

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Empire Manufacturing Company Building

other names/site number N/A

## 2. Location

street & number 575 Glen Iris Drive, N.E.

city, town Atlanta

( ) vicinity of

county Fulton

code GA 121

state Georgia

code GA

zip code 30308

( ) not for publication

## 3. Classification

### Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

### Category of Property:

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

### Number of Resources within Property:

#### Contributing

#### Noncontributing

buildings

1

1

sites

0

0

structures

0

0

objects

0

0

total

1

1

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

*Richard Croves*

Signature of certifying official

*1-23-02*

Date

W. Ray Luce  
Division Director and  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

*Edson R. Beall*

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

*Joe* *02/20/02*  
Keeper of the National Register Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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### Historic Functions:

INDUSTRY/Manufacturing Facility

### Current Functions:

COMMERCE/TRADE/Business/Office Building

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification:

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

### Materials:

<b>foundation</b>	Brick
<b>walls</b>	Brick
<b>roof</b>	Wood
<b>other</b>	N/A

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Empire Manufacturing Company Building is located in a small industrial area in northeast Atlanta. The building was constructed in 1939 by the North Carolina firm of Jackson & Edney for the National Linen Service Corporation. The building is rectangular in shape (photographs 1 and 2) with a nonhistoric addition on the south facade (photographs 6 and 8). The building is one story with a partial daylight basement. Built in the Art Deco style, the front (west) facade of the Empire Manufacturing Company Building features an over-sized entrance with a geometric brick surround (photograph 1). There are three bays on each side of the entrance separated by brick pilasters and featuring large multi-pane metal windows (photograph 2). A small alley separates the Empire Manufacturing Company Building from the Southern Dairies Building just to the north (photograph 3). The north facade of the building contains two entrances and large multi-pane metal windows. The east facade remains relatively unchanged (photograph 4). This facade offers access to the daylight basement. The facade is divided into seven bays by brick pilasters, echoing the main facade of the building. The south facade is the most altered (photograph 6). Two nonhistoric additions were removed from this facade during rehabilitation. Some openings are not original. A nonhistoric addition, constructed after 1965, is located at the southwest corner of the building (photograph 6). The addition is one-story concrete block building with a rectangular footprint. The east end of this facade remains unchanged. Window and door openings are original. Exterior walls are painted brick. Structurally, the building is poured-in-place concrete in the basement and load-bearing brick walls with an interior steel column and truss system on the first floor (photograph 14). The amount of equipment used in the manufacturing industry required large open spaces. The building features a clear span truss system that permitted a 95-foot span without any supporting members to break up the floor space. The roof deck is wood with five saw-tooth monitors running east-west along the width of the building with light intake on the north side (photographs 13-15). The building was constructed according to guidelines established by Jackson & Edney to move away from the sweat-

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

### Section 7--Description

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shop atmosphere still typical in the manufacturing industry at the time of construction. The guidelines called for the use of modern construction techniques, provision of natural light, and warm and cold air circulation. When constructed, the interior of the Empire Manufacturing Company Building was a large open plan to accommodate the large equipment utilized and to provide flexibility of arrangement. Today the first floor and basement are divided to accommodate office space with the open plan utilized within each office (photographs 11, 14, and 15). The roof monitors and structural systems of the building remain visible, as does the original open plan of the design (photographs 11-15). There is one nonhistoric building on the property to the southeast of the Empire Building (photograph 10). Constructed after 1965, the building is one-story with a rectangular footprint. The structural system consists of steel bar joists with a metal deck and the walls are concrete block. The remainder of the property is a parking lot. There is minimal landscaping on the property that is all modern.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:**

nationally       statewide       locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

A       B       C       D

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):**  N/A

A    B    C    D    E    F    G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

Architecture  
Industry

**Period of Significance:**

1939-1951

**Significant Dates:**

1939-Construction of the building

**Significant Person(s):**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

Jackson & Edney-Architects/Builders

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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#### **Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)**

The Empire Manufacturing Company Building was constructed in 1939 for the National Linen Service Corporation. The Empire Manufacturing Company Building is significant in the area of architecture as a good and intact example of a pre-World War II industrial building constructed in the Art Deco style. The property is also significant in the area of architecture as a good and intact example of an industrial building constructed to meet specific new guidelines for a specific industry, in particular the need for a "modern" looking building with large open interior spaces, natural daylighting, and good air circulation. Built in the Art Deco style, the character-defining exterior features include the over-sized entrance with a geometric brick surround, symmetrical division of bays by pilasters, and large multi-paned metal windows. The interior features an open plan with exposed mechanical systems and roof monitors. The building was designed by an architectural firm which specialized in the area of commercial laundries and related facilities. The Empire Manufacturing Company Building is also significant in the area of industry for its association with the National Linen Service Corporation, which began in Atlanta and grew to national prominence in the historic period and continues to operate today. This building represents the diversification of the National Linen Service Company in the 1920s and 1930s which proved to be a major factor in the company's success. This building housed a linen supply company (the Empire Manufacturing Company) which had been acquired by the National Linen Service Corporation in 1928; the company manufactured uniforms, caps, towels, and other linen products. This kind of "horizontal integration" was a hallmark of the National Linen Service Corporation and allowed it to better control the linen supply and service market.

#### **National Register Criteria**

The Empire Manufacturing Company Building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for its association with the National Linen Service Corporation and under Criterion C as a good example of an industrial-related building constructed in the Art Deco style.

#### **Criteria Considerations (if applicable)**

N/A

#### **Period of significance (justification)**

The period of significance includes the date of construction of the original building and the period the building evolved and served as the main Atlanta office of the National Linen Service Company.

#### **Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)**

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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The Empire Manufacturing Company Building is the one contributing resource on the property. The building to the southeast of the main building is noncontributing due to the fact that it was built outside the period of significance.

#### Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

**\*\*Note: The following history was compiled by Marion Ellis, Historic Preservation Consultant, March, 1999. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.**

#### National Linen Service Corporation

The National Linen Service Corporation began on April 1, 1919 in the kitchen of an old residence in Atlanta, Georgia. At that time it was known as the Atlanta Linen Supply Company. The total capital of the company was \$1700; \$1500 of which was furnished by Isodore M. Weinstein, the first president, and the remainder by Herman Gross, his associate. Together they invested in linens and two horse-drawn vehicles. The wagons were obtained from the A. C. Miller Company on Gilmer Street and the horses were hired from the Milam and Miller livery stable. Weinstein was the outside man while Gross was in charge of the office. Their staff consisted of two route men and an office girl. Among the first customers were Jacob's Pharmacy, Tom Pitts who ran a cigar store at Five Points, and the Arcade Restaurant.

Expansion became a necessity due to incredible marketing efforts by Weinstein, who convinced different industries, such as beauty parlors, grocery and meat markets, health services and, hotels and restaurants of the convenience of their services. The company moved to a new building on Walker Street on August 19, 1920, only 16 months after its beginning. By this time the number of employees had increased to 25. Abraham J. Weinberg and Joseph B. Jacobs joined the firm as Vice-President/Treasurer and Executive Vice-President, respectively. Under this stable team of leaders the company grew steadily. Starting in 1922, expansion moved the firm outside of Atlanta and Georgia. Under the leadership of Gross, a Birmingham, Alabama, plant was established and Savannah, Georgia and Chattanooga, Tennessee soon followed. At this time the company was renamed Southern Linen Service Company, and soon ran 10 southeastern plants. In Atlanta, larger quarters were needed and a new building was constructed on Simpson Street by Ben J. Massell of Massell Realty, a prominent Atlanta builder.

The National Linen Service Corporation was formed in 1928. In the period of development

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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immediately following its formation, sixteen new plants were established in sixteen different cities. In the early 1930s there were 34 units and over 1500 individual stockholders. Also in 1928 Sidney H. Vicknair joined the company as an accountant. An affiliated organization, The Linen Service Corporation of Texas was formed in 1939, and purchased two plants in Los Angeles. This was the last expansion before World War II. By 1944 the company had grown from two horse drawn wagons to 656 modern trucks and from three to 4700 employees.

Under the same management, with the addition of Weinstein's son Milton after World War II, the company continued to grow. In 1954 the older Weinstein died and Milton took over the business. In July of 1962 National Linen Service Corporation merged with Erwin Zabin of Zep Manufacturing which made laundry chemicals. The new company was known as National Service Industries, and Weinstein became President with Zaban as Vice-President. As of today this company is still in operation.

National Linen was known as a fair employer, always giving promotions from the ranks. Weinstein cared for his employees, which he expressed through many social functions and sponsorship of sports teams for plant employees. He instituted a health and welfare plan by the 1940s. In 1943 an employee died, and for his total expense paid in of \$75.60 his widow received \$2,500 under the group plan, and for the \$52.65 he paid toward the Pension Trust his widow received \$5,850.

A handful of Atlanta-based Jewish businessmen started this company, and for almost forty years they kept it under the same steady leadership. Weinstein, Weinberg and Jacobs all became well known Atlanta citizens, very active and generous with their donations. The younger generation, Milton Weinstein and Zabin remain well known today.

#### **Isodore M. Weinstein**

Weinstein came to Atlanta in 1908 to establish the Merchant Towel Supply Company for Fred McGonnigal of Cleveland, Ohio. Weinstein was living in Atlanta when he entered the army in World War I. He first trained at Camp Logan and later was transferred to Camp Upton at Yaphank, New York. He was severely wounded in action in France on August 9, 1918. After recuperating in a French hospital and later in London he sailed for America as a patient December 2, 1918. As soon as he returned to Atlanta he started the first unit of what was to become National Linen Service Corporation. Mr. Weinberg died in 1954 and left the business to his son Milton.

#### **Herman Gross**

Gross also began his business career in Atlanta. He was connected with the theatrical business for some years when he started the linen business with Weinstein. He ventured out on his own in 1922, but later sold his Charlotte plant to the National Linen Service Corporation and returned as manager



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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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of Atlanta Linen. In the 1940s he moved to the main office and was elected director.

#### **Abraham J. Weinberg**

In 1908, after finishing school in Brooklyn, Weinberg came to Atlanta and ran a grocery store, then a drugstore successfully until June 1920, when he liquidated. As a satisfied customer of the Atlanta Linen Supply Company he discussed business with Weinstein and decided to become a partner in the business with a one-third interest and an additional loan of \$6000 to the firm.

#### **Joseph B. Jacobs**

Jacobs was born and educated in Atlanta and operated several businesses successfully. In 1922, when Herman Gross left to start his own enterprise in the linen supply business in Charlotte, North Carolina he sold his interest in the company to Weinstein, Weinberg and their new partner J. B. Jacobs. During the start up of the Birmingham plant, Jacobs held the position of manager, but returned to Atlanta once the operation was successful.

#### **Jack L. Weinstein**

Jack Weinstein was recruited by his brother Isodore in 1929, initially to become assistant manager at the Empire Manufacturing Corporation. In order to come to Atlanta he had to dispose of his manufacturing interests in Cleveland, Ohio. His experience in the garment and knitting manufacturing business helped him to obtain the position of Empire manufacturing manager after the death of S. Isacoff.

#### **Empire Manufacturing Corporation**

To provide the uninterrupted, timely, quality service Isadore Weinstein was striving for, he did not want to be dependent on his suppliers, and formed several subsidiary companies assuring timely delivery of goods and services. There was ALSCO Manufacturing Company, which manufactured wooden cabinets, used to store linens, and special body construction for the delivery trucks. ALSCO also included a complete machine shop to manufacture parts for washing machines, electric motors and small machinery items. A soap plant was housed in a separate building next to Atlanta Linen. The soap was not only used in connection with the laundry work, but small bars were also supplied to customers.

In 1928 Weinberg bought out one of his linen suppliers, Empire Manufacturing Corporation, located on Marietta Street. The name and management of the plant were retained. After the death of the former plant owner, S. Isacoff, Jack L. Weinstein, brother of Isodore, was appointed manager. The ownership of this company guaranteed a steady supply of uniforms, caps, towels, and many other

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### Section 8--Statement of Significance

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items. Soon the company outgrew the Marietta Street building and a new facility was built at 593 Glen Iris Drive by the firm of Jackson & Edney. Design guidelines were established to differentiate their new factories from the "sweat shop" atmosphere still typical for many of the older textile industries. The building should be modern in construction, provide ample natural light through the use of tooth roof construction and have modern warm and cold air circulation. The new plant provided a pleasant work environment for up to 200 men and women.

The amount of equipment used in this manufacturing business required large open spaces. The clear span steel truss allowed for a 95 foot span. These trusses were manufactured by Dave Steel Company in Asheville and shipped by rail. In 1954 a new Empire Manufacturing plant on Ralph McGill Boulevard was constructed according to the same guidelines; and in 1955, after completion of this plant, National Linen Corporation sold their Glen Iris Drive building to the adjacent Southern Dairies Inc.

### Jackson & Edney

Equally amazing is the company history of Jackson & Edney, headquartered in Asheville N.C., the builder/contractor for National Linen. Lynwood B. Jackson, and R.H. Edney started the firm. They built their first National Linen laundry building in 1937 in Asheville, North Carolina. The senior Edney was the architect/designer for the buildings. He also served as on-site project manager. Edney was succeeded in the company (Jackson & Edney) by his son, also R.H. Edney. The younger Edney was also an architect and perfected the design developed by his father. He was several years older than the younger Jackson who joined the company in 1953. Jackson was the business manager for the projects. He located building sites, purchased them, arranged the financing, and generally dealt with the non-technical aspects of the building process.

Although Jackson & Edney had other clients, National Linen Company was undoubtedly their largest account. In non-depression years they averaged two buildings a year for National Linen, which was expanding rapidly nationwide in the post World War II era. Their laundry building business was put on hold during the war, as they were unable to purchase the steel which was an integral part of their design. In 1946-47, after the end of war-time shortages, Edney altered his original design for the National Linen plants (Glen Iris Drive) to the one exemplified by the Ralph McGill Boulevard (formerly Forrest Street) building. The amount of equipment used in manufacturing businesses housed in these buildings required large open spaces. These buildings featured a "clear span truss" system which permitted a 95 foot span without any supporting members to break up the floor space. Also an integral part of the truss design was a series of full length monitors, which permitted light and air flow into the large working area. The steel trusses were made by Dave Steel Company in Asheville and shipped to projects all over the United States by rail.

In the early 1960's the development of "bar joists" permitted a cheaper construction technique to

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span large spaces. Improved fluorescent lighting and air conditioning eliminated the need for large monitors and windows. At that time, Jackson & Edney changed their design to reflect the new technologies. Altogether Jackson & Edney built some 65 buildings in 21 states for National Linen.

When National Linen decided to open a new plant, they contacted Jackson & Edney who traveled to the desired location, picked a site, bought it, and erected the building and leased it back to National Linen when completed. Jackson & Edney set up a new corporation for each project in that particular city. National Linen provided financial backing for the projects. Lynwood Jackson, who joined the company in 1953, said they would write a \$50,000 check to purchase a lot without "blinking an eye." Jackson & Edney retained ownership of the plants they built until the mid 1950s when National Linen decided to purchase most of them. Jackson & Edney kept ownership of six buildings, including the Empire Manufacturing Company building on Ralph McGill Boulevard.

National Linen had at least four plants in the Atlanta area. The largest, which is still in operation as a commercial laundry, is located on Glen Iris Drive about a block south of the Empire Manufacturing Building. This building was constructed after World War II from Jackson & Edney's plans, but not by the company. Steel was only available on the black market and Jackson's father refused to buy it that way. The building was constructed by Massell Realty, and cost 50% more than those built by Jackson & Edney

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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Ariel phot, Atl 11593 K, 12-10-87. Dillon Reynolds Ariel Photography, Inc., 2 Northside 75, Suite 235, Atlanta, Georgia, 30316.

Atlanta City Directories. Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, Georgia.

Freitag, Joseph V. The Story of 25 Years of National Linen Service. Higgins-McArthur Company: Atlanta, Georgia, 1944.

Jackson, Lynwood B. Interview on January 13, 1999.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, Georgia.

Zaban, Erwin. Personality file, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS): ( ) N/A**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued**  
**date issued: July 21, 2000**
- 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 #**

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office**
- Other State Agency**
- Federal agency**
- Local government**
- University**
- Other, Specify Repository:**

**Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A**

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** 2.26 acres

**UTM References**

A) Zone 16 Easting 743844 Northing 3739803

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is bounded on the west by Glen Iris Drive, on the north by the Southern Dairies Building, and on the east and south by property lines. The boundary is indicated on the attached map by a heavy black line.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the nominated property includes all land historically associated with the building and its operation as the National Linen Service.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**State Historic Preservation Office**

**name/title** Holly L. Anderson, National Register Historian  
**organization** Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**street & number** 156 Trinity Avenue, S.W., Suite 101  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303  
**telephone** (404) 656-2840 **date** October 24, 2001

**Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable)** (X) not applicable

**name/title** Bamby Ray and Marion Ellis  
**organization** Ray & Associates  
**street and number** 328 7<sup>th</sup> Street, N.E.  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** GA **zip code** 30308  
**telephone** (404)607-7703

- consultant**  
 **regional development center preservation planner**  
 **other:**

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

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**Name of Property:** Empire Manufacturing Company Building  
**City or Vicinity:** Atlanta  
**County:** Fulton  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** May, 2001

**Description of Photograph(s):**

- 1 of 15: West facade, detail of entrance; photographer facing southeast.
- 2 of 15: West facade; photographer facing south.
- 3 of 15: North facade, alley; photographer facing west.
- 4 of 15: North facade and east facade; photographer facing southwest.
- 5 of 15: East facade, detail of entrance; photographer facing west.
- 6 of 15: South facade and addition; photographer facing north.
- 7 of 15: South facade, detail of entrance; photographer facing northeast.
- 8 of 15: Addition and south facade; photographer facing northwest.
- 9 of 15: South facade; photographer facing northwest.
- 10 of 15: South facade and noncontributing building; photographer facing north.
- 11 of 15: Interior, main floor; photographer facing south.
- 12 of 15: Interior, main floor; photographer facing north.
- 13 of 15: Interior, main floor; photographer facing west.
- 14 of 15: Interior, main floor; photographer facing west.

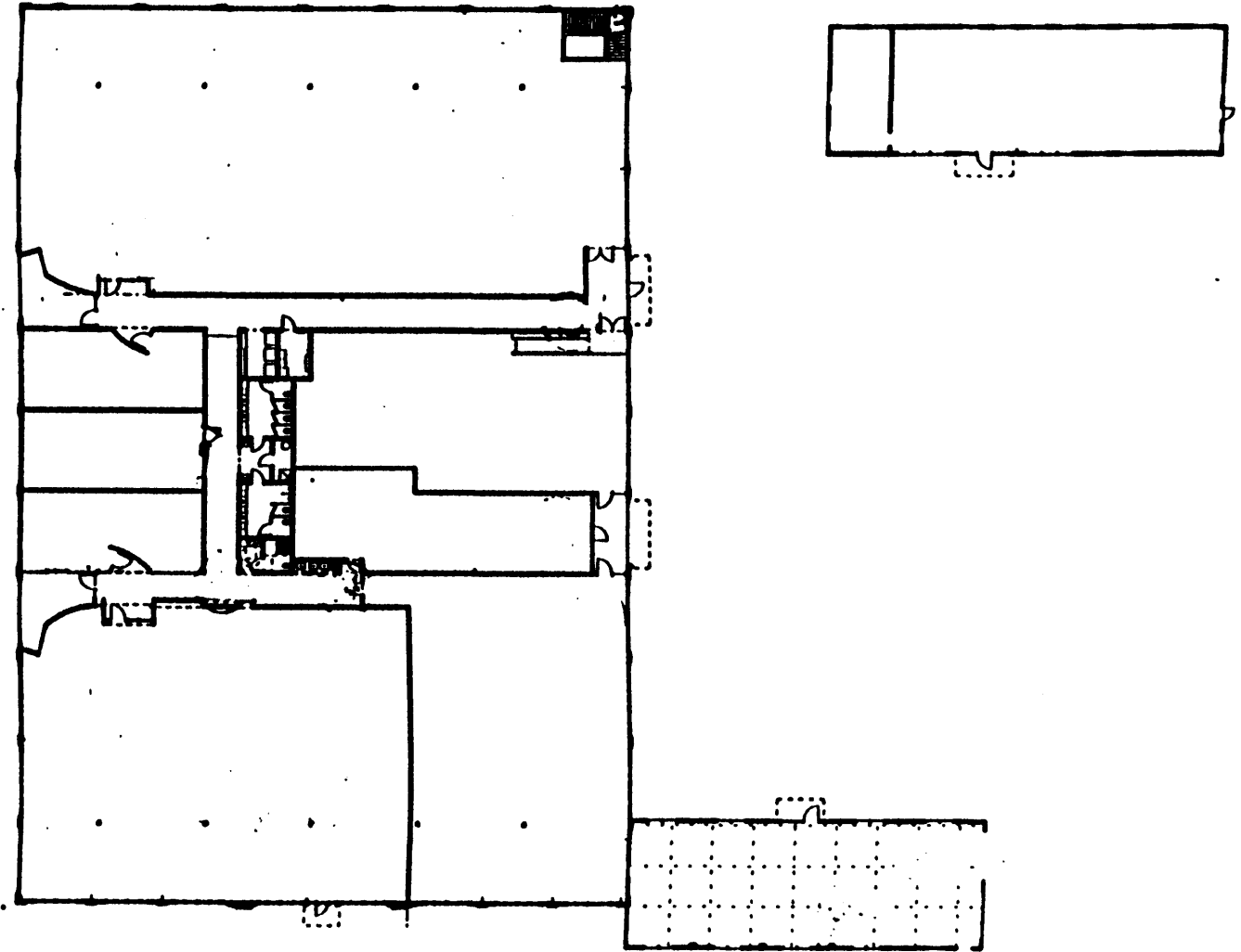
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Photographs**

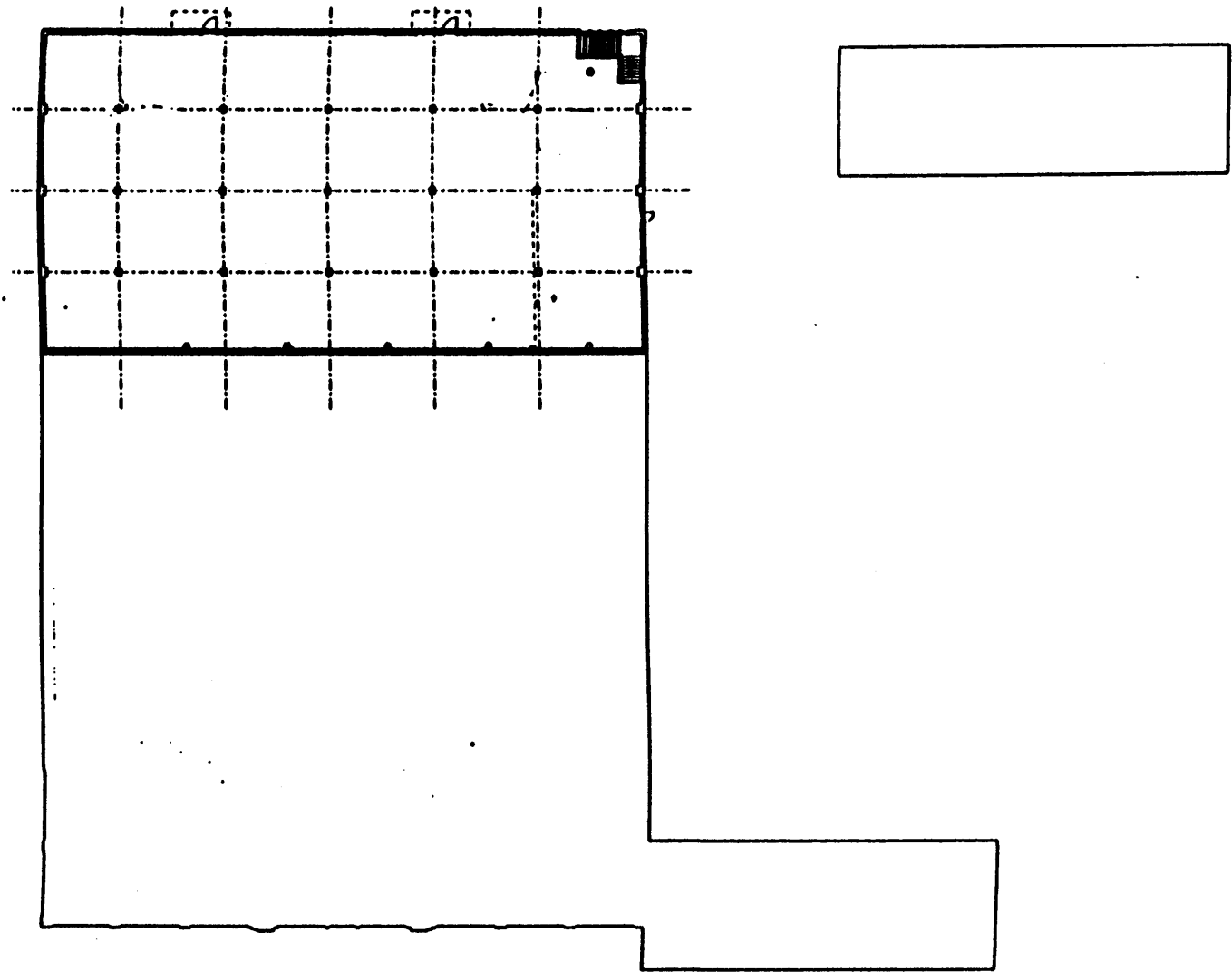
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15 of 15: interior, main floor; photographer facing northeast.



Empire Manufacturing Company Building  
Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia  
Floor Plan-First Floor  
Scale: Not to scale  
North: ←





Empire Manufacturing Company  
Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia  
Floor Plan-Basement  
Scale: Not to scale  
North: ←

