

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received MAY 16 1983
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic B. Lowenstein & Brothers Building

and/or common Brinkley Plaza

2. Location

street & number 27 South Main N/A not for publication

city, town Memphis N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Shelby code 157

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> <input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Wolfson Larkey Memphis Associates, Inc.

street & number Suite 222 / 370 Seventh Avenue

city, town New York N/A vicinity of state New York 10020

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Shelby County Registrar

street & number 160 N. Main Street

city, town Memphis state Tennessee 38103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The B. Lowenstein and Brothers Building is a concrete frame, nine story structure located at the corner of Main Street (Mid-American Mall) and Monroe Avenue in Memphis' central business district. The structure is sheathed in white ceramic glazed brick on the south (Monroe) and east (Main) elevations. South and east elevations are organized into distinct bays defined by structural piers faced in white glazed brick with northeast, southeast, and southwest corners of the structure softened by 45° corners. Horizontal organization of the building was accomplished with the use of red Italian levanto marble, cast iron display windows and canopies at street level; engaged terra cotta columns placed within window bays spanning the second and third floors; and terra cotta ballustrade at the eighth floor with a terra cotta spandrel flowing into a 6' -0" high copper cornice covering the ninth floor. South and east elevations contain wood double hung window units with transoms. The west alley elevation is finished in red common brick while the north alley elevation is finished in yellow brick. Both alley elevations contain steel wire glass windows. Major modifications executed prior to present ownership include removal of cast iron canopies, replacement of first floor cast iron store front display windows with bronze Duronic aluminum framed windows and the installation, at transom height, of a 3' -0" red illuminated sign that wraps the south and east elevations at street level. Despite such changes, the building retains its architectural integrity to a high degree.

Exterior detailing is eclectic. Fluted terra cotta columns at the second and third floors are capped off with modified Egyptionate capitals. Terra cotta spandrel between the second and third floors is detailed with wave moulding and acanthus paterae centered around an urn motif. The Main and Monroe corners of the building contain cast iron cartouche styled sconces supporting flagpoles. A 3' -0" terra cotta spandrel above the eighth floor acts as a base for the copper cornice and is detailed with an ornamental cartouche placed above each structural column. The copper cornice is detailed around an acanthus leaf and urn motif resting on a shallow cable mould, egg and dart and dentilled base.

Interior detailing of the first floor consists of a suspended plaster ceiling in a square layered pattern with corners cut at 45° angles creating an octagonal layered pattern around column capitals. Ornamental plaster column capitals are finished with enriched talon and cable molding. A continuous plaster dentilled cornice along the perimeter of the first floor is detailed with talon. Terrazzo flooring was installed in original aisle areas of the first floor. A bank of seven high speed elevators is located at the west end of the building. First floor elevator fronts are constructed of cast iron and contain wire glass doors and transom lights. First floor modifications include the removal of an original monumental stair, the installation of a wall of wood and gypsum board construction separating the elevator lobby.

Typical floors, two through nine, are devoid of decorative treatment, leaving structural bell columns, slabs and HVAC systems exposed.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1924 **Builder/Architect** Hanker and Cairns / Emile Weil

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The B. Lowenstein and Brothers Building is being nominated under National Register criteria A and C. The significance of the building lies in its architectural distinction and its importance in the commercial history of Memphis. This outstanding Beaux Arts structure is one of the finest examples of department store architecture from the 1920's remaining in Tennessee. Founded in 1855, Lowenstein's was the oldest and for many decades the largest department store in Memphis until the bankruptcy of its parent company, City Stores of New York, forced the closure of Lowenstein's in 1982.

The Lowenstein Company had its beginning in 1855 when a German immigrant, Benedict Lowenstein, opened a clothing store at 242 N. Main Street in downtown Memphis. Within a few years the business expanded by 1869 to include Benedict's two brothers, Elias and Bernard. After surviving the yellow fever epidemics of the 1870's, the retail division of the company moved to the larger Goodlet Building at 61 N. Main Street, which in turn became too small and the store moved in 1906 to the Hunter Building at 39 N. Main Street. By the early 1920's Lowenstein's was the city's largest department store, and in 1924 it moved to the nominated building, the most palatial of its homes during its 127 year history. The store was to move one last time in 1967 to a smaller and more modern structure at 85 N. Main.

Constructed in 1924, the nominated building was designed by the Memphis architectural firm of Hanker and Cairns in association with New Orleans architect Emile Weil. The nine-story, Beaux Arts structure is a graceful composition of white glazed brick and terra cotta, capped by an imposing copper cornice encompassing the ninth floor. Costing over \$830,000, the building was claimed by Lowenstein's to be the most modern and complete retail establishment in the South.

William Julius Hanker (1876-1960) and Bayard Snowden Cairns (1875-1935) were among the most prominent and successful Memphis architects during the years between 1900 and the Great Depression. In addition to the Lowenstein's building, the men were responsible for several other Memphis landmarks, including the Commerce Title Building (1904, 1915, NR), Hotel Chisca (1913, NR), Shrine Building (1923, NR), and the National Bank of Commerce (1929, NR).

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .51

Quadrangle name Northwest Memphis, Tenn-Ark

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	5	7	6	8	4	8	0	3	8	9	2	8	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David M. Schuermann, AIA

organization Bologna & Associates, Inc. date March 1, 1983
Architecture & Planning

street & number 66 Monroe Avenue telephone (901) 527-0371

city or town Memphis state Tennessee

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

Deputy
State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Harper

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 4/26/83

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>John Pelous Byers</u> Keeper of the National Register	Entered in the National Register date <u>6/16/83</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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B. Lowenstein and Brothers Building

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

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Coppock, Paul R. Memphis Sketches, Friends of Memphis and Shelby County Libraries, 1976.

Hanker & Heyer Architects, Over Fifty Years of Architectural Achievement in the Mid-South, Memphis, Tennessee.

B. Lowenstein & Bros. Company, Better To Serve You, 1924.

The Memphis Commercial Appeal. October 26, 1923; November 27, 1923; September 24, 1924.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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B. Lowenstein and Brothers Building

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

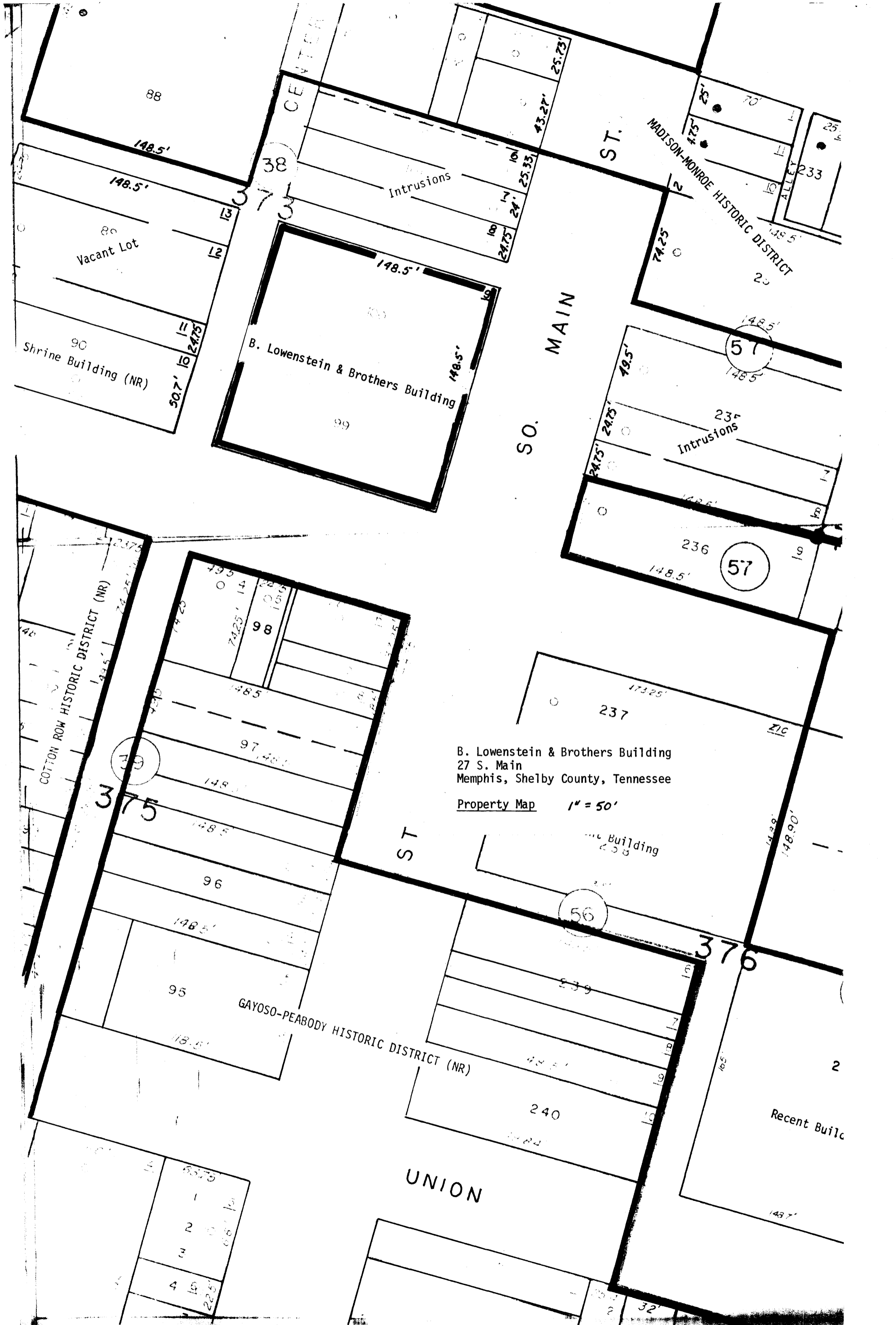
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Beginning at a cross set at the intersection of the north line of Monroe Avenue and the west line of Mid America Mall (formerly South Main Street) thence northwardly with the west line of Mid America Mall a distance of 149.50 feet to a cross set in the south line of an alley; thence westwardly with the south line of said alley and making an interior angle of 89 degrees 52 minutes a distance of 149.79 feet to a cross set in the east line of south center lane; thence southwardly with the east line of south center lane and making an interior angle of 90 degrees 07 minutes a distance of 149.50 feet to a cross set in the north line of Monroe Avenue; thence eastwardly with the north line of Monroe Avenue and making an interior angle of 89 degrees 53 minutes a distance of 149.75 feet to the point of beginning, and containing an area of 22,390 square feet.



B. Lowenstein & Brothers Building
99

B. Lowenstein & Brothers Building
27 S. Main
Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee

Property Map 1" = 50'

COTTON ROW HISTORIC DISTRICT (NR)

MADISON-MONROE HISTORIC DISTRICT

GAYOSO-PEABODY HISTORIC DISTRICT (NR)

UNION

Recent Builc

375

376

38

51

57

56

2

32

88

Vacant Lot
80

Shrine Building (NR)
90

B. Lowenstein & Brothers Building
99

98

96

95

237

236

240

233

Intrusions

Intrusions

Building

148.5'

148.5'

148.5'

148.5'

50.7' 10' 24.75'

148.5'

148.5'

148.5'

148.5'

173.25'

148.5'

148.5'

148.5'

195'

24.75'

24.75'

148.5'

148.90'

148.7'

SO. MAIN

CENTER

ST.

ST

