

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH 0688231

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RECEIVED NOV 20 1978  
DATE ENTERED JAN 8 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Bass Furniture Building

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

142-150 Mitchell Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5th - Wyche Fowler

VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

CODE

13

COUNTY

Fulton

CODE

121

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

X PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

X COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

X YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

James Witherspoon

STREET & NUMBER

150 Mitchell Street

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Fulton County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

136 Pryor Street, S. W.

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Architectural Survey of Fulton County

DATE

May 1976

FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The present structure is, in actuality, two buildings. The west section was built in the late 1890's and the east section was built in 1924. The west section contains four levels and a basement; the east section contains three levels.

The facade unifies both buildings. It is done in the Commercial Style of the early 1900's. It is characterized by a vertical rhythm of pilasters with arches connecting the capitals. The rhythm is interrupted only at the joint of the two buildings and in the spacing between the pilasters of the west section and the closer spacing of the east section.

In the early 1950's, the first level was remodeled. It is now finished in aluminum siding and large panes of glazing.

Details of the facade are in fair condition, which restoration can revive. The cornice consists of terra cotta moldings and an inverted pyramidal design in brick. Gargoyles of lion heads are placed at the apex of the pyramids. The terra cotta arches are detailed with Roman ovulo of an egg and dart pattern. The arches on the west section have a greater depth than those of the east section. The capitals contain terra cotta molding trim of a triple acanthus leaf on the lower portion of the egg and dart molding on the upper portion.

In 1924, part of the renovation scheme included the removal of the northwest corner and replacing it with an angled section which extends the full height of the building. In this section, the arch at the top of the pilasters is elliptical rather than circular, as in all other arches. The rear of the building shows the brick work as it was originally built. The only modifications are the brick sealing of windows on the first level and in the area of the shaft of the freight elevator, which was installed in 1950.

The interior is basically the original structure. The first and second floors have undergone some renovation due to a fire in 1913. The central stairway was removed and replaced by an elevator in 1912. The original elevator is still in operation. The original structural elements are exposed in the basement and top floor levels.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1898-1899

BUILDER/ARCHITECT A. Ten Eyck Brown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bass Furniture Building is significant to both the architectural and historic development of Atlanta. Architect A. Ten Eyck Brown was commissioned to build the east section and design the facade for the east and west section. It is located in an area that, for a century, was considered the social and commercial center for the city; its history and development reflect the growth and change of the City of Atlanta.

In the area below Mitchell Street from Whitehall (Peachtree) to McDaniel Street, between 1837-1864, small shopkeepers lived above their shops, saloons, boarding houses, blacksmith shops, etc. This was a commercial center with grain dealers, machine shops, wagon yard, churches and residences. The original building on 146-150 Mitchell Street served as both shop and residence for its owner in 1854. When Federal forces captured the city in 1864, this structure was one of those burned by Sherman. In 1871, the first free streetcar line ran down Mitchell Street to McPherson Barracks, which provided opportunities for revived commercial development in this area. This area, known as the Old Terminal District, was the city's chief retail shopping area by 1880.

In 1883, Henry C. Sawtelle purchased the property "known as house and lot on the East side of Whitehall Street Number One Hundred and eighty" from the estate of John Broad. On April 1, 1892, Sawtelle sold the Mitchell Street tract to A. K. Hawkes. Although there appears to have been a house and/or commercial building on the site when he bought it, Hawkes built the present structure in about 1898. In this structure, Hawkes operated a feed and grain store.

In 1906, the store front was remodeled. The May 8, 1908, fire in the Terminal District caused damages in Hawkes' store, which were repaired in 1909. About this time, it housed a publishing company, a boarding house, a millinery shop and the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Warehouse. Apparently a dry goods store in 1913, the extant structure suffered extensive fire damage that year. In 1912, the central stairwell had been removed and an interior elevator installed. The building was largely restored following the fire; the first and second floor levels were completely rebuilt while the basement and top floor required only minor repairs.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Atlanta and Environs. A Chronicle of its People and Events, Franklin Garrett, Lewis Historical Publishing Company (New York, 1954).  
 Toombs, Amisano and Wells Report (Atlanta, 1975).  
 Interview with James W. Witherspoon, May 2, 1977.  
 Fulton County Deeds and Mortgages.  
 "Historic Preservation" Carol Taylor, December 2, 1975, City Planning Department, Georgia Institute of Technology.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 1/2 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Northwest Atlanta

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 741540 3738340  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Christopher R. Sherry, Student, Georgia Institute of Technology;

Morton R. McInvale, Consultant, Historic Preservation Section

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Preservation Section

June 6, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

270 Washington Street, S. W.

(404) 656-2840

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Atlanta

Georgia 30334

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Elizabeth A. Lyon*

TITLE

Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

11/15/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

1-8-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

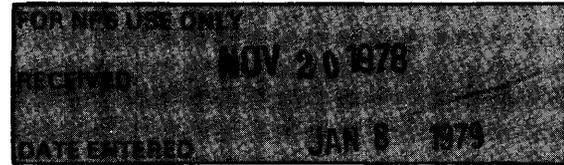
*Jan H. Gamine*

DATE

4/5/78

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

**CONTINUATION SHEET**    Significance    ITEM NUMBER    8    PAGE    2

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J. G. Sterchi purchased the property in the early part of 1919 and used the building as one of a chain of furniture stores he had established. In 1924, Sterchi Furniture Company commissioned A. Ten Eyck Brown to design a new structure adjacent to the old one and remodel the old to give the new four-story structure a unified facade. Brown had begun the practice of architecture in Atlanta in 1907 and had designed the Edwin P. Ansley Realty Trust Company Building on Luckie and Forsyth Streets (1910); the Fulton County Courthouse (1911); Atlanta's Arcade Building on Peachtree and Broad Streets (1916); the Criterion Theater on Peachtree (1916); the Federal Reserve Bank Building (1918); the Transportation (Western Union) Building on Marietta Street (1919). In 1930, Brown was the architect of Atlanta City Hall and in 1931 the Metropolitan Building.

Part of Brown's scheme was to alter the west corner of the building. He removed the corner and created an angled entry which extends the full height of the structure. The facade, as designed by Brown, exists very much as when he renovated it.

On July 4, 1933, Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance bought the property at sale from the estate of Sterchi, as Sterchi had defaulted on his payments since April 1, 1931. M. B. Porter leased the building from Sterchi's estate in 1936 and purchased it on June 13, 1940. On May 28, 1948, Porter sold the site to Bass Furniture Company. A year and a half earlier, Porter had installed a sprinkler system on the interior of the building as a measure to lower the insurance premium. In 1950, owner James W. Witherspoon installed a freight elevator in the rear of the building. Between 1950-1955, Witherspoon also applied store front aluminum and glass renovation to the street level.

In the course of changing ownership, the building reflected the decline of this once-prosperous area. With the beginning of the twentieth century, the viaducts covering the railroad tracks, and the skyscrapers such as the Hurt Building and the Candler Building, drew retail merchants from the Old Terminal District into the area about the five points area. The retail business had begun to decline by the 1930's but commercial hotels serving the Terminal Station and Union Station dotted the area. By the 1960's, both terminals had been demolished and the commercial decline, all too evident, has continued to the present. An area of mixed racial structure and abandoned buildings, it is, nevertheless, extremely significant. The Bass Furniture Company remains as one of the few nineteenth century structures in a city in need of preserving its last vestige of such buildings.



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CONTINUATION SHEET Geographical Data ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point on the southwest side of Mitchell Street, 87 feet southwest from the intersection of the southwest side of Mitchell Street with the southeast side of Peachtree Street, and extending southeast 102.6 feet; thence southwest 100 feet; thence northwest 34.8 feet; thence southwest 14 feet; thence northwest 50.7 feet; thence northeast 31.1 feet; thence northwest 25.2 feet; thence northeast 65 feet to the point of beginning.

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BASS FURNITURE BUILDING  
Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia  
Source: Fulton County, Georgia, Tax Map  
Scale: Not to Scale

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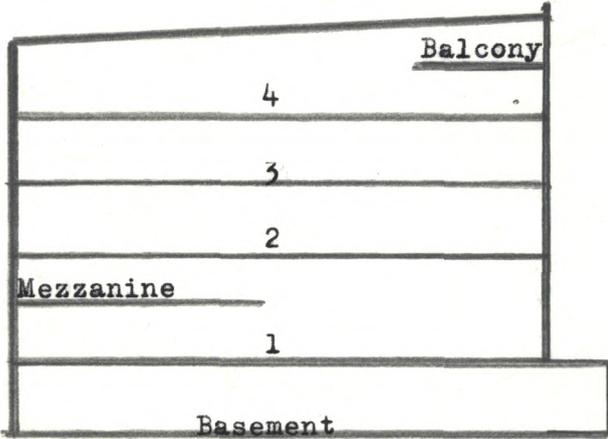
DATE ENTERED

JAN 8 1979

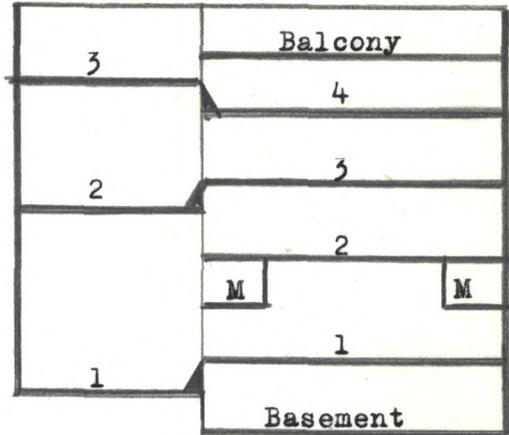
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE



Section A-A



Section B-B

