United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property	
historic name Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building	
other names/site number N/A	
2. Location	
street & number 914-918 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard	not for publication
city or town Savannah	vicinity
state Georgia code GA county Chatham code 051	zip code 31415
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this <u>X</u> nomination <u>request</u> for determination of eligibility meet for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the proce requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property <u>X</u> meets <u>does not meet the National Register Criteria</u>	dural and professional
be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: national	
Signature of certifying official/Title Dr. David C. Crass/Historic Preservation Division Director/Deputy SHPO Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official Date	_
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal G	Government
4. National Park Service Certification	
I hereby certify that this property is: entered in the National Registerdetermined eligible for the	• • National Register
determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National other (explain:)	Register
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action	13

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Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building Name of Property

5. Classification

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wnership of Property Check as many boxes as apply.)	Category of Property (Check only one box.)	Number of Resources within Propert (Do not include previously listed resources in the		he count.)	
		Contributing	Noncontributing		
private	X building(s)	1	0	buildings	
X public - Local	district	0	0	sites	
public - State	site	0	0	structures	
public - Federal	structure	0	0	objects	
	object	1	0	Total	
Name of related multiple pr (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of	operty listing a multiple property listing)	Number of con listed in the Na	tributing resources tional Register	previously	
N/A			N/A		
6. Function or Use					
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)		Current Functi (Enter categories fr			
Commerce/Trade: professio	nal	Work in progess			
Commerce/Trade: business					
7. Description					
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions		Materials (Enter categories f	rom instructions.)		
Modern Movement: Expres	sionism	foundation:	Concrete		
		walls: Concre	ete, Brick		
		roof: Aspha	lt		
		other: Metal,			

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building is a modern, two-story retail and office building on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard on the west side of Savannah. Designed by architect Eugene Allen Maxwell and completed in 1964, the pharmacy stands out along the street because of its striking modern design. Hexagonal openings in the brick-veneer first floor provide windows and entrances to the pharmacy and other businesses. The second-floor façade, which is built of reinforced concrete, cantilevers above the sidewalk. Large hexagonal openings filled with concrete-block screens rise above the flat roof to create an accordion-like appearance. The dark voids of the hexagonal openings alternate with hourglass-shaped images of parabolic arches, which can be read as abstract mortars, a traditional symbol of pharmacies. In the first-floor plan, most space is devoted to the pharmacy, which remains mostly intact from its last use in 2007. On the second floor, light filters through the "solar porch" of concrete-block screens to illuminate the main corridor and glass-walled interior offices.

Narrative Description

The Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building is a modern, two-story retail and office building on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard on the west side of Savannah. The pharmacy is located in the Savannah Victorian Historic District, but is outside the period of significance, which is 1870 to 1924. The surrounding African-American neighborhood is mostly one- and two-story, single and multi-family dwellings. The corridor along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard is a mix of residential, commercial, and public buildings. On the west side of the boulevard, opposite the pharmacy, are two complexes of 60, mostly two-story apartment buildings that comprise the Simon S. Frazier Homes and Herbert L. Kayton Homes.

Designed by architect Eugene Allen Maxwell and completed in 1964, the pharmacy stands out along the street because of its striking modern, Expressionist design (photos 1-5). Hexagonal openings in the brick-veneer first floor provide windows and entrances to the pharmacy and other businesses (photos 8-9, 17-18). The second-floor façade, which is built of reinforced concrete, cantilevers above the sidewalk. Large hexagonal openings filled with concrete-block screens rise above the flat roof to create an accordion-like appearance (photos 4-5). The dark voids of the hexagonal openings alternate with hourglass-shaped images of parabolic arches, which can be read as abstract mortars, a traditional symbol of pharmacies photos 5).

The main façade includes three hexagonal entrances. The pharmacy entrance is the largest and includes aluminumframed, glass double doors and sidelights (photos 8 and 9). The doors and sidelights are covered with steel mesh for security. The north office entrance, which features a single glass door with sidelights and transom, provides access to a single office suite (photos 1, left). The south office entrance, a hexagonal-shaped steel gate composed of smaller steel hexagons, provides access to first- and second-floor office suites (photos 17-18).

The north elevation is formed by a concrete-block wall covered in the same red brick veneer used in the main façade. The south elevation, which closely adjoins another building, and the rear (east) façade are built of concrete block (photos 6-7). The rear elevation features small, rectangular window openings that have been covered with plywood.

In the first-floor plan, the largest space is devoted to the pharmacy, which remains mostly intact from its last use in 2007. The drug store (public space) includes a terrazzo floor, wood-paneled walls, and suspended ceiling with fluorescent lights (photos 10-12). The north and south walls feature plywood shelves and the south wall includes a mirror inscribed "Savannah Pharmacy" with the image of a mortar (photo 13). Marble-and-glass display cases are located on the north and south sides of the shop. The east side contains the pharmacy customer counter and, to the rear, is the elevated pharmacy with the pharmacist's work counter and dispensary shelves (photo 14-15). A small pharmacy office is located behind the counter.

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The gated south entrance provides access to a long corridor that serves office suites along the south and east sides of the building (photo 19). The corridor, which features a long planter along the south side, includes both stack-bond concreteblock walls and aluminum-framed glass partition walls (photo 20). The rental space was laid out for an insurance office and, at the back, a doctor's office that included a secretary's office, doctor's office, conference room, and two treatment rooms. A rear stair well is located in the northeast corner of the building (photo 19, left). The main stair to the second floor, which is located inside the gated south entrance, is illuminated by a light passing through a hexagonal-shaped concrete-masonry screen. The reinforced-concrete stairs include wood handrails supported by cast-aluminum balusters.

On the second floor, light filters through the "solar porch" of hexagonal-shaped concrete-block screens to illuminate the main corridor and glass-walled interior offices (photos 21-22). The reinforced-concrete hexagons dip below the floor and also form the undulating ceiling. The floors are vinyl tile and the walls are wood paneling and plaster. The ceilings are exposed acoustic tile. The second floor was occupied by the North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company and the front offices were designed as a manager's office (photo 23) and a conference room (photo 24). Rooms in the rear include the lobby, cashier, and a large open-plan room for agents, though this space has since been subdivided. Bathrooms and a storage room are located in the southeast corner.

The Pharmacy lot is mostly occupied by the pharmacy building with a small, paved parking lot at the rear, which is accessed by West Bolton Lane. The south side of the building adjoins the neighboring two-story commercial building. The two buildings comprise the east side of the block of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard between West Waldburg Street and West Bolton Lane.

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Applicable National Reg	gister Criteria for the criteria qualifying the property	Areas of Significance
or National Register listing.)		(Enter categories from instructions.)
A Property is associa	ated with events that have made a	Architecture
significant contribu	tion to the broad patterns of our	Commerce
history.		Ethnic Heritage: Black
B Property is associa significant in our p	ated with the lives of persons ast.	
C Property embodies	s the distinctive characteristics or method of construction or	
represents the wor	k of a master, or possesses high	Period of Significance
	epresents a significant e entity whose components lack on.	1964
D Property has yield important in prehis	ed, or is likely to yield, information tory or history.	Simplificant Dates
		Significant Dates
		1964 - Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office
		Building completed
Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that a		
Property is:		Significant Person
A Owned by a religion purposes.	ous institution or used for religious	(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
B removed from its of	original location.	
		Cultural Affiliation
C a birthplace or gra	ve.	N/A
D a cemetery.		
E a reconstructed bu	uilding, object, or structure.	
F a commemorative	property	Architect/Builder
	property.	Maxwell, Eugene Allen (architect)
X G less than 50 years within the past 50	old or achieving significance years.	

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance is 1964, when the Fonvielle family built the Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building, built in 1964, meets National Register Criterion Consideration G in the areas of commerce and black ethnic heritage because it achieves significance for its association with three generations of Fonvielle-family ownership. In Savannah during Jim Crow, few professions were open to African Americans. The Fonvielles earned college degrees that enabled them to work as pharmacists and they owned both a pharmacy and a office-leasing business. The Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building meets Criterion Consideration G in the area of architecture as an excellent example of late modernism. Eugene A. Maxwell's design is among the most significant late modern buildings in Savannah. Its cantilevered second-story, parabolic arches and the use of the hexagon as a design module distinguish the Savannah Pharmacy from the many buildings built in Savannah in the 1960s.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building is significant at the local level under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of architecture, commerce, and black ethnic heritage. The Savannah Pharmacy is significant in the area of <u>architecture</u> as an excellent example of modern architecture because of its emphasis on modern materials and technology, abstract geometric imagery, and its lack of historicism. The pharmacy is significant in the area of <u>commerce</u> because it served as a pharmacy and also provided space for a variety of other businesses. The pharmacy is also significant in the area of <u>black ethnic heritage</u> because it was among the longest-operating African-American businesses in Savannah. The three generations of the Fonvielle family that operated the business cultivated regular customers and contended with urban renewal, which resulted in the decline of the West Broad Street neighborhood; desegregation, which led to diminished sales as African Americans patronized stores that previously had been designated for whites only; and competition from national drugstore chains.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building is significant in the area of <u>architecture</u> as an excellent example of late modernism because of its emphasis on modern materials and technology, abstract geometric imagery, and its lack of historicism. The expressionistic Savannah Pharmacy was designed by Eugene A. Maxwell and completed in 1964. Curvilinear forms, such as arches and vaults, often constructed in reinforced concrete, are characteristic of this style of late modernism, which was popular in Georgia in the 1960s and early 1970s. Maxwell also designed the exuberant Georgia Welcome Center in Savannah. Completed in 1963, the welcome center is formed by a series of interlocking concrete shells that spring from tapered concrete piers. The doors and walls are glass. Additional examples of modern Expressionism in Georgia include the Trust Company Branch Bank in Atlanta, designed by Abreu and Robeson in 1965, the Georgia Welcome Center in Statesboro, designed by Edwin C. Eckles in 1962 (listed in the National Register in 2011), and the Alma Exchange Bank and Trust in Alma, built in 1966, which is framed by interlocking parabolic arches.

The pharmacy is significant at the local level in the area of <u>commerce</u> because it served as a pharmacy in an African-American neighborhood and also provided space for a variety of other businesses. Among the greatest challenges for the Fonvielles were plans by the federal government in the 1950s to build public housing on several blocks along West Broad Street (now called Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard), including land occupied by the Savannah Pharmacy since 1915. Forced to relocate, the Fonvielles received \$15,000 for their property. Frances Fonvielle struck a deal with the North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company, which would finance the construction of a new store for \$75,000 with the agreement that the insurance company would occupy the second floor. Completed in 1964, the new Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building included the pharmacy on the first floor and the North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company on the second, along with other tenants such as shoe repair, barbers, and beauty salon businesses and the Savannah Branch of the NAACP. The three generations of the Fonvielle family that operated the business later contended with urban renewal, which resulted in the decline of the West Broad Street neighborhood; desegregation, which led to diminished sales as African Americans patronized stores that previously had been designated for whites only; and competition from national drugstore chains. The family closed the pharmacy in 2007.

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The pharmacy is also significant in the area of <u>black ethnic heritage</u> because the family-owned Savannah Pharmacy served the city's African-American residents for a century and by the time it closed in 2007, it was the second-oldest African-American business in Savannah. The Savannah Pharmacy first appeared in city directories in 1907. In 1914, Joseph Earl Fonvielle, pharmacist, and store manager, Walter E. Moody, purchased the business, which they operated together until Moody's death in 1942. The Fonvielle family operated the pharmacy from 1942 until 2007. After J. Earl's death in 1954, his wife, Lillian, operated the pharmacy with assistance from her daughter Frances E. Fonvielle, who served as company president from 1955 to 1998. In the early 1960s, when the pharmacy was forced to relocate because a planned urban-renewal project forced the family to sell their business, Frances secured a deal with North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company, which enabled the Fonvielles to build a new pharmacy building, completed in 1964, in the same neighborhood. Lillian's grandson, William Earl Fonvielle, Jr., managed the business from the 1970s to 2007. The Fonvielles operated their new pharmacy and office building, even as business declined, partly as a result of the urban renewal project, the Simon S. Frazier Homes and Herbert L. Kayton Homes, which had a deleterious effect on the once thriving African-American neighborhood.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

**The following developmental history derives from L. Spracher, "The Savannah Pharmacy, 1914-2007: A brief history of the pharmacy business, properties, and owners." Savannah, Ga.: Research and Municipal Archives, 2009.

The Savannah Pharmacy first appeared in the Savannah City Directory in 1907. Between 1907 and 1913, the drug store was located at 811 West Broad Street (now known as Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard), between Gwinnett and Bolton streets. G. W. Smith, noted as "colored" in the city directory, was listed as proprietor or manager of the pharmacy until 1910. In 1912, Walter E. Moody served as a clerk at the Savannah Pharmacy. The following year, Moody was listed as the druggist and in 1914 as the manager. In 1915, the pharmacy was located at 719 West Broad Street, near the corner of Maple Lane in the Currytown neighborhood, where it operated for nearly 50 years. Joseph Earl Fonvielle, according to the city directory in 1916 is listed as a pharmacist.¹

William Earl Fonvielle, Jr. (known as Earl), Joseph Fonvielle's grandson, believes Moody and Fonvielle purchased the business from the Lee Chemical Company in 1914 and operated under the name Lee Chemical Company until 1917 when they changed it to the Savannah Pharmacy. However, the consistent appearance of the Savannah Pharmacy in the city directories starting in 1907 indicates that the business was known as the Savannah Pharmacy prior to Moody and Fonvielle's purchase. According to local historians Charles Elmore and Charles Lwanga Hoskins, Fonvielle and Moody purchased the Savannah Pharmacy from the Lee Chemical Company, of Albany, Georgia, in 1914 with a loan from the Wage Earners Bank. It is likely that the move to 719 West Broad Street coincided with the purchase of the pharmacy business.

Hoskins notes that "the growth of the [Savannah Pharmacy] business was said to be 'one of the high spots in local Negro business enterprises'."² Over the years, the Savannah Pharmacy had several branches, though the main branch remained at 719 West Broad Street. In 1917, their first branch, known as Savannah Pharmacy No. 2, was located at 140 Farm (Fahm) Street, between York Street and Oglethorpe Avenue. Moody served as manager at this location. By 1930, there were two branches, one at 202 Randolph Street and another managed by William H. Kirby at 615 West Bay Street. By 1940, the West Bay branch had closed and another opened at 1307 Augusta Avenue in the West Savannah neighborhood. In 1950, the Augusta Avenue location was still active, along with a second location at 1221 West Broad Street. However, by 1960 the company had consolidated to just the original main branch at 719 West Broad, probably due to several deaths in the Fonvielle family.³

¹ Savannah City Directories, 1905-1916, Georgia Historical Society (hereafter GHS); Elmore, Charles J., "Historical Analysis and Summary of the Westside Documentation Project," (22 September 2005), Record Group 6112-003 Department of Cultural Affairs - Westside Neighborhood Documentation Project, Box 6112-003-7, Sub-series 1, Folder 33, page 20 (hereafter Elmore/Westside), City of Savannah, Research Library & Municipal Archives (hereafter RLMA).

² Hoskins, 34.

³ Hoskins, 34; Savannah City Directories, 1917, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, GHS; *Supplement to the Urban Redevelopment Plan for the Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard and Montgomery Street Corridor, South of Gwinnett Street* (Prepared by Savannah Development and Renewal Authority and the Phase II Advisory Committee with assistance from the Bureau of Public Development for the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah, December 2002), Savannah Area Local Government Documents Collection, uncatalogued document, page 6, (hereafter Supplement), RLMA.

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The Savannah Pharmacy was known for compounding its own medicines. Fonvielle and Moody mixed all of the prescriptions and created many unique recipes:

Joseph Fonvielle and Moody made many of their own generic medicines in a basement laboratory [according to the Savannah Cadastral Survey, this building had no basement⁴], such as castor oil and a cure-all called Yamacraw Chill Tonic. But they were most famous for their patented cold medicine called Long Ease, which they began manufacturing in 1936. The pharmacy stopped making it three years ago [circa 1996], although a neon sign on the storefront still touts "Home of Long Ease". Earl Fonvielle said, "we couldn't keep it on the shelves. People came from Florida and New York to buy it"5

The rear of the building was set aside for the manufacture of ice cream, which was then sold at the pharmacy's soda fountain. Charles Elmore "remembers walking with his brother and sister to the pharmacy in the 1950s for ice cream and cherry Cokes on Sunday afternoons.... The old place had a white tile floor and one heck of a soda fountain."⁶ "On any given Sunday, I guess we would have probably a hundred kids come in here," and the "fountain. . . . was generating a hundred dollars a day."7 Company ledgers from the 1930s through the 1950s show that at times more money was made from the sale of ice cream than from the sale of prescriptions.8

It was largely due to the dedication of the entire Fonvielle family that the Savannah Pharmacy survived in Savannah for over 90 years. The story of the business is intertwined with the story of the family. According to both the 1920 and 1930 United States Federal Censuses, Joseph Earl Fonvielle, was born around 1888-1889 in North Carolina. His grandson Earl believes he is a native of Camilla, Georgia. So, it is likely that he was born in North Carolina, but raised in Camilla. Fonvielle was trained at Livingstone College, in Salisbury, North Carolina, and graduated from Howard University Pharmacy School in 1914. He worked in Albany, Georgia, briefly before moving to Savannah. It is possible that his time in Albany was spent with the Lee Chemical Company.⁹

J. Earl Fonvielle, and his wife Lillian, lived in several areas of Savannah before settling in the Cuyler-Brownville neighborhood on West 36th Street. Walter Moody and his wife, Mary, lived at 915 West 36th Street. By 1930, the Fonvielles were living at 913 West 36th Street, next door to the Moodys. The 1940 city directory lists both families living at 913 West 36th Street. Following Walter Moody's death on August 17, 1942, at the age of 63, J. Earl Fonvielle assumed full control of the Savannah Pharmacy, though Moody's widow, Mary, continued to own a share in the business. The next generation of Fonvielles soon began work with their father. J. Earl and Lillian had three children, William Earl (born c.1917), Reginald N., (born c.1919), and Frances E. (born c.1921). Reginald served as a clerk in the pharmacy, and William Earl was a branch manager. The latte, lived with his wife, Mattie, and their three children two doors down from his parents at 917 West 36th Street. The family homes were only about a 15-minute walk from the main pharmacy, and J. Earl would travel back and forth between home and the pharmacy.

⁴ Savannah Cadastral Survey: Garden Ward, Block 5, Subdivision 16, North 1/2 Lot 1.

⁵ Few, Jenel, "Health care primitive for early blacks," Savannah Morning News (15 February 1999), available on-line at

http://old.savannahnow.com/stories/021599/ACCblackhist.html (last accessed 2 December 2009). ⁶ Mobley, Chuck, "Intersections of history," *Savannah Morning News* (1 February 2004), available on-line at

http://old.savannahnow.com/stories/020104/LOC_elmore.shtml (last accessed 2 December 2009).

Savannah City Directories, 1960, 1963-1964, GHS; Fonvielle, Jr., William Earl, interview, 26 July 2005 (Charles Elmore, interviewer), Record Group 6112-003 Department of Cultural Affairs - Westside Neighborhood Documentation Project, Box 6112-003-7, Sub-series 1, Folder 9 "Fonvielle," (hereafter Fonvielle/Westside), RLMA; Fonvielle SOHP; Hoskins, 34.

Few.

⁹ Fonvielle SOHP; Elmore, 81; United States Federal Census, 1920, Savannah, Chatham, Georgia, Roll T625_240, Page: 33A, Enumeration District: 58, Image: 1132, Ancestry.com, 1920 United States Federal Census [database on-line] (hereafter Federal Census 1920); United States Federal Census, 1930, Savannah, Chatham, Georgia, Roll 343, Page: 1B, Enumeration District: 11, Image: 1110.0, Ancestry.com, 1930 United States Federal Census [database on-line] (hereafter Federal Census 1930); Few.

Indexes of Vital Records for Georgia: Deaths, 1919-1998, Certificate #16860, Georgia Health Department, Office of Vital Record, 1998, Ancestry.com, Georgia Deaths, 1919-98 [database on-line] (hereafter Georgia Deaths); Federal Census 1920; Federal Census 1930; Savannah City Directory, 1950, GHS; Fonvielle SOHP.

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[Grandfather was a] tall bald guy with a strong voice, and he didn't have much use for children....So, he was strictly business. He worked every day. He came home for lunch, came home for dinner. At that time, the store stayed open until midnight. So he would come home for lunch, and he'd go back to the store, and then he'd come home again around five for dinner, and then he would go back to the store and stay until midnight.11

Dr. Fonvielle died on February 28, 1954, at the age of 65. Fonvielle left the Savannah Pharmacy to his three children and four grandchildren, including William Earl Fonvielle, Jr., born in 1947. Dr. Fonvielle had been an active member of the African-American community, serving on the Charity Hospital Board and as a member of the West Broad Street YMCA. He was also a member of the South Atlantic Medical Society.¹² The eldest son, William Earl, Sr., who was also a graduate of Howard University's Pharmacy School, was killed in a robbery at the pharmacy in October 1955. William Earl, Jr., then eight-years old, witnessed the robbery and murder.¹³

> I was sitting out front in the store with my grandmother, and two guys came in, and he [my father] was having problems. He was so nervous opening the register and the guy shot him. I remember it was like it was yesterday, and he was lying on the floor saying, "Call Mac." Mac was his friend, Dr. MacDoo, and he said, "Call Mac." Of course the ambulance came and took him away, and four days later he died of infection. . . . He died at Charity Hospital.14

Frances E. Fonvielle, at the time of her brother's death, was working as a pharmacist in Atlanta. She received her pharmacy degree from Howard University in 1946. She came back to run the Savannah Pharmacy with her mother and she served as president of the Savannah Pharmacy from 1955 to 1998. She is considered "an African-American female pioneer in the pharmacy business." William Earl's widow moved to Macon with her two daughters to live with her parents. William Earl, Jr. was raised by his grandmother, Lillian. "At the time I thought that was the worst thing in the world, but as it turned out, it was probably the best thing in the world."¹⁵ Earl was often called on to help his grandmother and aunt in the store.¹⁶ "I was able to wait on customers and ring the cash register at ages eight and nine," said Earl. "As I grew older I became a delivery boy for the drug store, and I hated it. However, my grandmother told me I had to work in the store, and that was how it was."¹⁷ He continued:

> At eight years old, I was delivering on Saturdays. . . . I'd have to be up to the store going places at eight o'clock Saturday morning, and I would work until one. I would ride....down as far as 45th Street. I'd go up here...and Frogtown....At eight years old and collect money on my bike. . . . My biggest problem was when I'd go out delivering, I'd stop and play.

In the 1963 city directory, the pharmacy advertised "Prescriptions Filled, Promptly and Accurately, Drugs, Sundries, Cosmetics." The Fonvielles also rented out space to local dentists, doctors, and businesses serving the African-American community. Dr. Charles Collier, who practiced dentistry in Savannah for 40 years, rented space above the Savannah Pharmacy, as did Dr. Bell, another black dentist. Father and son doctors, Stephen M. McDew, Sr. and Stephen M. McDew, Jr., had adjoining offices in the pharmacy building. The D. J. Hill Real Estate Agency and Acme Insurance Agency both leased offices from the Fonvielles.

¹¹ Fonvielle SOHP.

¹² Georgia Deaths, Certificate #2542; "FONVIELLE – ," Savannah Morning News (1 March 1954), 2:1; Savannah Morning News (3 March 1954), 2:1; Fonvielle SOHP; Elmore, 81. ¹³ Fonvielle SOHP; Elmore, 83; Georgia Deaths, Certificate #22053.

¹⁴ Fonvielle SOHP.

¹⁵ Fonvielle SOHP.

¹⁶ Fonvielle SOHP; Elmore, 82.

¹⁷ Fonvielle/Westside.

¹⁸ Fonvielle SOHP.

¹⁹ Savannah City Directories, 1960, 1963-1964, GHS; Fonvielle/Westside; Hoskins, 42-43.

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Some of the success of the Savannah Pharmacy was a result of racial segregation, in which black neighborhoods and black-owned businesses thrived because African Americans avoided white-owned establishments when possible. In the early 1960s, West Broad Street was lined with black-owned businesses.

> Working down here at 719 [West Broad], and the street all up in here, nothing but businesses. Right across the street was McLaughlin's Market. You had I don't know how many restaurants. You had the bars. You had the fish market, the undertakers. It was a booming street. Everybody traded, all black people traded on West Broad. You see because at that time they didn't want you in the white grocery stores. I mean, you could go in the Jewish grocery stores, of course.... But, basically you had to shop in the black community. In terms of pharmacies, I remember they had Elliot's Cut Rate, and you couldn't go in the front door. They had a section in the back for quote colored people. So it meant that black folks had to shop in the community. As a result, all black businesses prospered.²⁰

> The African-American business presence was particularly vibrant south of Union Station in the 1930s and 40s, but it was never just one racial or ethnic makeup. The businesses included barbershops, restaurants, shoe companies, theaters, professional offices, banks, funeral homes, etc. Professionals had their offices in the Wage Earners Savings and Loan Building; the Dunbar Theater Building; the Savannah Pharmacy Building; Powell Hall and Captain Edward Seabrook's Building. Between Gwinnett and Taylor streets and to some degree north of this, there were approximately 50 to 70 black-owned businesses.²¹

Urban Renewal brought the decline of many black-owned businesses on West Broad Street. "The Urban Renewal strategies of the 1950s and 1960s in Savannah can take the bulk of the blame for the loss of many commercial establishments and neighborhoods."²² In 1955, the Urban Renewal Administration announced plans to renew the area bounded by Indian Street on the north, 52nd Street on the south, West Broad Street on the east, and Hopkins, Kollock and Magnolia streets on the west. This area included the Savannah Pharmacy on the 700 block of West Broad Street. Local community leader W. W. Law wrote the NAACP's New York office in 1956 because he was concerned about the "mammoth urban redevelopment program." Law's warnings went unheeded. In 1959 the path of Interstate 16 onto West Broad Street and the flyover ramp entering Montgomery Street were staked out, and plans for new public housing on West Broad Street were underway. Simon S. Frazier Homes and Herbert L. Kayton Homes comprised 400 units along West Broad Street.23

The public housing and traffic improvement initiatives called for buyouts and the clearing of the entire 600 and 700 blocks on the west side of West Broad Street. Earl recalled:

> Most of them [the businesses] were black owned. . . . They come in, and they sell you a line.... and then they tell you don't have a choice.... What are you going to do? So nobody fought. I think my aunt and my grandmother were the only ones that really fought because they were quite adamant, but in the long run they still had to give it up and move.24

²⁰ Fonvielle SOHP.

²¹ Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard/Montgomery Corridor, Existing Conditions Survey, Section, "Cultural Resource Survey" (Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission, 1995), Savannah Area Local Government Documents Collection, #SGA.MPC.1995-007 (hereafter Existing Conditions Survey), RLMA. ²² Supplement, 3.

²³ Supplement, 3; "HAS: The History" (February 2006), Savannah Area Local Reference Files: "Organizations – Housing Authority of Savannah," 4-5, RLMA; Fonvielle/Westside; "From West Broad Street to MLK Boulevard: A Shadow of a Legacy," (Savannah State University, College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences, 2007), available on-line at http://www.savannahstate.edu/class/EyesonthePrize%20copy/ (accessed 14 October 2009). 24 Fonvielle SOHP.

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The Fonvielle family was offered \$15,000 for the land and building. Relocation costs were not provided to displaced businesses. The Fonvielles found they could not get a loan through a local bank to rebuild. Frances Fonvielle worked out an agreement with North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company to finance the construction of a new store for \$75,000. The agreement included the insurance company as a second-floor tenant.²⁵

The Savannah Pharmacy closed its doors at 719 West Broad Street in 1963 and prepared for its move to its new location at 916 West Broad Street. The old building was demolished, along with almost everything else on the block.²⁶ In September 1962, Lillian and Frances Fonvielle purchased the property known as 914-916-918 West Broad Street from the family of Louisa M. Logan for the relocation of the Savannah Pharmacy business. The eastern side of the 900 block of West Broad Street included African-American, white, and Jewish tenants.²⁷ Earl recalls:

> Boise Goldwire, a local black contractor, was hired to construct the \$75,000 building. Since he was a black contractor he could not get a construction bond over \$20,000. Therefore, this forced him to build the building in pieces at a time, as he could only borrow \$20,000 at a time. He built a beautiful and fully functional building. In twelve years my aunt and grandmother paid off the mortgage to North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company.²⁸

The new two-story building, known as both the Savannah Pharmacy Building and the Fonvielle Office Building, was occupied in 1964. The Savannah Pharmacy occupied the first floor at 916 West Broad Street, in the center of the building. Kendrick's Shoe Shop Repairs moved into 914. Dr. Stephen M. McDew, Jr. moved with the Fonvielles to the new building and occupied 918 with the Acme Insurance Agency. As agreed upon, North Carolina Mutual occupied the second floor at 918 ½.²⁹

Between 1964 and 2004, the Savannah Pharmacy building had consistent tenancy. 914 was occupied by Kendrick's Shoe Shop, an alteration shop, Picture This flower shop, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance Day Committee/Association. 918 was occupied by Dr. McDew and the Acme Insurance Agency through 1980. In 2000, 918 was occupied by the Savannah District AME Church. The Savannah Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) also used offices in the pharmacy building at 918. North Carolina Mutual occupied the second floor through 1990, though by 1970 they shared space with the American Bakery & Confectionary and Workers International Union AFL-CIO Local 110. Around 2002, Dr. Pope, a physician, occupied the entire second floor.30

The following listings from the Savannah City Directories indicate the tenants that occupied the Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building from 1965 to 2000.

916, Savannah Pharmacy 918, McDew, Stephen M., Jr., physician; Acme Insurance Agency 918 ½, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company
916 72, North Carolina Mutuar Life insurance Company

- 1970 914, Kendrick's Shoe Shop 916, Savannah Pharmacy
 - 918, McDew, Stephen M., Jr., physician; Acme Insurance Agency
 - 918 1/2, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company; American Bakery &

²⁵ HAS, 4-5; Supplement, 3; Fonvielle SOHP.

²⁶ Supplement, 3; Fonvielle/Westside.

²⁷ Deed Book 81L - Page 476, CCCH; Savannah City Directories, 1914-1917, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1963-1964, GHS.

²⁸ Fonvielle/Westside.

²⁹ Savannah City Directory, 1965, GHS; "Group provides Links to history," Savannah Morning News (29 November 2005), available on-line at

http://old.savannahnow.com/stories/112905/3457631.shtml (last accessed 2 December 2009). ³⁰ Savannah City Directories, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, GHS; "The Civil Rights Movement and the NAACP in Savannah, Georgia," from "A Shadow of a Legacy"; Fonvielle SOHP.

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Confectionary; Workers International Union AFL-CIO Local 110

1980	914, Alteration Shop 916, Savannah Pharmacy 918, McDew, Stephen M., Jr., physician; Acme Insurance Agency of Savannah, Inc. 918 ½, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company
1990	914, Savannah Pharmacy, Inc., Mrs. Frances E. Fonvielle, president, William E. Fonvielle, secretary-treasurer, (3 employees) (snack bar) 918-918b, vacant 918 ½, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company
2000	914, MLK Observance Day Association; Picture This, artificial flowers 916, Savannah Pharmacy, William E. Fonvielle, treasurer, drug store, (5 employees) 918, Savannah District AME Church

Earl Fonvielle remembered the transition to the new building:

I came back [from college] to see the new store, and I remember my aunt asking me would I get the accounts and file them correctly, and at that time I think we brought down there like two hundred accounts.³¹ We brought the fountain from the old store down here. It used to be over where. ... ["Savannah Pharmacy" is written on the mirror behind what used to be the fountain³²].... Ice cream, sodas, shakes, yeah and knick-knacks.³³

When the pharmacy moved to the new location they had already stopped making their own ice cream. "So we bought ice cream, Earl remembered, "when we came down here, but it still was a good quality ice cream, and we did real well with it." Eventually the soda fountain was sold. "It just wasn't profitable....So finally we did away with the fountain. We sold it for \$50...."³⁴

After graduating from St. Pius X High School in 1964, Earl Fonvielle, Jr., left Savannah for college, first attending Florida A & M and then Miles College, a small African-American church college in Birmingham, Alabama, where he received his B.S. degree. He received his master's degree from the University of Detroit, where he operated a methadone program from roughly 1968 to 1975. Earl had no intention of returning to work at the Savannah Pharmacy, "I swore I would never. . . come back here and work after seeing my father get killed."³⁶ Frances and Lillian continued to run the business, but by the mid-1970s Lillian was ready to retire and Frances needed help.³⁶ Earl remembered:

My grandmother worked in the store, and she said, "Son, I'm getting ready to retire. I'm tired. We're losing the pharmacy." Okay. I was going like I don't know where I fit into all this. So I came home on a visit, and they said we need you here. I said well, I'm not a pharmacist. I mean, I've worked in the store all my life. I know everything to know including how to fill prescriptions what have you, but so I said, "What good can I do?" "We need you here." So I went back to Detroit I guess it was five or six months later I said well, she kept calling me. "We need you here." So I said, "Well my grandmother raised me. She did everything in the world for me. I'll go back home and see what I can do." Sure enough we had a pharmacist that had been here

³¹ Fonvielle SOHP.

³² "Group provides Links to history."

³³ Fonvielle SOHP.

³⁴ Fonvielle SOHP.

³⁵ Fonvielle SOHP.

³⁶ Elmore, 83; Fonvielle SOHP; Savannah City Directory, 1970, GHS.

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forever, and he resigned to go to West Side Urban [Health Center], and my grandmother....retired. So and [that] left my aunt and two clerks. So I came in and I said, "Well, I don't know what I can do, but I'm here."³⁷

Lillian retired and lived in the family house on 36th Street until her death in 1980. Earl returned to the Savannah Pharmacy and assumed the role of secretary/treasurer. His aunt Frances served as president until her death in 1998, at which time Earl inherited the pharmacy property.³⁸

After its relocation to the 900 block of West Broad Street, the pharmacy began a long, slow decline, along with the rest of the neighborhood. Urban Renewal did not have the desired effect on the once-thriving business community along West Broad Street. The diverse mix of businesses was gone. Crime, substandard housing, litter, and traffic deterred new businesses from moving to the area. Coupled with the loss of a consistent African-American clientele, who could now shop at white- or black-owned businesses, the Savannah Pharmacy struggled to continue operating. A major factor in their decline was their inability to compete with large, chain drug stores.³⁹ Earl described the situation:

To be truthful, I don't know how I'm existing. People say, "Well, how do you stay down there," and I go, "By the grace of God." It is tough, real tough. I'm not ashamed to say it on my W-2 last year [circa 2001], I made \$5,000. That meant I made \$5,000 out of here. Of course, I have other interests and things that kept me going, but had it not been, I could not have survived working for Savannah Pharmacy.⁴⁰

It's two things that stopped me from selling this store. One, there is a need in this community because the closest pharmacy is CVS at Broughton and Bull. Secondly, is the legacy. Those are the only two things that stopped me from selling this store because it's just not a money-making venture anymore. I put so much of my inheritance in here until sometimes I look in the mirror and how foolish can you be, but I'm able to pay people, and I'm able to carve out a little for myself.⁴¹

l've got a business that's been going on for 88 years. That's not good enough. I mean, I've got the property that the building sits on. The whole thing's worth \$300,000....We've got your black physicians, and never do they come together. I'm trying to think how many black physicians patronize me in terms of sending their clients here, I mean, their patients here. You've got one upstairs where people can't help but come down.... Two black physicians that will say go around to Savannah Pharmacy, but they'll pick up the phone just as quick and call CVS or Eckerd's.... So that type of loyalty doesn't exist.⁴²

In 2002, Earl deeded the pharmacy property to his son William Clay Fonvielle. Clay moved to Houston, Texas, where he became involved in real estate and served as Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Amiri Airlines. With nobody to carry on the family business in Savannah, Earl Fonvielle, Jr., closed the Savannah Pharmacy in 2007. By then, the Savannah Pharmacy was the second-oldest African-American-owned business in Savannah and the only black-owned pharmacy in the city. (Only the Bynes-Royall Funeral Home, established by William Royall in 1876, had been in business longer.⁴³) In June 2009, William Clay Fonvielle sold the Savannah Pharmacy building to the City of Savannah for use by the Bureau of Public Development.⁴⁴

³⁷ Fonvielle SOHP.

³⁸ Georgia Deaths, Certificates #044516, 010267; Elmore, 83; Deed Book 209J – Page 253, CCCH.

³⁹ Supplement, 8; "The Savannah Pharmacy," from "A Shadow of a Legacy."

⁴⁰ Fonvielle SOHP.

⁴¹ Fonvielle SOHP.

⁴² Fonvielle SOHP.

⁴³ Fonvielle, Jr., William Earl, oral history interview, 2 August 2002 (Kieran Taylor, interviewer), Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Interview R-0174, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, available on-line at http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/R-0174/menu.html (accessed 14 October 2009) (hereafter Fonvielle SOHP); Elmore, Charles J., *Black America Series: Savannah, Georgia* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 81, 83; 13

		h Pharmacy, 1914-2007: A brie and Municipal Archives, 2009.	ef history of t	he pharmacy bu	isiness, properties, and owners."
prelimina requested previously previously designate recorded recorded	i) / listed in the Nation / determined eligible d a National Historic by Historic America by Historic America	ndividual listing (36 CFR 67 has been al Register by the National Register	X S C F L L C	ry location of addi tate Historic Preser other State agency ederal agency ocal government Iniversity Other of repository:	
	sources Survey	Number (if assigned):			
N/A					
10. Geogra	aphical Data				
UTM Refer	e previously listed re	ss than one acre esource acreage.) on a continuation sheet.)			
A 17	490620	3547660	С		
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
B Zone	Easting	Northing	D Zone	Easting	Northing
Verbal Bo	undary Descrip	t ion (Describe the boundaries of the _l	property.)		
The Nation	al Register bour	dary is indicated by a heavy bla	ack line on th	e attached map	, which is drawn to scale.
Boundary	Justification (E	xplain why the boundaries were select	ed.)		

The boundary includes the current legal boundary and entire, intact parcel historically associated with the Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building.

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building Name of Property

9. Major Bibliographical References

Chatham County, Georgia County and State

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Hoskins, Charles Lwanga, Out of Yamacraw and Beyond: Discovering Black Savannah (Savannah, GA: The Gullah Press, 2002), 34, 125; Elmore/Westside. ⁴⁴ Deed Book 353V – Page 536, CCCH; Deed Book 354A – Page 55, CCCH.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Steven Moffson, Architectural Historian			
organization	Historic Preservation Division, GA Dept. of Natural Resources	date Octo	ber 10, 2012	
street & num	ber 254 Washington Street, Ground Level	telephone	(404) 656-2840	
city or town	Atlanta	State GA	zip code	30334
e-mail	Steven.moffson@dnr.state.ga.us			

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

• Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- Continuation Sheets
- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building

City or Vicinity: Savannah

County: Chatham State: Georgia

Photographer: Charlie Miller

Date Photographed: June 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 24. Main (west) and north facades, photographer facing southeast.

2 of 24. Main (west) and north facades, photographer facing southeast .

3 of 24. Main elevation, photographer facing east.

- 4 of 24. Main façade, detail of office entrance and concrete-block screens, photographer facing east.
- 5 of 24. Main façade, detail of concrete-block screens, photographer facing east.
- 6 of 24. North and rear (east) façade, photographer facing northwest.

- 7 of 24. Rear façade, photographer facing west.
- 8 of 24. Main façade, detail of pharmacy entrance, photographer facing east.
- 9 of 24. Interior, pharmacy, detail of entrance, photographer facing east.
- 10 of 24. Interior, pharmacy, photographer facing southwest.
- 11 of 24. Interior, pharmacy, photographer facing southeast.
- 12 of 24. Interior, pharmacy, photographer facing northeast.
- 13 of 24. Interior, pharmacy, detail of mirror, photographer facing north.
- 14 of 24. Interior, pharmacy, detail of pharmacy counter, photographer facing east.
- 15 of 24. Interior, pharmacy, detail of pharmacy counter and dispensary shelves, photographer facing north,
- 16 of 24. Interior, pharmacy, detail of medicine bottles, photographer facing west.
- 17 of 24. Main façade, detail of office entrance gate, photographer facing east.
- 18 of 24. Interior, detail of office entrance gate, photographer facing west.
- 19 of 24. Interior, first-floor corridor and stairs, photographer facing east.
- 20 of 24. Interior, first-floor office, photographer facing northwest.
- 21 of 24. Interior, second-floor, corridor, photographer facing north.
- 22 of 24. Interior, second-floor corridor, photographer facing north.
- 23 of 24. Interior, second-floor office, photographer facing northwest.
- 24 of 24. Interior, second-floor office, photographer facing southwest.

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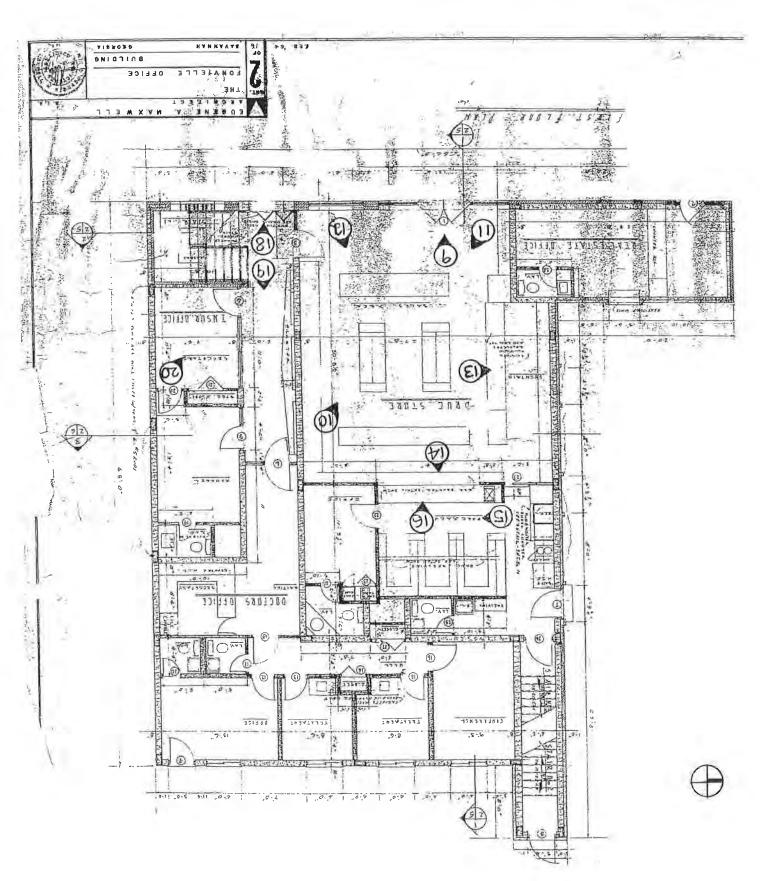
Chatham County, Georgia County and State



Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building Chatham County, Georgia

National Register boundary

Scale: 1 inch = 60 feet



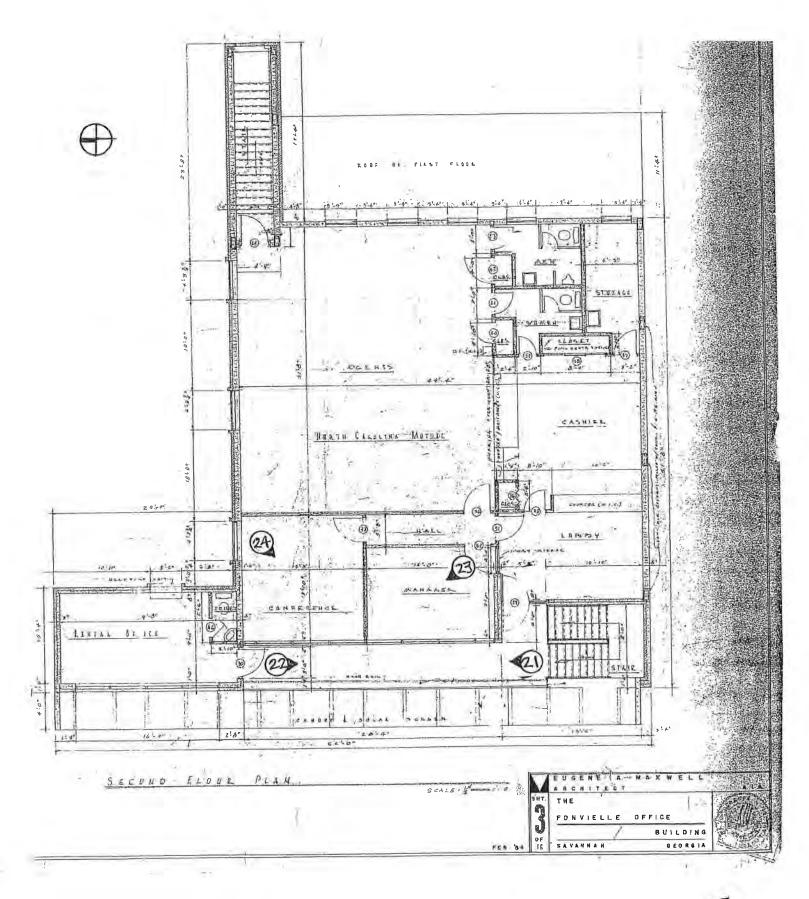
Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building

Chatham County, Georgia

First-Floor Plan

Albos oN

Photo number/direction of view



Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building

Chatham County, Georgia

Photo number/direction of view

No scale

Second-Floor Plan



Portions of Georgia-South Carolina boundary in dispute, not shown

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

AMS 4748 II SE-















































