

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received AUG 2 1984

date entered AUG 30 1984

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

1. Name

historic The AGE-HERALD Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 2107 5th Avenue North N/A not for publication

city, town Birmingham N/A vicinity of 6th congressional district

state Alabama code 01 county Jefferson code 073

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<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 J. Wilson Dinsmore

street & number 2107 5th Avenue North

city, town Birmingham N/A vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street & number 716 North 21st Street

city, town Birmingham state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Jefferson County Historical Commission has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1970-present federal state county local

depository for survey records 20 North 21st Street

city, town Birmingham state Alabama

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Age-Herald building is a five story-brick structure, located at 2107 5th Avenue North near the central business district of downtown Birmingham. The building is approximately 42 feet 3 inches wide and 140 feet 8 inches deep. The structure is bounded on the north (front) side by 5th Avenue North, on the east by a vacant lot, on the south by a mid-block alley, and on the west by the Redmont Hotel. Little or no set-back exists from the property line and there is no landscaping on the lot.

The building is divided into two major structural divisions. The first being the original section built in 1909-1910, and representing the front 80 feet of the building with the common width. The rearmost section, approximately 60 feet in depth, was added to the original building at some time around 1935. The most significant feature which denotes the two sections is the window treatment. The front section uses single and double-hung wood framed windows, and the rear section is exclusively the all metal industrial window units. These features are easily noted in the attached photographs. (see photo section, numbers 1, 2, 3)

The durability of reinforced concrete and brick construction is evident throughout. Very little, if any, deterioration is noted structurally and the brickwork is in excellent condition. The very high, open ceilings with exposed concrete beams is not that different from the types found in many of today's commercial buildings.

The basic design of the building was to allow for large open floors which could be divided into any number of user areas. The first floor, for example, was left completely open and used as warehouse and printing. The upper floors were divided into a combination of smaller offices and large open work areas. The segmenting was accomplished using full length plastered walls and shorter divider walls. Larger work rooms were left almost totally open, especially in the rear section of the building, as this was the style which predominated at the time of its construction.

The front of the building reflected the ornate and picturesque design that the architect, William C. Weston, strived for. Predominantly "Beaux-Arts" in style, the high relief artwork and symbolic fixtures reflected the newspaper's image. The globes, owls, and ionic columns represented the paper's wisdom and omnipresence in the publishing of the news. (See photo section) The appearance of a heavy base, distinctive brickwork, and extensive use of terra cotta artwork distinguish this design from others.

Sometime between 1920 and 1925, the front of the first floor was modified with the addition of large display-type aluminum framed windows on either side of the entrance. At the same time, a more modern metal framed door replaced the double wood doors. These features remain in place today even though the first floor design does not lend itself well to this treatment. An early photograph and a 1927 photograph clearly illustrate the change.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1910-1982 **Builder/Architect** William C. Weston

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

ARCHITECTURE:

The Age-Herald Building is one of the best examples of the Beaux Arts style in Birmingham and was designed by the city's leading turn of the century architect--William Weston.

COMMUNICATION:

The building is strongly associated with a major early newspaper in Birmingham--The Age-Herald. It was constructed to house the paper shortly after its creation in 1909 from a merger of The Iron Age and The Elyton Herald, and served as the headquarters of that paper until 1920.

* * * * *

In 1871, the offices of The Elyton Herald, a small weekly tabloid from a neighboring community, moved to Birmingham. It was joined by another newspaper, The Iron Age, in 1874. The two papers served the community well for several years with The Iron Age specializing in items of interest to the growing steel and iron business. In 1909 the two papers merged and formed the new Age Herald, which was the foundation for The Birmingham News, which is the publication still serving the city.

The Age-Herald building served as the home office and the printing facility for The Age-Herald until 1920, when the newspaper offices moved to their new building, and present location, only a few blocks away. The building then served as the home of The Exchange Club, and later housed Rust Engineering, a prominent local firm.

Originally built next to the First Christian Church, the location on 5th Avenue seemed ideal for the newspaper, being only a few blocks from the courthouse and the old City Hall. In 1923 the Christian Church was demolished and the Redmont Hotel was built on the lot adjacent to the Age-Herald building. The new hotel caused the Age-Herald building to be much less conspicuous since the hotel towered a full seven stories above the smaller newspaper building. Construction of the hotel building immediately adjacent to the Age-Herald also blocked the view of the downtown section. Many of the newspaper's west side windows were eventually bricked over.

Around 1935, a second section of the building was added to the rear of the original structure. The newer section, being only slightly smaller than the original, nearly doubled the size of the building. There were no architecturally significant features employed on the new addition; however, the large industrial windows, unfinished ceilings and walls, and concrete floors signalled a change in direction for this building. Now destined for a series of owners and small manufacturing enterprises, the showcase of 1910 Birmingham would become virtually unnoticed. The causes were as much the tenants as the size and age of the building. In recent years, all but the first floor has been almost continuously vacant.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Photographic files, Birmingham Public Library
Historical Sites of Jefferson County. Prepared by Jefferson County Historical Commission
and Carolyn Green Satterfield. Privately printed. 1976.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .16 acres

Quadrangle name Birmingham North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

West 42 feet of lot 7, block 58, according to a map of the City of Birmingham, made by the Elyton Land Company, Real Volume 1327, page 950, 45' x 155'

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Wilson Dinsmore & Ellen Mertins

organization Alabama Historical Commission

date August 18, 1982

street & number 725 Monroe Street

telephone (205) 261-3184

city or town Montgomery

state Alabama

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date July 26, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date

8/30/84

for 
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration