediately in front of the north ell facade, which is flush with the front of the recessed corridor. The planting bed, and the concrete walk and drive further east, is documented in a single image by Tom Self of the Alabama Department of Archives and History (Figure 2.36) and in screen shots from a 1963 video by the Associated Press (Figures 2.31-2.34). The low resolution of the Associated Press images makes it difficult to glean precise details, particularly the vegetation. The planting bed's form is possible to replicate based on historic photos.

Reconstruct planting bed to replicate the curvilinear form on the west and straight alignment at adjacent walkway on the east.

Bed Edge: Concrete Curb and Sawtooth Brick - The planting bed has an edge on the west with upright bricks set in a sawtooth pattern. There is a narrow concrete edge approximately two inches high and two inches wide, separating the brick sawtooth edge from the brick paving. Based on the presence of the concrete curb, it is likely the upright bricks were set in concrete. Reconstruct the bed edge to match historic images, referencing Figure 3.21.

Reconstruct planting bed edge on west side with concrete curb (2"x2") adjacent to brick paving and bricks set in a sawtooth pattern on the west side. Set bricks in a concrete base on the west side integral with the concrete curb.

- **Concrete Bird Bath -** The planting bed contains a concrete bird bath near its center. Clearly shown in two images (Figures 2.31 and 2.36), the bird bath appears to be made of concrete. A round basin at the top, approximately two and one-half feet in diameter, is set on a circular support. The support is narrow at the top and increases in size to form a rounded circular base at the bottom. A rounded collar above the base provides additional ornamentation. An exact replica of the concrete bird bath should be commissioned if not available commercially, and added to the reconstructed courtyard in its original location

- **Vegetation –** Figures 2.26, 2.31, 2.33, and 2.36 provide the best clues to plant materials in the planting bed in 1963. Within the planting bed, the ground level appears completely vegetated, likely in some type of grass. Scattered shrub plantings throughout are primarily in informal arrangements with the exception of a few formal arrangements. A line of shrubs, approximately two and one-half to three feet in height and below the window sills, is set against the north ell façade. Other shrubs throughout the planting bed are similar in size and are located in a group approximately 10 feet from the north ell, a cluster near the bird bath and several in a line along the concrete walk.

  Other low plantings, also interspersed throughout the bed with spike-type projections approximately 18 inches high, are likely perennials. Images of the Planting Bed, referenced above, date from April to May 10, 1963. Since it is early spring, the young age of the materials, and the poor resolution of the images, it is difficult to discern if shrubs are deciduous or evergreen. Based on the lacey texture of most, deciduous shrubs are likely predominant. Planting against the north ell façade have thicker leaves and are likely evergreen varieties. The quality of images and the young age of the plant materials, especially the shrubs, make plant identification problematic.

  The book, *"African-American Gardens and Yards in the Rural South"* by Richard Westmacott, provides information on rural residential gardens in South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama. In the book, Westmacott references a study by "Sara Glickman (1986) of back house types and gardens in urban communities in piedmont Georgia," which "invites comparisons between urban and

rural gardens and the transfer of values, practices, and skills from rural to urban areas."[156] With little information on gardening practices of the African-American community, Westmacott's book proved a reliable source.

Some of the book's observations are relevant to the landscape at the Gaston Motel. The planting bed at Gaston served as a place for "entertainment, recreation and display."[157] Planting design within this bed reflected observations found in rural residential landscapes including the placement of shrubs as "individuals rather than en masse," and shrubs "often spaced throughout swept or mowed areas, though they sometimes tended to be lined up or pushed toward the edges, probably to make mowing the grass easier." Also, "ground cover plants were rare."[158]

"African-American Gardens and Yards in the Rural South" provides many lists from different gardens on the most popular plant materials. Of particular value to the Gaston landscape is Appendix 3 with a summary of the "Frequency Analyses of Garden Plants" shown by various types that appear in the Gaston landscape (including Flowering Perennials, Flowering Shrubs and Trees, and Foliage Shrubs).[159]

Another reference source for potential plant materials at the Gaston site is a review of plants used by David A. Williston, considered the first professional African American landscape architect. Williston was instrumental in the development of the Tuskegee campus in the early to mid-1900s, specifically 1902-1906, 1909-1929 and 1936-1958, arriving first as an instructor and becoming part of the "team that oversaw the development of the campus."[160] Williston's work included The Oaks, home of Booker T. Washington, the president of Tuskegee University 1899-1915 and in the early 1940s at Moton Field, the training location for the Tuskegee Airmen three miles from the campus.

Chart #3 provides a plant list of period species that could have been at the A.G. Gaston Motel. Based on size, recognizing that pruning might be required, and the form of the plants shown in historic images, a list of candidate plants included some of the most widely used plants in Alabama per Westmacott's findings and Williston's plant list in CLRs for The Oaks and Moton Field.

Install vegetation in the planting bed to reflect the appearance of the garden in 1963, using Chart #3: Period Plant List as a reference for the selection of appropriate plant materials.

- **Concrete Walk**

The walk bordering the planting bed is concrete, as shown in Figures 2.31, 2.32 and 2.34. The elevation of the walk appears almost level with the courtyard space. The walk is approximately four feet in width. Angled parking borders the walkway to the east.

Reconstruct concrete sidewalk, four feet wide, extending from the property line at north and south to southern end of the courtyard space.

- **Angled Parking and Drive Lane**

[156] Richard Westmacott, African-American Gardens and Yards, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 2.
[157] Richard Westmacott, African-American Gardens and Yards, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 23.
[158] Richard Westmacott, African-American Gardens and Yards, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 45.
[159] Richard Westmacott, African-American Gardens and Yards, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 177-180.
[160] Douglas A. Williams, A Thesis, "David A Williston: The First Professional African American Landscape Architect and His Campus Designs for Historically Black Colleges and Universities," (Master's Thesis, Graduate School, Cornell University, January 2002) 32-33.

The row of parked cars number approximately seven, parked at a 60 degree angle, based on Figures 2.26, 2.31, 2.32, and 2.34 and the 1970 aerial (Figure 2.44). The parking surface is asphalt and in Figure 2.34, there is a truck parked in what is assumed to be a driving lane. It is not detectable in the image, but there likely is a gate access to the alley from this driving lane.

Reconstruct seven angled parking spaces and driving lane. Surface all in asphalt, using existing asphalt, where possible with repairs and resurfacing and new asphalt in areas now in concrete and turf.

- **Parking Stop -** Figures 2.26, 2.32 and 2.34 show a parking stop between the walkway and angled parked cars. The parking stop appears to be a six inch by six inch wood post set on the ground, or possibly of metal. The parking stop forms a sharp edge to the concrete walk. Though impossible to detect, it is likely the parking stop was structurally-linked to the ground. Reconstruct by placing parking stop on concrete base and attach to concrete via metal spikes.

- **Chain Link Fence with Fabric**
  Many images (Figures 2.26, 2.34, and 2.35) document the presence of a chain link fence covered in some type of fabric in pattern of diamond shapes. Figure 2.35 shows a round metal rail, approximately one and one-half inch diameter, along the top of the fence. The fabric mesh likely attaches to the pipe support. The fence pattern is bold with the diamond approximately one and one-half foot wide at its horizontal center, outlined in a dark color with the surrounding areas appearing white in black and white images. The fence is approximately six feet in height based on its relationship to the parked cars.

  Reconstruct chain link fence with fabric to replicate appearance in 1963. Add gate access at the driving lane, described above. A gate serves a functional purpose in future uses by providing vehicular/service access to the interior of the site from the alley.

- **Footprint of Two-Story Garage and Apartment Building**
  The footprint of the former two-story garage and apartment building is an important visual element in the reconstruction treatment, though technically the building is located in the rehabilitation zone. The building's footprint can take different forms within the rehabilitation zone. A list of potential options is described more fully in the Rehabilitation section of this chapter.

  The addition of the footprint as a flush element within the landscape and utilizing a contrasting material is a minimal treatment. At the other extreme is reconstruction of some exterior walls of the building. Figure 2.32 provides excellent documentation of the west façade of this structure in 1963 and Figure 2.13 shows the south façade in 1946.

  In terms of views and vistas, the west façade, south façade and possibly a limited area of the southeast section of the east façade are the most important to the reconstruction zone. The replication of these façades maintains the views at strategic locations within the site in 1963 by blocking views of the 1968 additions. The west façade of the garage/apartment was a major backdrop in views to the east from the courtyard. The high cost of reconstruction and the structural challenges in the support of free-standing walls, noted to be 28 feet high on the c.1960 Sanborn Map (Figure 2.20), lessens the feasibility of this option.

Removal of Non-Contributing Elements within the Reconstruction Zone

- Concrete masonry (CMU) wall
- Chain link fence
- Concrete and asphalt paving (remove or replace/resurface asphalt paving)
- Concrete parking stops
- Concrete "bump outs"
- Bench on bump out
- Greenspace at north
- Two Arborvitaes

Other Requirements - Drainage

The existing drainage issue at the northwest corner of the site requires resolution as part of the reconstruction design. The removal of much of the existing impervious surfaces in the creation of the planting bed will lessen runoff. The planting bed also provides an opportunity for potential stormwater retention in an underground system or possibly more ecological approaches in rain gardens or bioswales, provided the 1963 appearance can be maintained.

Restoration

As a complement to the reconstruction treatment, described above, restoration of the following elements at the southeast corner of the parking court supports the return of the landscape setting to 1963.

- **Perpendicular Parking**

  In 1963, a row of cars parked perpendicular to the 1954 guest room wing was south of the courtyard space. From photographic documentation on Figure 2.36 and the aerial from 1970 (Figure 2.44), approximately six cars are parked on the asphalt surface. There is no evidence of any type of parking stops in Figures 2.36 and 2.29.

  Add six perpendicular parking spaces and replace or repair asphalt as necessary. The parking area extends from edge original concrete walk (5' wide concrete) on the south and on the north to the southern border of the reconstructed courtyard.

- **Metal Stairs and Covered Concrete Walkway**

  The metal stairs and covered concrete walkway, considered part of both of the landscape and the architecture, are retained and repaired as necessary. Repairs for the stairs are part of the HSR and included in the current LAS construction design project.

- **Concrete Paving Sections: A, B and C**

  Immediately north of the lobby space, a 13 feet wide paved concrete area includes five feet of original 1954 pavement, reflected in the score line today and on the 1954 architectural drawings. For purposes of the CLR, this section noted as "A." A one foot wide section of pavement, noted as "B," extends along the west side of the porte cochere and is also original. Both original sections should be repaired, if possible, or replaced to their original form. The concrete paving beneath the porte cochere. Noted as "C," may also be original and if confirmed, repaired or replaced in its original form.

  Remove eight feet of existing concrete and retain original five feet existing concrete flush with north façade of lobby space in 1954 building. Retain one foot wide section of original concrete. Also retain pavement adjacent to catch basin and extending under the porte cochere, if determine to be original. In all cases, repair original concrete or replace, if justified by poor condition.

- **Concrete Paving Restoration**
  A one foot section of curb on the east side of the porte cochere, identical to the original concrete curb on the west side, should replace the existing non-historic pavement. A concrete pad was in place in 1954 to link the doorway entrance to the restaurant to the street. The pad was placed between the public sidewalk and the street. This section of pavement, slightly wider than the doorway entrance, should be added to restore this street frontage to its historic appearance.

- **Existing Underground Drainage System**
  The existing catch basin under the porte cochere with an underground 4" PVC pipe daylighting at the 5th Avenue North curb should be retained and improved. This drainage feature facilitates on-site drainage. Currently, the feature functions poorly and will require repairs or possibly replacement. The date of the catch basin is unknown. Repair or replace existing catch basin and PVC pipe daylighting at street to function correctly.

  A second drainage feature, also daylighting at 5th Avenue North, are the two steel drains linking to the end columns at the planting box #1. These features, shown on Drawing 5 in the 1954 plans, consist of three inch "Galv Steel Down Spout" and three inch "Roof Drain' which link to a "Gutter" at ground level, shown as a dashed line in the location of today's steel pipes. Repairs or replacement should be made as necessary.

- **"DO NOT ENTER" Sign**
  The "DO NOT ENTER" Sign (Figure 1.6 from the HSR and 2.36), hanging from the roof of the interior face of the porte cochere, documents the one way circulation pattern in 1963. Vehicles entered the site through the porte cochere and prior to 1963, the exit was on the east end of the 1954 restaurant building at 5th Avenue North. The removal of the one-story garage (1962-1963) with angled parking and a potential drive in its place in 1963 (Figure 2.34) suggests a second egress with access into the alley.

  Replace "Do Not Enter" sign to replicate original from historic images.

Restoration treatment at the 5th Avenue North frontage includes (1) the restoration of the planters along the front façade of the 1954 building (part of the current LAS construction design project); (2) the removal of the existing ground-mounted sign; and (3) the replacement of the original wall mounted sign (recommended in the HSR). These recommendations allow the 5th Avenue North frontage to visually reflect 1963.

- **Planting Boxes (#1-3) on 5th Avenue North Façade**
  Planting boxes treatments are in two separate groups. Planters #1 and #4 reflect their original condition and require only repairs. Planters #2 and #3 require restoration in returning #2 to its original height and planter #3 to its two planting boxes original configuration and height.

  Planter #1 requires structural repairs, repointing and replacement of damaged bricks, and the replacement of the existing vent in-kind. Planter #4 requires repointing, repair or replacement in-kind of missing or damaged stone. Planter #2 to conform its original height requires the removal of stone added in 1968 (estimated original height at two feet) and repair or replace in kind of original stone. Planter #3 requires the creation of two separate planters in the reconstruction of

the original restaurant exterior door by removal of the stone added in 1982 to create a single planter. Removal is also required of the stone added in 1968 to restore its original height (estimated original height at two feet). Both #2 and #3 require repair or replace in-kind original stone.

In historic images from 1954 show small evergreen shrubs and in most cases, slightly larger shrubs on each end in the planting boxes (Figures 2.16, 2.37 and 2.38). Chart #: Period Planting List under evergreen shrubs offers a list of potential plants. Native Yaupon holly or privet species would have required pruning to main a low height. Other plants, such as buxus species or dwarf yaupon might be considered as appropriate substitutes for privet, which is a highly invasive species. Though not widely used in Westmacott's list, Boxwood Holly (ilex spp) was added to the list to provide additional options.

Plant planting boxes with vegetation selections from the Period Planting List. Refer to Figure 2.16 for the number in each planter and spacing. Note that slightly larger shrubs should be placed at each end of shrubs in planting boxes 2, 3 and 4.

- **Replacement of Z-shaped Sign**
  Reconstruct and replace the Z-shaped sign on the façade of the 5th Avenue North as shown in historic images. This recommendation is also included in the HSR.

- **Replacement of Gate at Porte Cochere**
  The existing gate at the porte cochere provide security for the site, limiting access when the site is closed. A metal gate of more compatible design should be added to replace the current gate.

Removal of Non-Contributing Elements within the Restoration Zone

- Asphalt, as necessary
- Concrete parking stops
- Non-historic concrete north of lobby space
- Non-historic concrete on east side of porte cochere
- Steel gate at porte cochere
- Guard booth
- Cluster mailbox structures
- Vegetation in planters
- Ground Mounted Sign (retain sign, place in storage for possible future use within NPS Park, described more fully in the rehabilitation section of this chapter)

Rehabilitation

The reconstruction and restoration treatments, described above, will recreate the historic landscape at A.G. Gaston Motel in 1963 and on the front façade 1963 and 1968. Within the rehabilitation zone, future design should follow rehabilitation standards as a complement to the "reconstructed and restored" historic zones of the site. Designs must also respond to the future uses within the adjacent buildings and potential site uses. The treatment of the two-story garage and apartment building footprint can serve an important role in the design direction of this zone.

Options noted in the reconstruction zone discussion along with other considerations for the building's footprint are listed below. These options are presented in order of magnitude, beginning with minimal approaches to most comprehensive.

- A flush footprint, delineated through a contrasting material or color
- A level open space with a flush footprint in the pavement or in turf; or delineated through plantings, such as rows of trees, tree bosques, or trees pruned in formals shapes, such as pleaching;
- An open area with the footprint serving as a low seating wall;
- An open area with the footprint expressed vertically by posts at each corner;
- An enclosed area with the footprint expressed in canvas walls, extending between corner posts; these canvas walls might incorporate a shade feature to cool the space in warm seasons;
- Two canvas walls; one on the west with a scaled image of the west façade in 1963 (2.32); and the second canvas, the south façade based on images from 1946, 1954, and 1963 (Figures 2.13, 2.16, and 2.32 respectively).
- "Ghosting" with vertical and horizontal metal posts to mimic the original form of the building; referencing the figures cited above and measurements from Sanborn maps; ghosting option might also include some type of shade feature; or
- Reconstruction of the west and south walls or only one wall; likely not feasible due to the high cost and structural challenges.

The footprint options could be permanent or ephemeral, added only for special events. The footprint could involve one, two, three or all four walls. In allowing the east side to remain open, there is the opportunity for the space to function more easily with the balance of the rehabilitation zone.

Conceptually, the rehabilitation zone might serve as a passive and interpretive park space in support of and as a visual complement to the historic areas of the site. This space could serve as a respite with vegetation for shade and pedestrian amenities for comfort. It could be an urban plaza with large expanses of hardscape or landscape zones of turf and plantings, or a combination. Interpretive signage within the plaza would offer educational opportunities. A new pedestrian system could link future building uses to the site and connect to the covered walkway system.

A wall enclosure along the north boundary of the site is necessary for security. This enclosure will need to respond to the reconstruction of the chain link/fabric fence to the west and possibly allow vehicular/service access from the alley.

Add other amenities for visitor interpretation and comfort, as appropriate, including but not limited to informational kiosks, interpretive panels, pedestrian walkways, and vegetation.

Ground-mounted Motel Sign

The existing 1968 sign, currently located within the front façade east of the porte cochere, is recommended for removal, but retained for potential use at another location. It is important for the sign to be located in close proximity to the motel to maintain associations. The open space immediately east of the motel site is a strong candidate due to its high visibility. If placed at the southeast corner of this site at the intersection of 5th Avenue North and 16th Street North, the sign would be visual marker to the motel site and serve as a gateway feature.

The list of elements to be removed from the rehabilitation zone as well as removal of plantings on the periphery of the site follow.

Removal of Non-Contributing Elements within the Rehabilitation and Interpretation Zone

- Concrete masonry wall (CMU)
- Chain link fence (with addition of new wall to address security requirements)

- Concrete and asphalt paving (retain only covered walkways along frontage of guest rooms)
- Concrete parking stops
- Concrete "bump-outs"
- Bench on bump out
- Greenspace at north
- Plantings of shrubs and trees at southeast section

The following is a list of vegetation recommended for removal outside the boundaries of the site and which have an impact on the site.

Removal of Non-Contributing Elements on Periphery of Site

- Silver Maple Bosque on west due to poor condition and potential damage to building foundations
- Leyland Cypress Row on east due to poor condition and potential damage to building foundations
- Nellie R. Stevens Holly Row on east side due to potential damage to building foundations
- Vegetation on north side of site, as necessary in adding utilities in areas immediately north of 1954 and 1968 guest wings. These areas with less visibility are more appropriate for utilities.

The design and species selection of replacement plantings is not suggested in the CLR. In the absence of confirmed future uses, it is difficult to know how best the adjacent landscape might respond to the site's final program.

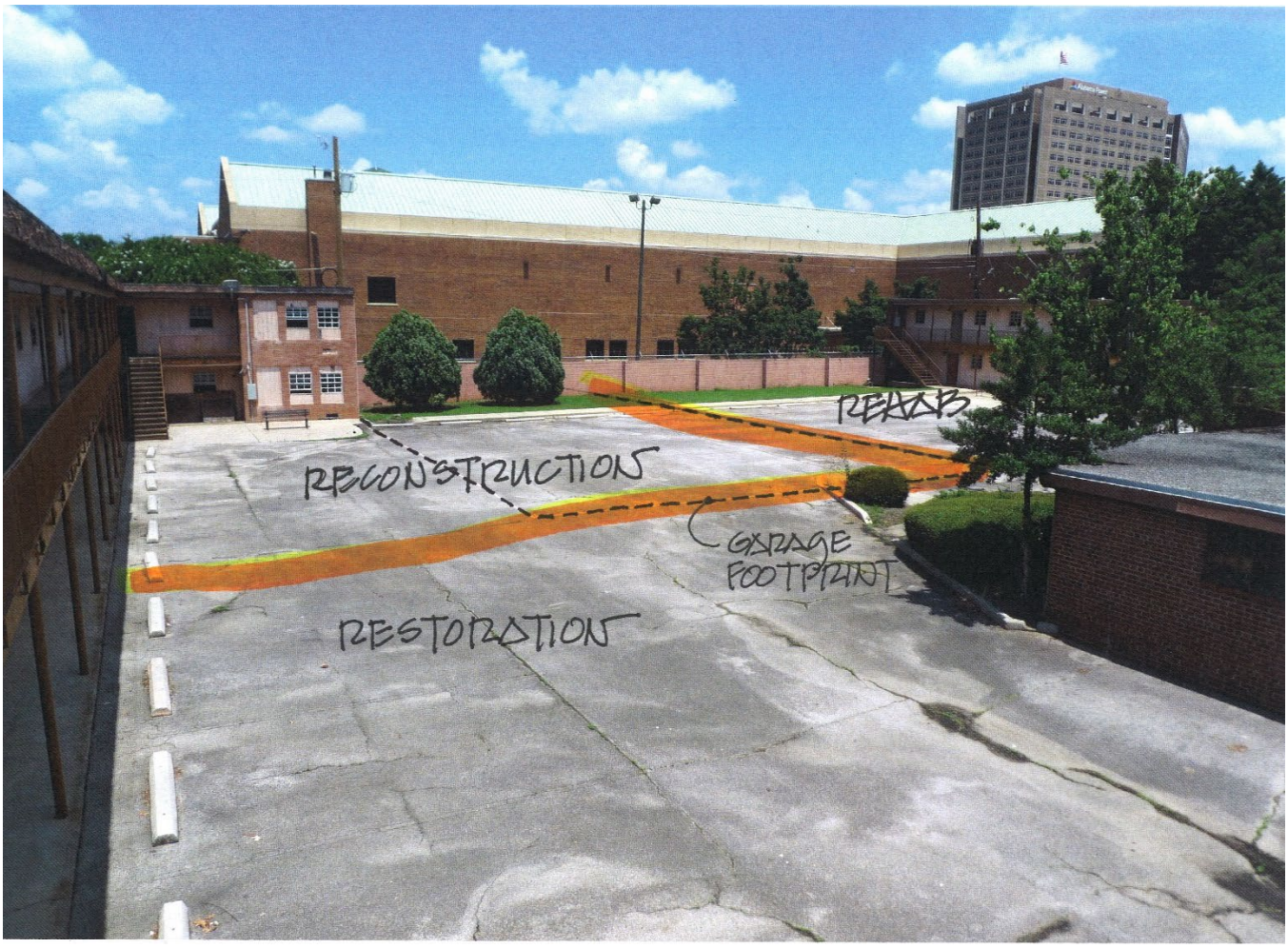


Figure 5.1: Reconstruction treatment zone, in background, encompasses building footprint of one-story garage and former courtyard space, immediately to L. Restoration zone in foreground and rehabilitation zone in foreground R.

Figure 5.2: Rehabilitation zone, in foreground, includes footprint of two-story garage and apartment building and parking court area between footprint and 1968 addition. Reconstruction zone in background with small section of restoration zone in background L.

Feature Name	Outside Site	Date of Origin	Removal Date	Status of Feature C-Contributing NC-Noncontributing M-Missing U-Undetermined	Condition G-Good F-Fair P-Poor	Status for Treatment C-Contributing NC-Noncontributing N/A-Not Applicable	Treatment Recommendation RC-Recontruction RS-Restoration RH-Rehabilitation Removal
Revised April 17, 2019							
Natural Character							
None Present						N/A	
Land Use and Context							
Proposed Heritage Tourism / Commemoration / Exhibit						N/A	
Missing Land Use and Context							
Residential				M		N/A	
Commercial (motel)				M		N/A	
Commercial (dining)				M		N/A	
Commercial (entertainment)				M		N/A	
Views and Vistas							
Views into site from 5th Ave North		1954 and 1968		C	G	C	RS & RH
Views into site from Elevated Walkways		1954 and 1968		C	G	C	RC, RS & RH
Views upward from Parking Court to Elevated Walkways		1954 and 1968		C	G	C	RC, RS & RH
Views across Parking Court		1954 and 1968		C	G	C	RC, RS & RH
Spatial Organization and Clustering							
Open character with removal of one-story garage		1960-1962		C		C	Remains as Existing
Open character with removal of two-story garage and apartment bldg		1982		NC		N/A	Remains as Existing
Enclosed parking lot formed by U-shaped arrangement of buildings and north wall		1968		C	G	C	Remains as Existing
Orientation of site to 5th Ave North and porte cochere		1954 and 1968		C	G	C	Remains as Existing
Missing Spatial Organization and Clustering							
Open character of site on north and east		1954	1968	M		N/A	RH
Courtyard Elements (see Small Scale Features)		1954 & early 1960s	1982	M		C	RC
Building clustering formed by two garage buildings		pre-1954	1960-1962 & 1982	M		N/A	
Greenspace at north of site		1982		NC		N/C	RC & RH
Cultural Traditions							
Heritage Tourism / Commemoration				NC		N/A	
Missing Cultural Traditions							
African American travel accommodations during segregation				M		N/A	
African American dining and entertainment during segregation				M		N/A	
Topography and Hydrology							
Flat topography		1954 and 1968		C	G	C	Remains as Existing
Drainage Structures							
Catch basin		U		U	F	U	RS & RH
Steel drains		1954		C	F	C	RS
Gutter system downspouts		1954 and 1968		C	P	C	RH
Missing Topography and Hydrology Features							
Vegetation							
Silver Maple Bosque	*	early 1990s		NC	P	NC	Removal
Shumard Oak Street Trees	*	early 1990s		NC	G	NC	Removal
Nellie R. Stevens Holly Row	*	early 1990s		NC	G	NC	Removal
Leyland Cypress Row	*	early 1990s		NC	P	NC	Removal
Cluster of Shrubs and Crape Myrtles (NW)	*	early 1990s		NC	G	NC	Removal
Sugar Maples (NE)	*	early 1990s		NC	F	NC	Removal
Chinese Hollies (NE)	*	early 1990s		NC	F	NC	Removal
Shrub and Trees Cluster (SE Section Parking Court)		Est1982		NC	P	NC	Removal
Arborvitaes (NW Section Parking Court)		Est 1982		NC	G	NC	Removal
Hollies in Planter Boxes		Est 1982		NC	F	NC	Removal
Missing Vegetation							
Planting island within courtyard		1955-1963	1982	M		N/A	
Shrubs in planting boxes at 5th Ave North		1954 and 1968	altered 1982	M		C	RS
Vegetation in planting bed in courtyard		1954**	altered 1982	M		C	RC

Chart 2: Landscape Resources and Treatment Recommendations

Feature Name	Outside Site	Date of Origin	Removal Date	Status of Feature C-Contributing NC-Noncontributing M-Missing U-Undetermined	Condition G-Good F-Fair P-Poor	Status for Treatment C-Contributing NC-Noncontributing N/A-Not Applicable	Treatment Recommendation RC-Recontruction RS-Restoration RH-Rehabilitation Removal
Buildings and Structures							
1954 Building		1954		C	F	C	HSR Scope
Guest Room Wing, Lobby, Clerk's Office, Clerk's Room and Coffee Shop		July					
Kitchen Addition (1)		October					
Kitchen Expansion (2) and Restaurant		December					
1968 Building		1968		C	F	C	HSR Scope
Kitchen Expansion (3), Banquet Hall/Meeting Space and Guest Room Wing				C		C	
Other Buildings and Structures							
Guard booth		1982		NC	P	NC	Removal
Cluster mailbox structure		1982		NC	P	NC	Removal
Utilities	*	1982 and more recent		NC	G-F	NC	Remain/Misc Improv
Missing Buildings and Structures							
Two-story garage / apartment building			1982	M		N/A	
One story garage			1960-1962	M		N/A	
Residential building			pre 1954	M		N/A	
Small Scale Features							
Concrete masonry wall (Concrete Masonry Unit)		Pre-1982		NC	G	NC	Removal
Chain link fence		Estimate 2015		NC	G	NC	Removal
Steel gate at porte cochere		1982		NC	G	NC	Removal & Replace
Ground-mounted motel sign		1968		C	F	C	Removal & Relocate
Interpretive sign	*	Estimate 2017		NC	G	N/A	
Planting box 1 - brick		1954		C	P	C	RS
Planting box 2 - stone		1954 & 1968		C	F	C	RS
Planting box 3 - stone		1954,1968 &1982		C	F	C	RS
Planting box 4 - stone		1968		C	F	C	RS
Bench		1982		NC	F	NC	Removal
Period light	*	early 1990s		NC	P	N/A	
Roadway luminaire	*	early 1990s		NC	G	N/A	
Security light	*	estimate 2015		NC	G	N/A	
Missing Small Scale Features							
Raised brick parking lot island with tree & ground cover plantings		1954	Before 1963	M		N/A	
Courtyard and its site features		1954	1982	M		C	RC
Plaza with brick paving		1954	1982	M		C	RC
Metal furniture		1954	1982	M		C	RC
Planting bed		1954	1982	M		C	RC
Bed edge: concrete curb and saw tooth brick		1954	1982	M		C	RC
Concrete bird bath		1954	1982	M		C	RC
Vegetation		1954	1982	M		C	RC
Z-shaped sign		1954	unconfirmed	M		C	RC & RS
"Do Not Enter" sign at porte cochre		1954	unconfirmed	M		C	RC & RS
"Welcome" sign flanking entrance		1954	unconfirmed	M		N/A	
Chain Link Fence		est 1962	est 1968 or 1982	M		C	RC
Circulation							
Covered conc walkway at 1954 Guest Room Wing		1954		C	F	C	RS
Elevated walkway at 1954 Guest Room Wing		1954		C	F	C	RS
Covered concr walkway at1968 Guest Room Wing		1968		C	F	C	RS
Elevated walkway at 1968 Guest Room Wing		1968		C	F	C	RS
Metal stairs at 1954 Guest Wing		1954		C	F	C	RS
Metal stairs at 1968 Guest Wing and Banquet/Mtg		1968		C	F	C	RS
Sections of Concrete Paving							
One-foot wide/adj Lobby/west side Porte Cochere		1954		C	F	C	RS or Replace
Pavement beneath Porte Cochere at Catch Basin		1954		C	F	C	RS or Replace
Five-feet wide/north of Lobby		1954		C	F	C	RS or Replace
Asphalt parking court		1954, 1968 & 1982		C	F	C	RS or Replace
Concrete walkways (north and south of parking court)		1982		NC	G	NC	Removal
Sidewalk along 5th Avenue North Frontage	*	early 1990s		NC	G	NC	Removal
Concrete parking stops		1982		NC	F	NC	Removal
Concrete "bump-outs"		1982		NC	F	NC	Removal
Missing Circulation Features							
Concrete walk (NW area of parking court)		est 1962	1982	M		C	RC
Angled parking and drive lane (potential) (NW)		est 1962	1982	M		C	RC
Parking stop (NW)		est 1962	1982	M		C	RC
Perpendicular parking (SW corner of parking court)		1954 & early 1960s*				C	RS
Archeology							
None Identified							
Notes							
**Perpendicular parking in 1954 was angled; exact date of change to perpendicular is unknown, but is documented in a photo in 1963*							
***It is assumed that vegeation was installed in planting bed in courtyard in 1954 with the likelihood of replacements in future years*							

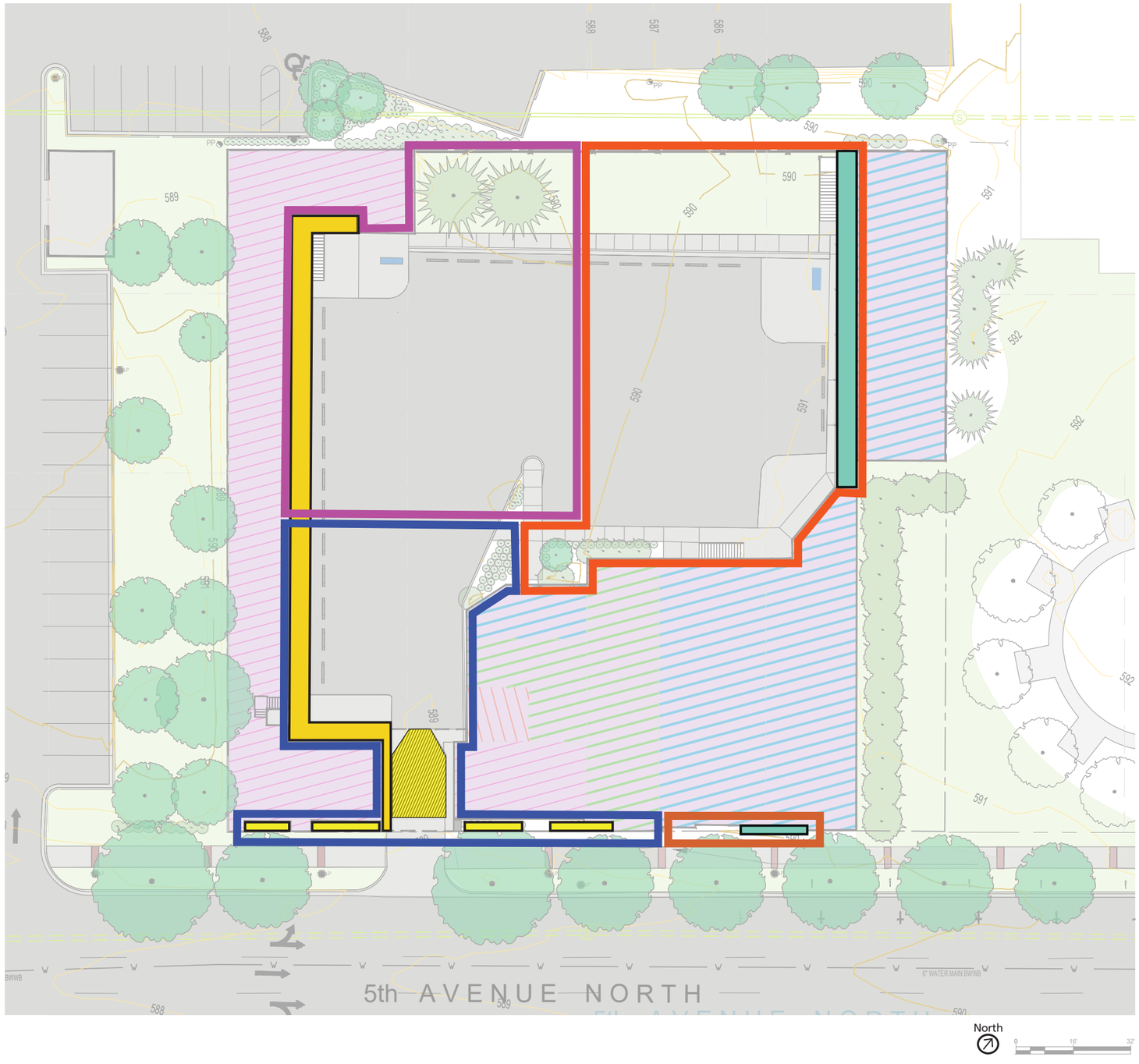
Chart 2: Landscape Resources and Treatment Recommendations

Common Name	Botanical Name	Source Westmacott	Source Williston
Revised April 17, 2019			
Perennials			
Canna	Canna spp.		
Iris	iris spp.		
Daylilly	Hereocallis spp.		
Deciduous Shrubs			
Azalea	Azalea spp.		
Abelia	Abelia grandiflora		
American Beautyberry*	Callicarpa americana		
Sweet Shrub*	Calycanthur floridus		
Rose of Sharon	Hibiscus syriacus		
Blue Hydrangea	Hydrangea macrophylla		
Oakleaf Hydrangea*	Hydrangea quercifolia		
Nandina	Nandina domestica		
Rose	Rose spp.		
Spiraea	Spiraea spp.		
Spiraea	Spriaea thunbergii		
Spiraea	Spriaea vanhouttei		
Evergreen Shrubs			
Boxwood Holly**	Ilex spp.		
Euonymus	Euonymus kiautschovicus		
Yaupon Holly* (prune as shrub)	Ilex vomitoria		
Cedar (prune as shrub)	Juniperus virginiana		
Wax Leaf Privet	Ligustrum japonicum		
Chinese Privet	Ligustrum sinense		
Privet	Ligustrum vulgare		

**Native Plants*

*** Included in Westmacott plant list, but not widely used*

Chart 3: Period Plant List



LEGEND

TREATMENT ZONES

- RECONSTRUCTION
- RESTORATION
- REHABILITATION

HISTORIC MATERIALS

- 1954, EXTANT
- 1954, POSSIBLY EXTANT
- 1968, EXTANT

BUILDING CAMPAIGNS

1954
29 GUEST ROOMS
LOBBY
COFFEE SHOP

1954 (OCTOBER)
KITCHEN ADDITION

1954 (DECEMBER)
KITCHEN EXPANSION
RESTAURANT

1968
KITCHEN EXPANSION
26 GUEST ROOMS
BANQUET HALL / MEETING SPACE

wla STUDIO
WLA STUDIO
675 PULASKI STREET
ATHENS, GEORGIA
30601

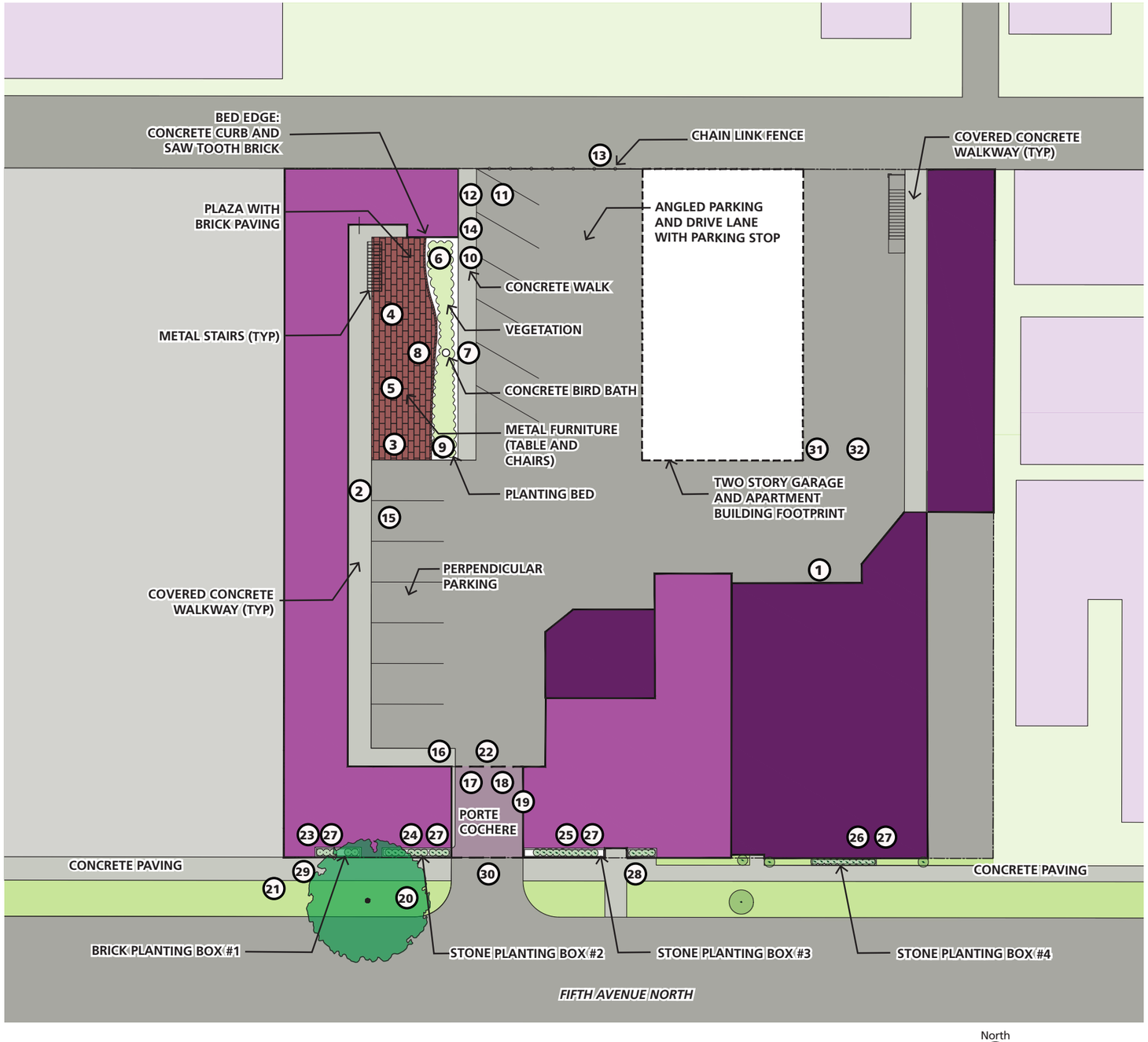
A.G. GASTON MOTEL
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

DATE
04.17.2019

RECORDED BY:
DJ, SD, MF

SCALE:
see graphic scale

5-1
TREATMENT ZONES



LEGEND

- DECIDUOUS TREE
- SHRUB
- BRICK
- PRE-1954 BUILDINGS
- 1954 BUILDINGS
- 1968 BUILDINGS
- ASPHALT
- CONCRETE
- TURF / VEGETATION

TREATMENT ZONES

1. Repair/Replace in-kind as necessary existing Metal Stairs from 1954 and 1968 buildings
2. Repair/Replace in-kind as necessary existing Covered Concrete and Elevated Walkways from 1954 and 1968 building campaigns

Reconstruction Zone
3. Reconstruct courtyard to original dimensions
4. Reconstruct plaza with brick paving to match original in brick pattern and color, elevation and construction techniques
5. Replace missing metal furniture with one table and eight chairs; obtain commercially if exact replica is available or commission fabrication of identical design
6. Reconstruct planting bed to replicate the curvilinear form on the west
7. Replace missing concrete bird bath; obtain commercially if exact replica is available or commission custom design to replicate feature
8. Reconstruct planting bed edge on west with concrete curb and sawtooth bricks
9. Add plantings to the planting bed to reflect the appearance of the garden in 1963; consult the Period Planting List chart in CLR
10. Reconstruct 4' wide concrete sidewalk
11. Reconstruct in asphalt eight angled parking spaces and drive lane
12. Reconstruct parking stop between concrete walk and angled parking spaces
13. Reconstruct chain link fence and cover with fabric, replicating pattern in 1963 images
14. Address drainage issue, consider ecological approaches in planting bed

Restoration Zone
15. Add six perpendicular parking spaces; replace or repair asphalt as necessary
16. Remove 8' of existing concrete and retain original 5' existing concrete north of lobby
17. Repair or replace 1' wide section of original concrete curb on west side of porte cochere
18. If concrete pad at catch basin and under porte cochere is original, repair or replace
19. Remove existing concrete; replace with 1' wide, concrete curb on east of porte cochere
20. Repair existing catch basin and PVC pipe daylighting at street
21. Repair, as necessary, existing drainage system (two steel pipes daylighting at curb)
22. Replace "Do Not Enter" sign to replicate original from historic images
23. Planter box #1 - Repoint and replace damaged or missing bricks; replace vent in-kind
24. Planter box #2 – Restore to original appearance in 1954
25. Planter box #3 - Remove stone added in 1982: restore to original appearance in 1954
26. Planter box #4 – Repair or replace any damaged stone
27. Add plantings to all planter boxes based on the Period Plant List chart
28. Add concrete pad to existing sidewalk to link original restaurant door to street
29. Replace Z-shaped sign on 1954 building
30. Add gate for security at porte cochere opening; gate to be of complementary design

Rehabilitation Zone
31. Interpret footprint of two-story garage and apartment building using selected option
32. Add other amenities for visitor interpretation and comfort, as appropriate.

WLA STUDIO
675 PULASKI STREET
ATHENS, GEORGIA
30601

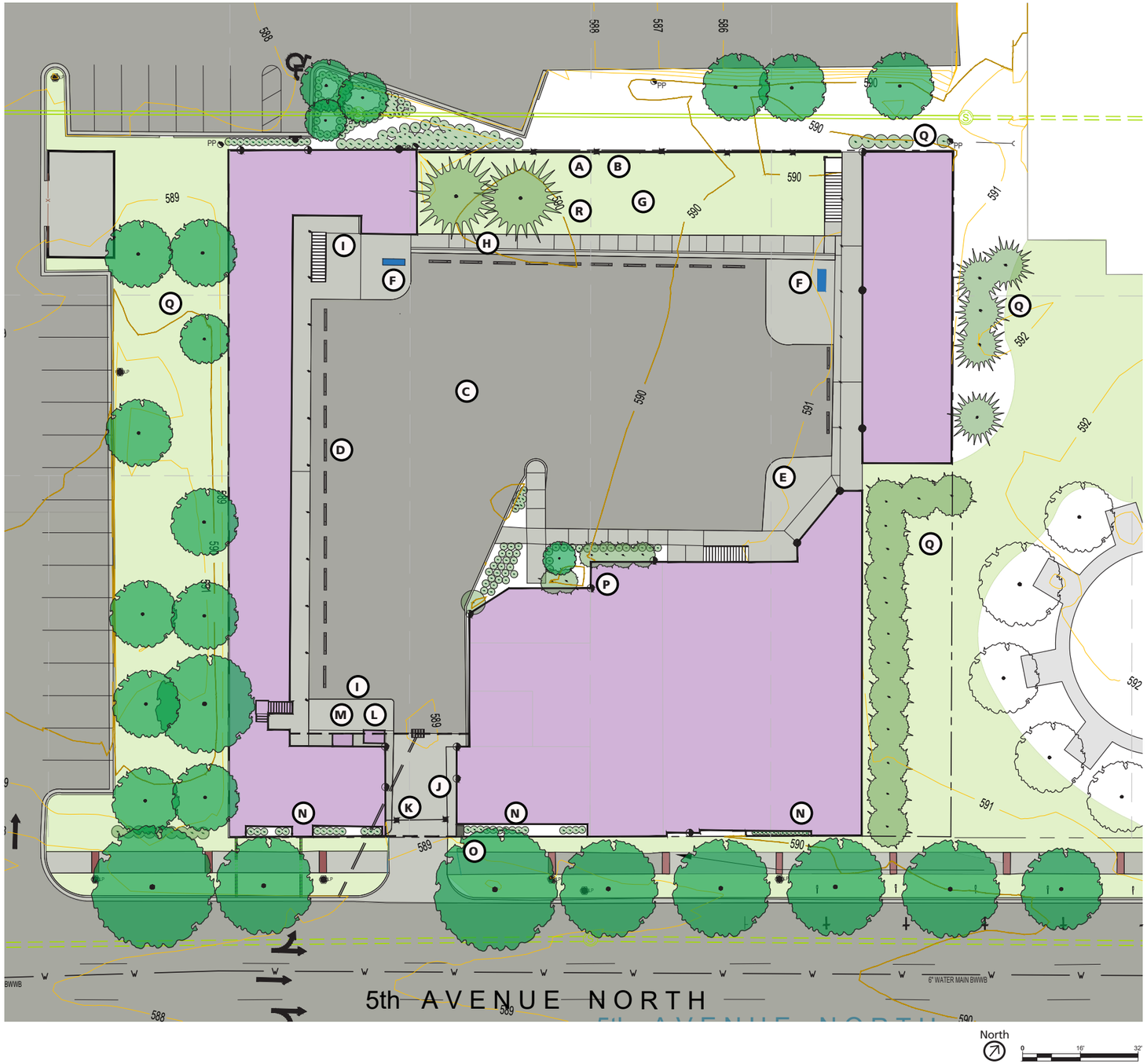
A.G. GASTON MOTEL
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

DATE
04.17.2018

RECORDED BY:
DJ, SD, MF

SCALE:
see graphic scale

5-2
TREATMENT



LEGEND

- DECIDUOUS TREE
- EVERGREEN TREE
- EVERGREEN TREE FORM SHRUB
- SHRUB
- BUILDINGS
- ASPHALT
- CONCRETE
- TURF / VEGETATION

ELEMENTS TO REMOVE

A. Concrete masonry (CMU) wall
B. Chain link fence
C. Concrete and asphalt paving (remove or replace/resurface asphalt paving)
D. Concrete parking stops (typ)
E. Concrete "bump outs" (typ)
F. Bench on bump out (typ)
G. Greenspace at north
H. Two Arborvitaes
I. Non-historic concrete (8' wide) north of lobby space
J. Non-historic concrete on east side of porte cochere
K. Steel gate at porte cochere
L. Guard booth
M. Cluster mailbox structures
N. Vegetation in planters
O. Ground Mounted Sign (retain sign, place in storage for possible future use within NPS Park, described more fully in the rehabilitation section of this chapter)
P. Existing vegetation
Q. Existing vegetation on the periphery of the site
R. Modifications in this area will be required if an access to the alley is created with the addition of a gate in the reconstructed chain link fence with fabric (immediately east of 1954 motel wing north ell). Redesign will be required to provide adequate turning radius for vehicles. Modifications may include the removal of existing vegetation and redesign of the hardscape with the possible removal of some or all of existing parking spaces.

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5-3
TREATMENT
REMOVALS

APPENDIX

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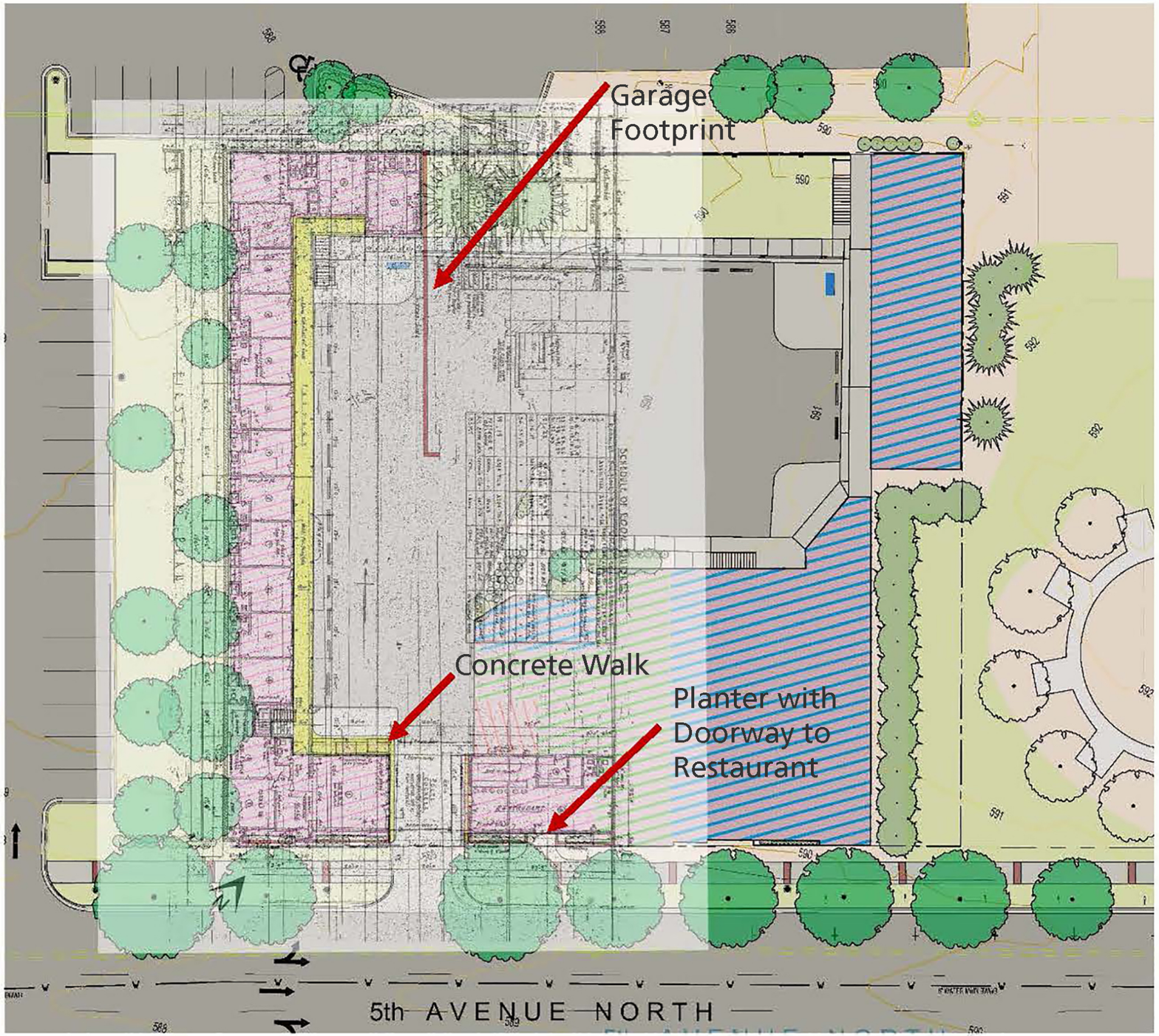
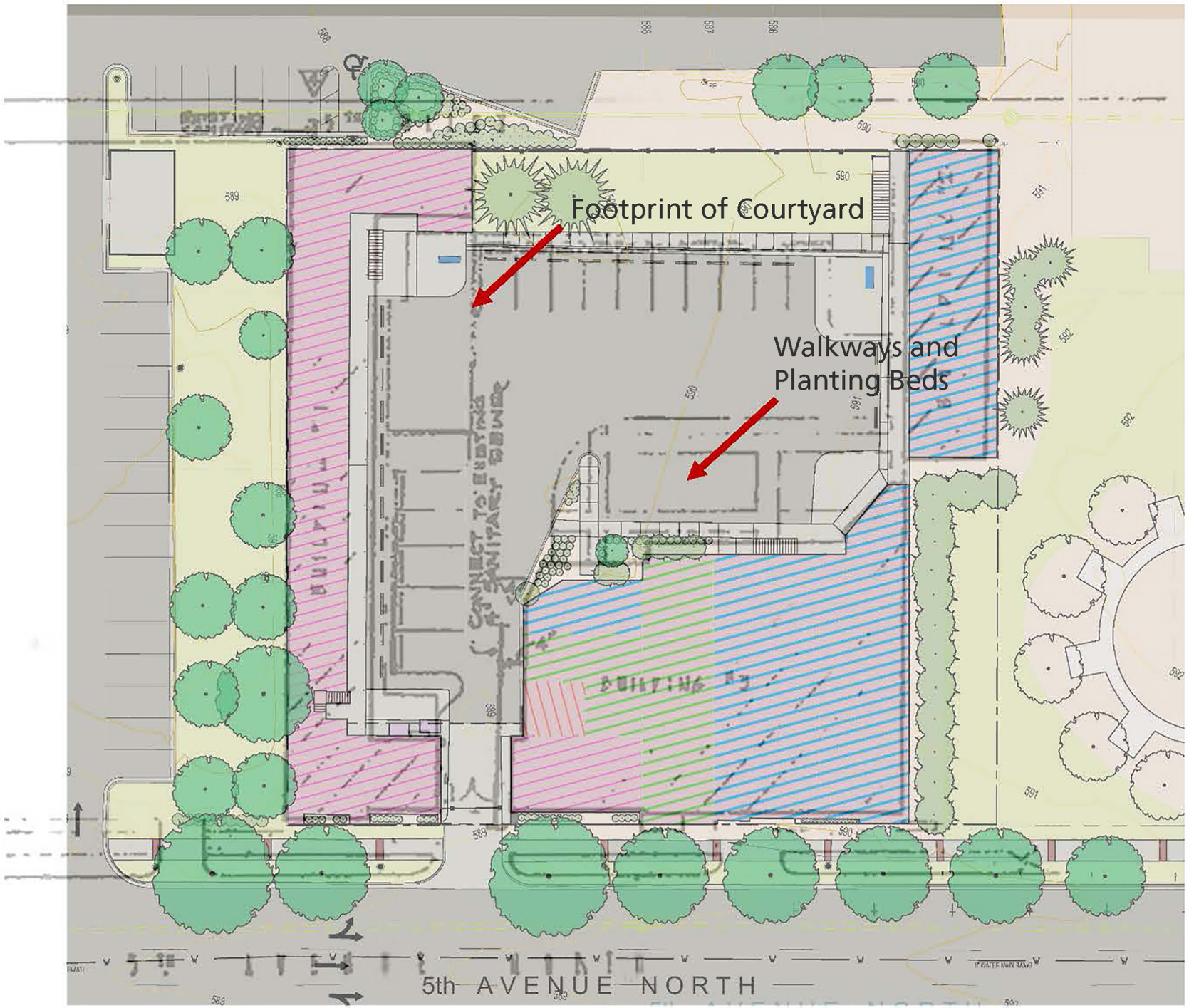
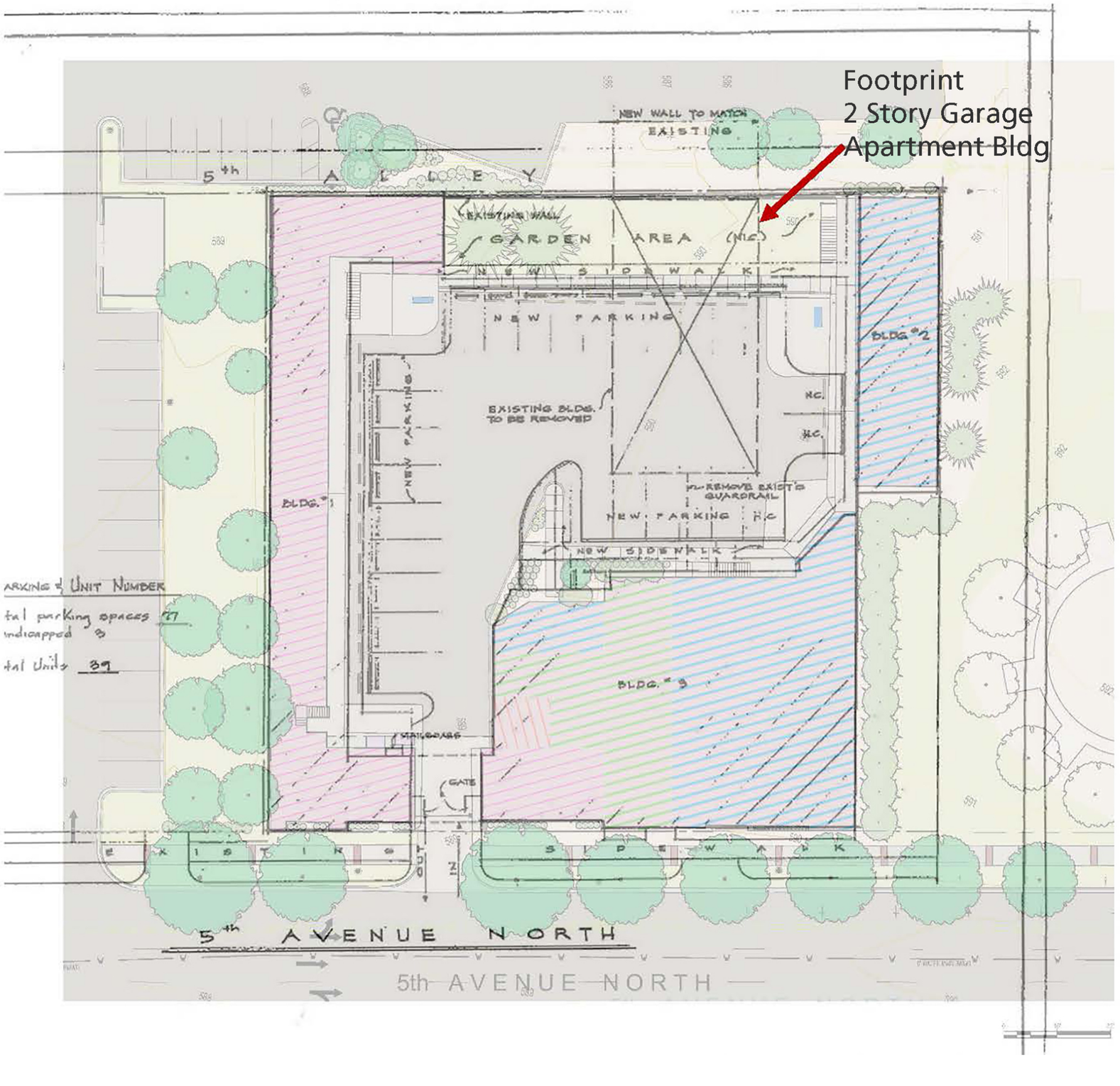
1954 Site Plan Overlay



1968 Site Plan Overlay



1982 Site Plan Overlay



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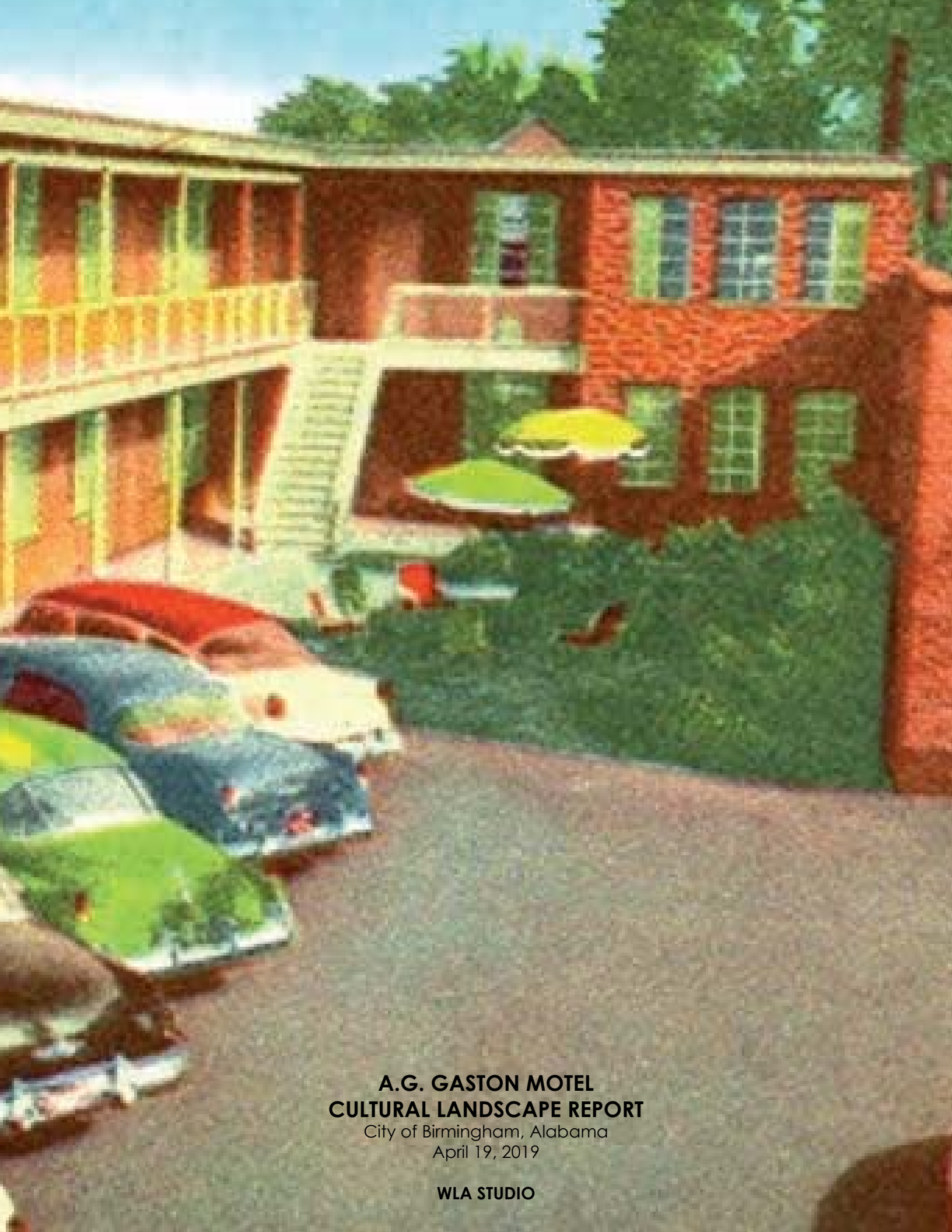

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