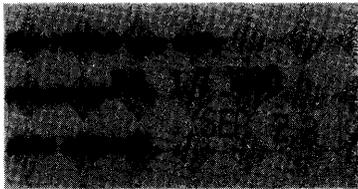


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**



**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Peter Zinszer's Mammoth Furniture House
and/or common Beard Furniture

2. Location

street & number 2115, 2117, 2119 Second Avenue North not for publication
city, town Birmingham vicinity of congressional district 6th
state Alabama code 01 county Jefferson code 073

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name 2115 Lucinda Jean Beard Allen W. Haskell Frank B. Yeilding
street & number 3609 Westbury Rd. 2880 Hastings Road Jefferson Fedreal Building
city, town Birmingham vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse
street & number 716 North 21st Street
city, town Birmingham state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1970-present federal state county local
depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission
city, town Montgomery state Alabama

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Zinszer Building is a three-story, rectangular masonry structure with a cast-iron facade. It is situated on one-and-one-half lots facing Second Avenue. Although close to the center of the business district, the building is surrounded by two and three story masonry commercial buildings of similar scale. The building is divided into three sections with a common stairway connecting the eastern third with the western two-thirds and incorporated design-wise into the central third. Each section measures approximately 25 feet by 130 feet. The articulated cast iron front is noted for the quality of its classically inspired ornament. Paneled square piers at the ground floor level define the three major bays and support an elaborate cornice enriched with egg and dart molding and acanthus leaves.

Similar piers with Corinthian capitals mark the major divisions of the two upper floors, while fluted Corinthian columns establish the rhythm of the lesser bays (3-4-3). Narrow paired 1/1 windows are topped with a single transom with a border of small square lights. This treatment is omitted in the western third of the building where the transoms are not bordered.

Some of the ground floor piers have been covered with aluminum and the lower part of the store fronts have been replaced with new entrances. The eastern half of the building has suffered some damage due to roof leaks over a period of time.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1888

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Peter Zinszer's Mammouth Furniture House (1888) is a rare and excellent local example of cast-iron-front architecture and is the largest of the two such buildings in the city. It was prominent in the city's early commercial history, housing for almost three decades the city's largest furniture store, perhaps the largest credit operation in the city. Through its associations with Dutchman Peter Zinszer and his wife, Rosa, proprietress of the store during its period of greatest growth and prosperity, it represents a significant aspect of local social history - the contribution of immigrants and women to the city's development.

The building's intricate, molded classical ornamentation and broad areas of glazing, made possible by the load tolerance of the slender cast-iron members, exemplify beautifully the design characteristics of cast iron. There is only one other, much smaller, cast-iron-front building in the city. The rich ornament expresses the prosperity and growing sophistication that the ironmaking and real estate boom of 1886-87 brought to a muddy young city not yet 20 years old. It is one of the most elaborate boomtown buildings remaining in downtown. It is possible that iron for the facade was locally mined and cast in one of the Birmingham foundaries that produced cast iron in the 19th century.

Dutchman Peter Zinszer, first listed in the city directory in 1887, at the height of the boom, moved his furniture store into the east third of the building in 1889; the eastern 2/3 of the building was unfinished at the time. The following year, 1890, Zinszer expanded his operation into the adjacent third and by 1891 occupied the entire structure.

Zinszer died in 1895 and his widow, Mrs. Rosa Zinszer, took over as proprietor. She consolidated "Peter Zinszer's Cash House," two blocks away at 1917 2nd Avenue North, with "Peter Zinszer's Installment House" in the nominated building and began promoting it extensively in local German and English-language publications as "Peter Zinszer's Mammouth Furniture House." Although remarried three years after Peter's death, to Dr. W. H. Wilders, a prominent physician, she continued to run the "extensive and superbly managed" business (Birmingham Souvenir, 1903) until 1917, at the time of World War I. Rosa Zinszer Wilder was one of the first women to operate a large business in Birmingham, beginning her career when it was still a rough mining and industrial town.

Rosa Zinszer Wilder and Peter Zinszer are buried at Oak Hill Cemetery (1871, N.R.H.P.) in an impressive mausoleum.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Lennox, Timothy J. "The Zinszer Family" manuscript to be published in The Journal of the Birmingham Historical Society, Volume VII, Number 2, July, 1980.

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Birmingham North 7.51

Quadrangle scale 1:2400

UMT References

A

1	6	5	1	8	2	0	10	3	17	0	18	3	12	10
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing							

C

Zone				Easting				Northing							

D

Zone				Easting				Northing							

E

Zone				Easting				Northing							

F

Zone				Easting				Northing							

G

Zone				Easting				Northing							

H

Zone				Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 101, lot 5 and East half of lot 6; 130' x 75'.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen Mertins/Alice Bowsher

organization Birmingham Historical Society date July 11, 1980

street & number 1425 22nd Street, South telephone _____

city or town Birmingham state Alabama

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Milo B. Howard, Jr.

title SHPO date July 14, 1980

For HCRS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

W. Ray Luce date 9/23/80
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Curt Dubois date 9/19/80
Chief of Registration