



# 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 Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company  
other names/site number N/A

## 2. Location

street & number 881 Memorial Drive  
city, town Atlanta ( ) vicinity of  
county Fulton code 121  
state Georgia code GA zip code 30136

( ) not for publication

## 3. Classification

### Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

### Category of Property:

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

### Number of Resources within Property:

#### Contributing

#### Noncontributing

buildings	1	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	1	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

**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 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 the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

*Richard Coates*

*8-31-04*

Signature of certifying official

Date

W. Ray Luce  
Historic Preservation Division Director  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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 or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

*Edson H. Beall* *10/27/04*

Keeper of the National Register

Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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### Historic Functions:

Commerce/Trade: warehouse

Industry/Processing/Extraction: manufacturing facility

### Current Functions:

Domestic: multiple dwelling

Commercial: professional

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification:

Other: early 20<sup>th</sup>-century industrial building

### Materials:

**foundation** Concrete

**walls** Brick

**roof** Asphalt

**other** Glass

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company Building is located on Memorial Drive east of downtown Atlanta in Fulton County, Georgia. Built in 1930, the A & P building is a large, multi-purpose building designed to house a food warehouse, bakery, and offices. The area, which bounds the residential Reynoldstown Historic District to the south, is an industrial corridor that developed along the Atlanta and West Point Railroad Belt Line. In 1914, in an effort to avoid downtown congestion, the railroad built a five- and one-half mile belt line from Oakland to Inman Park. Numerous warehouses and food-service businesses are located in the area.

The building is a three-story rectangular block supported by a reinforced concrete frame. The reinforced-concrete-slab floor is supported on every level by a grid of concrete "mushroom columns," so-called because of their mushroom-shaped profile. The concrete frame, which is filled with brick panels, is visible on the exterior of the building. Steel-framed fixed and pivot industrial-style windows line the walls. Double-hung sash windows are located on the second floor. Stairs were built in the northeast and south corners of the building and two elevators were installed in the center of each floor. A platform on the southeast corner of the building provided direct rail access to the warehouse. Goods left the warehouse from truck bays on the south and west facades. The latter was enclosed after 1940. The Glenwood Memorial Connector, which links Memorial Drive to Interstate 20, replaced the rail line along the east side of the building.

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 7--Description**

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As initially constructed, the interior was mostly open with numerous concrete columns supporting the reinforced-concrete floors. Interior masonry partitions were added in the 1960s. Wall-to-wall carpet was laid on the first floor and red-clay tile covers the floors on the second and third levels. Radiators provided heat to the building.

The basement was divided into smaller rooms including offices, space for cold storage, and a c.1960 walk-in refrigerator. The first floor handled shipping and receiving and storage of non-perishable groceries. The first floor included a weigh station and an employee cafeteria. The second floor was laid out in an open plan with reception, sales, purchasing, and accounting sharing a common space. The vice president retained the only private office. The third floor, also laid out in a mostly open plan, was dedicated to the bakery and offices.

Between 1997 and 2002, the A & P building was rehabilitated as residential loft apartments with retail space in the basement. The rehabilitation included the construction of partitions to form a double-loaded corridor that runs north to south with apartments on east side. Stairs pierce floors slabs in some apartments to provide access to upper-level living space. The loading dock across the west side of building and numerous window openings, which had been concealed, were reestablished. A new elevator was placed in the historic elevator shaft and a roof deck, which is not visible from the street, was added. Interior features were preserved, such the concrete stairs, steel fire doors, original windows, exposed ceramic walls, concrete floors and ceilings, and mushroom columns.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**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):**  N/A

A       B       C       D       E       F       G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

Commerce  
Architecture

**Period of Significance:**

1930-1954

**Significant Dates:**

1930 – Completion of Southern regional headquarters on Fair Street (Memorial Drive) in Atlanta that served Georgia and Alabama.

c.1948 – Stores in parts of Tennessee and South Carolina are placed under the regional office on Memorial Drive in Atlanta.

**Significant Person(s):**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

Flagler Company (builder)

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

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**Statement of significance (areas of significance)**

The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Building is significant in the area commerce because of its association with the A & P company, one of the first nationwide grocery store chains, and for its role as a regional headquarters during a period of company expansion. The Atlanta division of the A & P company served as the headquarters for stores in Georgia and Alabama. By 1948, the company had 24 stores in Atlanta, 77 stores in north and central Georgia, southeast Tennessee, and western South Carolina. In c.1952, warehouse needs exceeded the Memorial Drive building and a decade later additional space for frozen food storage was sought. Southeast headquarters remained on Memorial Drive until 1963. The bakery continued to operate on the site until c.1976. The A&P building on Memorial Drive represents a period of significant growth in the company when it decentralized control from its New York headquarters to a system of regional offices to manage its coast-to-coast grocery stores.

The A & P building, which served for over 30 years as the regional headquarters, incorporated cold storage, frozen food storage, and a bakery that supplied the city with fresh-baked breads and desserts. The efficiently designed Memorial Drive building supported the chain of grocery stores by storing fresh foods and raw ingredients brought by rail and then delivering by truck a variety of fresh, nonperishable, and baked goods to the many stores that served the Southeast.

The A & P building is significant in the area of architecture as an excellent example of a concrete-frame industrial building that was used by the company as a warehouse, bakery, and its local offices. Concrete-frame warehouses with brick infill and metal factory windows were commonly built throughout the United States in the 1920s and 1930s because they could be built quickly, they were fireproof, and their open interior plans could serve a variety of uses.

Concrete frame construction has its roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1870s, engineers in France and the U.S. devised concrete framing systems whereby steel-reinforcing rods (rebar) were inserted in concrete for increased strength. This system provided the tensile strength of steel to concrete, which is strong in compression but weak in tension. Albert Kahn, an American architect who spent most of his career designing car factories, especially for Henry Ford, used exposed-concrete framing; it met the requirements of cheapness, standardization, fireproofing, clear lighting, ventilation, and unobstructed, flexible interiors to accommodate assembly lines. This is evident in his Ford Motor Company factory in Highland Park, Michigan, which was built in 1909. Beginning in the 1930s, Kahn and other leading American architects turned to steel framing because steel could be prefabricated and quickly assembled on site in less time with fewer skilled workmen.

In addition to the A & P building, concrete-frame buildings in Atlanta include the Chevrolet Motor Company located in the Castleberry Hill neighborhood southwest of downtown. It is a three-story building with a visible concrete frame, brick walls and steel-framed industrial windows. The concrete-slab floors are supported by a grid of concrete columns. Atlanta architect G. Lloyd preacher designed the Chevrolet Motor Company in 1920. The Kraft Phenix Cheese building opposite the A & P building on Memorial Drive is another concrete-frame building. Completed before

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8--Statement of Significance**

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1923, the three-story factory is supported by a visible concrete frame, concrete columns and includes brick walls. Both the Chevrolet Motor Company and the Kraft Phenix Cheese building have been substantially altered. The A & P building is among Atlanta's best surviving examples of concrete-frame construction.

**National Register Criteria**

A and C

**Criteria Considerations (if applicable)**

N/A

**Period of significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins with the completion of the A&P building in 1930 and ends in 1954 at the fifty-year end date because the building continued to serve the A&P company through the third quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)**

The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company building, the only resource located on the property, individually meets the National Register criteria.

**Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)**

Begun in 1859 in New York City, the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company developed into a national chain grocery store within a decade. By the end of World War I, A & P introduced fresh produce, baked goods, and meat into all of its stores. By the late 1920s, the company operated 15,000 stores in 27 states with annual sales exceeding one billion dollars.

In 1859, George F. Gilman and George H. Hartford, both of Augusta, Maine, founded a tea company at the corner of Vesey and Church streets in Lower Manhattan. The shop was painted red and gold with a pagoda-like cashier's desk and a band played on Saturday evenings (*Newsweek*, 10/13/34). In 1861, Gilman proposed the name, the Great American Tea Company. At the time, numerous middlemen raised the price of tea, which was then considered a luxury. Hartford sensed an opportunity to reduce costs by eliminating the middlemen. The company succeeded with Hartford as the active partner and Gilmer as the principal investor.

Hartford's policy was to sell quality goods at the lowest possible prices by eliminating the middlemen. He was consumer oriented and treated people fairly and earned their confidence. Early practices of the company included money-back guarantees and a club plan for customers buying large quantities

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

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of mail-order tea. To encourage customer loyalty, the company introduced the idea of issuing trading stamps that could be redeemed for gift items.

As the company grew, it expanded into five New York City branches by 1865. In 1869, upon completion of the transcontinental railroad, Gilman renamed the company the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company. With their success, came competitor's attacks. In 1869, articles appeared which attacked the some of the company's business practices. In addition, the independent grocers began to challenge chain stores like A & P, a fight that lasted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 1870s, the company established wagon routes across rural areas of the country. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the company owned a fleet of 1,500 wagons that traveled throughout the United States. Eventually, automobiles replaced the wagons, but the routes remained until the 1960s. The first of many A & P stores west of New York was opened in 1871. By 1878, with over 100 retail stores, Gilman retired from active participation in the company but retained day-to-day financial control of the company. After Gilman's death in 1901, Hartford gained full control of the company. By 1906, Hartford had left most of the day-to-day management to his two sons, George and John. George Ludlom Hartford became the financial genius behind the company, while his brother John was the entrepreneur and leader. His leadership insured that A & P became known as the developer of mass retailing in America. By 1912, with 400 stores and an expanded product line, A & P had expanded beyond a series of specialty shops to a chain of food stores. After the death of George H. Hartford in 1917, the company passed into the hands of his sons.

In c.1912, the company reorganized its practices, which resulted in enormous growth over the next 15 years. The company advertised itself as "A & P Where Economy Rules." A & P leased its stores rather than buying them so the company could quickly close unprofitable stores. This policy provided the company with the financial flexibility to remain profitable during the Great Depression. By 1930, A & P was world's largest retail operation. In 1925, with over 14,000 stores in 29 states, the company decentralized its operations with its headquarters in New York and six regional divisions located in Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Chicago. After World War I, the company expanded its product line to include more than 600 items and its own baked goods. The retail markets were supported a network of warehouses and production plants. In 1924, A & P introduced fresh produce in all of its stores and soon after fresh meats were sold throughout the chain. When possible, the company purchased local merchandise to keep prices low. Other stores tried new innovations to remain competitive. In 1932 in California, the supermarket was created. Early supermarkets, small by current standards, provided free parking and other amenities. A & P adopted the supermarket concept in 1936 with 100 new stores.

A & P established its first store in Atlanta in 1881 during a time of rapid expansion for the company. Located at 75 Whitehall Street in the heart of the city's shopping district, the store moved to 121 Whitehall in c.1917, where it remained until 1923. The next year, the company built a warehouse on Sylvan Road that served 300 Southeastern stores in the Atlanta, Birmingham, Montgomery, Mobile, Augusta, Macon, and Jacksonville. The Sylvan Road warehouse employed 100 people.

In 1930, the company completed plans for a new building on Fair Street (Memorial Drive) that



**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8--Statement of Significance**

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combined warehouse, baking and office functions. The site for the new building was situated on the Atlanta and West Point Railroad Belt Line. In 1914, in an effort to avoid downtown congestion, railroad built a five- and one-half mile belt line from Oakland to Inman Park. A freight depot opposite the A & P building was built to serve the needs of the area. Numerous warehouses and food-service businesses were attracted to Memorial Drive, including the American Service Company grocers, the Handy Pandy Stores, the Warren Company, and the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company.

The new A & P building was completed in 1930. W. B. Van Inwegen from the A & P Engineering Department reported to the owner of the building, Investment Securities Corporation, "complete satisfaction" with the new building. Because the building was not air-conditioned, exhaust fans and open windows served as the only means of ventilation. In plan, the basement was refrigerated to store produce. The first floor handled shipping and receiving and storage of non-perishable groceries. Items shipped to the factory arrived by rail on the platform on the east side of the building. Trucks delivered goods to retail stores from the loading dock along the west side of the building. The first floor also included an employee cafeteria toward the front of the building. The second floor contained a reception area and offices in an open plan. The third floor was dedicated to the bakery, which produced a variety of breads such as plain, rye, and wheat as well as desserts. By 1934, the company produced 150,000 loaves of bread per hour in its 32 bakeries nationwide.

The Atlanta division of the A & P company served as the headquarters for stores in Georgia and Alabama. By 1948, the company had 24 stores in Atlanta, 77 stores in north and central Georgia, southeast Tennessee, and western South Carolina. In c.1952, warehouse needs exceeded the Memorial Drive building and additional space was let on Chattahoochee Avenue. Eventually, additional storage for frozen foods was also found. Southeast headquarters remained on Memorial Drive until 1963. The bakery continued to operate on the site until c.1976. A & P, now a retail giant, conducts one billion dollars in business in more than 15,000 stores.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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*Business Week*, June 6, 1930.

*The City Builder*, September, 1934.

Milton Pruett, Paul Shell and Robert Thomason. Interviews with Lyn Speno, 1997.

*Newsweek*, 10/13/34.

Speno, Lyn. Historic District Information Form. Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company. On file at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division, Atlanta, Georgia, 1997.

Walsh, William. *The Rise and Decline of The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company*. Secaucus, N. J.: Lyle Stuart Publishers, 1986.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued**  
**date issued:**
- 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:**

**Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A**

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## **10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property**      Approximately 2 acres

### **UTM References**

A)    Zone 16      Easting 744340      Northing 3737140

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The historic district boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached map, which is drawn to scale.

### **Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the property and all of the intact resources historically associated with the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**State Historic Preservation Office**

**name/title** Steven Moffson, Architectural Historian  
**organization** Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**mailing address** 47 Trinity Avenue, S.W., Suite 414-H  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334  
**telephone** (404) 656-2840 **date** August 1, 2004  
**e-mail** steven\_moffson@dnr.state.ga.us

**Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable)** ( ) not applicable

**name/title** Lyn Speno  
**organization** Ray and Associates  
**mailing address** 328 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** GA **zip code** 30308  
**telephone** (404) 607-7703  
**e-mail** N/A

- ( ) **property owner**  
(X) **consultant**  
( ) **regional development center preservation planner**  
( ) **other:**

**Property Owner or Contact Information**

**name (property owner or contact person)** S. R. Freeman  
**organization (if applicable)** N/A  
**mailing address** 881 Memorial Drive  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** GA **zip code** 30136  
**e-mail (optional)** N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

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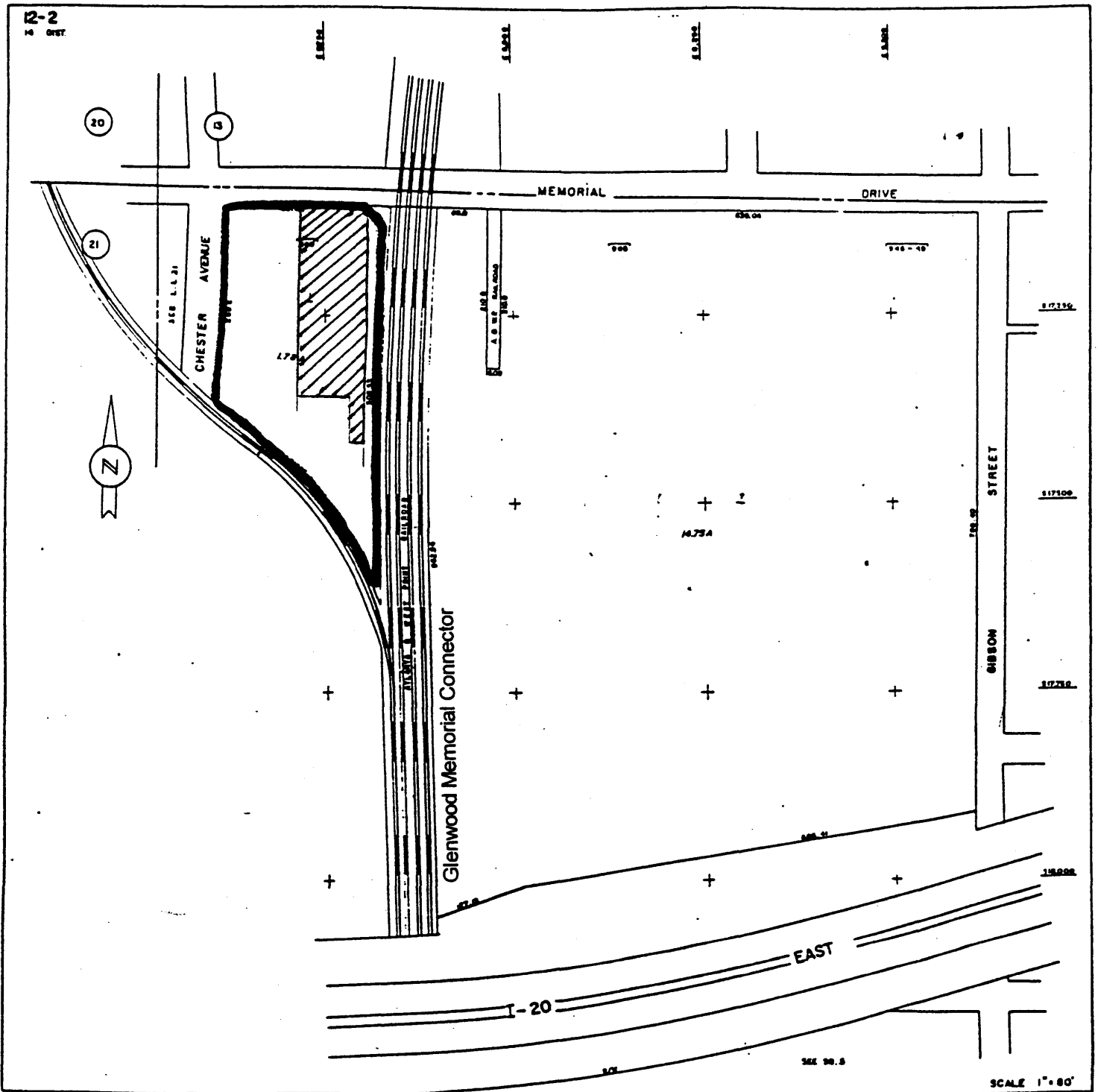
**Name of Property:** Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company  
**City or Vicinity:** Atlanta  
**County:** Fulton  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** November 2002

**Description of Photograph(s):**

Number of photographs: 15

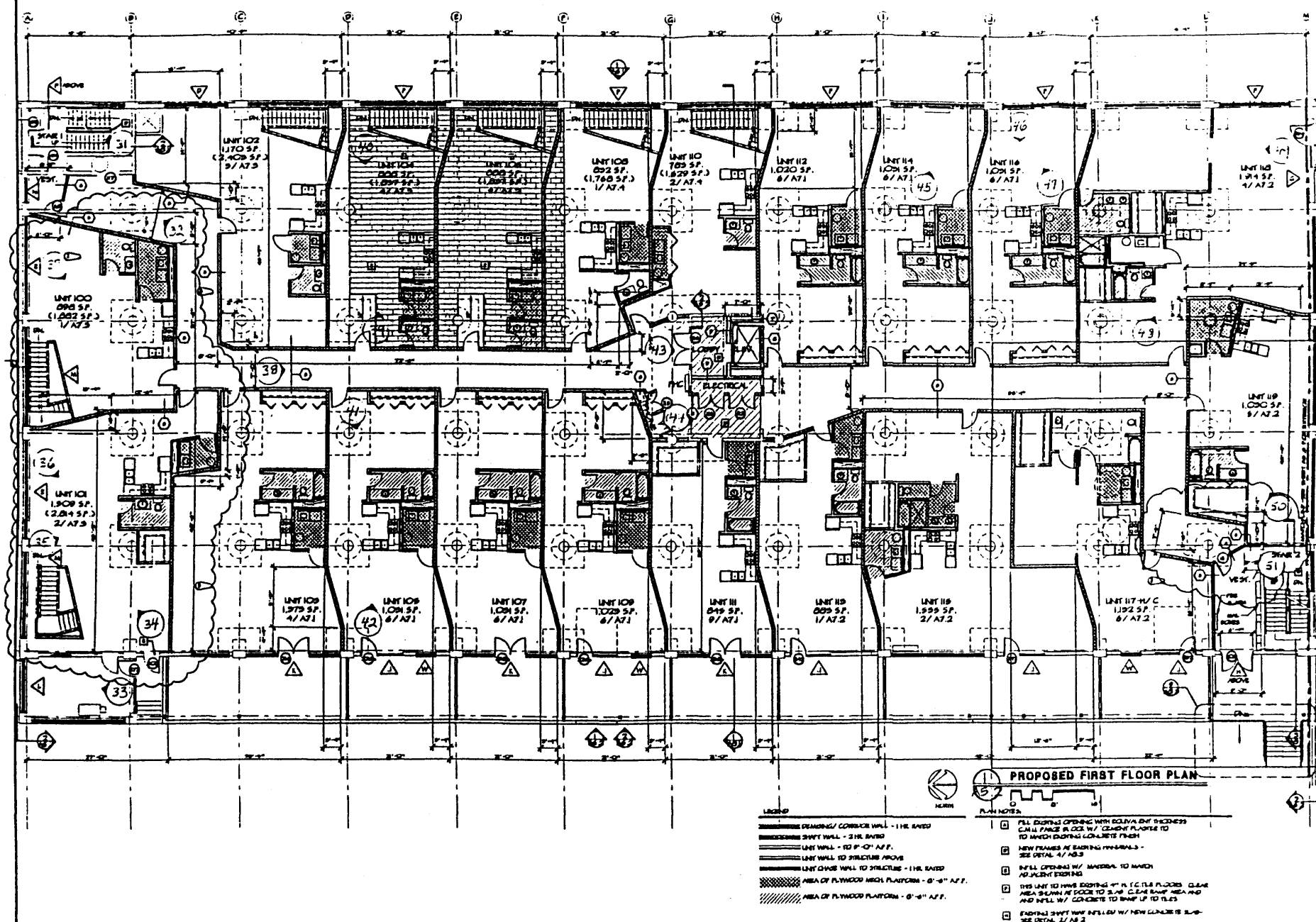
1. Northeast corner, photographer facing southwest.
2. Northwest corner, photographer facing southwest.
3. West façade (right), photographer facing northeast.
4. Southwest corner, photographer facing northeast.
5. South (rear) façade with loading dock, photographer facing north.
6. Southeast corner with platform, photographer facing northwest.
7. Basement studio with freezer door, photographer facing east.
8. Basement studio with freezer doors, photographer facing northeast.
9. Basement corridor, photographer facing south.
10. First-floor stair landing, southwest corner, photographer facing west.
11. First-floor loft, photographer facing east.
12. Third-floor corridor, photographer facing north.
13. Third-floor loft, east side, photographer facing east.
14. Third-floor loft, southeast corner, photographer facing southeast.
15. Third-floor loft, south side, photographer facing west.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)



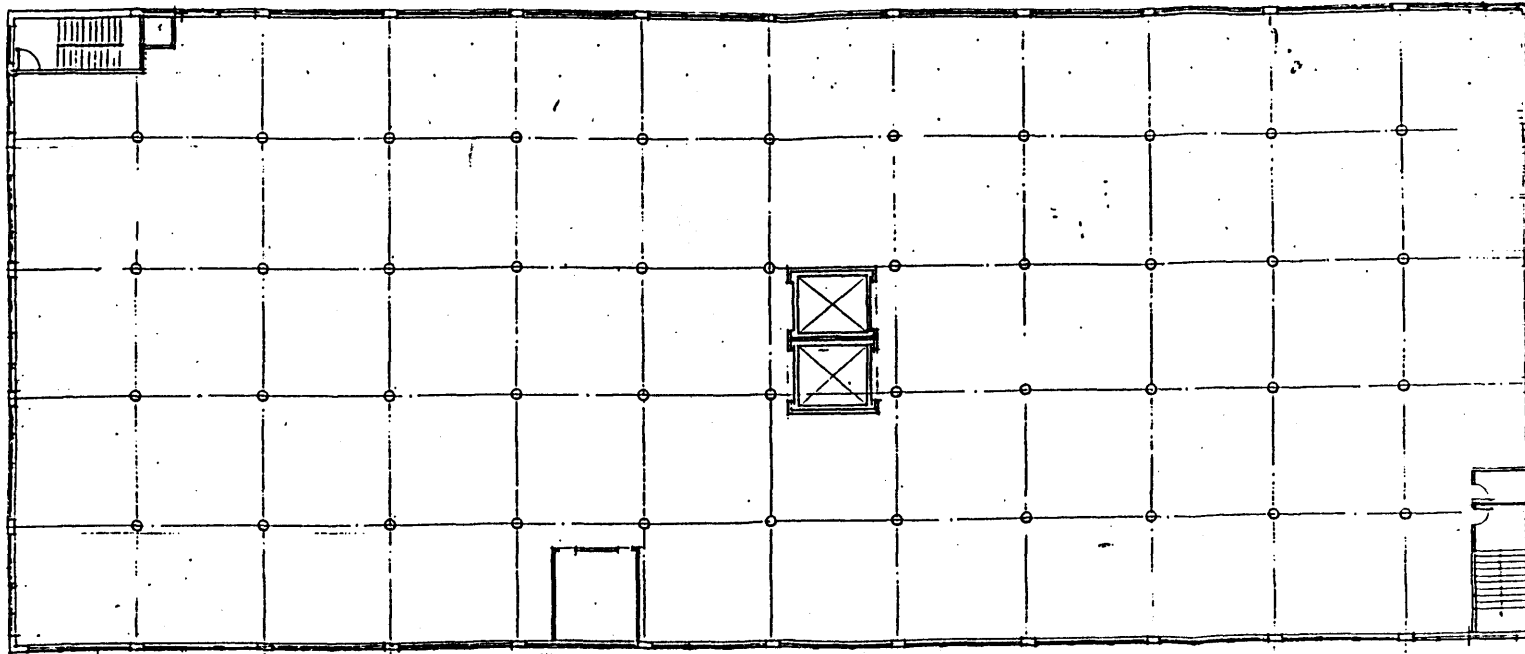
Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company  
 Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia  
 Site Plan

National Register Boundary **—————**  
 Approximate scale: 1" = 200'



Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company  
 Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia  
 First-Floor Plan (after rehabilitation)

No scale



Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company  
Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia  
Second-Floor Plan (before rehabilitation)

No scale