

17. KELLY BROTHERS AND ROWE BUILDING

307 North Jefferson Street

Jesse W. Wilson, Jr.
109 North Side Square
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

South 75.5' of the North 135' of Lots 6 and 7, Block 301, Old Town;
75.5' (Jefferson) X 120'

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1928: Architect/Builder unknown

DESCRIPTION

This is a one-story, attached brick building constructed as a warehouse. The plain, flat facade of dark brick and all the openings are outlined with a single row of headers laid perpendicular to the edges. The center section of the front wall has an elevated cornice and contains a plaque reading "Kelly Bros. & Rowe." The parapet is finished with a glazed tile cap. The building originally had a garage door at either side, two large, multipaned windows in the middle, and a standard door between each window and garage opening. The southern garage has been changed to a window and the southern window, to a double door with transom. The building is now used for storage.

SIGNIFICANCE

This building is locally significant for its part in portraying the evolution of commercial architectural styles in the years immediately preceding the Depression. Kelly Brothers & Rowe displays a late phase of the Commercial Brick style, when it had been refined and simplified to the point that functional considerations essentially replaced aesthetic concerns. The facade is perfectly flat--even the use of a contrasting material has been eliminated; the only decorative touches are the central raised wall portion with name plaque and the use of darker brick to outline the openings and the building's perimeter. The left side has been slightly altered by exchanging a door and a window, but this modification has not greatly affected the basic design or appearance of the structure.

Kelly Brothers & Rowe derives its integrity from its design, location, materials and age. However, its greatest value results from its relationship with the other three warehouses on North Jefferson Street--the Lombardo and the two Halseys. Taken as a group, the four structures effectively illustrate the evolution of warehouse design during the first thirty years of the 20th century. The 1904 Halsey continues to utilize Victorian features but combines them in a modern manner. The 1922 Lombardo and the 1923 Halsey show the Commercial Brick style in its fully matured form as interpreted for both a large and a small structure; by this time, all Victorian remnants have been eliminated although there is still an interest in surface

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Continuation:

decoration of a modified variety. Kelly Brothers & Rowe illustrates the late phase when decoration has been discarded, and the architectural style derives solely from the structural form. This warehouse represents the natural conclusion of the Commercial Brick development in Huntsville.