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## 3.0 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The historic development of the Druid Hills area took place over an approximately forty-year period from the beginning of construction around 1905 into the mid-1940s. Before the suburb of Druid Hills was conceived, the area was rural countryside between the cities of Atlanta and Decatur. Several farms were located here, and a network of roads ran through the area connecting surrounding communities. These roads included those that became Briarcliff, North Decatur, Euclid, Clifton, and Durand Mill Roads. A section of the CSX Railroad corridor to the east was in place as well.

The residential suburb of Druid Hills was envisioned by Atlanta developer Joel Hurt. In the 1890s he organized the Kirkwood Land Company and purchased approximately 1,500 acres of land on which to construct the suburb. Hurt secured the services of nationally renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., to plan and design Druid Hills.

Druid Hills was designed and planned as a whole by Olmsted and his successor firm, the Olmsted Brothers, from 1893 into the early 1900s. Several conceptualizations of the suburb's design were done on area topographic maps by Olmsted as he developed his ideas for the suburb. As Druid Hills developed in the years to follow, the basic concepts of his design were adhered to, although a number of specific elements were eliminated and others were redesigned. For example, some roads were realigned, and other roads were added. Two proposed lakes were never built, but the concept of a large open space in the middle of the suburb to protect the area's natural creek system was realized with the construction of the golf course.

The area that most closely follows Olmsted's design plans is the linear parkway of Ponce de Leon Avenue. The Olmsted Brothers' 1905 General Plan specifically laid out the parallel street pattern, the succession of park spaces, the trolley line, and the siting of street trees and made recommendations for the placement of houses on lots. Very detailed landscaping and planting plans were also prepared for this linear corridor.

The General Plan was laid out by civil engineer O. F. Kauffman, who platted a large portion of the Druid Hills area as well as many of the surrounding developments. Kauffman's exposure to Olmsted's design concepts clearly influenced his work on these later developments.

Construction began on road layout in the Ponce de Leon corridor area in 1905. In 1908, Hurt's Kirkwood Land Company and its Druid Hills holdings were sold to a group of local businessmen who organized the Druid Hills Corporation to continue the planning and development of the suburb. These businessmen included the Coca-Cola Company's Asa Candler and Atlanta real estate developers George and Forrest Adair.

The Druid Hills Corporation continued with the development of Druid Hills. With developments, changes were made to the original plans in order to better suit the economic trends of the early-twentieth-century real-estate market. Some road alignments were altered, and many areas were replatted to provide smaller, more affordable lots in a denser development pattern. Olmsted's original plan for a suburb of large estates had to be adjusted to fit early-twentieth-century economic trends, but his concept of a landscaped suburb was maintained.

The Ponce de Leon corridor continued to be developed in much the way Olmsted had designed it. Fairview (in the City of Atlanta), Springdale, Oakdale, and Lullwater Roads also followed their original designs as parallel, meandering streets that ran northeast from Ponce de Leon Avenue following the area's natural topography. The northern ends of these roads, however, were realigned to intersect with North Decatur Road rather than with each other as originally planned. These roads were in place by 1910, and development began there in the early 1910s. Oxford Road was added between Springdale and Oakdale by 1920 to allow access of the streetcar line into the northern sections of the suburb and to Emory University.

The Emory/Harvard/Cornell Roads area north of North Decatur Road was platted in 1915. A more dense curvilinear street pattern with smaller lots and more modestly sized houses resulted in a development pattern denser than that south of North Decatur Road. Several large parcels were reserved in this area for community purposes such as park space, commercial, and a high school, originally planned for the Springdale-Harvard-Emory Road corner.

Also in 1915 Asa Candler donated approximately seventy-five acres of land for the development of an Atlanta campus for Emory University. Situated on the north side of the suburb, this land was part of Candler's large estate in the area. The first buildings on the new campus were constructed between 1916 and 1919.

The Lullwater Subdivision was also subdivided from Candler property and platted in 1924. This area between Oxford and North Decatur Roads was laid out and developed in much the same way as the adjacent Emory/Harvard/ Cornell Roads area.

While portions of Clifton Road existed before Druid Hills, the existing Clifton/ East Clifton Road area was platted in 1924. The 1924 plat shows the road alignments and lot layouts much as they are today. The adjacent golf course and clubhouse shown on the plat had been previously constructed in the 1910s.

Both East Lake and Ridgecrest Roads were included in the 1905 General Plan. The existing street patterns follow the original design, but both areas were replatted with smaller lots—East Lake in 1919 and Ridgecrest in 1922.

At the same time the Druid Hills suburb was being platted and developed, other similar developments were being planned on adjacent parcels of land. These developments were inspired and influenced by the planning and design concepts of the Druid Hills plan.

One of these developments was Druid Hills Heights, to the west of the Druid Hills suburb and Briarcliff Road. First platted in 1917, the plan was revised in the 1920s and development began soon after. An adjacent area originally platted separately as University Park became part of Druid Hills Heights.

To the east of Druid Hills, another University Park was first platted in 1916, and development began there in the 1920s. University Park was the first of several small-scale, U-shaped developments densely designed to fit onto small parcels of land. Next to University Park, Emory Highlands was platted in 1923 and Emory Estates in 1925 following this same densely designed, U-shaped plan.

Cameron Court off Briarcliff Road also dates from the 1920s. This one-street development was designed by H. W. Nicholes and Harry Kuniansky, who reportedly developed alternating lots. Cameron Court is believed to be the first use of the cul-de-sac street design in the Atlanta area.

The Stillwood Subdivision was platted in 1926 as a single-street development running west off Briarcliff Road. The land was taken from the Hancock property, and the subdivision name came from the Hancock house, Stillwood.

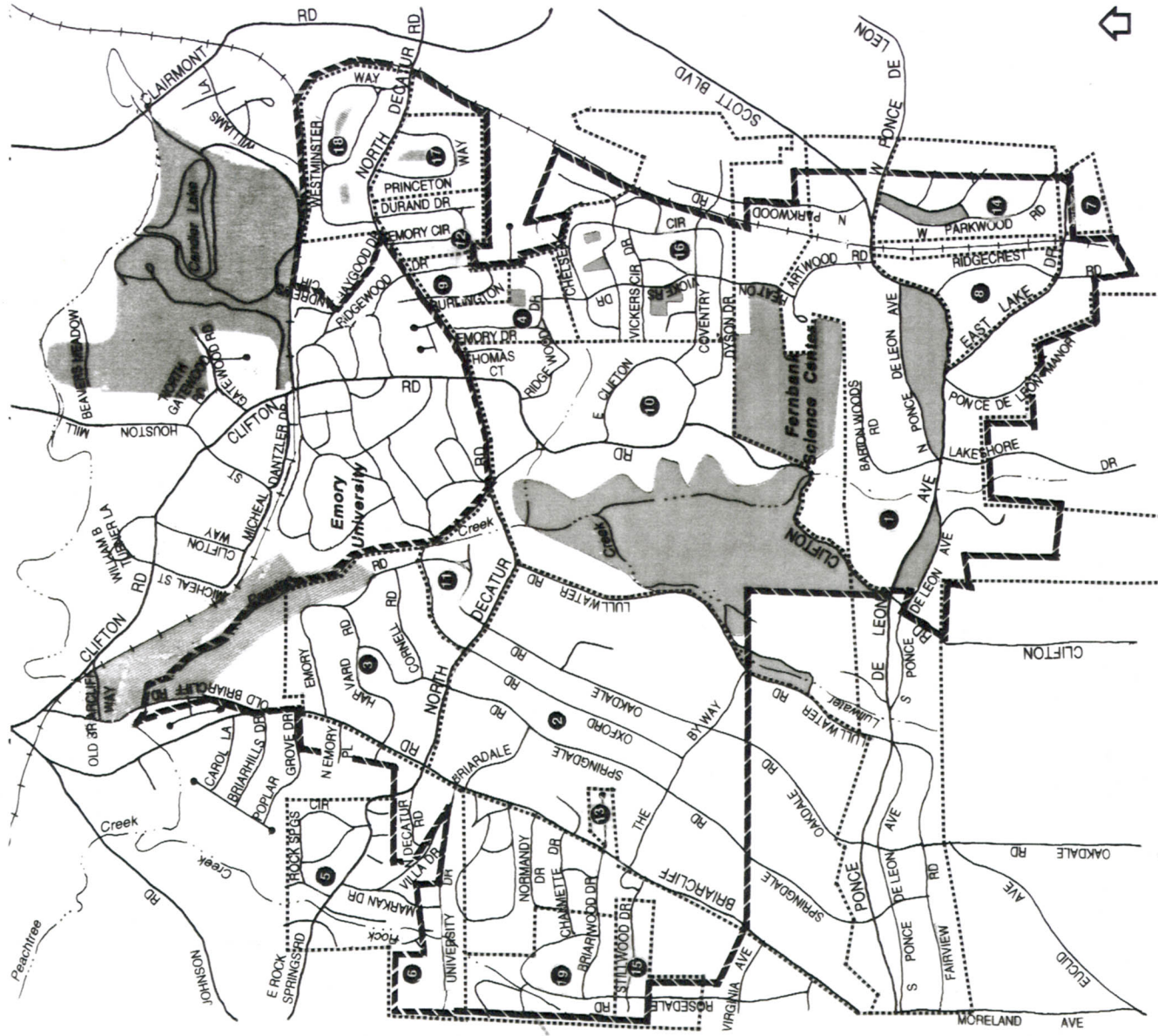
The Chelsea Land Company began platting property to the east of the Clifton Road area of Druid Hills as early as 1912-13. The company owned a fairly large parcel of land that extended east of the railroad. The streets of the Chelsea Heights

Subdivision were laid out during the late 1920s to early 1930s. Revisions were made to the neighborhood plats in 1930 and 1937. While the curvilinear street pattern was influenced by neighboring Druid Hills, the subdivision's much more compact plan was distinctly different. Development took place during the 1950s and 1960s according to the historic plan.

Located east of the railroad corridor, Parkwood was included in the original Druid Hills plan, but with a different proposed street design. The streets were redesigned and at least preliminarily laid out by 1928. The design of Parkwood emulates the Olmsted design concepts of Druid Hills extremely well. Development occurred in Parkwood during the 1950s and 1960s according to the historic plan.

The Emory Grove development was platted and laid out in two separate sections—the first in 1939 south of North Decatur Road and the second in 1941 north of North Decatur Road. These areas were developed by a single developer, Neal Smith, who built one basic house type in several variations, giving the neighborhood a uniform appearance. Houses were built here into the mid-1940s, reflecting a dense 1940s residential development pattern.

The subdivision of Briarwood Hills was platted and laid out to the west of Briarcliff Road in 1940 by the development company Briarwood, Inc. An additional area was platted in 1941. This area was part of the Hancock estate, as the adjacent Stillwood Subdivision had also been. Development in this area occurred in the 1940s and 1950s.



**Druid Hills Local Historic District**  
 DeKalb County, Georgia  
**Historic Development Plat Map**

Map Key	Subdivision Name	Firm Name	Date of Plat
1	Druid Hills 1905 General Plan	Omsted Bros./Kaufman	1905
2	Druid Hills	O. F. Kaufman, C. E.	c. 1910, 1926
3	Druid Hills	O. F. Kaufman, C. E.	1915
4	University Park (Emory Drive)	O. F. Kaufman & Bros.	1916
5	Druid Hills Heights (Rock Springs)	O. F. Kaufman & Bros., C. E. Steele, C. E. Kaufman	1917, 1922, 1924, 1923
6	University Drive	C. R. Hughes	1912
7	East Lake	O. F. Kaufman & Bros., C. E. Kaufman Bros. & Sons	1905, 1919
8	Ridgecrest	O. F. Kaufman	1905, 1922
9	Emory Highlands/Burlington	O. F. Kaufman	1923
10	Druid Hills	Druid Hills	1924
11	Lullwater Subdivision (Cornell/ Harvard/Emory)	O. F. Kaufman, C. E.	1924
12	Emory Estates (Emory Cir./Durand)	G. M. Crossdale, C. E. Nash, C. E.	1925
13	Cameron Court	H. W. Nicolopoulis/Harry Kuniasty	1925
14	Parkwood	O. F. Kaufman	1925
15	Stilwood	O. F. Kaufman, C. E.	1925
16	Chelsea Heights (Fernbank)	K. T. Thomas, C. E.	1926
17	Emory Grove, South (Princeton)	O. F. Kaufman & Bros., C. E. Kaufman Bros. & Sons	1915, rev. 1937
18	Emory Grove, North	C. R. Roberts & Co., C. E.	1939
19	Briarwood Hills	C. R. Roberts & Co. Briarwood, Inc.	1941, 1940

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**District Boundary** [Symbol]

**Plat Boundary** [Symbol]



Not to Scale