

2. TERRY HUTCHENS BUILDING
102 West Clinton Avenue

Huntsville Land Company
c/o Ira Terry
P. O. Box 798
Huntsville, Alabama 35804

Lot 1, Block 10, Old Town; 100' (Clinton) X 50' (Jefferson)
16 537825 3843120

1925: B. F. Hunt, Chattanooga, architect
Earl Cline, Birmingham, contractor
Hutchens and Co., Huntsville, mechanical contractor

DESCRIPTION

The Terry Hutchens Building is a seven-story office structure in the late Gothic Revival style situated on a corner lot. Of steel reinforced concrete construction, it is faced with brick and decorated with stone and terra cotta. The tall ground story is composed of large sheets of plate glass between brick piers and has a masonry faced, arched entrance of Gothic derivation on both street facades. The shaft features continuous brick piers above the ground level that separate the double hung windows into pairs which are divided by narrow continuous mullions. The spandrels are slightly recessed. The corner piers are twice the size of the intervening ones, but their purely symbolic function is indicated by their diminished scale on the ground level. The cornice is divided into panels the width of each bay by Gothic styled decorative terra cotta. The seventh floor windows have a green frog perched on the sill in front of each mullion. The first floor facing Jefferson street has been stripped of its Gothic detailing and arched entrance to be modernized with a flat wall of brick above display windows for two small shops.

SIGNIFICANCE

The 1920s was a decade of building and expansion for Huntsville; the city felt it was becoming truly a cosmopolitan center with the erection of three "skyscrapers" in the central business district. The Terry Hutchens building, originally called the Tennessee Valley Bank building after its major tenant, was the first of these tall buildings. The owners went to Chattanooga to engage the firm of R. H. Hunt and Company to design the building and then hired a Birmingham company, Earl Cline, as the general contractor. The low construction bid was \$154,750 while the mechanical bid came in at \$28,197.

The Terry Hutchens building is important as being the first tall office building in Huntsville, the only late Gothic Revival commercial structure, and the first to be constructed without load-bearing walls. This last item was a constant source of wonder to the many "sidewalk superintendents" who eagerly watched its progress.

JUN 11 1979