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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

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Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Carolina Life Insurance Company
Other names/site number: Seibels, Bruce & Company Building
Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1501 Lady Street
City or town: Columbia State: South Carolina County: Richland
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this x nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility 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 x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A ___ B x C ___ D

		<u>5/18/2016</u>
Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer:		Date
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

4. 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:)

Jon Eason H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

7.11.16
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

District

Site

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Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/Trade

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/Trade

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Sandstone, glass

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Carolina Life Insurance Building at 1501 Lady Street in Columbia, Richland County, South Carolina is a roughly L-shaped building with a southwest orientation and contains four floors visible from the surrounding street level. The Carolina Life Insurance building was modern in its style, but is difficult to place precisely within any single sub-category within the modern movement. It shares some features that resemble Art Deco, though in a restrained form, including the decorative mullions in the transom of the front entrance and the overall form and lines of the building. It may be most accurate to describe the building as transitional, falling somewhere between Art Deco and the International style that would prevail in post-war modern architecture. All faces of the sandstone building present an unbroken vertical plane, with the exception of the hyphen between the original 1949 construction and the 1977 addition. Significant architectural features include granite veneer panels, carved granite stairs, recessed double glass doors, brass fixtures, and steel mullions in most windows. Because the building has been continuously used as business offices throughout its lifetime it possesses a high level of historic integrity.

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Narrative Description

Exterior

The Carolina Life Insurance Building at 1501 Lady Street is a roughly L-shaped building with a southwest orientation and contains four floors visible from the surrounding street level. The building's primary façade overlooks the intersection of Lady and Bull Streets and is oriented at approximately a 45-degree angle to the roadway. The south and west elevations are the building's other two prominent faces, and overlook Lady Street and Bull Street respectively. These compose the south and west wings of the 1949 construction and the west wing of the 1977 addition. The north and east elevations constitute the building's secondary faces, and are not visible from the building's primary façade.

Lady Street bounds the building to the south, Bull Street bounds it to the west, and surface parking lots abut the north and northeast elevations. A rectangular building bounds the property to the east, enclosing another surface parking lot against the Carolina Life Insurance Building's east elevation. A narrow access road divides the Carolina Life Insurance Building's east elevation and the adjacent building to the east. Concrete sidewalks run along the south and west elevations of the building along Lady and Bull Streets. Landscaped shrubbery and trees ornament the space between the building's faces and the surrounding sidewalks.

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Five bays compose the building's angled southwestern façade. Granite veneer panels vertically alternate with windows in the center three bays of this elevation, serving to mark the building's main entrance in the center bay of the first level. Four carved granite stairs lead to the building's

¹“Seibels Insurance and Technology Services: Building Conditions Assessment and Building Code Analysis.” MB Kahn Construction Company, Inc. and The Boudreaux Group, Columbia: 2014, 23.

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main entryway, composed of a recessed double glass door of single plate glass with brass framing and steel handles. A decorative brass grille ornaments the transom window above the doors. The logo of the current occupant—the Seibels Bruce Inc. company—is attached to the face of the building in the granite panel immediately above the recessed doorway and just below the roofline. Windows in the southwestern façade are composed of four panes of single plate glass. Steel mullions divide these four panes: a single horizontal pane sits below three vertical panes, which in turn are topped by another single horizontal pane.

This window configuration continues throughout the south, east, and north elevations of the building's south wing, which was constructed in 1949 and runs along Lady Street. The south elevation of this wing contains eight bays, the east elevation five bays, and the north elevation four bays. A cast-in-place concrete loading dock with steel roof structure abuts the north side of the south wing.² Along its north elevation the south wing is divided from the central area of the original 1949 building by a single bay of windows vertically offset from the others throughout the exterior of the building.

The northeast face of the 1949 building contains two bays with windows set wide apart. Windows in the fourth level of this face of the building contain two vertical panes where the windows throughout the building contain three. Two aluminum louvered windows pierce the penthouse level.

Another single bay of vertically offset windows divides the central area of the 1949 building from its west wing. The east elevation of the west wing contains four bays of uniform windows identical to those throughout the south and west wings.

A tall and windowless hyphen connects the north edge of the 1949 building's west wing to the south edge of the 1977 addition. The hyphen meets both the 1949 and 1977 components of the west wing in only four stories, but the center contains penthouse level housing for the HVAC system, and is thus taller than the surrounding building. Though it presents an unbroken sandstone face to Bull Street to the west, this hyphen's eastern elevation contains a vertical panel of louvered steel that spans its height. The hyphen meets the north edge of the 1949 building in a similar vertical panel of louvered steel, and meets the south edge of the 1977 addition in a single bay of vertical, single plate glass windows. These windows have panes one-over-one with steel mullions. Single plate steel panels divide the windows between floors.

The west wing of the building provides continuous passage between the original 1949 building and its 1977 addition, and presents a nearly uniform face along Bull Street to the west. The 1977 addition contains four stories, a full basement partially below grade, a full sub-basement, and two mechanical penthouses. The mechanical penthouses are not visible from the street level. The 1977 addition is constructed of cast-in-place concrete with a frame of concrete spandrel beams and columns. Like the original 1949 building, the exterior walls of the 1977 addition consist of sandstone panels with an interior wythe of concrete block.

²“Seibels Insurance and Technology Services: Building Conditions Assessment and Building Code Analysis.” MB Kahn Construction Company, Inc. and The Boudreaux Group, Columbia: 2014, 23.

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The west and north wings of the 1977 addition are sympathetic to the design of the original 1949 building, and are appropriately sparing in detail and ornamentation. The west elevation of the 1977 addition's west wing contains eight bays, each containing a single plate glass window with only one pane and steel muntins. The east elevation of the 1977 addition's west wing contains two bays of single plate glass windows with only one pane like those along its west elevation.

The south elevation of the north wing contains three bays with windows uniform with those throughout the east and west elevations of the same wing. A single bay of vertical single plate glass windows is stepped back from the east edge of this wing, providing a hyphen to a final windowless section that caps the north wing along its south, east, and north elevations. A weather shelter awning overhangs the first level in the easternmost two bays of the north wing's windowed section.

The building's north elevation contains ten bays of the same evenly spaced, identical single plate, and single pane glass windows that pierce the south and west elevations of the 1977 addition. This side of the building overlooks a small parking lot that separates the property from the next parcel to the north. Deep window wells run the length of the north elevation, making the basement windows visible from the street level. A metal handrail guards the perimeter of the well. The Seibels Bruce company name and logo are attached to the top right corner of this face of the building, between the roofline and the top of the fourth story windows in the two westernmost bays. The easternmost edge of the north elevation abuts a windowless section of uniform sandstone, which contains a penthouse level that rises nearly a full story above the rest of the 1977 addition.

Interior

Interior partition walls around the stairs, core areas, and some other interior areas of both the original 1949 building and its 1977 addition are constructed of unreinforced concrete block. Basement walls and areaway walls surrounding much of the building are cast-in-place concrete.³

1949 building

First level

Main entry to the Seibels Bruce building through the central bay of the southwestern façade opens into the first floor lobby of the original 1949 building. The lobby still contains many of its original architectural elements, including a marble floor, floor-to-ceiling columns, decorative bronze air intake grilles at either side of the double elevators, and wood paneling throughout. Elevators have their original doors and indicators. The main entry is flanked on either side by carpeted sitting rooms with original windows onto Bull Street.

Two wings flank the lobby: the south wing runs east along Lady Street and the west wing runs north along Bull Street. Both wings are double loaded corridors with office space on either side. Office doors are wooden and original to the 1949 construction. Hallways in both wings are

³ "Seibels Insurance and Technology Services: Building Conditions Assessment and Building Code Analysis." MB Kahn Construction Company, Inc. and The Boudreaux Group, Columbia: 2014, 23.

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carpeted. Hallway walls are wood paneled from the floor to the chair rails, which run the length of either wing.

Men's and women's restrooms are the first rooms down the hallway on the rear side of either wing. These restrooms contain carpeted anterooms with metal lockers. The bathrooms themselves have original tile floors, original windows with frosted glass, porcelain sinks, and marble stalls with wooden doors.

Stairwells in the original 1949 building abut the side of the restrooms opposite the lobby. Each is a rectangular shaft providing access to all four floors and the basement of the 1949 building. The stairwell in the south wing continues to the penthouse level. Both stairwells have steel handrails.

Offices along the south wing of the 1949 building are wood paneled and retain their original windows onto Lady Street. Built-in vertical files, cabinets, and drawers are paneled in matching wood. Edwin G. Seibels invented this vertical filing system that would become the norm in administrative and clerical professions throughout the country and the world; even the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. displayed Seibels' filing system in its buildings. All office floors are covered in modern carpeting.

The first level contains drop ceilings with textured acoustical tiles throughout the hallways and offices.

Second through fourth levels

The core area of the first level – elevator lobby, restrooms, and stairwells – repeats on each level of the 1949 building, including the basement. Where the first level contains individual offices, the second through fourth levels have an open floor plan along the outer edges. These provide space for low partitions that create cubicle space for office workers. Each floor has drop ceilings and original windows.

The third and fourth levels of the 1949 building contain wood-paneled conference rooms with tray ceilings. Original windows look out onto the eastern parking lot at the building's rear. The third floor conference room contains a midcentury thermostat and built-in bookshelves.

Basement

The basement of the 1949 building has an open floor plan along the outer corridor of the west wing. The inner corridor contains the building's mechanical room. The south wing also has an open floor plan, and now houses the company's mailroom. Original windows pierce all faces of the basement.

The 1949 building connects to the 1977 addition via the hallway of the west wing on all levels. A wood panel frames a double-door onto the hyphen that opens onto the rest of the 1977 addition.

1977 addition

Basement through third levels

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The basement through third levels of the 1977 addition's west and north wings have open floor plans. Low, movable partitions create cubicle space for office workers. Only interior support columns break the open floor space.

Fourth level

The fourth level of the 1977 addition's north wing contains both a dining room and workshop. The dining room occupies the building's northwestern corner and has a tile floor and open floor plan. The workshop abuts the north wing's north wall.

On all levels, the easternmost section of the 1977 addition contains an elevator shaft and lobby, and stairwell.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1949

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

LAFAYE, LAFAYE, & FAIR

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Carolina Life Insurance Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C for Architecture as an example of modern design as deployed by the prominent Columbia architectural firm of Lafaye, Lafaye, & Fair in their commercial and corporate architecture. Lafaye, Lafaye, & Fair designed the four-story building for the Carolina Life Insurance Company in 1949, which was described by contemporary professional and lay admirers alike as "ultra-modern" and "one of the finest buildings of its kind in the South."⁴ The building's early design and construction date place it among Columbia's early buildings deploying design principals of the modern movement, helping to bring the city's architectural landscape into conversation with national architectural developments and communicating hope for Columbia's future as South Carolina's corporate and commercial capital. Despite minor alterations, the building's continuous use as office space has enabled it to maintain a high degree of architectural integrity.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

CRITERION C: ARCHITECTURE

Plans for a new home office building for the growing Carolina Life Insurance Company were announced in *The State* newspaper of February 6, 1949. A copy of Lafaye, Lafaye, and Fair's sketch for the building was included with a description given by Carolina Life's vice-president-treasurer Ames Haltiwanger. Therein Mr. Haltiwanger announced that the building would occupy the northeast corner of Bull and Lady Streets and would face southwest. Four floors of offices would stand atop a cafeteria in the full basement floor. Fireproof and finished in stone, the building would be fully air conditioned and outfitted with two elevators and "all of the latest modern office equipment and materials[.]" All offices were to be occupied by the Carolina Life Insurance Company—there were no plans to rent space to outside companies at that time. The building was to be more sprawling than high, designed with the convenience of its occupants in mind.⁵ Estimates made in November of 1949 predicted construction of the new building would cost approximately \$749,000.⁶

By February 1950, planes flying over Columbia could clearly see the concrete foundation work for the new Carolina Life Insurance building. The company announced completion of the building with a full-page advertisement in the June 10, 1951 edition of *The State* newspaper. The announcement included a black and white photograph of the building and an invitation to visit the newly completed offices any time during the day, Monday through Friday, throughout the

⁴ *The State*, 16 April 1953

⁵ *The State*, 6 February 1949, p. 1.

⁶ *The State*, 12 November 1949, p. 1.

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month of June. Carolina Life had officially occupied the building since May 21 of that year. Visitors to the building in the following month were quick to dub it “ultra-modern.”⁷

Indeed, the Carolina Life Insurance building was constructed in the period when Columbia was particularly concerned with the face and future of the area of the city that had traditionally served as its business district. The city widened streets, built an additional bridge across the Congaree River, added a parking garage to its landscape, and improved the local bus service in the decades immediately following the second World War. Retailers began advancing the idea of Columbia and its neighboring counties as the state’s “Midlands” area. This concept helped them promote Columbia as a natural marketplace for goods produced and sold throughout the state. Among Columbians’ visions for the city in the years between World War II and the 1970s was the development of core areas for commerce and industry. Developing the city blocks immediately adjacent to Main Street on the east and west helped create such a core – office buildings like the Carolina Life Insurance building indicated the city’s dedication to becoming the state’s corporate center.⁸ Additionally, the design of the building, which deployed principles of modern architectural design, signaled the desire of the Carolina Life Insurance Company, and the city generally, to become more cosmopolitan and communicate with national and international trends in business and architecture.

By the time the Carolina Life Insurance building was constructed in 1949, Lafaye, Lafaye, and Fair’s Columbia portfolio already boasted Modernist buildings designed for public and commercial use. Tapp’s Department Store (1940; Listed in the National Register, 1979) was perhaps the most notable Modernist building the firm designed in the years before WWII. In the post-war years, the firm designed several other Modernist buildings that became prominent on the city’s landscape, including Belk’s Department Store (1946), an office building for the Owen Building Corporation (1947; Listed in the National Register, 2013), an office building for the Methodist Center (1947), and the Hancock Buick Company building (1948). The Lafaye firm had also the U.S. Veterans Administration Regional Office (VARO) building on Assembly Street in 1949. When the Lafaye firm compiled its most representative work of all time in 1958, it prominently featured the Carolina Life Insurance Company building of 1949 in the book’s first pages.⁹

Even among its aforementioned cohort buildings, the Carolina Life Insurance building was stylistically distinctive. The relative uniform weight of its exterior faces contrasted with the more open first-level glass storefronts of the Tapp’s and Belk’s Department Store buildings. The Owen Building Corporation Office building also on Lady Street more closely resembles the solid heft of the Carolina Life Insurance building, but is nearly twice the height – the Owen Building includes eight stories where the Carolina Life Insurance building includes only four. The U.S. VARO building is more visually similar: it is rectangular, contains five stories, and also presents evenly spaced windows with similarly divided panes. But sills and jambs run the length of

⁷ *The State*, 15 January 1950, p. 50; 6 February 1950; 10 June 1951; 14 June 1951.

⁸ Moore, John Hammond, *Columbia and Richland County: A South Carolina Community 1740 - 1990*. (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 405 – 407.

⁹ *Representative Work of Lafaye, Fair, Lafaye & Associates, Architects, Columbia South Carolina* (Columbia, SC: R.L. Bryan Co., 1958).

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VARO building's south and west elevations, connecting all windows and providing the VARO building slightly more ornament than is evident in the Carolina Life Insurance building. Carved marble statues in the VARO building's southwest corner entry provide a much more ostentatious decoration than is found on any face of the Carolina Life Insurance building.

Within the context of Lafaye, Lafaye, and Fair's work the building offers an interesting case study that highlights the evolution of modern design in the city of Columbia. It is probably best described as transitional, falling somewhere between the Art Deco and International styles. Its trapezoidal form, its lines, and some of the decorative elements on both the exterior and interior, recall Art Deco design, but in a much more restrained fashion than is typical of the style. In that restraint it is more characteristic of the International style. Its placement along that continuum is indicative of the timing of its construction, coming as it did in the early post-war period, and the fact that modern design in Columbia tended to lag behind urban centers like New York or Chicago. While Lafaye, Lafaye, and Fair advertised themselves as a firm, "well rounded in experience and ability and qualified to keep abreast of changing design techniques," they, like all architecture firms, also had to satisfy their clients and, especially in a place like Columbia, those clients tended to be more conservative in their architectural tastes.¹⁰ This need to satisfy a client may provide a partial explanation for the building's design, which looked backward as much as it did forward.

Additionally, in 1949, Lafaye, Lafaye, and Fair was the main architectural firm in Columbia deploying modern design in their buildings. In short, they had very little competition and the city's modern landscape remained relatively sparse. In this environment there was less incentive to push the envelopes of design, perhaps especially for a venerable firm like Lafaye, which by that time was nearly half-a-century old and had an extensive portfolio of work in more traditional styles, ranging from colonial revival to neoclassical. At nearly this same moment, however, the firm of Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolff (LBC&W), which would become the most influential driver of modern architecture in Columbia, and in South Carolina more generally, was founded.

Among LBC&W's contributions to the Modernist landscape of Columbia is the Cornell Arms apartment building at 1230 Pendleton Street. Renown as the tallest building between New York and Miami at the time of its construction in 1949, the Cornell Arms apartment complex differs greatly in appearance from the Carolina Life Insurance building. Its cross shape footprint, storefront first level, red brick veneer, and tall height make it immediately distinctive from the more subdued Carolina Life Insurance building.¹¹ Over the course of the next twenty years, Lafaye, Lafaye, and Fair, later Lafaye, Fair, Lafaye and Associates, would represent the principal competitor for LBC&W in the realm of modern architectural design in the city of Columbia. This competition, as well as the progression of years and tastes, would expand Lafaye's modern portfolio well beyond where it stood in 1949. Still, the Carolina Life Insurance Building offers an early example of their work in this realm. Though buildings built in the city later would include some of the same elements seen in the Carolina Life Insurance building, the building at

¹⁰ *Representative Work of Lafaye, Fair, Lafaye & Associates, Architects, Columbia South Carolina*, 3.

¹¹ Janie Campbell et al., "Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolff: A Case Study for Researching and Preserving Mid-Century Modern Architecture" (University of South Carolina, April 2015); "Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolff: Building Modern Columbia" (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2015).

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1501 Lady Street remains distinctive. Its orientation, which is set at a diagonal relative to the street, its low profile, uniform sandstone trim, and subtle, minimal ornament, provide the Carolina Life Insurance an air of stoic elegance that sets it apart from other examples of modern architecture in Columbia.

Two years after the completion of the Carolina Life Insurance building, visitors lauded the building as “modern and efficient in every respect,” and remarked that it was “said to be one of the finest buildings of its kind in the South[.]” Among its many admirable attributes, visitors took particular note of the building’s Berea sandstone construction, triangular shape, attractive cafeteria, auditorium, IBM Accounting Systems, controlled music, and moveable partitions. This last feature allowed the building’s occupants to arrange and rearrange office spaces of various size.¹² Features contemporary commentators associated with the building’s ultra-modernity, including the Berea sandstone exterior and the interior moveable partitions, are still present in the building.

The Carolina Life Insurance Company was acquired by Southland Life of Texas in the early 1960s, and was quick to vacate its recently constructed edifice at 1501 Lady Street.¹³ Seibels, Bruce & Company purchased the building in 1965, and had replaced the Carolina Life Insurance Company in all of the building’s office spaces by Thanksgiving of that year. Its new home office was at the center of the company’s centennial celebration, noted as a “handsome 60,000 square foot, four and a half story building.” It then housed offices for 265 Seibels, Bruce & Company’s employees.¹⁴ Seibels Bruce & Company did not need all of the space in the building, so the top floor was rented to local architectural firm Lafaye, Lafaye, & Fair, as well as the credit rating agency of Dun & Bradstreet. J. Kenneth Morris, a marriage counselor, rented one suite on the executive corridor.¹⁵ Seibels, Bruce & Company’s loss department occupied the old auditorium on the building’s third floor. The seats had been removed prior to 1965, but the stage was still in place. Seibels, Bruce & Company constructed two offices on the stage, for employees Zann Robb and Frank Boatwright.¹⁶ The auditorium space is no longer evident in building.

Fully established in its new home office at 1501 Lady Street at Thanksgiving of 1965, Seibels Bruce & Company was widely recognized as one of South Carolina’s insurance giants by 1969.¹⁷ Clerical and administrative advances made by the Seibels Bruce Group at the building at 1501 Lady Street influenced corporate and administrative practices throughout the country. Edwin G. Seibels invented a vertical filing system that would become the norm in administrative and

¹² *The State*, 16 April 1953; 26 June 1953. Interestingly, this modular office system predated the introduction of “Action Office I” and “Action Office II” by the Herman Miller Research Corporation in 1964. Anyone who has ever worked a day in a modern cubicle might be surprised to learn that the “Action Office” appellation was originally applied unironically. Nikil Saval, *Cubed: A Secret History of the Workplace* (New York: Doubleday, 2014).

¹³ Hammond Moore, 20.

¹⁴ *The State*, 14 September 1969, p. 68.

¹⁵ Hammond Moore, 32. A Feb. 1949 in *The State* indicated that only the Carolina Life Insurance Company intended to occupy the building at the time of its design, suggesting that Lafaye, Lafaye, & Fair did not design the building with the explicit intention of moving in as occupants, though that is not entirely clear.

¹⁶ Hammond Moore, 36.

¹⁷ *The State*, 14 September 1969, p. 68.

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clerical professions throughout the country and the world; even the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. displayed Seibels' filing system in its buildings. Examples of this filing system remain built into the offices of the Seibels Bruce building. The building at 1501 Lady Street was also the original location for Policy Management Systems Corporation (PMSC), a major influence on the introduction and development of property and casualty insurance policy administration software and systems in South Carolina and throughout the United States. As the tenant continued to gain notoriety, the building continued to hold the public's fascination as symbol of Columbia's modernity. Local architects continued to assert the former Carolina Life Insurance Company building's significance as Columbia's "only example of 'Federal Modern' - and a good one."¹⁸

Seibels, Bruce & Company's continued success brought additional growth and diversification within the company, and the need for yet more office space. In August 1977, the company announced plans to add more than 162,000 square feet of office space to its existing facilities at 1501 Lady Street. MB Kahn Construction Company was contracted to build the new addition. The new addition to the building contained six stories and featured an open-floor concept with "all features designed to conserve energy, an employee cafeteria on the top floor, and special facilities to accommodate the handicapped." The exterior of the addition was designed to complement the existing 1950 building.¹⁹ The employee cafeteria MB Kahn Construction Company built in the 1977 addition is still in use today.²⁰

Seibels, Bruce & Company became The Seibels Bruce Group in 1978, subsuming both the South Carolina Insurance Company and the Consolidated American Insurance Company.²¹ The Seibels Bruce Group, Inc. continues to conduct insurance and reinsurance operations from its offices at 1501 Lady Street in 2015.

Charles H. Powers acquired the on December 22, 2000 and Jane Powers Huggins, trustee of the Seibels, Bruce & Company, subsequently purchased it on May 16, 2013.²²

Thanks to the building's infrequent change in tenants, and owing to its continuous use as an office building from the time of its original construction in 1949, many of the architectural features that made it so intriguing to contemporary observers remain intact. The building's characteristic lack of ornamentation, clean lines, exterior Berea sandstone and granite paneling, interior lobby design, and Edwin G. Seibels' built-in filing system recall its earliest years. In keeping with the building's original open floor plan with moveable partitions, modern occupants continue to use cubicle walls to subdivide an otherwise open interior space. Much of what made the Carolina Life Insurance building such a marvel of modernity in the 1950s remains in the building today.

¹⁸ "Columbia's Commercial Heritage: An inventory and evaluation of older commercial buildings in the city center." City of Columbia, Columbia: 1977.

¹⁹ *The State*, 2 August 1977, p.13.

²⁰ "Seibels, Bruce to Expand," *The State*, August 2, 1977.

²¹ Hammond Moore, 18.

²² Richland County Tax Assessor Data: Property Value & Tax Estimate, 1501 Lady Street, Columbia, SC 29201.

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While the VARO, Strom Thurmond Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse (1975-79; Listed in the National Register, 2014), and U.S. Post Office buildings in downtown Columbia are representative of government buildings constructed in the same era of Modernist architecture, the Carolina Life Insurance building is an important representative of Columbia's commercial buildings designed within a modern aesthetic. It recalls the early years of the city's efforts to reassert its identity as the capital not only of the state, but also of commerce and finance within the state, and to usher South Carolina into the new era of modern business. Within the context of modern commercial architecture in Columbia, South Carolina it stands out as an early entrant into a modern architectural skyline that would develop in the city over the coming decades.

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Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

MB Kahn Construction Company

Kahn-Southern, MB Kahn's construction management division, was founded in 1927 and was operating in eleven southeastern states fifty years later. Kahn specialized in industrial, commercial, and institutional construction. By 1977, the company had developed over two million square feet of industrial buildings and high-rise and low-rise office buildings and apartments throughout the South. Kahn's other notable works in the Columbia area included plants for Hobart Manufacturing Company, Square D Company, Union Underwear Company, and Wheel Trueing Company.²³

Carolina Life Insurance Company

Prior to construction of the building at the corner of Lady and Bull Streets, the Carolina Life Insurance Company occupied Columbia's third oldest "skyscraper," the Union National Bank building on the corner of Main and Gervais Streets. The Company purchased that building in 1925 for \$160,000 in cash.²⁴ By 1948, the Carolina Life Insurance Company was operating twenty-five districts throughout South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.²⁵

Seibels Bruce Group, Inc.

Founder Edwin W. and sons Edwin G. and John J. Seibels built the oldest original corporation in the city of Columbia, known today as the Seibels Bruce Group, Inc. Clerical and administrative advances made by the Seibels Bruce Group at the building at 1501 Lady Street influenced corporate and administrative practices throughout the country. Edwin G. Seibels invented a vertical filing system that would become the norm in administrative and clerical professions throughout the country and the world; even the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC displayed Seibels' filing system in its buildings. Examples of this filing system remain built into the offices of the Seibels Bruce building. The building at 1501 Lady Street was also the original location for Policy Management Systems Corporation (PMSC), a major influence on the introduction and development of property and casualty insurance policy administration software and systems in South Carolina and throughout the United States. From their headquarters at 1501 Lady Street, the Carolina Life Insurance Company and the Seibels Bruce Company helped usher Columbia into the modern business era.

The Seibels Bruce Group, Inc. began in 1869 as Seibels & Ezell in Columbia, South Carolina. In its early years, the firm served as local representation for several national insurance companies. The firm took its name from founders Edwin W. Seibels and George Ezell. By the m 1870s, the firm was operating from its offices at 127 North Richardson Street in downtown Columbia. Ezell left the firm in February 1882, and the company was renamed EW Seibels & Son. Upon the death of the elder Edwin W. Seibels in December of 1892, Edwin G. Seibels (the eponymous son) decided to end the firm's services to larger, national companies and concentrate the firm's

²³ *The State*, 10 August 1977, p. 7A.

²⁴ *The State*, 25 October 1925.

²⁵ *The State*, 11 August 1948, pg. 3.

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energies on claims adjusting. Brothers Edwin G. Seibels and John J. Seibels turned EW Seibels & Son into a local real estate and insurance agency, and entrusted the company's everyday operations to a capable manager after 1900.²⁶

Throughout the last decade of the 19th century, the Seibels brothers maintained offices in several locations throughout Columbia's downtown business district. They centralized their operations with the purchase of their first "skyscraper" in 1905: the brick structure at the southeast corner of Main and Washington Streets became the home of EW Seibels & Son. Managers Francis B. McIntosh and later Walter E. McNulty oversaw operations of EW Seibels & Son on the second level of the building, while brothers Edwin G. and John J. Seibels undertook other activities on the other, higher floors.²⁷

The Seibels brothers were an inventive pair, and were involved in many things in addition to their namesake insurance company. Edwin G. Seibels developed a vertical filing system adopted by insurance companies across the country, though it was never patented. He also ran for a seat in the lower house of the General Assembly, where he served one term (1909 – 1910). John J. Seibels founded and maintained Carolina Glass between 1902 and 1907.²⁸ In 1910, the Seibels created the South Carolina Insurance Company in an effort to retain some of the insurance money that was flowing out of the Southeast. By 1919, the brothers were developing Seibels, Bruce & Company to the same end.²⁹

Seibels, Bruce & Company moved into Columbia's renowned Palmetto Building (1400 Main Street) by 1914, and maintained its offices there for half a century. Palmetto Construction Company, another Seibels brothers company, had constructed the picturesque Palmetto Building for the Palmetto Bank, another local institution established in 1902.³⁰ John J. Seibels was president of the Palmetto Bank, and Walter E. McNulty was secretary-treasurer.³¹

The Seibels brothers were keenly interested in the many facets of the insurance business, including reinsurance. Their curiosity and family wealth enabled them to make contacts throughout the world, and Seibels, Bruce & Company welcomed its international partners at the company's headquarters in Columbia. Mexican, German, Swiss, and Belgian sons of insurance executives came to town to study how Seibels, Bruce & Company functioned. Whenever an international colleague came to visit, Seibels, Bruce & Company flew their home country's flag outside the Palmetto Building. In the words of local historian John Hammond Moore, these relationships "added an international patina to a family-dominated business located in a quiet Southern city."³² The company's international recognition encouraged the addition of offices in New York City, London, Copenhagen, and Barcelona. Again, in the words of John Hammond

²⁶ John Hammond Moore, *Seibels Bruce Since 1869*. Columbia, SC: Seibels Bruce Group, Inc., 1989. Pp. 6 – 8. On file in the Local History Room at the Richland County Public Library, "Columbia Business – S."

²⁷ Moore, 11.

²⁸ Moore, 11.

²⁹ Moore, 6-8.

³⁰ Moore, 15.

³¹ *The State*, 15 January 1978.

³² Moore, 16.

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Moore, the Seibels brothers “made Columbia a national, even international, center of insurance activity and laid a firm foundation for future growth.”³³

Seibels, Bruce & Company was operating out of the Palmetto Building on Columbia's Main Street in 1950 when the Carolina Life Insurance Company was constructing its new home office building at the corner of Lady and Bull Streets.³⁴ Seibels, Bruce & Company was parent to both the South Carolina Insurance Company and the Consolidated American Insurance Company after 1953.³⁵

Seibels Bruce received a permit to remodel its offices on the 9th and 13th floors of the Palmetto Building in 1961. The remodel was to cost \$2,000.³⁶ Despite the significant remodeling at the Palmetto Building, the Seibels Bruce & Company continued to outgrow its existing office space. Four years after the remodeling of the 9th and 13th floors, *The State* newspaper advertised 25,000 square feet of prime office space for sale at the Palmetto Building. Seibels Bruce & Company no longer had need of it as the company had purchased the former Carolina Life Building at the corner of Lady and Bull Streets.³⁷ Together with South Carolina Insurance, Consolidated American, Catawba, Premium Service Corporation, Argus Life, and various domestic and foreign accounts, Seibels, Bruce & Company moved into the former Carolina Life Insurance Building at 1501 Lady Street.³⁸

Fully established in its new home office at 1501 Lady Street at Thanksgiving of 1965, Seibels Bruce & Company was widely recognized as one of South Carolina's insurance giants by 1969.³⁹ Seibels, Bruce & Company became The Seibels Bruce Group in 1978, subsuming both the South Carolina Insurance Company and the Consolidated American Insurance Company.⁴⁰ The Seibels Bruce Group, Inc. continues to conduct insurance and re-insurance operations from its offices at 1501 Lady Street in 2015.

³³ Moore, 16, 17.

³⁴ *The State*, 15 January 1950, pg. 50.

³⁵ Moore, 18.

³⁶ *The State*, 22 April 1961, p. 12.

³⁷ *The State*, 5 December 1965, p. 75.

³⁸ Moore, 20.

³⁹ *The State*, 14 September 1969, p. 68.

⁴⁰ Moore, 18.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Newspapers

The State

- “New Home of Carolina Life to Rise at Bull and Lady,” February 6, 1949, 1.
- “Directors See Carolina Life Building, Magnolia Gardens,” June 26, 1953, 12.
- “Construction Business Here Unabated in ‘Slack’ Season,” November 12, 1949, 1.
- “Seen Here and There,” February 6, 1950, 7; June 10, 1951, 8A.
- “Lobby of Carolina Life’s New Building,” June 14, 1951, 2A.
- “Carolina Life Insurance Has Good Year,” April 16, 1953, 23.
- “Directors See Carolina Life Building, Magnolia Gardens,” June 26, 1953, 12.

The Columbia Record

- “SC Insurance Giant Celebrates Centennial,” September 14, 1969.

Books

- Dr. John Hammond Moore, comp., *Seibels Bruce Since 1869* (Columbia: Seibels Bruce Group, Inc., 1989).
- Salsi, Lynn Sims and Margaret Sims. *Columbia: History of a Southern Capital* (The Making of America Series. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003).

Reports

- “Columbia’s Commercial Heritage: An inventory and evaluation of older commercial buildings in the city center.” City of Columbia, Columbia: 1977.
- “Seibels Insurance and Technology Services: Building Conditions Assessment and Building Code Analysis.” MB Kahn Construction Company, Inc. and The Boudreaux Group, Columbia: 2014.

Journal articles

- Susan Piedmont-Palladino, “Federal Modern: Assessing and Preserving a Legacy,” *Blueprints XXVI* (2007-2008): 1, accessed February 26, 2015, <http://www.nbm.org/about-us/publications/blueprints/federal-modern.html>.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- 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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Seibels Bruce Company

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Carolina Life Insurance Building
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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.75 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 34.004487 | Longitude: -81.029093 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The building's southern boundary is along Lady Street. Bull Street bounds the building to the west. Adjacent property and surface parking bounds the building to the north and northwest. Adjacent property forms the eastern boundary. The boundary corresponds to parcel Richland County parcel R11402-12-14, marked by the thick blue line on the accompanying Richland County GIS Tax Parcel Map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These boundaries were selected because they have historically formed the property's boundaries.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Meg Southern
organization: Historic Columbia
street & number: 1601 Richland Street
city or town: Columbia state: South Carolina zip code: 29201
e-mail megsouthern@gmail.com
telephone: 301-788-7197
date: March 15, 2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Carolina Life Insurance Building
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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Seibels Bruce Building

City or Vicinity: Columbia

County: Richland

State: South Carolina

Photographer: Meg Southern

Date Photographed: February 12, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1. Southwest elevation, primary façade of building. Camera facing northeast.
2. Southeast elevation. Camera facing northwest.
3. East elevation of west wing, 1949 building and 1977 addition. Camera facing west.
4. Northeast aspect, 1949 building. Camera facing southwest.
5. South elevation of north wing, 1977 addition. Camera facing north.
6. South elevation of south wing, 1949 building basement. Camera facing north.
7. Exterior detail, windows in 1949 building.
8. Exterior detail, windows in 1977 addition.
9. Exterior detail, main entryway, southwest façade. Camera facing northeast.
10. Exterior detail, main entryway stairs along southwest façade.
11. Exterior detail, main entry door in southwest façade. Camera facing northeast.
12. Exterior detail, loading bay along north elevation of south wing. Camera facing southwest.
13. Interior, lobby of original 1949 building. Camera facing southwest.
14. Interior, elevators in lobby of original 1949 building. Camera facing northeast.
15. Interior, first level hallway in west wing of 1949 building. Camera facing north.
16. Interior, first level of 1949 building, executive conference room.
17. Interior detail, first level of 1949 building, executive file drawers.
18. Interior detail, first level of 1949 building, executive office.
19. Interior detail, first level of 1949 building, men's restroom door.
20. Interior detail, first level of 1949 building, men's restroom flooring.

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21. Interior detail, first level of 1949 building, men's restroom sink.
22. Interior detail, first level of 1949 building, men's restroom windows.
23. Interior detail, first level of 1949 building, men's restroom iron grate over ductwork.
24. Interior detail, first level office door in 1949 building.
25. Interior detail, first level windows in 1949 building.
26. Interior, open floor plan on third floor in 1949 building.
27. Interior, open floor plan on fourth floor in 1949 building..
28. Interior detail, stairwell in 1949 building. Camera facing east.
29. Interior detail, door to stairwell in 1949 building.
30. Interior detail, window in third floor of 1949 building.
31. Interior detail, transition between 1949 building and 1977 addition.
32. Interior, fourth floor dining room in 1977 addition. Camera facing northwest.
33. Interior detail, closet doors in 1977 addition.
34. Interior, third floor hallway in 1977 addition.
35. Interior, third floor executive conference room in 1949 building.
36. Interior, fourth floor executive conference room in 1977 addition.
37. Interior, fourth floor open floor plan in 1977 addition.
38. Interior detail, windows in 1977 addition. Camera facing north.
39. Interior detail, workshop in 1977 addition.
40. Interior detail, mailroom in basement of 1949 building's south wing.
41. Interior detail, open floor plan in basement of 1949 building's north wing.
42. Interior detail, electrical boxes in basement of 1949 building's south wing.

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Index of Figures

Figure #1: The Carolina Life Building, as the Seibels Bruce building was known in the earlier half of the 20th century, as designed by Lafaye and Fair architectural firm of Columbia in 1949. “Carolina Life Building,” 26 January 1949: Lafaye and Fair architectural rendering. Richland County Public Library: Russell Maxey collection. Identifier: max1483.



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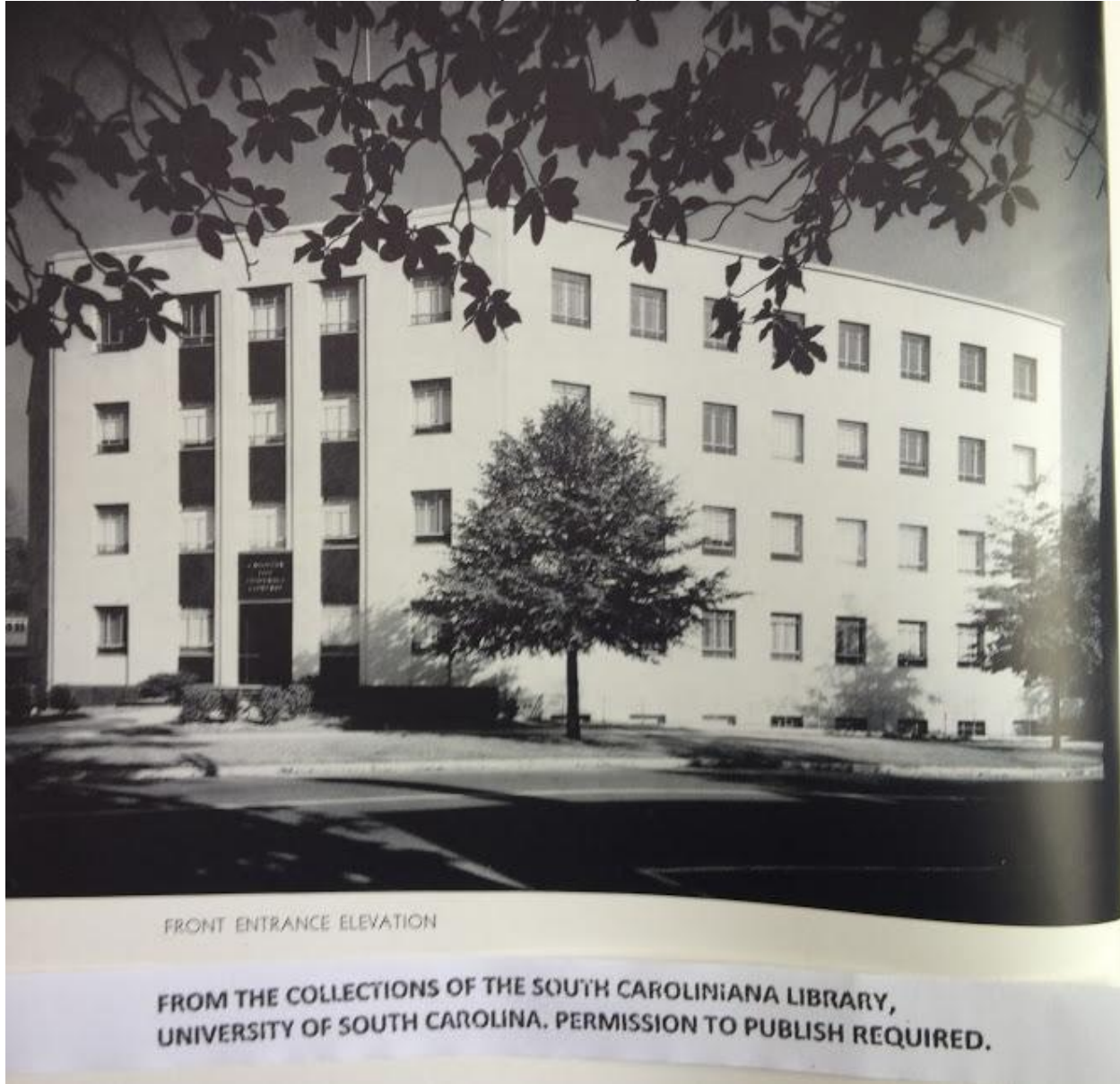
Figure #2: Photograph of the Carolina Life Insurance Company building in 1956. "Carolina Life Insurance Company," 12 April 1956. Richland County Public Library: Russell Maxey collection. Identifier: max0117.



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Figure #3: Photograph of Carolina Life Insurance Company building, 1958. "Home Office Building Carolina Life Insurance Co.," *Representative Work of Lafaye, Fair, Lafaye & Associates, 1958*. South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.



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Figure #4: Photograph of interior office suite and main entrance lobby. “Typical Executive Office” and “First Floor Elevator Lobby,” *Representative Work of Lafaye, Fair, Lafaye & Associates, 1958*. South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.



TYPICAL EXECUTIVE OFFICE

FIRST FLOOR ELEVATOR LOBBY



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Figure #5: Postcard featuring a color drawing of the Carolina Life Insurance Building, c. 1950.



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Figure #6: The Seibels, Bruce & Company building as it appeared in 1980. “Seibels Bruce 1980,” in the Russell Maxey photograph collection in the Local History Room at the Richland County Public Library.



Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Richland County Internet Mapping

0.x



100 ft

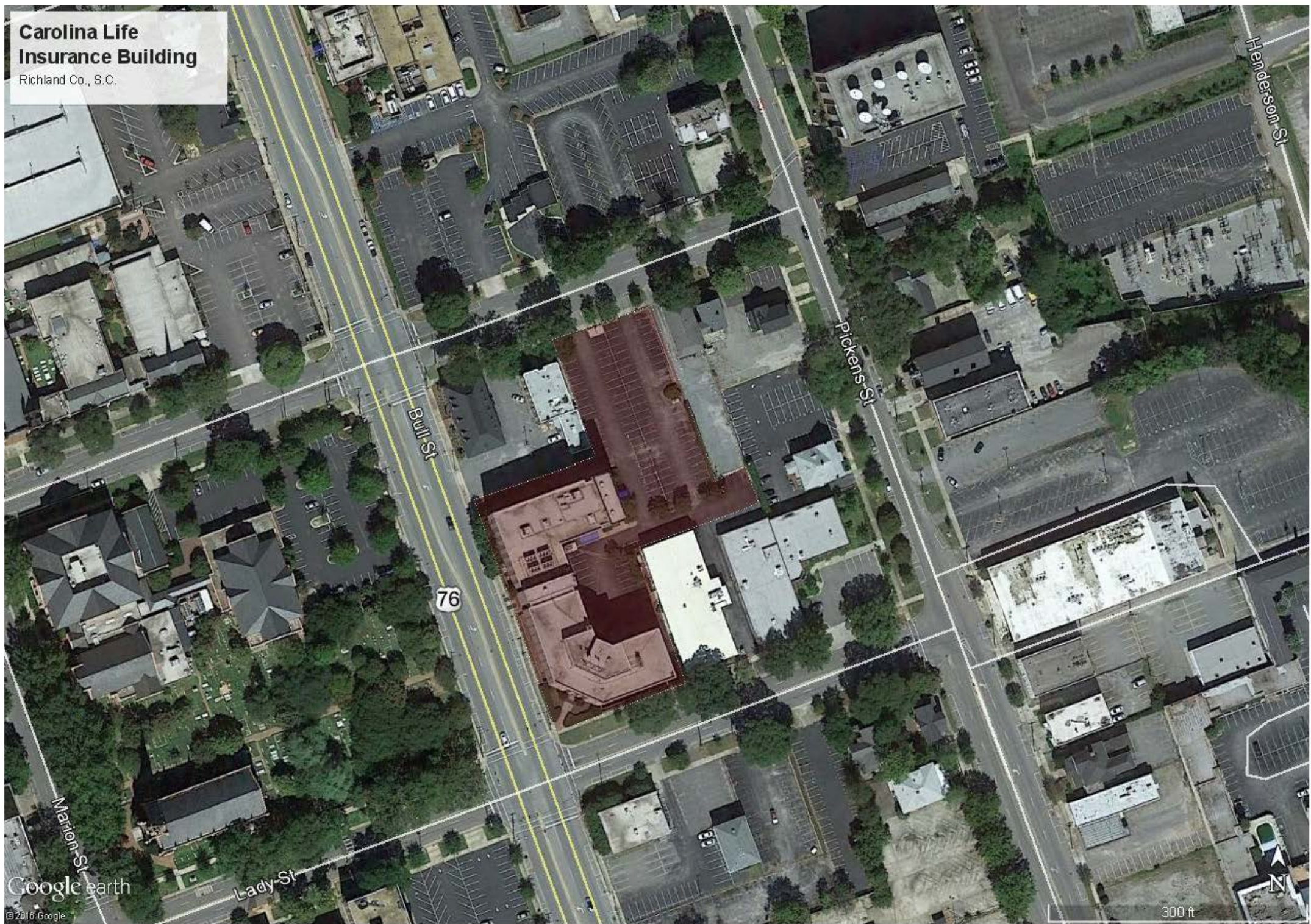
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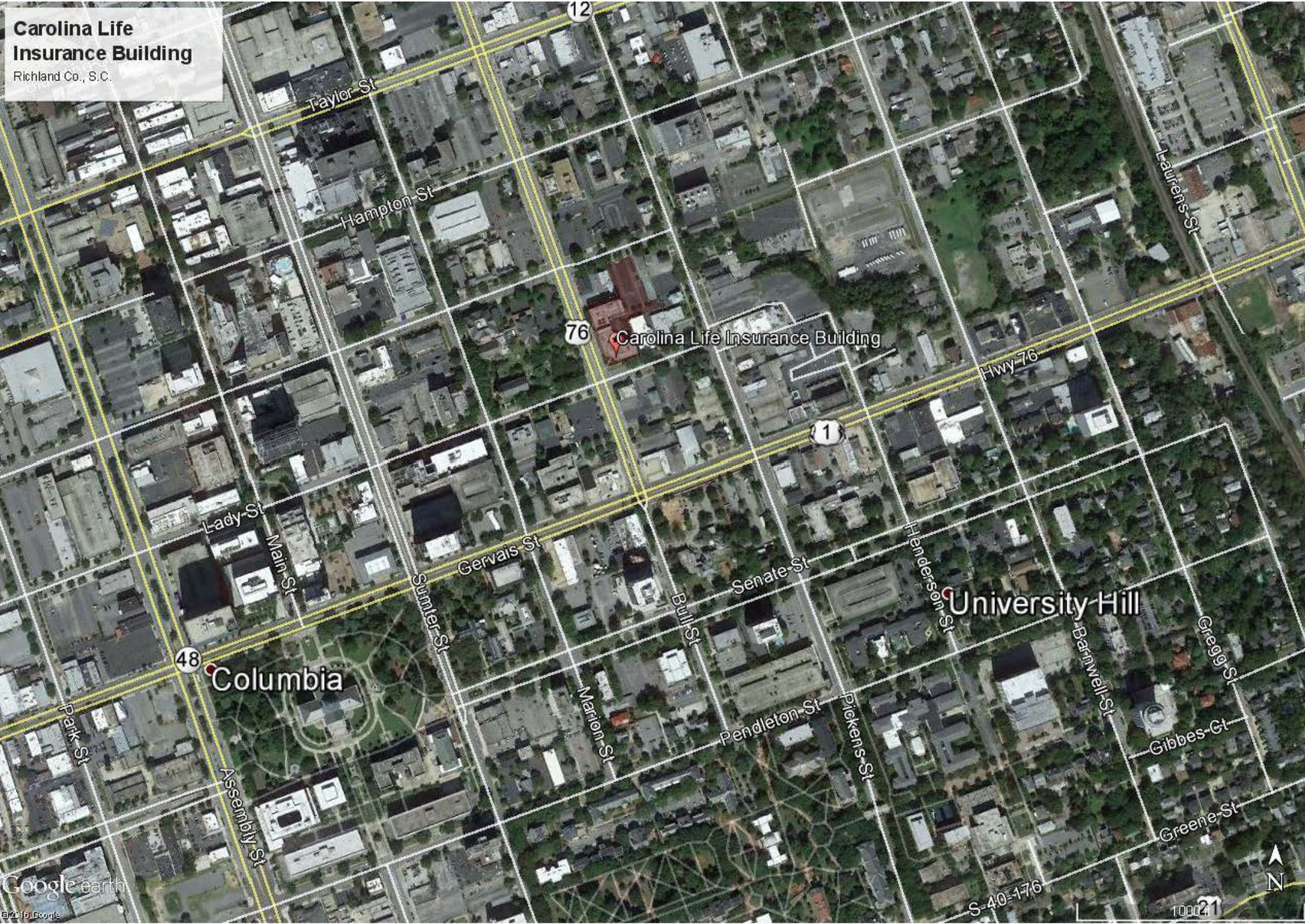
Leaflet | Map data © Richland County SC, Satellite basemap © Google

Carolina Life Insurance Building

Richland Co., S.C.



Carolina Life Insurance Building
Richland Co., S.C.



 **Seibels**

















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(877) 57WASTE

MAZDA 6
MAZDA 6







WO
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Small label on the top-left drawer.

Small label on the top-middle drawer.

Small label on the top-right drawer.

Small label on the top-furthest drawer.

Small label on the second drawer from the top-left.

Small label on the second drawer from the top-middle.

Small label on the second drawer from the top-right.

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Small label on the third drawer from the top-left.

Small label on the third drawer from the top-middle.

Small label on the third drawer from the top-right.

Small label on the third drawer from the top-furthest.

Small label on the bottom-left drawer.

Small label on the bottom-middle drawer.

Small label on the bottom-right drawer.

Small label on the bottom-furthest drawer.



PLEASE
FLUSH WHEN YOU ARE
FINISHED.
THANK YOU!

PLEASE
do not flush paper towels
or sanitary napkins.
Dispose of these items
appropriately.
Thank you.

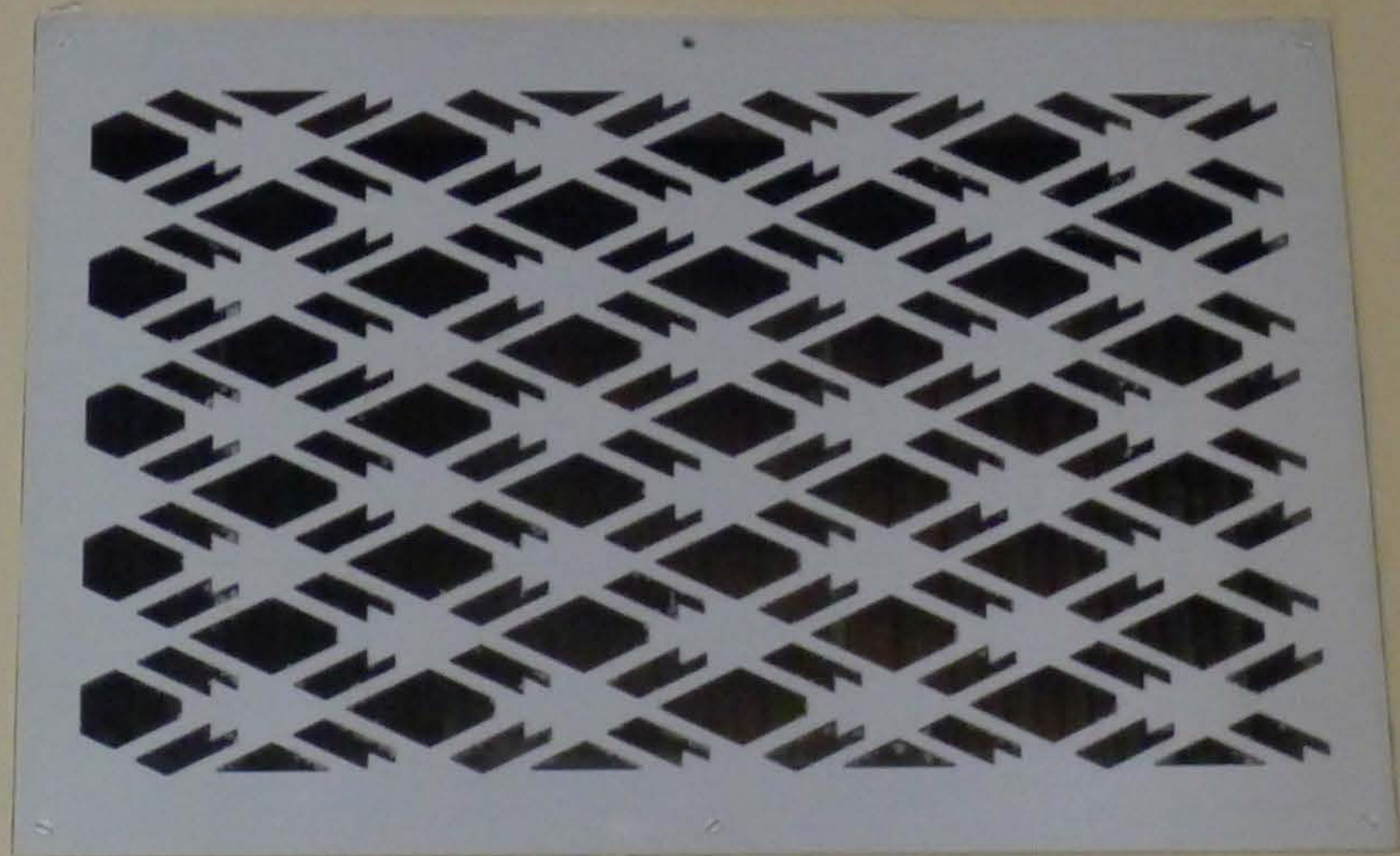
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FLUSH WHEN YOU ARE
FINISHED.
THANK YOU!











109

No Entry









Company	Environment	Last Version	Current Version	Next Build
Base	Dev	1.0.0	1.0.1	
Base	Prod	1.0.0	1.0.0	

03.51























ULINE
COUNTDOWNERS

CAUTION
CAUTION

SYLVANIA
SYLVANIA

PRICE

1/2
12

Vector



PLEASE
DO NOT PUT
NEWSPAPER
OR PHONEBOOKS
IN BINS







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Carolina Life Insurance Company

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: SOUTH CAROLINA, Richland

DATE RECEIVED: 5/27/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/12/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000444

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 7-11-16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

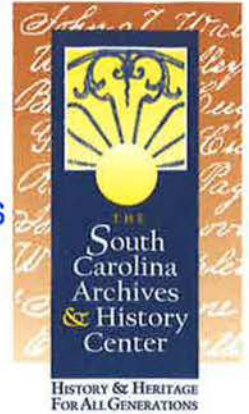
May 18, 2016

RECEIVED 2280

MAY 27 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

Paul Loether
National Register Chief
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye (I) Street, NW (2280)
Washington, DC 20005



Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed is the National Register nomination for the Carolina Life Insurance Building in Richland County, South Carolina. The nomination was approved by the South Carolina State Board of Review as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C at the local level of significance. We are now submitting this nomination for formal review by the National Register staff. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Carolina Life Insurance Building to the National Register of Historic Places.

If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below, call me at (803) 896-6182, fax me at (803) 896-6167, or e-mail me at efoley@scdah.sc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ehren Foley', is written over a horizontal line.

Ehren Foley, Ph.D.
Historian and National Register Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office
8301 Parklane Rd.
Columbia, S.C. 29223