

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 S. H. Kress & Company ^{Building} (~~store building~~)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 3rd Avenue & 19th Street, North (N. E. corner) not for publication

city, town Birmingham vicinity of congressional district 6

state Alabama code 01 county Jefferson code 073

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Nelson H. Head and Pedro C. Costa

street & number P. O. Box 11541

city, town Birmingham vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street & number 716 21st Street North

city, town Birmingham state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Resources Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date April 18, 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

city, town Washington state D. C.

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The S. H. Kress & Company Building occupies the corner of 3rd Avenue and 19th Street in the midst of the downtown Birmingham retail district. A 3 x 5 bay steel frame horizontal structure with concrete slab floors, it rises four stories over a double basement.

The facade, clad in a veneer of white glaze-finished terra cotta tile, wraps around and steps back at the curved corner. The tile veneer is laid in a stack bond above the convex reverse-fluted piers of the ground floor, emphasizing the planar quality of the curtain wall. The horizontal banding around the windows, vertical stripping on the 19th Street facade and the narrow coping are terra cotta tile. The industrial steel sliding sash windows are double hung, two over two with horizontal mullions.

The storefront consists of tranvertine paving, a granite bulkhead or base, bronze-framed polished plate glass display windows, and bronze awning hangers. Curved glass is used to recess the doorways, which are sheltered by curvilinear scalloped marquees. The three aluminum double doors, though set in the original bronze doorframes, are not original to the building. The Kress corporate logo is integral with the design, the signage being incorporated at the roof, over the doorways, on the facades and by the corner neon sign standard.

The interior consists of two merchandising floors and four floors of warehouse space. The ground level retail space is 25' high and unbroken except by structural columns. The upper levels are open with some temporary partition walls, as is the mechanical penthouse above.

The interior treatment of the main level consists of stylized Art Deco ornament. The plaster ceiling features geometric bas relief decoration of flat medallions and diamond patterns. The wood-panelled and plaster walls include convex reverse-fluted pilasters, finned louvered grilles and plaster name plaques above the store windows. However, the original zebrawood casework has been removed, the display windows altered and the clerestory windows blocked. The ever-textured terrazzo floor is gridded with brass stripping. Connecting the major retail floor with the basement are 2 major stairways of marble with bronze handrails and a scalloped ceiling motif.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input 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	1936-37	Builder/Architect	Edward F. Sibbert, Architect
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The S. H. Kress & Company building is an example of high style 1930's architecture, representing a transition between the Moderne or Art Deco style, and the International Style. It combines streamlined Moderne motifs with a functionalist approach to merchandising.

The new methods of merchandising and advanced technical standards employed by the Kress Brothers affected the design of their stores. High volume/low cost, direct-from-manufacturer retailing required that the warehouse be located directly above the retail floors and accessible by service elevators. The building utilized the latest in technological improvements, necessitating a large penthouse to house the extensive mechanical systems.

The relationship of the Kress Building to the Loveman's Building and the Woolworth Building creates a highly unified urban composition at the major retail intersection of Birmingham. Exhibiting a similarity of style, scale and materials, they create a significant concentration of Art Deco buildings.

Designed by Edward F. Sibbert of NYC, the Kress corporate architect, it was built by Days and Sachs of Birmingham at a cost of \$750,000. The smooth surface of the glazed terra cotta tile wraps around the curved corner, emphasizing the dynamic quality of the facade. The banded windows indicate the horizontal nature of the warehouse floors, while the vertical fenestration on the 19th Street facade expresses the location and directionality of the elevator core.

This was the third of the S. H. Kress stores in downtown Birmingham. The 1889 store at 1914 2nd Avenue North was the first of 10 Kress stores in the Southeast and was followed by the 1914 store at 1910 2nd Avenue North. Referred to by Russ Kress as his "monument to Birmingham" the 3rd Avenue store was a prototype, a duplicate of the larger Kress Store in NYC at Fifth Avenue and 39th Street (placed in nomination for National Register designation). It incorporated the Kress name as an integral part of the architecture to express the standardized corporate image of a national chain.

The Kress Building is to be incorporated in a revitalization scheme which includes the Burger Phillips Building. This will return the buildings, which have been vacant for several years, to their original intended retail use and include the compatible adaptive use of the upper levels for offices. This innovative project is significant in preserving the architectural and historical importance of the buildings, without which the economic viability of the structures would be subject to less sympathetic development pressures.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Birmingham, Alabama: Historic Resources Survey Washington, D. C.: Advisory Council Historic Preservation, April 18, 1979. pp. 9-10.
2. Birmingham News November 15, 1936 - September 2, 1937 - September 12, 1937 - September 20, 1937 and January 5, 1978. (see attached)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Birmingham North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	5	1	7	8	2	10	3	17	0	18	2	19	10
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H

Zone		Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 11, 12, 13

Block Number 73

100' x 150'

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Louise J. McPhillips, Architect

organization Pedro C. Costa, Architect-Planner

date November 13, 1980

street & number 21 Office Plaza, 2101 Magnolia Avenue

telephone (205) 251-1202

city or town Birmingham

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title S.H.P.O.

date 12-23-81

For HCRS use only

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


Keeper of the National Register

date 1/4/82

Attest:
Chief of Registration

date

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

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RECEIVED DEC 30 1981
DATE ENTERED JAN 4 1982

CONTINUATION SHEET

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3. Birmingham News April 7, 1932, March 13, 1933, March 3, 1933, March 4, 1933, March 5, 1933, November 8, 1936 and June 10, 1975.
4. Downtown Architectural Resource Survey, 1976, Birmingham Historical Society.
5. White, Marjorie L., ed. Downtown Birmingham: Architectural and Historical Walking Tour Guide. Birmingham: Birmingham Historical Society and The First National Bank, 1977. p. 58