

PH0679909

DATA SHEET

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR REGISTRATION | NOV 3 1977 |
| DATE ENTERED | NOV 15 1977 |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON
 Dothan Opera House

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
 103 North St. Andrews Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

01

Houston

069

CLASSIFICATION

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION | <input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER |

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
 City of Dothan

STREET & NUMBER
 P. O. Box 2128

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

36301

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
 Houston County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
 100 North Gates Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

DEPOSITION FOR
 SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

STATE

DESI

Xenatu
 -6000
 -1448

The Dothan for the us Completed Renaissance appearance

The T-shape T which fa bays of th as a rusti a piano no crowning i pavillion.

The ground wall above the vouisc arched doc an entabia bays are c two bays r similar. b are divide pedimented

The colurt a brick f: ls ornament a dentiled the outer less elabr similar w: brick pier

The grounc front bloc foyer is f the north divided in with flute trim of th

The second the stages control bo restroom f major stru

DESCRIPTION

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| CONDITION | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
| Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED |
| GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED |
| POOR | <input type="checkbox"/> LIMPORPOSED | <input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| | | MOVED DATE |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Dotlan Opera House is a three-story masonry structure which reflects the preference for the use of classical designs in public structures during the early 20th Century. Completed in 1915 from plans provided by Morris and Morris which drew heavily from Renaissance models, the Opera House is unaltered in its overall plan and exterior appearance.

The T-shaped structure measures 114 feet deep by 73 feet across the broad bar of the T which faces on St. Andrews Street and forms the dominant facade. The three major bays of this facade are divided horizontally into three zones - a first floor serving as a rusticated podium with arched windows and doors, the second and third floor forming a piano noble with pilasters and engaged columns supporting a full entablature, and a crowning low parapet which is developed as an attic story above the central three bay pavillion.

The ground story is sheathed in stone up to the sill course of the windows, while the wall above contains deep horizontal reveals with every fifth brick, which continues to the voussours of the arched windows of each outer bay. The central bay contains three arched doors forming the entrance to the ground floor. A continuous belt course implying an entablature separates the first story from the second and third. Here the major bays are defined by rusticated brick piers. Ionic pilasters divide the outer bays into two bays with 6-light windows topped with a two light transom on the second floor and similar, but transomless windows on the third. Windows of the central pavillion which are divided by engaged Ionic columns are similar; however, the second floor windows have pedimented architraves.

The columns and pilasters support an entablature consisting of a limestone architrave, a brick freize and a dentiled cornice. Above the central pavillion a low attic story is ornamented with sculptured piers interspaced with recessed panels and crowned with a dentiled cornice. Low parapet walls with brick piers and a limestone cap surmount the outer bays. North and south elevations continue the horizontal divisions but are less elaborately finished, consisting of simple brick piers forming the four bays of similar windows. The rear section with its low hipped roof is of common bond with brick piers and infrequent and irregularly spaced windows.

The ground floor entrance gives access to a U-shaped lobby running the width of the front block with stairs located at the rear wall on either end. A small central raised foyer is flanked by ticket offices on the front of either side and by an elevator on the north and a stair on the south. A portion of the area surrounding has been subdivided into concession stands. Entrance to the auditorium is through two double doors with fluted pilasters and ornate entablatures, this along with the heavy, ornate plaster trim of the proscenium form the only original ornament to the interior of the structure.

The second floor contains the first balcony, restroom, a hallway, and box seats flanking the stages, while the third floor contains a second balcony and small offices and the control booth. Although some spaces have been divided to provide new concession and restroom facilities and the direction of the flanking stairs has been altered, the only major structural changes were made in the basement beneath the stage.

SIGNIFICANCE

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| PERIOD | ARCHAEOLOGY PREHISTORIC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE HISTORIC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1915

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

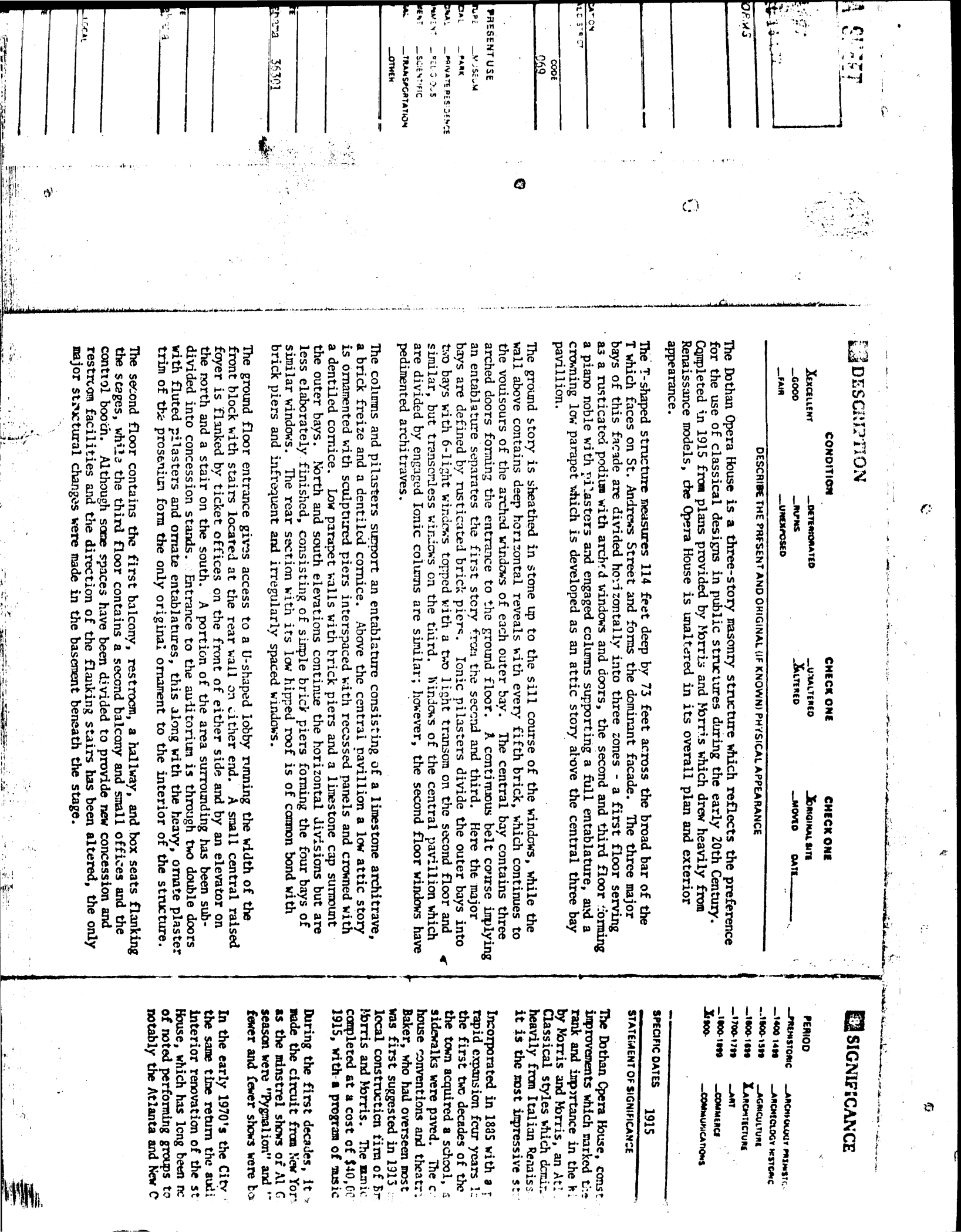
The Dotlan Opera House, construction improvements which marked the rank and importance in the history by Morris and Morris, an Atlanta Classical styles which dominated heavily from Italian Renaissance it is the most impressive structure

Incorporated in 1885 with a rapid expansion four years later the first two decades of the town acquired a school, sidewalks were paved. The house conventions and theater; Baker, who had overseen most was first suggested in 1915 local construction firm of Morris and Morris. The music completed at a cost of \$40,000 1915, with a program of music

During the first decades, it made the circuit from New York as the minstrel shows of Al G season were "Pygmalion" and fewer and fewer shows were bo

In the early 1970's the City the same time return the auditorium renovation of the street House, which has long been one of noted performing groups to notably the Atlanta and New C

LOCAL



SIGNIFICANCE

CHECK ONE
 ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

KNOWN PHYSICAL APPEARANCE
 The structure which reflects the preference of the architect during the early 20th Century. The structure was designed by Morris and Morris which drew heavily from the architecture of the period and is reflected in its overall plan and exterior.

The sill course of the windows, while the rest of the facade is made of brick, is made of every fifth brick, which continues to the top of the building. The central bay contains three windows. A continuous belt course implying the second and third. Here the major divisions divide the outer bays into three bays. The second floor and third floor are supported by a full entablature, and a full attic story above the central three bay.

The central bay contains three windows. A continuous belt course implying the second and third. Here the major divisions divide the outer bays into three bays. The second floor and third floor are supported by a full entablature, and a full attic story above the central three bay.

shaped lobby running the width of the building on either side. A small central raised platform of either side and by an elevator on the side of the area surrounding has been substituted. The auditorium is through two double doors this along with the heavy, ornate plaster ornament to the interior of the structure. The auditorium, a hallway, and box seats flanking the second balcony and small offices and the auditorium is divided to provide new concession and seating stairs has been altered, the only change at beneath the stage.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE - CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| PERIOD | ARCHAEOLOGY/PREHISTORIC | COMMUNITY PLANNING | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | RELIGION |
| PREHISTORIC | ARCHAEOLOGY/HISTORIC | CONSERVATION | LAW | SCIENCE |
| 1400-1499 | AGRICULTURE | ECONOMICS | LITERATURE | SCULPTURE |
| 1500-1599 | ARCHITECTURE | EDUCATION | MILITARY | SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| 1600-1699 | ART | ENGINEERING | MUSIC | THEATER |
| 1700-1799 | COMMERCE | EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | PHILOSOPHY | TRANSPORTATION |
| 1800-1899 | COMMUNICATIONS | INDUSTRY | POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| 1900 | | INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1915 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Morris and Morris

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Dothan Opera House, constructed in 1914-1915, was the most noted of a series of public improvements which marked the passage of Dothan from a small country town to a city of rank and importance in the Wiregrass portion of the state. Completed from plans provided by Morris and Morris, an Atlanta architectural firm, the structure reflects the revival of Classical styles which dominated public buildings of the early 20th Century and draws heavily from Italian Renaissance models. Next to the 1906 Federal Building (SNHP 12-31-71) it is the most impressive structure in the town.

Incorporated in 1885 with a population of under 500 people, Dothan began to experience a rapid expansion four years later when the Vidals Railroad came through the town. During the first two decades of the 20th Century the population increased to 10,000 people and the town acquired a school, a fire department, a city hall and jail, and the streets and sidewalks were paved. The construction of a municipal auditorium and meeting place to house conventions and theatrical entertainments was largely the project of Mayor Joe Baker, who had overseen most of the city improvements. The idea of a municipal center was first suggested in 1915 and by mid-summer of 1914 a contract had been let to the local construction firm of Brown and Flowers to erect the building from plans drawn by Morris and Morris. The municipal auditorium, soon locally named "The Opera House", was completed at a cost of \$40,000 in 1915 and was first opened to the public on October 8, 1915, with a program of music provided by the local orchestra and dedication ceremonies.

During the first decades, it was in constant use by traveling shows booked there as they made the circuit from New York to Miami. Shows included some Sam Shubert shows as well as the minstrel shows of Al G. Fields and Silas Green. In 1921 the highlights of the season were "Pygmalion" and "Madame Butterfly". With the advent of "Talking Pictures" fewer and fewer shows were booked in the auditorium.

In the early 1970's the City Commission decided to construct a new civic center and at the same time return the auditorium to its original splendor. Exterior restoration and interior renovation of the structure were completed in 1971. Since that time, the Opera House, which has long been noted for its superb acoustics, has attracted a wide variety of noted performing groups to the predominantly rural southeast section of Alabama, most notably the Atlanta and New Orleans symphonies.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| PRESENTS | MAY 31 1977 |
| DATE ENTERED | DEC 18 1977 |

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

Interior modifications consist of the lowering of the ceiling in the lobby and the addition of dry wood ornamental trim replacing earlier simple chattrailing and moldings. During renovation the old seats were removed and replaced with modern ones and the seating reduced from 800 to 600.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

Watson, F.S., Hub of the
Higginbotham, Inc.;

MAJOR HISTORICAL REFERENCES

Dothan Eagle. April 23, 1913; October 7, 1915; October 21, 1914.

Dothan Morning News. July 24, 1914.

Minutes of the Dothan City Commission.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 24 ACRES

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|----------|------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| 116 | 65 | 32 | 40 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ZONE | EASTING | EASTING | NORTHING | EASTING | EASTING | NORTHING | EASTING | EASTING | NORTHING | ZONE | EASTING | EASTING | NORTHING | EASTING | EASTING | NORTHING | EASTING | NORTHING |
| VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

On the North side of North St. Andrews Street, on the lot known as the Old Water and Light Plant Lot.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: W. Yarnor Floyd, Executive Director and Ellen Mertins
 ORGANIZATION: Alabama Historical Commission
 STREET & NUMBER: 725 Monroe Street
 CITY OR TOWN: Montgomery
 STATE: Alabama ZIP: 36130
 DATE: May 20, 1977
 TELEPHONE: (205) 832-6621

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATES IS:
 NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-685), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE: W. Yarnor Floyd
 TITLE: State Historic Preservation Officer
 DATE: May 20, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY
 I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE: May 20, 1977
 DATE: May 20, 1977