

24. - 33. 104 through 128 SOUTH SIDE SQUARE  
Huntsville, Alabama

Multiple Owners

Block 43 and Block 44, Old Town

1835 to 1912

#### DESCRIPTION

South Side Square is a single block that faces the courthouse square and is composed of fifteen attached, commercial buildings of two or three floors each, constructed of brick, with common party walls and flat roofs. Thirteen of these are considered to be historically or architecturally significant. The stores vary in width from 18 feet to 25 feet while the facades date from 1835 to the 1960s.

108 and 110 are the oldest, dating from 1835-40, and although much altered, they still retain the tall, narrow proportions typical of antebellum commercial architecture in Huntsville. The high parapet has been removed from 108, the facade faced with glazed white and green brick, and the windows and entrance modernized with redwood. 108 was built as an outlet store by the Bell Factory for the products of their textile mill which was chartered in 1832 so that this building is historically as well as architecturally significant. 110 was originally a three-bay building of which only the westernmost bay survives. Each bay featured a three story, recessed and arched panel with a Venetian style window centered on each floor. The cornice has been removed, the windows changed and the ground floor remodeled, but the proportions and full facade arch survive. This is the only commercial building designed and built by George Steele still standing except for the First Alabama Bank.

During the 1880s several of the antebellum stores were demolished to make way for new buildings; these include 106, 112, 114, 116 and 118. They were all designed in the Italianate style, built of brick, and have three segmental headed windows across the second story decorated with hoods of cast iron and a large pressed metal cornice. 118 was damaged by fire in 1901 and rebuilt without any of its Italianate features. 128 was erected in 1896 and displays lingering influences of the Italianate in its arched side windows and bracketed metal cornice. The facade was considerably altered in 1963.

104, 120, 122 and 124-126 were all built at the turn of the century in the Commercial Brick style. They continue the brick tradition and retain the proportions of their 19th century antecedents having been built on the old foundations and probably incorporating many of the old party walls. Although they continue to use metal cornices, they are much simplified, sometimes not even having

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Continuation:

brackets. The second floor windows are trabeated and joined by a single or continuous lintel and sill. 122 was extensively modernized in 1965, but all of the structural elements of the 1903 building were retained. Although contemporary in appearance, this structure contributes to the entity of the entire block through its age, scale, material and associations.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

South Side Square is important as an entity for several reasons. It has served as the prime commercial property in Huntsville since the second decade of the 19th century and actually was called "Commercial Row" until the 20th century. It was built up with small commercial "houses" prior to the Civil War and although the appearance of the block has changed through the years, the size and number of the buildings have remained constant because the party walls and foundations were usually retained during rebuilding or remodeling. Within this decade, the character of the block is changing from retail stores to professional offices as is the remainder of the downtown.

The two western buildings in the block have not been included because one is a totally new structure erected in the 1960s and the other is an Italianate building that has been stripped of all its architectural features and covered with aluminum. Nevertheless these two buildings retain the original scale of the rest of the block so that South Side Square is the only downtown block that survives as a complete unit.

The block is significant for retaining the scale and character of the 19th century downtown. It is important that the integrity of the block as an historical entity be recognized and preserved. The other three blocks on the courthouse square once looked similar to this but two of them now have vacant lots and inappropriate new construction while the third has been stripped of its historic architectural elements for the most part.

These buildings are significant for their age, consistency of materials, historical associations, and role in the development of commercial architectural styles as they evolved in a small town.

SOUTH SIDE SQUARE INVENTORY

(Owner's address is the same as the property unless otherwise noted.)

Block 43, Old Town; 16 538000 3842930

- 24. 104: Lot 3; ca. 1903, architect/builder unknown; 1976, remodeled;  
Commercial Brick  
Joyce, Pearson and Prout, Architects
- 25. 106: Lot 4; 1883, architect/builder unknown; 1976, remodeled;  
Italianate  
H. Kenan Timberlake
- 26. 108: Lot 5: before 1845, architect/builder unknown; 1914 and  
1976, remodeled; Antebellum Commercial  
Jeff S. Smith
- 27. 110: Lot 6; 1835, George Steele, architect and builder; 1884 and  
1976, remodeled; Antebellum Commercial  
Dan Moran

Lots 7 and 8, Block 43 and Lots 1 and 2, Block 44, Old Town  
16 538015 3842950

- 28. 112, 114 and 116: 1883-87, architect/builder unknown; ca. 1960,  
114 and 116 remodeled; Italianate  
112 and 114: Ira Terry, P. O. Box 798, Huntsville, Ala. 35804  
116: Johnston and Johnston

Block 44, Old Town; 16 538055 3842960

- 29. 118: Lot 3; 1887, architect/builder unknown; 1902, rebuilt;  
Stripped Italianate  
Marguerite E. Johnston, Rt. 7, Box 388, Russellville, Ala, 35653
- 30. 120: Lot 4; ca. 1912, architect/builder unknown; 1979, remodeled;  
Commercial Brick  
Zach Higgs et al, Suite 555, Central Bank Bldg., Huntsville, 35801
- 31. 122: Lot 5; ca. 1903, architect/builder unknown; 1965, remodeled;  
Commercial Brick  
Culver and Miller
- 32. 124-126: Lots 6 and 7; 1902, architect/builder unknown;  
Commercial Brick  
Daniel and John Harrison
- 33. 128: Lot 8; 1896, architect/builder unknown; 1922 and 1963,  
remodeled; Italianate  
Mrs. James M. Dyer, 1505 Glenwood Drive, Huntsville, Ala 35801