

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received **MAR 7 1983**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic S.H. Kress and Co. Building

and/or common S.H. Kress and Co. Building

2. Location

street & number 811 N. Franklin Street N/A not for publication

city, town Tampa N/A vicinity of

state Florida code 12 county Hillsborough code 057

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name William Charles Mayo

street & number 4800 Lemon Street

city, town Tampa N/A vicinity of state Florida 33609

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hillsborough County Courthouse

street & number 401 Pierce Street

city, town Tampa state Florida 33602

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Florida Master Site File has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Division of Archives, History and Records Management

city, town Tallahassee state Florida

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 checked="" 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 four-story former S.H. Kress and Co. building is located on the east side of the 800 block of Franklin Street in the heart of downtown Tampa. The building is flanked on the south by the three-story F.W. Woolworth Company building, erected in 1941, and on the north by the J.J. Newberry store, erected in 1940. Like the Kress building, the Newberry store is vacant. In the vicinity of the Kress building are a variety of small and high-rise commercial buildings, including the seventeen-story Floridan Hotel, erected in 1926, and the thirty-five story First National Bank, completed in 1973.

The Kress building is a masonry and steel skeleton structure. The steel members have been encased in concrete for fireproofing; the floors are poured concrete and the walls brick faced with architectural terra cotta. Most of the interior furnishings and original features have been removed; however, there are still some significant details on the walls and ceiling of the first floor.

The building has a frontage of fifty-three feet on both Franklin Street and Florida Avenue and extends through the block 210 feet. The interior is divided into five floors, including the basement, and has 55,000 feet of floor space. The Franklin Street and Florida Avenue facades are basically the same design. However the Florida Avenue (east) facade is slightly wider owing to the existence of the stairway connecting the floors. The stairway is lighted by a small window at each landing. To accommodate this feature, the pilaster at the northeast corner of the building was widened; however, it has been decoratively treated in a fashion very similar to the other colossal pilasters on the two facades.

Basically, each facade has been divided vertically into three parts. The first floor and mezzanine level (actually a sort of clerestory) are treated as a massive rusticated base, in the manner of a Renaissance Italian palazzo. A suspended bronze marquee separates the street entrance from the mezzanine windows. Each marquee is crested with a band of anthemions in bold relief and in the center is a large cartouche bearing the letter "K".

The mezzanine windows are recessed and set into metal frames. There are no decorative surrounds except for the rusticated straight or "jack" arches above them. Above the arches is a sharply projecting table or course of masonry which on the Florida Avenue facade bears the sign "S.H. Kress and Co." The sign on the Franklin Street facade is no longer extant.

The intermediate portion of each facade has a verneer of smooth flush jointed ashlar. The fenestration of the upper three stories is set into recessed bays and separated by spandrels decorated with swags and cartouches. The fourth story windows are arched and have eight-pointed stars in their tympanums. Cable moldings accentuate the edges of the window recesses.

The crown of each facade features an entablature surmounted by a paneled parapet. The entablature consists of a simple molded architrave with a dentil band, a frieze composed of a series of arches resting on modillions which frame red and blue shields, and a molded cornice decorated with an acanthus pattern.

(See Continuation Sheet)

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 +1929 **Builder/Architect** G.A. Miller (Builder)/G.E. McKay (Architect)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The S.H. Kress and Co. department store building at 811 N. Franklin Street was one of the last major commercial structures erected in downtown Tampa, Florida, before the beginning of the Great Depression. It is, therefore, representative of the remarkable period of growth from 1885 to 1929 that saw Tampa transformed from a small frontier village into a major Florida city. The Renaissance Revival style building is further significant for its extensive use of glazed and polychrome terra cotta which enlivens its two major facades.

The Kress store was for decades one of the most prominent and popular retail establishments in downtown Tampa. The first Kress store opened in 1904, making it among the earliest chain variety stores to open in Tampa and one of the earlier outlets established by the Kress organization.¹ Samuel Henry Kress built his retail chain empire on the fixed price concept of five and ten cent stores which had been developed in 1879 by F.W. Woolworth.² He decided to concentrate his efforts in the South where he had little competition and was one of the first retailers to buy directly from the manufacturer, thereby eliminating the middleman. He also preferred to own rather than lease his stores.³

The first Kress store opened in Memphis in 1896; and over the next four years, ten more stores opened.⁴ In 1908, the Tampa store was moved to its present location at 811 Franklin Street where a three story building--superficially similar to the present structure--was erected. This store was enlarged in 1916 by adding a two story addition that fronted on Florida Avenue.⁵

The rapid growth of the Kress facility in Tampa reflected the growth of the community itself. Although the area was known to the Spanish as early as the sixteenth century, there was no permanent settlement on Tampa Bay until the U.S. Army established Ft. Brooke near the mouth of the Hillsborough River in 1823. The civilian settlement that grew up nearby became Tampa. Primitive conditions and the isolation of the community kept the population small--in 1880 Tampa claimed only 700 residents.⁶

The opening of the Ft. Brooke military reservation to civilian settlement and the discovery of phosphate pebbles in the Hillsborough River in 1881, caused a flurry of real estate speculation. Another impetus to growth was the completion three years later of Henry Bradley Plant's South Florida Railroad which linked the gulf community with Jacksonville on the eastern seaboard.⁷ Another important development was the establishment of the cigar industry in Ybor City in 1885. With the assistance of the Tampa Board of Trade, a cigar manufacturer named Vicente Martinez Ybor purchased a swampy tract of land about a mile east of Tampa known as Lesley's Subdivision. Ybor had first achieved success as a cigar manufacturer in Havana, Cuba, then later in Key West, Florida, where many Cuban manufacturers moved after the outbreak of the Ten Years War in 1868. Nine other cigar manufacturers quickly followed Ybor to Tampa, and within a year Ybor City was a city of nearly 2,000 people; and Tampa's population had grown to nearly 3,000.¹⁰ Tampa annexed the new development in 1887. In 1888, Henry Bradley Plant extended his rail line to the tip of the Hillsborough peninsula, establishing port facilities there.¹¹ Five years later a second cigar manufacturing center, named West Tampa, was established on the west side of the Hillsborough River.¹²

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name USGS Tampa Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References 7.5 min. 1956 (pr 1969)

A

1	7	3	5	6	4	4	0	3	0	9	2	4	3	0
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

Tampa General Map of 1853. Block 27 Lot 1 S55' and S 1/2 of Lot 2. Boundary includes all significant area associated with nominated property.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul L. Weaver, III/Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Sites & Properties

date February 23, 1983

street & number The Capitol

telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee

state Florida

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title L. Ross Morrell, State Historic Preservation Officer

date February 23, 1983

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date 4/7/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The high parapet features pedestals whose dadoes are decorated with relief panels and paneled walls whose dividers are similarly decorated. The central, and somewhat larger, panel contains the word "KRESS" in bold relief executed in terra cotta with a gold metallic glaze. Atop this center panel is an escutcheon supported by scroll brackets. The inner pedestals which flank the central panel are also supported by scroll brackets.

Very few original interior furnishings or finishes remain in the Kress building. The basement still has a portion of its original wooden shelves in place, and those on the first floor, although they have been removed from the walls, are stored in the building. All the display cases, lunch counter furnishings, and equipment have been removed. Also gone are the storage bins that were once found on the three upper floors. These floors are vast lofts which were used primarily for the storage of retail merchandise, rotating seasonal displays, advertising aids, and other equipment. The only areas partitioned off on the upper floors were a small office on the second floor and the restrooms for the employees.

The first or main sales floor does contain some significant features on the walls and ceiling. The walls have colossal paneled pilasters with composite capitals. These support the grid of the beams supporting the upper floor which are also paneled and decorated with floral or biomorphic patterns. The coffers between the beams also have similar designs.

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Gradually, houses began to disappear from downtown Tampa as commercial development grew and people¹³ began building houses in the new residential subdivisions of Hyde Park and Tampa Heights. By the end of the century two- and three-story brick buildings stood where earlier there had only been a scattering of wood frame houses and stores.¹⁴ By 1929, the population of Tampa¹⁵ stood at approximately 100,000, and high-rise masonry buildings filled the downtown area. On March 1, 1929 the Tampa Morning Tribune announced that the S.H. Kress and Co. planned the construction of a new four-story building at the site of its Franklin Street store, the cost of the new facility to be \$325,000.

Plans for the new building were drawn by a New York City architect named G.E. McKay and the construction contract awarded to G.A. Miller, a local contractor.¹⁶ The building was completed in November, 1929 and was open for business by January, 1930.¹⁷ The new store fronted on both Franklin Street and Florida Avenue, its nearly identical facades bearing the Renaissance Revival style features which had been favored for decades by many American designers followed the tripartite system of articulation which had come into vogue in the 1890's: dividing the building into distinct treatments for the lower story, the intermediate stories, and the uppermost story, including the cornice or crown. Although stylistically conservative in approach, the building is enlivened by the coloristic effects of the terra cotta details in the spandrels and tympanums, and on the pilasters and cornices.

Not only the polychrome decorative elements, but also the simulated granite facing of the building is of architectural terra cotta. Architectural terra cotta was widely used in American commercial architecture during the 1920s and 30s,¹⁸ and many of Tampa's downtown buildings dating from that period evidence at least a limited, decorative use of it. Few other downtown buildings, however, employ terra cotta as extensively as the Kress building. Some of the more notable examples--also located on Franklin Street--are the Tampa Theater (National Register 1-3-78), erected in 1926, and the old First National Bank Building, also erected in 1926.

The Franklin Street store prospered during the 1930s and 40s, and the Kress Company reached its sales peak nationwide in 1952 but afterward declined steadily.¹⁹ In 1963 S.H. Kress & Co. was bought by Genesco, Inc.²⁰ The Franklin Street store closed in 1980.

FOOTNOTES

¹Plans for an S.H. Kress & Co. Building in Tampa, Florida. G.E. McKay, Architect. Layout Information Schedule, 1929 (Revised 1943).

²John P. Nichols. Skyline Queen and the Merchant Prince. New York: Trident Press, 1973, p. 30.

³Carl Rieser. "S.H. Kress: Who's in Charge," Fortune (November 1957) p. 171.

(See Continuation Sheet)

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⁴The National Cyclopedia of American Biography. Vol. G, New York: James T. White & Company, 1946, p. 540.

⁵Plans for an S.H. Kress Building in Tampa, Florida. Additions to Existing structure. Seymour Burrell, Architect, 1916.

⁶Durward Long. "Making of Modern Tampa: A City of the New South 1885-1911." Florida Historical Quarterly. LXIX (1971), p. 334.

⁷ibid., p. 335.

⁸Durward Long. "The Historical Beginnings of Ybor City and Modern Tampa." Florida Historical Quarterly. XLV (1966), p. 34.

⁹ibid., p. 31.

¹⁰ibid., pp. 38-39.

¹¹Dudley S. Johnson. "Henry Bradley Plant and Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly XLV (July 1966), p. 124.

¹²Durward Long. "Making of Modern Tampa," p. 341.

¹³Jacksonville Florida Times-Union and Citizen "South Florida and Christmas Edition," 1897.

¹⁴Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps of Tampa, Florida. Editions and Revisions 1884-1931, New York.

¹⁵R.L. Polk & Co. Polk's Tampa City Directory, Editions 1899-1982.

¹⁶Tampa Morning Tribune, March 1, 1929.

¹⁷Tampa Morning Tribune, November 29, 1929.

¹⁸Sweet's Architectural Catalogue. 23rd Annual Edition. New York: Sweet's Catalogue Service, 1929 (the catalogue lists 18 major suppliers of architectural terra cotta).

¹⁹Carl Reiser. Fortune, p. 266.

²⁰ibid.

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Johnson, Dudley S. "Henry Bradley Plant and Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly XLV
(July 1966), 119-131.

Long, Durward, "Making of Modern Tampa: A City of the New South 1885-1911," Florida
Historical Quarterly. XLIX (1971), 333-345.

"The Historical Beginnings of Ybor City and Modern Tampa." Florida Historical
Quarterly. XLV (1966) 31-44.

Nichols, John P. Skyline Queen and Merchant Prince. New York: Trident Press, 1973.

Plans for an S.H. Kress Building in Tampa, Florida. Additions to Existing structure.
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Tampa Morning Tribune, November 29, 1929.