

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received AUG 31 1983  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic First National ~~John A. Hand Building~~

and/or common

2. Location

street & number SE corner <sup>17 N. 20th St.</sup> 1st Avenue and 20th Street North n/a not for publication

city, town Birmingham n/a vicinity of

state Alabama code 073 county Jefferson code Alabama

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name 20th Street Partners, Ltd.  
c/o Greg Church

street & number 2100 John Hand Building

city, town Birmingham n/a vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street & number 716 21st Street

city, town Birmingham state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Jefferson County Historical Commission has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1972  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Birmingham Historical Society

city, town Birmingham state Alabama

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located on the southeastern corner of the intersection of First Avenue North and 20th Street, the First National-John Hand Building occupies a corner lot and faces northwest. Originally built as a 21-story skyscraper in 1912, it added a 2-story wing in 1940 (primarily a bank lobby and elevator lobby area) and a five-story addition on the eastern side in 1955 (a drive-thru teller area). The main 1912 building is a narrow 21-story skyscraper in the Neoclassical style. Monumental corinthian pilasters of white Dover marble form the base (with two attached columns along 20th Street); windows in bronze moldings are inset between the pilasters and columns. The fourth story is a frieze of ornamental terra cotta surmounted by a cornice with dentils. Above this rises a shaft of 12 stories, above which are three stories articulated by monumental corinthian pilasters and a frieze that echos the base. The building is topped by a full cornice with dentils. Above the third story, the building is faced in white matter glazed terra cotta; the south and east elevations, away from the street, are faced in buff pressed brick. A rounded corner at First Avenue and 20th Street gives distinctive elegance to the narrow shaft. The main entrance to the bank was at the curve, marked by a richly carved doorway of White Dover marble surmounted by a clock; it has since been remodeled as a window. The main entrance on 10th Street is the same curved marble. The 1940 addition continues the classical treatment of the exterior. The gross area of the building is 210,927 square feet. The main (1912) building is of heavy grade construction with a framework of heavy grade steel and reinforced concrete sub-floors and foundation walls; there are brick and tile block foundation walls. Rear walls are face brick. All roofs are built up tar and gravel. The exteriors have been only moderately altered.

INTERIOR: The interior has, on selected floors, been substantially altered to include plastering over marble walls, and covering marble floors. The marble lobby features massive marble columns and marble wainscoting on the walls. The 11th, 18th, and 19th floors are virtually intact including arched plaster ceilings, and marble floors and walls. The other floors have been altered as mentioned above. On most floors there is oak trim with frosted glass panels. The 1939 addition has 25-30 foot ceiling with a staircase to the second level which is fully marble and has brass handrails.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1912. 1940 **Builder/Architect** William Leslie Welton

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** Uffinger and Mowbray, Assoc.

ARCHITECTURE:

The First National-John A. Hand Building is significant because it is an exceptionally fine local example of a Neo-Classical style skyscraper which features elegant lines and rich ornamentation. The marble pilasters at the base and at the upper three stories are crowned with corinthian capitals, the most ornate of the three classical orders. The two-story (1940) addition continues the elegant classical treatment. The building was designed by one of Birmingham's most important architects, William Leslie Welton, who trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and who also designed the sixteen-story classically influenced Empire Building (1913; NRHP 3-19-83) across the street.

COMMERCE:

The First National-John A. Hand Building is significant because of its location on the nationally significant "heaviest corner on earth," at the intersection of 20th Street and First Avenue North. Here, between 1903-1913, four massive skyscrapers--the Empire, 1913, NRHP 3-19-82; the Woodward Building, c. 1903, NRHP 7-83; the Brown-Marx Building, c. 1906; and the First National-John A. Hand Building--clustered. Together, they represent the city's best visible documentation of the rapid growth and development which was taking place, and which was giving the young city a new scale and transforming it into the largest city in the state.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

White, Marjorie Longenecker, Downtown Birmingham, 1980, p. 37.  
Historic Sites of Jefferson County, Alabama, 1976, 34.  
Historic Site Survey Jefferson County, Alabama, 1972, p. 24.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 182.5 x 155

Quadrangle name Birmingham North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	5	1	8	0	8	0	3	7	0	8	1	2	1	0
Zone		Easting						Northing							

B 

Zone		Easting						Northing							

C 

Zone		Easting						Northing							

D 

Zone		Easting						Northing							

E 

Zone		Easting						Northing							

F 

Zone		Easting						Northing							

G 

Zone		Easting						Northing							

H 

Zone		Easting						Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

NW 1/4 36 Tsp 17s R 3W B (14) P(1)  
Lots 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 & W5 E FT of Lot 10 Blk 107-D Birmingham

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

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Pamela Sterne King

organization Operation New Birmingham/Alabama Hist Com date August 1, 1983

street & number 2027 1st Avenue North

telephone 205/254-2748

city or town Birmingham

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Pamela Sterne King*

date 8/19/83

title

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 9/29/83

*Delores Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration