

0127

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 Lewis-Rothschild Building
other names/site number Commerce Building

2. Location

street & number 1214 First Avenue
city, town Columbus () vicinity of
county Muscogee **code** GA 215
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 31902

() not for publication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	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	1	0

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

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Resources of Columbus, Georgia

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.

W. Ray Luce

2-11-04

Signature of certifying official

Date

for W. Ray Luce
Historic Preservation Division Director
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

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

Daniel J. Whinn

3/26/04

for

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

COMMERCE/TRADE/DEPARTMENT STORE/DRY GOODS STORE

Current Functions:

COMMERCE/TRADE/BUSINESS/OFFICE BUILDING

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/CLASSICAL REVIVAL

Materials:

foundation	Brick
walls	Brick
roof	Asphalt
other	N/A

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Lewis-Rothschild Building is located in the downtown central business district of Columbus, Muscogee County, in west central Georgia. The five-story, rectangular, brick building (photograph 1) has a full basement and was constructed c.1910 as a dry goods store. The front (west) façade (photographs 1, 2, and 14) exhibits Classical Revival characteristics. It is symmetrical with two storefronts on the first floor and three bays on the second through fifth floors (photographs 1, 2, and 14). The bays are divided by brick pilasters with corbelled brickwork forming capitals (photograph 2). The front façade also features two original cast iron columns with "James A. Lewis Company" clearly marked, and a parapet wall. The original storefront had a centrally located entrance framed by the two columns, display windows, and transoms. Windows on the second through fourth floors have flat arches while windows on the fifth floor have segmental arches with elongated keystones (photograph 1). The center bay on each floor contains paired multi-pane, metal-frame windows with a center pivot section ((photograph 2). Originally, the center bay windows were grouped with three double hung windows. An early alteration, c.1930-1940, changed the double hung windows to multi-paned industrial windows with a center pivot section. The windows on either side of the center windows are paired, single-pane, double-hung-sash windows with transoms (photograph 2). The south façade is painted brick and contains windows on the second through fifth floors. The windows are square, three-light, pivot windows with segmental arches. The rear (east) façade (photographs 3 and 4) is unpainted brick and contains fixed, single-pane windows with segmental arches on the second through fifth floors. Windows on the second through fourth floors also feature transoms. The rear façade also features brick corbelling at the cornice. The north façade (photograph 5) is painted brick and contains no windows.

When constructed, the interior of the building was a large open plan with post-and-beam construction

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

(photograph 13) on each floor to accommodate the dry goods businesses housed there in the early 20th century. The building was modernized in 1964 for small offices. At this time all historical mechanical systems were removed. A new glass and steel panel façade was attached to the front building covering the original storefront. The interior was subdivided into small rooms for offices by covering the masonry walls and windows with drywall. The ceilings were dropped with acoustic panels and new partitions were built to make the smaller spaces.

A recent rehabilitation project (certification application pending) has restored the building to its historic appearance. The 1964 glass and steel façade was removed to reveal the original façade. The original window openings were uncovered (photographs 7, 8, 9, and 10) and the interior partitions were removed. Today the building is divided to accommodate office space with the open plan utilized in some spaces (photographs 10, 11, 12, and 13). The historic structural systems (photograph 13) and original window openings remain visible, as do historic plank ceilings (photographs 7, 9, and 11) and brick walls (photographs 11 and 13). Also visible is the pulley system for the freight elevators that served the dry goods businesses housed in the building.

Landscaping on the property is minimal (photographs 1, 2, and 14) due to the fact that the building was constructed close to lot lines, however some foundation plantings exist on the north side of the building (photograph 5).

8. Statement of Significance

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
Commerce

Period of Significance:

c.1910-1958

Significant Dates:

c.1910-Construction date of the building

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Unknown

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Lewis-Rothschild Building is an early 20th century commercial building located in the central business district of Columbus. James A. Lewis constructed the building for a dry goods company, which he later expanded into a wholesale business. He leased the building to David Rothschild for Rothschild's dry goods company, but maintained ownership until 1964. The building is significant in the area of architecture as a good and intact example of a typical commercial building constructed in the early 1900s. The Classical Revival-style building features a first floor storefront with iron columns and one-over-one double-hung-sash windows. Character-defining features of the Classical Revival style exhibited on the Lewis-Rothschild Building include symmetrical facade, brick pilasters, parapet wall, segmental arches, and corbelled brickwork. Unusual features of the building are the c.1930s paired, multi-light metal casement windows located in the central bay of the building. The Lewis-Rothschild Building is also significant in the area of commerce for its association with the James A. Lewis Company from 1910 to 1912, and with David Rothschild & Company from 1912 to 1958. Both companies were involved in the dry goods business and served the Columbus area during the historic period. The Lewis family was important to several industries in Columbus, including the dry goods business, department stores and hardware stores. James A. Lewis also served as Director of both the Third National Bank and the Columbus Savings Bank and Trust Company. David Rothschild & Co. is one of the most recognized jobber's of dry goods, notions and men's furnishings in Columbus. After World War II, the company became the only converter of cotton goods in Georgia.

National Register Criteria

Lewis-Rothschild Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of commerce for its association with dry goods companies in downtown Columbus. It is also eligible for listing under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a good and intact example of an early 20th century Classical Revival-style commercial building in Columbus.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Lewis-Rothschild Building begins c.1910, the construction date of the building, and ends in 1958, the year David Rothschild & Company relocated to another location.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The Lewis-Rothschild Building is the one contributing resource on the nominated property. There are no noncontributing buildings on the nominated property.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

****NOTE: The following history was compiled by Elizabeth Barker, preservation planner, July, 2001. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.**

The earliest recorded purchase of the property on which the Lewis-Rothschild Building was constructed was on May 27, 1909, by Robena H. Lewis (Mrs. James A. Lewis) from Mr. G. G. Gallaway. Mr. James A. Lewis constructed the building between 1910 and 1912. James Angevine Lewis (1848-1928) began his career in the dry goods business with his uncle, David D. Gawley, in 1868 under the firm name Gawley and Lewis. After his uncle's death, Lewis continued the business under the name James A. Lewis Company and enlarged it into a wholesale business. One hypothesis is that Lewis built the First Avenue building for his dry goods business after purchasing the property in 1909 then leased it to David Rothschild & Co. in 1912 when he decided to enter the department store business.

Mr. Lewis purchased the Rooney Building at 1135 & 1137 Broad Street for his new department store venture. This was the largest department store in the city at that time and did business under the name Lewis & Gregory. Mr. Lewis later purchased the Columbus Show Case Factory that he reorganized into the National Show Case Company. After serving two years as president, he sold his interest in the company. In 1917 he and his family purchased the William Beach Hardware Company. Mr. Lewis also served as Director for both the Third National Bank and the Columbus Savings Bank & Trust Company.

David Rothschild & Co. became the most identified business associated with this building during the historic period. According to the City Directory, David Rothschild & Co. occupied the building from 1912 until 1958.

The David Rothschild Company was founded by David Rothschild in 1886. The first location was at 1247 Broad Street, the second at 1029 Broad Street, and in 1912 the business moved into the 1210 (1214) First Avenue building. The company started as jobbers of dry goods, notions and men's furnishings. After World War II, the company became the only converter of cotton goods in Georgia, buying goods in the unfinished state, sending them to a finishing plant and having them dyed or printed as ordered. The Rothschild Company has remained family owned from its inception.

The Lewis family sold the building to Peacock Woods Realty in 1964. This purchase signaled a new use for the building, as well as a new name, The Commerce Building. The new owners hired architect Robert Hecht to modernize the building for office spaces. A new steel and glass panel façade was attached to the building. It completely covered all of the original exterior details. Inside the building, drywall covered all masonry walls and window openings, ceilings were dropped with acoustic panels and new partitions were put up to divide the large spaces into smaller ones.

The building changed owners with some frequency between 1975 and 1993, however the main use

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

has continued as office space. The 1964 façade also remained a part of the building until this year, when the original façade was discovered and restored.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Columbus, Georgia City Directories, 1912-2000.

Harris, Roger. Our Town: An Introduction to the History of Columbus, Georgia. Columbus: Historic Columbus Foundation, 1992.

Industrial Indexes 1926 & 1928.

Kyle, Clason. Images: A Pictorial History of Columbus, Georgia. Virginia: The Donning Company, 1986.

Ledger-Enquirer Newspapers, Columbus, Georgia - August 16, 1994; March 13, 2000.

Sanborn Maps 1929, 1951.

Telfair, Nancy. A History of Columbus, Georgia 1828-1928. Columbus: The Historical Publishing Co., 1929.

Worsley, Etta Blanchard. Columbus on the Chattahoochee. Columbus: Columbus Office Supply Company, 1951.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) 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:
- 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

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 688754 Northing 3594006

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the proposed nominated property is indicated on the attached map by a heavy black line.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the proposed nominated property follows the current legal boundary and includes the building and the intact portion of land historically associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Holly L. Anderson, National Register Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 156 Trinity Avenue, S.W., Suite 101
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** February 10, 2004
e-mail holly_anderson@dnr.state.ga.us

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

name/title Elizabeth Barker, Preservation Planner
organization Historic Columbus Foundation, Inc.
mailing address P.O. Box 5312
city or town Columbus **state** Georgia **zip code** 31906
telephone (706)322-0756
e-mail

- () **property owner**
- () **consultant**
- () **regional development center preservation planner**
- (X) **other: Local preservation organization**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) J. Alvan Davis, Jr.
organization (if applicable)
mailing address P.O. Box 1025
city or town Columbus **state** Georgia **zip code** 31902
e-mail (optional)

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Lewis-Rothschild Building
City or Vicinity: Columbus
County: Muscogee
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: July, 2003

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 14

1. Front (west) façade; photographer facing east.
2. Front façade and north façade; photographer facing southeast.
3. Rear (east) façade and south façade; photographer facing northwest.
4. Rear façade and north façade; photographer facing southwest.
5. North façade and front façade; photographer facing southeast.
6. Interior, first floor; photographer facing west.
7. Interior, second floor; photographer facing southwest.
8. Interior, third floor; photographer facing northwest.
9. Interior, third floor; photographer facing east.
10. Interior, fourth floor; photographer facing west.
11. Interior, fourth floor; photographer facing northeast.
12. Interior, fifth floor; photographer facing northwest.
13. Interior, fifth floor; photographer facing southeast.
14. Front façade and north façade; photographer facing southeast.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)

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CRD 184

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179.85
1.13 AC (101) 2
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147.83 10 1245
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148.52 46.57 102.96
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228
131.83 16 (TRT B) 2 0.420 AC
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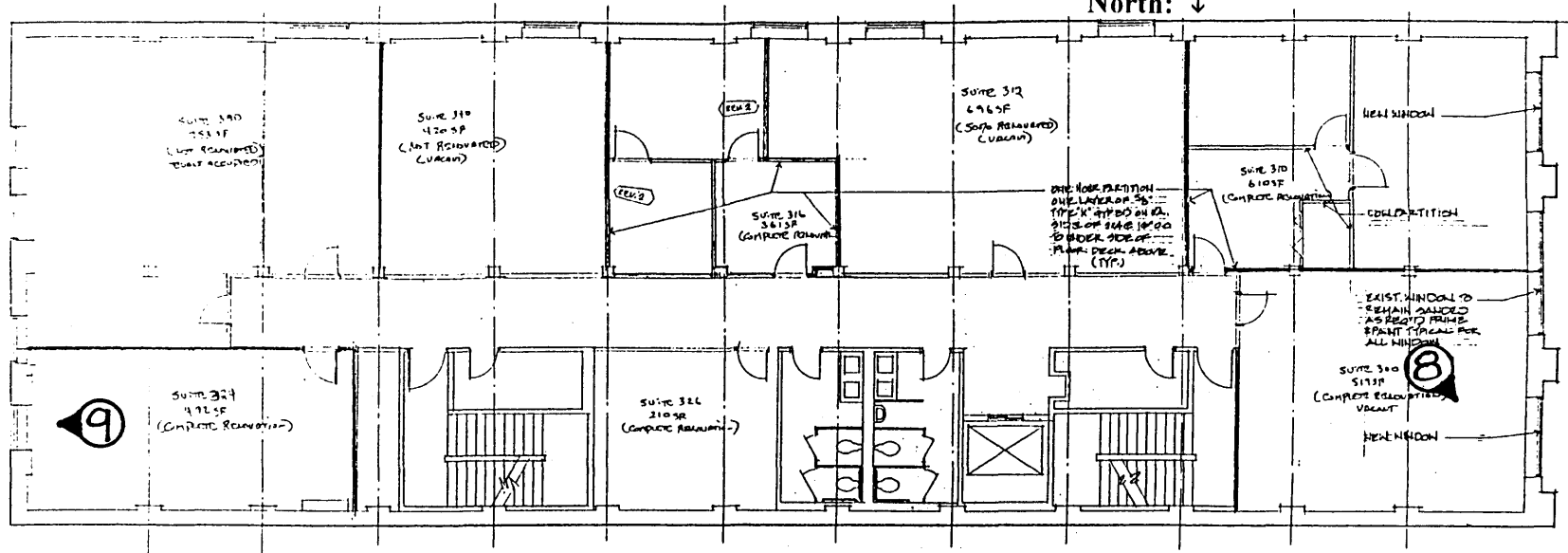
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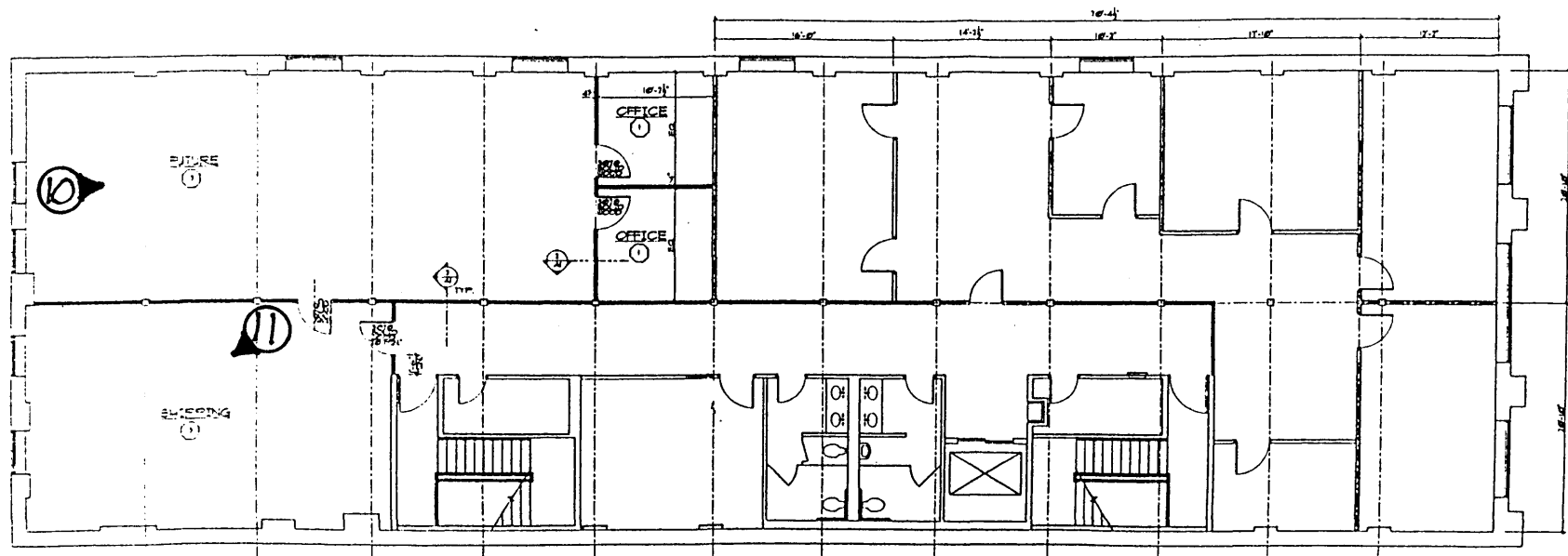
Lewis-Rothschild Building
Columbus, Muscogee County, Georgia
Columbus Consolidated Government Tax Map 4
National Register Boundary: 
Scale: 1"= 100'
North: ↑

Lewis-Rothschild Building
 Columbus, Muscogee County, Georgia
 Floor Plans-Third and Fourth Floors
 Photograph Direction/Number: ①
 Scale: Not to scale
 North: ↓

Third Floor



Fourth Floor



Lewis-Rothschild Building
 Columbus, Muscogee County, Georgia
 Floor Plan-Fifth Floor
 Photograph Direction/Number: ①
 Scale: Not to scale
 North: ↓

Fifth Floor

