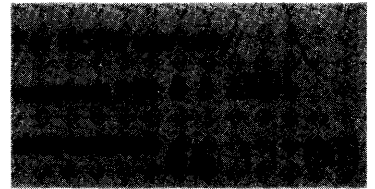


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 The Fox Building

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number Northwest corner of 19th Street and 4th Avenue not for publication

city, town Birmingham vicinity of congressional district 6

state Alabama code 01 county Jefferson code 071

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Birmingham Branch, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

street & number 1801 5th Street North

city, town Birmingham vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street & number

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1970-present federal state county local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission 725 Monroe Street

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	(slightly)		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Fox Building is a three-story brick commercial structure notable for its fenestration, brick work and pressed metal cornice. At a distance, its most distinctive feature is a range of arched windows -- segmental at the second floor and roundheaded at the third -- across the facade. These rhythmic voids give the building a prominent form. They are detailed by careful brick work that is today obscured by dirt and flaking white paint. The building has a handsome classical cornice with modillions and dentils and a frieze of garlands. The name and date of the building occupy the central portion of the frieze -- the name on the Fourth Avenue side, the date on the Nineteenth Street side.

Although the lines of the storefront have been altered, the large cast-iron columns remain at street level. In fact, this is one of the least altered buildings of its period in the city. The interior is undistinguished except for the third floor, an open hall lined by tall roundheaded windows. A preliminary site visit by a city building inspector and a local architect indicated that the structure is sound.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Fox Building (1895) is one of the most intact late 19th century commercial buildings in downtown Birmingham a city which was not founded until 1871 and which has retained only a handful of its early commercial buildings. Additionally, it is significant for its associations with a prominent commercial family whose history reflects that of the early settlement of the town, and for the quality of its Victorian commercial design. Named for the Fox family, who had operated a grocery store in the city since its second decade, the building housed Birmingham's largest grocery store and meat market.

Its location at Nineteenth Street and Fourth Avenue suggests the importance of the building and provides insight into the early city's size and land use patterns. Fourth Avenue marked the division between the city's first residential neighborhood, which stretched northward, and the Victorian commercial district, which filled the blocks south to the railroad tracks which gave birth to the city in 1870. Nineteenth Street was a major commercial thoroughfare, site of the finest stores and hotels (now demolished). Across the intersection at Nineteenth and Fourth stood City Hall (1886-1901, 1901-50; the Fox's store was constructed the year after David Fox had served a term as mayor).

The Fox Building's handsome classical cornice and fine brick work make it a good example of the late Victorian commercial architecture that characterized the city after its first boom. The building's facade, substantially intact, is further distinguished by carefully detailed segmental and semi-circular arched windows of the second and third stories and a delicately patterned frieze of garlands beside the permanently displayed name and date.

Like hundreds of other families, the Fox family came to Birmingham to seek their fortune in the "Magic City", so named for the sensational growth which in 20 years transformed a corn field into one of the most promising industrial cities in the nation. Originally English, they came to Birmingham by way of Canada. John Fox and Annie Smith were married in England in 1847. They migrated to Canada where 8 children were born to them. John Fox and his three sons -- John George, David James and William Thomas -- arrived in Birmingham sometime before 1888, the height of the city's first iron making and real estate boom. John Fox, Sr., first opened a grocery near the Alice Furnace where the three brothers worked briefly. In the early 1890's, the Fox brothers relocated their grocery business to Third Avenue and Nineteenth Street, the heart of the Victorian city. About this time, only several years after their arrival, David Fox served a term as the City's 8th Mayor (1892-94). In 1895, they moved a block north to Fourth Avenue, where they erected the building that bears their name today.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Cemetery Records - Oak Hill
2. City Directories
3. Fox Family Bible - in possession of Fox family

(see addendum sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 50' x 100' **UTM NOT VERIFIED**
 Quadrangle name Birmingham North **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED** Quadrangle scale 1:2400

UMT References

A	<u>116</u>	<u>511771010</u>	<u>31701831610</u>	B							
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing				
C				D							
E				F							
G				H							

Verbal boundary description and justification.

50' x 100', Block 61, Lot 19

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen Mertins

organization Alabama Historical Commission date June 17, 1980

street & number 725 Monroe Street telephone 832-6621

city or town Montgomery 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 Nils B. Howard, Jr.

title SHPO, Alabama date June 19, 1980

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>W. Ray Price</u>	date <u>8/11/80</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest: <u>Carl Dubois</u>	date <u>8/7/80</u>
Chief of Registration	

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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RECEIVED	JUN 25 1980
DATE ENTERED	AUG 1980

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

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John Fox's Sons Groceries continued in the Fox Building until 1910. From then through the Depression, it was occupied by a meat market, a drugstore, a barber shop with offices of the Birmingham Business College on the second floor. Later the Chicago Clothing Company, a shoe store, a finance company and the Paris Men's Shop were located in the building. The large open third floor hall, known as the "Third Loft" was rented to community groups for meetings, concerts and religious services. In 1897, the Church of Christ, now located in West End, started and met here for ten years.

The building's individual architectural merit is enhanced by its proximity to three other significant late 19th century buildings on Nineteenth Street: the Taylor Building (1890) at 215 19th Street and facing each other at 2nd Avenue and 19th Street, the Peerless Saloon (1889) and the Terry Building (1881 perhaps the oldest building downtown). This concentration of Victorian buildings adds vital historical continuity to a continually evolving commercial street.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

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RECEIVED JUN 25 1980

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

4. Interviews - Mrs. J. Fread Carey (Marjorie White, 10-79)
Mrs. W. T. Fox, Jr. (Marjorie White, 10-79)
Mrs. J. T. Honea (Alice Bowsher, 10-79)
Mrs. Peter Fyfe (Alice Bowsher, 10-79)
5. Photographs - in possession of Mrs. Joseph F. Carey
6. Titles Records