



685 Grandview Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 367-7840

Source: *Google Earth*

Project No: 2422405916

Date: October 2024

Drawn By: KT

Reviewed By: DS

Site Plan

Legacy Decatur
Creative Village Project
500 South Columbia Drive, Decatur, GA 30030





1. View of the Trustees Building.



2. View of the Edwards building.

DECATUR LEGACY PARK
CREATIVE VILLAGE PROJECT
AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND STUDIO COMPLEX FOR ARTISTS

INTRODUCTION:

Decatur Legacy Park is located at 500 South Columbia Drive in Decatur, GA. This 77-acre site was formerly the United Methodist Children's Home and includes 28 historic buildings and a 22-acre conservation area along with a lake, nature trails, woodlands and meadows.

The City of Decatur acquired the property in 2017 to protect it from development. The City engaged in a robust, year-long community engagement process that produced a master plan to guide the repurposing of the buildings and the use of the site. As a result of multiple small group discussion groups, on-line surveys, property tours and civic dinners, the community established four guiding principles for the final master plan:

1. Establish this place as a community space for all
2. Preserve and Enhance the Park
3. Create a sustainable, well-connected master plan that builds community
4. Incorporate a wide range of uses

The adopted master plan honors these principles and includes projects that preserve and protect the greenspace, provides for a variety of affordable housing options, expands opportunities for recreational uses, provides affordable studio space for artists and creates a place that is welcoming and engaging for diverse populations to strengthen and celebrate community. The entire master plan can be viewed

<https://www.decaturga.com/planning/page/decatour-legacy-park-master-plan>

SUMMARY:

The creation of a wide range of affordable housing options and supporting the creative arts are a critical need and are strongly supported by the community in the master plan. While several new affordable housing developments are planned for the property, the focus of this grant proposal is for the Creative Village Project. The Creative Village includes the adaptive reuse of four, originally built to provide housing on the property, to create affordable housing and studio space for Decatur and Dekalb County artists. Because Smith, Edwards, and Trustees Cottages were transformed into small apartments a decade ago, they offer an opportunity to provide immediate affordable housing with minimal renovations. With the \$209,000 allocated funding, we will complete the necessary renovations for Edwards and Trustees, which will activate eight apartments units. If additional funding remains, we will begin the renovation process for Smith Cottage.

As the Master Plan enters its implementation phase, it is important to balance projects to meet the diversity of interests requested by the community. Legacy Decatur has made progress in recent months on environmental and recreational program goals. It is now time to focus on affordable housing and the arts. Delivering 17 affordable apartments and 10 affordable art studios in the next 12 months would provide tangible proof of our commitment to affordable housing at this property and allow us to provide some units more quickly than planned. Two new, affordable housing developments identified as the North Village and South Village will add between 125 and 150 affordable units at the park but will take several years to bring to market. Adding the proposed 17 affordable units outlined in this grant application by renovating 4 existing buildings allows us to address this goal more quickly and increase the total number of units proposed for the site by over 10%.

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

The Creative Village Project includes the adaptive reuse of four, former group homes to provide both affordable housing and studio space for Decatur and DeKalb County artists. Decatur has a number of organizations that support the arts but none that provide residences and studios. The four buildings range in size from 3,565 sf to 5,000 sf providing 17,823 sf of combined space for use as apartments and studios for qualified artists. The current layout of the buildings would provide 17 residential units ranging in size from efficiencies to four bedroom apartments. We will target professional artists with incomes in the 30% to 80% AMI range in the Atlanta MSA. The application process and the selection of artists would be handled through a partnership with the Decatur Arts Alliance and will be modeled after a similar program in the City of Atlanta.

Although three of the Creative Village buildings were previously renovated into apartment-style accommodations ideal for artist residences, the Hyatt building maintains the historic group home model with rooms along a hallway with a shared bathroom. Because the supportive housing community has transitioned away from communal living models, we plan to use Hyatt for artist studios as well as the new home of the Legacy Park non-profit tenant Paint Love, which provides trauma-informed art classes, camps, and community events for low income families.

Artists working through the Decatur Arts Alliance would agree to participate in open studio tours, offer art classes and/or agree to contribute volunteer time to projects and programs at Legacy Park that benefit the larger community. Artists would also have the opportunity to develop and activate the open area between the buildings into a public arts space.

The grant request would fund repairs and upgrades to the Creative Village buildings, pay for the installation of new kitchen appliances in each unit and shared laundry facility, and make them comfortable and inviting for working artists. The grant funding will prioritize the completion of the Edwards and Trustees buildings. If there are unused grant funds upon the completion of Edwards and Trustees Cottages, the remaining funding will go towards renovating Smith Cottage.

IDEAL FOR HOUSING: HISTORIC USE OF THE COTTAGES

Legacy Park is nestled in the middle of a residential neighborhood but in close proximity to Downtown Decatur and Decatur High School. Currently zoned as institutional, the surrounding parcels are zoned for various types of residential housing ranging from single family residential to medium lot and small lot residential. The Columbia Theological Seminary is the only nonresidential use adjacent to the site. In addition to the neighborhood feel, the Creative Village site also addresses the issue of transportation inequity, allowing residents to access the three MARTA bus stops along South Columbia Drive, the Avondale MARTA station approximately half a mile away, and the highly walkable and bikeable City of Decatur.

The 28 historic buildings located on the property are a legacy that tell a story of how the United Methodist Church cared and provided for some of Georgia's most vulnerable children. For over 140 years, the caretakers at this property provided a home and services for thousands of children in Georgia. We are committed to repurposing these historic buildings in ways that continue to benefit the community. The adaptive reuse of the four historic cottages comprising the Creative Village offer an example of our commitment to bringing these buildings back to life with new but compatible uses that respect the existing historic character of the structures.

Edwards (3565 sqft) was built in 1948 as a respite for off-duty house parents. In 2012, the UMCH renovated the interior of the building to accommodate the independent living and transitional living programs for youth aging out of foster care. This building includes four two-bedroom/one-bathroom apartments, an efficiency apartment, and a former group bathroom that will hold the shared laundry facility, utility sinks, and other items necessary for artists. The exterior of the building will not change except for minor repairs, repainting, and a new roof. The interior improvements will not alter the existing floor plan but will include a new HVAC system, electrical upgrades and cosmetic upgrades to include new paint, bathroom fixtures and kitchen appliances.

Trustees (5000 sqft) was built in 1968 and was modeled in the traditional UMCH group home model of two front suites, a long hallway with individual rooms, a house parent apartment, and a communal kitchen. In 2012, UMCH renovated the building into three apartments with varying configurations to serve as transitional family housing until 2017. No exterior changes will be made to this building other than minor repairs and repainting the trim. Interior improvements will include upgrading bathroom fixtures and installing new kitchen appliances and washer/dryer units.

Hyatt (4922 sqft) maintains its original UMCH group home model with individual rooms off a long hallway from its 1968 construction. Given that supportive housing advocates now recommend against this communal housing model, Hyatt will serve as artist studios as well as the new home for Legacy Park tenant Paint Love, which has already activated the space with trauma-informed art classes, camps, and community events for low income families. Cosmetic improvements to the exterior will include a fresh coat of paint on the trim. A new HVAC system and bathroom fixtures were installed earlier this year. Hyatt also includes space that can be used for small art shows, event space, and classroom space that artists can reserve for art classes.

The last of the four buildings is Smith (4336 sqft). Built in 1942 and renovated in 2008, Smith housed off-duty house parents until it was converted into efficiency apartments to provide independent living and transitional living programs for youth aging out of foster care. This building needs significant plumbing and HVAC repairs before it can be used for residential units. The rental revenue generated from the other three buildings will help fund these improvements

COMMITMENT TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The United Methodist Children's Home was established to house orphaned children after the Civil War. Until the 1950s, most orphanages were institutional facilities that housed children in dormitory-type buildings. After the 1950s, the cottage model became more common, with children living in small homes under the care of house parents. The buildings at the site reflect this transitional period. Eventually, this model evolved into the foster care system, used throughout the country today.

The population of children at the home peaked in the 1960s with a high of 151 children. In 1970, the Board of Trustees created a Long Range Plan that changed operational policies at the home, including the cessation of all farming activities and decentralized dining activities for the residents. Most of the older residences were remodeled after 1970 to accommodate food preparation and serving areas. In 2017, the Methodist Church sold the property to generate a reserve of funds to support foster care programming.

Rather than accept a larger offer from a developer, the Methodist Church opted to sell the 77 acres to the Public Facilities Authority of City of Decatur with the promise of environmental and historic preservation. The City, in partnership with Legacy Decatur as the managing entity for the Park, has continued to make good on that promise.

To enshrine its commitment to environmental stewardship, the northeastern 22 acres of woodlands and riparian areas are under a conservation easement that forever protects it from development. The City also signed a five-year contract with Trees Atlanta to remove the invasive species like privet, english ivy, kudzu, and wisteria that choke out native trees and shrubs and reintroduce native flora. A two-loop 5k cross country course and a series of winding foot paths connecting to the East Decatur Greenway promote recreation and access to nature.

In the Master Plan for Legacy Park, the City committed to prioritize the historic preservation of the property. Several of the buildings originally constructed at the site no longer exist. For example barns, wood-sided structures, and a water tower were removed from the property over time. The remaining 22 buildings that pre-date 1970 are contributing features and continue to reflect the period of significance. The buildings feature a variety of construction materials. Granite buildings include the rustic Dairy Barn, the Atlanta building, Nickerson Cottage, and the Late Victorian Moore Chapel building, which has Gothic revival stylistic elements. Later additions to the site include Classical Revival brick residential buildings.

Although Moore Chapel is no longer owned by the Methodist Church, its beautiful 1906 stonework, wood-beam ceilings, and detailed stained-glass windows host intimate wedding

celebrations and memorial services. As the only remaining building related to the site's agricultural history, the Dairy Barn had fallen into disrepair but is undergoing a renovation to preserve its historic character while rejuvenating the space to serve as an environmental education classroom and event space.

The core of the park included housing for children and operational support like the Education building, Infirmary, and the Laundry building. Buildings at the north and south ends of the park served as staff housing. Built in the 1990s, Wood, Goodwin, Cochran, and Ruff Cottages were the property's most recent construction and served as emergency housing for families. These four cottages represent how the operations of the United Methodist Children's Home were shifting. To continue the legacy of affordable housing, the City will replace these four cottages with approximately 130 apartments in partnership with the Decatur Housing Authority.

In addition to environmental and building preservation, the City of Decatur and Legacy Decatur has also committed to protect the built and natural features of its cultural landscape. The large pecan and oak trees along the arched front driveway demarcate the vehicular entrance to the site. The grave site of the founder of the United Methodist Children's Home sits in front of the administration building. The historical pattern of the aggregation of buildings and lawn spaces remains from the period of significance. Sidewalks, buildings, and structures that served the children who lived at the home remain in their original locations. All of these features are contributing to the period of significance and together mean that the site retains historical integrity.

Surviving historic vegetation at the site includes specimen pecan trees that dot the front lawn area and willow oaks that reinforce the circulation patterns (sidewalks and driveways) throughout the site. A few remnant orchard plantings including pecan and fruit trees remain in the northwest portion of the site. In 2019, the Decatur Youth Council planted 19 pear trees and 14 apple trees to represent the number of children who first lived at the property nearly 150 years ago and to nod to their agricultural subsistence.

CONCLUSION

The successful completion of the Creative Village project would deliver both affordable housing and affordable studio space relatively quickly and economically by repurposing four existing buildings that were built for residential use. The Community Project Funding Grant will be used to renovate the buildings slated for affordable housing, starting with Edwards and Trustees. A portion of the revenue generated from the housing and studio space will be reinvested into the rehabilitation for Smith Cottage, which will add the final nine apartments to the Creative Village. Thank you for choosing the City of Decatur and Legacy Decatur's Creative Village Project for the Community Project Funding Grant. The prioritization of this housing and studio space will be an incredible asset, not only for the artists selected to occupy the space, but also for the entire Decatur and Dekalb county community who will benefit from the increased art programming and public art.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

March 8, 2024

Madeleine Henner
Executive Director
Decatur Legacy Project
500 South Columbia Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

**RE: Rehabilitate Edwards, Trustees, Hyatt, Smith Cottages, Legacy Park
500 South Columbia Drive, Decatur
DeKalb County, Georgia
HP-240208-005**

Dear Ms. Henner:

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) has received the information submitted concerning the above referenced undertaking. Our comments are offered to assist the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and its applicants in complying with provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA).

The subject project consists of rehabilitating the Edwards, Trustees, Hyatt, and Smith Cottages located within the Legacy Park complex, formerly the United Methodist Church Children's Home/Decatur Children's Home/Decatur Orphan's Home campus, on DeKalb County parcel 15 233 07 001 at 500 South Columbia Drive in Decatur. It is HPD's understanding that the rehabilitation scope of work (SOW) for the Edwards and Trustees Cottages includes replacing the roof of each in-kind; repainting exterior trim; HVAC, electrical, and plumbing system upgrades; and various interior renovations. It is also HPD's understanding that the SOW for the Hyatt and Smith Cottages is currently unknown. Based on the information provided and desktop research, HPD finds the Edwards, Trustees, Hyatt, and Smith Cottages contribute to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-eligible Legacy Park/United Methodist Children's Home/Decatur Children's Home/Decatur Orphan's Home historic district. As currently proposed, the rehabilitation activities for the Hyatt and Smith Cottages cannot be evaluated for effects to historic resources. However, it is HPD's opinion that the project will have **no adverse effect** to historic property within its APE, as defined in 36 CFR Part 800.5(b), **provided the following condition is met:**

1. Submit project plans to HPD for review, when available. Plans should include a SOW for the rehabilitation of the Hyatt and Smith Cottages along with elevation drawings and site and landscape plans, as applicable.

Please note that satisfying the condition(s) above does not preclude the project from constituting an adverse effect, as defined in 36 CFR Part 800.5(a)(2) once project plans are provided. Should an adverse effect be determined, and absent federal agency involvement, HPD will work with the applicant to complete the required steps to move the project forward. HPD looks forward to receiving documentation that indicates compliance with the condition(s) as soon as it is available.

Please refer to project number **HP-240208-005** in any future correspondence regarding this project. If we may be of further assistance, please contact Edward Harthorn, Environmental Review Historian, at Edward.Harthorn@dca.ga.gov or (404) 679-4839.

Ms. Henner
HP-240208-005
March 8, 2024
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stacy Rieke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stacy" and last name "Rieke" clearly distinguishable.

Stacy Rieke, MHP
Program Manager
Environmental Review & Preservation Planning

SMR/ejh

cc: Renea Hall, HUD
Keri Stevens, Atlanta Regional Commission
Tracie Sanchez, DCA Regional Services, Region 3

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

May 17, 2024

Madeleine Henner
Executive Director
Decatur Legacy Project
500 South Columbia Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

**RE: Rehabilitate Edwards, Trustees, Hyatt, Smith Cottages, Legacy Park
500 South Columbia Drive, Decatur
DeKalb County, Georgia
HP-240208-005**

Dear Ms. Henner:

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) has received the additional information submitted concerning the above referenced undertaking. Our comments are offered to assist the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and its applicants in complying with provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA).

The subject project consists of rehabilitating the Edwards, Trustees, Hyatt, and Smith Cottages located within the Legacy Park complex, formerly the United Methodist Church Children's Home/Decatur Children's Home/Decatur Orphan's Home campus, on DeKalb County parcel 15 233 07 001 at 500 South Columbia Drive in Decatur. It was previously determined that the project would have no adverse effect to the Edwards, Trustees, Hyatt, and Smith Cottages which contribute to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-eligible Legacy Park/United Methodist Children's Home/Decatur Children's Home/Decatur Orphan's Home historic district, with one condition, as noted in our letter dated March 8, 2024.

The current submitted information includes the scope of work (SOW) for the Hyatt and Smith Cottages along with elevation drawings and site plans in accordance with Condition 1. It is HPD's understanding that the rehabilitation SOW for the Hyatt Cottage includes selectively replacing a two (2)-foot (ft.) by four (4)-ft. section of interior flooring in-kind based on its condition due to water damage and that the SOW for the Smith Cottage includes selectively repairing windowpanes in-kind based on condition and upgrading the HVAC, electrical, fire suppression, and plumbing systems. Based on the additional information provided and desktop research, it is HPD's opinion that the subject project, as proposed, will have **no adverse effect** to historic properties within its area of potential effect (APE), as defined in 36 CFR Part 800.5(d)(1) and will meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, **provided the following conditions are met:**

1. Adequate protective measures should be utilized to ensure historic resources and features adjacent to the project area are not damaged by project activities.
2. Installation of new or rehabilitation of existing electrical, plumbing, fire suppression, and HVAC systems must be undertaken in such a manner that the impact on the historic framework and materials of the building is minimized. Appropriate methods for upgrading building systems should be undertaken in accordance with the guidance provided in Preservation Brief #24, *Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings: Problems and Recommended Approaches*.

Ms. Henner
HP-240208-005
May 17, 2024
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National Park Service (NPS) Preservation Briefs can be found here:
<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/preservation-briefs.htm>

This letter evidences consultation with our office for compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA. It is important to remember that any changes to this project as it is currently proposed may require additional consultation. HPD encourages federal agencies and project applicants to discuss such changes with our office to ensure that potential effects to historic properties are adequately considered in project planning.

Please refer to project number **HP-240208-005** in any future correspondence regarding this project. If we may be of further assistance, please contact Edward Harthorn, Environmental Review Historian, at Edward.Harthorn@dca.ga.gov or (404) 679-4839.

Sincerely,



Stacy Rieke, MHP
Program Manager
Environmental Review & Preservation Planning

SMR/ejh

cc: Renea Hall, HUD
Keri Stevens, Atlanta Regional Commission
Tracie Sanchez, DCA Regional Services, Region 3



Historical Aerial Photograph - January 6, 1940
Source: University of Georgia Mapping Library
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

Environmental Technology Resources, Inc.
4780 Ashford Dunwoody Rd. Suite A-456
Atlanta, Georgia 30338



SITE

Historical Aerial Photograph - February 23, 1960
Source: University of Georgia Mapping Library
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

Environmental Technology Resources, Inc.
4780 Ashford Dunwoody Rd. Suite A-456
Atlanta, Georgia 30338



Historical Aerial Photograph - March 9, 1966
Source: University of Georgia Mapping Library
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

Environmental Technology Resources, Inc.
4780 Ashford Dunwoody Rd. Suite A-456
Atlanta, Georgia 30338



Historical Aerial Photograph - February 20, 1972
Source: University of Georgia Mapping Library
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

Environmental Technology Resources, Inc.
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Atlanta, Georgia 30338



Historical Aerial Photograph - January 26, 1993
Source: GoogleEarth
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

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Atlanta, Georgia 30338



Historical Aerial Photograph - February 28, 1999
Source: GoogleEarth
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

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Atlanta, Georgia 30338



Historical Aerial Photograph - March 31, 2002
Source: GoogleEarth
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

Environmental Technology Resources, Inc.
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Atlanta, Georgia 30338



Historical Aerial Photograph - November 11, 2005
Source: GoogleEarth
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

Environmental Technology Resources, Inc.
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Atlanta, Georgia 30338



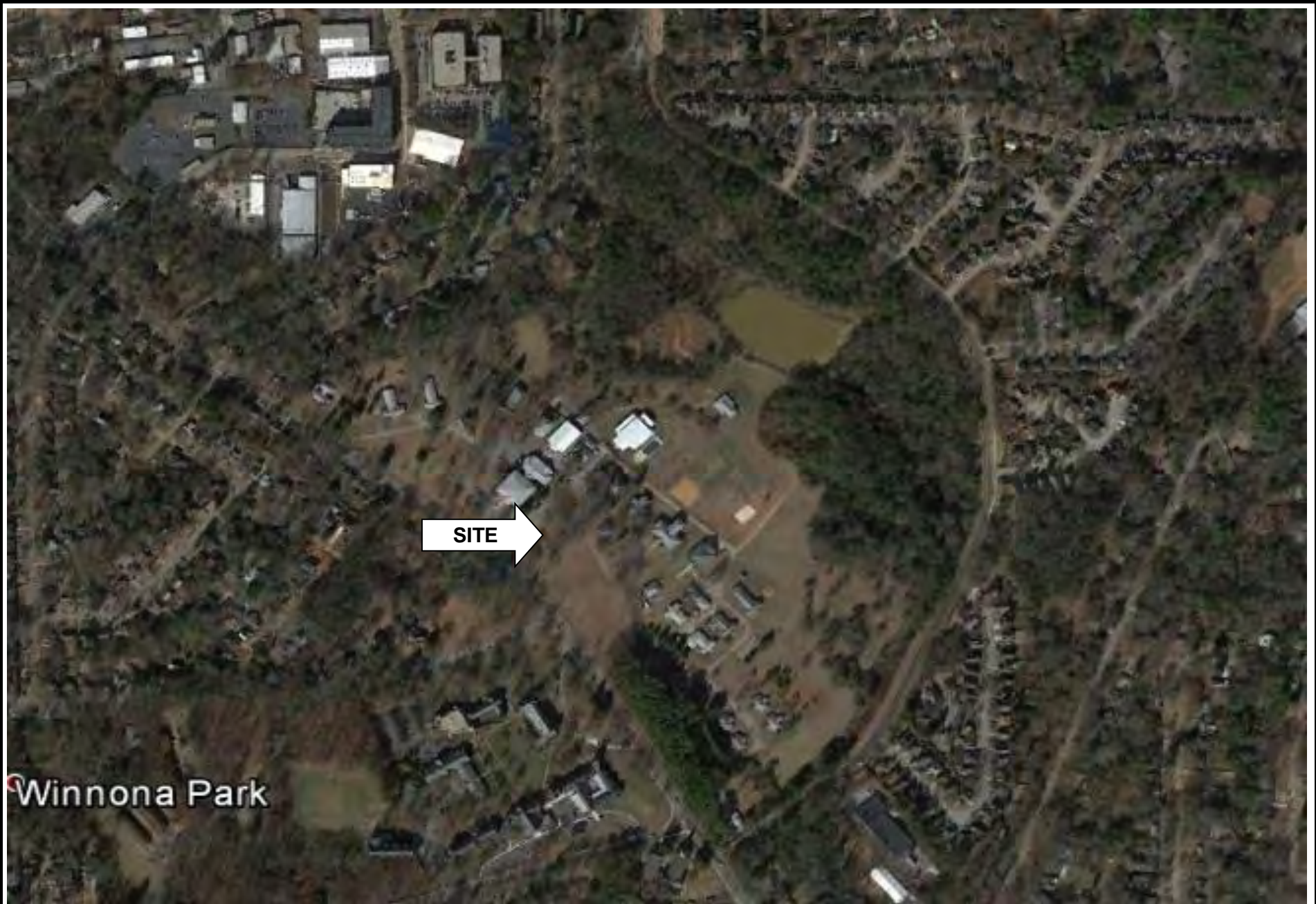
Historical Aerial Photograph - March 31, 2008
Source: GoogleEarth
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

Environmental Technology Resources, Inc.
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Atlanta, Georgia 30338



Historical Aerial Photograph - October 16, 2011
Source: GoogleEarth
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

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Atlanta, Georgia 30338



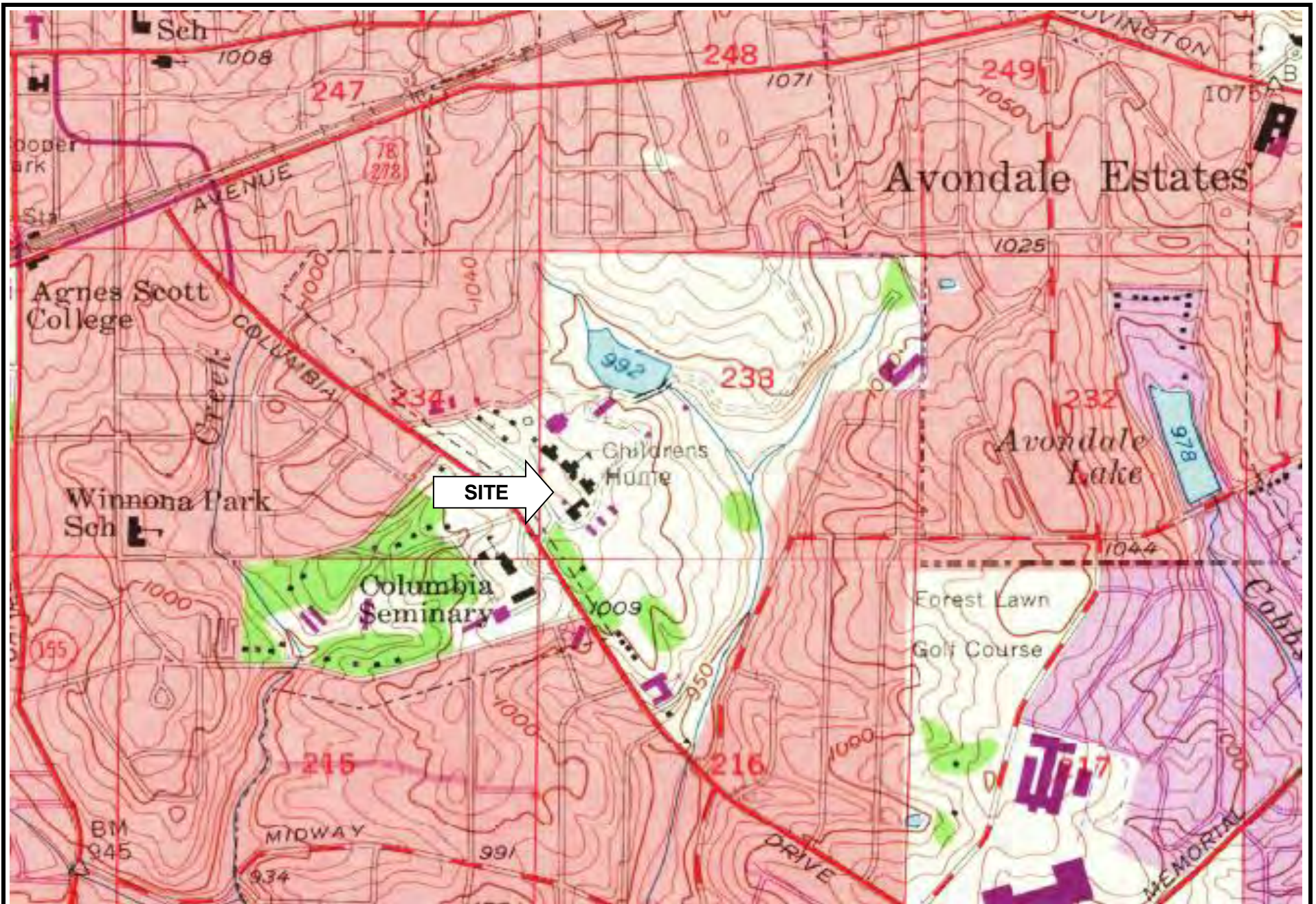
Historical Aerial Photograph - January 23, 2014
Source: GoogleEarth
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

Environmental Technology Resources, Inc.
4780 Ashford Dunwoody Rd. Suite A-456
Atlanta, Georgia 30338



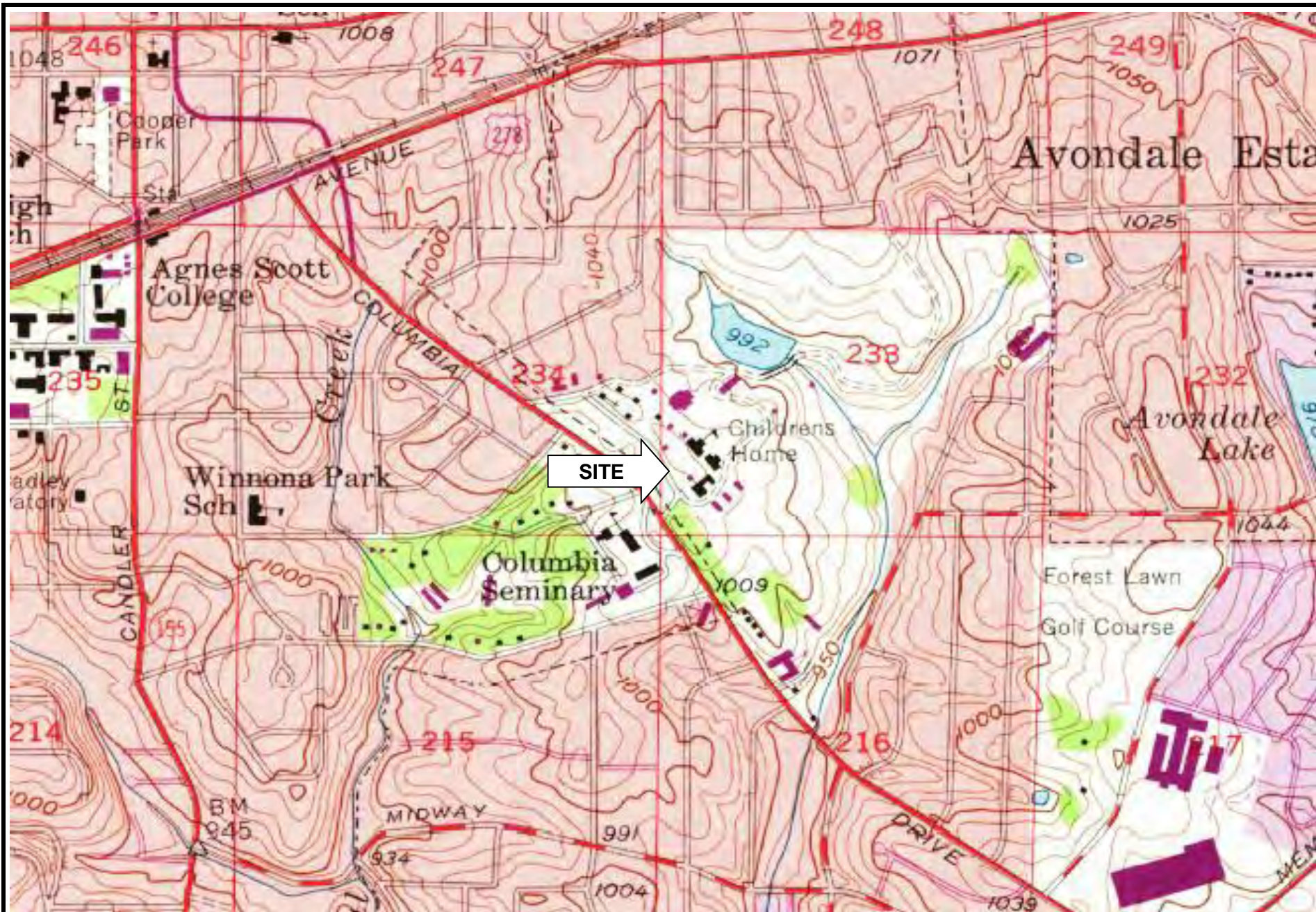
Historical Aerial Photograph - November 30, 2016
Source: GoogleEarth
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

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Atlanta, Georgia 30338



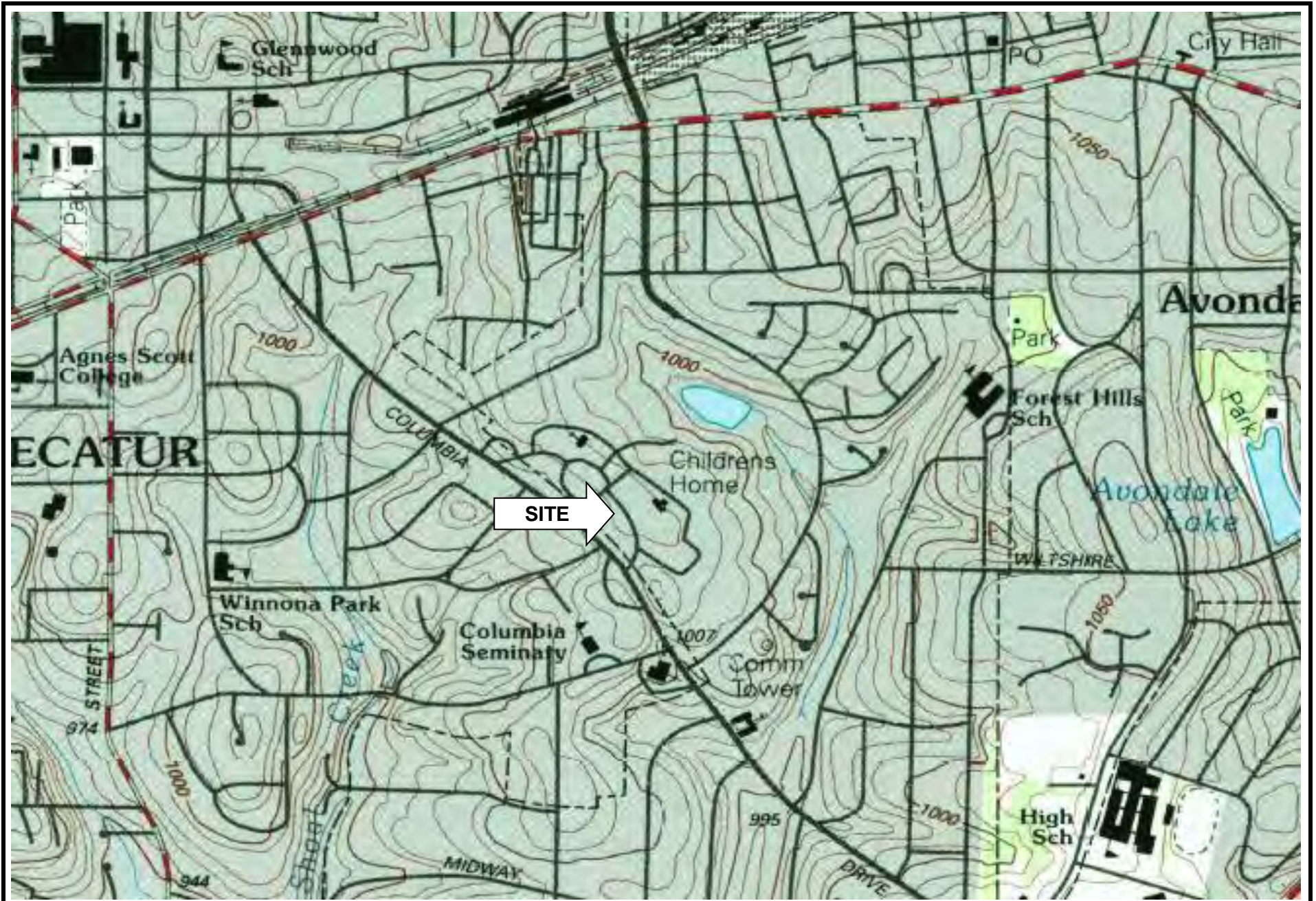
Historic Topographic Map - 1954 photorevised 1968
 Source: U.S. Geologic Survey
 Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
 Project Number: 17-077

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Historic Topographic Map - 1954 photorevised 1968 and 1973
Source: U.S. Geologic Survey
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

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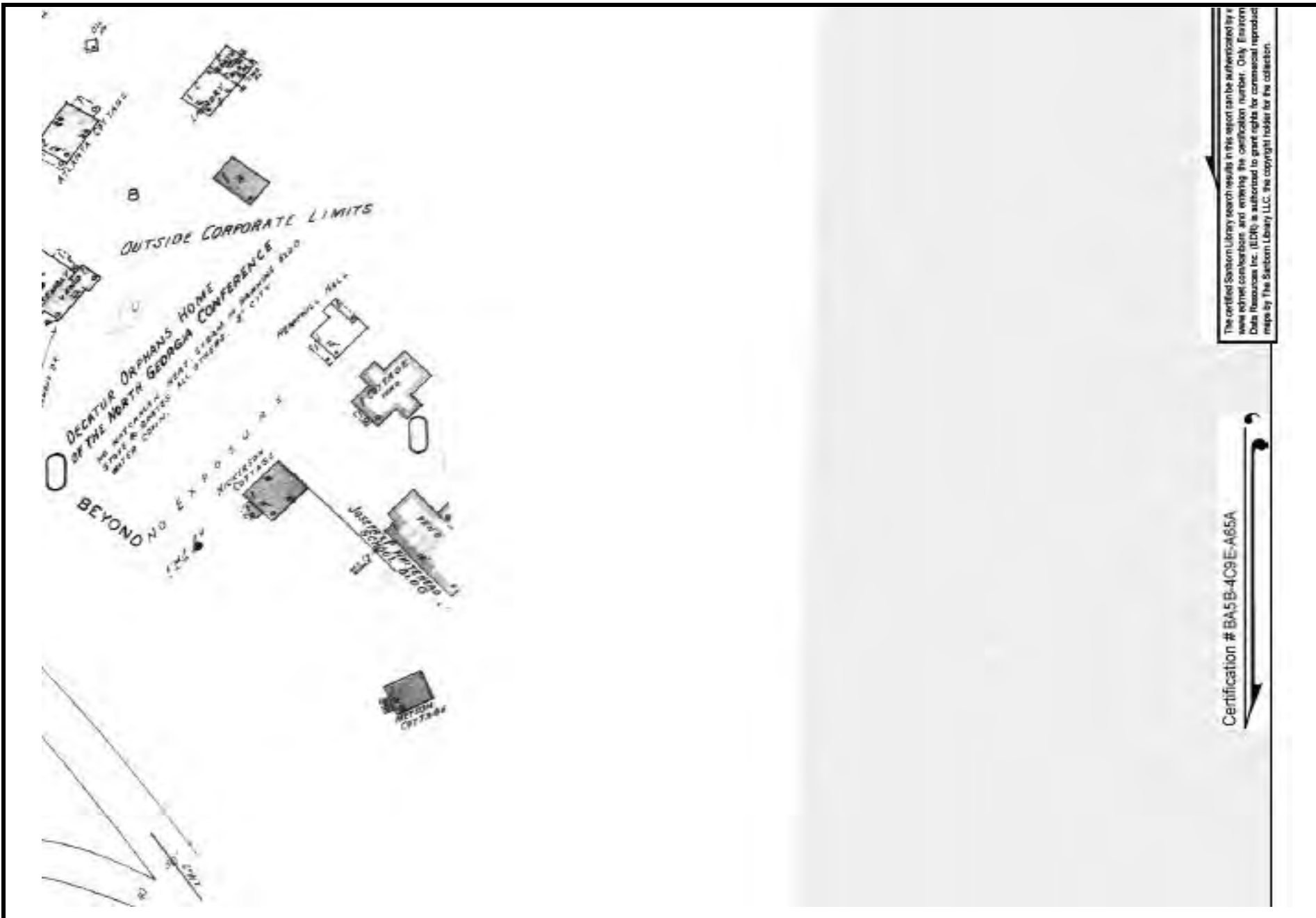
Historic Topographic Map - 1993
Source: U.S. Geologic Survey
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

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Historic Topographic Map - 1997
Source: U.S. Geologic Survey
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

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Historic Sanborn Map - 1950
Source: Environmental Data Resources
Project Name: 500 South Columbia Drive
Project Number: 17-077

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