NPS Form 10-900

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

OMB No. 1024-0018

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 Mechanics Engine House No. 4
other names/site number Fire Engine Company House No. 4

2. Location

street & number 950 Third Street
city, town Macon (n/a) **vicinity of**
county Bibb **code** GA 021
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 31208

(n/a) **not for publication**

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

(x) **private**
( ) **public-local**
( ) **public-state**
( ) **public-federal**

Category of Property

(x) **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: 0

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.

Elizabeth A. Lyon — 8/7/90

Signature of certifying official — Date

Elizabeth A. Lyon
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer,
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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

Entered in the National Register

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

(X) entered in the National Register — Alonzo Byers — 9/13/90

( ) determined eligible for the National Register

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register

( ) removed from the National Register

( ) other, explain:

( ) see continuation sheet

Signature, Keeper of the National Register — Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

GOVERNMENT:fire station

Current Functions:

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE VICTORIAN:Italianate

Materials:

foundation	brick
walls	brick
roof	asphalt
other	

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Mechanics Engine House No. 4 is located one half mile southwest of downtown Macon, Bibb County, the county seat, in central Georgia. The building is a two-story, masonry firehouse constructed around 1870. The building sits on a small site in the middle of the intersection of Oglethorpe, Arch, and Third Streets. The building displays the typical firehouse design elements including the rectangular shape, the front facade with a square hose tower at one corner, and a large, round-arched main entrance (photographs 1,2). The round-arched motif is repeated in upstairs windows on both front and rear facades and in the rows of windows on each side facade (photographs 3,4). Corbeled brick cornices emphasize the front and rear gabled parapets, and a corbeled stringcourse visually separates the floors. On the interior, the first floor has been divided into office space, while the second floor remains largely open (photographs 9,10). Wood floors, ceilings, and plaster walls on the second floor and the stairway remain intact. A one-story rear, brick wing was added around 1905 (photograph 5). Recent rehabilitation work has replaced missing windows and doors, and has uncovered the first floor arched entrance.

Mechanics Engine House No. 4 is representative of the late 19th-century architecture used for public buildings and of the urban, commercial-type firehouses of the period. Architectural details are Italianate in nature and include brick corbeling, a decorative stringcourse, arched windows, and window crowns. The side doors are also highlighted with rectangular brick hoods. The upper story round arched windows are emphasized by masonry arcading. A large hose tower is located at the left of the front corner. A circular "dahlia"-pattern wrought-iron grid is located in the tower opening (photograph 8). Originally, a wooden tower topped with a spire-like finial extended the brick tower. During the early 20th century, this tower was removed, presumably from deterioration. The building's front

entrance contains the oversized, round arched entranceway for the fire engine. Brick voussoirs and quoins frame the opening.

The building's interior on the first floor has been modified for office use. The first floor was originally one large space that accommodated the fire engine, hose wagon, equipment, and horses. The second floor is a large open space with pine floors and modern plywood partitions. This space would have served as dormitory space for the men, offices, and meeting space. Interior craftsmanship was simple and utilitarian. The wooden stairway, with simple turned balusters, remains intact.

The firehouse originally had a rear double door before the one-story storage addition was built in c. 1905. The horse drawn engine would exit through the front entrance and return through the rear double doors in order for the engine to face the right direction. The rear entrance was eliminated once motorized fire trucks were introduced. The remainder of the firehouse lot is paved and without landscaping. Industrial and commercial buildings surround the area.

The facade of Mechanics Engine House No. 4 looks similar to when it was originally constructed with the exception of the wooden tower. Recent rehabilitation work has replaced missing doors and windows. The building retains its identifying features as an important 19th-century public building and firehouse.

8. Statement of Significance

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

( ) **nationally** ( ) **statewide** (x) **locally**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

(x) **A** ( ) **B** (x) **C** ( ) **D**

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): (x) **N/A**

( ) **A** ( ) **B** ( ) **C** ( ) **D** ( ) **E** ( ) **F** ( ) **G**

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture
Politics/Government

Period of Significance:

c. 1870-1930

Significant Dates:

c. 1870

Significant Person(s):

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

n/a

Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Mechanics Engine House No. 4 is significant as an early firehouse built by the City of Macon around 1870 to house one of its volunteer fire fighting companies. It is the only intact 19th-century firehouse remaining in Macon.

Architecture

In the area of architecture, the building is significant as a good example of a late 19th-century masonry firehouse with the typical firehouse features of a hose tower for drying hoses and a large arched entrance for movement of fire fighting equipment. The two-story firehouse is similarly built to more commercial-type structures of that time. Architectural details are Italianate inspired and include brick corbeling, arched windows with decorative crowns, brick arcading, and gabled parapets. The firehouse is also identifiable by its square hose tower with a circular opening for air circulation. The large double door front entrance is accented with brick voussoirs and quoins. The building's interior consisted largely of open space for housing equipment on the first floor and fire fighters on the second floor. The nominated property represents the only intact 19th-century firehouse in Macon and illustrates the use of Italianate architectural elements with a commercial-type design; a popular combination for public buildings during the late 19th century.

In the area of politics/government, the building is significant for its representation of the City of Macon's fire department. Built by the city around 1870, the building was first used by a volunteer department. The Mechanics No. 4 volunteer company formed in 1868, and disbanded in 1890, after Macon officials organized the Fire Engine Company No. 4 with paid staff. The firehouse reflects the type of building used by cities for their public buildings, and the increased role governments played in providing services for their citizens. The building was used as a city firehouse until 1930.

National Register Criteria

In meeting Criteria A the Mechanics Engine House No. 4 illustrates the broad patterns of American history as an example of the type of firehouse used by many cities during the late 19th-century. The use of the building spans various transitions in fire fighting from 1870 to 1930. The first transition is from volunteer to paid fire fighting staffs, a process most cities implemented to gain a more efficient fire fighting system. The second transition was the change from hand-operated equipment to steam engines pulled by horses, to eventually the use of motorized fire engines. In addition, the firehouse represents the increased interest that local governments were taking in the protection of their community. By organizing paid fire fighting companies, and by improving fire fighting equipment, local governments were able to provide better and more consistent protection for their communities. The Mechanics Engine House No. 4 represents the early developments of fire fighting, within a major Georgia city, during the late 19th century.

Under Criteria C, Mechanics Engine House No. 4 illustrates the type of layout and design used by governments for specialized public buildings. Built by the city in ca. 1870, it was used by a volunteer staff until 1890. The structure is representative of the late 19th-century concept of the firehouse as an important public building. The building's design consists of an oversized "storefront" entrance with smaller side entrances, and an upper facade with double-hung windows and decorative brickwork, typical of commercial buildings of the period. The building also follows the architectural trends of the Victorian era as seen by the windows crowns and brick corbeling. The brick tower is also an important design element, used to emphasized the building's function as a firehouse and to highlight the importance of the fire department as a public institution. The interior plan was typical with open first floor space for engine equipment and second floor dormitory space for the firemen. The open interior space and wide double front doors were also easily adaptable to the various technological changes of the fire engines and equipment. The firehouse represents late 19th-century trends in the design of both public buildings and firehouses.

Period of significance (justification, if applicable)

ca. 1870 - construction date
1930 - last used as a firehouse

Historic Context

The major influences on firehouse design have come from the history of the modern fire department and its administration, the shift from private to public fire service, developments in fire fighting equipment, and the fire department's popularity as an institution. The earliest fire companies formed in the 18th century were private and voluntary, and the first firehouses were small wooden sheds that housed the hand-pumped and hand-pulled engines. In the first half of the 19th century, these fire companies became community institutions, and their firehouses became more than simply a place to house equipment. During the 1820s and 30s firehouses began including space for meeting rooms along with space for the fire engine. As the fireman became celebrated as a hero, his firehouse reflected his importance in the community. The volunteer companies often hired their own architects to design elaborate stations befitting their high community standing. In fact, station design became a point of rivalry between the companies, with each trying to outdo the other.

Around the mid-19th century, the public became dissatisfied with the social club attitudes and lack of efficiency of the volunteer companies. In 1853, Cincinnati, Ohio established the first city administered and city paid fire department. Other cities followed this example in the 1850s, 60s, and 70s. Also in 1853, the first American steam fire engine was built. Horses, used to pull the heavy steam engines, soon became a standard part of the department. The change in fire fighting equipment and the organization of paid fire departments brought a new era of professionalism and subsequent changes to firehouse design.

The design of firehouses generally followed current architectural trends, with suitable elaborations as the volunteer departments could afford them. After cities took over fire department administration, many of the existing volunteer firehouses continued to be used. New stations were often less ornate and more uniform and incorporated industrial and commercial architecture forms, as they now were municipal buildings. Often one architectural firm or the city's staff architect would be responsible for designing several fire stations. Changes in features also occurred. Hose towers, once characteristic of volunteer stations, became less ornate and were built as simple shafts or eliminated altogether for horizontal drying racks. Stations in downtown areas developed a "storefront style" facade taken from neighboring commercial buildings. This trend became a standard design for urban firehouses up through the 1930s and 40s.

At the turn-of-the-century, however, firehouses were once again designed to make an impressive statement as a public building. The municipal buildings became more elaborate utilizing red brick as the preferred building material and following Victorian trends toward rich color, texture, and pattern. Stylistically, Italianate variations, sometimes with Gothic Revival and Richardsonian Romanesque details were very popular. Jagged roof lines, projecting bays, and elaborate towers provided architectural emphasis. Firehouses were no exception, as they were conceived as important public buildings and as architectural tributes to firemen. In the 1870s and 80s many cities built large station blocks, housing several companies and a department headquarters together.

In the late 19th century, interior plans of firehouses reflected the most change. Equipment space had to be large enough to accommodate both the steam engine and stalls for the horses. The regularly administered and paid firemen were provided with expanded meeting rooms and living quarters on the second floor, separated from the equipment and horses but within easy access.

Technological advancements in the early 20th century brought further changes in construction techniques, materials, and fire fighting equipment. The horse drawn steam engine was replaced by the internal combustion engine, removing the need for the equipment area to include horse stalls. Living quarters could be moved downstairs, and the entire station designed in the form of a bungalow to fit discreetly into a neighborhood. Firehouse design began to vary according to a station's location within a commercial area, industrial area, or neighborhood. The design of firehouses has continued to follow current technological and architectural trends up to the present, bound by only a few set requirements for equipment and living space, and the essential oversized entrance.

The history of the City of Macon's fire department closely parallels fire fighting development elsewhere in the nation. Prior to 1853 there was never any permanent organization or even a properly equipped company. In 1832, the first hand engines were received. At that time there were no cisterns, and water was supplied from the nearest pumps or private wells. In 1852, a major fire on Cherry Street prompted many citizens to form a volunteer fire department. Organized in February, 1853, these volunteers adopted the name Macon Hook and Ladder Company. Shortly thereafter, they changed their name to Protection Fire Company No. 1. Over the next thirty years, several other volunteer companies formed. On March 17, 1887, the first paid engine company went into service, located in the former Ocumulgee No. 2 volunteer firehouse.

On June 1, 1868, Mechanics No. 4 organized as a volunteer company. The staff consisted of machinists and iron workers, the "mechanics", from the nearby factories and ironworks. The company later moved into the firehouse, built for them by the city, at 950 Third Street. Their first engine was the former hand engine of Protection Fire Company No. 1. This engine was used until the company received a steam engine in 1873. In February, 1890, citizens from the southwestern part of Macon petitioned city council for a paid company. This request was also supported by the factory owners who became increasingly chagrined at having employees leave during working hours to fight fires. The request was adopted, and the former Mechanics Engine House No. 4 was changed to Fire Engine Company No. 4. This company became the third paid fire department for the city.

The building was used as a firehouse until 1930, when it was superseded by more modern facilities. In 1959, it was sold by the city as an "abandoned firehouse" to the present owner.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Battin, Maryel. "Historic Property Information Form - Mechanics and Engine House No. 4." 1986. On file at the Department of Natural Resources.

Smallwood, Larry. City of Macon Fire Department, Macon, Georgia. Telephone interview by Lisa Raflo, June 15, 1990.

Zurier, Rebecca. The American Firehouse, An Architectural and Social History. New York: Abbeville Press, 1982.

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

(x) **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:

(x) **State historic preservation office**
( ) **Other State Agency**
( ) **Federal agency**
( ) **Local government**
( ) **University**
( ) **Other, Specify Repository:**

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

A) Zone 17 Easting 253540 Northing 3635180

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property corresponds to the current legal boundary and is shown on the enclosed plat map.

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundary follows the historic legal boundary and encompasses the small site on which the building sits.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Raflo, National Register Researcher
organization Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334
telephone 404-656-2840 **date** 7/31/90

(HPS form version 3-30-90)

Name of Property: Mechanics Engine House No. 4
City or Vicinity: Macon
County: Bibb
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: 4/90

Description of Photograph(s):

1 of 10: Front facade of the firehouse; photographer facing southeast.

2 of 10: Double door entranceway; photographer facing southeast.

3 of 10: Side facade view of the firehouse; photographer facing northeast.

4 of 10: Rear facade view showing c. 1905 one-story addition; photographer facing north.

5 of 10: Rear and northeast facade view; photographer facing west.

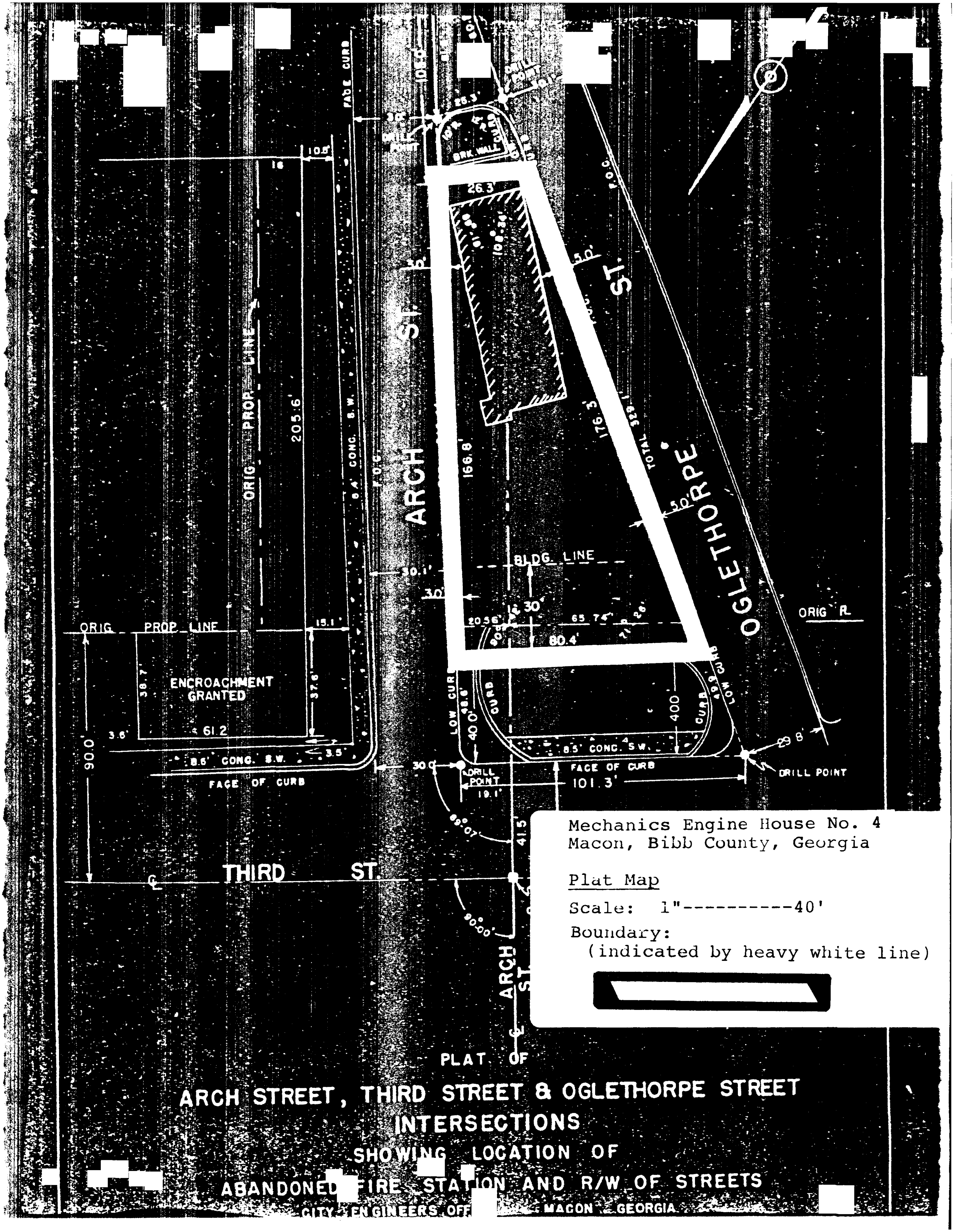
6 of 10: Interior view of front entrance doors; photographer facing north.

7 of 10: Interior features/woodwork; photographer facing northeast.

8 of 10: Interior tower view with circular opening; photographer facing up.

9 of 10: Interior view of first floor rehabilitation work; photographer facing southeast.

10 of 10: Interior view of second floor open space; photographer facing northwest.



Mechanics Engine House No. 4
Macon, Bibb County, Georgia

Plat Map

Scale: 1"----------40'

Boundary:
(indicated by heavy white line)