

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET PH0282812

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED DEC 28 1975

DATE ENTERED

MAR 26 1976

**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 English-American Building (1897-1910);  
 later (1916-1920) Flatiron Building

AND/OR COMMON

Georgia Savings Bank Building

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER 74 Peachtree Street

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

\_\_ VICINITY OF

5 - Andrew Young

STATE

Georgia

CODE

13

COUNTY

Fulton

CODE

121

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

| CATEGORY  | OWNERSHIP                                   | STATUS  | PRESENT USE   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT               | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED        | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED                 | <input checked="" 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                   | <b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>                   | <b>ACCESSIBLE</b>                                   | <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 Hamilton Bank

STREET &amp; NUMBER

74 Peachtree Street, N.E.

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Fulton County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

160 Pryor Street, SW

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**TITLE City of Atlanta, Urban Design Commission, Survey of  
Historic Structures, Sites and Districts

DATE

1973

\_\_FEDERAL \_\_STATE \_\_COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Atlanta Urban Design Commission, Atlanta City Hall

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

## 7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION                                |                                       | CHECK ONE                                   | CHECK ONE   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT       | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS        | <input checked="" 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 Georgia Savings Bank Building is an eleven-story, narrow triangular steel-framed building which conforms to its lot between Peachtree, Broad and Poplar Streets in the center of Atlanta's downtown business district. The steel frame is enclosed at the base in heavy limestone piers, while a heavy, plastically handled stone facing in upper stories provides a vigorously sculptural form for the entire building. The street facades contain the now familiar base, shaft capital components. The base is equivalent to two stories in height with large glass areas separated by stone piers. The two upper floors above a heavy cornice and a parapet are the cap of the structure. Vertical tiers of bay windows protrude from the major Peachtree and Broad Street facades between the base and the heavy overhanging cornice section. The monumental base is achieved by half-columns and piers extending through two stories and supporting a substantial classical entablature. Original plans specified twelve-story building with full columns in front of the facade over the basement area which extends underneath the sidewalk.

The date, 1897, the year of construction, is carved over the main Peachtree Street entrance. At the junction of Peachtree and Poplar Streets the transition between street facades is achieved by curving the walls around the corner between the base and capital components. Large horizontal windows with curved glass in the offices which face this corner create unusual irregular spaces within.

The building which originally contained 33,185 square feet of rentable area in office floors above the banking floors is now being renovated by its new owner, the Hamilton Bank and Trust Company. While the bank is making an effort to respect the historic fabric of the structure, some interior changes, in part to satisfy code requirements for such equipment as sprinkler systems, have been considered necessary. The ceilings of the main banking floor, for example, have been lowered to provide space for such equipment. Fortunately, the iron and marble staircase between upper floors, a vanishing type in Atlanta, will be preserved. The unusual and interesting office spaces created by the narrow triangular shape of the building, including the apex locations with their light-filled spaces and spectacular views, remain.

While the exterior of the building remains intact, some alterations to the original fabric have occurred. The original brick and limestone wall surfaces had been subsequently painted and have been repainted during the present renovation. Originally a corridor passed through the center of the building with elevators adjacent to this passageway. The original walls of this area had been remodeled with smooth marble and the iron grillwork of the

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elevator cages enclosed before the present owner began renovations which have now changed the access pattern. The Peachtree entrance has been filled in to adapt to new banking needs and a new more direct access in this facade opened up.

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD  | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC          | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING     | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC     | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION           | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW                    | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS              | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION              | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY               | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE     | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-                | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>Architecture<br>History |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |   |  |

SPECIFIC DATES

1897

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Bradford Gilbert

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Georgia Savings Bank Building is Atlanta's oldest standing skyscraper. Its designer, Bradford Gilbert of New York City, a well-known architect of the late 19th century, has here produced a structure of considerable architectural merit. The sharply defined vertical tiers of bay windows in its street facades and the narrow triangular form of the building provide a visually important component in the present changing environment as well as a visible reflection of the City's early commercial activity.

In 1897 when this building, then known as the English-American Building, was under construction, only one other skyscraper office building, The Equitable (Trust Company of Georgia) Building, stood in Atlanta. The earlier building has recently been demolished, leaving the Georgia Savings Bank Building as the earliest example of a type of structure which has been of great importance to the commercial growth and urban form of the City.

Little is known of the initial impetus for the building. The structure was built by and named for the English-American Loan and Trust Company, which listed among its officers in the City Directory of the period Rufus B. Bullock, President, Augustus H. Benning, Vice President, and Roby Robinson, Cashier. Rufus Bullock, the infamous reconstruction Governor of Georgia, had been forced out of office in 1876, but later became a respected Atlanta businessman. Augustus H. Benning, who managed the building and later became President of the English American Company, had moved from New York City about 1881 to establish a coal business in Atlanta. Roby Robinson became an important figure in Atlanta financial circles.

The building was known until 1910 as The English-American Loan and Trust Company Building. It then became the Empire Life Building until 1916 when it was called the Flatiron Building. In 1920, The Georgia Savings Bank and Trust Company, founded in 1899 by George M. Brown, who was a son of former Governor and Senator Joseph E. Brown, purchased the structure. For more than fifty years, until it was purchased in 1974 by The Hamilton Bank and Trust Company, the building was known as the Georgia Savings Bank Building.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Elizabeth A. M. Lyon, "Business Buildings in Atlanta: A Study in Urban Growth and Form." Emory University, 1971  
 J. H. Finch, "Classification and Description of Historic Atlanta Business Buildings," Paper, Georgia State University, 1972  
 Franklin Garrett, Atlanta & Environs, II (New York, 1954)  
 Henry and Elsie Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .09

UTM REFERENCES

|   |      |           |          |   |      |         |          |
|---|------|-----------|----------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 116  | 741181910 | 37380000 | B |      |         |          |
|   | ZONE | EASTING   | NORTHING |   | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C |      |           |          | D |      |         |          |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

|       |         |      |    |        |        |      |     |
|-------|---------|------|----|--------|--------|------|-----|
| STATE | Georgia | CODE | 13 | COUNTY | Fulton | CODE | 121 |
| STATE |         | CODE |    | COUNTY |        | CODE |     |

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dr. Elizabeth A. Lyon, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Advisory Committee for Historic Structures, <sup>DATE</sup> January 1975  
~~Sites and Districts of the Atlanta Urban Design~~  
 Commission

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall - Mitchell Street

TELEPHONE

(404) 656-2840

CITY OR TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE     

LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

DAVID M. SHERMAN

DATE

12/16/75

TITLE

Chief, Historic Preservation Section

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

3/26/96

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

Robert B. Kettig

DATE

3-21-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting

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While no written record of the planning stages of the building has been found, some speculation on its motivation is possible. A. H. Benning's son, on the basis of later family discussions, reports that the company wanted no adjacent buildings because of the danger of fire. Photographs of the construction phases of the structure are suggestive. The site was on the northern edge of the central business districts; low two- and three-story buildings bordered the site and residential sections spread out to the north. One photo of the apex at Broad and Peachtree Streets emphasizes both the tall, narrow form and the key location at the intersection of two streets that lead into the central district. Clearly, the site and the resulting form provided dramatic visual advantages for the English-American Loan and Trust Company.

Bradford Gilbert, who had designed New York City's first steel frame building, the Tower Building of 1889, maintained an office in Atlanta in 1895 and 1896 while he was the supervising architect of the Cotton States and International Exposition. Plans were filed with the City's building inspection office on August 5, 1896. One of the most interesting features of the building's history is the fact that it pre-dates New York City's larger and more famous, but similar, Flatiron Building of 1901 by D. H. Burnham and Company. Both buildings were built on narrow triangular lots, both have monumental classically detailed bases and narrow shafts with protruding bay windows and heavy, overhanging cornices. The rusticated facade of the New York building makes a somewhat more ornate design than Atlanta's strongly modeled composition. In 1916, when someone apparently noticed the similarity, the Atlanta building was renamed the Flatiron Building.

The role which this building has played in structuring the urban environment of downtown Atlanta can be documented in many photographs at various intervals since its completion. Both the vigorously modeled exterior surfaces and the narrow triangular form have continually provided a strong anchor to the central business district. This is especially impressive in views looking south down Peachtree Street, and equally evident to anyone moving through the district today. The new Central City Park has opened up the space to the east of the structure, while a small plaza in front of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill's Equitable Building of 1968, is north and west on Peachtree Street. The result is a visually exciting sequence of architectural forms and spaces in which the late nineteenth century form of the Georgia Savings Bank Building is an irreplaceable component.

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Major Bibliographical  
References

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(Deceased) (California, 1956)

Original filing blueprints and construction photographs provided by Hamilton Bank and Trust Company and deposited with the Atlanta Historical Society, 1975.

Telephone interview with T. Cobb Benning, September, 1975.

Elizabeth A. Lyon, Personal Inspection, January, 1974  
and August, 1975.