

AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

AVONDALE

Prepared for:

The City of Charleston, South Carolina

November 2021

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



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INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to be the first in a series of Area Character Appraisals by West Ashley Connects focusing on the neighborhoods in Charleston's suburb of West Ashley. Founded in 2020, West Ashley Connects is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to education, engagement, advocacy, diversity, and conservation in the West Ashley community. Founded in 1945, the Avondale Civic Club has functioned as the community's neighborhood association since the subdivision was built over 75 years ago. Historical research contributions were also made by the West Ashley Historians; Ina Bootle, Diane Hamilton, Donna Jacobs, and Charlie Smith. Photographs for this study were provided by Patricia Ploehn, a local photographer and former resident of Avondale.

The content herein has been created and informed by the following individuals:

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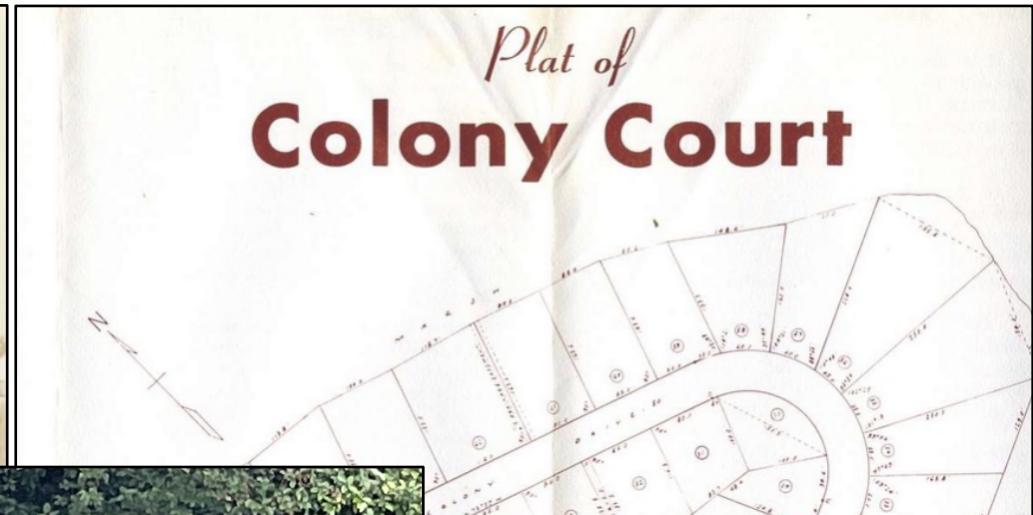
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SCOPE OF PROJECT & DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The scope of this project is to analyze the overall character of the Avondale Subdivision, located in the West Ashley district of Charleston County, South Carolina. The term character, in this case, refers to a select group of features such as the age of the area's structures, the uses of the land, and the density of units. The integrity of the historic character is determined by documenting historical locations and analyzing remaining fragments of the historic landscape. In essence, the goal herein is to answer the questions: what features make this area distinct, or unique, and what signature characteristics can be documented, so as they may be referenced and referred to in future projects?

To this end, a distinction should be drawn between two terms; *Avondale Neighborhood*, and *Avondale Point*.

- ❖ The *Avondale Neighborhood* is the subdivision founded in 1940 on a triangular piece of land, formerly the 137-acre Weimar Plantation, between Savannah Highway and St. Andrew's Boulevard. It is bordered by the Maryville/Ashleyville neighborhood to the North, Westwood and Moreland to the South, Ashley Forest and the Concord to the West, and the Ashley River to the East. 93.8 acres of the marsh along the river should be considered part of this area as well since it historically belonged to the Weimar Plantation and was used for drainage infrastructure during the creation of the subdivision. This is the focus area of this study.

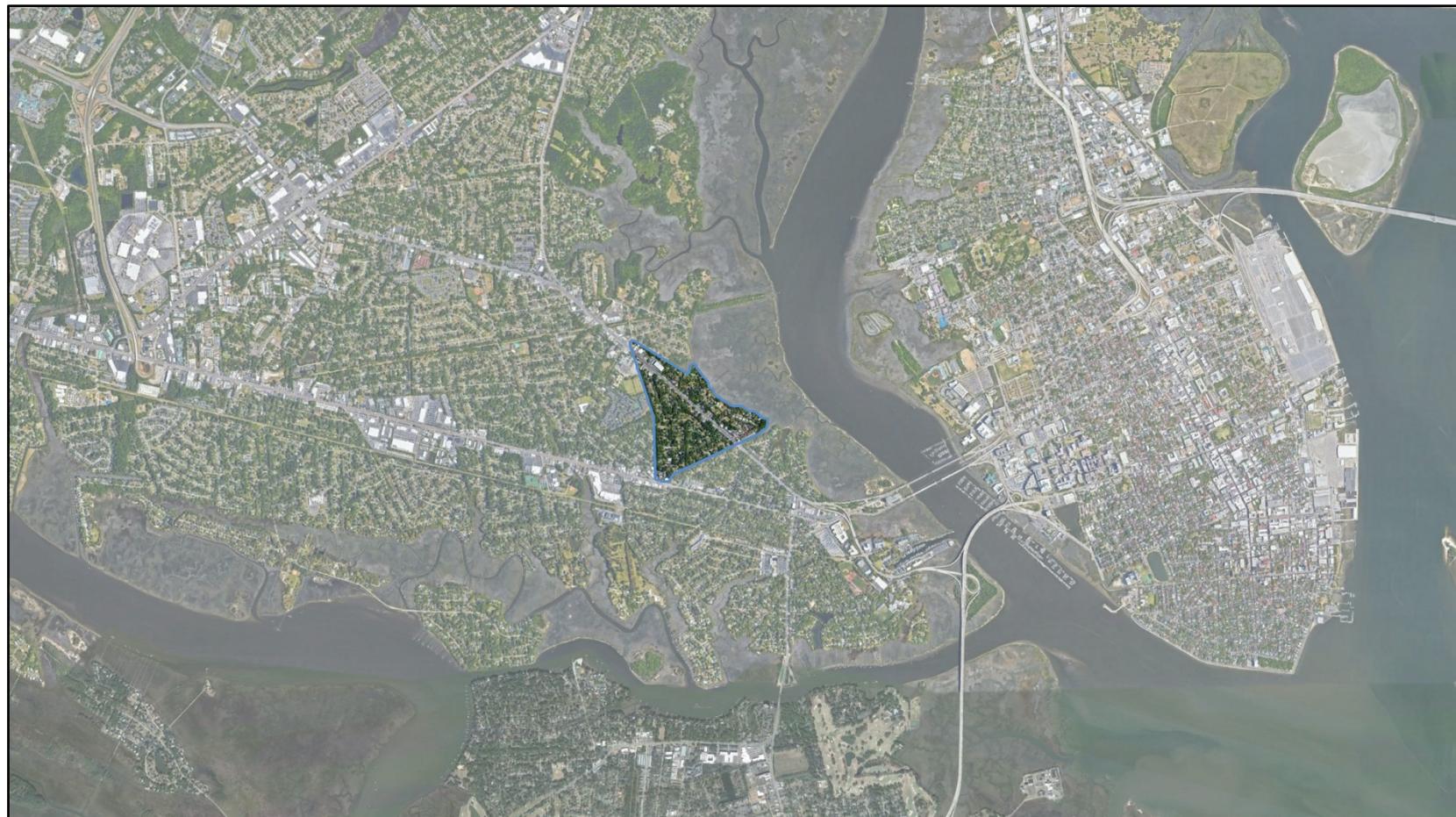
- ❖ The area known as *Avondale Point*, or *Avondale Point Business District*, is a loosely-defined commercial node, or hub, along Highway 17 (Savannah Highway). It is comprised of parcels spanning both sides of the highway that are zoned non-residential. It is located at a major intersection where several arterial streets meet Highway 17; Avondale Avenue, Magnolia Road, Riverdale Road, Nicholson Drive, and Coburg Road. This hub is comprised of parcels from five different subdivisions; Avondale, Westwood, Ashley Forest, Carolina Terrace, and Byrnes Downs. This is not the primary focus of this document, though the portion that is within the Avondale subdivision will be discussed in terms of its value and contributions to this commercial area.

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PART I: LOCATION AND HISTORY



LOCATION



The Avondale neighborhood, outlined in blue on the above map, is located in the West Ashley district of Charleston County, South Carolina, between the Ashley and Stono Rivers. Avondale is situated between two highways, St. Andrew's Boulevard and Savannah Highway, and is approximately 2.5 miles from peninsular Charleston, accessible via four bridges across the Ashley River.

HISTORY

1670 – CHARLES TOWNE COLONY FOUNDED

- The property was one of the original land grants from the Lord Proprietors to Captain John Godfrey
- John Godfrey built the original plantation house, which had tabby foundations

1672 – Godfrey Plantation is named as a rallying point for militiamen from Charles Towne in colony's defense plan



1680 – Charles Towne colony moves to nearby Oyster Pointe, now the Charleston Peninsula

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1706 – St. Andrew's Parish was established a parish of the Anglican Church

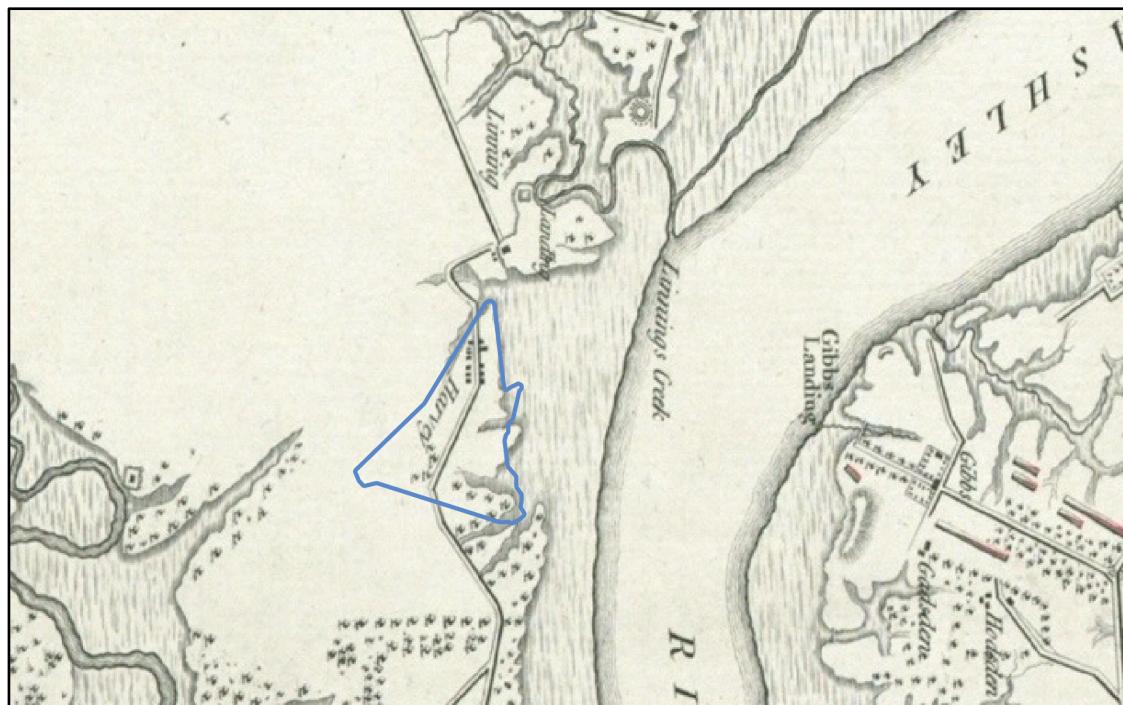
- St. Andrew's Parish was also used as an administrative district by the Lord Proprietors

1719 – John Woodward, cousin of John Godfrey, owned the plantation

- Woodward signed a petition to convert Charles Towne from a Proprietary Colony to a Royal Colony, granted in 1721
- Henry Woodward, father of John Woodward, is credited with introducing rice to South Carolina

1776 -1782 – AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR

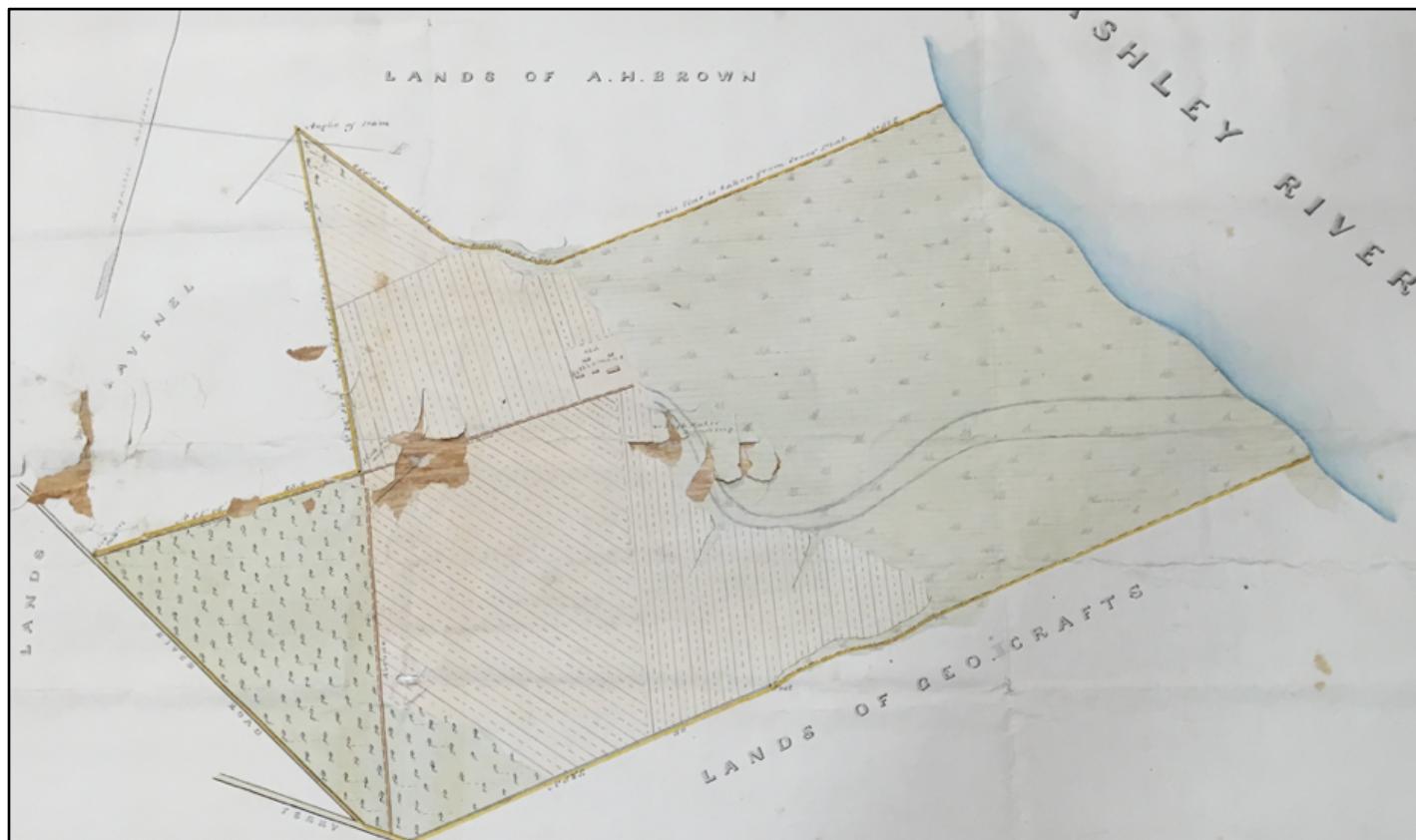
- Plantation was owned by William Harvey who used it as his residence



Banastre Tarleton Map (1787)

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1852 – Plantation purchased by Martha Prioleau



Lands of Martha Prioleau (1867)

1861-1865 – AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

- Plantation owned by Martha Prioleau, who used it as her residence
- Plantation house likely burned by Union Army, March 1865

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1867 – Plantation sold to W.D. and J.W. Sprague

- Used as a truck farm
- Hired formerly enslaved workers as sharecroppers
- The term “truck” farming originates from the French verb *torquer*, meaning the act or practice of trading by exchange

1873 – Charleston County Sheriff, C.C. Bowen, confiscates the property from the Sprague brothers

- Plantation is sold to John F. Ficken and V.J. Tobias's Brookland Corporation

1892-1896 - John F. Ficken, owner of the plantation, serves as Mayor of the City of Charleston while living at 35 Meeting Street

1895 – St. Andrew's Parish is transferred from Berkeley County to Charleston County

- Death of V.J. Tobias

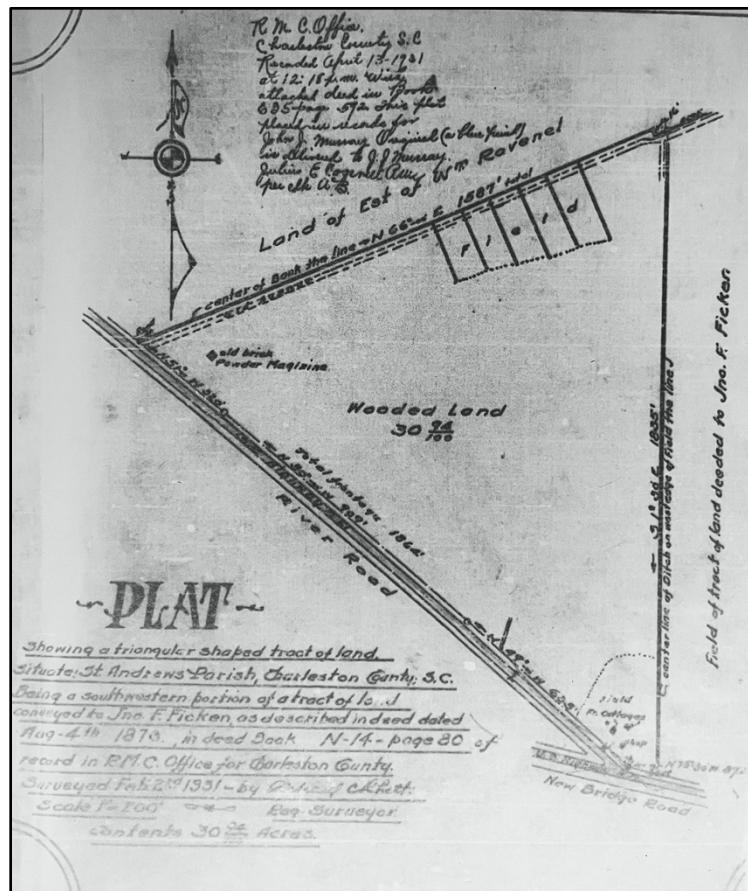
1917 – U.S. ENTERS WORLD WAR I

- Construction of the Seaboard Railroad through St. Andrew's Parish to, in part, service truck farmers

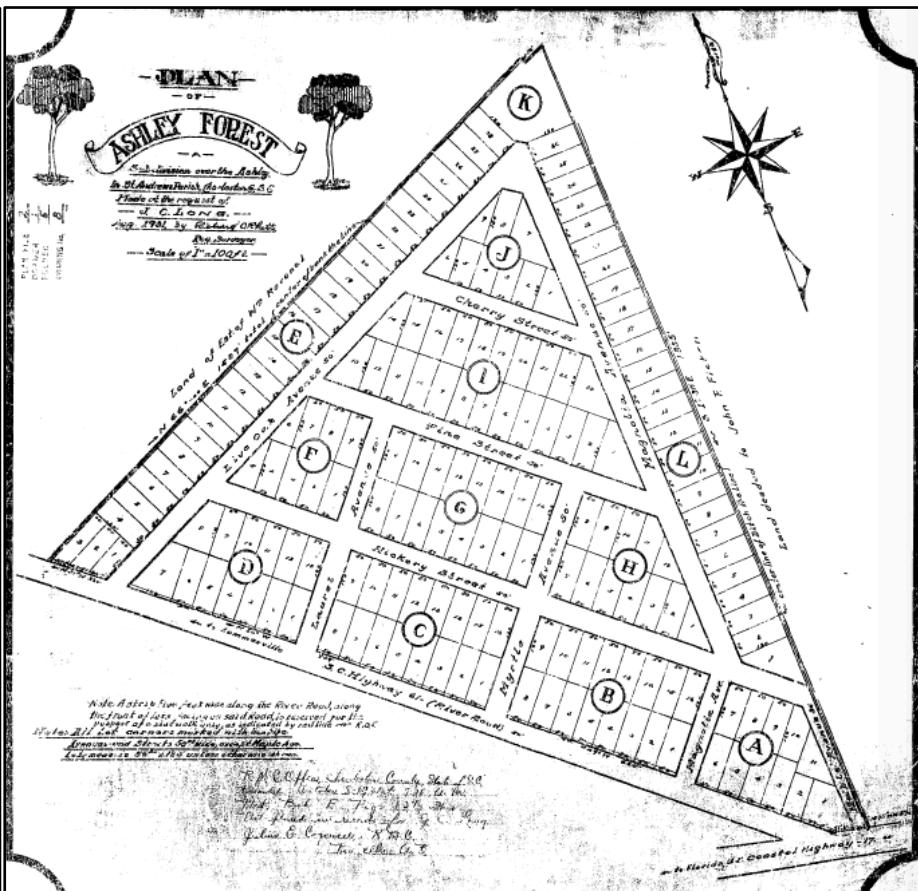
1925 – Death of John F. Ficken, plantation transferred to the Narva Corporation owned by his son, Henry Horlbeck Ficken

1930 – J.C. Long purchases 30.7 acres of the Weimar plantation from the Narva corporation to create Ashley Forest

- Ernest King was leasing land on the Weimar Plantation for truck farming
- A blacksmith was operating a shop on the Weimar Plantation
- The plantation had an old powder magazine along Magnolia Road
- Live Oak Road, the original name for Oakdale Place, is severed



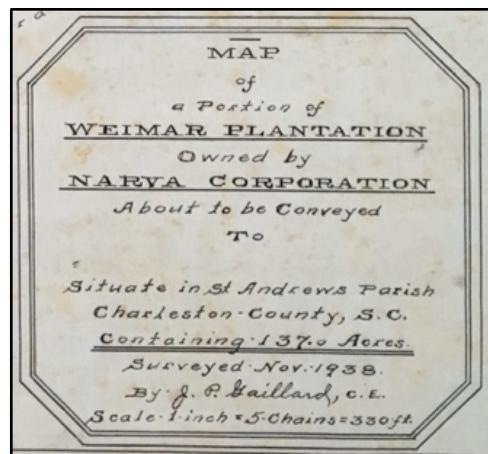
Triangular parcel that would become Ashley Forest (1930)



Plat of Ashley Forest subdivision (1931)

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1938 – Henry Holbeck Ficken has the Weimar Plantation surveyed in preparation for sale
- corn was being grown on the plantation



1939 – West Charleston Corporation, a partnership between Cotesworth Means and Isaac Peek, purchases Weimar Plantation



Photos courtesy of the Clerk of the General Assembly of South Carolina

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1940 – Subdivision is named “Avondale” by Cotesworth Means as a homage to Shakespeare’s home, Stratford-on-the-Avon

- West Charleston Corporation creates restrictive covenants for Avondale with racial clause
- “Dream Castle,” the first house in the new development, is built on Oakdale Place
- Dream Castle Street naming competition is held

1941 – UNITED STATES ENTERS WORLD WAR II

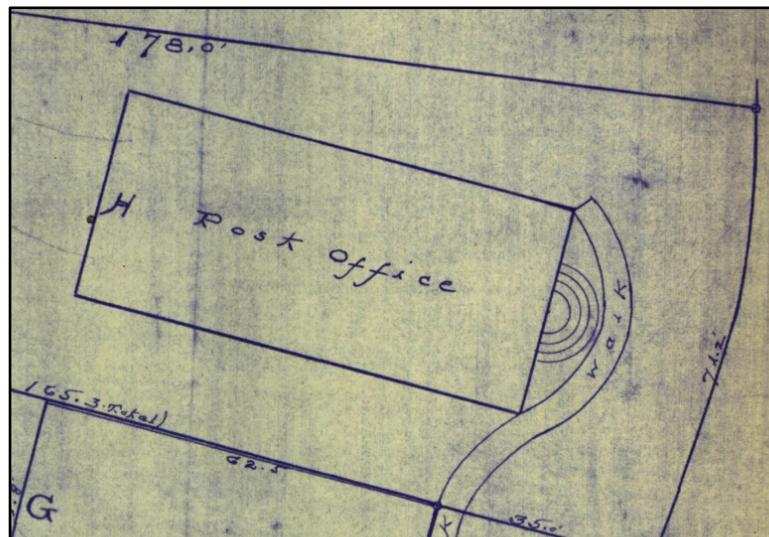
1942 – Construction begins on St Andrew’s Boulevard

1943 – Avondale Post Office built on Avondale Avenue

- Avondale Master Plan is created
- Wartime supply shortages cause delays on the boulevard
- Supply shortage causes delays on Avondale homes as well



The "Dream Castle", the first house built in Avondale



Avondale Post Office plat survey and facade



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1944 - P.O.W. Camp opens in Section D of Avondale



German P.O.W. Camp

1946 – P.O.W. Camp closes in Section D of Avondale

1948 - West Charleston Corporation creates restrictive covenants for Avondale with racial clause

1953 – St. Andrew's Freezer Locker is destroyed in a fire of unknown origins



St. Andrew's Freezer Locker

1956 – Avondale Post Office relocated to Ashley Forest, still within Avondale Point

1960 – St. Andrew's Blvd is widened from 2 lanes to 6 lanes, widening completed 1961

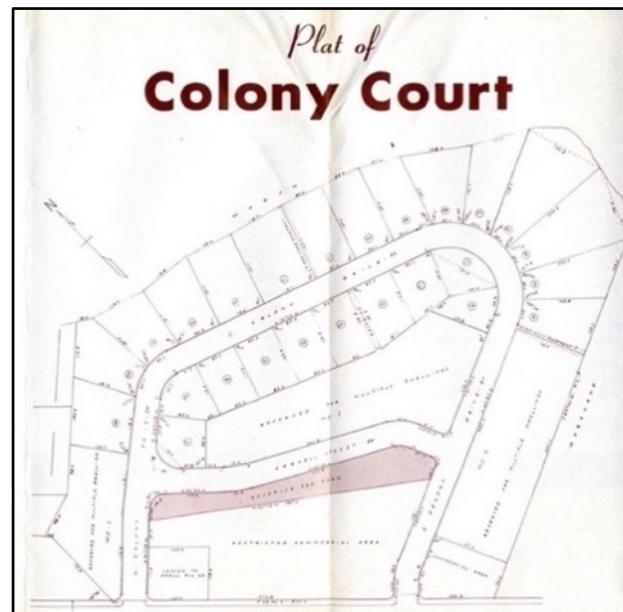
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1962 – Colony Court is created in Section D of Avondale

- St. Andrew's Blvd is repainted to have 4 travel lanes and 2 parking lanes

1963 – Death of Isaac Peek

- St. Andrew's Blvd is repainted to have 4 driving lanes and 2 parking lanes



1966 – 25 homeowners in Section C of Avondale repeal racial restrictions from their properties

1977 – Death of Cotesworth Means



c.1995 – Avondale Civic Club sets up neighborhood signage

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2015 – Brick chimney, last remnant of the P.O.W. Camp, is demolished



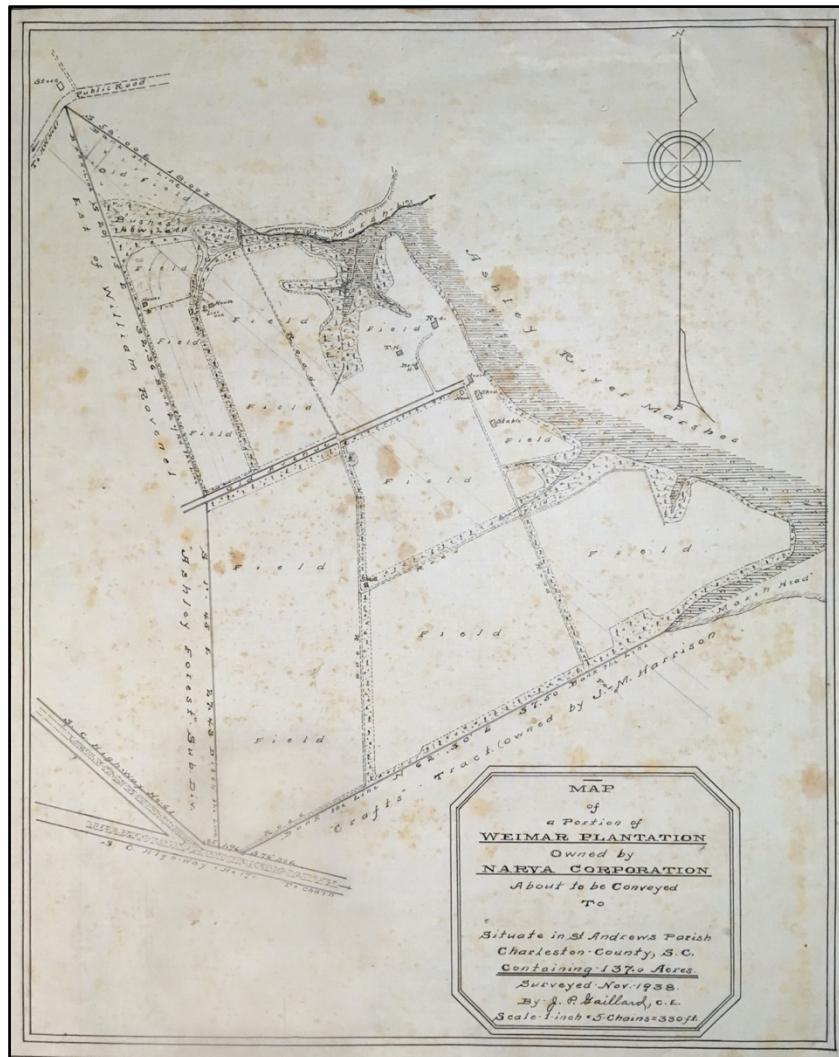
Photographs courtesy of Donna F. Jacobs



Photographs courtesy of Avondale Civic Club

2019 – Reveille Court is platted in Section C of Avondale

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Map of Weimar Plantation (1938)



Master Plan of Avondale Subdivision (c.1943)

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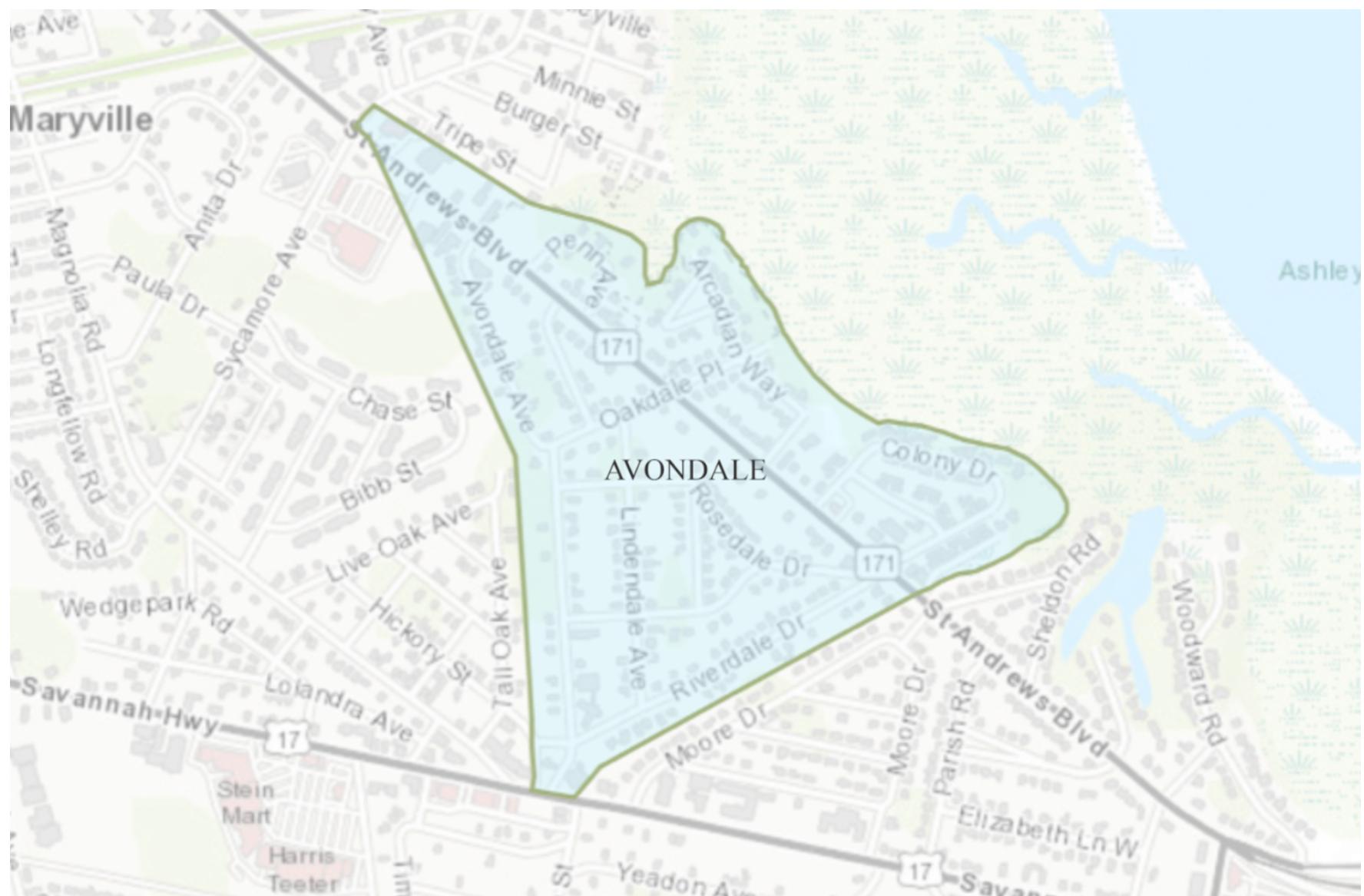
This memory map displays the locations of historical landmarks and significant sites of the Weimar Plantation. The original boundaries for the plantation are outlined in blue and encompassed all of Avondale and Ashley Forest subdivisions. Ashley Forest is shown as a triangular tract of land shaded green and is included as a historical component of the plantation. The original path of Live Oak Road is shown as a gray line running laterally across the map.

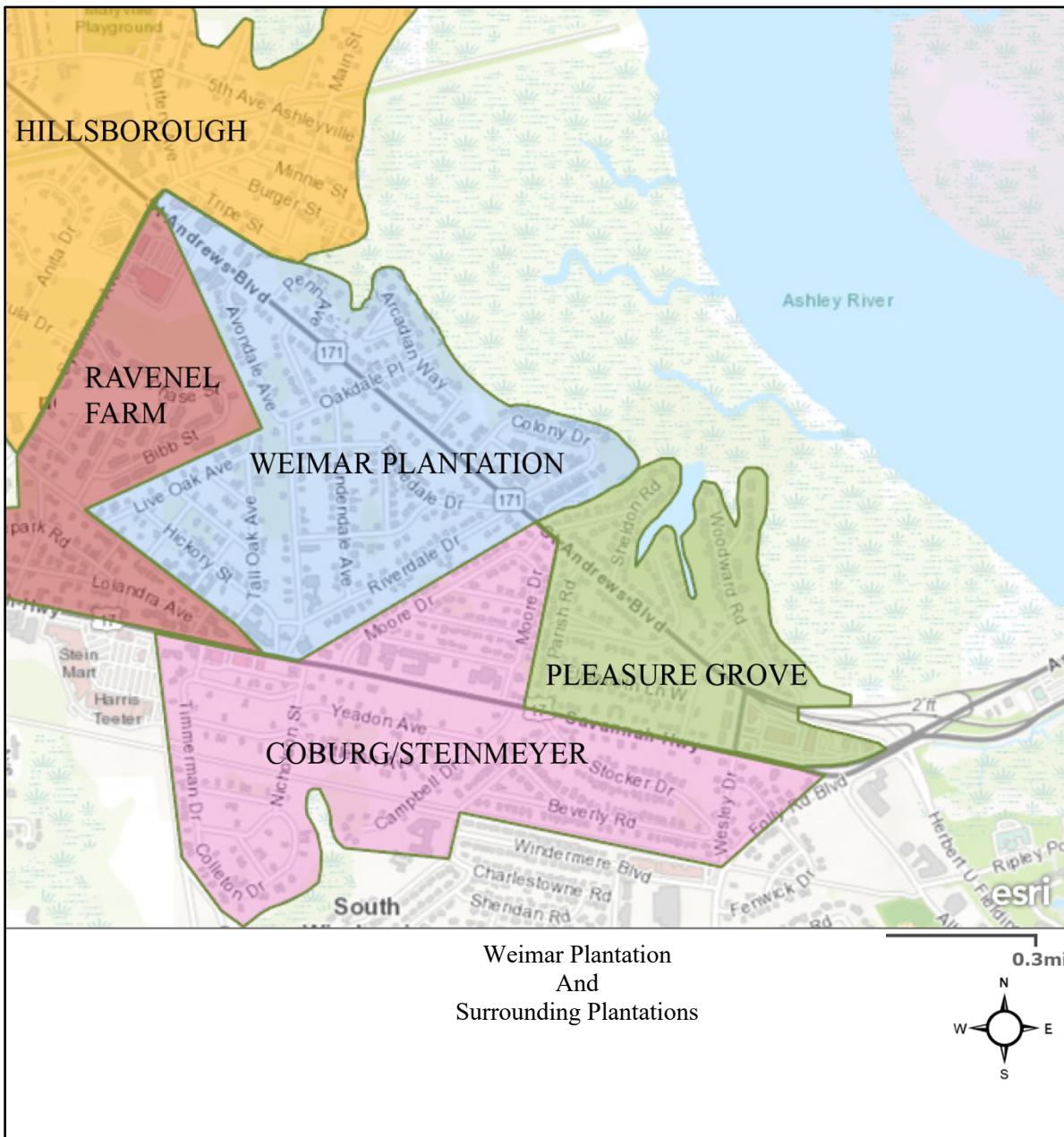
NOTE: The photograph shown for the Boat Landing is a recreational dock along the Ashley River, proximate to the location of the original landing.

MEMORY MAP

- 1) **St. Andrew's Freezer Locker Company**
The first and only full service freezer locker, butcher, and meat processing facility in St. Andrew's Parish. Created by Isaac Peek in 1945, destroyed in a fire in 1953. Part of the building was likely reused as part of 840 St Andrew's Blvd.
- 2) **“Dream Castle” House**
The first house constructed in Avondale in 1940. It was used for marketing the new subdivision and hosted a street naming competition to choose names for the neighborhood's streets.
- 3) **Boat Landing**
This spot at the end of Oakdale Place, formerly Live Oak Road, was where barges and other boats could dock for river access to Weimar Plantation through the marsh circa 1867.
- 4) **P.O.W. Camp Chimney**
This Chimney was built by the prisoners of the P.O.W. camp, demolished 2015.
- 5) **P.O.W. Camp**
This camp was constructed in 1944 to house German Prisoners of War. It was decommissioned in 1946, and was used for supper clubs and Boy Scout events until Colony Court was developed in 1963.
- 6) **Avondale Post Office**
Build by the West Charleston Corporation in 1943, this was the first major post office in West Ashley. It was demolished circa 1975.
- 7) **Blacksmith Shop**
This blacksmith shop was operated by Edward Pierre in the 1920s and 1930s. The shop was demolished circa 1940.
- 8) **Powder Magazine**
This brick power magazine likely held explosive phosphate materials for farming, such as fertilizer. It was demolished circa 1931.

PART II: NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

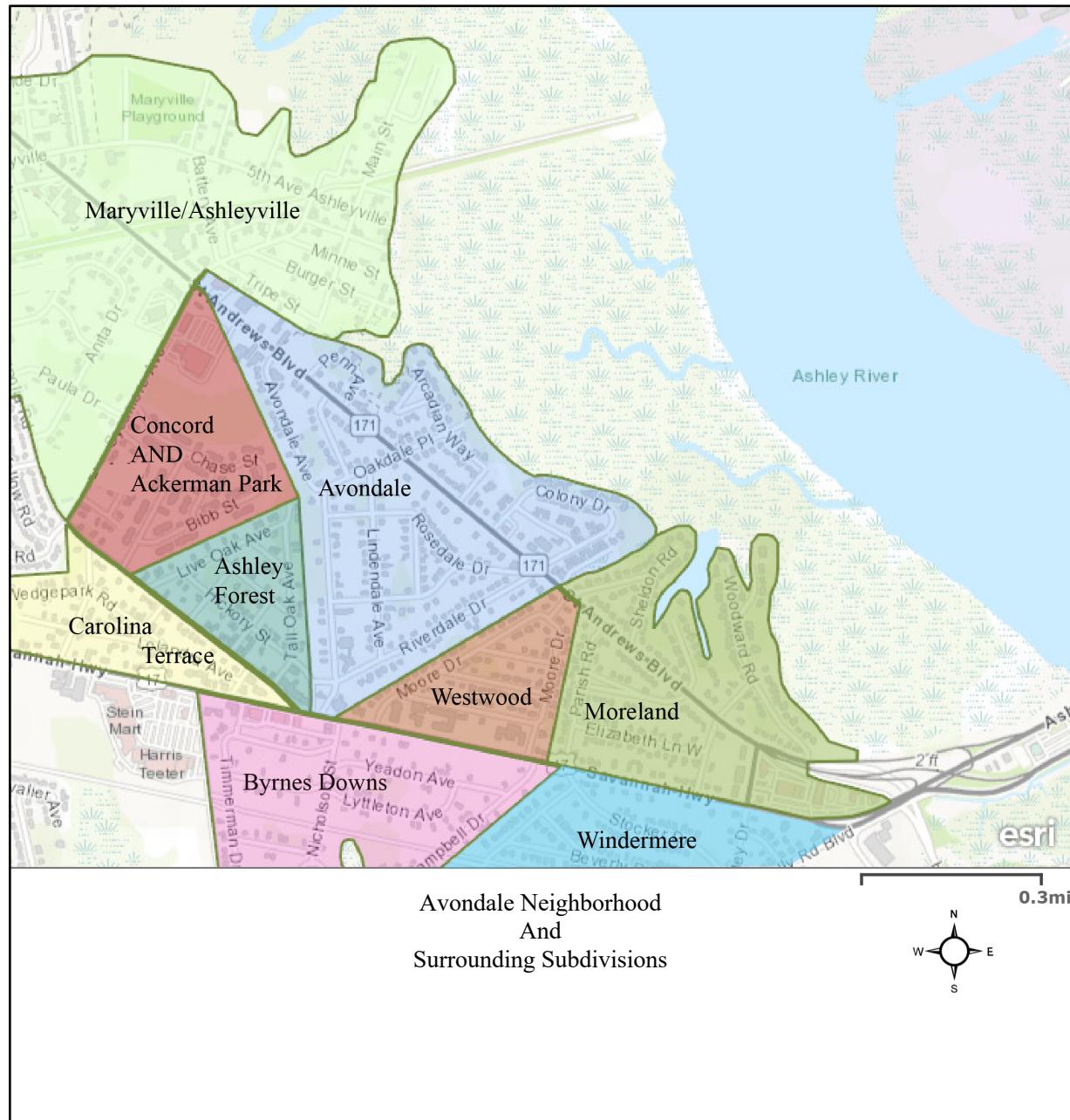




HISTORIC BOUNDARIES

- ❖ The blue section symbolizes the original Godfrey Plantation, later called Weimar Plantation. In 2021, the larger light blue area is Avondale, while the smaller dark blue area is Ashley Forest.
- ❖ The Hillsborough Plantation is shown in orange. In 2021, this is primarily the Maryville/Ashleyville neighborhoods, as well as part of East Oak Forest.
- ❖ The Ravenel Farm is shown in red. In 2021, this land is divided between the shopping center at 829 St. Andrew's Blvd, Ackerman Park, and The Concord neighborhood. A portion was also used to create Carolina Terrace.
- ❖ The Coburg Plantation, shown in pink, historically owned by the Steinmeyer family prior to the Civil War, is shown in pink. As of 2021, this land is the Coburg estate, Byrnes Down, Westwood, and Windermere.
- ❖ Pleasure Grove plantation, shown in green was historically owned by George Crafts.
- ❖ The three adjacent plantations – the Ravenel Farm, Hillsborough, and Weimar- met at a point along Sycamore Avenue roughly where the intersection with St. Andrew's Boulevard is in 2021.

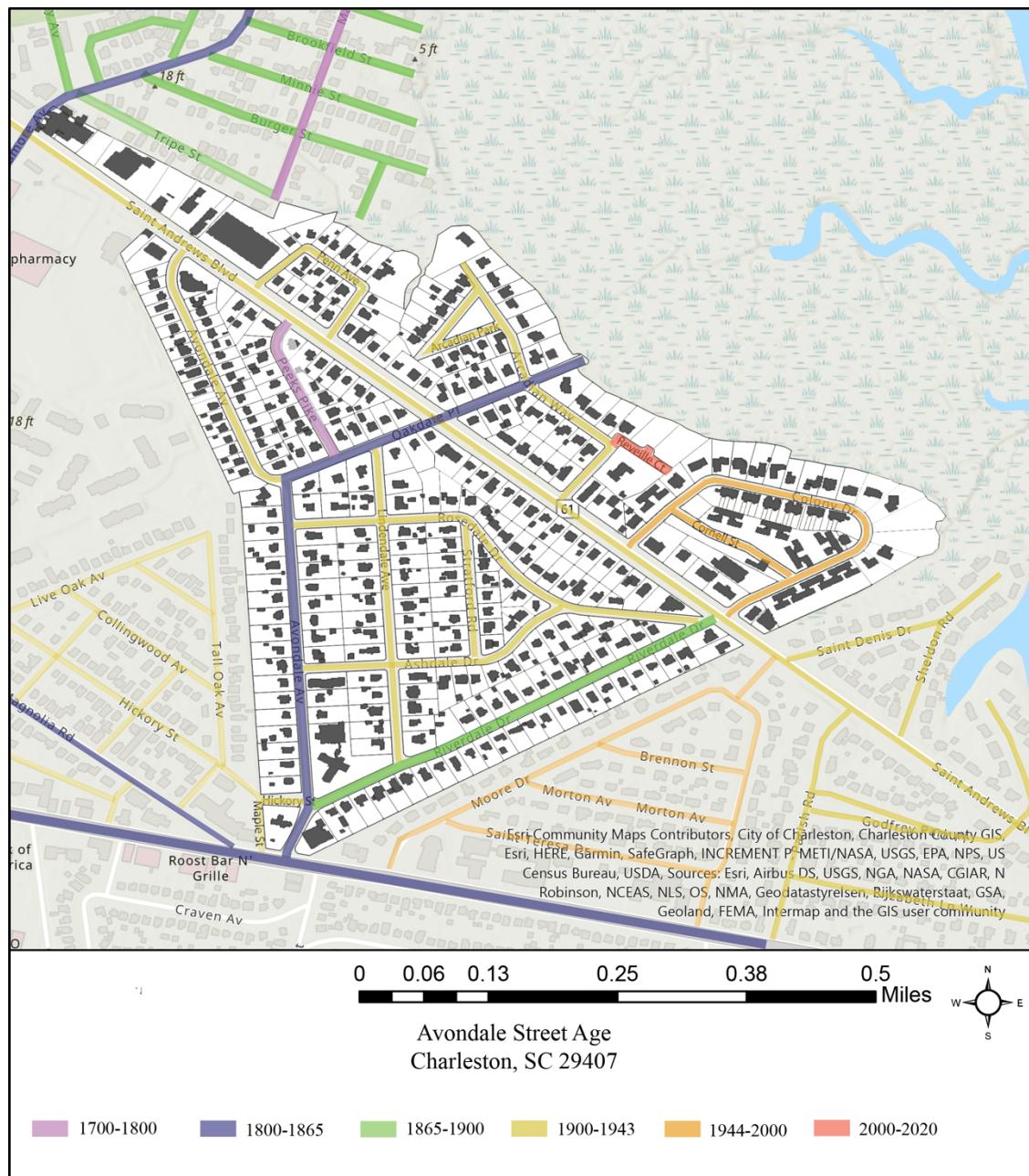
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PART III: ROADS, INTERSECTIONS, & TRANSPORTATION



AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



STREET AGE

Roads from 1700-1800 were originally informal transit routes between plantations. This route connected the Godfrey House to the Hillsborough Plantation and the original Charles Towne Colony. Peeks Pike is the last remaining piece of this route.

Roads from 1800-1865 were major inter-city transit corridors and formal plantation entrances. Savannah Highway was the original transit corridor of St. Andrew's Parish, and Oakdale Place was the original plantation driveway. Avondale Avenue was originally known as "Mr. Roberson's Road," a reference to a plantation owner in the area. Magnolia Road was the original State Highway 61 before St. Andrew's Blvd replaced it.

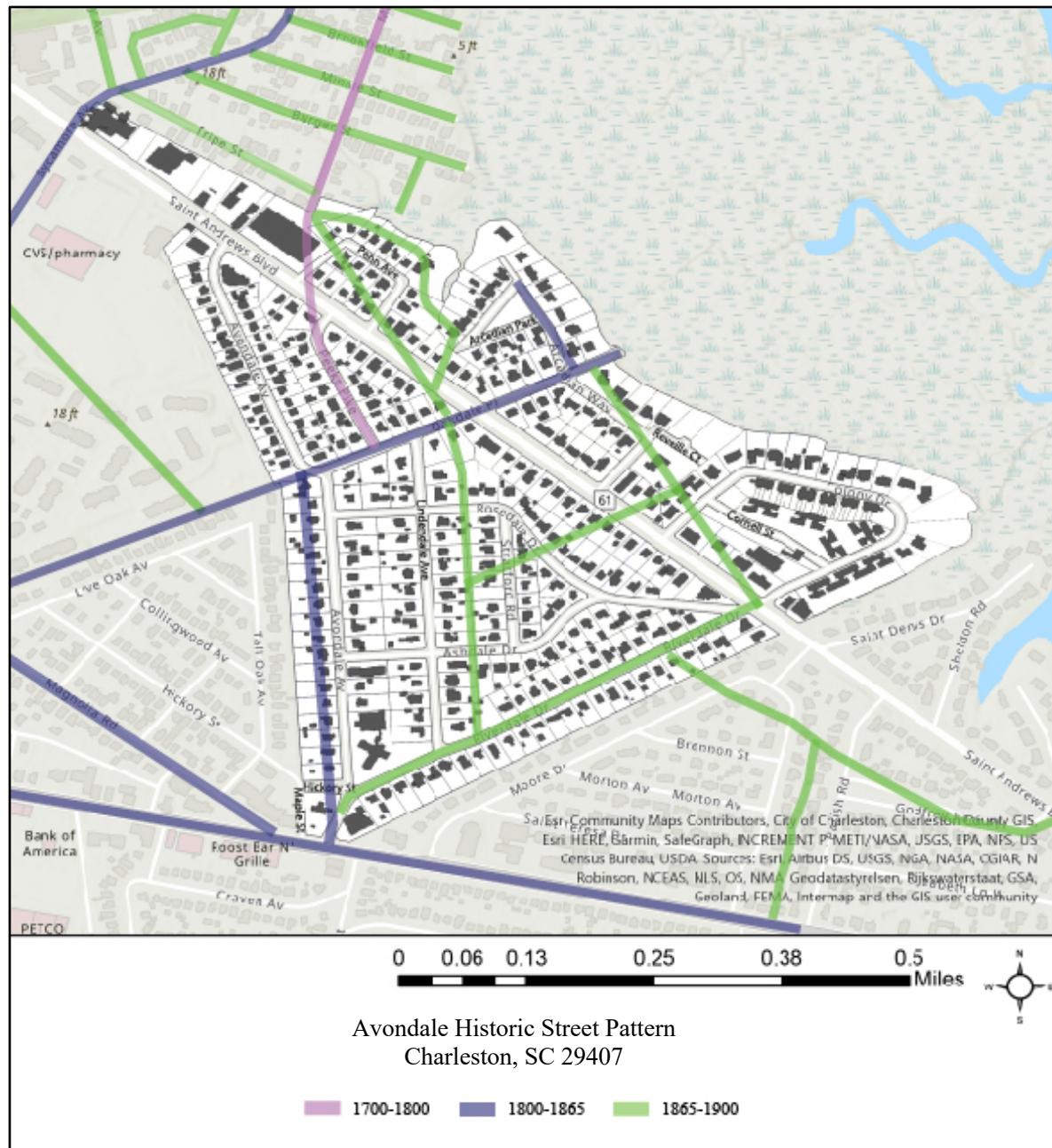
Roads from 1865-1900 developed during the post-war truck farming era. Roads from this era did not survive subdivision, but the future subdivision roads generally followed the same directions.

Roads from 1900-1943 were the primary street networks of the subdivisions, including the imposing boulevards to connect them. St. Andrew's Boulevard along with Avondale's neighborhood roads were planned.

Roads from 1944-2000 were additional subdivision roads. Colony Court was finished as the last major phase of Avondale.

Roads from 2000-2020 were created when subdivision parcels were, in turn subdivided. Reveille Court is the most recent addition.

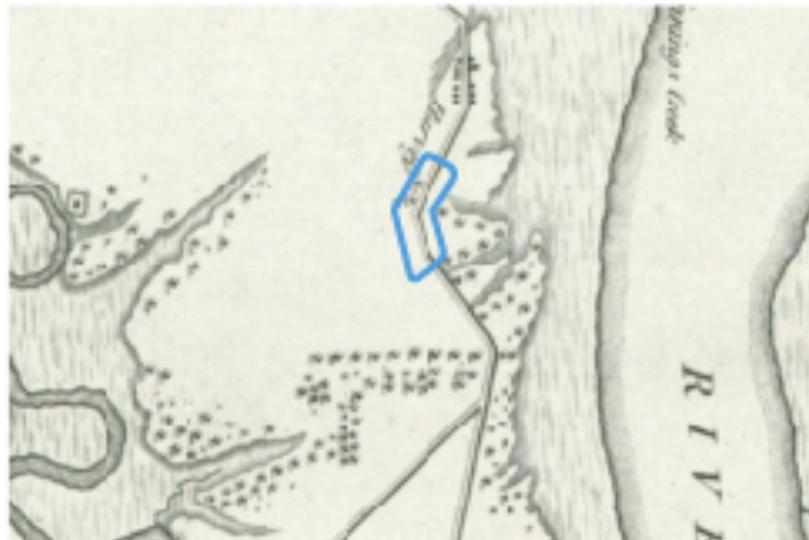
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HISTORICAL ROAD STRUCTURE

- ❖ The road structure prior to the creation of Ashley Forest in 1931 and Avondale in 1940 was far more interconnected, and all roads ultimately connected to either Savannah Highway or Magnolia Road, as these were the major routes through St. Andrew's Parish.
- ❖ Avondale's later subdivision roads generally correspond to older farm roads in terms of general direction; however, the newer roads reduce overall connectivity in favor of internal traffic circulation.
- ❖ The older roads and informal paths were designed for two purposes: access to individual farm fields and travel between the plantations. By contrast, the subdivision roads are intended to provide convenient connectivity to each residential lot. There is overlap in these uses insofar as the major arterial inter-plantation roads now serve as inter-subdivision roads, but the smaller farm roads intended for field access were replaced.
- ❖ Pre-subdivision road structure was reconstructed using the 1855 Map of Coburg, 1867 Plat Survey of Lands of Martha Prioleau, 1904 USDA Soil Survey Map, 1919 U.S. Geological Survey of Charleston, 1938 Map of Weimar Plantation, and 1939 USDA Aerial Imagery.

MAIN STREET & PEEK'S PIKE



1787 Banastre Tarleton Map



1939 US Department of Agriculture Aerial Imagery



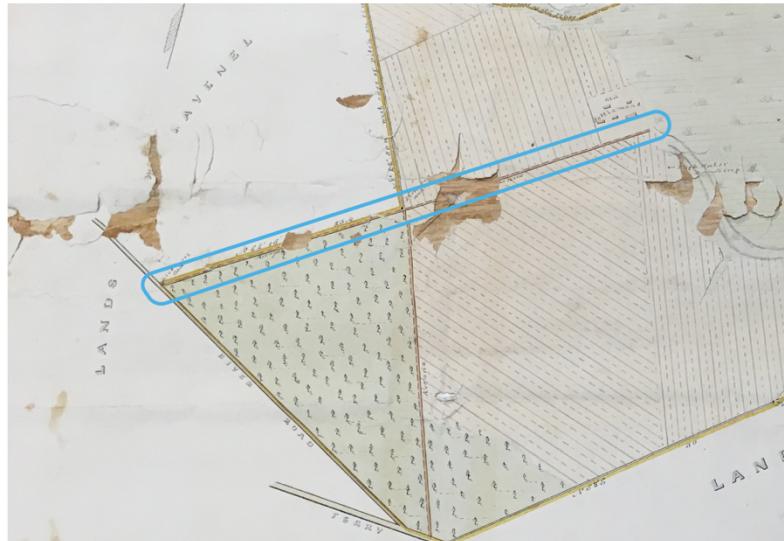
1919 US Department of Agriculture Map



2021 Road Map

- ❖ Historical maps and aerial imagery show that Peeks Pike in Avondale and Main Street in Ashleyville once formed a single connected street dating from at least 1787. The street was severed when Avondale was created in 1940, and St. Andrew's Boulevard was built in 1942. The section where Peeks Pike and Main Street once connected is highlighted in blue.

OAKDALE PLACE & LIVE OAK ROAD



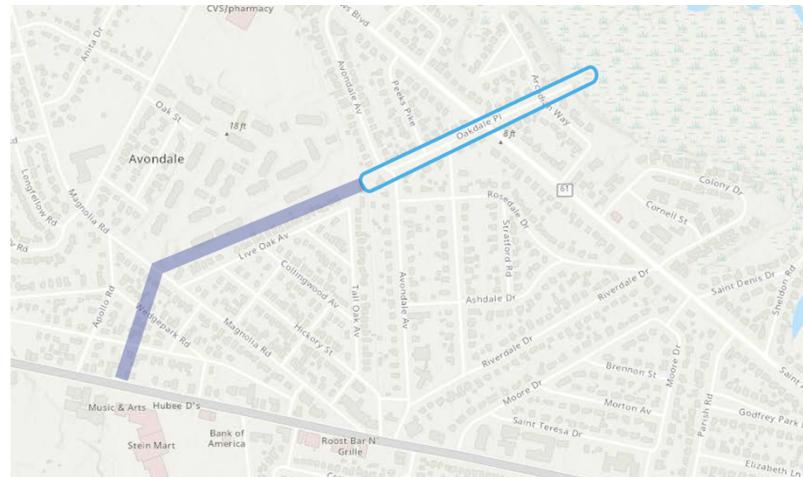
1867 Prioleau Map



1939 US Department of Agriculture Aerial Imagery

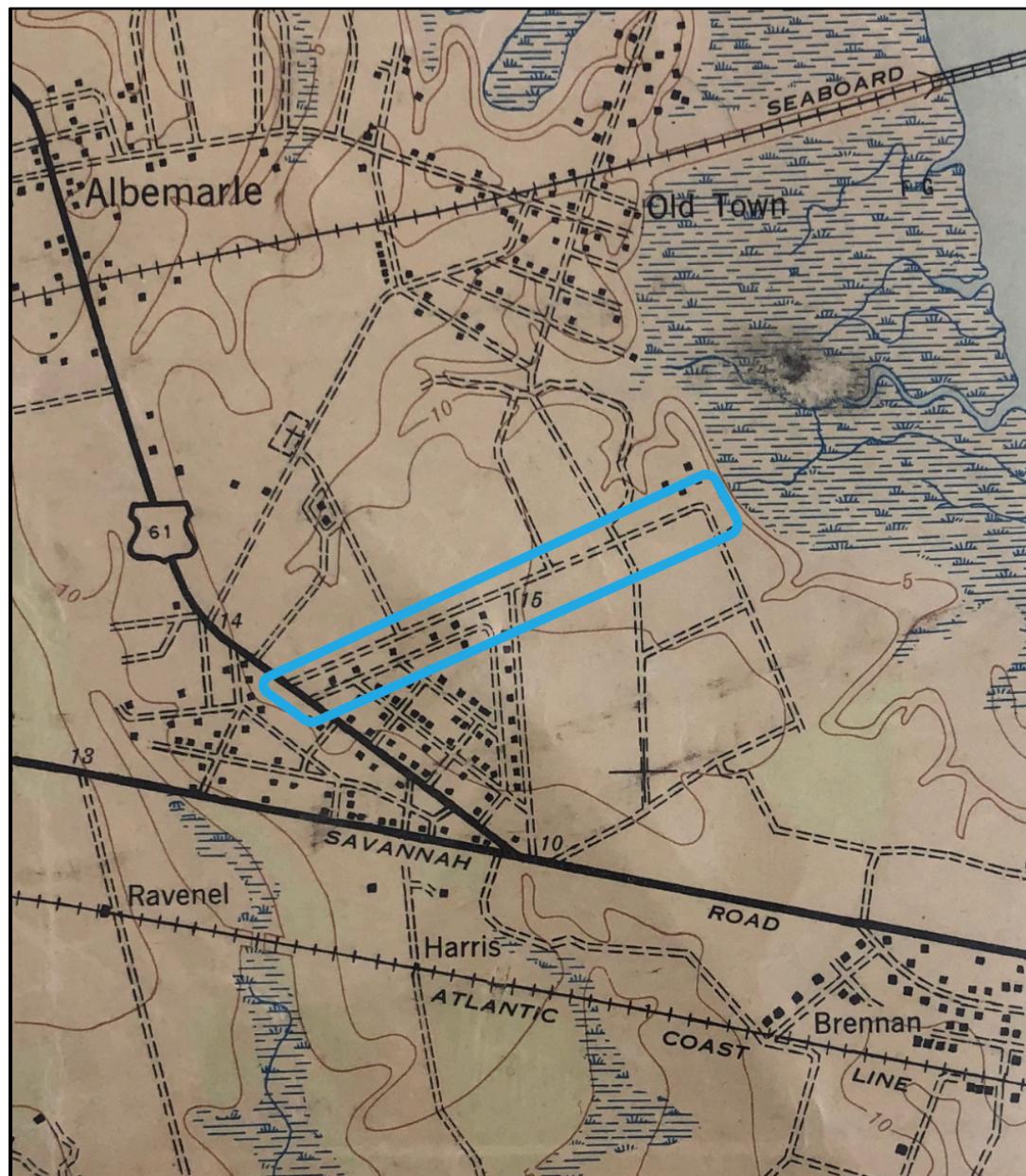


1904 US Department of Agriculture Map



2021 Road Map

- ❖ Oakdale Place was once Live Oak Road, a formal canopy entrance drive to the Weimar Plantation. It spanned from Savannah Highway to Magnolia Road, then bent east and ran straight to the Ashley River. The only remaining section is Oakdale Place, circled in light blue in the diagram above. The historical extended route of the road is highlighted in dark blue on the 2021 map.

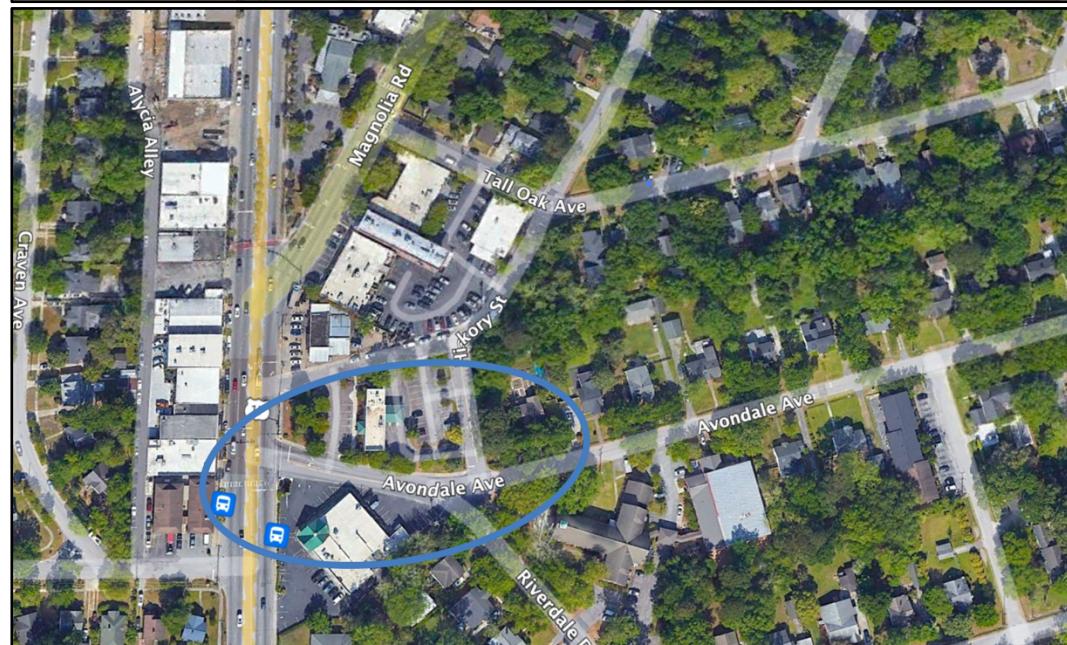
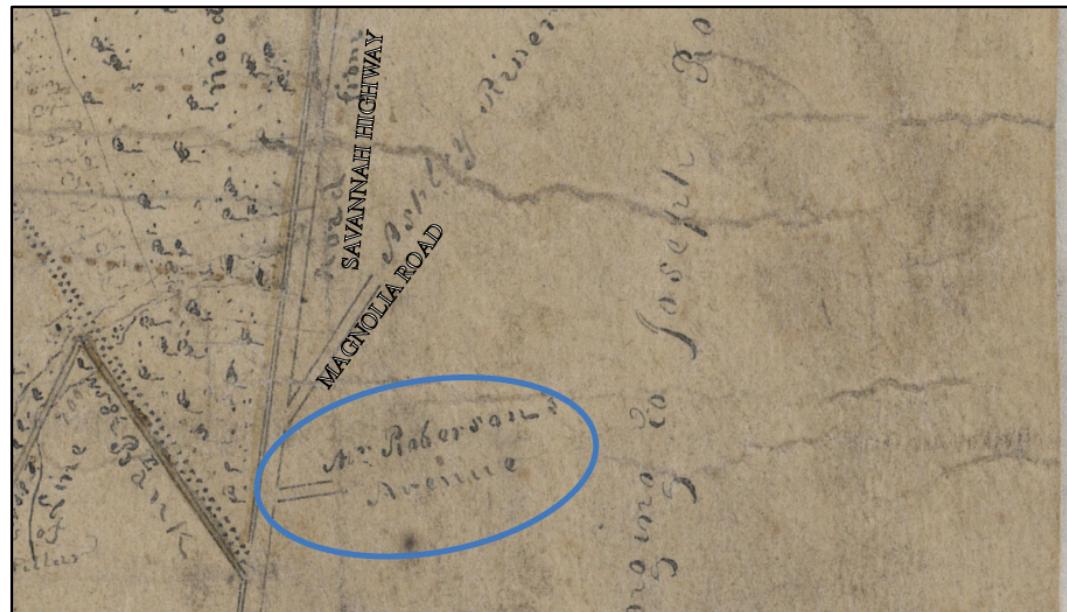


OAKDALE PLACE & LIVE OAK ROAD

- ❖ This 1942 US Department of Agriculture map shows that the historic Live Oak Road and a new road, Live Oak Avenue in Ashley Forest, ran parallel to each other from 1931 when Ashley Forest was created until 1940 when Avondale was created. The two streets running parallel are circled in blue.
- ❖ The remaining section of Live Oak Road was reworked into Oakdale Place in 1940
- ❖ The section running between Magnolia Road and Savannah Highway, visible on the 1904 map, was likely discontinued or reworked into Apollo Road when Carolina Terrace was created in 1930.

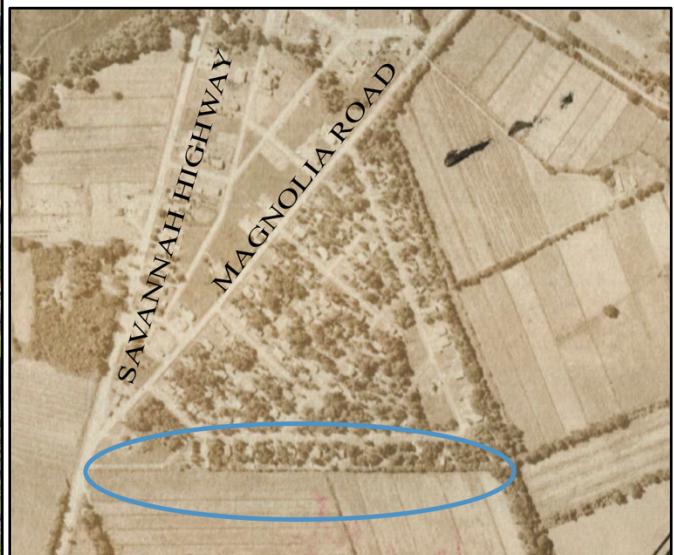


Oakdale Place (2021)

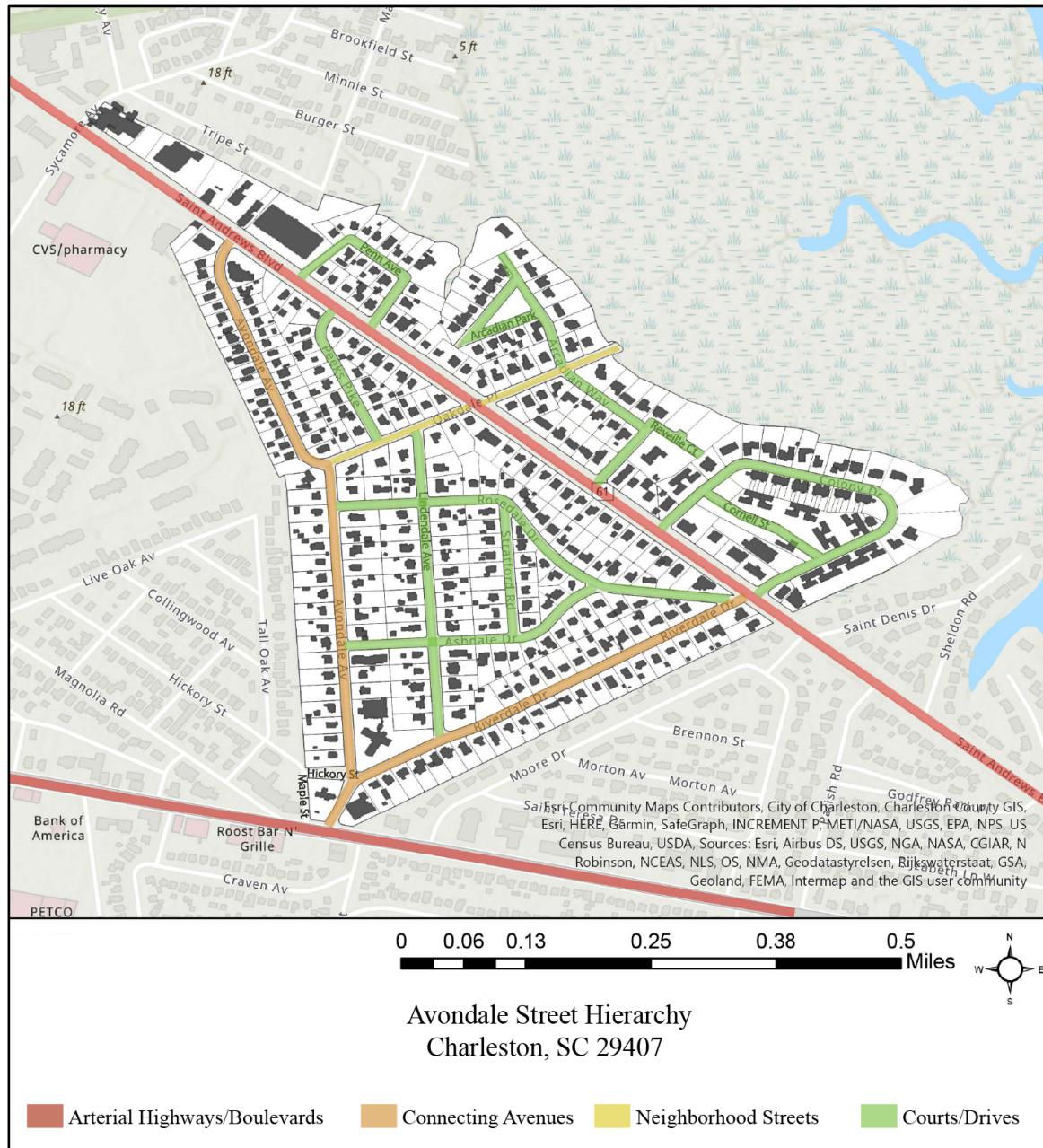


MR. ROBERSON'S AVE & AVONDALE AVE

- ❖ The intersection of Magnolia Road (formerly River Rd, or Ashley River Rd) and Savannah Highway (formerly Ferry Rd) has been a critical intersection long before Avondale Point Business district became a booming commercial hub.
- ❖ Avondale Avenue was originally created as "Mr. Roberson's Avenue," a farm road running between fields that was named for a local land owner, Joseph A. Roberson. It is visible on an 1855 map of the Coburg Plantation. It is circled in blue on the top left.
- ❖ The original route was visible on 1939 aerial imagery by the US Department of Agriculture, circled in blue below.
- ❖ When Avondale subdivision was developed, this avenue was reconfigured and renamed for the new subdivision.



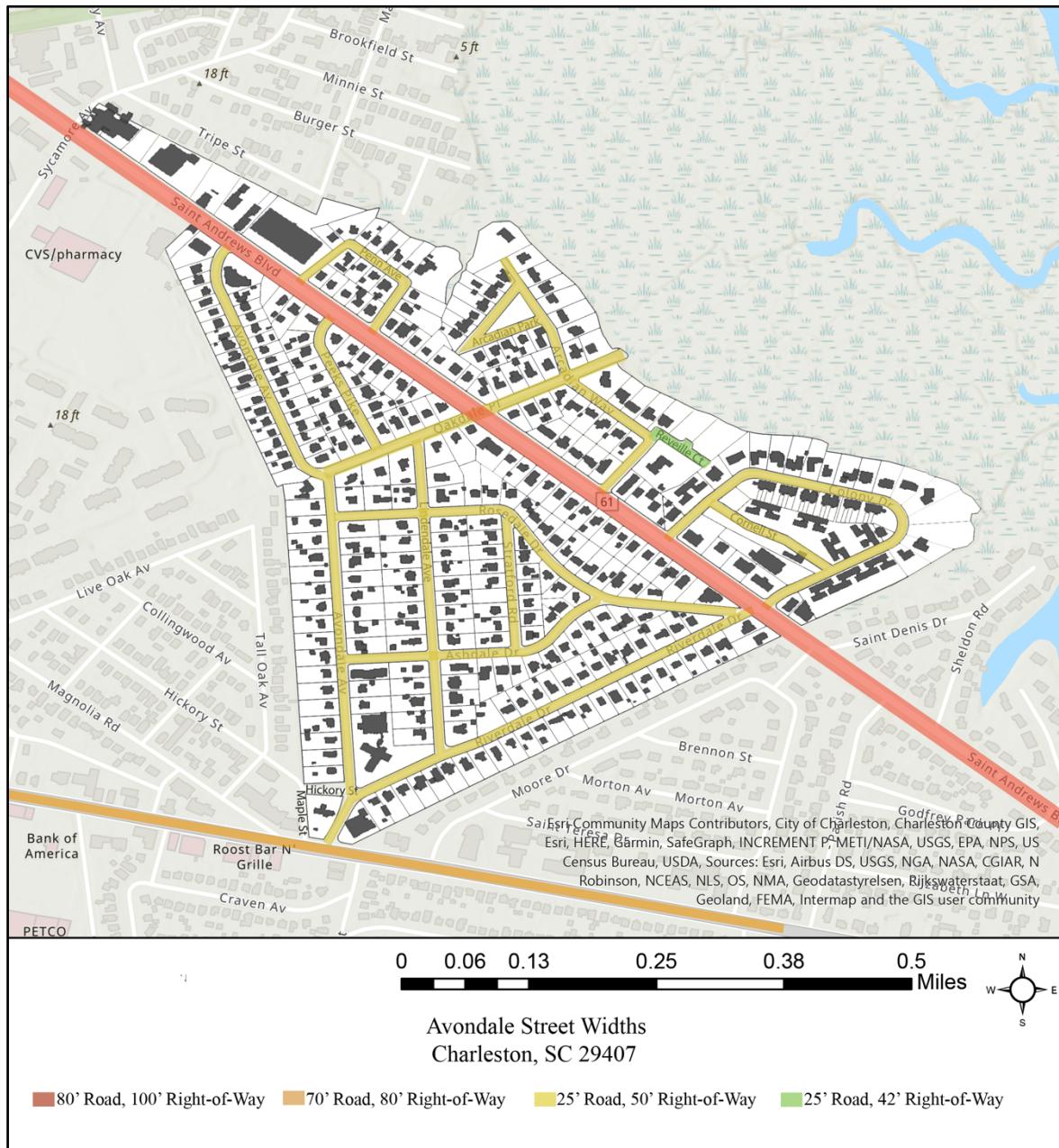
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STREET HIERARCHY

- Arterial highways and Boulevards connect multiple subdivisions and multiple geographic areas. Savannah Highway and St. Andrew's Boulevard are each two lanes in each direction with some parking on both sides and have central turning lanes.
- Riverdale Road and Avondale Avenue are the two Connecting Avenues of the subdivision. They handle traffic circulation both within the subdivision and through it.
- Oakdale Place is Avondale's central Neighborhood Street. It is the main street from which all others, except for Penn Ave and Colony Drive, may be accessed. It handles traffic within the subdivision, leading from connecting avenues and arterial highways to the smaller courts and drives.
- Courts and Drives handle strictly local circulation. These roads are primarily used by those who live on them.
- Plan West Ashley identifies the Avondale Point Business District as one of the primary commercial nodes of West Ashley, and further denotes Savannah Highway as the "main street" of this node.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



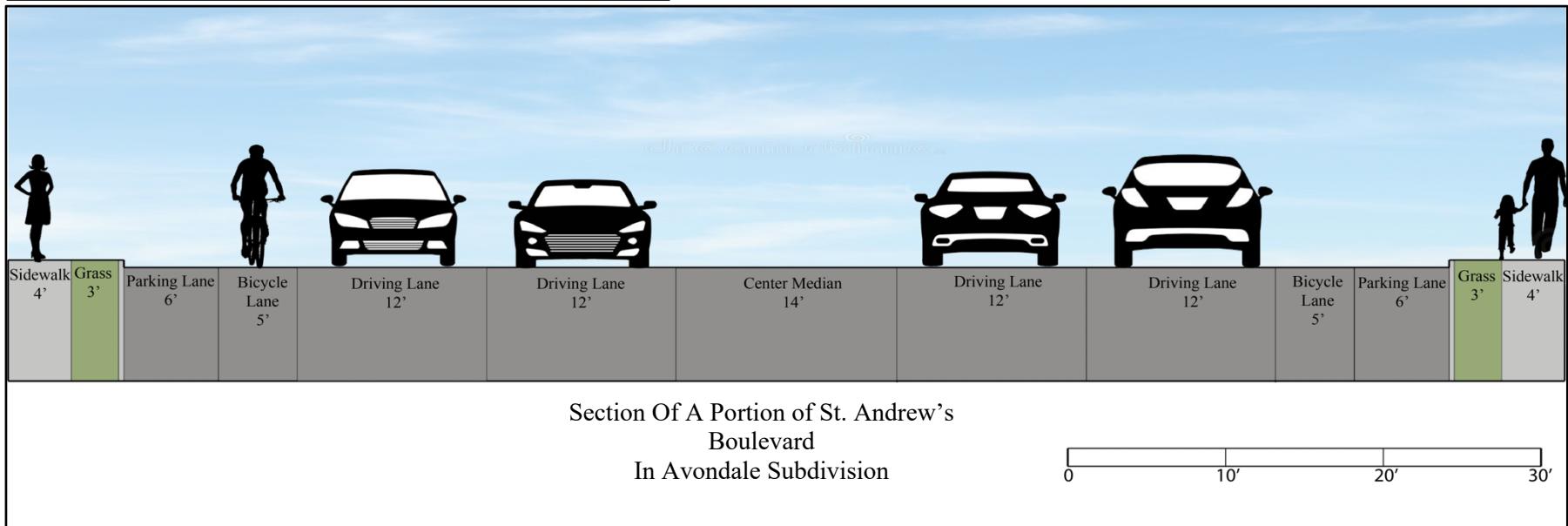
AVONDALE STREET WIDTHS

- Reveille Court is the smallest street in Avondale, being 25 feet wide with only a 42-foot right-of-way.
- All other neighborhood streets are a standardized 25-feet wide with a 50-foot right-of-way.
- Savannah Highway is 70-feet wide with an 80-foot right-of-way.
- St. Andrew's Boulevard is the widest road in Avondale, being 80-feet wide with a 100-foot right-of-way.

ST. ANDREW'S BOULEVARD



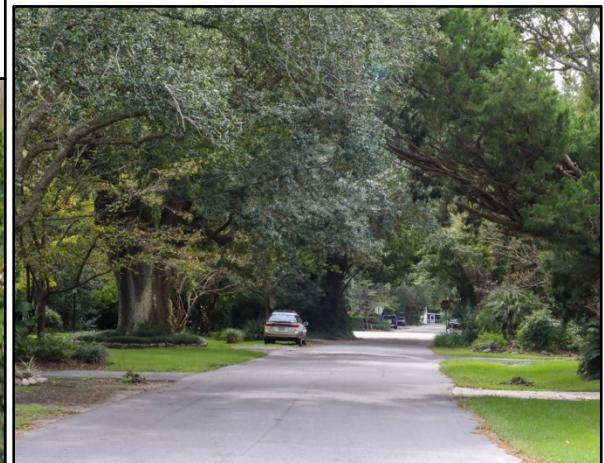
- ❖ St. Andrew's Boulevard bisects the Avondale subdivision by design. The highway and the subdivision were planned at the same time, between 1940 and 1942, and the subdivision was conceived of with the highway running through it.
- ❖ Both the Avondale subdivision and St. Andrew's Boulevard were conceived of by Cotesworth Means and Isaac Peek as State Senator and State Representative, respectively. Peek also served as State Highway Commissioner for the Charleston District from 1942 to 1946, during which time the highway was completed.
- ❖ Originally authorized in the South Carolina legislature's 1941 session in Act. No. 145, the boulevard's completion was initially delayed due to wartime supply shortages, and was widened from 1960-1961. It was always planned to have a 100-foot wide right-of-way. It was re-striped in 1963.
- ❖ As of 2019, the boulevard experienced 52,300 cars per day and remains one of the primary vehicular arteries in West Ashley.





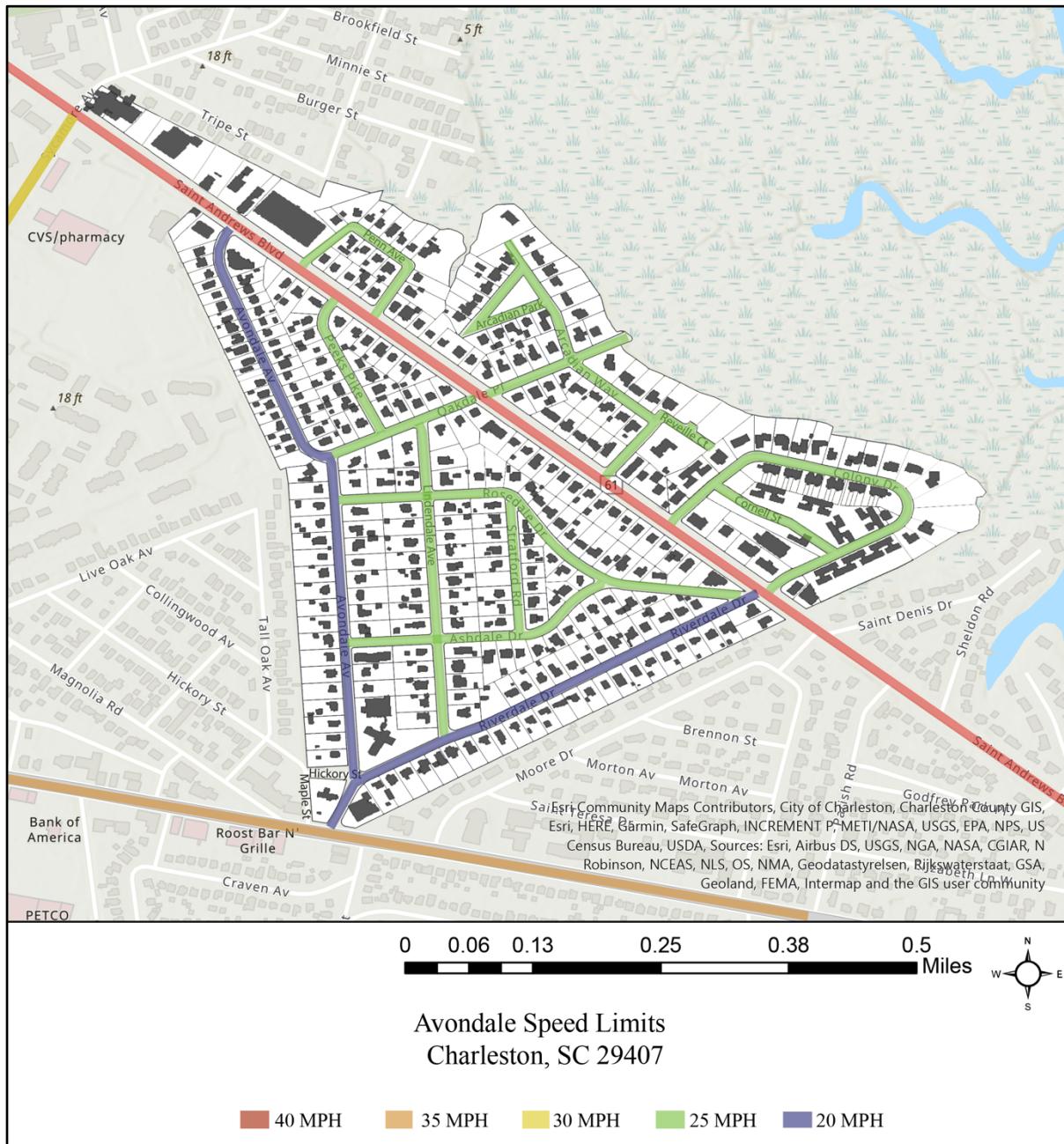
NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

- ❖ All neighborhood streets in Avondale are a standardized 25-feet wide with a 50-foot right-of-way.
- ❖ The streets have two driving lanes, each 12.5 feet in width.
- ❖ There is also 12.5 feet of public right-of-way on each side of the street.
- ❖ Unlike St. Andrew's Blvd, none of the neighborhood streets in Avondale have bicycle lanes, curbs, or sidewalks, though some have drainage ditches.



Oakdale Place is a typical neighborhood street in Avondale. Photograph by Patricia Ploehn.

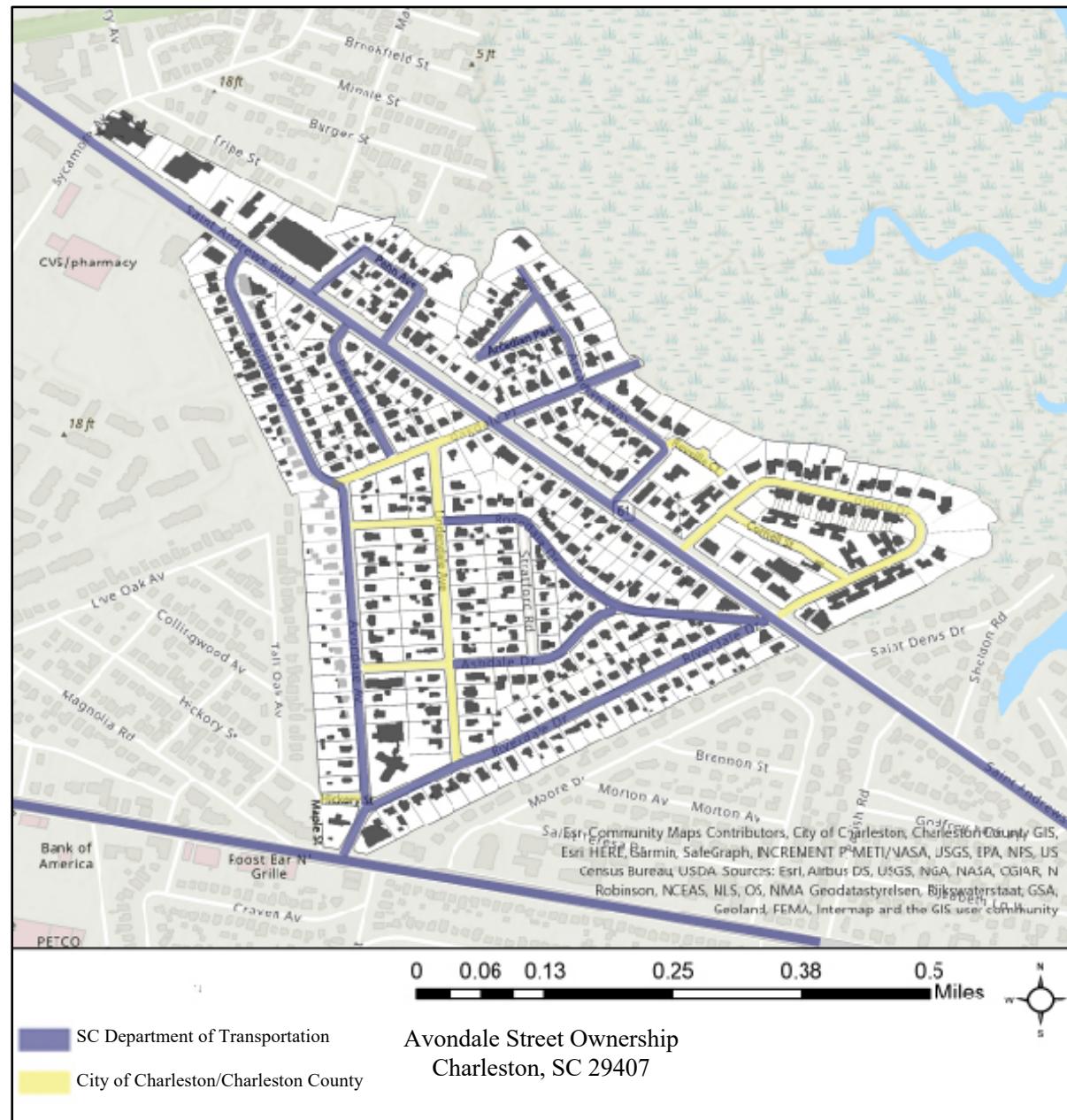
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SPEED LIMITS

- St. Andrew's Boulevard has the highest speed limit in the area at 40 Miles Per Hour.
- Savannah Highway's speed limit for the section that runs through Avondale is 35 Miles Per Hour.
- Only one road in the area, Sycamore Avenue, has a speed limit of 30 Miles Per Hour. This street is not within the neighborhood but is included for comparative purposes.
- Most neighborhood streets have a speed limit of 25 Miles Per Hour.
- Two streets, Avondale Avenue and Riverdale Drive, have speed limits of 20 Miles Per Hour.

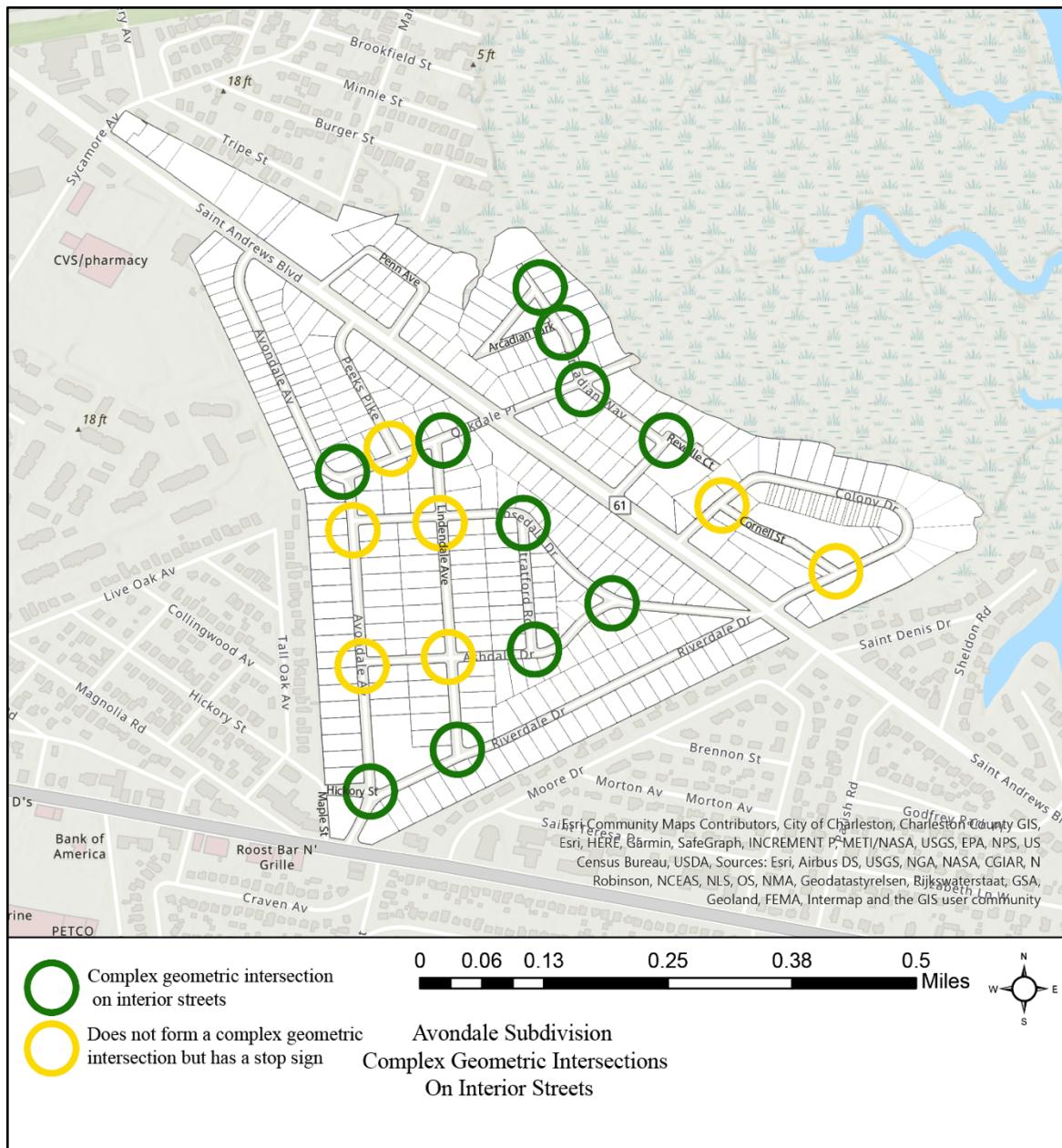
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STREET OWNERSHIP

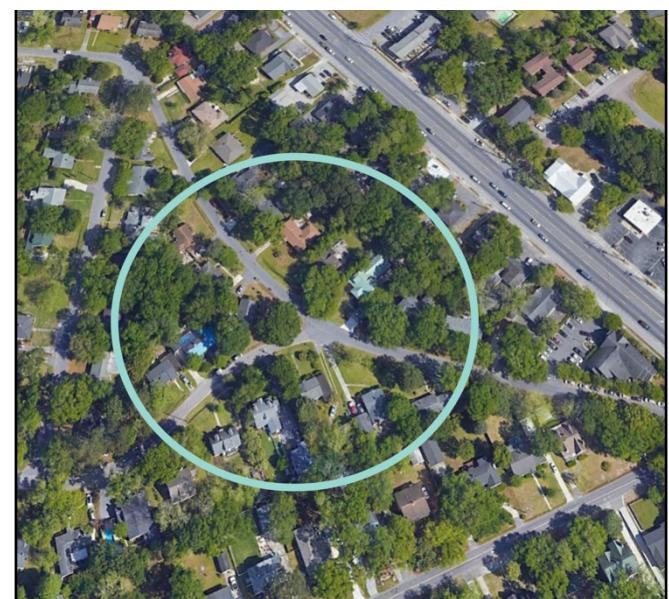
- ❖ Street ownership in Avondale is divided between local ownership and South Carolina Department of Transportation.
- ❖ South Carolina Department of Transportation owns the major highways, St. Andrew's Boulevard and Savannah Highway, as well as many interior streets.
- ❖ Some interior streets are owned locally, either by Charleston County or by the City of Charleston.
- ❖ Several streets, including Rosedale Dr, Ashdale Dr, and Oakdale Place, have multi-jurisdictional ownership.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



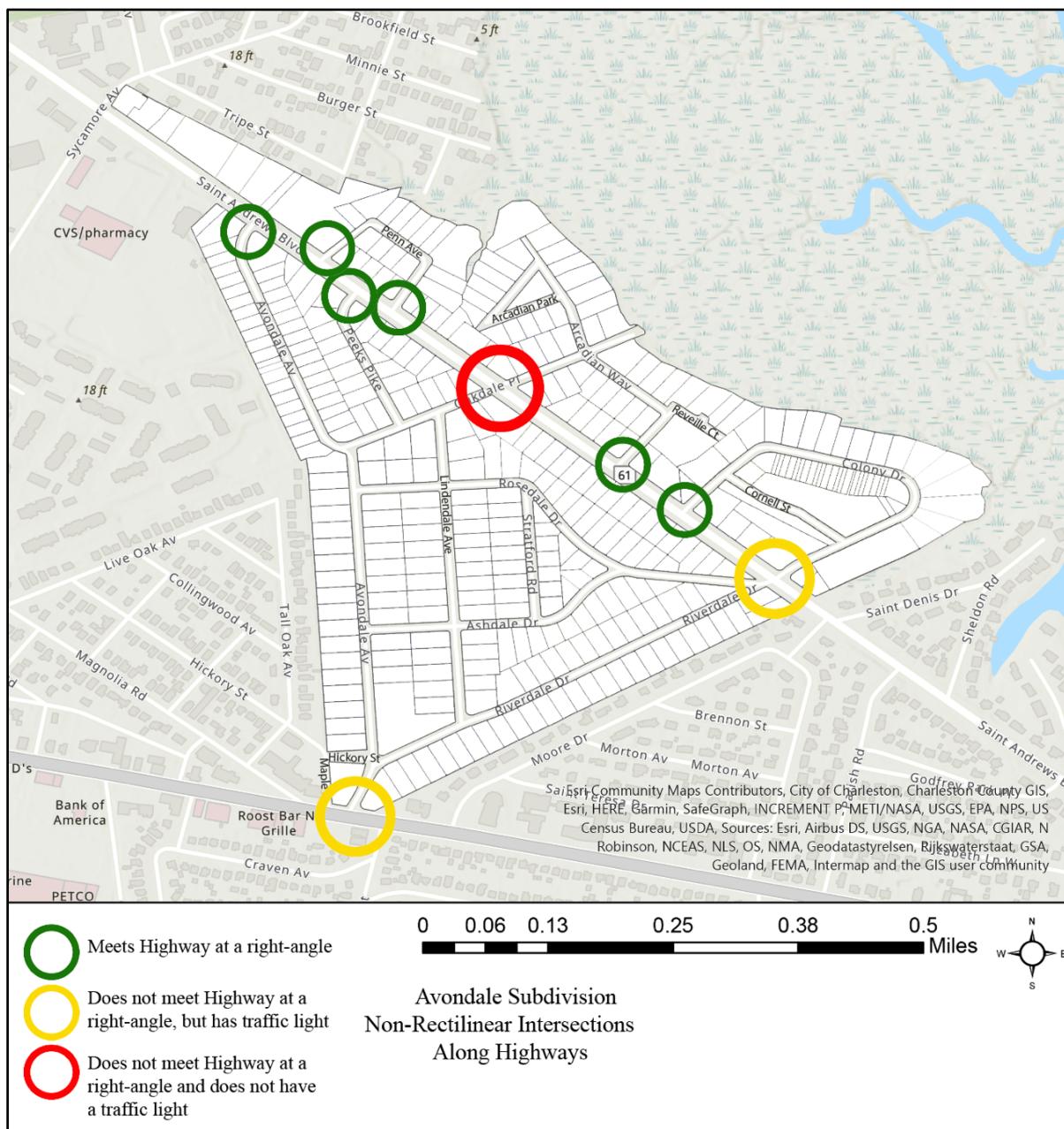
COMPLEX GEOMETRIC INTERSECTIONS

- ❖ American architect and urban planner Andres Duany demonstrated in his work *Smart Growth Manual* that forks, staggered intersections, roundabouts, and other complex geometric configurations arranged along slow neighborhood streets make drivers less confident and therefore more cautious. This has been shown to have a traffic calming effect on drivers, thereby reducing accident rates.
- ❖ In Avondale, many of the neighborhood intersections were correctly planned this way originally.
- ❖ Where neighborhood intersections were not planned with complex geometries, traffic calming devices, such as stop signs, have been set up.



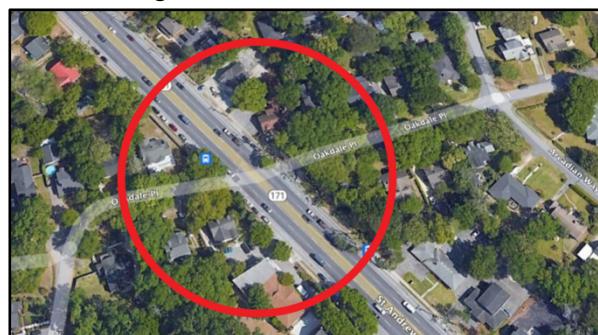
Complex Geometric Intersection at the merge of Ashdale and Rosedale.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)

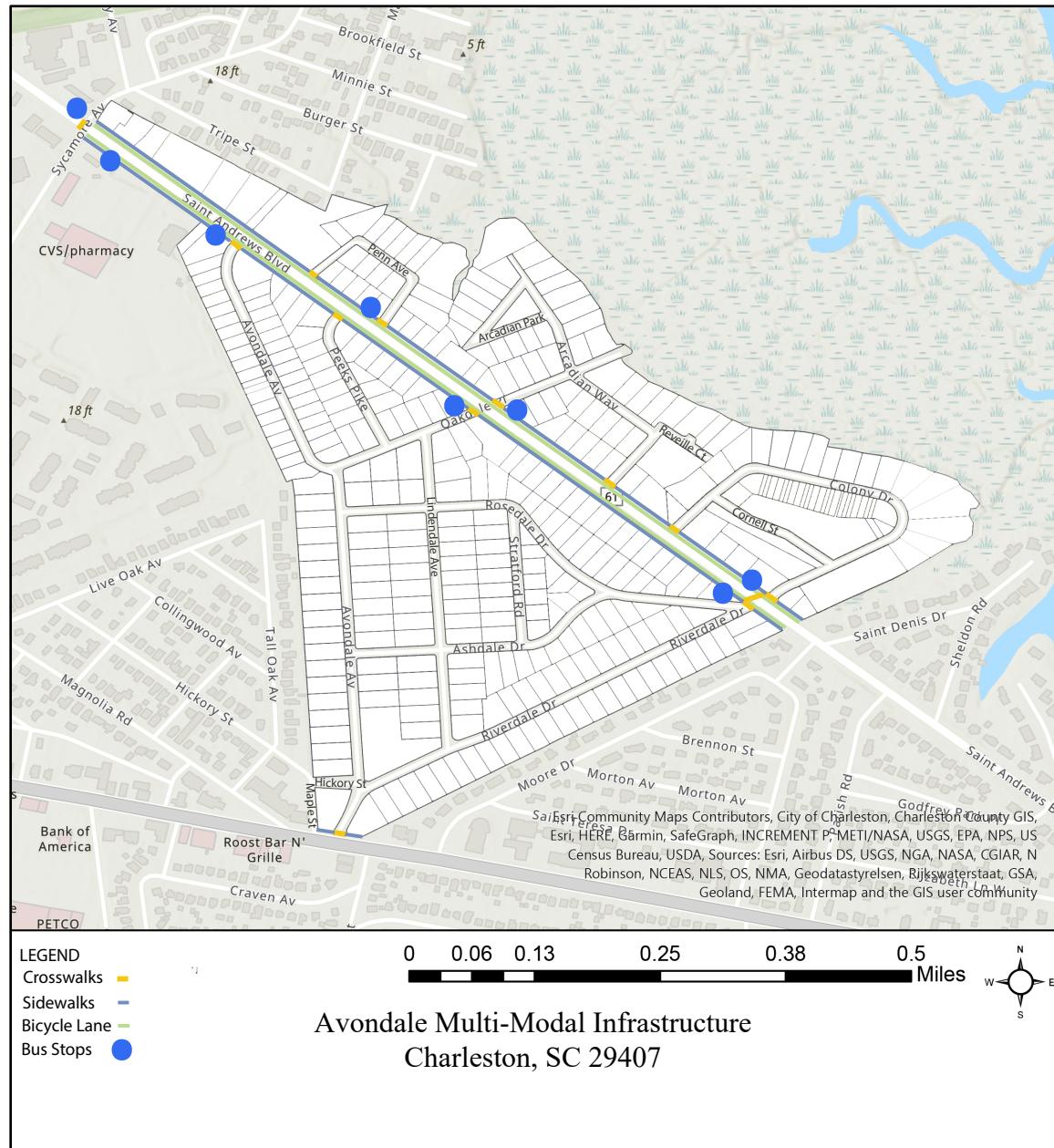


NON-RECTILINEAR INTERSECTIONS

- ❖ Intersections with major highways, such as St. Andrew's Blvd and Savannah Highway, should be rectilinear, or intersecting at right-angles, with traffic calming devices. Studies by the Federal Highway Administration have shown that non-rectilinear intersections at highways are quantifiably more dangerous for drivers. Specifically the FHA's *Handbook for Designing Roadways for the Aging Population* explains that "decreasing the angle of the intersection makes detection of and judgments about potential conflicting vehicles on crossing roadways much more difficult."
- ❖ Colony Drive, Arcadian Way, Penn Avenue, and Peeks Pike all intersect with St. Andrew's Boulevard at right-angles with stop signs.
- ❖ Riverdale Drive intersects with St. Andrew's Boulevard at a right angle with a traffic light but also has an additional complex geometry formed by Rosedale Drive, which is mediated with a stop sign.
- ❖ Oakdale intersects with St. Andrew's Blvd at a non-rectilinear intersection and does not have a traffic light.

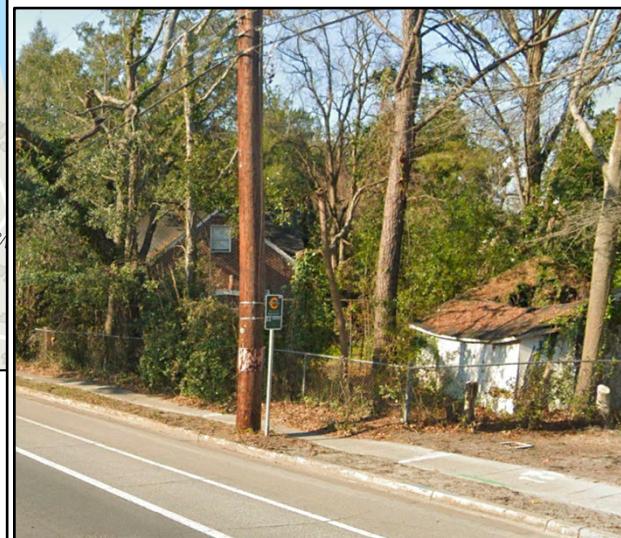


AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



MULTI-MODAL INFRASTRUCTURE

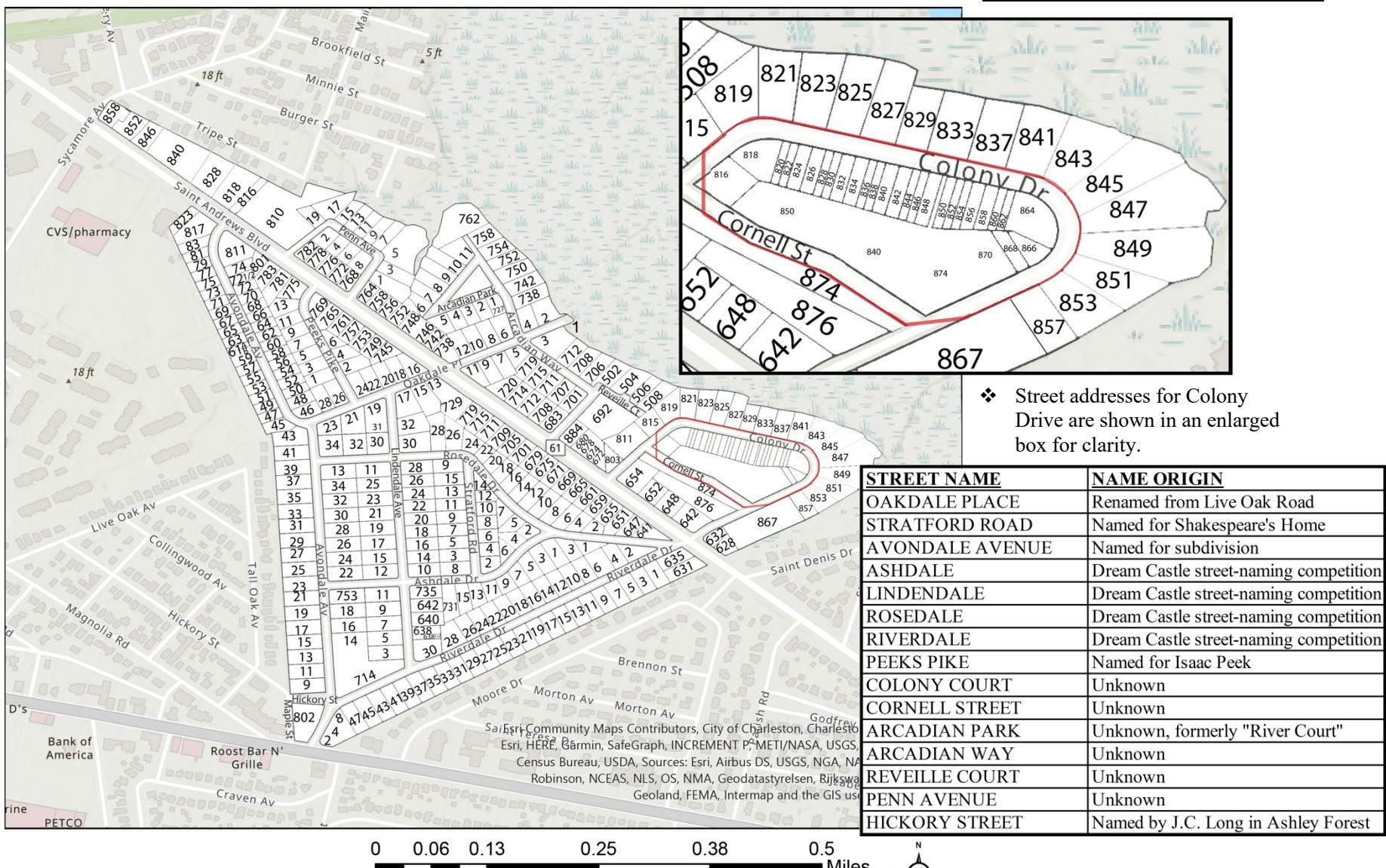
- ❖ Painted crosswalks are present only on neighborhood streets that intersect with either St. Andrew's Boulevard or Savannah Highway.
- ❖ Unprotected bike lanes exist for the entire stretch of St. Andrew's Boulevard that runs through Avondale.
- ❖ Sidewalks are present only along St. Andrew's Boulevard and Savannah Highway.
- ❖ There are four bus stops on each side of the portion of St. Andrew's Boulevard that runs through Avondale.
- ❖ Plan West Ashley noted that Avondale Point is among the most walkable areas of West Ashley.



Oakdale Place bus stop along St. Andrew's Blvd, with bicycle lane and sidewalk visible.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)

STREET NAMES & NUMBERS



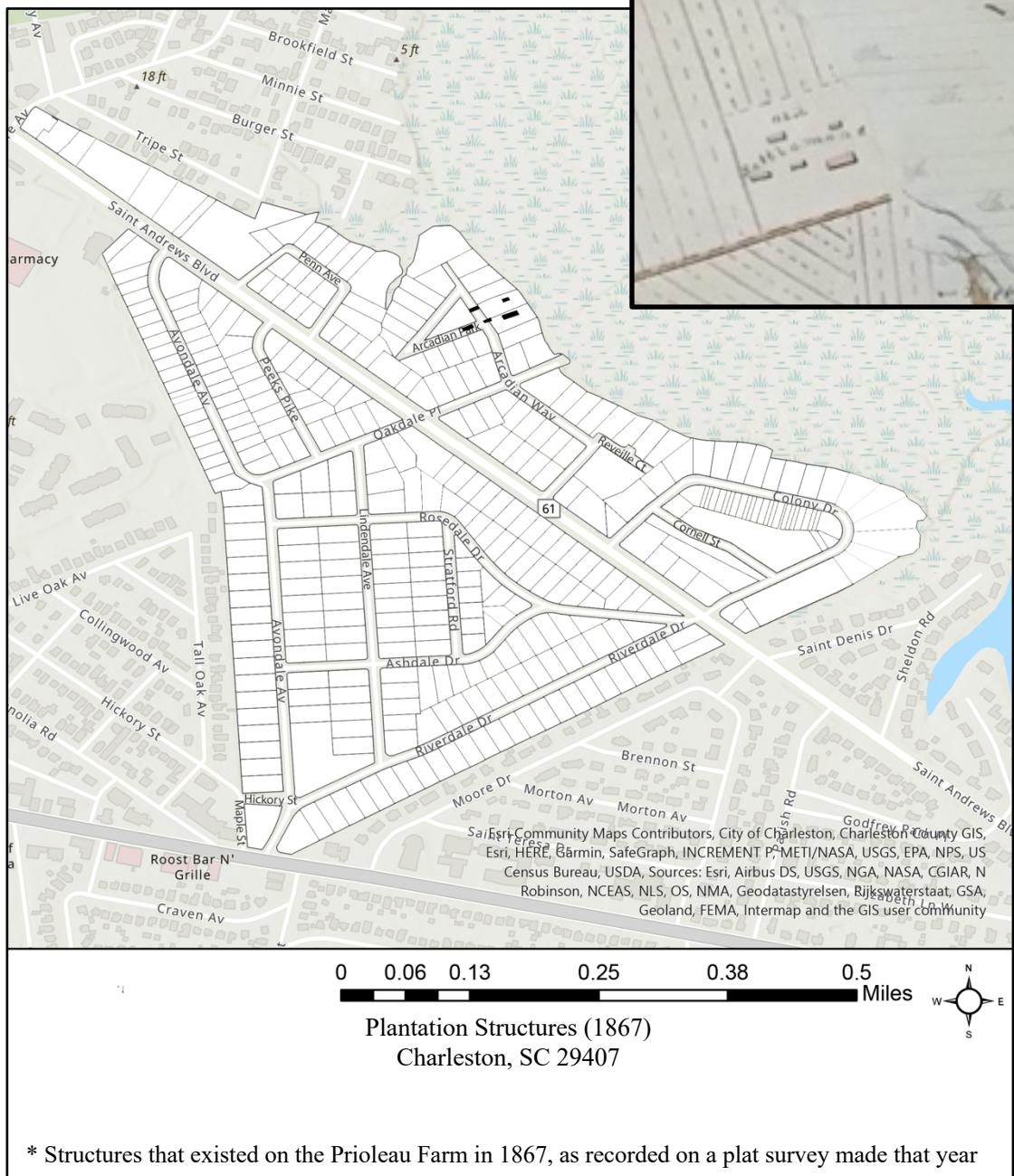
Avondale Street Numbers
Charleston, SC 29407

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)

PART IV: HOMES AND BUILDINGS

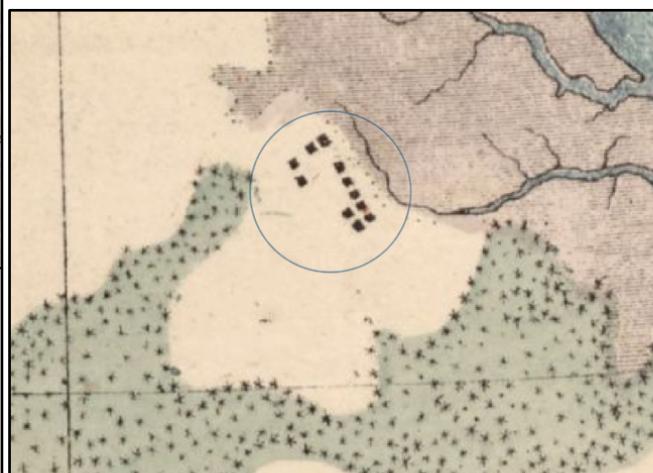


AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



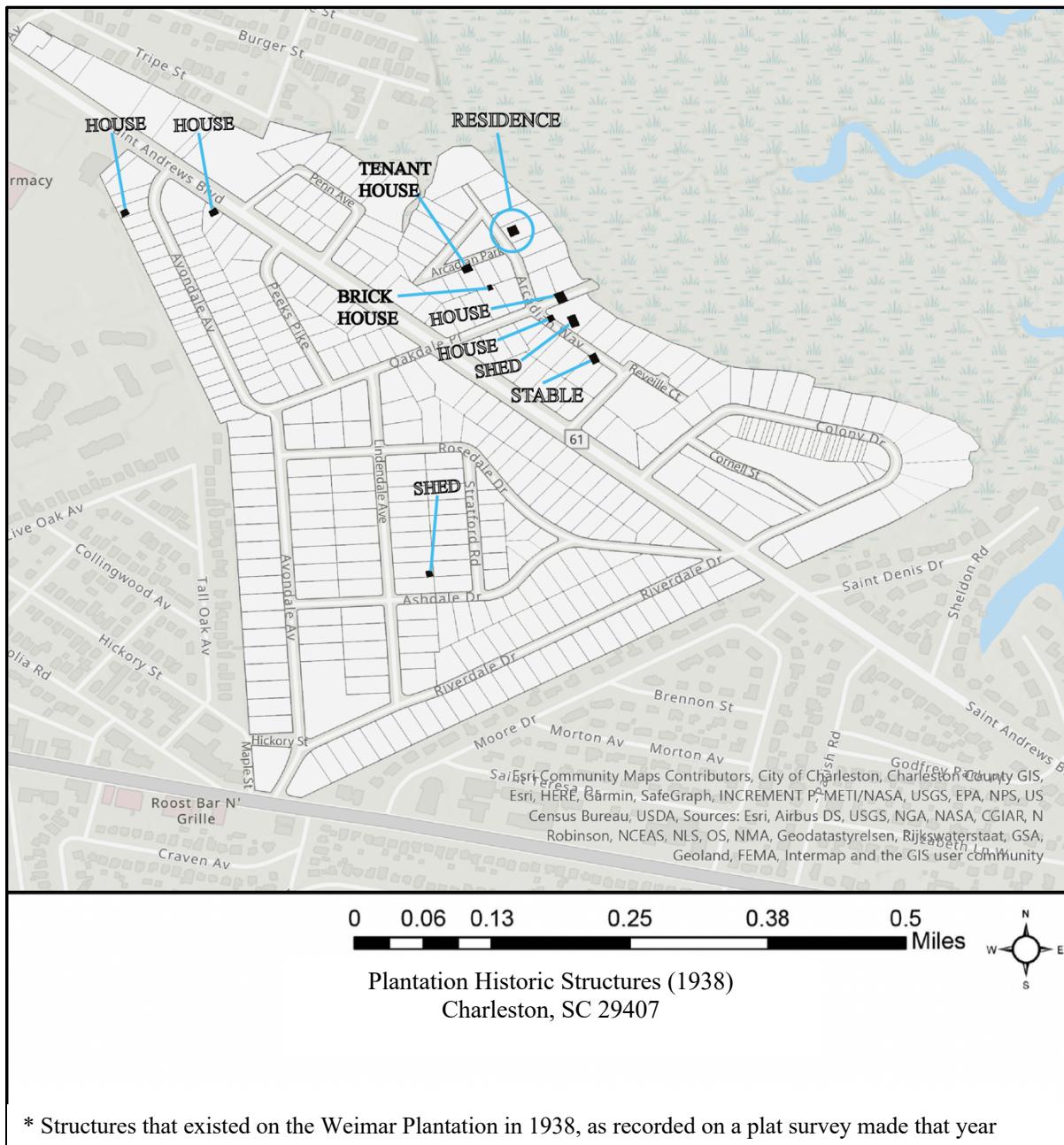
HISTORIC STRUCTURES (1867)

- ❖ Diagram showing the approximate location of structures visible on a plat survey of the Prioleau Farm created after the Civil War in 1867.
- ❖ A cropped section from the plat, visible in the box to the left, shows 5 structures clustered at the end of Live Oak Road (now Oakdale Place) and are labeled "Old Settlement."
- ❖ An 1858 harbor map, shown below, recorded 11 structures on the plantation which are circled in blue. The position of these structures in relation to Live Oak Road is unclear, as the road was not shown on the map, but must have existed in some form as a means of access.
- ❖ Assuming both maps were accurate for their respective times, 6 structures were



Charleston Harbor and Its Approaches (1858)

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



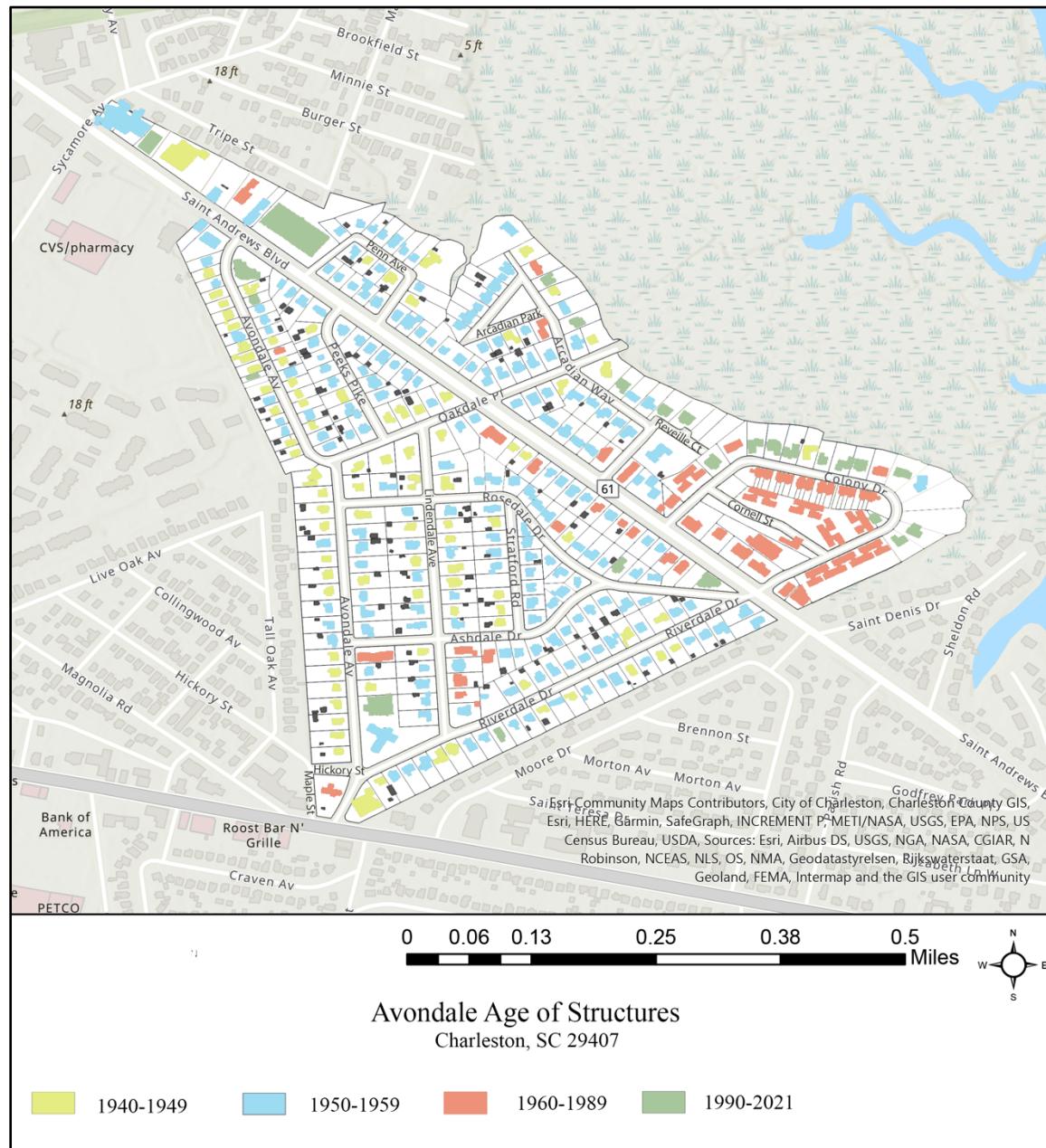
HISTORIC STRUCTURES (1938)

- ❖ There were several houses and sheds on the site. One house was recorded as being brick, while the rest were likely wood.
- ❖ The structure labeled “Residence” is in precisely the same place as 750 Arcadian Way. Documentation provided by the current owner of the property confirmed that foundations of the prior structure were removed to allow the ground to be leveled for the current structure to be built.

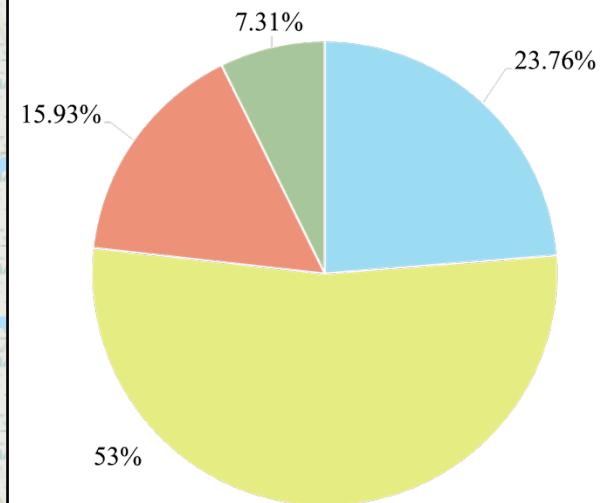
Where did the name Weimar come from?

Many plantations had historic names such as Drayton Hall, and Middleton Place. Some plantation owners chose German names for their plantations, as Charleston had a very large German population. Examples include the nearby Coburg Plantation, named for Coburg, Germany, and Sans Souci Plantation on the northern part of the peninsula, which shares its name with the Sanssouci palace in Potsdam, Germany. The Weimar plantation had two owners of German descent; the Sprague brothers and the Ficken family. The name was likely chosen by one of them during the Postbellum truck farming era.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



AGE OF STRUCTURES



53% of structures were built during the subdivision's first phase of development, 1940-1949.

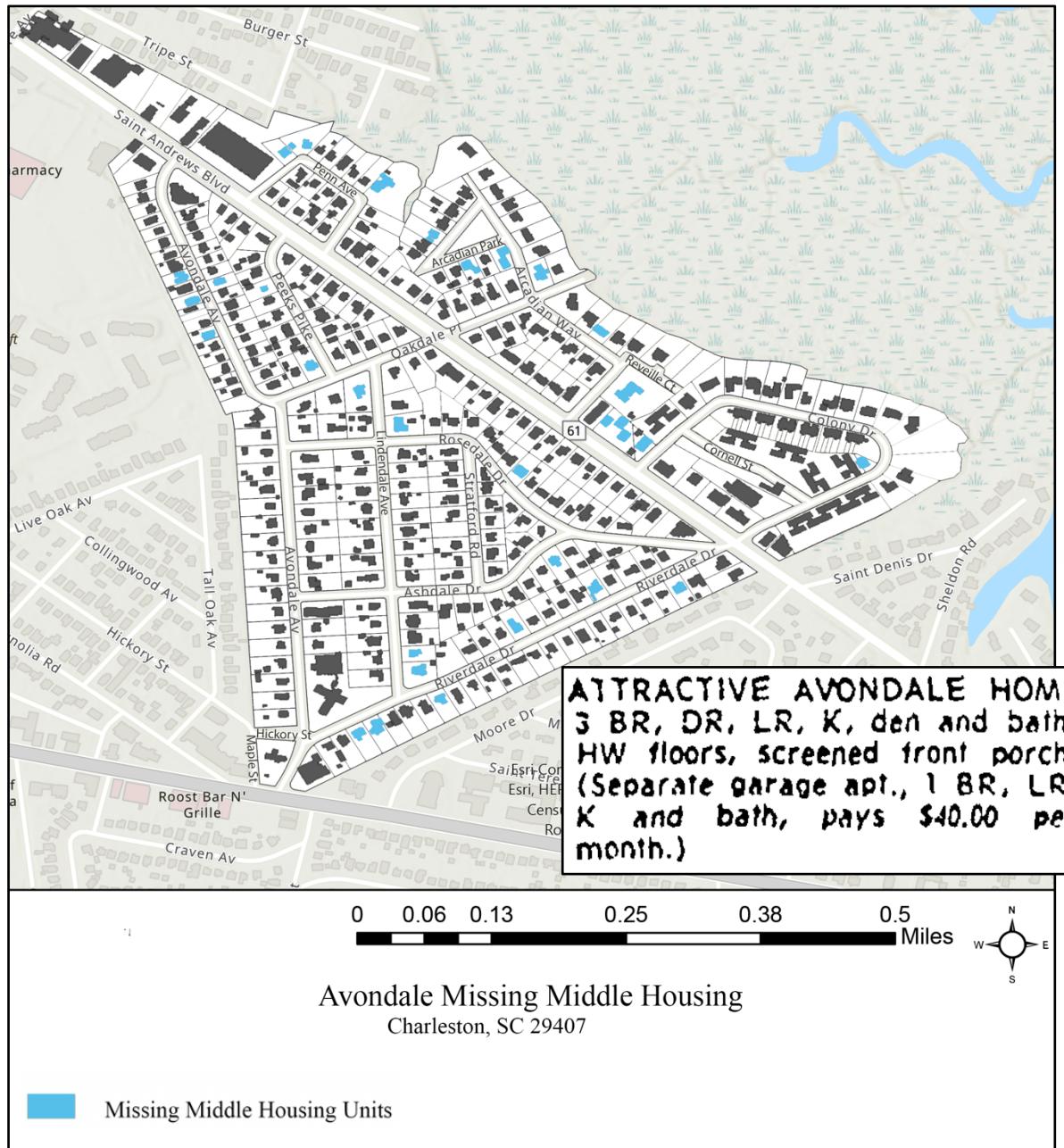
23.76% of structures were built during the second decade of the subdivision's existence, 1950-1959

15.93% of structures were built during the second main phase of development, 1960-1989.

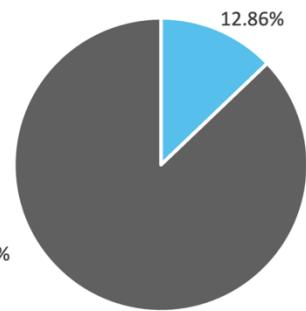
7.31% of structures were built during the latest phase of development, 1990-2021.

❖ Garages, utility sheds, carports, and other auxiliary structures were not surveyed.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



MISSING MIDDLE



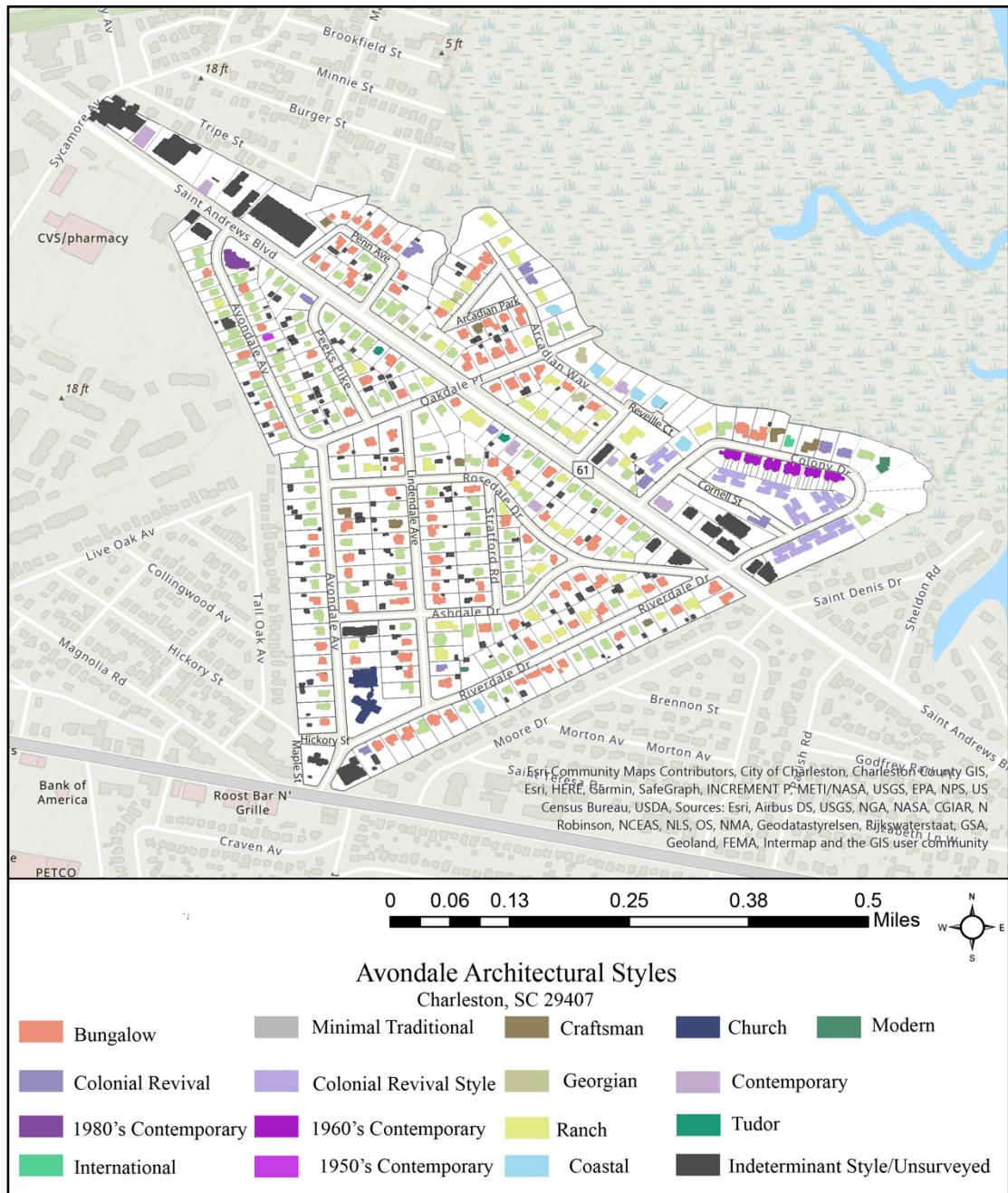
❖ The term “Missing Middle” housing refers to a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units. There is no one specific architectural style or floorplan for Missing Middle, but it is characterized as being comparable in scale and form to single-family homes.

In Avondale, missing middle housing can be found as duplexes, triplexes, and may even have as many as six units. Avondale has had missing middle housing types since the subdivision was first developed. These units were often built onto existing single-family homes, either as additions or converted attics or garages. Newspaper advertisements, such as the ad from 1959 shown, promoted these attached dwelling units as attractive amenities.

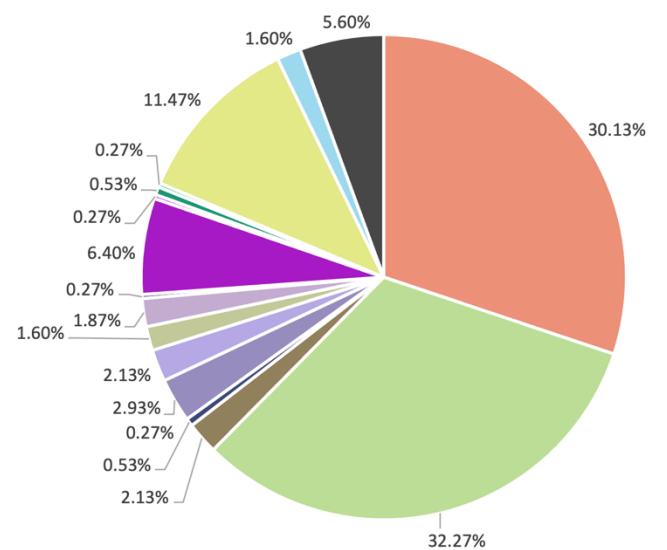


Elevation of a “Missing Middle” house in Section C of Avondale with a quadplex constructed behind an original single-family bungalow.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



ARCHITECTURAL STYLES



■ Bungalow ■ Minimal Traditional ■ Craftsman
■ Church ■ Modern ■ Colonial Revival
■ Colonial Revival Style ■ Georgian ■ Contemporary
■ 1980's Contemporary ■ 1960's Contemporary ■ 1950's Contemporary
■ Tudor ■ International ■ Ranch
■ Coastal ■ Indeterminant Style/Unsurveyed

- ❖ Avondale has a wide variety of architecture reflecting at least sixteen different styles.
- ❖ 5.60% of buildings are of indeterminant style, which are mostly townhouses and generic commercial structures.
- ❖ Contemporary styles generally refer to a collection of architectural details and ornamentation that were popular during a particular era but that do not reflect a specific architectural style.
- ❖ Garages, utility sheds, carports, and other auxiliary structures were not surveyed.



Minimal Traditional – This small house type has a low or intermediate pitched roof that is more often gabled. It's generally one or one and a half stories in height with roof eaves and usually no overhang. Windows are typically multi-pane or 1/1. There is frequently minimal architectural detail and are rarely dormers. The “*Gable and Wing*” subtype has a low-pitched, front-facing gable added on one side of a side-gabled roof. Typically, the front-facing gable does not protrude very far in front of the side gable and consists of a small extension added to one room of the house. Two story examples are sometimes found.



Coastal - A relatively young architectural type, it is typically characterized by prominent porches, a pitched roof, and a raised first floor. A blend of rural and suburban characteristics, the ground level, often composed of brick piers that support the living space, reflects the typology's premise of being found in coastal areas where flood zone requirements would prohibit usage of the ground floor as habitable space. The space is usually unfinished, using louvers or slats to enclose a garage or storage area. Metal gable roofs and siding are the main materials for the living spaces. Storm shutters reminiscent of storm-prone environments are common features. This housing type can be two or three stories and features light toned or neutral colors such as browns, beiges, and shades of white and gray all contrasted by black ornamentation.



Bungalow – Derived from the Hindi word *bungala*, meaning a style of house from India that was favored by British colonists for broad overhangs and open porches, which were desirable in warm climates. Bungalows were especially popular in the United States between 1900 and 1930, and in particular after the First World War, where they were adapted into a typology that has the appearance of a small or humble house, even when used as a style for larger homes. Definitive features include a broad front porch usually supported by substantial square or tapered columns resting on the porch rail. A side-gabled roof typically continues from the main house and sweeps over the porch in a continuous line. This typology also frequently has dormer windows in the center of the roof, facing front, with the result of a two-story house that resembles a low, one-story structure



Colonial Revival - Accentuated front door, normally with decorative crown pediment supported by pilasters, or extended forward and supported by slender columns to form entry porch; doors commonly have overhead fanlights or sidelights; façade normally shows symmetrically balanced windows and center door (less common with door off-center); windows with double-hung sashes, usually with multi-pane glazing in one or both sashes; windows frequently in adjacent pairs.



Craftsman - Low-pitched, gabled roof (occasionally hipped) with wide, unenclosed eave overhang roof rafters usually exposed; decorative (false) beams or braces commonly added under gables; porches, either full- or partial-width, with roof supported by tapered square columns; columns or piers frequently extended to ground level (without a break at level of porch floor); commonly one or one and a half stories high



Georgian – This relatively simplistic house type typically features a paneled front door, usually centered and capped by an elaborate decorative crown (entablature) supported by decorative pilasters (flattened columns). There may be a row of small rectangular panes of glass beneath the crown, either within the door or in a transom just above. Windows are aligned vertically and horizontally in symmetrical rows. The “*Centered Gable*” design has a gable or pediment centered on the front façade. The façade beneath the gable may either remain in the same plane as the rest of the wall or be extended slightly forward for emphasis as a pavilion.



Ranch – Broad one-story houses built low to the ground with a low-pitched roof without dormers. These houses commonly have a moderate-to-wide roof overhang with a front entry that is usually located off-center and sheltered under the main roof. A garage is typically mounted to the main façade facing either front, side, or rear. There is also frequently a large, picturesque, and horizontal window facing the front, creating an asymmetrical façade.



Contemporary - This typology is defined primarily by the utilization of the most trendy, fashionable, or popular design innovations of the era in which the structure is being built. It incorporates some rural characteristics as reminders of craftsman houses but looks to simultaneously integrate the technological appeal of modernism. It functions as a conglomeration of architectural features from other typologies with the goal of suiting immediate trends. Roofs are often flat or built with a low pitch, and fewer classicist elements are relied on with geometric shapes favored instead. These houses may bear similarities to ranch houses in terms of massing, and their shape may sometimes resemble minimal traditional houses. They may also be taller, sometimes two stories.



Tudor – This typology is defined by steeply pitched roofs, which are usually side-gabled. Façades are dominated by one or more front-facing gables, also usually steeply pitched. Windows are usually tall and narrow, clustered in multiple groups with multi-pane glazing. These houses have massive chimneys, sometimes crowned by chimney pots. Front doors and/or entry porches tend to have round or Tudor arches.



International – This style typically has a flat roof, usually without a ledge at the roofline. Windows are set flush without outer walls smooth, unadorned surfaces with no decorative detailing at the doors or windows; façade composition commonly includes large window groupings, often linear, and expanses of windowless wall surface; unified wall cladding, generally white stucco; commonly asymmetrical.

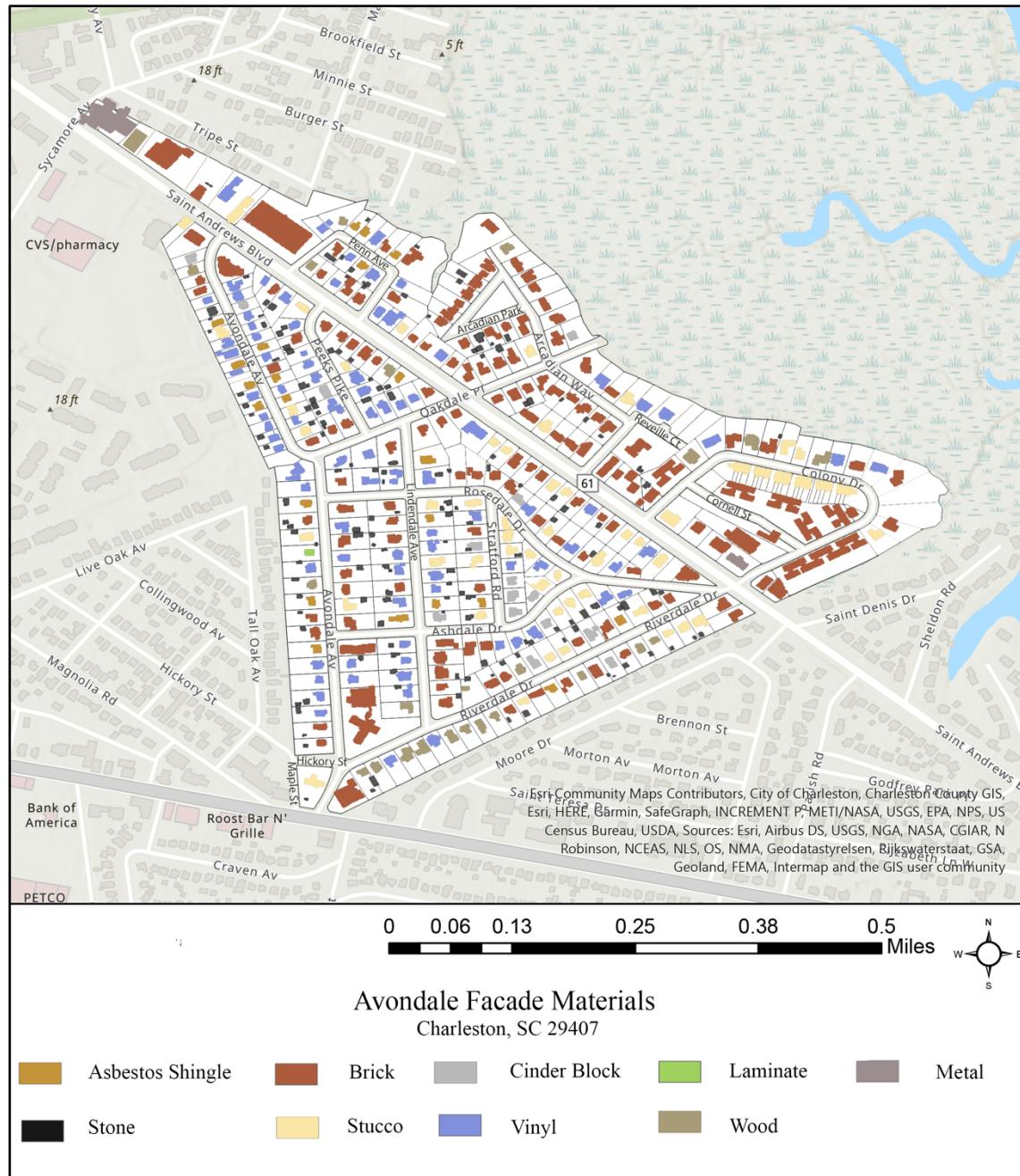


Modern – This architectural style is based upon the usage of new and innovative construction technologies, particularly the use of glass, steel, and reinforced concrete. The guiding principle of this style is that form should follow function, known as functionalism. The style embraces minimalism and rejects ornamentation. Elements of modern houses are casement windows, firmly geometric shapes, and large overhanging eaves. Roof lines of modern houses typically have a shallow pitch.

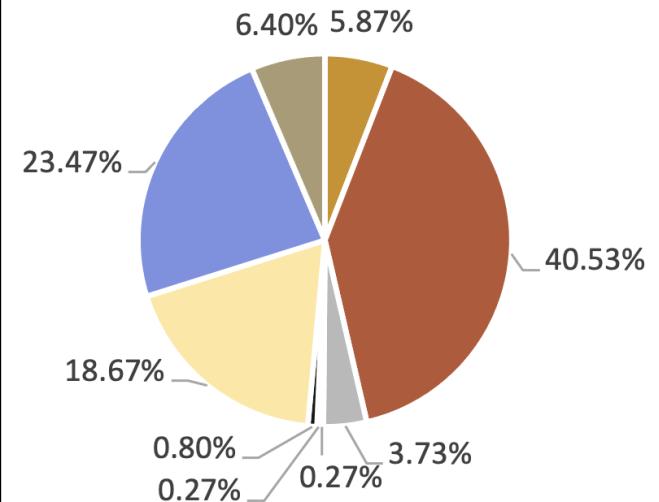


Church – Avondale's single religious structure is the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, which is built in an American Ecclesiastical, or Neotraditional style reminiscent of English churches. This structure is positioned diagonally on its lot as a *cruciform*, or shaped as a cross with an entrance at the base of the symbol. In this case, the diagonal position on the lot orients the entrance to address the corner of Avondale Avenue and Riverdale Road, with the steeple gracefully presiding over the intersection.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)

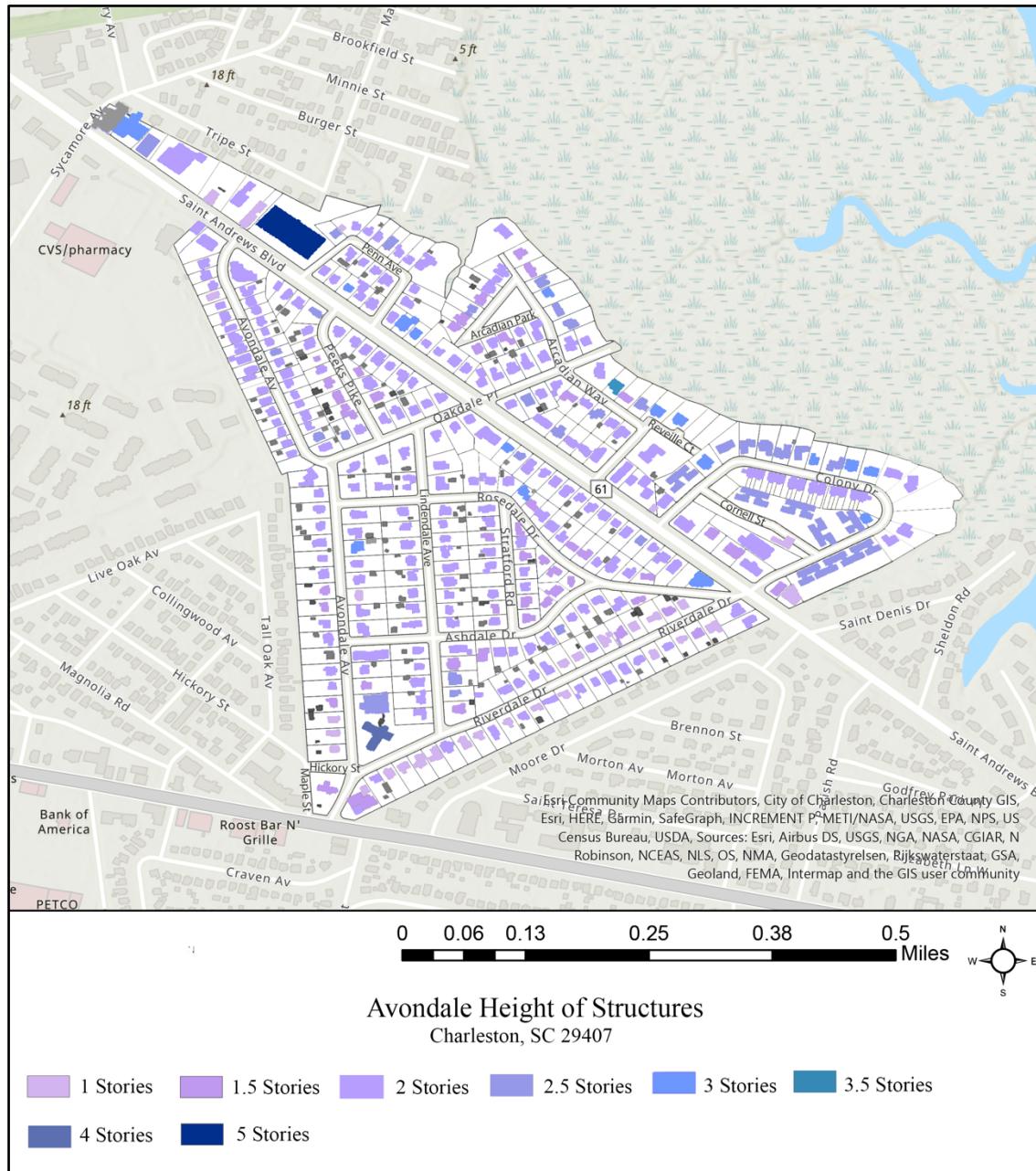


FACADE MATERIALS

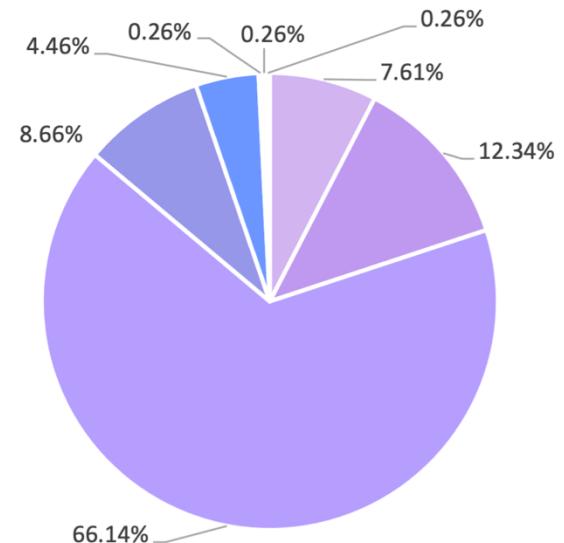


- ❖ Many houses have multiple façade materials. For the purposes of categorization however, the primary material, or the one most prominent on the façade facing the street, was selected for this analysis.
- ❖ The majority of facades in Avondale, 40.53%, use brick as the primary building material as veneer, masonry construction, pillars, piers, steps, or foundations.
- ❖ The second most prominent façade material, at 23.47%, is vinyl siding. This usually represents a modern renovation over a structure's original façade. This lower-maintenance material is often installed over wood siding, which is more prone to decay.
- ❖ The third major façade material, found on 18.67% of structures, is stucco.
- ❖ Garages, utility sheds, carports, and other auxiliary structures were not surveyed.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



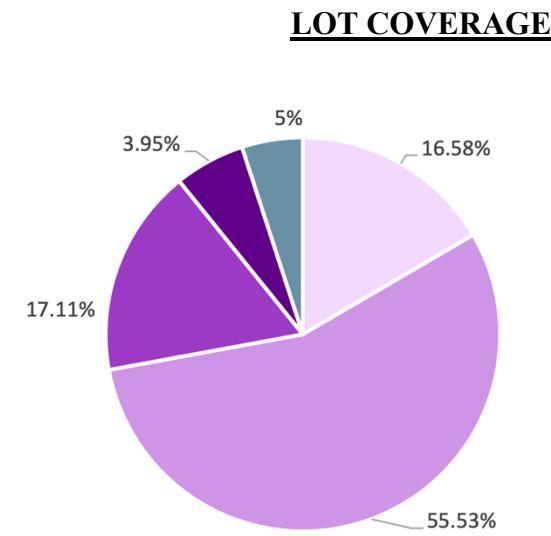
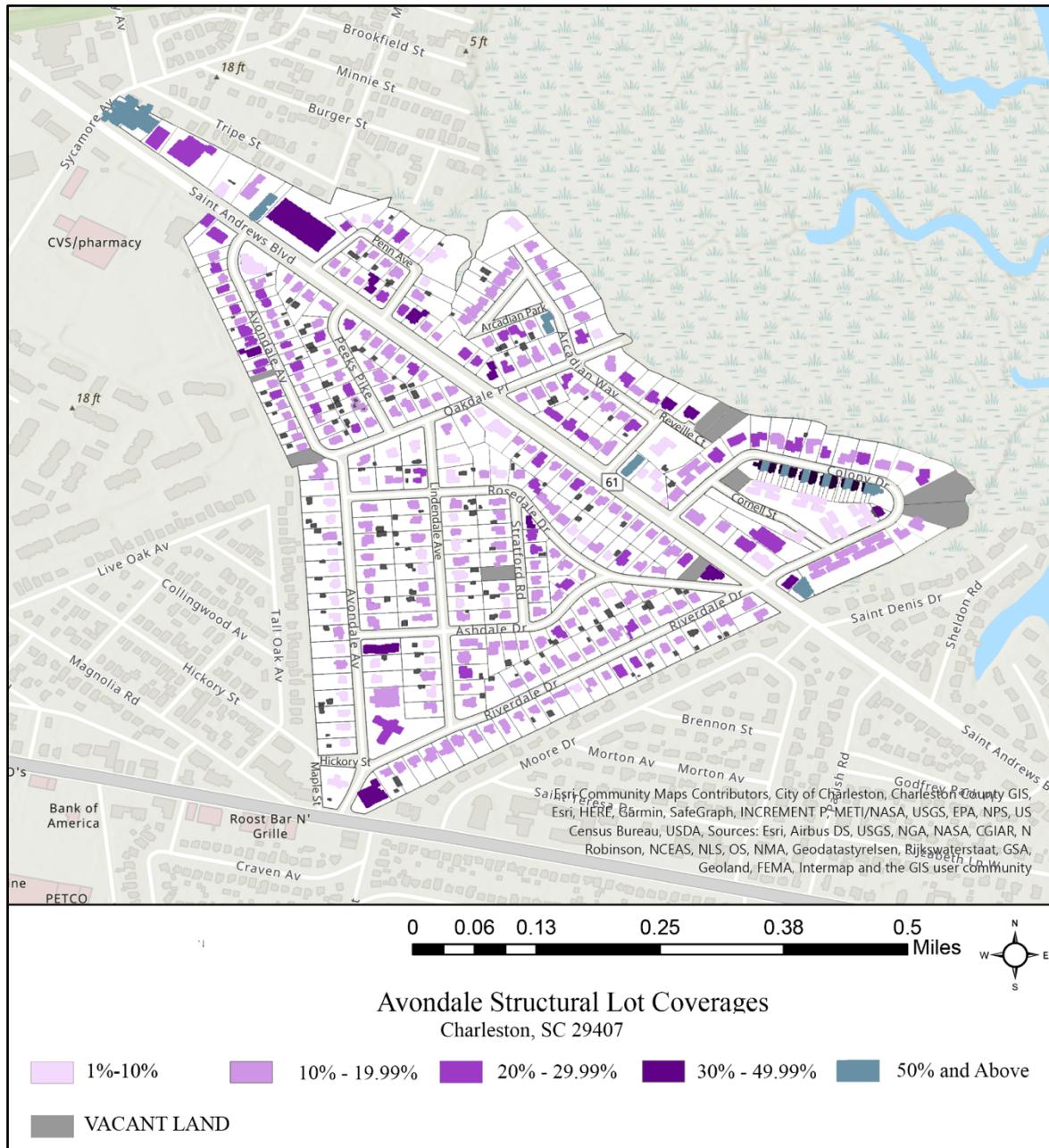
HEIGHT OF STRUCTURES



- 1 Story
- 1.5 Stories
- 2 Stories
- 2.5 Stories
- 3 Stories
- 3.5 Stories
- 4 Stories
- 5 Stories

- ❖ 7.61% of structures are a single story, while 12.34% of structures are 1.5 stories.
- ❖ 66.14% of structures are 2 stories, and 8.66% are 2.5 stories.
- ❖ 4.46% of structures are 3-stories, and 0.26% of structures are 3.5 stories.
- ❖ 4-story and 5 story structures each account for 0.26% of structures.
- ❖ Garages, utility sheds, carports, and other auxiliary structures were not surveyed.

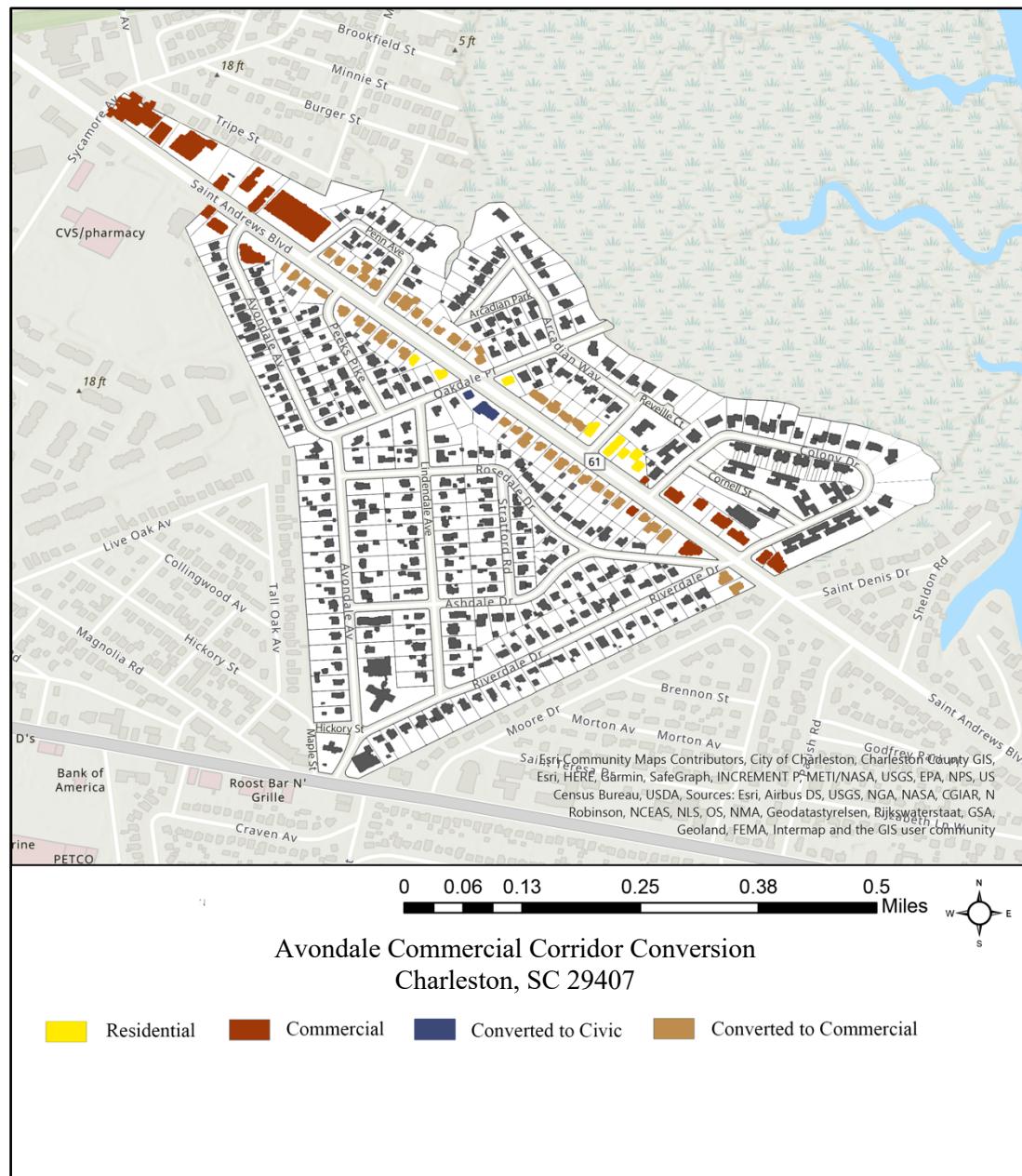
AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



Legend: Less than 10% (lightest purple), 10-19.99% (medium-light purple), 20-29.99% (medium purple), 30-49.99% (dark purple), 50 and over (darkest purple)

- ❖ The majority of lots in Avondale, 55.53%, have lot coverage between 10% and 19.99%.
- ❖ Lot coverage over 50% in Avondale is found primarily in the townhouses along Colony Drive and the commercial lots along St. Andrew's Blvd.
- ❖ Townhouses typically have lot coverage in the range of 20% to 49.99%.
- ❖ “Missing Middle” housing in Avondale falls within the range of 20% to 49.99% lot coverage.
- ❖ Garages, utility sheds, carports, and other auxiliary structures were not surveyed.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR CONVERSION

- ❖ Most historic structures along St. Andrew's Blvd were originally built for residential use, with the notable exception of the Freezer Locker building.
- ❖ Over time, many of these residential structures were converted to commercial or civic uses. Architecturally, they are still reminiscent of their original use in terms of their massing, scale, and relationship to the street. Many of these structures were built as residential duplexes, which were converted into two commercial units. Attic spaces were also converted into additional commercial space, and additions were added onto the original structures to accommodate the change in use.
- ❖ Finally, new commercial buildings were constructed that do not resemble residential homes. Overall, these structures are larger, more rigidly geometric in form, and do not resemble the historical architectural precedents of the rest of the neighborhood.

'Chaotic Phenomenon'

Engulfing Commercial Octopus

By RON BENSON
Evening Post Staff Writer

The average homeowner may have to think twice before naming an application of the term "chaotic phenomenon".

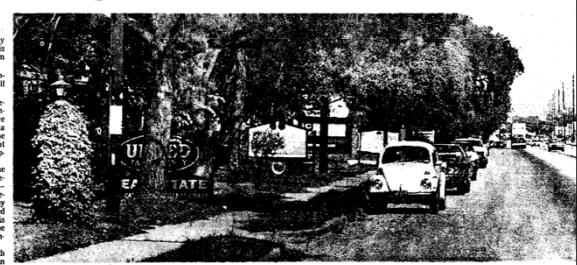
Neighborhoods that are managed, the conclusion likely will be the same.

Residents of Highway 61, between Highways 17 and 52, where the area has been known to have been living in the middle of a "chaotic phenomenon" for the last 10 years. That's what professional planners say is happening to the area.

The residential portions of the highway between Avondale, Ward and Ashdale Hall Road - have undergone dramatic face-lifts, with new buildings springing up like weeds in a lawn.

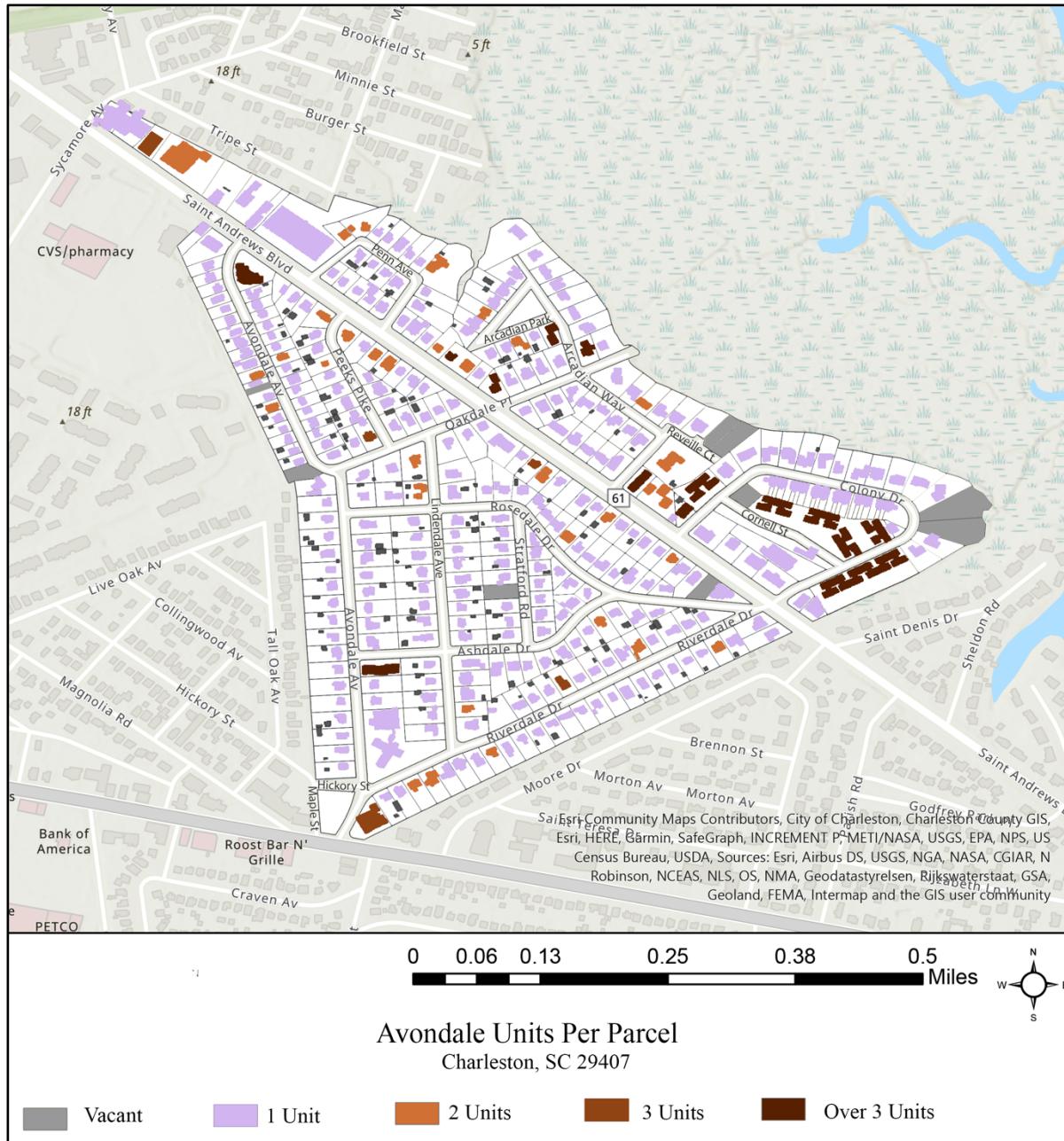
A typical block in the south side of Highway 61, between Avondale and Olddale avenues. Prior to 1968, there were 19 structures on the block. Now there are 36.

Parking and traffic have increased along sections of Highway 61 which were previously residential areas.

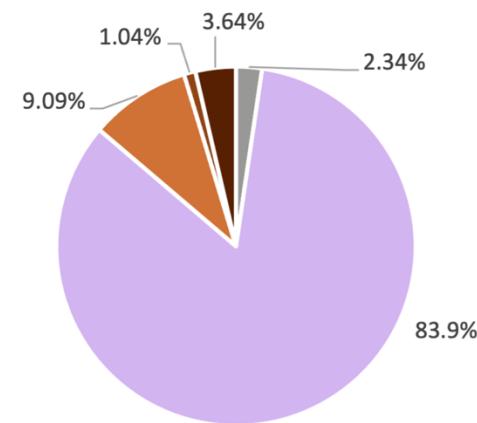


1971 news article describing commercial conversion underway along the Avondale section of the boulevard.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



UNITS PER PARCEL



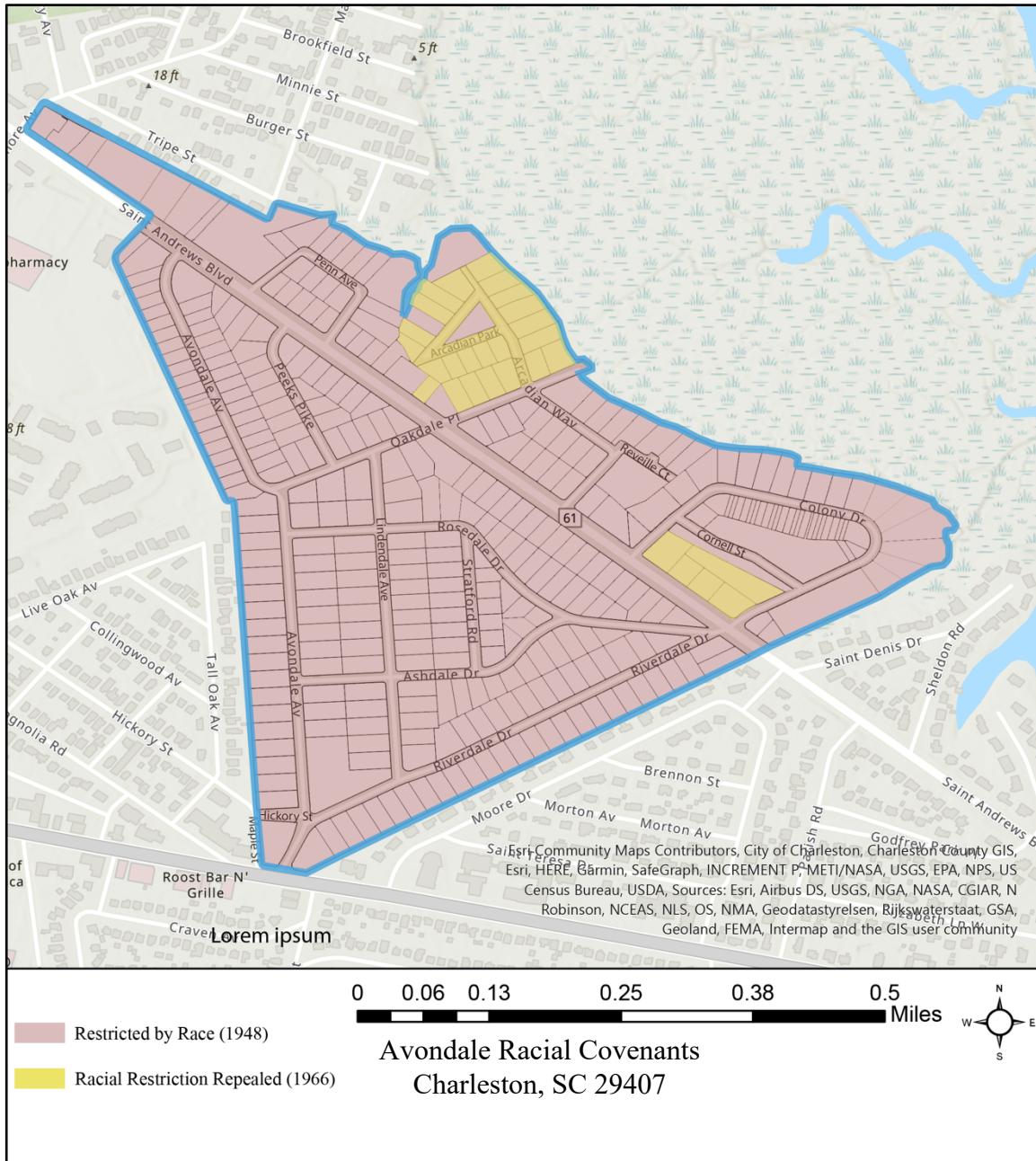
■ Vacant ■ 1 Unit ■ 2 Units ■ 3 Units ■ > 3 Units

- ❖ The overwhelming majority of parcels, 83.9%, have single-family homes.
- ❖ Duplexes, or properties with two units, account for 9.09% of structures.
- ❖ Tripleplexes are the smallest percentage of structures in Avondale at just 1.04%.
- ❖ Denser multifamily containing more than three units accounts for 3.64% of the parcel in Avondale. These structures have between 4 and 16 units.
- ❖ Unit counts include both commercial and residential uses.

PART V: JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES & LAND USE



AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



RACIAL RESTRICTIONS

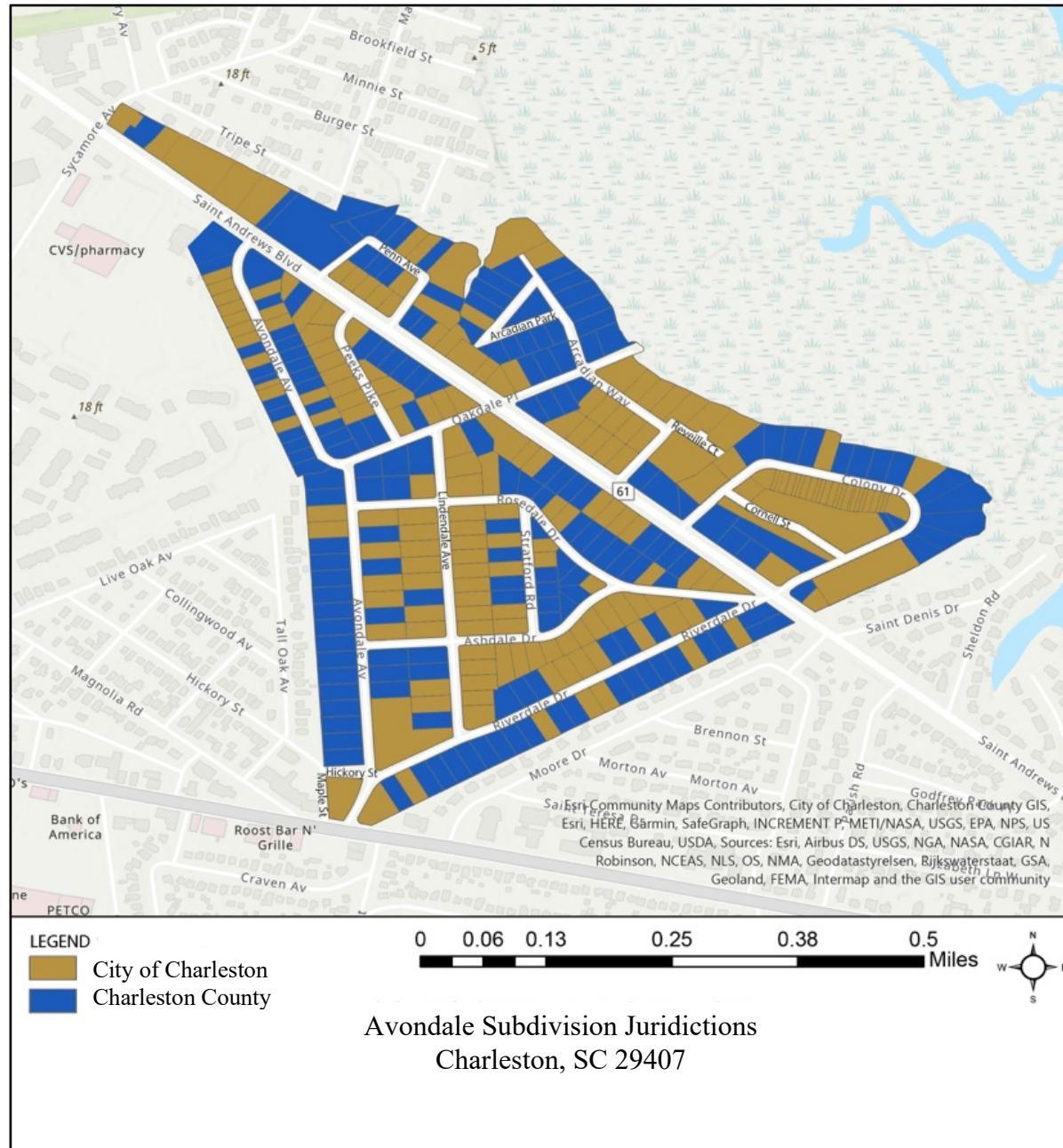
March 26th, 1940 - The West Charleston Corporation drew up a neighborhood covenant for its development in the Avondale subdivision. Section 8 contained a racially restrictive clause.

- ❖ **May 6th, 1948** – The West Charleston Corporation created a second set of covenants for Avondale. Section 7 included a racially restrictive clause.
- ❖ The purpose of these covenants was, among other things, housing segregation by race. The document addressed many standard neighborhood issues, but also restricted ownership and occupancy of the homes to specifically exclude African-Americans.
- ❖ In both documents, the racial clause reads as follows; *“The property shall not be conveyed, sold, mortgaged devised, denoted, rented or otherwise disposed of to any person or persons of African descent, nor to any corporation whose stock is controlled by stockholders of such descent, with the exception, however, that household servants of African descent employed on the premises may occupy servants quarters thereon.”*

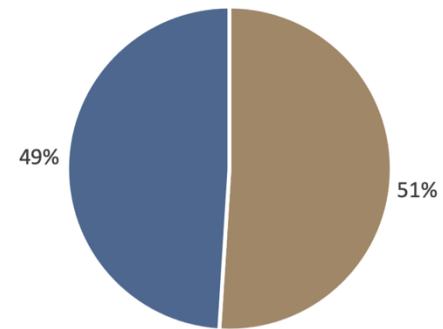
January 10th, 1966 – An amendment to Avondale’s restrictive covenants was filed by a group of 28 homeowners in Sections C, and D of Avondale legally repealing Section 8 of the original 1940 covenant document. The amendment explains that the goal of the amendment was to *“enhance property values.”* This implies that racial restrictions must have harmed property values.

- ❖ The Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 outlawed racially restrictive covenants, and an appeals court ruling in 1972 upheld the prohibition, effectively nullifying all racial covenants.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)

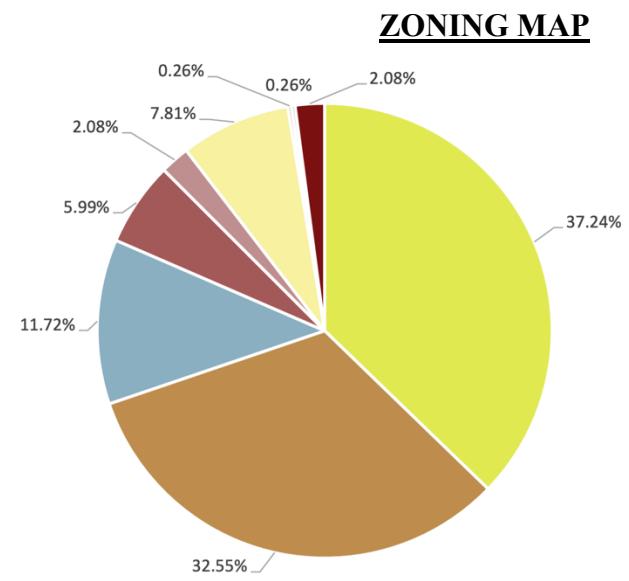
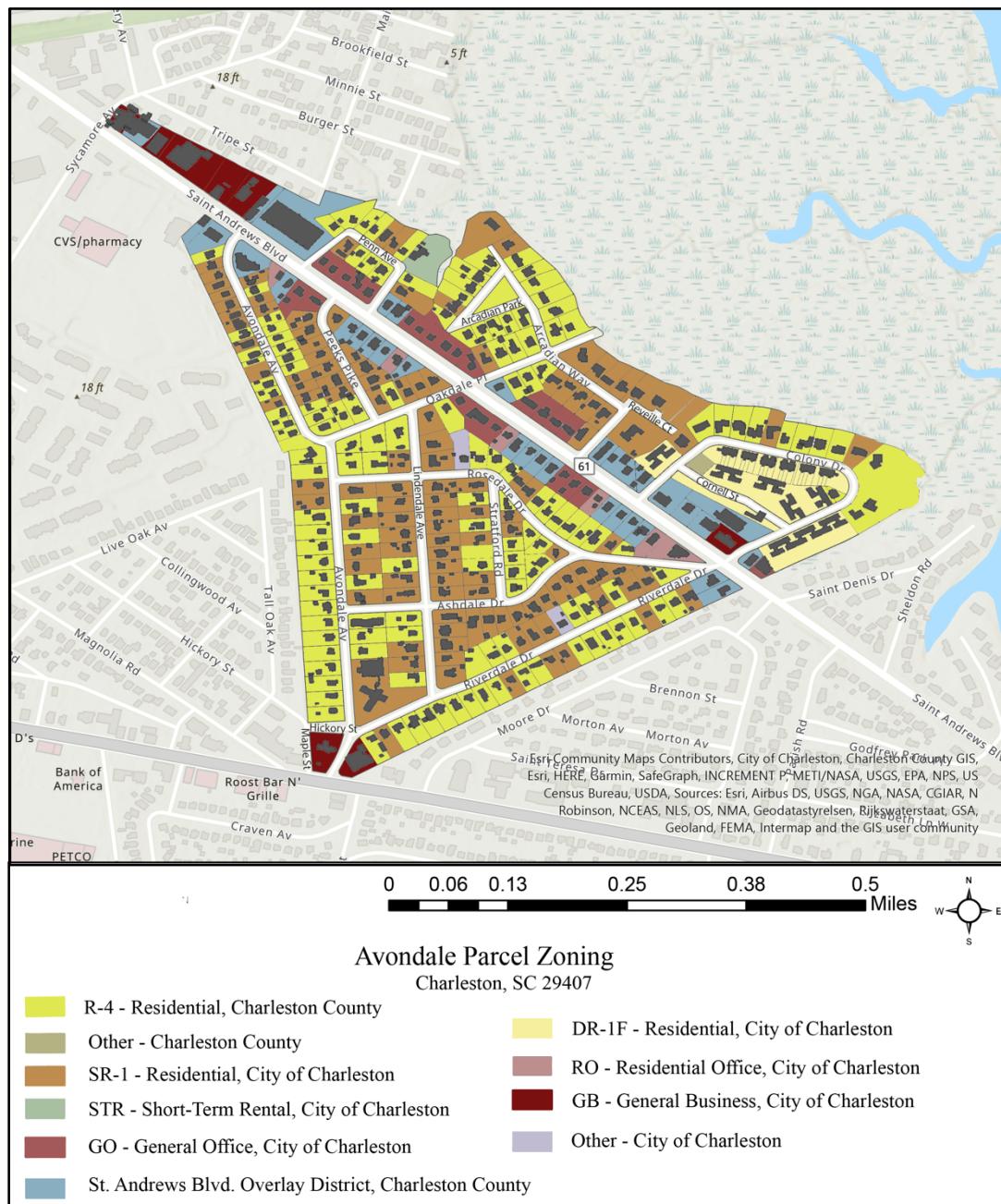


JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES



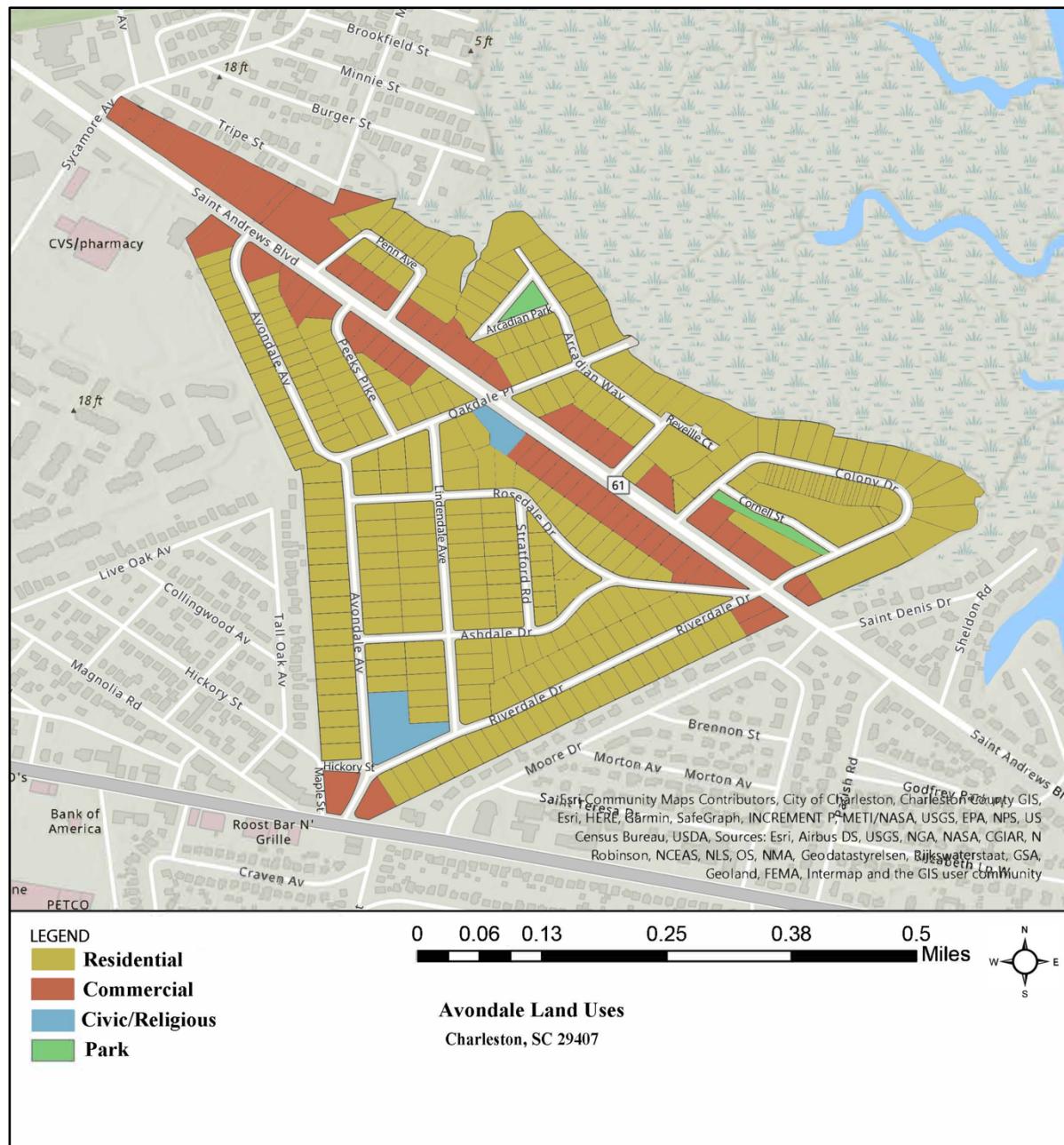
- ❖ Jurisdictional boundaries within the Avondale subdivision are split between the City of Charleston and unincorporated Charleston County.
- ❖ St. Andrew's Public Service District has historically provided sewer, firefighting, streetlights, and garbage collection services for the unincorporated areas since its creation in 1949.
- ❖ 51% of parcels in Avondale is in the City of Charleston.
- ❖ 49% of parcels in Avondale is in unincorporated Charleston County.
- ❖ Having a majority of parcels in the City of Charleston allows Avondale to be recognized as a part of the City of Charleston's Neighborhood Council.
- ❖ City of Charleston began annexing land in West Ashley in 1960, and its territory has expanded considerably since then.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)

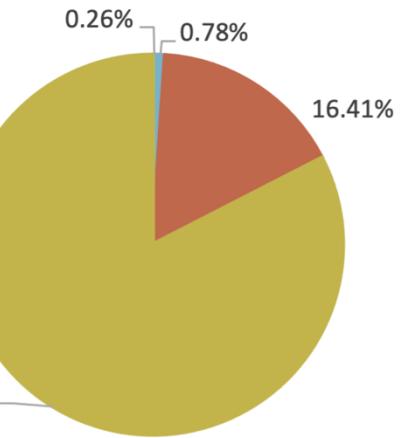


- ❖ R-4 and SR-1, the County's and City's base residential zoning categories, account for 69.79% of the zoning in Avondale.
- ❖ GB, GO, and the St. Andrews Blvd Overlay District, which form the commercial zoning for the area, account for a combined 19.79% of the area's zoning.
- ❖ RO and STR, which are intermediate zoning categories allowing varying forms of residential and commercial activity, account for 2.34% of parcel zoning.
- ❖ DR-1F, which allows for some diverse residential housing, accounts for 7.81% of zoning.
- ❖ Other zoning categories form less than 1% of parcels in Avondale.

AVONDALE AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL (2021)



LAND USES



The majority of the land use in Avondale, on both sides of St. Andrew's Blvd, is residential.

Commercial usage lines the corridors of Savannah Highway and St. Andrew's Blvd.

Avondale has one school, the Cooper School located on St. Andrew's Blvd, and one church, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, on Riverdale Drive.

There are two neighborhood parks in Avondale. Arcadian Park, also known as Peek's Park, a triangular parcel that is 0.37 acres with a grand Live Oak tree, and an unnamed 0.87-acre park on Cornell Street.

❖ Plan West Ashley noted that: “*the Avondale area along Savannah Highway is a great example of how specific land uses, in proximity to residential areas and alternative transportation options (West Ashley Greenway) can transform the aesthetics and impression of major roadways, without significant impact to regional vehicular flow.*”

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FUTURE LAND USES

Neighborhood Edge - These areas are found on the periphery of existing neighborhoods and future neighborhoods. Uses vary widely but are mainly those things that residents need, such as offices, stores, and restaurants that are typically found along roads and transit routes forming the edges of neighborhoods rather than the centers. While traditionally threaded along major roads, over time, these areas could transition to more compact urban design patterns and contain more residential uses, especially along major transit routes. Residential densities can range from 6-20 units per acre.

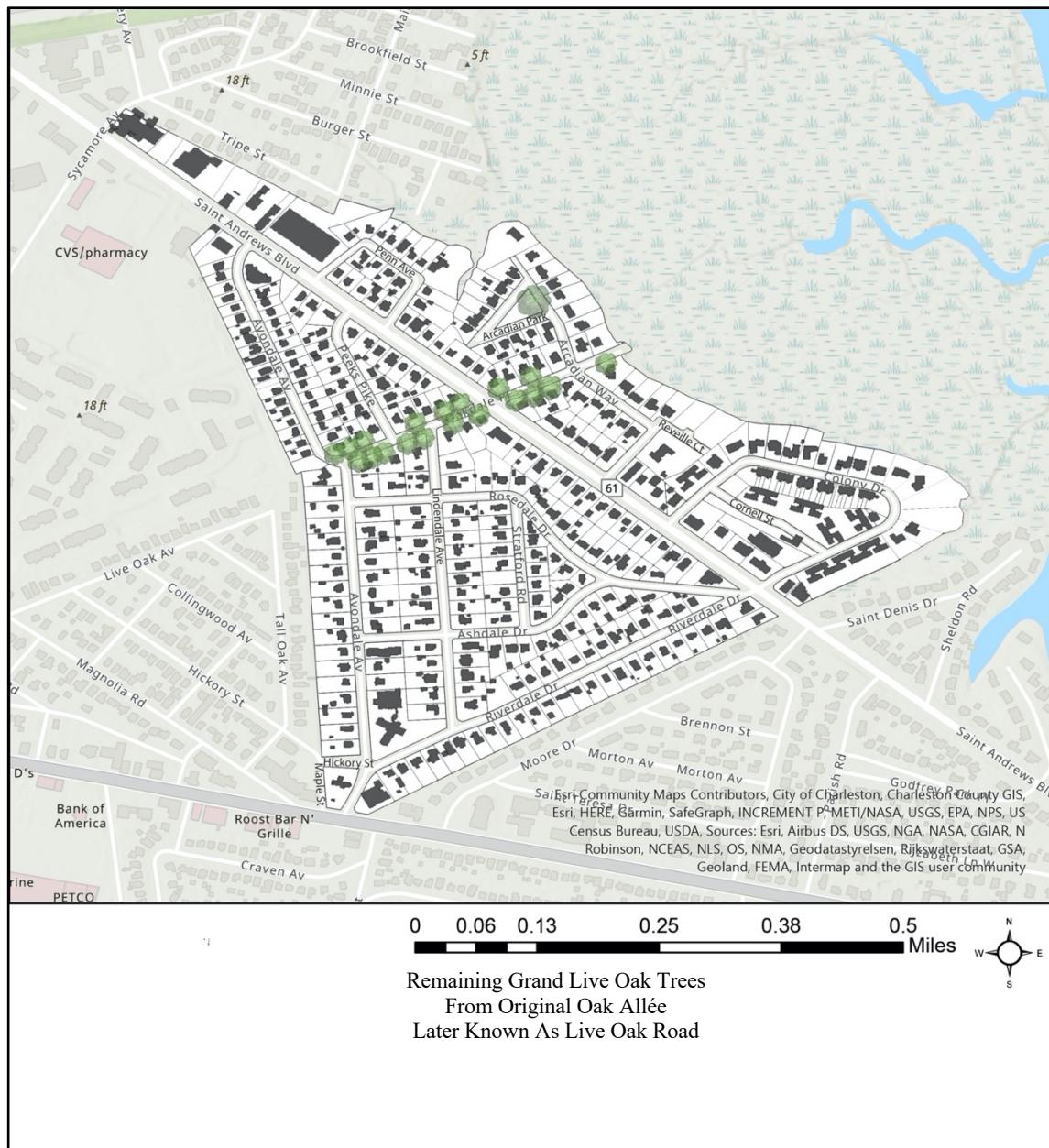
Suburban – These are low intensity, suburban-style areas located adjacent to higher-intensity areas that include a mix of uses. Limited mixed-use occurs at key crossroads. Densities range from four to eight dwelling units per acre.

Park - Publicly or privately owned lands open to the general population for all types of recreational purposes, active and passive, or designated for future such uses.

- ❖ Future land uses as determined by the Charleston City Plan (2021).

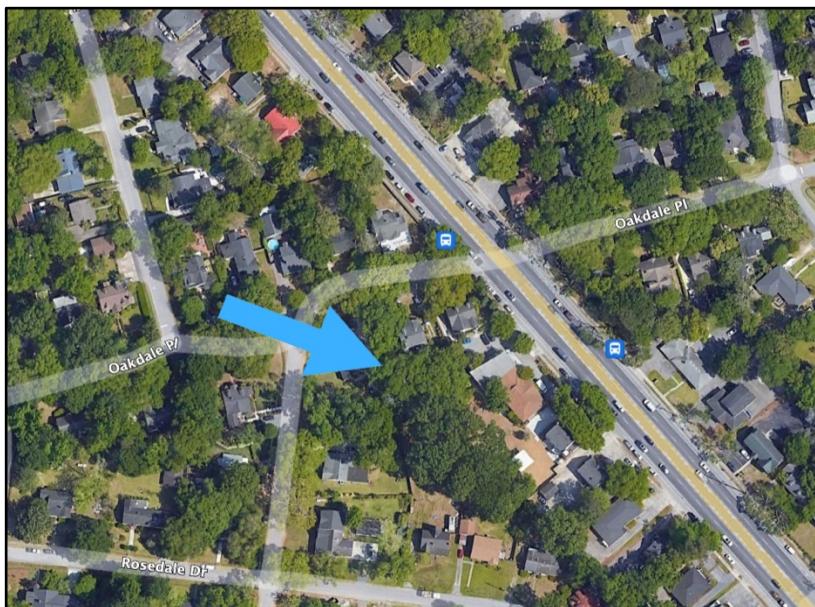
PART VI: PARKS & TREES





REMNANTS OF OAK ALLÉE

- ❖ Surviving grand Live Oak trees, which once formed the canopied oak allée, continue to line Oakdale Place. This was once Live Oak Road, which originally served as the entrance drive to the Weimar Plantation.
- ❖ This entrance drive began at Savannah Highway and crossed over Carolina Terrace to meet Magnolia Road. From Magnolia Road, it continued towards the Ashley River. This road formed the boundary between the Ravenel Farm (now The Concord/Ackerman Park), Weimar Plantation, and the field that became Ashley Forest.
- ❖ The original name was Live Oak Road. A version of this name was used by J.C. Long when he planned Ashley Forest subdivision.
- ❖ As of 2021, Oakdale Place is the last remnant still in use as a road, though grand trees that were once part of this road still exist between The Concord and Ashley Forest.
- ❖ Also marked on this diagram is the Arcadian Oak, noted for its position as a landscape feature and local landmark relative to the original tree canopy.

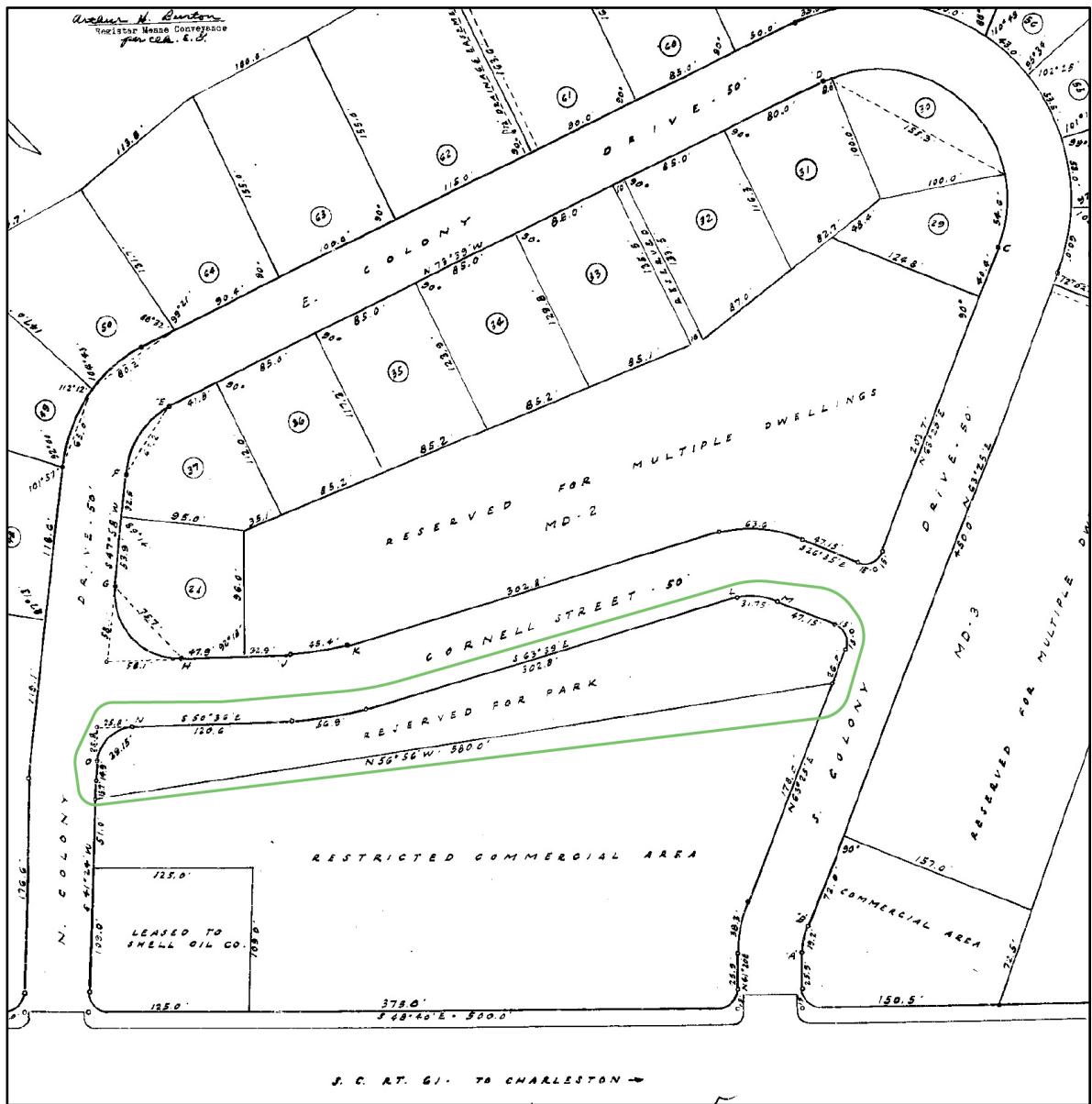


SURVIVING LIVE OAK TREES

- ❖ The 1938 Map of Weimar Plantation, shown on the bottom right, symbolically notes two Live Oak trees. One was located proximate to the oak allée known as Live Oak Road, and it is marked with a **blue** arrow. The other was located near the present-day intersection of Peeks Pike and St. Andrew's Blvd and is marked with a **red** arrow. These two trees are also marked with the same color arrows on the 1939 aerial photo on the bottom right image.
- ❖ As of 2021, the tree marked with a **blue** arrow still survives and is located behind 15 Oakdale place, shown in the modern aerial image to the left.
- ❖ The tree marked with a **red** arrow was in the path of St. Andrew's Blvd and was therefore destroyed.

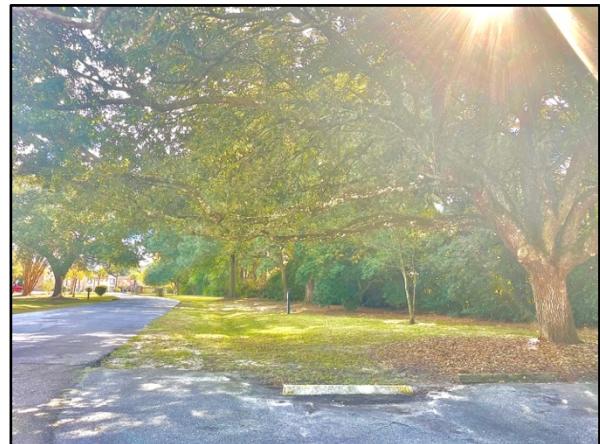


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COLONY COURT PARK

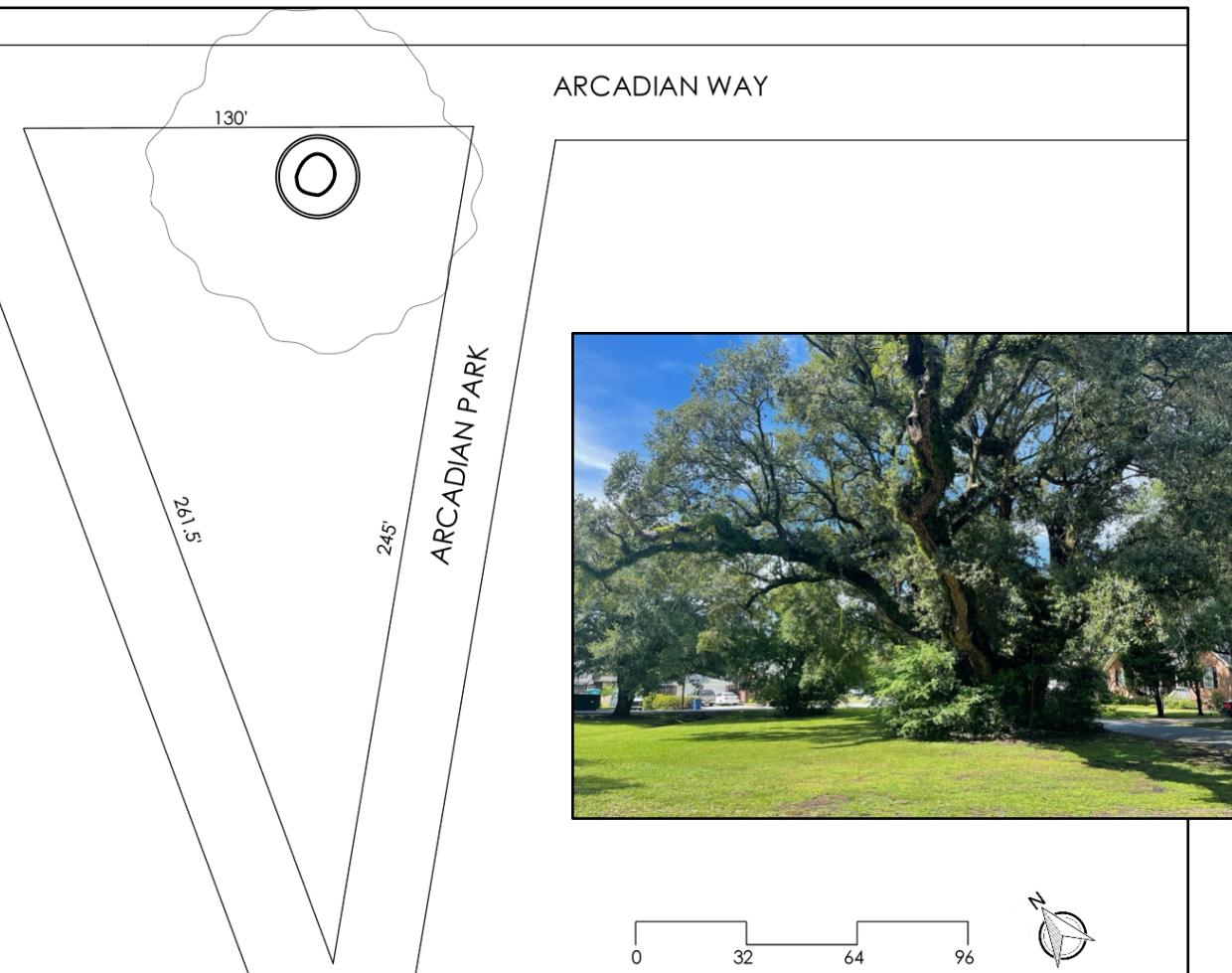
- ❖ When the master plan for Colony Court was created in 1963, a strip of land along Cornell Street was marked *“Reserved for Park.”*
- ❖ The lot is about 0.82 acres, circled in *green* on the adjacent survey.
- ❖ In 1966, a community structure with a pool was constructed on the lot and now houses utility equipment for the subdivision.
- ❖ This park reflects the second wave of development in Avondale and is primarily used by the River’s Bend and Proprietor’s Row condo buildings, as well as other residents of Colony Court.
- ❖ This is a *linear park*, simply meaning a park that is longer than it is wide in terms of physical dimensions.



Unnamed linear park in Colony Court, as seen in 2021, runs along Cornell Street.



ARCADIAN PARK PLAN VIEW



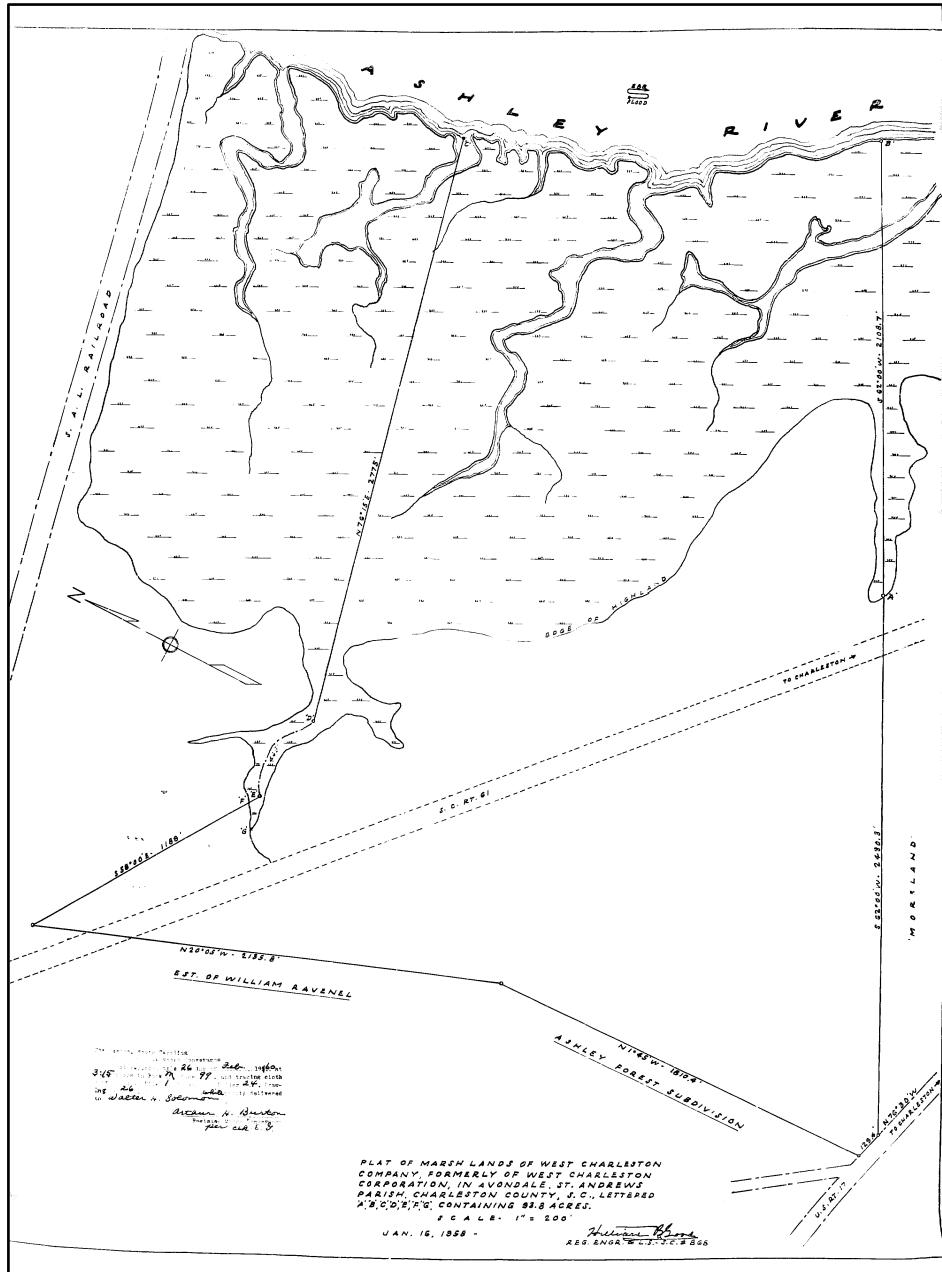
*Arcadian Park Dimensions from Plat W48-183

- ❖ Platted as “Peek’s Park” on the master plan for Avondale, c.1943
- ❖ Marked “Peeks Park” on the Plat for Section C of Avondale
- ❖ 0.37 acres of greenspace
- ❖ Historically served as the location of the Avondale Civic Club’s annual neighborhood picnics
- ❖ Reflects Avondale’s first era of development, between 1940 and 1949

ARCADIAN OAK

The grand Live Oak tree in Arcadian Park is a prominent landscape feature in the neighborhood. Official measurements for the tree, as taken by the Clemson Champion Tree project in October 2021, are as follows: Circumference: 36 ft. 7in, Crown Length 1: 102.5 ft, Crown Length 2: 106 ft, Height: 53 ft. The tree is also registered with the Live Oak Society as Tree #9477.

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MARSHLANDS

- ❖ Avondale has 93.8 acres of marshland that was once a part of the Weimar Plantation. The marsh has the address 1 Oakdale Place.
- ❖ Marsh access was a critical resource during the antebellum and truck farming eras when the river was the primary transportation method for both transporting goods and regular travel. Weimar Plantation's boat landing was serviced by a tributary stream through this marsh.
- ❖ During the early subdivision era, the marsh was used for rudimentary drainage systems.
- ❖ In 1990, the marsh was donated to the Lowcountry Land Trust, which defines itself as *“a local land conservation organization and a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on protecting ecologically, agriculturally, and historically significant Lowcountry lands — and the way of life they make possible.”*



The Avondale marsh, 2021. Photograph by Patricia Ploehn.

PART VII: CONCLUSIONS & HISTORICAL TRENDS

1. The Avondale neighborhood reflects a historical trend of agricultural to suburban land development in which former farms and plantations were converted to residential usage in the Post-War era.
2. Avondale has become increasingly denser over time since the Civil War, with five structures on a 167-acre parcel in 1867, to ten structures on the reduced 137-acre parcel in 1938, to having almost 400 structures within the 137-acre geographic area as of 2021.
3. The parks in Avondale each reflect a period of development, but nevertheless both function similarly. Arcadian Park was platted around 1943 as “Peek’s Park” on the original master plan for Avondale and reflects the first phase of development. The unnamed park in Colony Court on Cornell Street was created in 1963 and reflects the second wave of development.
4. Jurisdictional boundaries have changed considerably since annexation began in 1960 as parcels continue to annex into the City of Charleston.
5. The largest period of construction in Avondale, during which the greatest number of structures were built, was the first phase of development between 1940 and 1949.
6. The neighborhood’s major commercial corridor, St. Andrew’s Blvd, has seen a conversion from its original residential use to almost exclusively commercial usage. However, the massing, architectural style, and street rhythm all generally continue to reflect the original residential context.
7. “Missing Middle” housing accounts for 12.86%, or just over 1/8, of all homes in Avondale.
8. Roads that pre-date St. Andrew’s Blvd meet the highway at unsafe intersections greater than 90-degrees, while subdivision roads usually meet the highway at right angles. Most roads within the neighborhood safely intersect in complex geometric configurations.

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8. Some current photographs by Patricia A. Ploehn
9. Background images were contributed from the Avondale Civic Club's files, care of Kenneth Marolda