NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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Ala. Historical Commission

NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name The Old Anniston Electric and Gas Company Plant
other names/site number Old Utilities Plant

2. Location

street & number 2 West Third Street N/A ☐ not for publication
city, town Anniston N/A ☐ vicinity
state Alabama code AL county Calhoun code 015 zip code 36201

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
☒ private	☒ building(s)	2	0 buildings
☐ public-local	☐ district		sites
☐ public-State	☐ site		structures
☐ public-Federal	☐ structure		objects
	☐ object	2	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official — Date 4/9/91

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the National Register

☒ entered in the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet. — 5/16/91
☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Industry/Energy Facility	Other: Home Improvement Services
	Commerce/Trade/Warehouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
Late Victorian	foundation brick
Commercial Style	walls brick
	roof shingle
	other tin
	stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The old Anniston Electric and Gas Company Plant is located in a low area six blocks south of the business district on an irregularly shaped lot on the southwest corner of Noble and Third Streets. The original tract included the land between Noble and the railroad tracks, but the western part of the parcel was separated about 1930. Two buildings survive of an original complex of four structures plus several minor dependencies, constructed in 1888 and 1915 for the production of gas and electricity for the early town.

The larger of the two remaining buildings is a pressed brick late Victorian commercial structure, rectangular in shape and in several sections, each with a gabled shingle roof. It was built in 1888. The north end of the building is one and a half story, next to that a two story section, then an original extrusion to the south, and a concrete block shed addition to the west. In addition there is another small extrusion on the west side with a flat sloping roof that covers what was once an electric deep well pump. The building is embellished with paired brick pilasters at the corners, supporting a corbeled cornice that follows the gable line. The design is repeated on the small original southern extrusion. Windows on all elevations have segmentally arched brick hood molds with corbel stops and stone sills. Security bars cover the original sashing. The north elevation of the building has clapboard in the uppermost gable. The main entry, on the north side, has an added small covered portico, and a former garage opening has been infilled with triple windows.

The interior of the building still contains the original floor plan of large rooms, which according to old Sanborn maps were designated for machinery and warerooms. It is modified at present only with partitioned office space on the northern end. The open truss work of heart pine beams bolted together is visible in the one and a half story section. Several storage lofts hug the walls, which are brick. The second floor of the two story section has been converted to a conference room. The

[X] See continuation sheet

entire building possesses an unusually high degree of integrity, considering its multiple adaptive reuses.

The smaller of the two structures, situated on the corner to the north of the larger building, is a one and a half story brick commercial style building with stone foundation and a slanting corrugated iron roof resting on iron girders. It was constructed in 1915 as an electrical transformer station. The east elevation has six small circular windows with brick surrounds placed about midway up the wall. A sign recently attached to the exterior of the wall has obstructed four of these. The segmentally arched entry on the south side has double paneled wooden doors with multi-pane transoms above. The interior of the small building is open from floor to ceiling, with exposed brick walls, the tin roof visible, and with two storage lofts on the west wall. Except for the new signs on the exterior of the building, and the removal of the transformer machinery, it stands today exactly as it was constructed.

The site once included the town's first plant for manufacturing coke gas, with an adjacent coal shed and coal piles, and a storage tank or "Gasometer." These were razed about 1930. The lot is surrounded by an old wire fence to the east, modern chain link around the rear of the larger building and on the west, and a small landscaped area and customer parking to the north.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Community Planning and Development	1888-1915	1888, 1915
Industry		
Architecture		

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Significant Person: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

CRITERION A: Community Planning and Development

The old Anniston Electric and Gas Company Plant represents an outstanding illustration of the utopian efforts of the town founders to create what they perceived to be a "model city." They used company profits in planning and building a town which could successfully compete with older communities. Inherent in their model city syndrome was their intention to furnish all amenities of life for the townspeople, including gas and electricity.

CRITERION A: Industry

The old plant serves as a good example of structures which housed early technology in the production of gas and electricity. The site is closely associated with the history of electricity and gas in the town, and served to produce both utilities during the period of significance. Although the original machinery has been dismantled and removed, the site and the two extant buildings still provide the setting and the feeling of association with their original industrial importance.

CRITERION C: Architecture

The two remaining buildings of the old plant are significant examples of late Victorian and commercial styles of architecture. Despite the fact that they were part of a utilities complex, the builders incorporated design elements and embellishments usually reserved for downtown business area commercial structures.

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Gates, Grace Hooten. The Model City of the New South: Anniston, Alabama, 1872-1900. Huntsville, Alabama: Strode Publisher, 1978, 2nd ed. 1983.

Anniston City Land Company Maps, 1890
Calhoun County Records, Plat Book A, p. 416-a; also tax assessor's records
Sanborn maps, 1890-1935

Interviews:

Joe Dobbins, property owner
Scott Andrews, former property owner
James Henry "Red" Smith, Jr., engineer who dismantled gas works in 1930
Ed Miller, former district manager of Alabama Gas Corp.
Rod Bowling, Alabama Power Company engineer

☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.3 acres

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	16	608520	3723470
B			
C			
D			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

A lot beginning at the southwest intersection of Third and Noble Streets, thence South 478.5 ft.; southwest 36.5 ft.; northwest 145.9 ft.; North 360 ft.; East 135.4 ft. to point of beginning.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Legal boundary lines.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Grace Hooten Gates /Historian; Melanie Betz/AHC Reviewer
organization City of Anniston date December 1990
street & number 36 Diana Hills Road telephone 205 236-6252
city or town Anniston state Alabama zip code 36201

Historical Summary:

Anniston was founded in 1872 as a private company town built around charcoal iron furnaces and later a textile mill. The town's founder, Samuel Noble, and his partner, Daniel Tyler, early on conceived of a model city, and planned accordingly. They used their Woodstock Company profits to provide town improvements. Their plan involved furnishing all the amenities that older communities enjoyed, including schools, churches, and such social overhead improvements as paved streets, water facilities, and utilities. The company's concern for and continued management of the town persisted even after Anniston opened to the broader public in 1883.

The Woodstock Company produced electricity on a small scale beginning in 1882, thus making Anniston the first town in the State of Alabama where electricity was used in a practical way. Woodstock Furnace Number One, which was located in the general area west of Eighth and Noble Streets, furnished the power to run the dynamo. There was one street light on the corner of Tenth and Noble Streets, and the furnace casting houses were lighted.

After Anniston opened to the general public in 1883, the parent company contracted with the Brush Electric Light Company to provide machinery and appliances for making lights for the town. By May 1884 seventeen lamps on forty-foot poles stood at the main intersections. The storage battery for the electricity was kept in the Opera House, located on the corner of Tenth and Noble Streets. A further increase in both prosperity and population in 1887 necessitated expanding the supply of electricity, and the company began experimenting with gas as well.

Accordingly, the site on Third and Noble was selected for new facilities in 1888. The low-lying area was considered ideal for the pumping of gas to the higher elevations. That year three structures were built by the newly-formed Anniston Electric and Gas Company: the Electric Light and Power Plant, which still stands; the adjacent Gas Works; and a nearby coal shed and 40,000 cubic foot holding tank, or "Gasometer" for the gas. The Electric Light and Power Plant contained the machinery and generators

for producing electricity by means of coal. In the gas works building, coke gas was manufactured in six to eight retorts, or long ovens constructed of fire brick. Coke heated the ovens to a red hot state, then coal was shoveled in. The resulting smoke or gas was pumped out, purified, and stored, while the residue of pitch and tar were drained out.

Soon Anniston customers could choose between the two systems. Illuminating gas rates were advertised as low: $2.00 per 1,000 cubic feet. Some of the town's restaurants and businesses used coin gas meters with quarter slots. Electric rates for overall lighting cost $15.00 monthly from sunset until midnight and $20.00 until sunrise. Residential customers could also buy small amounts of electricity for incandescent lighting as follows:

Candlepower	Sunset to 9:00 p.m.	To Sunrise
16	$1.39	$1.66
32	2.66	3.33
65	4.22	5.00

Source: Anniston Daily Press, January 3, 1890.

For the 9:00 p.m. subscribers, free use of electricity until midnight was generously allowed on Saturday nights. The customers were constantly complaining, however, about the varying density of light. It was not until 1900 that Anniston citizens enjoyed twenty-four hour service.

By 1910, the complex was called the Anniston Electric Light and Power Company and Gas Plant. On March 6, 1915, Thomas W. Martin, then president, sold the business to the Alabama Power Company. That year, the new company constructed the Transformer Station, the smaller building still standing. It housed three 300 kilowatt and three 200 kilowatt transformers. Alabama Power continued the production of both gas and electricity until about 1930, when natural gas pipe lines reached the Calhoun County area. The Alabama Power Company gave up the production of coke gas and dismantled the gas works. A Public Service Commission decision also contributed to the separation of the production of gas and electricity. At that time a holding company, the Central

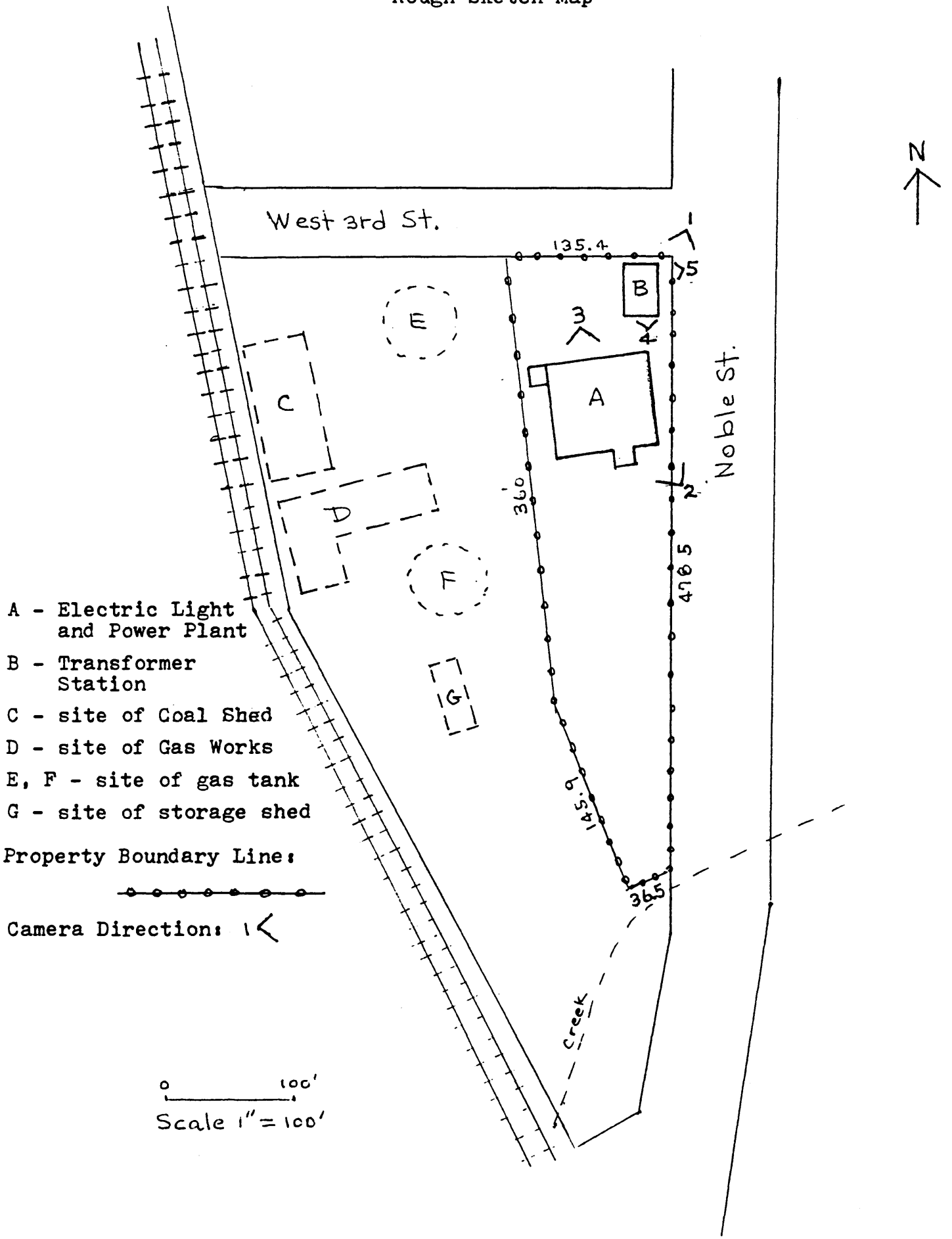
Public Service Corporation, took over the gas utility for Anniston, and bought the west part of the parcel of land. The natural gas was pumped from Oxford into Anniston and received on the same site of the old gas plant. It was stored in holding tanks and the pressure was regulated. It is now the property of the Alabama Gas Corporation and the site of the modern Service Center.

The building originally known as the Electric Light and Power Plant was also abandoned except for use as general storage of electric supplies, and the transformer station became a machine shop. In 1956, Alabama Power sold the eastern part of the property to Glenn Andrews, who operated his Noble Sign Company on the premises until the Andrews family sold the buildings to Joe Dobbins in April 1990. Dobbins uses the larger building for Anniston Total Home Care, Steamway Carpet Care, and Dixie Steamway Distributors. The smaller building is now used for storage.

The two buildings remain as an important reminder of the model city heritage, particularly in the history of gas and electric production for the area.

OLD ANNISTON ELECTRIC AND GAS COMPANY PLANT

Rough Sketch Map



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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photo-graphs Page 1

Information in items 1 - 5 is the same for all photographs listed.

1) The Old Anniston Electric and Gas Company Plant, 2 West Third Street
2) Anniston, Calhoun County, Alabama
3) William F. Gates
4) August-September 1990
5) Alabama Historical Commission

Photo No. 1
6) View of property showing Transformer Station in foreground, old Light Plant in background, and to far right, present Alabama Gas Corp. Service Center, camera facing S

Photo No. 2
6) East elevation of old Light Plant, camera facing NW

Photo No. 3
6) North elevation of old Light Plant, camera facing S

Photo No. 4
6) Interior view of ceiling in old Light Plant, camera facing S

Photo No. 5
6) Interior view of ceiling in old Light Plant, camera facing N

Photo No. 6
6) South elevation of old Transformer Station, camera facing NW

Photo No. 7
6) East and north elevations of Transormer Station, camera facing SW

Photo No. 8
6) Interior of north and east walls of Transformer Station, camera facing NE

Photo No. 9
6) Interior of east wall of Transformer Station, camera facing E