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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Downtown Birmingham Historic District (2nd expansion)

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 2201-2210, 2214, 2224-2226, 2230 3rd Ave. N.; 2223, 2227, 2230 4th Ave. N.; 2300, 2305 5th Ave., N.; 213-215, 231, 309, 312, 400 23rd St. N.  not for publication

city or town Birmingham  vicinity N/A

state Alabama code AL county Jefferson code 073 zip code 35203

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility 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  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 1/16/98  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

[Signature]  
Signature of Park Keeper  
Edson H. Beall

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action  
2/20/98

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 11           | 5               | buildings  |
|              |                 | sites      |
|              |                 | structures |
|              |                 | objects    |
| 11           | 5               | Total      |

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

81

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store  
 COMMERCE/TRADE/business  
 DOMESTIC/hotel  
 RECREATION/CULTURE/theater  
 COMMERCE/TRADE/professional

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store  
 COMMERCE/TRADE/business  
 DOMESTIC/hotel  
 COMMERCE/TRADE/professional

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival  
 Colonial Revival  
 Commercial Style/Chicago

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick  
 walls brick  
 stucco  
 roof asphalt  
 other glass  
 stone

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is: N/A

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1880-1947

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Warren, Knight, & Davis

Stevens, H. L.

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Downtown Birmingham Historic District (2nd expansion) Jefferson County, Alabama  
Name of Property Jefferson County, Alabama  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property approx. 13 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jeff Mansell and Trina Binkley, AHC National Register Coordinator

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date August 10, 1997

street & number 4 Windsor Drive telephone (205) 556-9286

city or town Tuscaloosa state Alabama zip code 35404

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Downtown Birmingham Historic District (2nd expansion)

Birmingham

Jefferson County, Alabama

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## Description (cont'd.)

### Architectural Classification

Late Victorian

Beaux-Arts

Renaissance Revival (Italian)

Spanish Revival

Art Moderne

Art Deco

International Style

Other: one story commercial block

multiple story commercial block

### Materials

foundation

concrete

stone

walls

concrete

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Downtown Birmingham Historic District (2nd expansion)

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Birmingham  
Jefferson County, Alabama

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### Architectural Description

This document represents a second expansion to the Downtown Birmingham Historic District in Jefferson County, Alabama. This increase is the result of additional survey work conducted in April 1997 to evaluate the area surrounding the existing boundaries for possible expansion. The survey indicated that sixteen buildings could be added to the district that were historically an integral part of the downtown commercial district of Birmingham. These surviving resources would for the most part contribute (11 contribute, 5 do not) to the architectural and commercial significance of the National Register district. This new survey and certain aspects of the existing nomination necessitated that it be updated. Pertinent information from the existing nomination was integrated with the new survey information resulting in the current submission. As such, the old nomination was revised, reorganized, and renumbered to take into account status changes due to age, condition, and usage. Demolished buildings and parking and vacant lots were excluded from the revised inventory. The original Downtown Birmingham Historic District National Register nomination was approved in 1982 containing a total of 102 resources. This nomination was expanded in 1985 to include two additional buildings, bringing the inventory to 104. This second expansion will incorporate sixteen more buildings, and with the revised inventory, contain a total of 120 resources, ninety-one contributing and eighteen noncontributing.

The Downtown Birmingham Historic District, located in the heart of the city's central business district, contains buildings from every major period of development in the city's history, from the later part of its first decade (1871-81) through the 1920s, picking up after World War II and continuing into the 1970s. It stretches from the high density business core at the western end of the district, where skyscrapers mark the intersections, through the interim blocks of stepped rooflines scaling down from four stories, to the one-and two-story buildings at the eastern end of the district, which has the main street character of a small town commercial district. The northeastern section of the district is anchored by three multi-storied buildings, the YWCA and the Bankhead and Stonewall buildings. These buildings are in turn, separated by one and two story commercial buildings. As a whole, the district contains the largest concentration of significant architecture in downtown Birmingham.

Although the district includes buildings that vary greatly in size (26-story skyscrapers to one story storefronts) and in usage (banking houses to farm stores), the district is held together by a consistency in materials, setback, and most importantly, a sense of place. Throughout the district, the buildings relate to the pedestrian, opening storefronts or public lobbies to the street at regular intervals and providing architectural detail for the pedestrian eye. Brick is the most common material used, with a few examples of cast iron fronts, limestone facades, and polychromed terra cotta faced buildings.

The earliest styles represented in the district are from the Victorian period, exemplified in the vernacular architecture of the Dewberry Building, c. 1880 (#11) and the Wilson Building, c. 1880 (#10), with their rough-textured surface and classical motifs derived from the laying of the brick to form window arcades and dog-tooth cornices, and in the more developed styles represented by the

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Downtown Birmingham Historic District (2nd expansion)

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classical facade of the Peter Zinszer Building, c. 1888 (#21), and the brick and stone striped facade of the Daniels Building, c. 1888 (#22), ornamented with pressed metal spandrels and cornices.

The buildings remaining from the first decade of the 20th century are based on two major architectural styles, the Beaux-Arts and the Chicago School. The commercial storefront buildings in the Beaux Arts influenced designs have cornices, cartouches, and terra cotta ornamentation derived from classical motifs. The two story storefront at 2210 2nd Avenue North, c. 1907 (#36) is a fine representative of the style. Of red brick, the facade carries two classical cornices with running dog friezes, one atop the storefront, the other capping the building. A cartouche rests on the upper cornice, and the terra cotta ornaments at the same level act as capitals for the framing pilasters. The broad segmental arched window attempts to enlarge the rather narrow facade. Four fine representations of the Chicago School style skyscraper exist in the district, the most notable is the nine-story Title Guaranty & Trust Company Building, c. 1903 (#78), a honey colored brick faced steel frame building that follows the division of base, shaft, and capital perfected by Louis Sullivan. Terra cotta imitating stone at the ground floor articulates an impressive entry; quoined brickwork at the second and ninth stories provides a transition to the flat wall with its window grid at the intermediate stories. Two others of this type, the Frank Nelson Building, c. 1903 (#12), and the Farley Building, c. 1909 (#66), interpret the style similarly with geometric forms and grids of grouped windows while the Jefferson County Savings Bank, c. 1913 (#18) interpret the style with Beaux Arts motifs in marble, granite, and polished terra cotta.

The 1910 buildings are more stylized, with an emphasis on silhouette and geometric ornamentation. An activated roofline replaces the cornice, with terra cotta panels and various colors of brick and stone used to create designs on flattened facades. A four-story commercial building, c. 1914 (#25), is a fine example of the use of ornamentation with recessed spandrels, brick banding surrounding terra cotta and stone panels, and a stone-capped activated roofline.

Three styles emerged in the district in the 1920s. The most notable is Art Deco, expressed ultimately in the Watts Building, c. 1928 (#73, NRHP 9/17/79), a monumental design with a stepped roofline that gives it a profile unchallenged in the Birmingham skyline. The Classical Revival appears in the YWCA, c. 1925 (#103) and the Bankhead Building, c. 1926 (#88). Both of these multi-storied brick veneered buildings are embellished with Classical detailing such as pilasters, pediments, limestone friezes and stringcourses, and articulated cornices. They are excellent examples of the application of classical detailing to the design of multi-storied commercial and recreational buildings. The other major stylistic influence is the Renaissance Revival, as expressed by the Florentine Building, c. 1927 (#19), a polychromed terra cotta and marble interpretation of Venetian Renaissance motifs, and in the less dramatic Fire Station #4, c. 1926 (#108), with its fine brickwork and terra cotta balcony arcade.

Of the post 1930 architecture, there are two fine examples. The International style Bromberg Building, c. 1946 (#1), with its smooth faced limestone walls and monumental asymmetrically placed windows cleanly defines the southwestern edge of the district. The Guaranty Savings and

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Downtown Birmingham Historic District (2nd expansion)

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Loan Building, c. 1971 (#14), an example of the Brutalist style, shows the important contribution contemporary architecture can make to reinforce the character, scale, and design quality of the district.

The present use of the district is commercial, although an adjustment in zoning regulations returned a residential aspect to the district, a move that had historical precedent. Overall, the structural conditions in the district are generally good, with many buildings needing only minor repair. The buildings at the western end of the district are generally in better repair, being in the high-use business district. As one moves eastward, one encounters buildings with more vacancies and a greater sense of neglect. The buildings along Third Avenue and 23rd Street North are, for the most part, well maintained although some buildings are in need of routine maintenance.

This second boundary expansion to the Downtown Birmingham Historic District proposes an addition of 16 buildings in the new boundary area, 11 contributing and 5 noncontributing. Most of the contributing buildings in the second boundary expansion were constructed between 1920 and 1930; however, two buildings were constructed circa 1940. While the majority of these buildings are brick, one and two story commercial blocks, the YWCA (#103), the Bankhead building (#88), and the Stonewall Building (#87), are large, multi-storied buildings.

The original and the first expansion boundaries of the Downtown Birmingham Historic District were roughly bounded on the north by 3rd Avenue, on the south by 2nd Avenue, on the west by 20th Street, and on the east by 25th Street. This new expansion nomination will include the buildings facing both sides of 3rd Avenue between 22nd Street and 24th Street, and buildings facing both sides of 23rd Street lying north of 2nd Avenue North to 5th Avenue North. These present boundaries enclose the largest concentration of Victorian and early 20th century buildings in the city. With 2nd Avenue North as the core of the district, boundaries include the blocks of 2nd and 3rd Avenues and portions of adjacent blocks in which a majority of the buildings pre-date 1950, and contribute to the district's character. The boundaries include as many contributing and exclude as many non-contributing buildings as possible.

### Archaeological Component

Although no formal archaeological survey has been made of the Downtown Birmingham Historic District, the potential for subsurface remains may be good. Buried portions could reveal significant information that may be useful in interpreting the district.



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Downtown Birmingham Historic District (2nd expansion)

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### Downtown Birmingham Historic District (2nd expansion) Historic Resources Inventory

Buildings added to the district in the first boundary expansion are noted on the inventory by a single asterisk. Those from this second boundary expansion are noted by double asterisks.

#### 2nd Avenue North

1. 2001-2007 2nd Avenue North/123 20th Street North (Bromberg's), 1946, Miller, Martin, and Lewis, architects. perhaps Birmingham's best example of the International Style, 5 stories, asymmetrically placed windows, limestone and marble exterior wall material. (C)
2. 2009 2nd Avenue North, c. 1890, International style influence, three stories, brick veneer, substantially altered, refaced with marble. (NC)
3. 2011 2nd Avenue North, c. 1887, commercial building, two stories, brick, substantially altered in 1979, although brickwork of this facade reflects the character of the district. (NC)
4. 2013 2nd Avenue North (Conwell Building) c. 1906, commercial building, four stories, brick and terra cotta, terra cotta ornamentation around windows, cartouches. (C)
5. 2015 2nd Avenue North (Conwell Building), c. 1887, commercial building, brick, substantially altered. (NC)
6. 2017 2nd Avenue North (Conwell Building), c. 1887, commercial building, two stories, limestone exterior wall material, substantially altered, refaced with aluminum and tile. (NC)
7. 2019 2nd Avenue North, c. 1893, commercial building, two stories, substantially altered, refaced with red masonite. (NC)
8. 2021 2nd Avenue North (Drennen Building) c. 1895, commercial building, three stories, brick, recessed bay windows on second floor, fine brickwork and classical details. (C)
9. 2025-27 2nd Avenue North (Cayce Building), c. 1880, commercial building, two stories, brick. (C)
10. 2029 2nd Avenue North (Wilson Building), c. 1880, commercial building, two stories, brick, window arcade and brick cornice treatment, one of the oldest and most intact buildings in the district. (C)

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Downtown Birmingham Historic District (2nd expansion)

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11. 2031 2nd Avenue North (Dewberry Drugs), c. 1880, commercial building, two stories, brick, window arcade and brick cornice treatment. (C)
12. 2002-2006 2nd Avenue North (First National Bank, Frank Nelson Building), 1903, William C. Weston, architect; Chicago/Commercial Style, skyscraper, ten stories, brick and terra cotta, an important local interpretation of the Chicago School, was the third steel frame skyscraper in Birmingham. (C)
13. 2008 2nd Avenue North (Singer Building, Guaranty Savings & Loan Association), c. 1928, Renaissance Revival style, Warren, Knight & Davis, architects, two stories, limestone, Palladian window, finely laid ashlar masonry and stone balustrade. (C)
14. 2012 2nd Avenue North (Guaranty Savings & Loan Association), c. 1890, Brutalism style, two stories, limestone and cast stone, substantially altered and remodeled in 1971 and 1973. (NC)
15. 2018 2nd Avenue North (Stollenwerk & Lewis Building), c. 1888, commercial building, two stories, brick, substantially altered. (NC)
16. 2020 2nd Avenue North (The Fair Variety Store), c. 1890, commercial building, two stories, brick, cast iron frame around 1st story, brick quoining, arched windows, decorative brick treatment above windows. (C)
17. 2022 2nd Avenue North (Melba Theatre), 1940, Art Modern influence style, two stories, terra cotta, marble and cast stone. (C)
18. 2026 2nd Avenue North (Jefferson County Savings Bank Building, City Federal Building), 1913, William Weston with John David and Eugene Knight, architects; Beaux Arts Skyscraper, 26 stories, terra cotta and granite, classical columns and pilasters, elaborate cornices, use of marble and glazed terra cotta, was the last and grandest of Birmingham's early skyscrapers and for over 50 years, the tallest building in the skyline. (C)
19. 2100 2nd Avenue North (The Florentine Building), c. 1927, D. O. Whilldin, architect, Renaissance Revival style, two stories, terra cotta and marble exterior wall material, columns, window arcade at second floor, bas relief sculpture, an architectural landmark noteworthy for its skillful interpretation of Venetian Renaissance motifs. (C)
20. 2107 2nd Avenue North (Denechaud Building), c. 1887, commercial building, three stories, brick, decorative hood molds and prominent corbelled cornice with blind arches. (C)

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21. 2117-2119 2nd Avenue North (Peter Zinszer's Mammoth Furniture House), c. 1888, commercial building, three stories, cast iron, classical details, Queen Anne motif windows in the transoms, one of two excellent examples of cast iron architecture in the city. (C)  
NRHP 9-23-80
22. 2121 2nd Avenue North (Daniels Building), c. 1888, commercial building, four stories, brick and cast iron, striated brick and stone treatment, pressed metal spandrels, elaborate cornice with Greek crosses, largest Victorian-era building in the city and possibly the oldest cast iron frame building in Birmingham. (C)
23. 2125 2nd Avenue North (New York Pawn Shop), c. 1918, commercial building, two stories, brick. (C)
24. 2127 2nd Avenue North (Yeilding's), c. 1911, Miller, Martin and Lewis, architects; commercial building, three stories, brick, ornamental brickwork, Roman grill vent covers, heavy massive cornice with classical details, fine brickwork, an excellent example of the functional commercial style of the early 20th century and built for the oldest and in continuous use retail establishment in Birmingham. (C)
25. 2201 2nd Avenue North (Anco Furniture), c. 1914, Wheelock & Wheelock, architects, commercial building, four stories, brick and terra cotta exterior wall material, ornamental brickwork, marble and terra cotta spandrels, stone caps at roofline. (C)
26. 2205 2nd Avenue North (Hastings Building), c. 1917, commercial style, four stories, brick, rope cornice over the windows. (C)
27. 2207 2nd Avenue North, c. 1921, commercial building, three stories, brick. (C)
28. 2209-11 2nd Avenue North (Green-Bragan Building), c. 1911, commercial building, two stories, brick, transom lights at floor level, corbelled brick cornice treatment. (C)
29. 2217-19-21 2nd Avenue North (Rhodes-Carroll Building), c. 1913, commercial building, three stories, brick, inset brick panels in spandrels and at cornice line. (C)
30. 2223-2225 2nd Avenue North (William S. Brown Mercantile Building), c. 1905, commercial building, brick, cast iron brackets and cornice above 1st and 3rd floors, stone lintels and sills, Roman grill vents, an excellent example of the early 20th century expression of Beaux Arts motifs in commercial architecture. (C)
31. 2227 2nd Avenue North, c. 1922, commercial building, three stories, brick, stone lintels and sills. (C)
32. 2231-33 2nd Avenue North, c. 1916, commercial building, one story, brick, stone window frames, original window treatment intact, stone cap at roofline. (C)

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33. 2202 2nd Avenue North, c. 1904, 1908, commercial building, one story, brick, carved limestone. (C)
34. 2204 2nd Avenue North, c. 1908, commercial building, one story, brick, polychromed brick pattern. (C)
35. 2206 2nd Avenue North, c. 1902, refaced 1920s, commercial building, two stories, brick refaced with stucco and Carrera glass, relieved piers and bull's-eye frieze at cornice line. (C)
36. 2210 2nd Avenue North, c. 1907, commercial building, two stories, brick, fine brickwork, pressed metal cornices with running dog frieze, segmented arch window opening, pressed metal brackets and cartouche, a particularly intact example of the Beaux-Arts influence on early 20th century commercial architecture. (C)
37. 2212 2nd Avenue North (Gingold Building), c. 1904, commercial style, two stories, brick, steel beam lintel above ground floor entry, ornamental brickwork on ground level piers and above second-story windows and at cornice line. (C)
38. 2214 2nd Avenue North (Taylor Carriage Company Building), c. 1905, commercial building, three stories, brick, limestone sills, unique window treatment on 2nd and 3rd floors, dogtooth corbelling at cornice line. (C)
39. 2216 2nd Avenue North (E. L. Klinner Furniture Company), c. 1915, commercial building, three stories, brick, pressed metal cornice and downspouts and ornamental brickwork with stone accents, window treatment on 2nd and 3rd floors. (C)
40. 2218 2nd Avenue North, c. 1906, commercial building, two stories, brick, transoms above 1st floor, corbelled brick at cornice line with Dutch Colonial stone cap at roof line. (C)
41. 2220 2nd Avenue North (Athens Building), c. 1965, International style influence, four stories, brick. (NC)
42. 2303 2nd Avenue North (Baldone Tailors), c. 1915, commercial building, two stories, brick, grouped segmented arches over windows, beveled corner entrance. (C)
43. 2311 2nd Avenue North (Davis Furniture & Salvage), c. 1896, commercial building, two stories, brick arched windows with stone keystones, ornamental brickwork. (C)
44. 2313-2315 2nd Avenue North (S. F. Teague Building, Alabama Berman Mercantile Company), c. 1904, commercial building, two stories, brick cast iron columns, ornamental brickwork above second floor windows. (C)

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45. 2317-2319 2nd Avenue North, c. 1904, commercial building, two stories, brick, cast iron columns on ground floor, segmental headed windows on second floor, brick corbelling and cornice line. (C)
46. 2321-2323 2nd Avenue North, c. 1888, commercial building, two stories, brick, cast iron columns on ground floor, round headed recessed windows, dog tooth brick cornice. (C)
47. 2325-2327 2nd Avenue North (Blackwood-Bentley Building), c. 1910, possibly designed by William C. Weston, commercial building, two stories, brick, pressed metal cornice with heavy brackets, one of the only glazed brick facades in the city. (C)
48. 2329 2nd Avenue North (Jack's Auto Supply), SW corner 2nd Avenue and 24th Street, c. 1904, commercial building, two stories, brick corbelling along cornice line, decorated cast iron lintels above ground floor windows. (C)
49. 2306 2nd Avenue North (Kreulhas-Steele Building), c. 1910, commercial building, two stories, brick stone inset ornament and stone caps at the crenellated roofline. (C)
50. 2308 2nd Avenue North (Killian Building), c. 1897, commercial building, two stories, brick. (C)
51. 2310 2nd Avenue North (Beard's Government Surplus), c. 1910, commercial building, one story, brick, two bay. (C)
52. 2312-2314-2318 2nd Avenue North (Shepherd's Furniture and FDSK German Club), c. 1918, commercial building, one story, brick, four-bay, recessed panels with limestone inlays, dentilated cornice treatment. (C)
53. 2320-2332 2nd Avenue North, c. 1904, commercial building, one story, brick, eight bay facade, pressed metal cornice. (C)
54. 2403-2405 2nd Avenue North (Wright-Acton Building), c. 1913, commercial building, two stories, brick, ornamental brickwork at cornice line, decorative window surrounds. (C)
55. 2407 2nd Avenue North (Ferguson Building), c. 1911, commercial building, two stories, brick, ornamental brickwork and limestone inlay. (C)
56. 2409 2nd Avenue North, c. 1908, commercial building, two stories, brick corbelling above 2nd story windows and at cornice lines. (C)

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57. 2413 2nd Avenue North, c. 1910, commercial building, two stories, brick, small-paned transom windows and tall 2nd story windows with segmented arched heads, brick corbelling on cornice line. (C)
58. 2419 2nd Avenue North, c. 1907, commercial building, two stories, brick, multi-paned windows above 1st floor, pressed metal cornice, stone lintels and sills at 2nd floor, brick corbelling at cornice line, stone cap at roofline. (C)
59. 2423 2nd Avenue North (Vandergrift Building), c. 1908, commercial building, two stories, brick, stone lintels, 2nd floor large multi-paned windows, brick corbelling at cornice line, Dutch Colonial gable motif at roofline. (C)
60. 2425 2nd Avenue North (J. T. Massey Building), c. 1895, commercial building, two stories, brick. (C)
61. 2412 2nd Avenue North, c. 1912, commercial building, one story, two bay, brick, stone caps at roofline. (C)
62. 2414 2nd Avenue North, c. 1928, commercial building, three stories, brick, limestone and Carrara glass refacing. (C)
63. 2416 2nd Avenue North, c. 1906, commercial building, one story, brick. (C)
64. 2422 2nd Avenue North, c. 1904, commercial building, one story, substantially altered, refaced with permastone. (NC)

### Third Avenue North

- 65.\* 1923 3rd Avenue North (Rialto Theater), c. 1916, commercial building, three story brick, intricate brick work, decorative iron grill work, original multi-pane windows, peaked roof and proportionately sized arches comprise fine alternative to a cornice. Originally the Bonita movie house, then the Rialto Theater until the Depression. (C)
66. 1929 3rd Avenue North (Farley Building), 1909, H. D. Breeding, architect; Chicago/Commercial Style skyscraper, 9 stories, brick, pilasters of red brick rise from a quoined base to monumental arches with keystones, facade broken at each floor by the horizontal emphasis of the gold brick spandrels and ranges of Chicago-style windows, while making a rhythmic repetition across the facade, fine brickwork and high contrast polychromy add a visual dimension to the building design, a flat deep cornice was removed in a 1960s remodeling. (C)

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67. 2007 3rd Avenue North, c. 1904, refaced 1927, possibly designed by Martin and Lewis, commercial building, Art Deco style, three stories, limestone, bas relief sculpture capping piers, well integrated fire escapes. (C)
68. 2015 3rd Avenue North (Drennen Building), c. 1889, commercial building, three stories, brick, cornice lines which use molded terra cotta in circular, dog tooth and classical motifs. (C)
69. 2017 3rd Avenue North (Eubank Building), c. 1889, commercial building, three stories, brick. (C)
70. 2019 3rd Avenue North (Gilbreath Building), c. 1891, commercial building, three stories, brick, dentillated cornice and parapet relieved with narrow patterned terra cotta insets. (C)
71. 2023 3rd Avenue North (O'Neill Building), c. 1890, commercial building, three stories, brick, ornamental brick work, corbelling, diamond patterns, dentil work, frieze, and recessed rectangles. (C)
72. 2025 3rd Avenue North (Bankers Bond - Massey Building), 1925, William Leslie Welton, architect; Spanish Revival style skyscraper, ten stories, brick and terra cotta, unusual brick colors and patterns, elaborate twisted columns, false balconies, three dimensional terra cotta ribbing; an elaborately ornamental Spanish Revival skyscraper that is an excellent expression of 1920s taste for elaborate and baroque expressions in emulation of the decade's prosperity. (C)
73. 2002-2004 3rd Avenue North (Watts Building, Molton-Allen and Williams), 1928, Warren, Knight, and Davis, architects; Art Deco style, 16 stories, brick, terra cotta, and granite, gable roofline with three dimensional sculpture, streamlined window articulation, grand entrance and lobby area; one of the most distinctive elements in the city skyline and the most imaginative interpretation of the Art Deco style in the city. (C) (NRHP, 9/17/79)
74. 2012 3rd Avenue North (Empire Theater), c. 1888, four stories, brick, substantially altered, refaced with permastone. (NC)

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75. 2014 3rd Avenue North (Hood-McPherson Building, Standard Furniture), c. 1904, commercial building, four stories, brick, arched windows with stone keystones and square windows, stone lintels, Ionic capitals, brick cornice treatment. (C)
76. 2020 3rd Avenue North (Oster Brothers Building), c. 1900, commercial building, four stories, brick, two story window arcade with fanlights and fleur-de-lis motif, semi-circular opening, wrought iron grill, cylindrical rusticated buttresses support central parapet. (C)
77. 2024-2026 3rd Avenue North (Alabama Department of Revenue), 1904, William C. Weston, architect, Beaux-Arts style, three stories, brick, decorative brick work, quoins, and limestone carving surrounding entrance, classical capitals, pressed metal cornice supporting flagpole. (C)
78. 2030 3rd Avenue North (Title Guaranty and Trust Company Building, Commercial Bank), 1903, William C. Weston, architect; Chicago/Commercial Style, 9 stories, brick and terra cotta, finely executed brickwork, quoining, imitation keystone and cornice lines above 1st, 2nd, and 8th stories. This building is the second skyscraper built in Birmingham and it is the finest expression of the Chicago School in the city. (C)
- 79.\*\* 2201-2209 3rd Avenue North, c. 1920, one story brick commercial block housing five storefronts, low lying parapet above flat roof, decorative stringcourses along cornice, central single leaf entrances flanked by large plate glass windows. (C)
- 80.\*\* 2208-2210 3rd Avenue North, c. 1920, two story brick commercial block, decorative parapet above flat roof, two storefronts on first floor, single leaf recessed entrances flanked by plate glass windows, six bay upper story. (C)
- 81.\*\* 2214 3rd Avenue North (Anthony's Light Maintenance and Construction Company, Copeland Signs), c. 1920, two story brick commercial block, low lying decorative parapet above flat roof, two storefronts on first level, single leaf entrances flanked by plate glass display windows, four bay upper floor. (C)
- 82.\*\* 2224-2226 3rd Avenue North, (Re-entry Ministries), c. 1920, one story brick double commercial block, double storefronts featuring a band of transom windows over centrally placed single leaf entrances flanked by plate glass display windows. (C)
- 83.\*\* 2230 3rd Avenue North (Thuss Clinic), c. 1920, Art Deco influence, one story brick building, basically rectangular in shape, hipped roof, central entrance pavilion capped by a pedimented surround embellished with antheneums, flanking bands of windows. (C)
- 84.\*\* 2225 3rd Avenue North, (American Red Cross), c. 1975, large five story concrete and glass office building, rectangular in shape, flat roof. (NC)



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### Fourth Avenue North

- 85.\*\* 2223 4th Avenue North (Mr. Sun's Chinese Restaurant), c. 1970, one story brick commercial building, flat roof, three bay facade, multi-paned windows, double leaf entrance set beneath Oriental-styled overhang. (NC)
- 86.\*\* 2227 4th Avenue North (Career Development Institute), c. 1970, one story brick and stucco, corner entrance, large bands of aluminum windows. (NC)
- 87.\*\* 2230 4th Avenue North (Granada Hotel), c. 1930, four story brick hotel building, first floor contains series of storefronts with single leaf entrances and plate glass windows, low lying parapet above flat roof, upper stories contain multi bays of paired and single double hung sash windows, decorative brick pilasters. (C)

### Fifth Avenue North

- 88.\*\* 2300 Fifth Avenue North (Bankhead Building), c. 1926, renovated 1973; H. L. Stevens, architect; Davis, Speakes, and Assoc., renovation architects. Fifteen storied building in the Colonial Revival style, steel and concrete construction, brick and limestone exterior wall material, first three floors and last three floors feature decorative limestone trim, some end windows on the fourth floor have decorative limestone surrounds with broken pediments, central five bay balcony located on the eleventh floor. (C)
- 89.\*\* 2305 Fifth Avenue North (Jimmie Hale Mission), c. 1970, modern two story brick and concrete bank building, large porte cochere, large plate glass windows with double leaf entrance. (NC)

### 20th Street North

90. 219 20 Street North (Twentieth Street Realty Block), c. 1890, resurfaced 1927; Miller, Martin and Lewis, architects; Art Deco style; three stories, limestone, pressed metal spandrels, bas relief sculpture at cornice line, capping piers and mullions. (C)
91. 305 20th Street North (Bank of the Southeast), c. 1888, remodeled 1975, commercial building, three stories, substantially altered and refaced with brick in 1975. (NC)
92. 309 20th Street North (Home Federal Savings and Loan Association), 1927, remodeled 1966, reflecting International style influence, three stories, brick, substantially altered. (NC)
93. 313 20th Street North, c. 1885, commercial building, two stories, brick, pressed metal hoods over upper windows, metal cornice; one of the oldest buildings in downtown Birmingham, the only 1880s building on 20th Street, the city's main axis. (C)

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### 21st Street North

94. 115 21st Street North (Smith Print and Copy Center), c. 1886, commercial building, three stories, brick, round and segmental arched windows, recessed twisted colonettes, corbelled cornice treatment. (C)
95. 112 21st Street North (John's Restaurant), c. 1925, Art Deco style, two stories, limestone, substantially altered, refaced with aluminum and tile. (NC)
96. 118 21st Street North (Phoenix Insurance Building), c. 1884, commercial building, brick bas relief sculpture and brick cornice treatment. (C)
97. 310 21st Street North (Electric Blue Printing Company), c. 1911, commercial building, five stories, brick, three pointed arches of graduated stone and brick enframing fanlights, glazing at ground level. (C)
- 98.\* 312-322 21st Street North (Jefferson Land Title Service Company, Inc.), 1908, commercial building, one story, brick with large corner lighted marquee projecting over sidewalk, decorative frieze, multiple bays. Constructed by one of Birmingham's most prominent industrialist and developers, William A. Walker. (C)

### 22nd Street North

99. 209-211 22nd Street North (Waters Building), c. 1888, commercial building, three stories, brick; perhaps the finest remaining retail-residential building that appeared during the city's first major boom in the late 1880s. (C)

### 23rd Street North

100. 208 23rd Street North (Grundy's Music Room), c. 1920, commercial building, Art Moderne style, two stories, brick, polychromed glaze on brick, rounded glass brick windows; an excellent example of a modest building successfully incorporating Art Moderne style features. (C)
- 101.\*\* 213-215 23rd Street North, c. 1920, one story brick double commercial block, low lying parapet above flat roof, contains single leaf entrances flanked by plate glass windows, band of transom windows, on one side the plate glass windows have been boarded up. (C)
- 102.\*\* 231 23rd Street North (Social Grill Cafeteria and Restaurant), c. 1920, one story brick building, flat roof, exterior overed in Carrera glass panels, c. 1955. (NC)

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- 103.\*\* 309 23rd Street North (YWCA), c. 1925, Warren, Knight and Davis, architects. Originally designed as a gentleman's club, later served as the Dixie Carlton hotel, presently serves as the headquarters for the Young Women's Christian Association. An excellent example of the application of Classical Revival detailing to a multi-storied building. Ten storied central rectangular block with four storied rear wing, steel frame construction with brick and concrete exterior wall material, first three stories are eleven bays wide with remaining stories containing twelve bays. The focal point of the building is the elaborate main entrance on the 23rd Street facade which embraces the three central bays. The entrance is defined by the application of classical pilasters and frieze applied to the first three stories of the facade. The exterior wall material of the first floor, upon which the pilasters rest, is limestone. On the first floor, the single leaf entrance with fanlight and sidelights is set into recessed arched entrance flanked by smaller pilasters which support a semi-elliptical overhang embellished with dentil work. Surmounting the central entrance is a screen of two story pilasters, twin Corinthian capped half round pilasters flanked by flattened pilasters. These pilasters support a classical frieze and entablature. The remainder of the building is embellished with decorative stringcourses on the fifth and tenth floors and small balconies at the opposite ends of the fifth and tenth floors. (C)
- 104.\*\* 312 23rd Street North, (Ritchie and Redicker Law Office), c. 1920, Art Moderne style, two story brick office building, stucco exterior wall material, three bay facade, slightly projecting entrance bay with recessed entrance located behind arched opening, decorative window and door surrounds, concrete stringcourses. (C)
- 105.\*\* 400 23rd Street North, (Stonewall Building, American Life Insurance), c. 1940, twelve story office building, basically L-shaped, fronting 23rd Street and 4th Avenue North, first floor of each elevation contains six large bays containing a single leaf entrance flanked by plate glass windows and surmounted by a band of multi-paned transom windows, remaining floors contain pairs of windows, decorative brick stringcourse located at the base of top floor, balconies located at each end of the top floor on the 4th Avenue North elevation. (C) (#1-3)

### 24th Street North

106. 112-114 24th Street North (The Entertainer's Club and Iron Workers Shipment Local Union No. 539), c. 1910, commercial building, two stories, brick, quoining on ground floor piers and corbelling at cornice line, stone caps and projecting piers at roofline. (C)
107. 208-210 24th Street North (Joyce Jewelry), c. 1920, commercial building, brick, two story. (C)
108. 209-211 24th Street North, c. 1928, commercial building, two stories, brick. (C)
109. 212-214 24th Street North (Birmingham Fire Station No. 4), 1926, Renaissance Revival style, two story, brick and terra cotta wall material, terra cotta trim around door, arcade, copper cornice, terra cotta tile roof; unique application of style to a utilitarian building. (C)

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## Statement of Significance

### Criterion A:

The Downtown Birmingham Historic District in Jefferson County, Alabama is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the commercial development of Birmingham. The Downtown District has historically been the center for the city's businesses. The district was and is comprised of various commercial buildings, banks, professional offices, restaurants, hotels, theaters, retail stores, and housing.

### Criterion C: Architecture

The Downtown Birmingham Historic District is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for its excellent examples of late 19th to mid 20th century commercial architecture. This is reflected in its fine collection of traditional commercial designs, one and multiple story commercial blocks, and its examples of Classical Revival, Art Moderne, Art Deco, Late Victorian, Beaux-Arts, and Chicago/Commercial Style, Renaissance Revival, International Style, Spanish Revival, and Colonial Revival architecture. The buildings range from one, two and three story commercial buildings to towering multi-storied skyscrapers.

### Period of Significance

The period of significance extends from 1880, when the oldest extant commercial building was constructed during Birmingham's first decade, through the early 20th-century building boom periods up until after World War II. This ending date, 1947, was set at the National Register's "fifty-year-mark," as the district continues to be significant for its commercial associations.

This document represents a second expansion to the Downtown Birmingham Historic District in Jefferson County, Alabama. This increase is the result of additional survey work conducted in April 1997 to evaluate the area surrounding the existing boundaries for possible expansion.

### Historical Summary

Lying at the foot of Red Mountain in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Birmingham, Alabama, was founded in 1871 and for 15 years was a small town developing around railroads that intersected just south of the downtown historic district. The Alabama and the Chattanooga Railroad completed its line in 1870 and by 1872, the Louisville and Nashville (L. & N.) Railroad was finished. Unfortunately, the railroads had little to transport for there was, as yet, no industry. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, however, the development of the iron industry gave rise to a burgeoning young city. On November 23, 1880, Birmingham's first furnace went into blast and by 1890, the city boasted a score of furnaces, rolling mills, coal companies, and manufacturing

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enterprises. Many of the furnaces and mills were located along the railroad tracks, giving Birmingham's central business district a busy look.<sup>1</sup>

With growing confidence in the supply and quantity of mineral resources for the manufacture of iron, Birmingham boomed. The large influx of southern farmers, skilled northern and eastern plant managers, immigrants and blacks swelled the labor force, and in the decade of the 1880s Birmingham's growth surpassed that of any other southern city. Construction of homes, businesses and public buildings in the central business district and at other manufacturing centers occurred at a rapid pace. Within 15 years, the City of Birmingham had grown from an unproductive cornfield to an industrial center with a population nearing 20,000. The architecture that remains from this period reflects an architecture of need, buildings quickly erected to serve a new city with a growing population, rather than an architecture of plenty that was to arrive in later decades. The architecture of the early period is exemplified by the Dewberry Building (by 1880, #11) and the Wilson building (c. 1880, #10), two-story, rough-brick buildings that derive their style from simplified Italianate motifs, created by the laying of brickwork to imitate arcades and cornices of classical inspiration.<sup>2</sup>

As the city began to realize its prominence as a production center for iron, Birmingham quickly surpassed Mobile and other Alabama towns to become the largest city in Alabama. The buildings constructed in the late 1880s and early 1890s mirrored the wealth and commerce of the "Magic City." The Peter Zinszer Building (c. 1888, #21), a three story cast iron facade building elaborately decked with ranges of classical colonnettes and cornice lines, housed Zinszer's Mammoth Furniture House, an "easy payment" furniture store that sold furniture, carpet, stoves, and a general line of household furnishings to a public eager to amass the accoutrements of "civilized life." For many years after Zinszer's death in 1894, his wife, Rosa, operated the establishment, becoming one of the most prominent female entrepreneurs in early Birmingham. The Daniel Building (c. 1888, #22), believed to be the oldest remaining iron-frame building in the city, housed the V.V. V. Blood Medicine Manufacturing Company and had residential rooms on the upper floors, a characteristic of many of the buildings in the district from the 1880s until the 1910s. The four story brick and stone-faced building, overlaid with pressed metal spandrels and cornices, originally carried an elaborate pediment at the roofline. The building's pressed metal facade and striped masonry carefully masks the straightforward structural form of the cast-iron frame construction that reflects the movement toward the turn-of-the-century erection of the city's steel-

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<sup>1</sup>White, Marjorie Longenecker, The Birmingham District: An Industrial History and Guide, (Birmingham, AL: Birmingham Historical Society, 1981), p. 42-46.

<sup>2</sup>Stella, Steven. "National Register Nomination for the Downtown Birmingham Historic District," (Montgomery, AL: Alabama Historical Commission, 1984), n.p. and White, p. 46-48.

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frame skyscrapers. Less imposing buildings of the period also expressed the new wealth of the city. The Waters Building (c. 1888, #99), the Fair Variety Store (c. 1890, #16), and the group of buildings along the south side of the 2000 block of 3rd Avenue North (#'s 68 thru 71) are modest commercial buildings reflecting Victorian taste for ornament. These buildings feature metal window hoods, metal cornices, terra cotta ornamentation, and decorative brickwork.<sup>3</sup>

In 1893, a national depression brought construction in Birmingham to a halt. Birmingham, the Victorian boomtown, would have to wait until the next decade to grow up. By 1900, steel was once again being produced in commercial quantities in local furnaces. This new industrial might needed raw materials to keep going, so the first decade of the twentieth century was a time of rapid growth and investment, especially in those industries connected with coal and iron or mining. In 1900, 283 manufacturing establishments in the district - including mines, blast furnaces, iron foundries, machine shops, rolling mills, and cast iron pipe factories - employed more than 14,000 workers. One half of the City of Birmingham's 6,675 wage earners found employment in iron and steel foundry and machine shops. Area mines and quarries employed 1,800 miners and produced more than 10 million tons of domestic steam, gas, blacksmith and coking coal, iron ore and limestone. The district's blast and steel furnaces produced 1.1 million tons of pig iron and 66,000 tons of steel. The growth of mining and metallurgical industries brought with it a general land speculation. All of this fostered Birmingham's economy, which pushed the city to the forefront of the industrial "New South." As rapidly as the economy picked up, so did the building industry. New suburbs ringed the Victorian town, and most importantly, new buildings, of great size and innovative design, replaced outmoded Victorian buildings.<sup>4</sup>

As workers flocked to the mills, homes, and churches, places of business began to rise on vacant land throughout the district. A 1904 publication of the Commercial Club boasted that the era of town building and skyscrapers had begun. In this year, 1,500 houses were built surrounding various mines, quarries, and furnaces and an additional 1,921 houses were constructed within the Birmingham city limits. In the city's central business district, several skyscrapers of the "modern type" were under construction to house corporate offices and banks. The first steel-frame skyscraper erected in the city was completed in 1903. The second, the Title Guaranty & Trust Company Building, and the third, the Frank Nelson Building, followed within the year. The Title Guaranty & Trust Company Building (c. 1903, #78) is perhaps the finest expression of the Chicago/Commercial style in the city. Designed by Birmingham's most prominent early 20th century architect, William C. Weston, the honey colored brick faced building, follows the division of base, shaft, and capital devised by Louis Sullivan. Weston articulated the impressive entry through the use of terra cotta ornament on the ground floor; quoined brickwork on the second and ninth floors provide a transition to the central floors that are articulated by flat walls and a grid of paired windows. Weston also designed the Nelson Building (c. 1903, #12) for The First National

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<sup>3</sup>Stella.

<sup>4</sup>White, p. 52-55; and Stella.

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Bank of Birmingham and local steel magnate, William H. Woodward. The ten storied buff colored, brick faced building expresses the Chicago style through a balance of vertical and horizontal elements, specifically the vertical ranges of paired windows and the series of string courses and cornice lines at every floor. The most dramatic of the early skyscrapers, and for more than fifty years, the tallest building in the city, is the 26 story Jefferson County Savings Bank Building (c. 1913, #18), a Beaux-Arts expression of the Chicago style in marble, granite, and terra cotta. Eugene Enslin, son of a German immigrant, founded the bank in 1884 and was responsible for erecting the building.<sup>5</sup>

By 1910, Birmingham produced 795 different products, 16 million tons of coal, 3.2 million tons of coke, 1.9 million tons of pig iron, and 529,000 tons of steel. In this year Alabama's iron and steel industry employed 9,681 and shipped products whose value exceeded the value of any other of the state's industries. While the financial base of the city was expanding, as evidenced in the erection of the large banking houses and skyscrapers, the local retail economy was also growing. Yeilding's Store, the oldest retail establishment founded in the city (1876) built a new building in 1911 (#24). The three-storied brick building, by local architects Miller and Martin, is an excellent example of the functional commercial style of the early 20th century, influenced by Beaux Arts design as expressed in the classical cornice, Roman grill attic story and the large blank parapet at the roofline. Originally, the store served as a feed and grain store for farmers, with residential rooms above. Farther along 2nd Avenue in the 2200 block a group of two and three story commercial storefront buildings (#'s 36-40) represent the development of small business and merchant concerns that occurred in the district during the early 20th century. Originally, this part of 2nd Avenue North was primarily residential with frame dwellings interspersed with small groceries, markets and shops. As the central business district expanded along the 2000 and 2100 blocks of 2nd Avenue, the smaller merchants, grocers, tailors, jewelers and clothing and hardware stores, moved here. A good example of the type of building erected by these small merchants is 2210 Second Avenue (#36), a two-story red brick storefront with classical motifs in the pressed metal cornice, fine brickwork, segmented arches, and terra cotta cartouches along the parapet. These buildings transformed the eastern end of 2nd Avenue from a residential neighborhood to a small-merchant business district. The buildings at the eastern end of the district had storefronts at the street level, with residential rooms and lofts in their upper stories. The 2400 block of 2nd Avenue (#'s 54-59) is an intact example of this development.<sup>6</sup>

In the decade 1910 to 1920, growth was spurred by the national market and World War I. By 1915, southern steel making capacity, concentrated in Alabama and Georgia, reached 3.9 percent of the nation's open-hearth capacity and 2.6 percent of the U. S. total capacity. Birmingham steel companies dominated the southern market growth. The 1910s saw the development of more stylized buildings that relied on the use of geometric patterns and fine brickwork, with inlays of

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<sup>5</sup>White, p. 58-63, and Stella.

<sup>6</sup>White, p. 63-68, and Stella.

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stone and terra cotta, and the replacement of a cornice with an activated roofline. A four-story commercial building (c. 1914, #25) is a fine example of this style built by the local architectural firm of Harry Whelock. Its gold brick facade is relieved by recessed spandrels and brick banding, with inlays of terra cotta and stone. During World War I, building construction slowed in the downtown historic district but it rapidly picked up during the 1920s.<sup>7</sup>

In 1920, metropolitan Birmingham reached a population of 310,000 and was unquestionably the leading industrial center of the region. Although the growth and progress of the city may be attributed to the production of coal and the manufacture of iron and steel and their products, great industrial diversification had taken place resulting in the manufacture of over 1,600 different kinds of articles and commodities. In 1924, The Manufacturers Record, a Baltimore-based trade journal, listed lumber, ships, sugar mill machinery, cotton gins, steel furniture, mattresses, wire and nails, frogs and switches for railroads, ornamental iron products, radiators, stoves, ranges, hardwood flooring, and coke by-products as principal products of the district. Within a radius of 75 miles of the city, six large and well-equipped sawmills and almost 50 smaller plants served to make Birmingham the largest market for soft woods in America. Approximately 50,000 cars of yellow pine were shipped out of Birmingham per annum. With nine trunk lines, two district railways, and three railway yards and shops, the city enjoyed rail transportation unexcelled in the South. Ninety-three passenger trains served Birmingham's two passenger stations. By 1924, Birmingham industry was in its prime and the newly constructed downtown buildings mirrored the national trends in American architecture and reflected the cosmopolitan air pervading the city in the 1920s.<sup>8</sup>

The most prominent styles appearing during the 1920s were the Art Deco and the Renaissance and Classical Revivals. The architectural firm of Warren, Knight and Davis erected three fine Art Deco skyscrapers in the city between 1926 and 1928. The Watts Building (1928; NRHP 1979; #73), a monumental tower sheathed in terra cotta panels with geometric patterns, is the most notable and in fact, the ultimate expression of the Art Deco style in the city. Its stepped roofline gives it a profile unchallenged in the Birmingham skyline. Architect David Oliver Whildin designed Birmingham's most exuberantly detailed downtown structure, the Florentine Building, a Venetian palazzo/arcade covered in polychrome terra cotta and striated travertine marble. The YWCA (1925; #103) originally served as the Birmingham Athletic Club while and the Bankhead Building (c. 1926, #88) was one of Birmingham's premier downtown hotels. These two buildings reflect the emergence of Birmingham as a modern city, populated by a sophisticated business class.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>White, p. 63-64, and Stella.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Stella.



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The Great Depression hit the Birmingham District particularly hard, arriving early and leaving late. Birmingham was fortunate, however, to survive the 1930s with most of its major industries financially intact, although not without great financial loss to many individuals. Steel production sank to an all-time low. Consequently, little expansion or modernization occurred in the decade 1930 to 1940. Furnaces and mines were shut, and the city's development pace, accelerated during the 1920s, ground to a halt. Although World War II with its heavy demand for structural steel and armament provided the stimulus required to revive the district's industrial manufacturing economy, between 1936 and 1946, only a handful of buildings were constructed in the city. Within the downtown historic district, not one new building was constructed during this time.<sup>10</sup>

World War II's demand for steel and armament fueled the revival of the district's industrial manufacturing economy. By 1945, Birmingham produced 2.7 million tons of steel. Coal production was at an annual rate of 16 million tons. Coke production increased to 4.6 million tons. Principal manufactured products included steel, iron, coal products, cast-iron pipe, castings, textiles, household clothing, furniture and food products. In 1947, the Birmingham District led the world in the production of cast-iron pipe. Alabama ranked first among states in the production of limestone and pine, second in peanuts, third in production of iron ore, fourth in production of coke, cotton and hydroelectric power, fifth in production of pig iron, seventh in steel, eighth in production of coal and ninth in production of cement. Chamber of Commerce publications proclaimed Birmingham the "Industrial City of the South" and advertised it as located in the "richest mineral producing section of the globe."<sup>11</sup>

Bromberg's (#1; 1946) was the first building constructed in the district after World War II and is the finest example of the International style in the city. Its smooth limestone walls and monumental, asymmetrically placed windows cleanly express an elegant and balanced composition. A jewelry store, Bromberg's is the oldest retail concern in the state, founded in Mobile in 1836 and subsequently moving to Birmingham in 1900.<sup>12</sup>

Contemporary buildings in the district include both new construction and the renovation of older buildings. In the 1960s and early 1970s, downtown Birmingham, like scores of other American cities, witnessed the abandonment of merchants and businessmen who headed for suburban shopping malls lying on the city's perimeter. During the 1960s and 1970s, many storefronts in the downtown business district were modernized in an effort to continue to attract people to the downtown area. Today, Birmingham's downtown is on an upswing. While it remains the banking, legal, and governmental center of the city, it also contains many businesses, restaurants, religious institutions, and apartments.

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<sup>10</sup>White, p. 65, and Stella.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Stella.

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### Verbal Boundary Description

The second expansion of the boundaries of the Downtown Birmingham Historic District are indicated on the accompanying base map.

### Boundary Justification

The secondary boundary expansion of the Downtown Birmingham Historic District includes a group of 20th-century commercial buildings that are representative of the growth of downtown Birmingham from that period. The expanded nomination will include the buildings facing 3rd Avenue North from 22nd to 24th Streets North and buildings along 23rd Street North, from 3rd Avenue North to 5th Avenue North. As such, the increase represents an effort to expand the existing district along its previous boundaries to include as many contributing and exclude as many noncontributing buildings that were historically an integral part of the downtown commercial district.

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National Park Service

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## Photographs

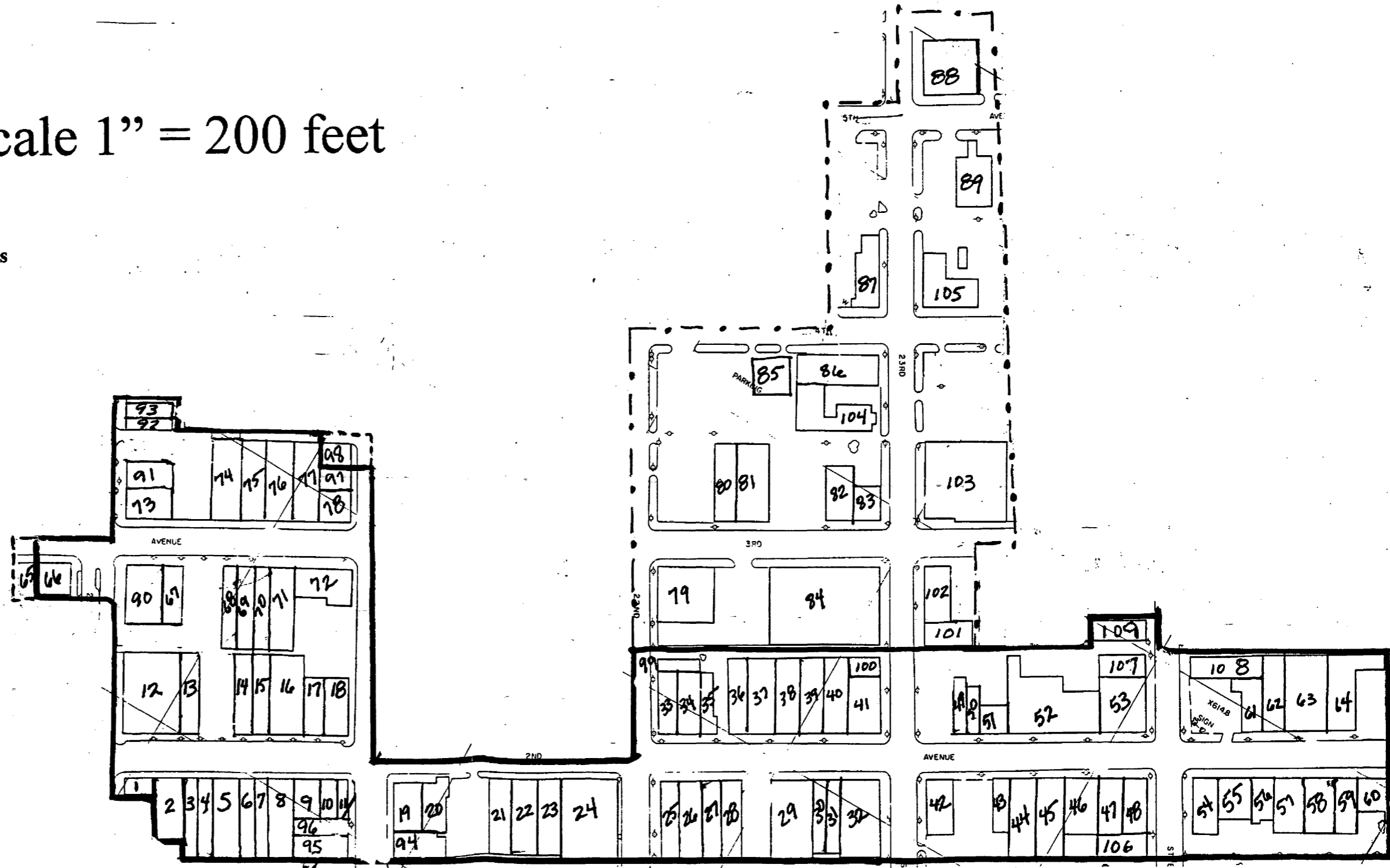
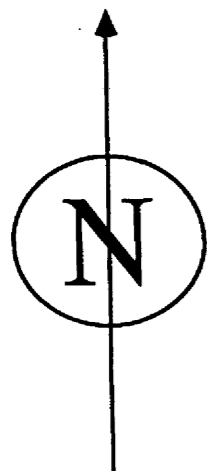
The following information is the same for items 1-5 for all photographs.

1. Downtown Birmingham Historic District
2. Jefferson County, Alabama
3. Jeff Mansell, photographer
4. May, 1997
5. negatives on file with the Alabama Historical Commission
6. photo 1
7. Inventory #80, camera facing north
  
6. photo 2
7. Inventory #81, camera facing north
  
6. photo 3
7. Inventory #83, camera facing north
  
6. photo 4
7. Inventory #103, camera facing northeast
  
6. photo 5
7. Inventory #103, camera facing east
  
6. photo 6
7. Inventory #87, camera facing north
  
6. photo 7
7. Inventory #105, camera facing northeast
  
6. photo 8
7. Inventory #105, camera facing southeast
  
6. photo 9
7. Inventory #88, camera facing northeast

# Downtown Birmingham Historic District (2nd Expansion)

Scale 1" = 200 feet



- Original Boundary Lines
- - - 1st District Expansion
- . - . - 2nd District Expansion



# Downtown Birmingham Historic District, 2nd Expansion

Scale 1" = 200 feet

Photograph Key

-  Contributing Resources
-  Non-Contributing Resources

