

RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown) HABS No GA-2290  
45 Broad Street  
Atlanta  
Fulton County  
Georgia

HABS  
GA-2290

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN AND HISTORICAL DATA

Historic American Building Survey  
National Park Service  
Southeast Region  
Department of the Interior  
Atlanta, Georgia  
30303

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)

HABS No. GA-2290

Location: 45 Broad Street  
Bounded by Alabama Street to the north, Broad Street to the east, Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to the south, and Spring Street to the west.

U.S.G.S. Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates : 3,737,375 Northing, 741,500 Easting.

Present Owner: Downtown Development Authority

Present Use: Unoccupied

Last Owner: Federated Department Stores

Last Occupant: Rich's

Last Use: Department Store

Significance: The original 1924 building, which has been added to eight times, reflects the appearance of an Italian palazzo, a favorite theme associated with department stores constructed in the early twentieth century. The 1946/1948 Store for Homes addition is one of Atlanta's earliest examples of International Style architecture. The Rich's complex is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Rich's is significant as the focus of retail shopping in downtown Atlanta since the store's opening in 1924, and as the location from which Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. was arrested following a sit-in at Rich's Magnolia Room restaurant, leading to his first night ever spent in jail.

PART I. PHYSICAL CONTEXT OF RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE

The Rich's complex covers a two-block area of downtown Atlanta in Fulton County, Georgia. It is bounded by Alabama Street to the north, Broad Street to the east, Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to the south, and the elevated Spring Street viaduct to the west. The site is bisected into two blocks by Forsyth Street, which runs north/south between Broad and Spring Streets.

The department stores on either side of Forsyth Street are connected by a four-story pedestrian bridge (hereafter referred to as the "Crystal Bridge"). Except for a one-story McDonald's restaurant on the southwest corner of the Alabama Street/Forsyth Street intersection and a public plaza on the southeast corner of the intersection, the department store facilities occupy the entirety of the two blocks on either side of Forsyth Street.

The Rich's site is surrounded by a diverse mix of land uses. The majority of uses are moderate density retail establishments. The Martin Luther King, Jr. and Richard Russell Federal Buildings are located south and southwest of the site. Across Alabama Street to the north is a vacated three-story office building occupied by the Georgia Power Company, which in turn is within the boundaries of a proposed multimodal transportation center. The Five Points MARTA Station is north of the Rich's complex.

PART II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE

**Rich's Role in Commerce**

The concentration of money and people in cities throughout the industrialized sections of the United States in the mid-1800's brought about the birth of the modern department store. Many dry goods merchants began to expand and capitalize on the growth of these cities, fueling the retail trade cycle of consumption and demand and ushering in a new form of social interaction for women — shopping. Most likely, the opening of A.T. Stewart's "Marble Palace" on the corner of Chambers Street and Broadway in New York City in 1846 signaled the beginning of this new phenomenon — in five stories of imposing and edifying marble, the shopper could fill her consumption needs, hobnob with wealthy clientele, learn about new fashion trends, and be awestruck by the architecture, all under one roof. In addition, this "palace of merchandise" exhibited the new trend in retail trade — departmentalization of goods. As A.T. Stewart continued to expand, other merchants in New York, Chicago and Philadelphia followed the trend: R.H. Macy, Marshall Field, John Wanamaker, Jordan Marsh and Edward Filene, to name a few.

The intense competition of the top retailers of the late eighteenth century led to newspaper advertising, attention to customer service, and the one-price-for-all system. No longer did customers have to haggle over prices and wonder if they got a better or worse deal than their neighbors, a system that had become outmoded in large cities in the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Price tags were placed on every piece of merchandise and clearly marked. This also contributed to the feeling of equality that shoppers felt; they no longer had to feel ashamed by inquiring about a price from a haughty clerk in an exclusive specialty shop. Shoppers from every socio-economic class could now come to this new shopping emporium and be treated the same as everyone else by the attentive and courteous sales clerks.

The appearance of the department store heightened the illusion of shared luxury among the shoppers. In the form of a marble palace, a cast-iron showplace, a sprawling grand depot, or a masonry castle, the store emphasized dedication to the ideal of shopping as an endless delight. The fact that no offices or other tenants crowded the building's upper stories signaled its commitment to a sole purpose.<sup>2</sup>

All these elements were refined and improved upon until, by the turn of the century, the typical department store could be recognized by its attractive displays, wide selections, convenient arrangement of merchandise, attention-drawing window displays, and the existence of such customer amenities as rest rooms, lounges, restaurants, reading rooms, children's nurseries, mail-order services, check-cashing windows, ticket agencies, post offices, and credit and complaint counters.<sup>3</sup>

While all this was happening in the country's large cities, small merchant houses, haggling, and poor customer service still characterized retail stores in smaller cities and towns. This was the case in the post-war town of Atlanta, when young Morris Rich, a Jewish emigrant from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, opened up his first dry goods store in a one-story, 20- by 75-foot, wooden building in 1876.

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1. Gunther Barth, "The Department Store," in *American Life, American People*, Vol. II (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 115.

2. Ibid., 114.

3. Ibid., 116.

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Morris Rich was born to Joseph and Rose Reich in 1847 in the town of Kosice,<sup>4</sup> which lay at that time in Austria-Hungary, and now lies in the eastern end of the Slovak Republic. In 1859, at the age of 14, Morris and his older brother William ventured to the United States, most likely to escape military conscription and the limited opportunities of their crowded European ghetto.<sup>5</sup> They joined family friends in Cleveland, Ohio and got their start in retail by becoming door-to-door salesmen. Morris continued in this vein for eight years, gaining valuable experience in salesmanship and human interaction, as well as seeing various parts of the country. By 1867, Morris was ready to open his own dry goods store in war-torn Atlanta, where his brother William had a successful wholesale and dry goods business. Of all the towns he had seen, he recognized the potential for growth in this small town, where all the major railroads crossed — it was sure to be the transportation hub of the developing Southeast, yielding major opportunities for the growth of business. When the citizens of the state approved eleven years later to move the state capitol to Atlanta, the opportunities for industry were even more apparent.

Morris borrowed \$500 from his brother, moved into his small rough-hewn wooden structure at 27 Whitehall Street and opened for business May 28, 1867 as M. Rich & Company.<sup>6</sup> This first store was quite small — Morris housed his entire stock plus office on one floor which contained two aisles and a side wing.<sup>7</sup> His store represented a small portion of the retail dry goods trade in the small-town Atlanta of roughly 25,000 individuals. The leading merchants at the time he opened his store were Moore and Marsh, Silvey and Dougherty, and M.C. and J.F. Kiser.<sup>8</sup>

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4. Henry Givens Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta: The Story of a Store Since 1867* (Atlanta: University of Georgia, 1953), 5.

5. Ibid., 6.

6. Ibid., 9; *Facts About Rich's*, October 1966, Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 35, Folder 22, Emory University Special Collections.

7. J. H. Latimer, "As I Remember," *Rich Bits*, May 1926, Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 47, Folder 1, Emory University Special Collections.

8. Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 12.

In 1870, the business truly became a family business when Morris' first cousin Adolph Titlebaum came to work for him as a clerk.<sup>9</sup> A year later, he was joined by his cousin Samuel Rich, and one of his brothers, Emanuel Rich, who had emigrated with another brother, Daniel, in 1862.<sup>10</sup> Emanuel and Daniel had opened up a business together in Albany, Georgia, but soon decided that Atlanta was the better choice and joined their stock with Morris'.

In May of 1875, seven years after opening his store, Rich started what in time became a well-known practice of his store, advertising in the *Atlanta Constitution*. In this ad appears his first publicized motto: "Rich means business when he says so."<sup>11</sup> From then on he advertised more and more in the paper and continuously expanded his floor space. In July of 1875, he made his first of many moves to 35 Whitehall Street and then in September of that year, to 43 Whitehall Street and again, one month later, to 65 Whitehall Street.<sup>12</sup>

By February of 1877, Morris was ready to take in his younger brother Emanuel as a partner, the business now being called M. Rich & Brother. A year later, his other brother Daniel joined the company as a clerk.<sup>13</sup> What perhaps defined Rich's store and set him apart from his competitors was that he brought to Atlanta the sophisticated retail philosophies pioneered by A.T. Stewart and John Wanamaker in the North and adapted them to the social customs of the South. Though this did not make him the leading merchant from the start, it enabled him to grow, catch up, and, finally, outdistance his competitors. He conducted business in his small store as if he were a huge department store in a large city, and in addition, took the literal interpretation of the creed "The Customer Is Always Right."

Breaking new ground in Atlanta with attention to customer service, the one-price-for-all system and dedication to quality at low prices, Morris and Emanuel Rich's firm

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9. Ibid., 21.

10. Ibid., 20.

11. *Atlanta Constitution*, 5 May 1875, quoted in Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 12.

12. Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 13.

13. Ibid., 20.

now emerged as one of the "big five." Their other competitors were Chamberlin, Boynton and Company, John Keely, John Ryan and D. H. Dougherty.<sup>14</sup> Intense competition between these firms helped hone and improve the Richs' business skills. In 1880 they opened a dress-making department, which was quite successful from the start as evidenced by Rich's advertisement for 20 experienced seamstresses that same year.<sup>15</sup> The next year, Morris was off to New York in search of a "modiste" for the dress-making department and was able to employ Madame Marie Gillette of Paris, France.<sup>16</sup> Soon, Rich's had the largest dress-making department in the South with a staff of 50 seamstresses making the most fashionable gowns of that time.<sup>17</sup>

Their success was demonstrated by the move of Rich's in 1882 to perhaps the first department store prototype in Atlanta — A "Bazaar of Fashion" at 54-56 Whitehall Street. This new two-story, 45 by 105 foot building exhibited one of the main philosophies of the northern department stores — making the store architecturally pleasing to show its commitment to the ritual of shopping. The interior was decorated in black and gold and gas chandeliers hung from the ceiling. This store was also the first in Atlanta to use plate glass show windows.<sup>18</sup> The Rich brothers held their grand opening on September 15, 1882 and the *Atlanta Constitution* heralded it as an "Emporium of Fashion and Design."<sup>19</sup> This location was also strategically placed among the other four big competitors in the dry goods trade: Chamberlin, Johnson and Company; John Keely; J.M. High; and D.H. Dougherty. The arrangement worked in Rich's favor — a shopper intending to visit two of the five had to pass by Rich's at some point, and this was not the case with the other four. Thus, Rich's benefited from

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14. Ibid., 29.

15. Ibid., 26, 28.

16. Ibid., 32.

17. Richard Joel, "A Brief History of Rich's," *Atlanta Historical Bulletin* Vol VII, No. 27 April 1942.

18. Ibid, p. 7.

19. Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 35, 37.

the others' newspaper ads, and therefore made their show windows attractive to pull in street traffic.<sup>20</sup>

In July of 1884, the firm was changed to M. Rich and Brothers when Morris' older brother Daniel was admitted as a partner.<sup>21</sup> Soon after, Rich's opened a carpet department, which soon grew to be a major source of income for the store — winning bids to carpet hotels all over the state and even the state capitol.<sup>22</sup> Success continued. They built two additions to this store within six years — the first addition in 1886 apparently made them the largest store in the city<sup>23</sup> and then in 1888 they added 5000 square feet to the rear.<sup>24</sup>

By 1891, Rich's was organized into the following departments: Carpets; Draperies; Art Goods and Bric-a-Brac; Furniture; Dry Goods; and Art and Fancy Goods.<sup>25</sup> Atlanta was growing rapidly, and now its population had reached 65,533.<sup>26</sup> However, by 1893 the country was experiencing another economic slowdown, and so competition became even more fierce. One of Rich's competitors, John Ryan, failed during this downturn.<sup>27</sup> By practicing their same prudent business measures, Rich's rode out the storm. In 1894, the brothers were financially able to perform what seems to be their

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20. Ibid., 39-40.

21. Ibid., 41.

22. Ibid., 41, 65-67.

23. *Atlanta Constitution*, 10 January 1886, p.1, quoted in Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 43.

24. Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 49.

25. Ibid., 70-71.

26. Ibid., 70.

27. Ibid., 75.



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first act of charity as a firm — they donated \$1,000 to the 1894 Fall Exposition at Piedmont Park.<sup>28</sup>

Another of Rich's competitors, J.M. High, went out of business, but Chamberlin, Johnson, Dubose & Company continued to be Rich's chief competitor.<sup>29</sup> A major loss hit the Rich's firm in 1897 with the death of Emanuel Rich.<sup>30</sup>

In order to keep pace with the phenomenal growth of Atlanta and get ahead of the competition, Rich's decided to reorganize at the turn of the century. Morris, Daniel, William (Emanuel's son) and Bertha Rich (Emanuel's widow) and David H. Strauss applied for a charter of incorporation in December of 1900 and it was granted on January 12, 1901.<sup>31</sup> They were now known as M. Rich and Brothers Company. Several days later, they held their first stockholder's meeting in which Morris was elected President and Daniel Vice-President.<sup>32</sup>

Between 1901 and 1907, several changes occurred: Rich's started a mail-order business; held Charity Sale Days; and an annex to the main store was opened at 46-48 Whitehall Street in May of 1904 and connected by corridors.<sup>33</sup>

This new store was another step towards the department store ideal. "Rich's great white store truly a paradise for shoppers; the feminine heart will flutter with real delight at its manifold treasures and conveniences for all."<sup>34</sup> Besides being elegantly decorated, the four-story store offered some new amenities for its shoppers and

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28. Ibid., 76.

29. Ibid., 81-83.

30. Ibid., 87.

31. Ibid., 93.

32. Ibid., 94.

33. Ibid., 96, 99, 104.

34. *Atlanta Journal*, 13 January 1907, p. N-5, quoted in Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 108.

employees — a ladies' restroom and parlor; an employee's restaurant and restrooms; soda fountain for customers; skylights; and "giant" elevators, apparently the first ones in an Atlanta store.<sup>35</sup> This put Rich's ahead of their competitors for a short while.

Rich's continued to expand services to employees and customers: for example, they added a Shoe Department in 1908, established the popular Economy Basement Department in 1910, organized a profit-sharing plan for salespeople in 1914, and accepted Liberty bonds in lieu of cash in 1918.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, a new generation in management was also having more and more say in the operations of the store: Lucian York, who had started as a bundle-wrapper and window-dresser, was the manager in 1911; David H. Strauss, who had joined the team as an accountant in 1893, was secretary of the Board in 1911; and Walter H. Rich, who had started as a clerk in 1901, was now treasurer.<sup>37</sup>

Competition remained strong and when Chamberlin-Johnson-DuBose Co. opened their new store in 1918, with five stories and a restaurant, Rich's moved back to second place in regards to facilities.<sup>38</sup> A little over a year later, not to be outdone, Rich's announced their plans for a new store at Alabama and Broad Streets, which would be completed in 1924.<sup>39</sup>

At the completion of the new store at Alabama and Broad, Rich's had more window frontage than any other store south of Philadelphia.<sup>40</sup> Dubbed "Rich's Palace of Commerce" by citizens, the six-story building of Indiana limestone and Normandy tile

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35. Ibid., 110-112; Joel, "A Brief History of Rich's," 10.

36. Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 121-124, 148-149.

37. Ibid., 87, 114, 134.

38. Ibid., 144-145.

39. Ibid., 145.

40. Ibid., 168.

represented floor space nearly 100 times that of the original store.<sup>41</sup> Holding their grand opening on March 24, 1924, Rich's offered more than a grand department store — new services were waiting. "Ask Mr. Foster" Travel Information Service, Rich's Home Service (offering the services of an interior decorator), new restrooms with easy chairs, a Tea Room, "Quest for Beauty" Service (offering free beauty advice), an employees' lunch room, and an exclusive dressmaking salon run by Madame Yvonne were instituted at the opening of the 1924 Store.<sup>42</sup> Rich's was once again the premier department store in Atlanta, but, once again, only shortly.

The following year marked the beginning of increased competition when Davison-Paxon-Stokes became affiliated with R. H. Macy & Co. and Sears, Roebuck & Co. announced plans to build a store in Atlanta.<sup>43</sup> Not long after occupying their new store, Rich's determined that they had miscalculated the rate of business growth northward. Davison's announced plans in 1925 to build a new department store on Peachtree Street, a full, nine-block jump north of the traditional shopping district.<sup>44</sup> Their plans included four times the floor space of Rich's newly opened store.<sup>45</sup>

Rich's was also facing a crisis in leadership during this time of strengthening competition. Morris Rich, 77 years old in 1924, was alone at the top — both his brother Daniel and general manager Lucian York had died.<sup>46</sup> Vice-President Walter Rich needed a dynamic leader to take over the reins of the store as general manager; he found this person in engineer Frank Neely, a graduate of Georgia Tech and an avid

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41. Ibid., 169, 170. Floor space in the original store was 1,875 square feet and the new store had 180,000 square feet.

42. Ibid., 163-164.

43. Ibid., 172.

44. Ibid., 173, 175.

45. Ibid., 176.

46. Celestine Sibley, *Dear Store: An Affectionate Portrait of Rich's* (Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers, Ltd., reprint 1990), 61

follower of the principles of Henry L. Gantt and Frederick Taylor.<sup>47</sup> Rich's owes much of its success to this man who shortly had the business running under scientific principles. He brought in lighting experts, who flooded the store with light, and instituted a method of inventory and stock control.<sup>48</sup> In addition, he designed and installed an air-conditioning system in the new store in 1926, the first such store to be fully air-conditioned in the country.<sup>49</sup> He also created one of the most well-known policies of Rich's when he eliminated the adjustment bureau — "The customer makes her own adjustment," became an oft-repeated and well-known policy.<sup>50</sup> Neely also continued the tradition of running institutional ads but improved on it by always running an institutional ad on page two of the Monday morning *Atlanta Constitution* — Atlantans came to expect their ad there, and it won many prizes.<sup>51</sup>

Morris Rich retired as president and was promoted to chairman of the Board of Directors in January of 1926, and the president's seat went to Walter H. Rich.<sup>52</sup> Morris Rich died in Atlantic City on June 29, 1928.<sup>53</sup>

In April 1929, the company was reorganized in order to finance expansion plans. M. Rich & Brothers Co. became a real estate firm and the department store business was

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47. Ibid., 63

48. Ibid., 64.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., 66.

51. Ibid., 67.

52. Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 179

53. Ibid., 184.

put under a new firm called Rich's, Inc. This new company would be M. Rich & Bros. Co.'s main tenant.<sup>54</sup>

When the stock market crashed several months later, the country was gripped in the Great Depression that lasted through the 1930s. Rich's continued its prudent management policies and survived, while its arch-rival, Chamberlin-Johnson-Dubose Company, failed in 1931.<sup>55</sup> Rich's hired 100 of Chamberlin's best workers and benefited from their retail experience.

Rich's maintained an aura of prosperity throughout the Depression. When Walter Rich heard that the Atlanta City Council did not have enough money to pay its teachers, he informed the council that they could give the teachers scrip which could then be redeemed for cash at Rich's, with no obligation to buy anything in the store. The council did so, and issued \$645,000 worth of scrip, which Rich's held until the city could repay them.<sup>56</sup>

By 1935, Rich's was ready to invest \$350,000 in expansion of the store. Hiring Philip Trammell Shutze to design their story-and-a-half rooftop addition, Rich's also added two more elevators.<sup>57</sup> In 1937, they redesigned the third floor into a fashion floor with thirteen specialty shops and added an employee recreation area on the roof at a cost of almost \$100,000.<sup>58</sup>

Headlines in the Atlanta papers announced a new \$1,000,000 expansion program in December of 1939. Completed in September of 1940, the expansion included new shipping rooms; a new tunnel under Forsyth Street; a large, five-story addition to the original building designed by the firm of Hentz, Adler & Schutze; a new warehouse

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54. Ibid., 183; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 3 November 1957, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

55. Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 206.

56. *Atlanta Journal*, 19 December 1930, p.21, quoted in Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 205.

57. *Atlanta Journal*, 24 December 1939, p.1, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

58. Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 216.

across the street; and escalators connecting the first three floors.<sup>59</sup> The escalators were installed by the Otis Elevator Company and were among Atlanta's first.<sup>60</sup> The addition added 15,000 feet to each floor, making it the largest retail store in the South, according to the *Atlanta Constitution*.<sup>61</sup>

Several new programs were established at Rich's at this time. One of the most valued institutions in Atlanta was instituted in 1937 — the Rich's Charge-Plate.<sup>62</sup> Five years later, Rich's had 80,000 charge accounts, a sure sign that they were doing something right.<sup>63</sup> Also in 1937, Rich's instituted the Rich's Mutual Aid Association for employees, and in 1938 an employees' credit union was created.<sup>64</sup>

To establish an organized way of distributing profits to charities and other worthy causes, Rich's instituted the Rich Foundation in 1943.<sup>65</sup> Their first major contribution came in 1945 — in honor of Morris, Emanuel and Daniel Rich, \$250,000 was given to Emory University to erect a building to house the Emory School of Business Administration.<sup>66</sup> Rich's also continued to assist the community and establish the company as an outstanding corporate citizen in other ways. For example, when over

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59. Ibid.; *Atlanta Constitution*, 24 December 1939; *Atlanta Journal*, 24 December 1939, p.1, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

60. *Atlanta Constitution*, 24 December 1939, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

61. Ibid.

62. *Rich Bits*, September 1937, pp. 6-7, Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 47, Folder 2, Emory University Special Collections.

63. Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 236.

64. *Rich Bits*, September 1937, Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 47, Folder 2, Emory University Special Collections.

65. Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 242.

66. *Atlanta Constitution*, 11 March 1945, Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 75, Folder 12, Emory University Special Collections.

100 people were killed in the Winecoff Hotel fire in 1946, store managers and other employees went to help the survivors. Free clothes were given to victims, as well as free burial clothes for the dead.<sup>67</sup> When troops returned from Europe on Labor Day weekend at Fort McPherson and found that the safe containing their pay was time-locked until Tuesday, Rich's advanced the money to the soldiers.<sup>68</sup>

After World War II ended, the patterns of urban living began to change noticeably. After more than a decade of economic stagnation, Americans were eager and able to buy their own homes, and retailers wanting to market to new suburbanites were compelled to respond to the trend away from downtown. The answer for most retailers was to close up shop downtown and move out to the suburbs — Wanamaker's closed its store on Broadway in New York City in the mid-1950s and most department stores throughout the country followed suit in the early 1960s.<sup>69</sup> Conversely, Rich's strategy was to expand the downtown store and make it irresistible to shoppers. From the end of World War II until the closing of the downtown store in 1991, Rich's tried to fight the suburban trend, and they succeeded for a while.

The first solution was the Store for Homes, built in 1946. Recognizing that returning G.I.'s would be buying new homes that would need to be furnished and decorated, they planned a separate store devoted strictly to the home — a store within a store. The new light-grey brick and granite six-story building, costing around \$5,500,000, was designed by the Atlanta firm Toombs & Creighton.<sup>70</sup> The concept was to create a separate store environment dedicated solely to a single theme in merchandise, still connected to the main store. This was accomplished by building a four-story, glass-enclosed bridge above Forsyth Street -also built in 1946. Dubbed "the Crystal Bridge," it was the first such bridge in Atlanta. The City of Atlanta owned the air rights over the street; to build the bridge Rich's had to obtain approval of the Atlanta City

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67. Sibley, *Dear Store*, 15.

68. Ibid.

69. Bernard J. Frieden and Lynne B. Sagalyn, *Downtown, Inc.: How America Rebuilds Cities* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1990), 12-13.

70. Louis Goodenough, "Rich's Buyers Get Set for the Opening," *Retailing Home Furnishings* (19 July 1947); Herbert C. Milkey, "Rich's Expansion Program," *Georgia Engineer*, Vol V, No. 9 (November 1947), Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 37, Folders 16 and 17, Emory University Special Collections.

Council.<sup>71</sup> This set a precedent in Atlanta architecture, and other architects used the concept in their designs, most notably John Portman.

New York interior designer Eleanor Le Maire directed the design for the interior of the Store for Homes.<sup>72</sup> The first floor and plaza were opened to the public in late 1947, followed by the second floor in the first week of March 1948. The grand opening, however, was March 29, 1948, when all the floors were ready to be opened.<sup>73</sup>

The Store for Homes idea worked; traffic was increasing, including automobile traffic. In August, 1949, a 1,000-car capacity, four-story garage over the Forsyth Street viaduct was opened at a cost of \$600,000.<sup>74</sup> Also in this period, a nursery for children was added on the second floor and a message desk was added on the second floor of the Crystal Bridge for customers to leave notes for expected friends.<sup>75</sup> Rich's also was a leader in employee benefits. They were the first department store in the south to institute the 40-hour work week. They also paid time-and-a-half for overtime, provided meals to employees at cost, provided a profit-sharing Christmas bonus, free medical care, and group insurance.<sup>76</sup>

Further additions to the store were made in 1951. The success of the Store for Homes, the store-within-a-store concept, led to plans to build a store to appeal to a market segment traditionally ignored by department stores — the six-story Store for Men. Completed in 1951, the store was designed with a masculine appeal, where a

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71. City Council Minute Book 43, 17 December 1945, Rich's, Inc. File, Atlanta History Center.

72. Goodenough, "Rich's Buyers Get Set for the Opening," *Retailing Home Furnishings*.

73. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution?*, undated; Memo from O.R. Strauss, 13 March 1948, Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 37, Folder 17, Emory University Special Collections.

74. Baker, *Rich's of Atlanta*, 260.

75. *Ibid.*, 262.

76. *Ibid.*, 265.



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man could shop, test guns, and eat at the Cockerel Grill.<sup>77</sup> Other new facilities were added that year as well: a new 350-seat employee cafeteria for whites; a new snack bar; a pharmacy; and a new cafeteria with lockers and restrooms for Rich's black employees.<sup>78</sup>

Breaking with tradition, during this period Rich's was looking to expand to other Southeastern cities. After studying sites all over the South, in 1954 Rich's acquired S.H. George Co. in Knoxville, Tennessee and opened a new \$8 million store in 1955. Acquiring George's by merger in 1954, they built a new \$8 million store, which was ready for business on August 29, 1955.

In 1957, Rich's bought for \$2 million the rest of the property on the block in which their main store was located. A three-story Service Building was designed by the firm of Stevens & Wilkinson and added to Rich's in the Fall of 1958.<sup>79</sup> The top floor was built flush with the Spring Street viaduct and gave parking space to 400-500 cars. Other improvements included new escalators and an enlarged soda bar and new cafeteria for "Negro patrons."<sup>80</sup>

Besides all these physical improvements to the downtown store designed to keep shoppers coming downtown, other more intangible "improvements" were made. The late 1940's - early 1950's saw the beginning of two of Rich's most well-known traditions — the annual lighting of the Great Tree and ride on the Pink Pig monorail, in 1948 and 1953 respectively.<sup>81</sup> For generations of Atlantans, these two traditions symbolized the advent of the Christmas season. Another tradition was the Rich's Curb

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77. *Rich Bits*, Christmas 1951, Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 47, Folder 8, Emory University Special Collections.

78. Ibid.

79. "Stevens & Wilkinson to Rich's Inc.", 20 March 1958, Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 37, Folder 7, Emory University Special Collections; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 13 July 1958, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

80. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 13 July 1958, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

81. *Atlanta Constitution*, 13 November 1986; *Atlanta Constitution*, 17 December 1987, p 1E, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

Market Harvest Sale, held for the first time in 1956.<sup>82</sup> At this annual sale, farmers from all over the state could set up booths and sell their produce. Fashionata, held from 1945 to 1947, was revived by fashion director Sol Kent in 1957 and quickly became yet another tradition. Mr. Kent wrote, produced and narrated the musical fashion show which benefited a chosen charity, usually an arts facility.<sup>83</sup> These traditions also helped to tie the spirit of Rich's, and the survival of the downtown store, to the heart of Atlanta.

As Rich's Downtown was a successful enterprise resembling a shopping mall of stores within stores, business was solid enough to begin contemplating expansion to the suburbs. The first two suburban branches, Lenox and Belvedere, were opened in 1959.<sup>84</sup> This was the first wave of many branches Rich's would open in the next fifteen years. By 1975, Rich's had nine other locations, including two in Alabama.<sup>85</sup>

Even with suburban expansion, Rich's remained devoted to the health of the flagship store downtown. Rich's downtown would continue to be "the big tent — where the big traffic is," said Richard Rich in 1962, now the Chairman of the Board of Directors.<sup>86</sup> With this in mind, Rich's hired the firm Stevens & Wilkinson to design a six-level self-parking garage that could park 6,500 cars.<sup>87</sup> After opening this garage in 1961, Mr. "Dick" Rich noted an increase in store traffic.<sup>88</sup> Also added in 1961 was

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82. *Atlanta Journal*, 7 October 1983, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

83. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 21 August 1983, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

84. "Rich's Inc. Proxy Statement for Special Meeting of Stockholders to be held 25 October 1976," pp. 31-32, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

85. *Ibid.*

86. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 7 January 1962, p. 40, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

87. *Atlanta Journal*, 10 April 1962, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center; "Facts About Rich's," October 1966, Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 35 and 37, Folder 22 and 11, Emory University Special Collections.

88. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 7 January 1962, p. 40, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

Rich's Tire Center located off of the parking garage.<sup>89</sup> According to a revised agreement signed by Harold Brockey, Stevens & Wilkinson agreed to design a five-story addition to this garage in 1962, but plans apparently changed to make it six stories.<sup>90</sup> The 1958 Service Building was expanded first in 1964 and again in 1966, when Rich's announced plans for a six-floor addition that would add 130,000 square feet of floor space.<sup>91</sup>

Richard Rich also demonstrated his commitment to downtown and the city by serving as chairman of the board of MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority) from 1965 to 1969. A promoter of rapid transit, Rich resigned from his position when the referendum for MARTA failed.<sup>92</sup> The project later succeeded and the site of Rich's was adjacent to the proposed Five Points Station, where both the North-South and East-West lines would cross. Rich's had always been in the center of downtown Atlanta's transportation hubs — people changed trolleys, trains, and later buses, near the Rich's store, and patrons would visit Rich's between trolley, bus or train rides. However, the subway brought all this activity underground — people switched trains beneath the ground without ever seeing daylight or Rich's. Undoubtedly, the store suffered. It also suffered due to the construction of the station in the mid-1970s, which effectively cut off pedestrian traffic. Rich's attempted in an ad called "There's a lot going on at Rich's Downtown. . dig?" to inform the public of what was happening and encouraging customers not to give up the downtown store. Depicting a map showing which streets were closed, the ad stated:

The other entrances and exits from the Garage will remain open, as will all our pedestrian entrances. . . ready to lead you to the excitement, the

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89. *Rich Bits*, Christmas 1961, Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 47, Folder 16. Emory University Special Collections.

90. "Revised Agreement, Stevens & Wilkinson to Rich's Inc.," 15 August 1962. Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 37, Folder 11, Emory University Special Collections.

91. *Rich Bits* April 1967, Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 47, Folder 25. Emory University Special Collections; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 17 April 1966. Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

92. *Atlanta Journal*, 1 May 1975, Richard H. Rich Papers, Series III, Box 75, Folder 17, Emory University Special Collections.

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94. *New York Times*, 2 May 1975, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 75, Folder 17, Emory University Special Collections.

95. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 15 August 1976, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

96. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 18 April 1991, p. C5, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

97. *Rich Bits*, January 1980; *Rich Bit*, February 1981, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 48, Folders 11 and 12, Emory University Special Collections.

98. *Atlanta Journal*, 17 June 1980, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

99. *Atlanta Journal*, 16 September 1982, p. 1B, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

now sat on top of the Old #8 sandwich.<sup>100</sup> Nonetheless, a complete interior renovation was begun in 1985 and completed in 1987.<sup>101</sup> Departments were consolidated into the Store for Fashion (1924 store and Store for Men) and the fifth floor of the Store for Homes, and a portion of the Store for Homes was converted into leased office space. The Pavlik Design Team out of Ft. Lauderdale, Fl. had charge of redesigning the interiors.<sup>102</sup>

Trouble for the store was compounded when Campeau Corp. bought Federated in 1988 and a year later Federated filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy.<sup>103</sup> All the renovations made in the 1980s, at a cost of \$9 million, and the reopening of Atlanta Underground in 1989, were not enough to revive the old downtown store — it had been losing money each year since 1986 and the downtown building was scheduled to close its doors July 13, 1991.<sup>104</sup>

### **Segregation Practices and the Civil Rights Movement**

Modern advertisements hail Rich's as "All About The South," and it always has been a peculiarly southern institution. Morris Rich brought to Atlanta the *form* of the department store, first established by the northern retail pioneers, to the South. However, this form transmuted and settled itself into the southern environment of racial segregation and strict social behaviors between the white and black races. So in the "democratized" department stores of the South, separate facilities existed to serve whites and blacks, and not always equally. Strict rules of racial etiquette governed modes of behavior and social interaction between whites and Blacks. Rich's was no exception. Separate employee cafeterias and restrooms existed for each race, and even

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100. "Time Ran Out for Rich's," *Atlanta Constitution*, 18 April 1991, p. A1, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

101. *Atlanta Constitution*, 2 October 1985, p. 1D, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

102. Ibid.

103. *Atlanta Journal*, 16 October 1988, p. 1E; *Atlanta Constitution*, 16 January 1990, p. 1C, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

104. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 18 April 1991, p. C1, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

separate Christmas parties were held on the roof.<sup>105</sup> Each year the employee newsletter honored workers who had been with the company for 10 and 20 years. Each issue had the white and black 10/20 year clubbers in separate sections — it was not until the 1962 issue that the employees were pictured all together in alphabetical order.<sup>106</sup>

Some evidence exists that salespeople treated black customers courteously. Facilities, however, were distinctly unequal. Black patrons here, as elsewhere, could not eat in the same facilities as whites. Restrooms for black customers were in the sub-basement, right next to their snack bar. Both were in deplorable condition. In the early spring of 1958, a number of black women's clubs got together and agreed to write letters to Richard Rich and make him aware of the situation. One woman wrote the following:

We have always been impressed by the high caliber of service accorded us by sales personnel. We feel, however, that the facilities provided for customer convenience are also indicative of the management's wish to accommodate those who patronize your store. Quite frankly, unless an emergency arises, we do not use the rest room or eating facilities because we feel that for reasons of comfort, sanitation, and self-respect, the token facilities which you provide for us do not reflect the spirit of "welcome" accorded us in other areas; nor do they reflect a desire on the part of management that we share in the "comforts" provided by the store.

As mothers, we have found it depressing and embarrassing to take our children across the bridge en route to the Children's Department, amidst the smell of food and to have to answer their question, "Where can we eat?" Before beginning a shopping trip we always have to caution our young ones to "go to the bathroom because you won't have another chance until we come back home."

We realize that it is difficult for those who do not have to face these prodding questions and humiliating experiences to realize what it must be like. We ask, however, that in keeping with your policy of fairness,

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105. *Rich Bits*, Christmas 1950; *Rich Bits*, Christmas 1951; *Rich Bits*, Christmas 1952, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 47, Folders 7,8 and 9, Emory University Special Collections.

106. *Rich Bits*, Christmas 1962, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 47, Folder 18, Emory University Special Collections.

some steps be taken to provide for all customers' facilities which in some degree say, "We are glad you came."<sup>107</sup>

In response to these letters Rich's immediately built a new restroom "for colored ladies" on the Fifth Floor of the main building, next to the Crystal Bridge.<sup>108</sup> Renovation of the sub-basement facilities was underway by the summer to "provide a larger, more attractive, and complete Luncheonette and a separate Ladies Lounge in this area," and would also separate the eating and restroom facilities.<sup>109</sup>

Less than two years later, patrons were asking not for better facilities, but an end to segregation altogether. When four black college students sat down for service at the lunch counter in Woolworth's in Greensboro, North Carolina on February 1, 1960, they sparked the sit-in movement that rapidly spread throughout the country. In response to this growing movement, the Georgia General Assembly unanimously passed a bill on February 16 that made it a misdemeanor for someone to refuse to vacate the premises of a place of business after being asked to by the management.<sup>110</sup> The first sit-in in Atlanta occurred March 3rd, 1960.<sup>111</sup> On March 4th, 5th, and 7th a group of students went to Rich's and were served. However, when they came on the 8th and the 9th, they were refused service.<sup>112</sup> Students and members of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) became more organized and on March 15th, they came as a group and targeted ten different eating places downtown at the same time,

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107. Mrs. Jewel Simon and Mrs. Margaret Young, Atlanta Chapter Jack and Jill of America, Inc. to Rich's Inc, 14 April 1958, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 1, Emory University Special Collections.

108. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 13 July 1958, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center; Richard H. Rich to Dolores M. Robinson, 19 June 1958, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 1, Emory University Special Collections.

109. Richard H. Rich to Dolores M. Robinson, 19 June 1958; Richard H. Rich to Jesse Hill, Jr., 25 June 1958, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 1, Emory University Special Collections.

110. Martin Oppenheimer, *The Sit-In Movement of 1960* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1989), 131.

111. Oppenheimer, *The Sit-In Movement of 1960*, 42.

112. *Ibid.*, 132.

including the State Capitol and City Hall.<sup>113</sup> They found the downtown establishments ready for them, however, and 77 were arrested.<sup>114</sup>

Action was stalemated for the summer, as the Black community tried to reach consensus on a course of action. Meetings were held between Rich's and the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights, the students' organization. Richard Rich maintained his position of favoring continued segregated facilities.<sup>115</sup> Not long after these meetings, Lonnie King, Chairman of the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights, wrote Richard Rich on August 8th and asked for another meeting. Richard Rich responded with the following:

It is our feeling, at this time, that a meeting such as you suggest in your letter would not be productive. You will recall that we had a meeting rather recently on the subjects enumerated in your letter, and we made our views perfectly clear to you. We cannot see how a repetition could be fruitful to either party.<sup>116</sup>

Jesse Hill, Jr., Actuary of the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, also wrote Richard Rich on August 30 and asked for a meeting prior to registration at the Atlanta University Center colleges on September 30. He stressed that the general aims of the student movement were the same as those of the adult black community. "Certainly now, as never before, it is up to all of us as Atlantans to show that this city of one million people can solve its problems in a manner which will do credit to a progressive modern metropolis."<sup>117</sup> Mr. Rich responded, saying that past meetings had been fruitless, but stated, "My relations with you over the years have been most

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113. Ibid., 133.

114. Ibid.

115. Richard Rich to Lonnie King, 10 August 1960, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 2, Emory University Special Collections.

116. Ibid.

117. Jesse Hill, Jr. to Richard H. Rich, 30 August 1960, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 2, Emory University Special Collections.



pleasant, and I should be glad to have a personal chat with you on any subject, at any time, if you will call my office for an appointment."<sup>118</sup>

Rich's was an important target because blacks in the community had shopped there all their lives. Now, as a symbol of protest, blacks were turning in one of Atlanta's "most prized possessions," the Rich's Charge-Plate.<sup>119</sup> One of those to do so was John Wesley Dobbs. He and the Rev. M.L. King, Sr. had held meetings with Mr. Rich, and Mr. Dobbs was frustrated by the outcome. In a letter of September 16th, he sent the balance due on his account and his Charge-Plate. "I find that my Conscience and Self-Respect will no longer allow me to support a business that shows so much unfairness to its Colored Patrons."<sup>120</sup>

After the SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) Conference in Atlanta October 14-16, a sit-in demonstration, under the leadership of the Committee of Appeal for Human Rights, was planned for downtown on October 19th — two department stores and eight variety stores were to be hit at precisely 11:00 a.m. and Rich's was to be their chief target.<sup>121</sup> It was important to the students that The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. be a part of the planned demonstration, though he was reluctant to join. "Rich's was a symbol of Atlanta, which was a symbol of the hopes of the South, and King was a symbol of the hopes of the Negro people."<sup>122</sup> Asked by student leader Lonnie C. King to join the sit-in, Dr. King agreed to meet him on the Crystal Bridge.<sup>123</sup>

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118. Richard R. Rich to Jesse Hill, Jr., 1 September 1960, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 2, Emory University Special Collections.

119. Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-63* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 346.

120. John Wesley Dobbs to Rich's Inc., 16 September 1960, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 2, Emory University Special Collections.

121. Oppenheimer, *The Sit-In Movement of 1960*, 136; Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 351.

122. Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 351.

123. Ibid., 350.

When Dr. King and the students were refused service at the snack bar on the bridge, they moved to the Magnolia Room. There they were arrested under the state anti-trespass law passed in the beginning of the year.<sup>124</sup> Richard Rich was confronted with a problem — he wanted to accommodate both races. Fearing that if he gave in, he would lose his white clientele, he "broke down in tears on hearing that his board chairman could get King and the demonstrators out of the Magnolia Room only in handcuffs."<sup>125</sup> In all, 51 demonstrators were arrested, including Dr. King.<sup>126</sup> When he refused bond, Dr. King spent the first night of his life in jail.<sup>127</sup>

Subsequently, a series of events unfolded that involved the aspirations of Georgia Governor Ernest Vandiver, Atlanta Mayor William Hartsfield, and presidential hopeful Senator John F. Kennedy. Racially moderate Mayor Hartsfield was determined to get Atlanta quickly through these embarrassing birth pains of integration. Governor Vandiver, however, represented the rest of the state in his conservative, segregationist stance. Hartsfield offered to begin negotiations to desegregate the downtown stores, if the demonstrators came out of jail.<sup>128</sup> However, Dr. King and the students refused to come out until the charges were dropped. Hartsfield was in a tricky situation — he had no control over their release. Only Rich's or the state prosecutor could drop the charges. Since Mr. Rich was not willing to do so, Hartsfield, a consummate politician, found his solution — announce that Senator Kennedy had asked him to release Dr. King from jail.<sup>129</sup> With that kind of backing, Gov. Vandiver and other state democrats wouldn't dare go against him. Attempting to convince an aide of the Senator's to ask Sen. Kennedy, Hartsfield said:

Now, Harris [Wofford], I'm just so certain that his taking a position will help him with this doubtful Negro vote all over the nation that I'm

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124. Ibid., 351.

125. Ibid., 354.

126. Oppenheimer, *The Sit-In Movement of 1960*, 136.

127. Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 351.

128. Ibid., 353-354.

129. Ibid., 354.

going to take it on myself to tell this group that Senator Kennedy is asking me to intervene. That he has asked me to turn Martin Luther King loose. Why should he be ashamed of that? I'm going to turn him loose anyway.<sup>130</sup>

Before the aide or Hartsfield could reach Sen. Kennedy with the idea, Hartsfield dropped Sen. Kennedy's name at the bargaining table with Martin L. King, Sr. A reporter overheard, and soon the news was out. Apologizing to the aide, Hartsfield said, ". . . I needed a peg to swing on and you gave it to me, and I've swung on it."<sup>131</sup> In the end, the charges were dropped and Sen. Kennedy became linked to Dr. King's plight in the eyes of many black voters, perhaps giving him the extra votes he needed to win.

Rich's was flooded with telegrams, postcards and letters, registering shock and outrage at Rich's treatment of Dr. King and their segregationist policies.<sup>132</sup> The following telegram came from Louisville, Ky.:

THE MEMBERS OF ZION BAPTIST CHURCH ARE HORRIFIED  
THAT THE MANAGEMENT OF YOUR STORE CAUSED THE  
ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT OF DR MARTIN LUTHER KING  
JR AND OTHERS SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY SAT DOWN FOR  
EATING ACCOMMODATIONS IN YOUR PUBLIC LUNCH ROOM  
IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT ANY HIGH CLASS  
ESTABLISHMENT WITH RICH'S REPUTATION WOULD DENY  
PEOPLE SOMETHING TO EAT EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T SERVE  
THEM YOU SHOULD ALLOW FREEDOM OF PROTEST WE  
SINCERELY PRAY THAT YOU AS OWNER OF RICH'S WILL USE  
YOUR POWER TO CORRECT SUCH UNDEMOCRATIC  
UNAMERICAN AND UNCHRISTIAN PRACTICES  
REV D E KING PASTOR<sup>133</sup>

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130. Ibid., 354-355.

131. Ibid., 355.

132. Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 2, Emory University Special Collections.

133. Telegram, Rev. D. E. King to Richard Rich 23 October 1960, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 2, Emory University Special Collections.

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Mayor Hartsfield and black leaders agreed to a 30-day truce on October 22, and the jailed students were pardoned and released. During this truce, a joint negotiating committee was formed, representing the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights and the Student-Adult Liaison Committee, with Jesse Hill, Jr. as the chairman. Meetings between the negotiating committee and the downtown merchants were attempted, but "the majority of the downtown merchants had flatly refused to participate in such meetings," stated Mayor Hartsfield.<sup>134</sup>

Thirty-two days after the truce, organized demonstrations resumed. Fourteen department, drug and dime stores were targeted on Friday, November 25 and continued every day. The two big downtown department stores, Rich's and Davison's, immediately closed their seated dining rooms, and offered only take-out or stand-up food service.<sup>135</sup> By Wednesday, only the lunch counter at Walgreen's at Peachtree and Ellis Streets remained open.<sup>136</sup> A memo was sent from the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights and the Student-Adult Liaison Committee to all the targeted merchants on November 29, explaining their position and stating that the joint negotiating committee was ready to meet on the issues.<sup>137</sup> Mayor Hartsfield maintained that "many smaller merchants . . . and chain stores would be willing to go along with us if Rich's would."<sup>138</sup> Rev. W. H. Borders, Chairman of the Student-Adult Liaison Committee, felt that both sides were mainly in agreement, but that the students wanted

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134. "Store-at-a-Time Accords Get Sit-in Leaders' Okay," *Atlanta Journal*, 30 November 1960; Rev. W.H. Borders, Chairman Student-Adult Liaison Committee and Lonnie C. King, Chairman Committee on Appeal for Human Rights to Downtown Merchants & Shopping Centers, 29 November 1960, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 3, Emory University Special Collections.

135. "Store-at-a-Time Accords Get Sit-in Leaders' Okay," *Atlanta Journal*, 30 November 1960, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 3, Emory University Special Collections.

136. Ibid.

137. Rev. W.H. Borders, Chairman Student-Adult Liaison Committee and Lonnie C. King, Chairman Committee on Appeal for Human Rights to Downtown Merchants & Shopping Centers, 29 November 1960, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 3, Emory University Special Collections.

138. "Store-at-a-Time Accords Get Sit-in Leaders' Okay," *Atlanta Journal*, 30 November 1960, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 3, Emory University Special Collections.

integration immediately, while the merchants wanted to tie it with the school desegregation scheduled for the Fall of 1961.<sup>139</sup>

In a letter from Mrs. Eliza Paschall, Chairman of the Greater Atlanta Council on Human Relations, to Richard Rich on December 21, she said that she had heard reports that other stores would desegregate their eating facilities if Rich's would. She states further:

Rich's has contributed immeasurably to the development of the Atlanta community. Leadership brings with it responsibilities which weigh heavily. At the same time it brings unique opportunities for service. I believe it is not exaggerating to say that at this time Rich's has the power to grant, or withhold, the gift of peace and good will to the people of Atlanta.<sup>140</sup>

In late November, Rich's removed their segregated signs from their restrooms, and 1,600 whites turned in their Charge-Plates in protest.<sup>141</sup> Picketing and sit-in demonstrations continued through to the new year, and by February 11th, 1961, a total of 82 students were in jail, refusing bond.<sup>142</sup> On February 20 and 21, the remaining students agreed to come out for negotiations between the Student-Adult Liaison Committee, Rev. M.L. King, Sr. and downtown businessmen, represented by the president of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, Ivan Allen.<sup>143</sup> A news release was prepared by the Chamber of Commerce on March 7 announcing what came to be known as the "compromise" agreement. Merchants agreed to desegregate their facilities in "the same patterns" as shown by the rulings to desegregate the schools, and the black leaders agreed to stop demonstrating. This agreement, however, was vague. Lunch counter desegregation was tied to the successful integration of schools,

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139. Ibid.

140. Mrs. Eliza Paschall to Richard Rich, 21 December 1960, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 3, Emory University Special Collections.

141. Oppenheimer, *The Sit-In Movement of 1960*, 137.

142. Ibid., 137-138.

143. Ibid., 138.

but was not a definite statement.<sup>144</sup> Students felt betrayed by the black leadership, but went along for the sake of unity after an impassioned speech by Dr. King, Jr.<sup>145</sup> The merchants who signed the agreement were: Rich's, Davison's, Woolworth's, McCrory's, Grant's, Walgreen's, Jacob's Pharmacy, S.H. Kress and Co., Sears, Roebuck and Co., Kresge's, H.L. Green Co., Newberry's and Lane's.<sup>146</sup> The black leaders who agreed were: Dr. W. Holmes Borders, Chairman of the Student-Adult Liaison Committee; A.T. Walden, attorney and Chairman of the Atlanta Negro Voters League; Dr. M.L. King, Sr.; Leroy R. Johnson; Q.V. Williamson; Jesse Hill, Jr.; Mrs. P.Q. Yancey; Rev. O.M. Moss; Dr. Rufus E. Clement, President of Atlanta University; Lonnie C. King, student and Chairman of the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights; and Miss Herschell Sullivan, student and Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights.<sup>147</sup>

A seven-week strike was held by over 10% of Rich's black employees in April and May, 1973. Charging discrimination in hiring and promotion practices and a lower wage scale, 350 employees walked out on April 3, 1973.<sup>148</sup> Demonstrations and picketing followed, including a thwarted march from Rich's to Harold Brockey's home, until strikers accepted mediation by the Community Relations Commission.<sup>149</sup>

PART III      PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF RICH'S DOWNTOWN  
DEPARTMENT STORE/ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

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144. News Release, 7 March 1961, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 4, Emory University Special Collections.

145. Oppenheimer, *The Sit-In Movement of 1960*, 139; Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 396-397.

146. News Release, 7 March 1961, Richard H. Rich Papers, Accession # 575, Series III, Box 37, Folder 4, Emory University Special Collections.

147. Ibid.

148. *Atlanta Journal*, 6 May 1973, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

149. Ibid.; *Atlanta Constitution*, 23 May 1973, Rich's, Inc. File at the Atlanta History Center.

## General Architectural Description

### *Exterior*

The Rich's Department store complex consists of at least eight distinct additions to the original 1923/1924 building located on the block bounded by Broad, Alabama, and Forsyth Streets. The total complex includes the two city blocks bounded by Broad and Alabama Streets, Spring Street viaduct, and M.L.K., Jr. Drive. Of these numerous additions, the two most architecturally significant portions were built in 1923/1924 by the firm of Hentz, Reid, and Adler, and the 1946/1948 Store for Homes designed by the firm of Toombs and Creighton.

The original building reflects the historical appearance of an Italian palazzo, a favorite theme for mercantile stores in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The 1946/1948 Store for Homes is one of Atlanta's earliest and most dramatic examples of the International Style. The complex of buildings is in good condition with some deterioration of roof surfaces and interiors due to the recent lack of temperature control in the building.

The overall dimensions of the 1923/1924 building are 210.78 feet north/south and 177.87 feet east/west. For the entire building between Broad and Forsyth Streets, the dimensions are approximately 408.69 feet along Broad Street, 177.87 feet along Alabama Street. The dimensions of the 1946 Store for Homes without additions are 192.37 feet north/south and 205.26 feet east/west. With additions, the Store for Homes is approximately 192.37 feet along Forsyth Street and 425.49 feet along MLK, Jr. Drive from Forsyth Street to Spring Street viaduct.

The original 1923/1924 building employed spread footings. Pile foundations were employed on all of the subsequent additions and in the 1946/1948 Store for Homes.

A variety of materials was employed on the project, all keeping within the original color range of Indiana Limestone. The 1923/1924 building originally employed Indiana Limestone and a medium tan brick. The limestone is used for the diagonally cut corner at Alabama and Broad Streets, for the pilasters separating bays along Alabama and Broad and for trim around the windows. Two significant architectural details are incorporated in the facades -the corner clock and the two Broad Street entry compositions- and each is carved in limestone. The well-known Rich's clock is a circular design surrounded by a wreath motif. The two entry compositions employ rusticated surrounds with prominent keystones and unusual broken pediment motifs inspired by Francesco Borromini's Collegio di Propaganda Fide in Rome.

The structural systems employed in the complex are reinforced concrete frames throughout, except for a steel structure used on the four-story Crystal Bridge. The

exterior walls are brick and limestone cladding on a reinforced concrete frame. The floors are reinforced concrete slabs.

The entry doors of the 1923/1924 building are not original and are standard bronze anodized aluminum storefront systems. The display windows have also been replaced with a more recent system and most above-entry level windows have been filled in with glass blocks on the Broad and Alabama elevations. Numerous original wood windows exist on the Forsyth side of the 1924 building. Original 12/12 lighted windows with wood frames exist only on the fifth floor in the store's management offices. All later additions employ modern aluminum storefront and window systems. The Store for Homes employs a natural finished aluminum storefront system for windows and doors.

The building has flat roofs throughout the complex and a portion of the original copper cornice exists on the 1923/1924 building, facing Forsyth Street. The remainder of this original cornice was removed when eighth floor was added in 1946.

#### *Interior*

The floor plans may be generally described as a typically open mercantile arrangement with unobstructed floor space. Each addition to the original building employed a slightly different bay spacing. The original building employs a 23-foot square bay, the Store for Homes employs a 28-foot square bay system and the other additions employ a variety of regular and irregular bay systems between these two sizes. The building does not include any elegant stairs for vertical movement, instead all stairs are utilitarian fire stairs with simple balustrade treatment. The major movement system in the complex is the bank of escalators located in the 1923/1924 building. The escalator system, added during the 1935/1936 renovation, may be characterized as streamlined modern with smooth flowing details that characterized work of that period.

The flooring, wall and ceiling finishes have been renovated numerous times in the history of the building. A typical example is the Magnolia Room, a lunchroom well known to Atlantans, which has roughly 12-inch false walls covering the original wall surface. These new walls provide space to accommodate improved heating and cooling systems. The original base molding is all that remains intact in this important public space. The structural columns in this room are approximately 24 inches in diameter with simplified Doric derived capitals. All the originally round concrete columns in the dining room area have been transformed into square piers with the addition of wood wainscot below and mirrors above.

The solitary example of original finishes in the 1923/1924 building exists on the fifth floor, in the executive office area. These offices include a conference room, executive offices, and the "Chart Room. Pine paneling is used in each of these rooms with



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simplified classical details. The conference room has a cornice approximately 24 inches deep. The Chart Room is an irregularly shaped room located in the diagonally cut corner detailed by the Rich's clock. This room has pedimented overdoors with cushion moldings, and recessed arches with prominent keystones. The original 12/12 lighted wood windows exist only in these offices.

## Building Complex Development Narrative and Diagrams

The Rich's Department Store complex as it existed at the beginning of 1994 was the result of a long, almost continuous, process of addition and modification. This narrative and the diagrams that follow briefly describe the development process and the resultant building. The primary sources of information for this outline are the existing architectural and engineering drawings that were used to construct the various pieces of the complex. (See Photographs GA-2290-99 through GA-2290-161.)

Prior to construction of the 1924 building, the blocks subsequently occupied by the Rich's complex were numerous smaller buildings, 2 to 6 stories high, usually with brick load-bearing party walls. The site of the 1924 building alone was occupied by 14 different storefronts. The area immediately northwest of the site was occupied by a large railroad yard with numerous siding and freight areas. The viaducts on Spring, Forsyth and Broad streets were already built.

### 1924

The first building constructed, completed in 1924, was designed by the firm of Hentz, Reid & Adler (See drawings GA-2290-1 through GA-2290-12), and consisted of a partial sub-basement, basement, first floor, mezzanine and floors 2 through 6. The exterior facing Broad and Alabama Street was an imposing design based on Italian Renaissance precedents and featured a limestone base with rusticated attached columns, a beige brick central segment with large double hung wood windows, and a generously scaled cornice made of sheet copper finished to appear to be stone. The corner at Broad Street and Alabama Street was beveled 45 and featured the famous Rich's clock. (Interestingly, the construction drawings indicate a wrought iron grille instead of the clock, which was apparently incorporated as a change). The less imposing Forsyth Street facade was designed with a lesser degree of ornamentation. The Broad Street facade featured two entry points designed with a large limestone arch infilled with glass, and a canopy (or marquee) made of wrought and cast iron with wire glass panels. Two smaller entries were located on Alabama Street and Forsyth Street. Elaborate display windows were located on Broad and Alabama streets with back walls featuring classical ornamentation made with plaster finished to look like stone.

The entry vestibules were finished with dark stained wood, variegated green marble benches, and marble floors. A mezzanine above the first floor ran the entire length of the Alabama and Broad Street sides and stepped up and down over the display windows and entries. The head room in the mezzanine was too low for usable space so it may have served mainly to promote natural ventilation. A bank of five elevators was located adjacent to the party-wall with the Atlanta Constitution building

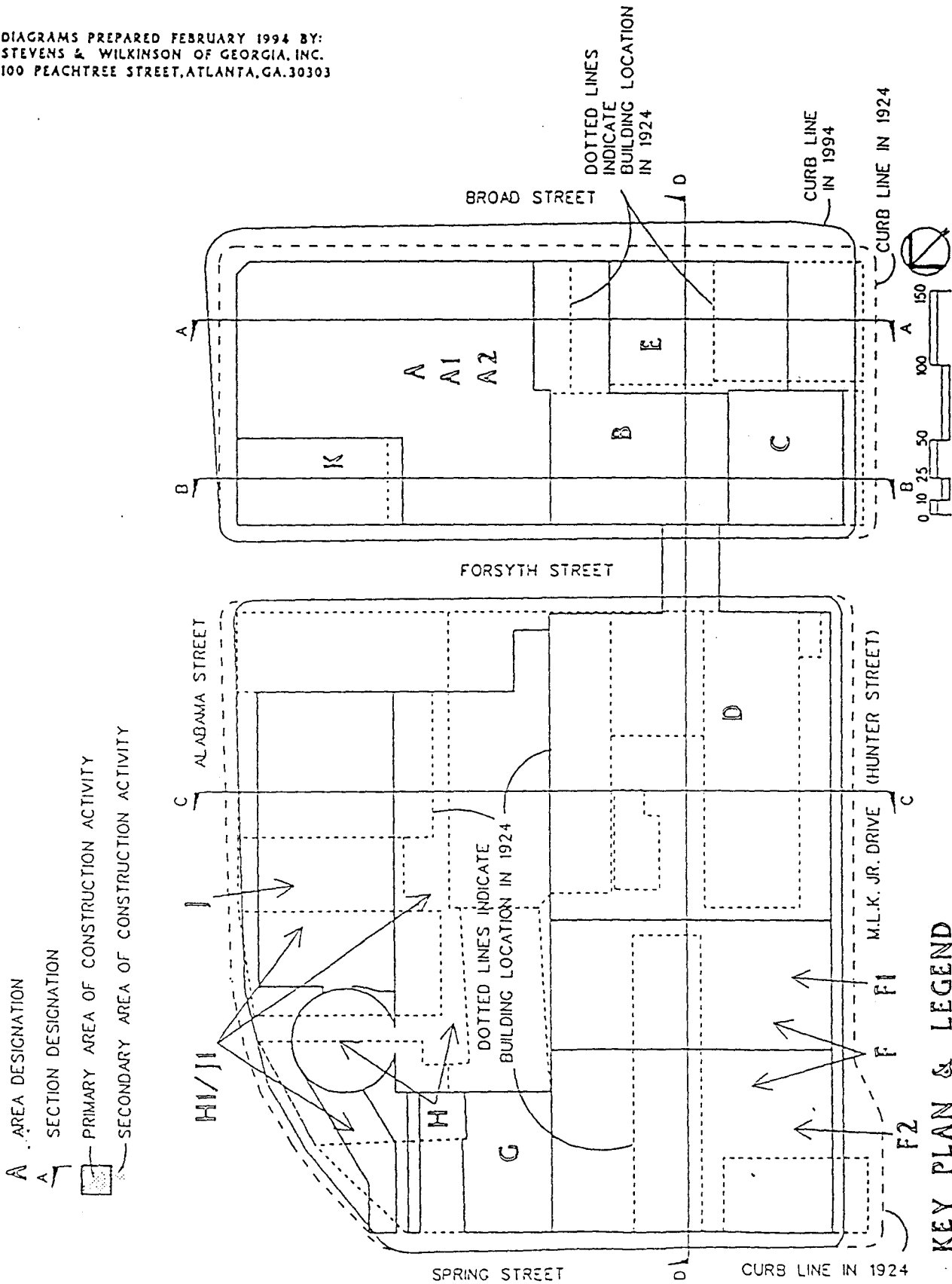
(northwest corner of Alabama and Forsyth Streets) and featured carved wood classical columns and wire glass elevator doors. All floors in the building were concrete with cinder fill topped with a finish floor of wood. Ceilings were plaster and interior columns were finished in plaster with classical molding at top. 34

The sub-basement level was used mainly for mechanical equipment. The basement contained retail space and a shipping and receiving area with a door to Forsyth Street. The rest of the floors were mainly retail. There was some office space on the fifth floor and some stock space on the sixth floor. Also on the sixth floor was a restaurant and kitchen at the location of what was to become the Magnolia Room at a later date.

The structure was poured-in-place concrete on spread footings. The roof was poured flat, probably to accommodate a future floor. The exterior walls were masonry with plaster on interior surfaces. Heating was provided by steam radiators. A fire sprinkler system was provided, and a sprinkler system continued to be provided in all subsequent building additions.

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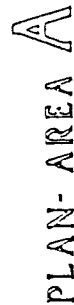
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## 30

NO. 15 TO, THIS DIAGRAM:

1. 1924 BUILDING: HENTZ, REID & ADLER; DRAWINGS DATED OCT 3, 1922:  
SUB-BASEMENT, BASEMENT, FLOOR 1, MEZZANINE, FLOORS 2-6
2. STAIR BETWEEN 1st & 2nd FLOORS ADDED IN 1926
3. MEZZANINE ABOVE 1st FLOOR AT COLUMN BAY ADJACENT TO FORSYTH

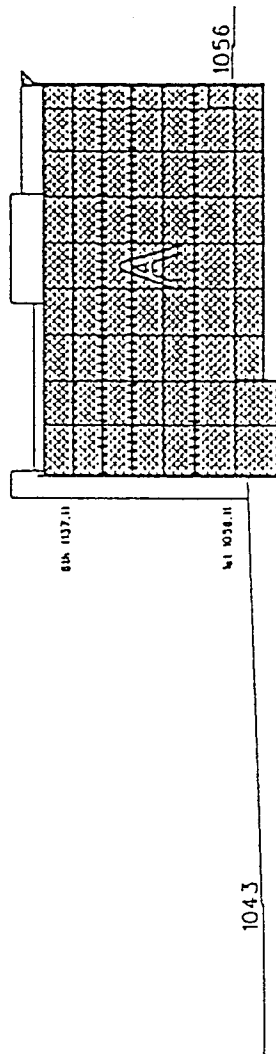


DATE: 1924

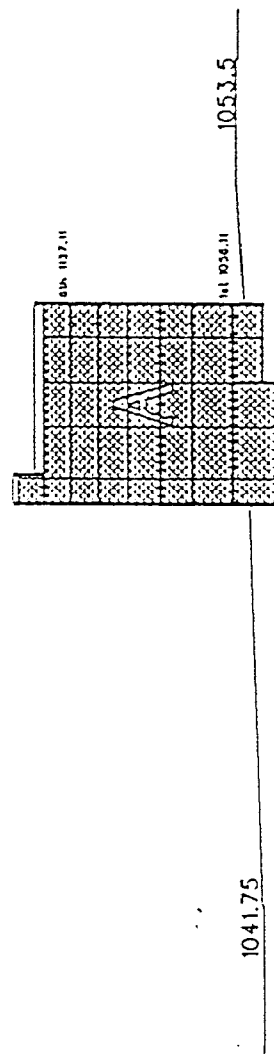
RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
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SECTION A AREA A DATE: 1924



SECTION B AREA A DATE: 1924



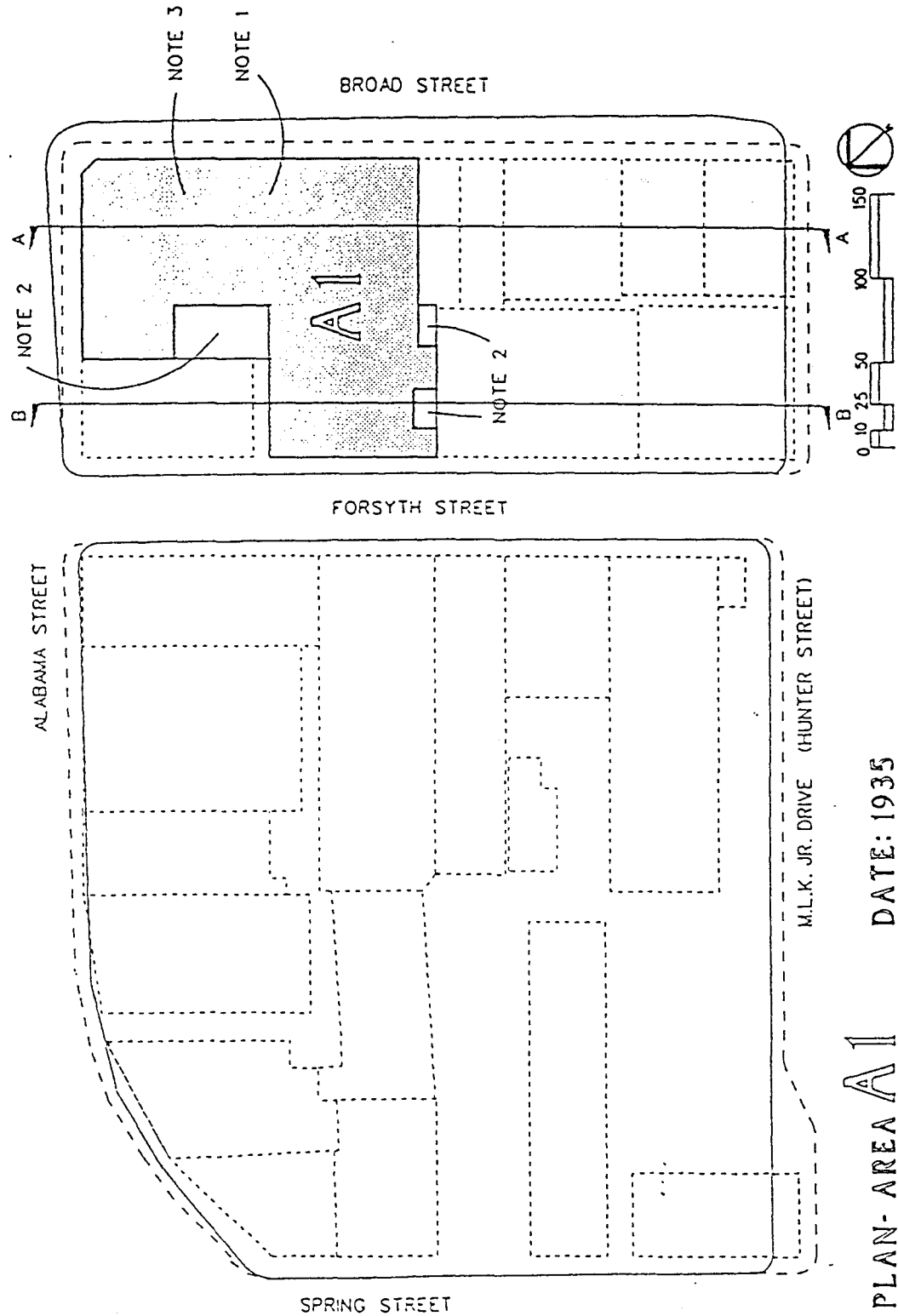
RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
HABS No. GA-2290 (Page 37)

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NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

1. 1935 ADDITION: HENTZ, REID, & ADLER: DRAWINGS DATED OCT 8, 1935: 7th FLOOR ONLY ON TOP OF 1924 BUILDING
2. EXISTING PENTHOUSE INCORPORATED INTO NEW CONSTRUCTION
3. AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM ADDED TO 1924 BUILDING IN 1936

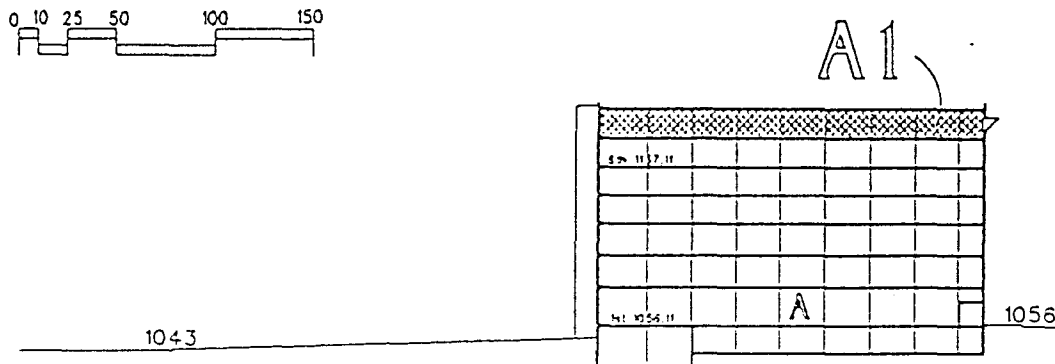


1935

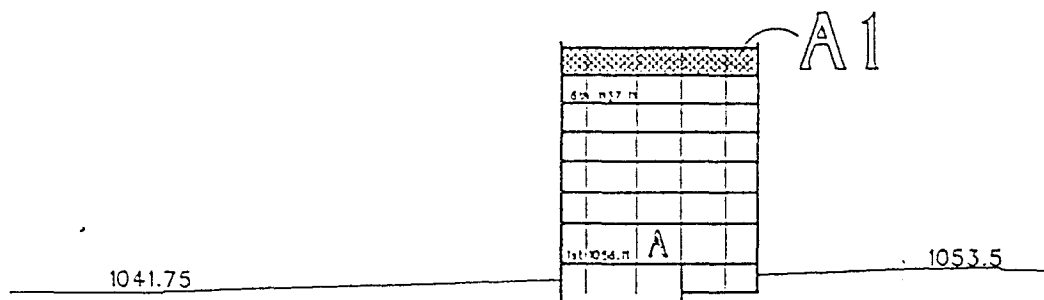
In 1935-6, a seventh floor was added on top of the 1924 building, designed by Hentz, Reid & Adler (See photos GA-2290-1,5,6,7,9,10,11, and 122-124). The drawings indicate a somewhat utilitarian looking exterior of beige brick with operable wood windows and the retention of the large copper cornice on the Broad and Alabama sides of the 1924 building. The structure was poured-in-place concrete.

In 1936, an air conditioning system was installed in the 1924 and 1935 buildings. The extant mezzanine above the first floor at the Forsyth Street side was probably constructed at this time to accommodate air conditioning equipment. Air conditioning systems continued to be installed in all subsequent additions.

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SECTION A AREA A1 DATE: 1935



SECTION B AREA A1 DATE: 1935



## 40

NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

- 
6. EXISTING BUILDINGS OWNED BY RICH'S BY 1940, BASED ON DRAWING AT ATL HIST CENTER DATED 8/21/39
7. STAIRS AT 1st FLOOR MODIFIED
- ALABAMA STREET
- SPRING STREET
- FORSYTH STREET
- BROAD STREET
- M.L.K. JR. DRIVE (HUNTER STREET)
- NOTE 2
- NOTE 3
- NOTE 4
- NOTE 5
- NOTE 6
- NOTE 7
- 120.75'
- 87.6'
- 88.75'
- 86.54'
- 11.05'
- 90.0'
- 51.18'
- 87.6'
- 150'
- 100'
- 50'
- 25'
- 10'
- 0'
- PLAN-AREA B
- DATE: 1940

PLAN-AREA B

DATE: 1940

1940

In 1940, an addition immediately south of the 1924 building was constructed, along with a number of modifications to that building. The work was designed by Hentz, Adler & Shutze (see photos GA-2290-17 and 18). The building contained a sub-basement, basement, first floor, mezzanine, floors 2 and 3 , and partial floors on 4 and 5.

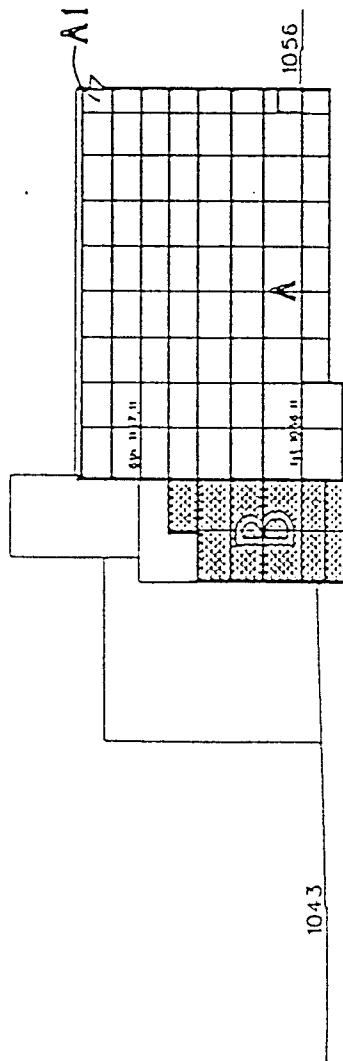
The 1940 building was a generally modernist design but featured beige brick compatible with the 1924 building. A canopy was included that extended northward across the first three column bays of the 1924 building on Broad Street and the entire Forsyth Street facade. The southern Broad Street entry of the 1924 building was moved two column bays south to the last bay of the original building, and limestone infill panels were installed in the arched opening above the original entry and the mezzanine windows in the two southernmost bays. The first floor and basement windows in the Forsyth Street facade were also filled with limestone. The mezzanine in the 1924 building at Broad Street was demolished between the north Broad Street entry and the south end of the building, and a new mezzanine at a lower height (allowing more headroom) was built. Escalators were installed in the 1924 building at this time. By 1940 Rich's owned several buildings on the block between Forsyth and Spring Street, which were evidently used for stock, shipping and receiving and were connected to the 1940 building via a tunnel under Forsyth Street. The freight entry doors on the 1924 building were closed and the area on Forsyth under the canopy mentioned above was converted to display windows.

The sub-basement was utilized for stock areas, but the basement and upper floors were retail space. An additional entry point was incorporated into the Forsyth Street facade.

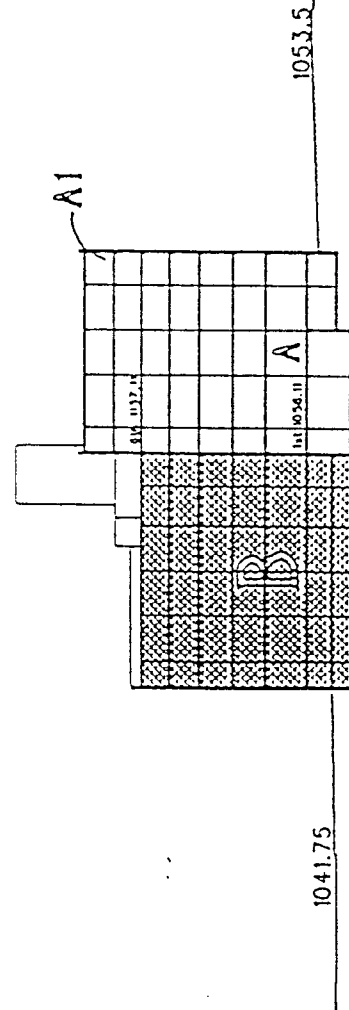
The structure was poured-in-place concrete supported on steel pipe piles. The exterior walls were masonry with plaster finish on the interior.

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HABS No. GA-2290 (Page 4)

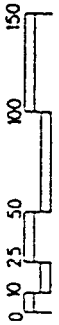
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SECTION A AREA B DATE: 1940

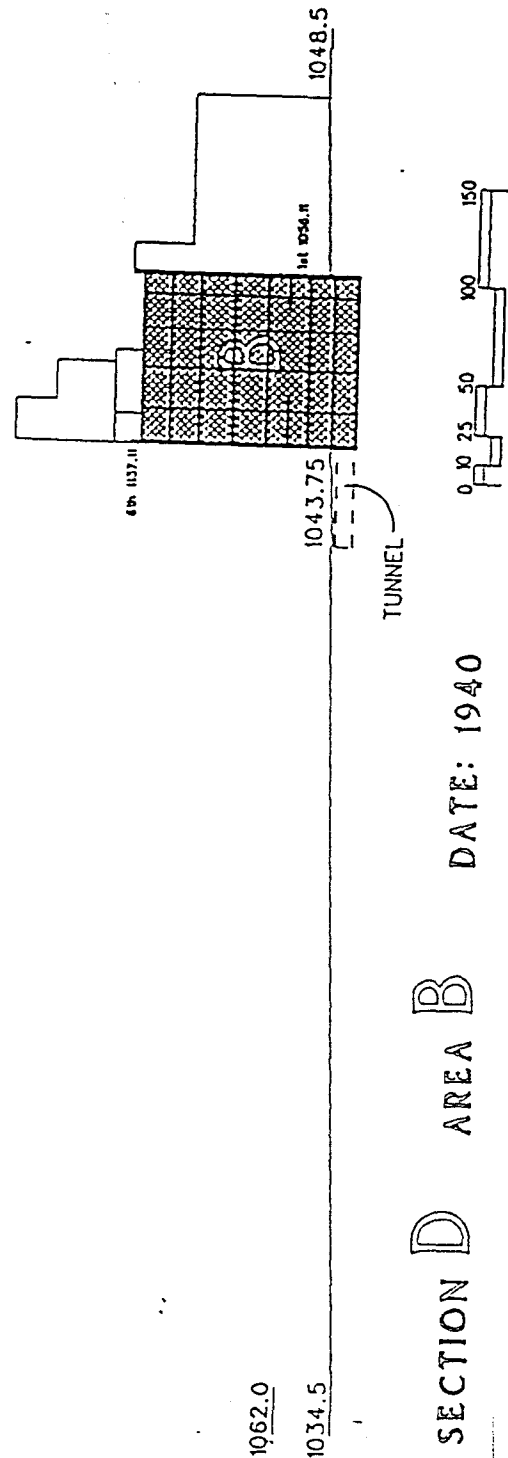


SECTION B AREA B DATE: 1940



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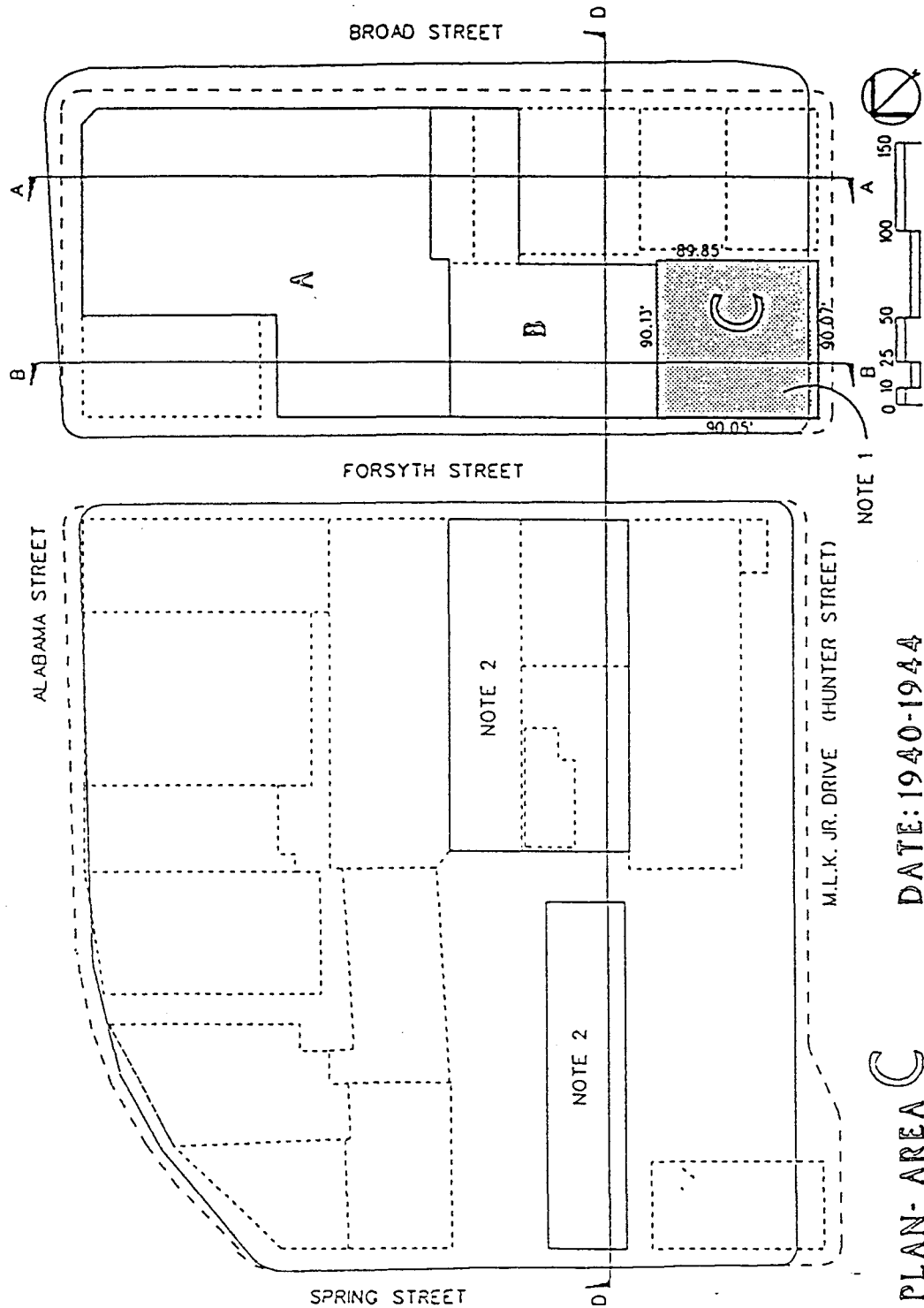


RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
HABS No. GA-2290 (Page 43)

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NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

1. EXISTING BUILDING INCORPORATED INTO THE STORE, NOT OWNED BY RICH'S AT TIME OF THE 1940 ADDITION, 1944 PROPERTY SURVEY IMPLIES THAT IT IS OWNED
2. EXISTING BUILDINGS OWNED BY RICH'S BY 1940



DATE: 1940-1944

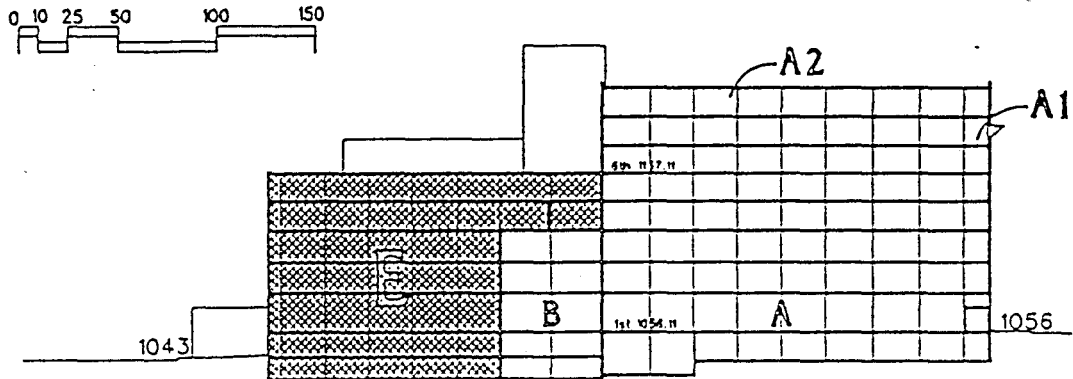
PLAN - AREA C

RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
HABS No. GA-2290 (Page 44)

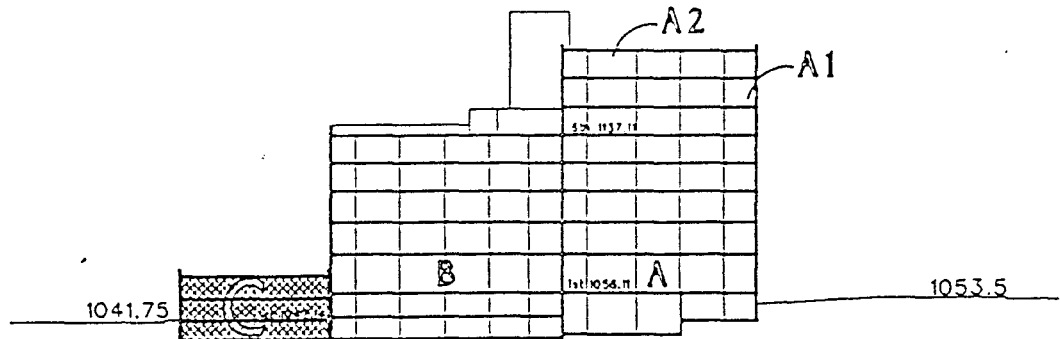
1940-44

Sometime between 1940 and 1944, Rich's acquired an adjacent existing building at the corner of Forsyth and M.L.K. Dr. (then called Hunter St.) and incorporated it into the complex. Very little information is available on this building which was known as the "Corner Store."

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SECTION A AREA E DATE: 1951



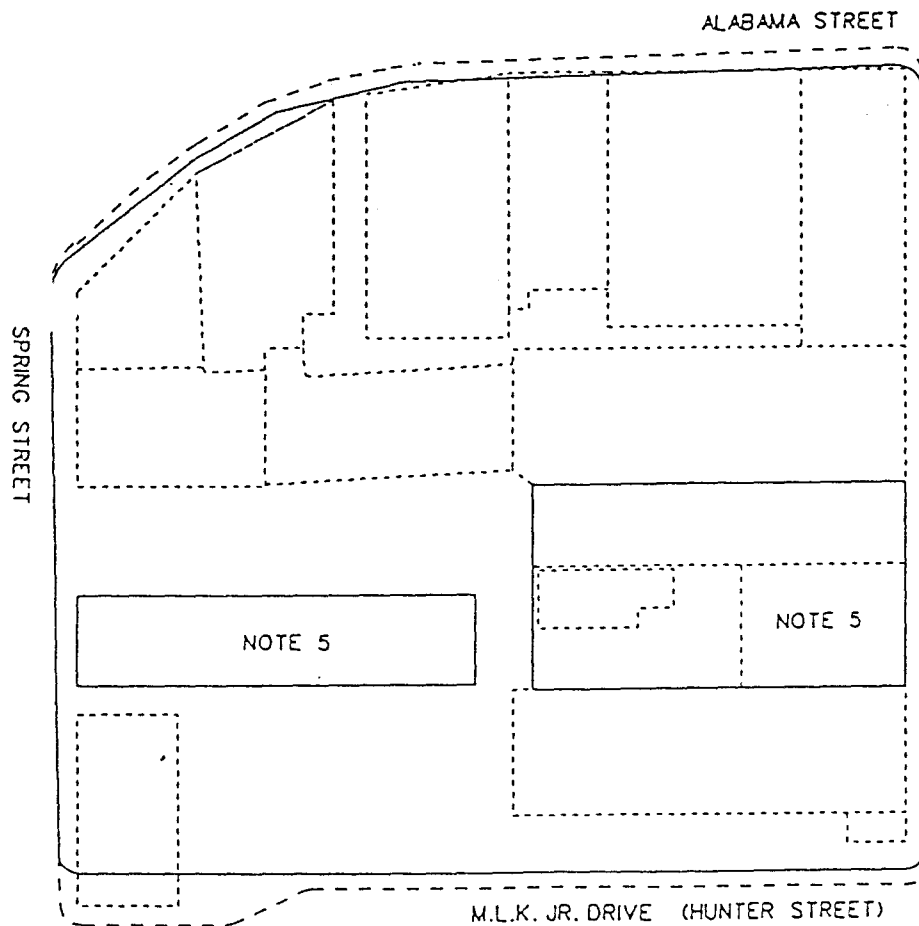
SECTION B AREA C DATE: 1940-44

RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
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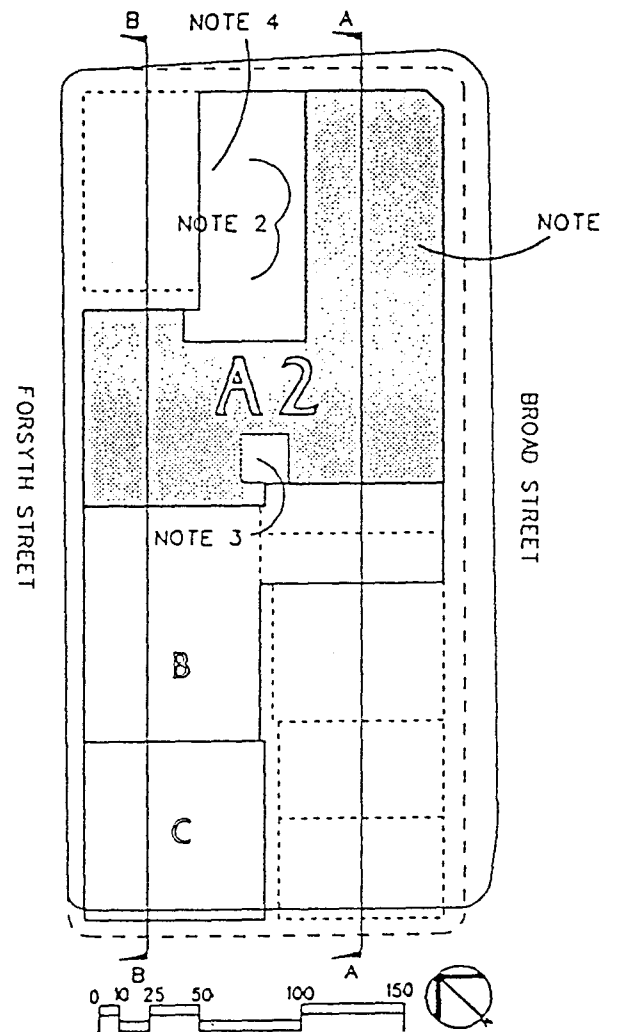
NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

1. 1944 ADDITION: ARCHITECTS UNKNOWN: ROBERT G. LOSE, STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:  
DRAWINGS DATED DEC 14, 1944: PARTIAL 8th FLOOR ONLY
2. EXISTING ROOF AND PENTHOUSE
3. EXISTING PENTHOUSE INCORPORATED INTO NEW CONSTRUCTION
4. ADDITIONAL PENTHOUSE CONSTRUCTION IN 1948
5. EXISTING BUILDING OWNED BY RICH'S BY 1944



PLAN- AREA A2

DATE: 1944

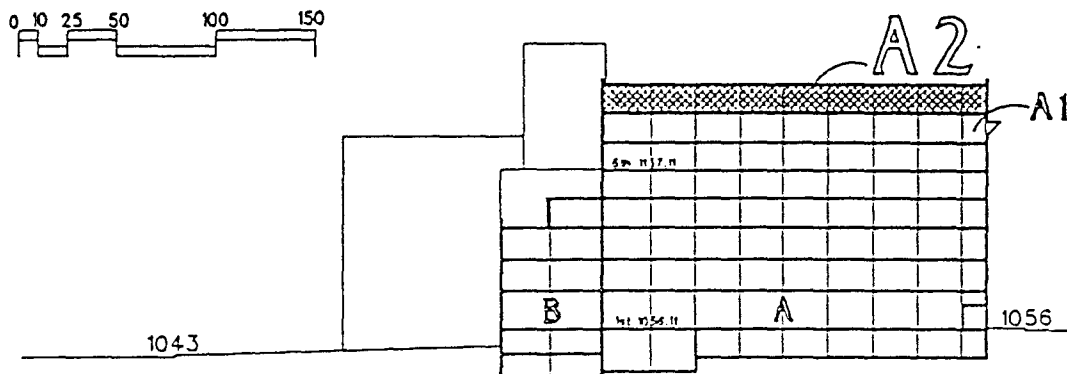


RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
HABS No. GA-2290 (Page 46)

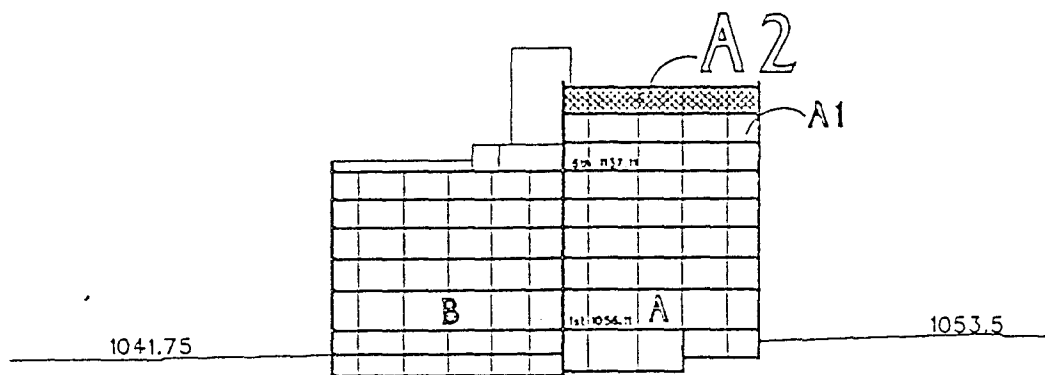
1944

In 1944, an eighth floor was added to the 1924 building. The only drawings discovered are structural engineering drawings by Robert G. Lose (see photo GA-2290-126.) This addition was even more utilitarian in appearance than the 1935 addition but continued the use of beige brick. The drawings do not indicate the addition's original function, but the escalators did not extend to this floor, and its final use was for support functions.

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SECTION A AREA A2 DATE: 1944



SECTION B AREA A2 DATE: 1944

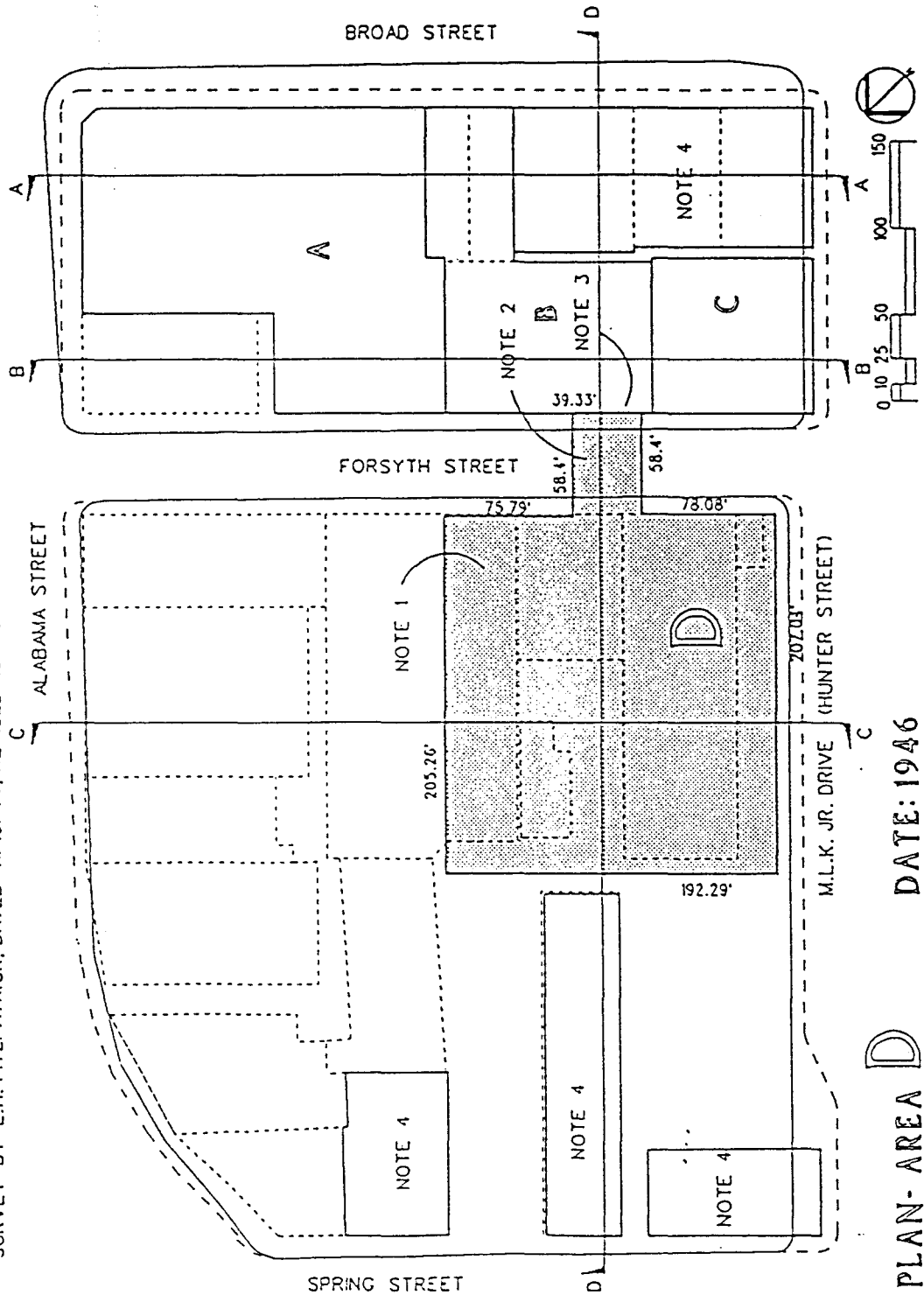


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NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

1. 1946 ADDITION: TOOMBS & CREIGHTON, DRAWINGS DATED OCT 4, 1946;  
SUB-BASEMENT, BASEMENT, FLOOR 1, PLAZA FLOOR, FLOORS 2-5,  
PARTIAL FLOOR ON 6 & 7; BRIDGE ON FLOORS 2-5; TUNNEL AT BASEMENT
2. TUNNEL UNDER FORSYTH ST TO 1940 BUILDING
3. STRUCTURAL MODIFICATIONS MADE IN 1940 BUILDING TO SUPPORT BRIDGE
4. EXISTING BUILDINGS OWNED BY RICH'S BY 1946, BASED ON PROPERTY  
SURVEY BY L.H. FITZPATRICK, DATED 11/19/44, REVISED 10/46



DATE: 1946

PLAN-AREA D

1946

1946 saw the start of construction on the "Store for Homes" located on the west corner of Forsyth and M.L.K. Jr. Drive (then called Hunter Street)--the largest addition at one time in the history of the complex. The architects were Toombs & Creighton (see photos GA-2290-136 through 149). The building contained a sub-basement, basement (which aligned vertically with the sub-basement level of the 1940 store), first floor, plaza floor (which aligned with a future plaza area on Spring Street), floors 2 through 5 and partial floors on 6 and 7 and was connected back to the original complex by a glass walled bridge on floors 2 through 5.

This building was an early example of modernist design in Atlanta. The Forsyth Street facade, the bridge and the west facade were finished with a glass-and-aluminum curtainwall system, and an elaborate curved support rail system for a window-washing car was installed on the roof. The M.L.K. Drive and north facades featured an undulating brick treatment - the brick was a beige color similar to the previous buildings across Forsyth Street.

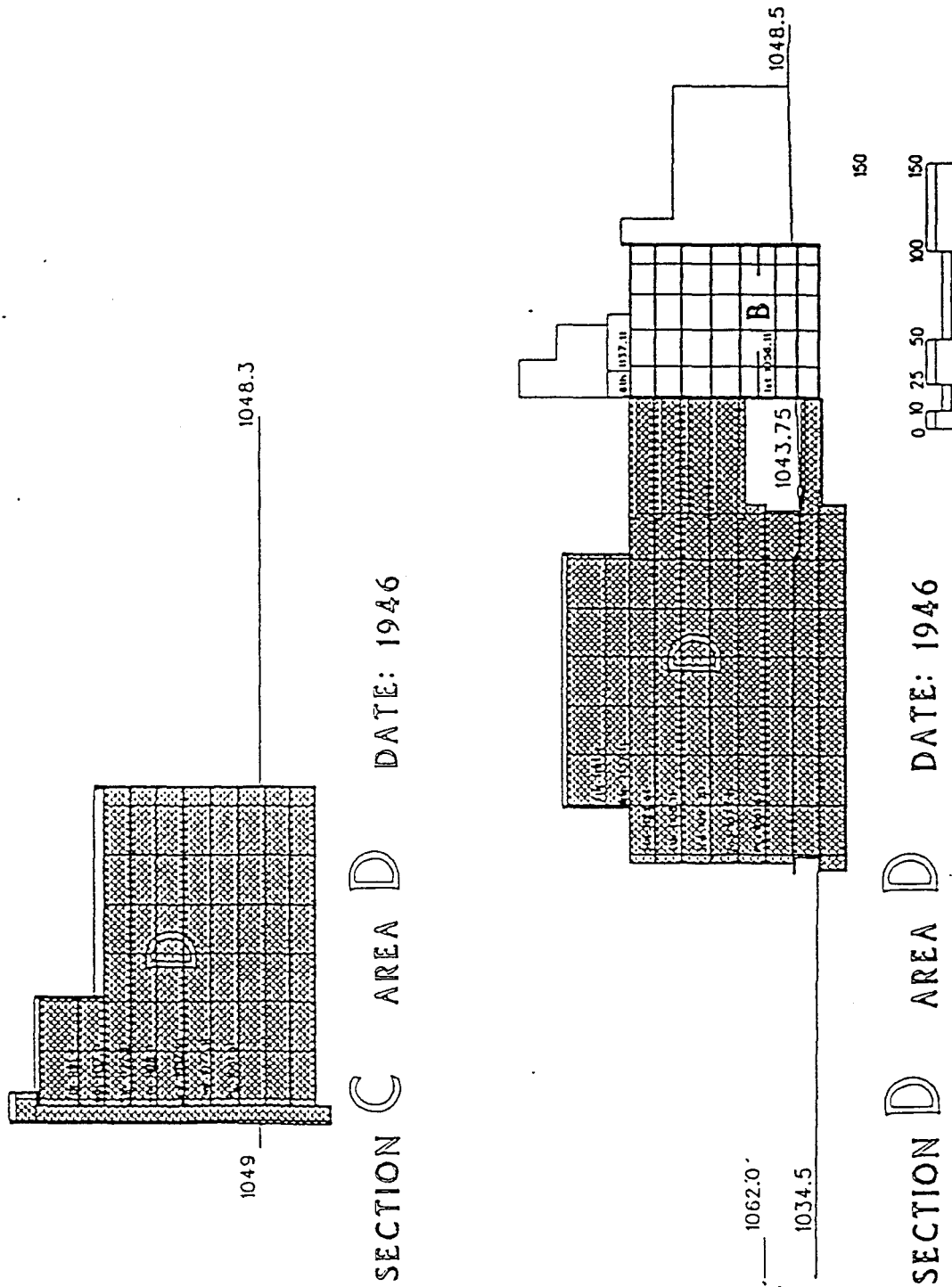
The warehouse buildings which occupied the site were in effect replaced by equivalent area on the lower levels of the new building, and a new tunnel under Forsyth Street was built to facilitate better communication with the original buildings (now known as the "Store for Fashion"). The upper levels were mainly retail space with an entry located on Forsyth Street.

The structure was poured-in-place concrete on pilings, except for the bridge, which was steel. The exterior walls were either curtainwall or masonry finished with plaster on the interior.

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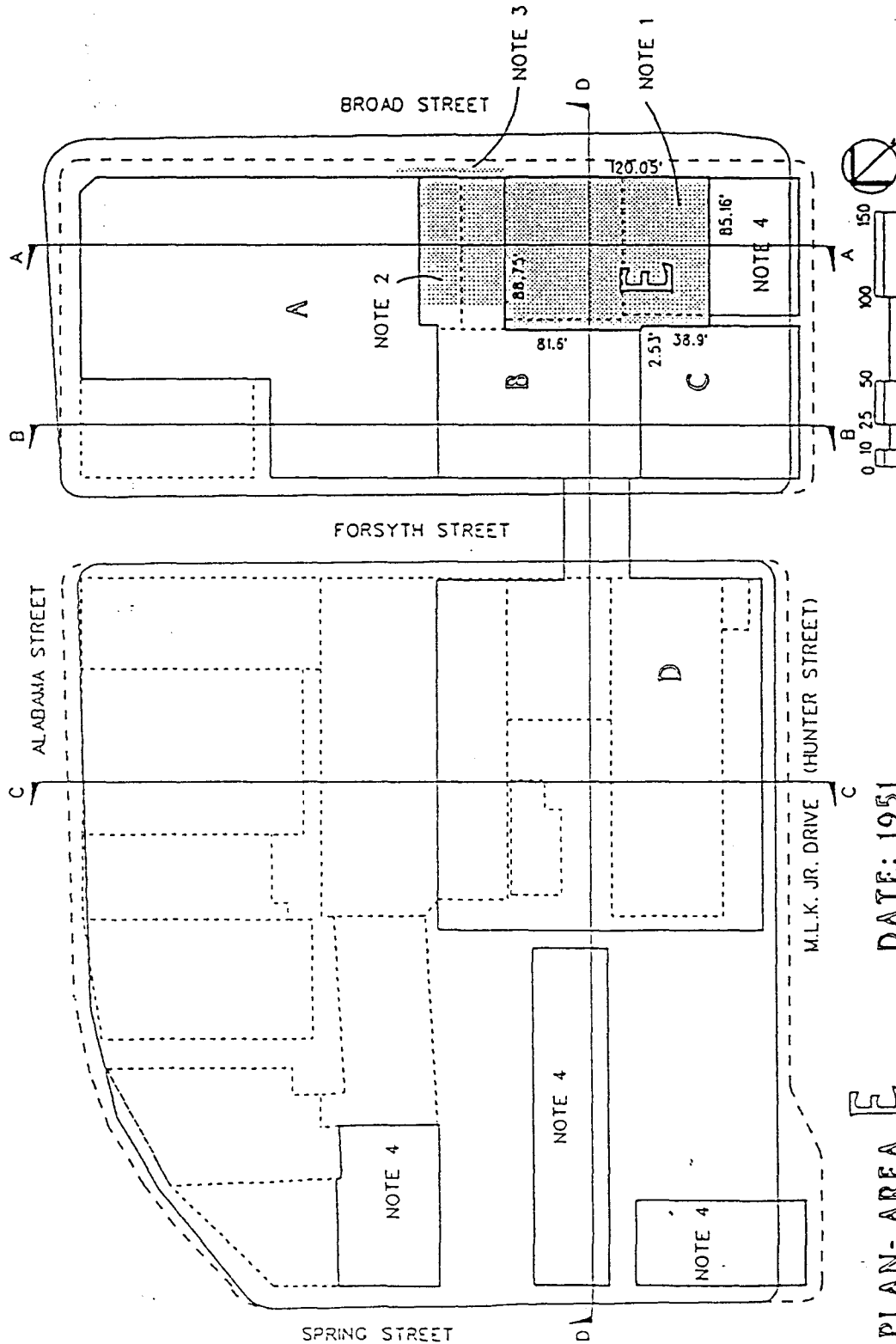


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NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

1. 1951 ADDITION: STEVENS & WILKINSON: DRAWINGS DATED OCT 16, 1950:  
SUB-BASEMENT, BASEMENT, FLOOR 1, MEZZANINE, FLOORS 2-5
2. PARTIAL FOURTH & FIFTH FLOORS ADDED ON TOP OF 1940 BUILDING
3. NEW CANOPY ADDED EXTENDING TO FIRST BAY OF 1924 BUILDING  
DISPLAY WINDOWS MODIFIED
4. EXISTING BUILDINGS OWNED BY RICH'S BY 1951



PLAN- AREA E

DATE: 1951

1951

In 1951 work was begun on the Store for Men, located on Broad St. adjacent to the 1940 building. The architects were Stevens & Wilkinson (see photos GA-2290-150 through 155) and the interiors were designed by the New York interior designer Elanor LeMaire. The building contained a sub-basement, a basement, first floor, mezzanine and floors 2 through 5.

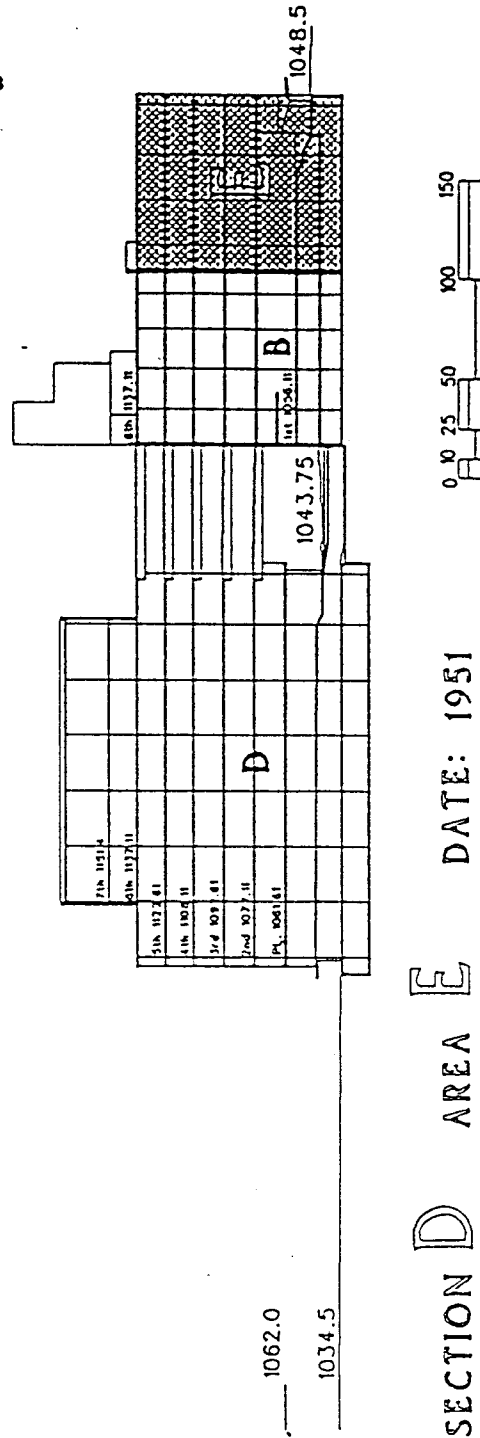
The exterior and interior design of this addition were also modernist in character. The Broad Street facade was glass curtainwall and a new entry was built featuring a sloped luminous ceiling and perforated metal guardrails with wood trim. The mezzanine in the 1940 building was partially demolished to create one large interior space and a new mezzanine was connected into the remaining existing mezzanine. The canopies extending up to the 1924 building were also modified at this time, including the addition of partial floors on top of the 1940 building, with a beige brick exterior to match. A photograph taken at this time indicates that the copper cornice on the 1924 building had been removed and the original wood windows had been replaced with glass block.

The drawings indicate that the sub-basement through the second floor to be retail and, the fifth floor support space, but no information was discovered describing floors 3 and 4.

The structure was poured-in-place concrete on piles. The exterior walls were curtainwall or beige brick masonry.

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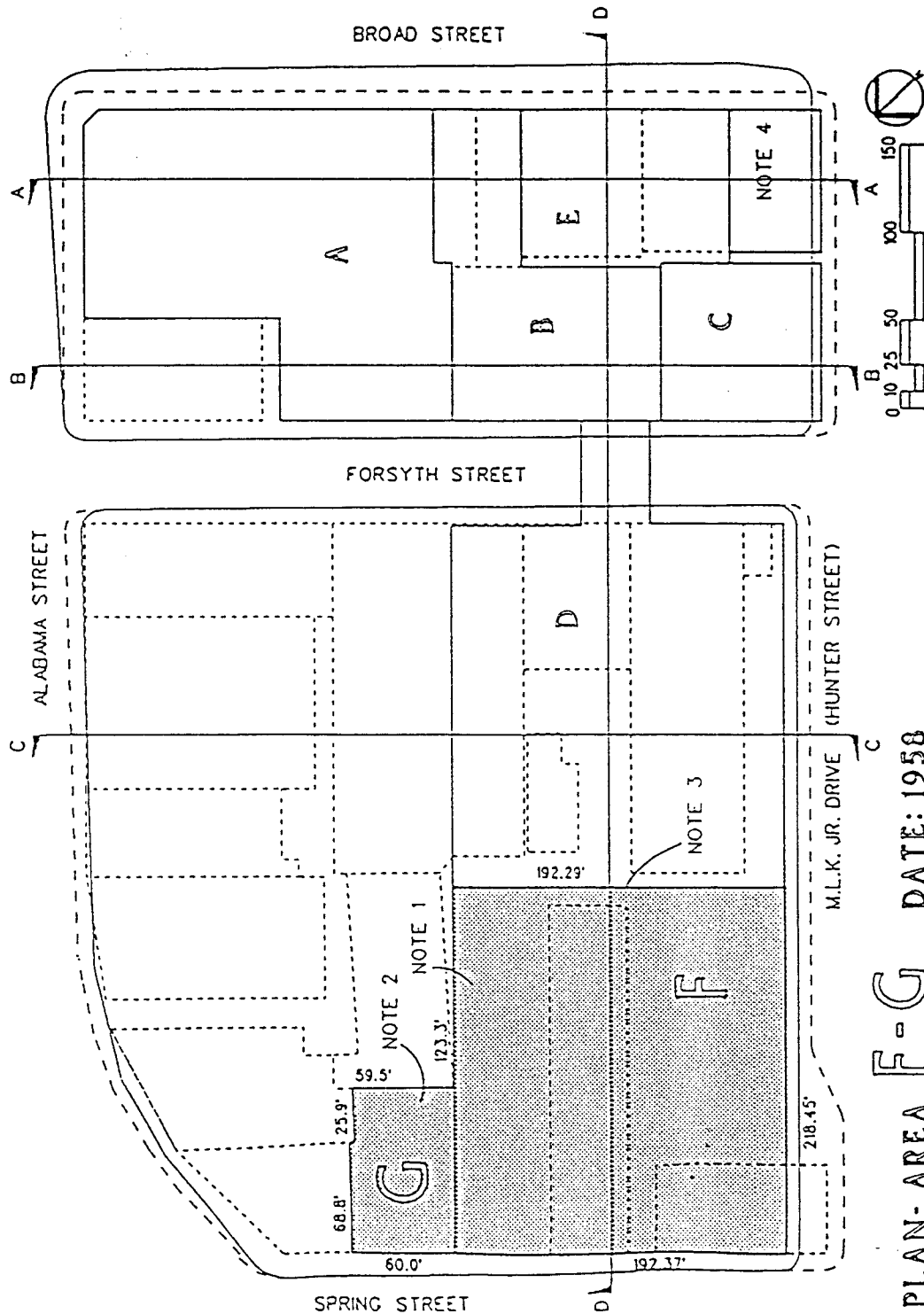
RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
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NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

1. 1958 ADDITION: STEVENS & WILKINSON: DRAWINGS DATED FEB 24, 1958: SUB-BASEMENT, BASEMENT, FLOOR 1, ROOF PARKING DECK
2. EXISTING BUILDING INCORPORATED IN STORE
3. ENTRY INTO WEST SIDE OF 1946 BUILDING CONSTRUCTED
4. EXISTING BUILDING OWNED BY RICH'S BY 1958



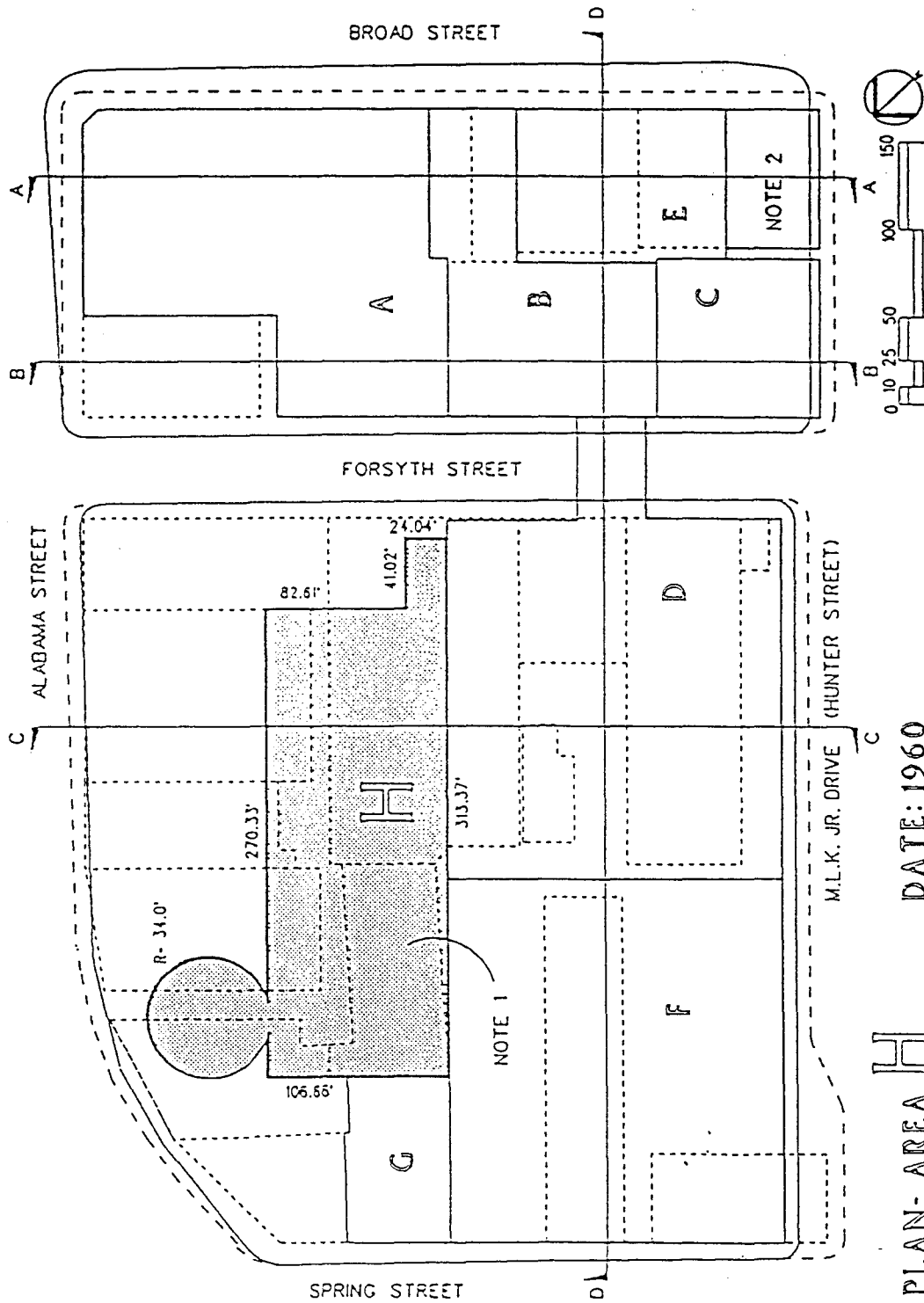
PLAN-AREA F-G DATE: 1958

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NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

1. 1960 PARKING DECK: STEVENS & WILKINSON: DRAWINGS DATED DEC 15, 1960: BASEMENT, FLOORS 1-6
2. EXISTING BUILDING OWNED BY RICH'S BY 1960





1958

In 1958, a three-story addition was constructed on the west side of the 1946 Store for Homes extending to the Spring Street viaduct. The architects were Stevens & Wilkinson. The exterior was all below the viaduct level and was utilitarian in appearance. The building replaced several existing warehouse buildings and contained a new truck dock facility and storage space, completing the trend established in 1924 for service and freight areas to be located on the west side of the site. The first set of drawings indicated a built-up roof on top, but a later drawing shows what was actually built, a rooftop parking deck accessed from Spring Street. A western entry to the 1946 Store for Homes was also constructed. The drawings show the area under the M.L.K. Drive viaduct used as unenclosed trash and truck areas, but at some later date, this area was enclosed and continued to be used for the same purpose. An existing building on Spring Street (constructed around 1910) was connected with a tunnel at the basement level. The structure was poured-in-place concrete.

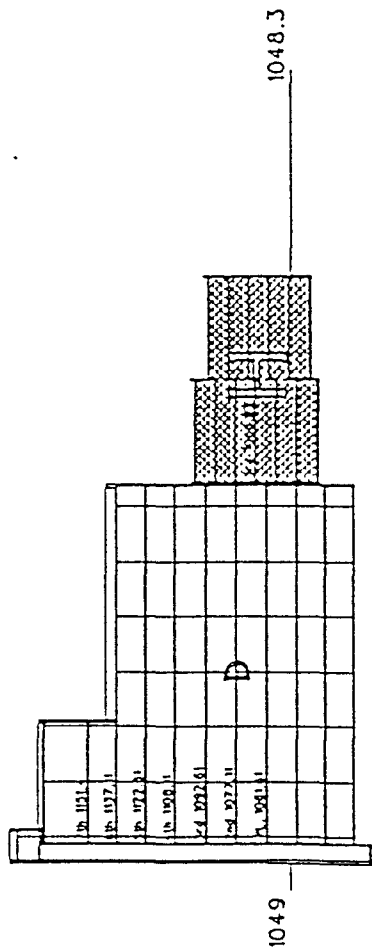
1960

In 1960 work was started on a parking deck attached to the north side of the Store for Homes. Architects were Stevens & Wilkinson (see Photos GA-2290-156 through 159). The deck was part of an effort to counter competition from suburban malls and featured a spiral exit ramp. Vehicular access was from Forsyth and Alabama Streets and shoppers could enter directly into the Store for Homes from each level. Access to the rooftop parking deck on top of the 1958 building was also provided. The structure was poured-in-place concrete, as were all subsequent parking deck additions.

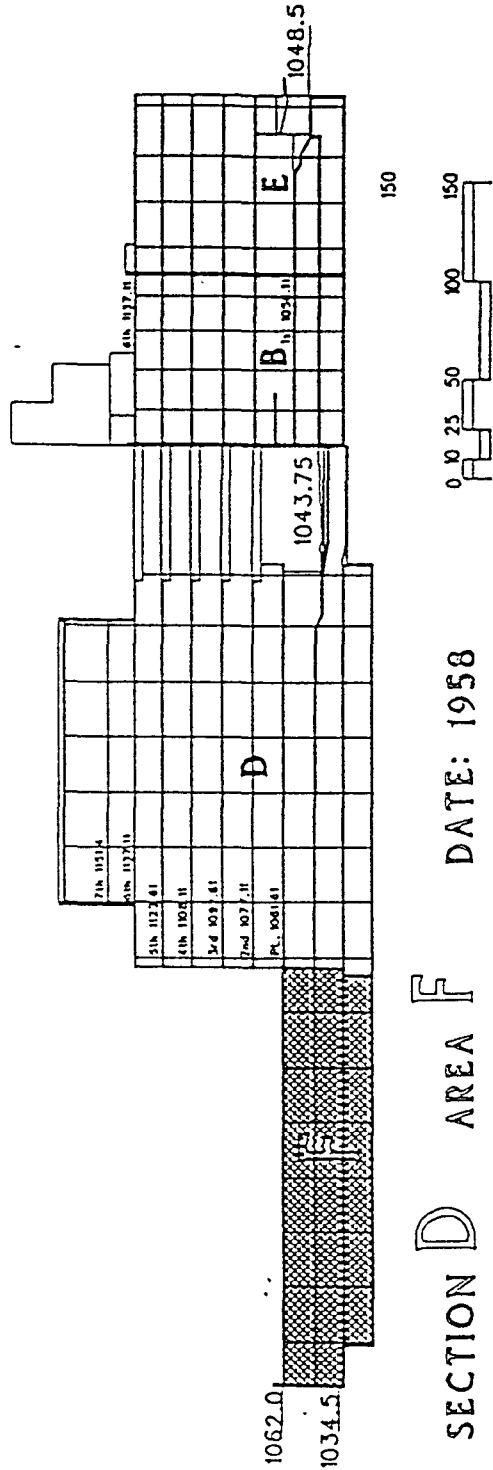
RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
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SECTION C AREA H DATE: 1960



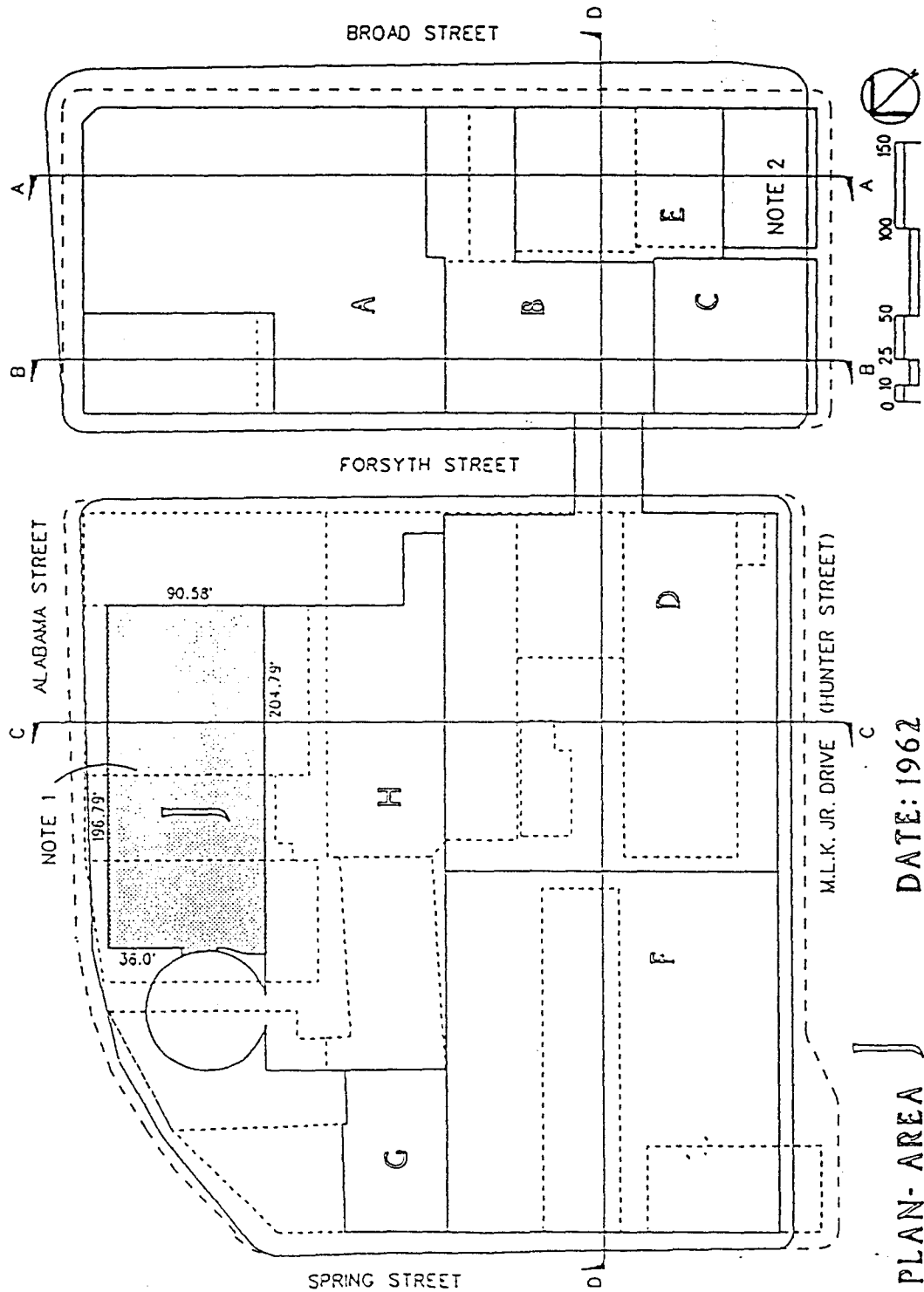
SECTION D AREA F DATE: 1958

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NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

1. 1962 PARKING DECK: STEVENS & WILKINSON: DRAWINGS DATED NOV 28 THRU DEC 12, 1962: BASEMENT, FLOORS 1-6
2. EXISTING BUILDING OWNED BY RICH'S BY 1962

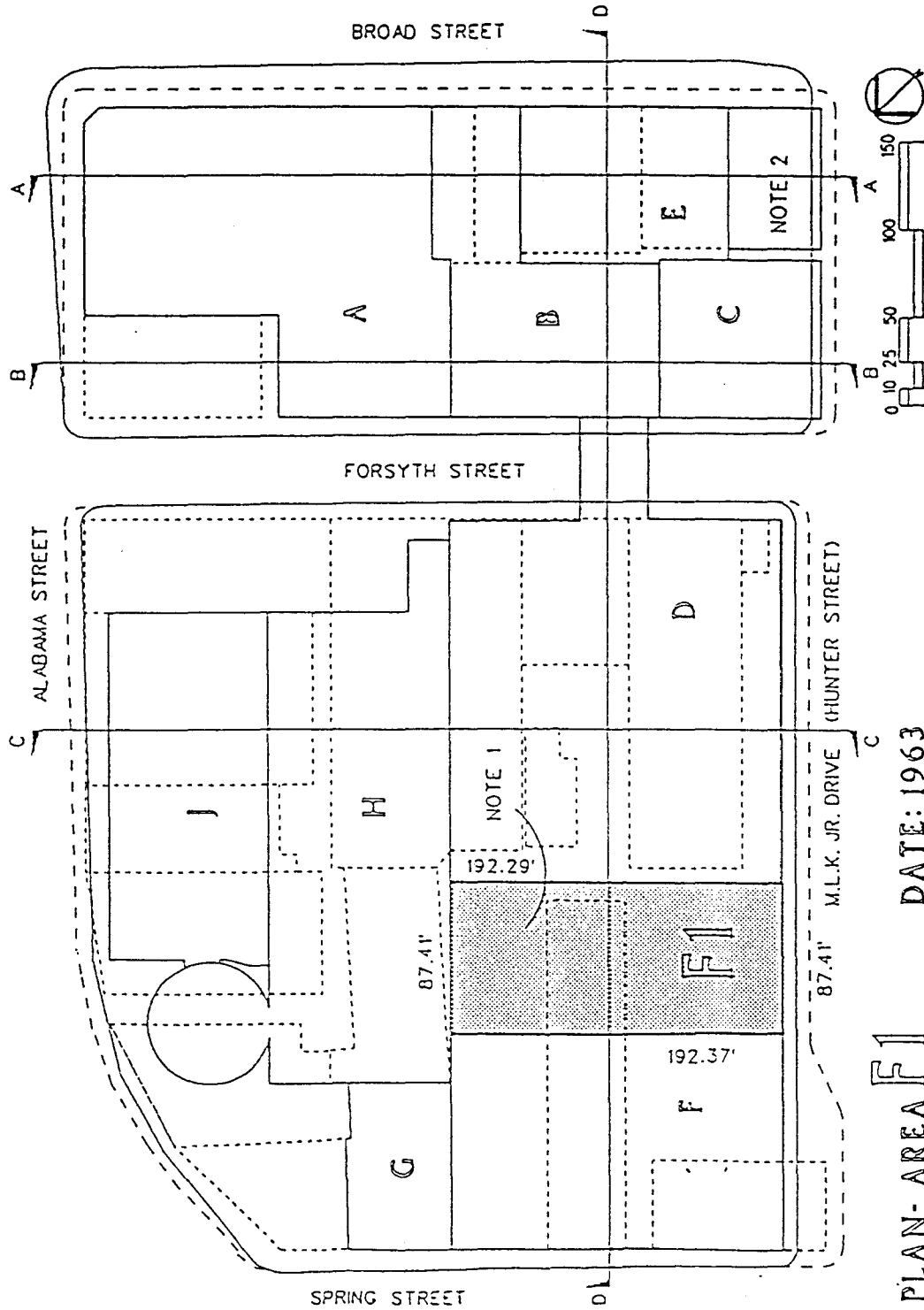


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DIAGRAMS PREPARED FEBRUARY 1994 BY:  
STEVENS & WILKINSON OF GEORGIA, INC.  
100 PEACHTREE STREET, ATLANTA, GA. 30303

NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

1. 1963 ADDITION: STEVENS & WILKINSON: DRAWINGS DATED DEC 31, 1963: PLAZA FLOOR, FLOORS 2-6, ALL FLOORS ON TOP OF 1958 BUILDING
2. EXISTING BUILDING OWNED BY RICH'S BY 1963



PLAN-AREA F1

DATE: 1963

RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
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1962

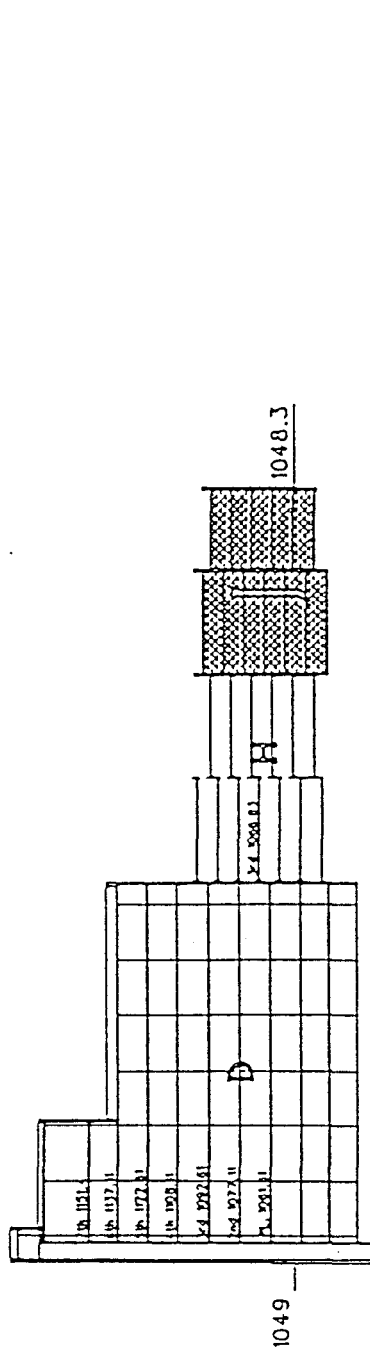
The parking deck was expanded northward starting in 1962. The architects were Stevens & Wilkinson (see photos GA-2290-160). Cars from this deck also exited onto the spiral ramp. Alabama Street was widened by one lane at this time to improve access.

1963

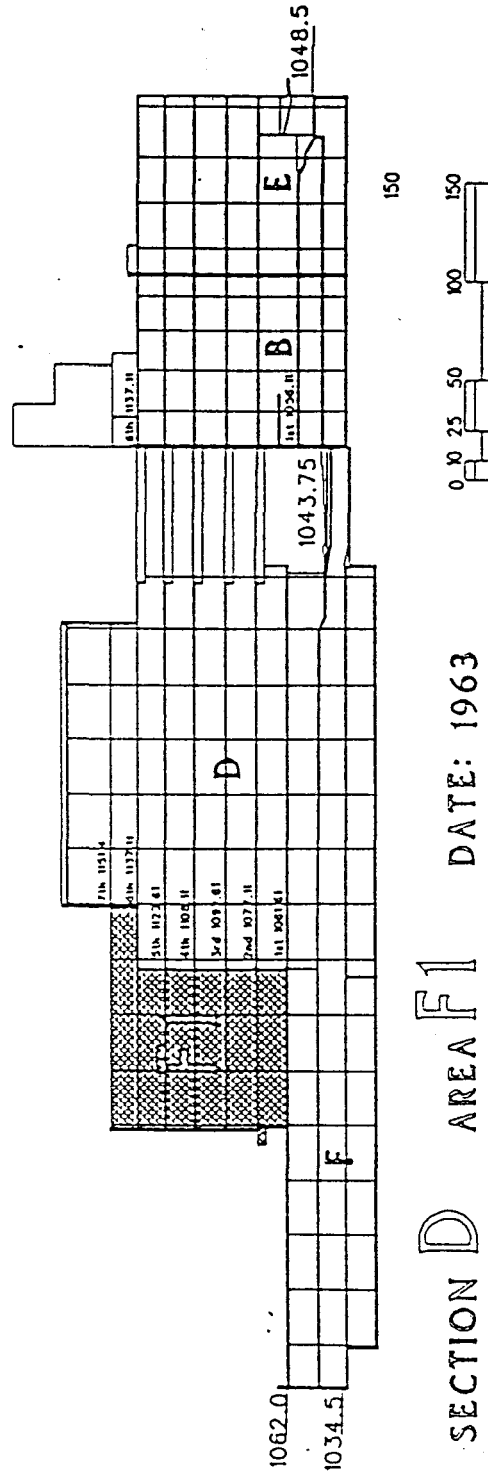
In 1963 work was started on a sixth floor addition on top of the 1958 service building immediately to the west of the 1946 Store for Homes. This addition was designed by Stevens & Wilkinson and added retail space. The exterior was clad in beige brick and featured vertical elements (louvers and brick reveals) that, while not mimicking the 1946 building, created a similar proportional system. The structure was poured-in-place concrete and the column grid extended that of the 1946 building to allow for large, unobstructed interior spaces.

RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
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100 PEACHTREE STREET, ATLANTA, GA. 30303



SECTION C AREA J DATE: 1962



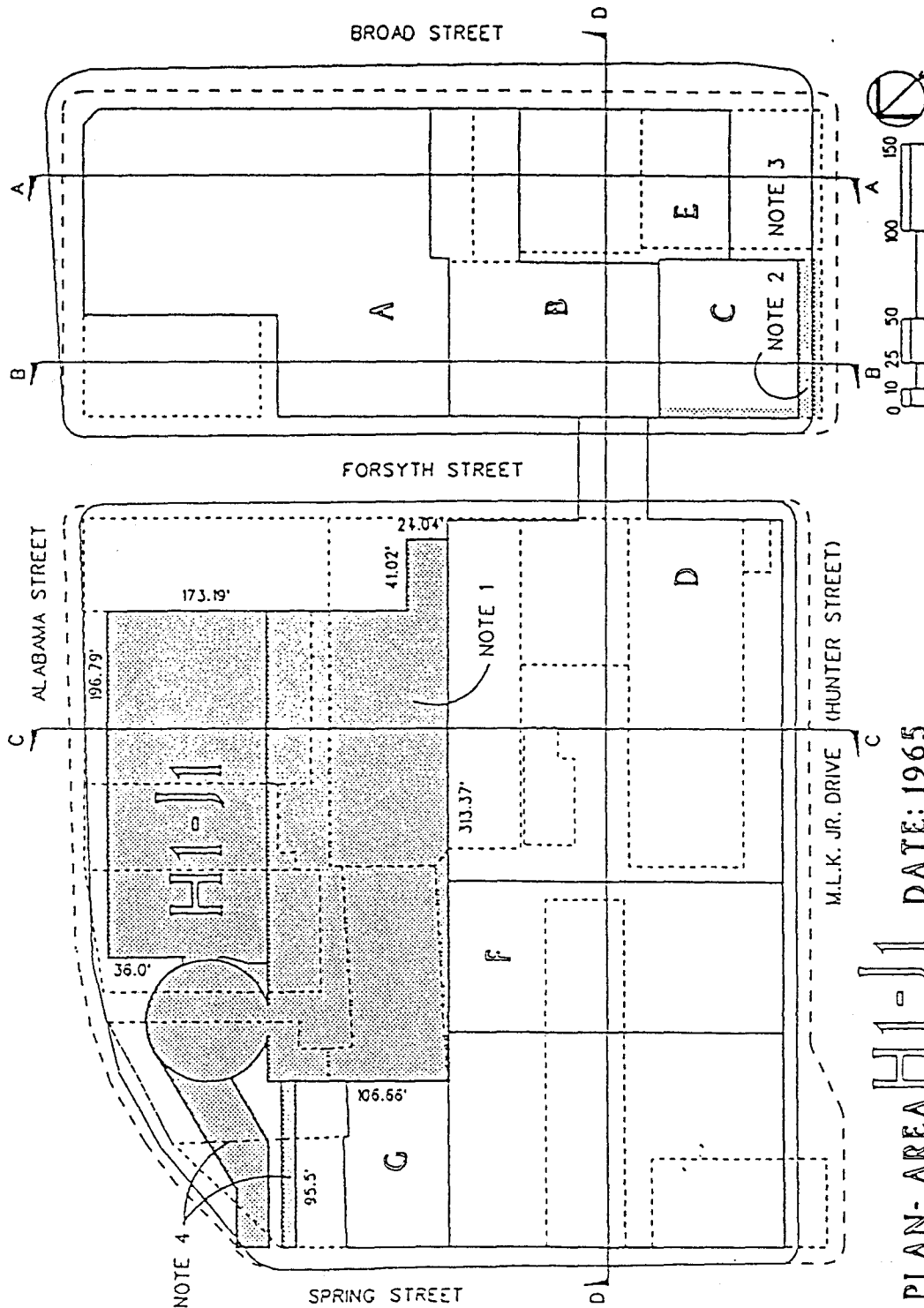
SECTION D AREA F1 DATE: 1963

RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
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DIAGRAMS PREPARED FEBRUARY 1994 BY:  
 STEVENS & WILKINSON OF GEORGIA, INC.  
 100 PEACHTREE STREET, ATLANTA, GA. 30303

NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

1. 1965 PARKING DECK ADDITION: STEVENS & WILKINSON: DRAWINGS DATED FEB 5, 1965: FLOORS 7-8 ON TOP OF 1960 AND 1962 PARKING DECKS
2. EXISTING BUILDING MODIFIED: STEVENS & WILKINSON: DRAWINGS DATED JULY 13, 1965: 13'-1" REMOVED FROM SOUTH SIDE TO ALLOW FOR STREET WIDENING, BOTH ELEVATIONS RECLAD
3. EXISTING BUILDING DEMOLISHED FOR 1965 STREET WIDENING, PARK INSTALLED IN 1967
4. BRIDGES FROM 1960 RAMP TO SPRING ST VIADUCT ADDED AS PART OF 1965 WORK

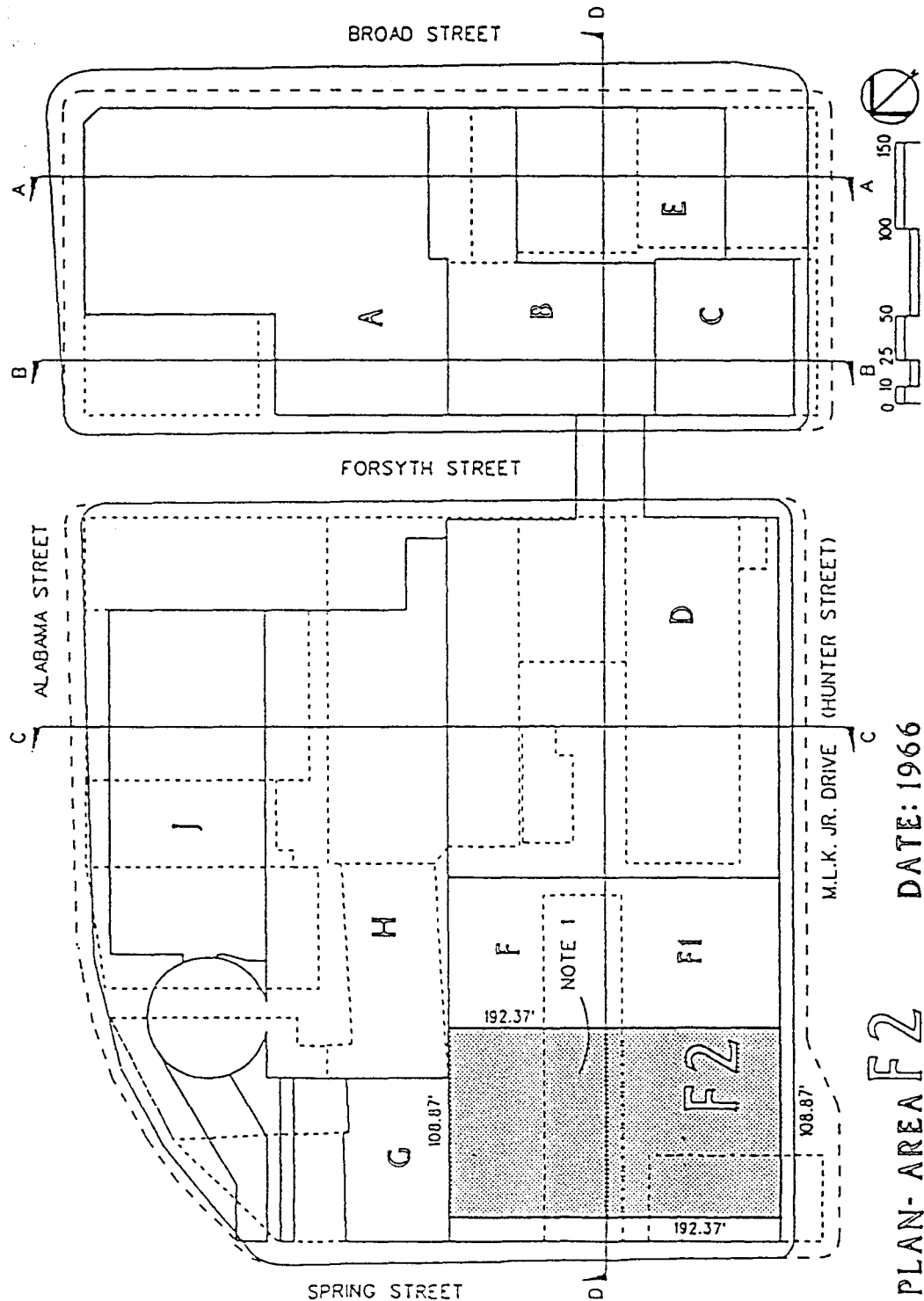


RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
HABS No. GA-2290 (Page 62)

DIAGRAMS PREPARED FEBRUARY 1994 BY:  
STEVENS & WILKINSON OF GEORGIA, INC.  
100 PEACHTREE STREET, ATLANTA, GA. 30303

NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

1. 1966 ADDITION: STEVENS & WILKINSON: DRAWINGS DATED JAN 21, 1966: PLAZA FLOOR, FLOORS 2-6, ALL FLOORS ON TOP OF 1958 BUILDING



PLAN- AREA F2

DATE: 1966



RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
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1965

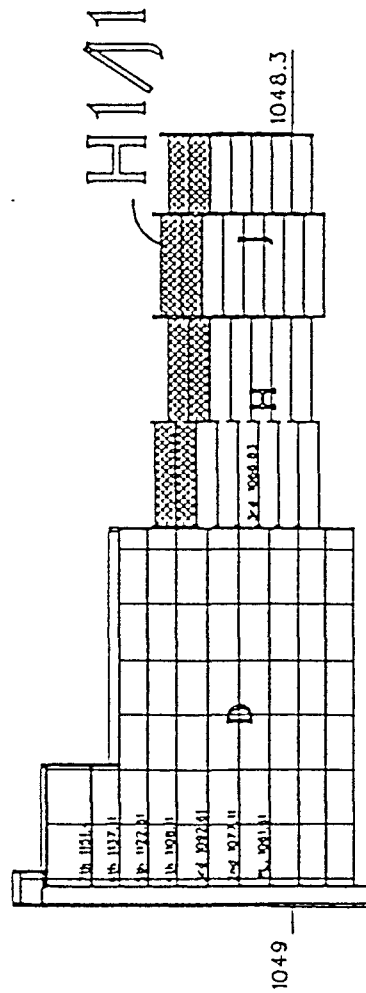
In 1965, two floors were added on top of the 1960 and 1962 parking decks, and a bridge from the spiral ramp to the Spring Street viaduct were added. The architects were Stevens & Wilkinson. At about this time M.L.K. Drive was widened and the "Corner Store" building was modified to remove the southernmost 13 feet and both the M.L.K. and Forsyth facades were reclad with beige brick to make them consistent with the other buildings.

1966

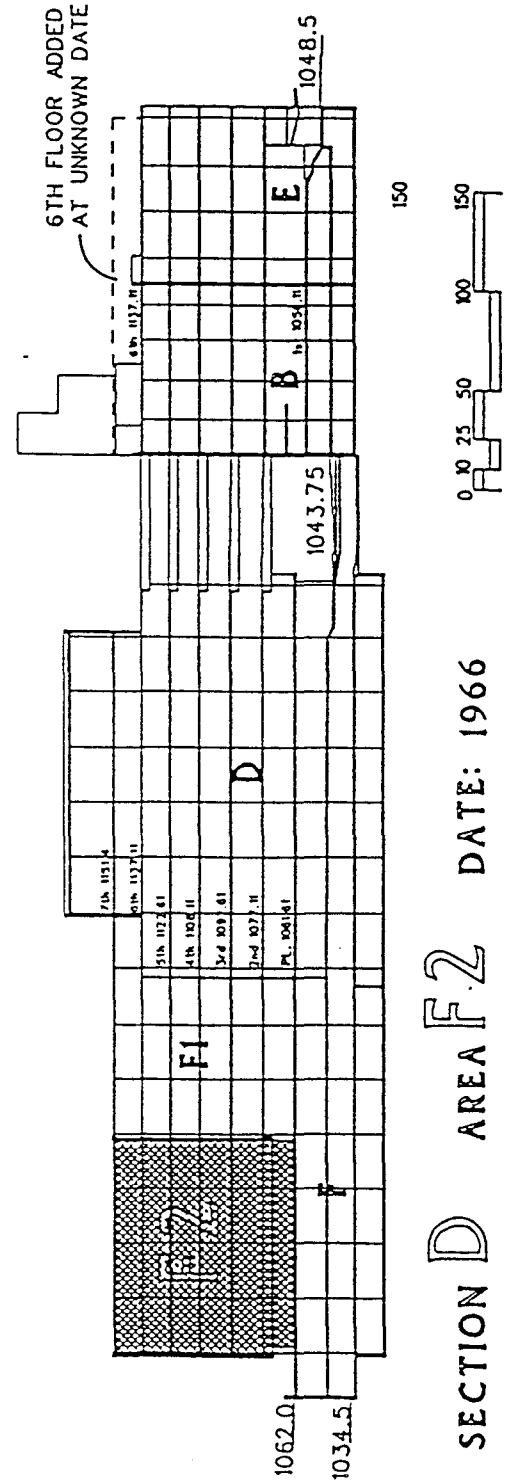
In 1966, another sixth floor addition was added on top of the 1958 service building to the west of the earlier construction. The architects were Stevens & Wilkinson. This construction brought the Store for Homes almost all the way to Spring Street--only a small landscaped plaza was left. The exterior was, once again, beige brick and designed to be compatible with the 1946 building and the 1963 addition. The structure was cast-in-place concrete.

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100 PEACHTREE STREET, ATLANTA, GA. 30303



SECTION C AREA H1/1 DATE: 1965



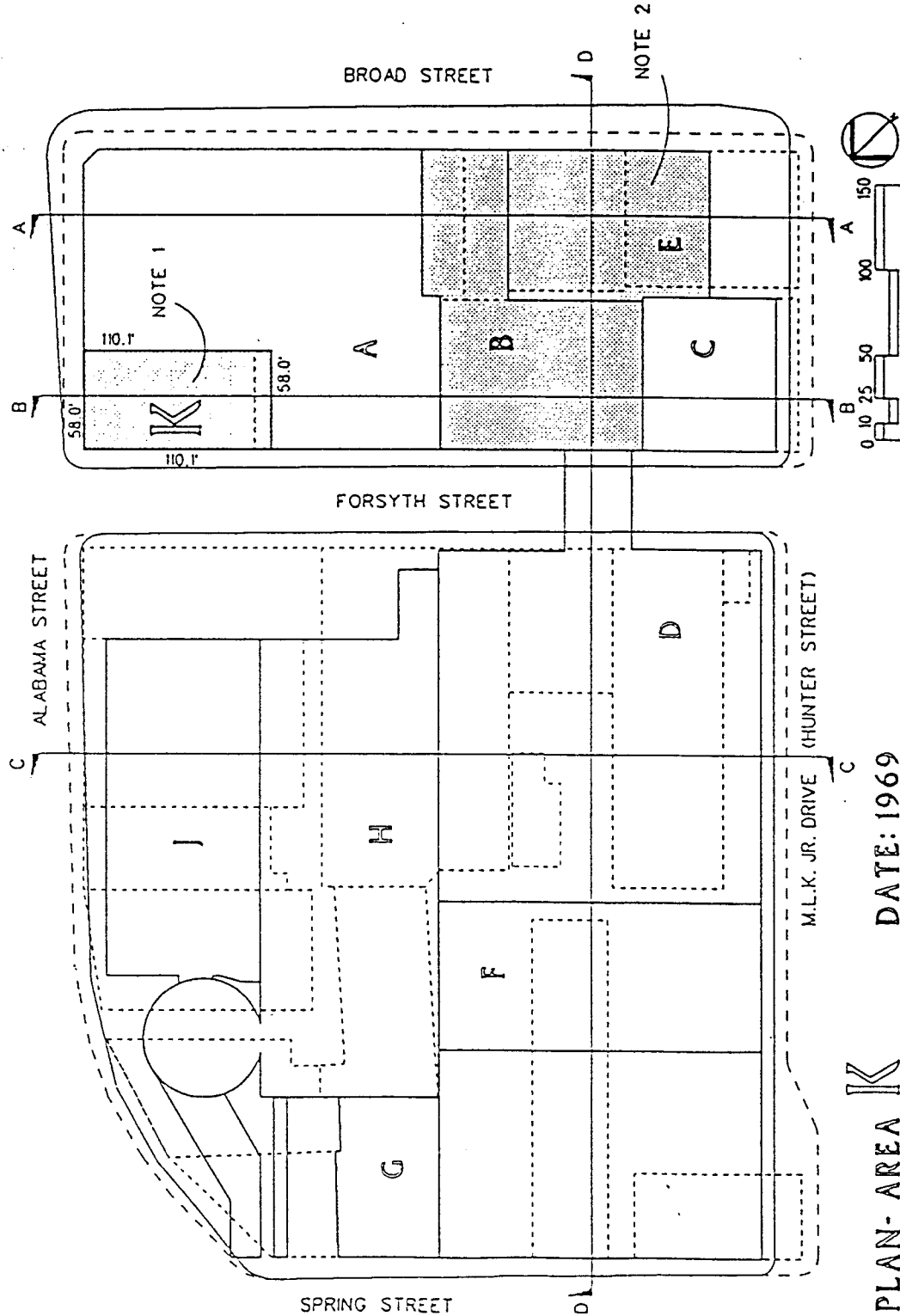
SECTION D AREA F2 DATE: 1966

RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
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DIAGRAMS PREPARED FEBRUARY 1994 BY:  
STEVENS & WILKINSON OF GEORGIA, INC.  
100 PEACHTREE STREET, ATLANTA, GA. 30303

NOTES TO THIS DIAGRAM:

1. 1969 ADDITION: STEVENS & WILKINSON: DRAWINGS DATED JAN 16, 1969: BASEMENT, PLAZA AT STREET LEVEL
2. 6th FLOOR ADDED ON TOP OF AREAS B & E AT UNKNOWN DATE, NO DRAWINGS DOCUMENTING THIS WORK HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED

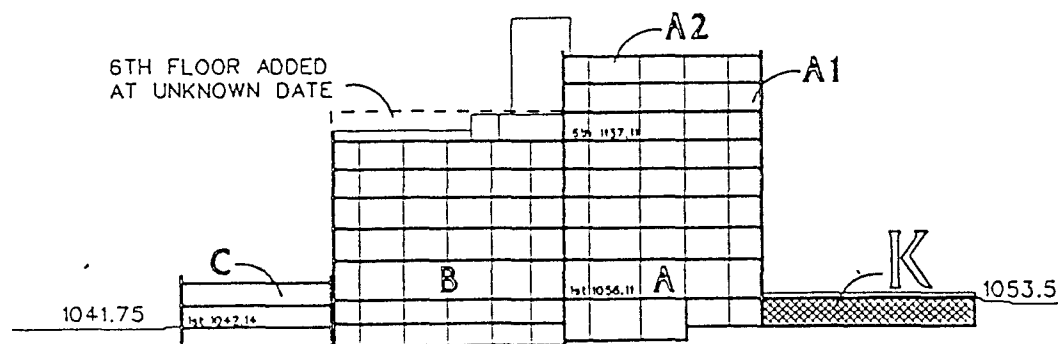


RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
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1969

In 1969, a single-story addition was made on the site of the old Atlanta Constitution building (the northeast corner of Forsyth and Alabama Street). The architects were Stevens & Wilkinson (see photos GA-2290-161). This project was evidently intended to enhance this very visible corner and the poured-in-place structure was designed to accept a multi-story addition on top. The top was a few feet above the Alabama Street level and served as a small park with planters and seating. The floor area, which aligned with the basement of the 1924 building, was used for office space. This was the last large addition made to the complex. When the Urban Walls program was begun in Atlanta a large mural design by artist Vincejia Blount was painted on the party walls of the old Constitution building that were left when that building was razed.

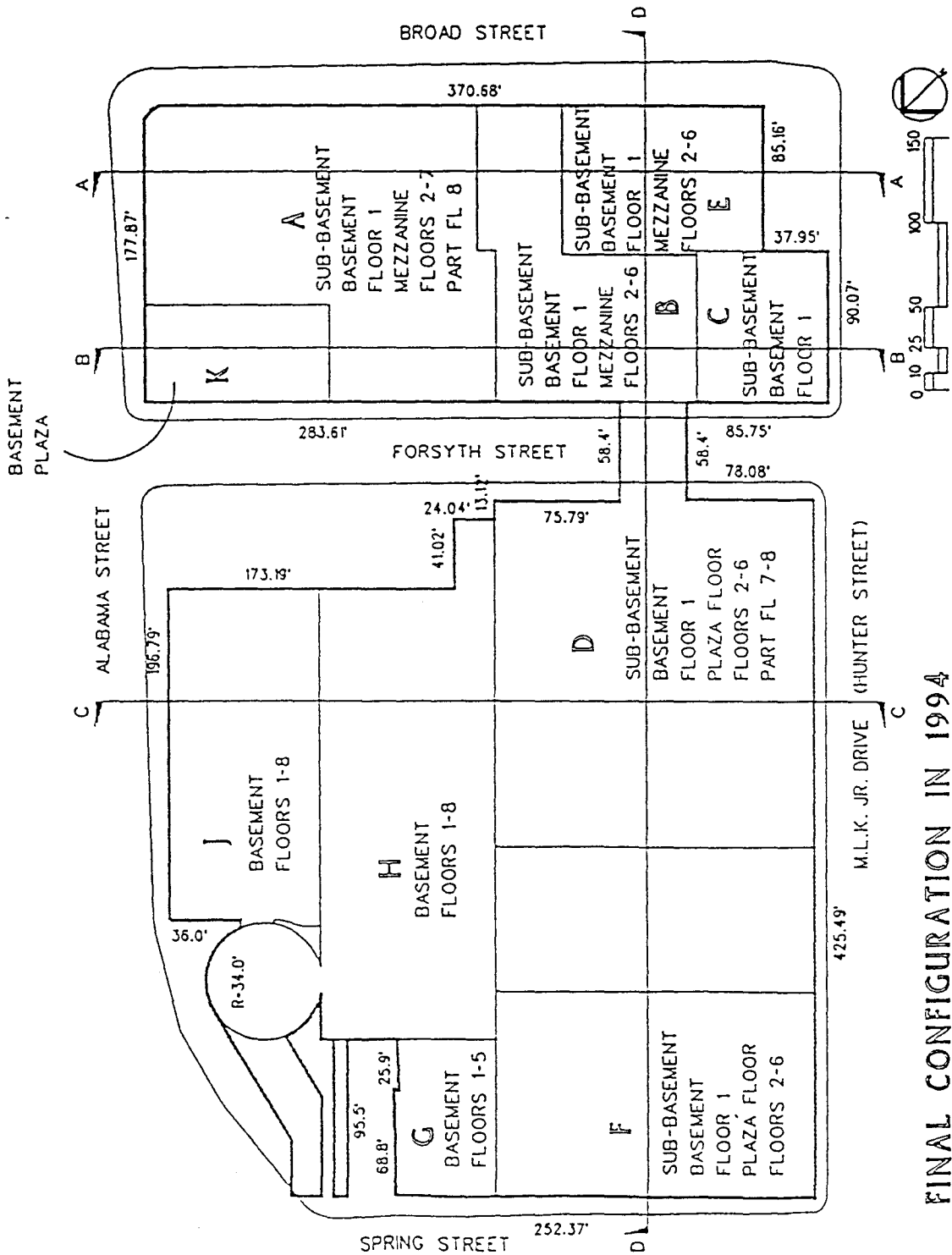
DIAGRAMS PREPARED FEBRUARY 1994 BY:  
STEVENS & WILKINSON OF GEORGIA, INC.  
100 PEACHTREE STREET, ATLANTA, GA. 30303



SECTION B AREA K DATE: 1969

RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE (Rich's Downtown)  
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DIAGRAMS PREPARED FEBRUARY 1994 BY:  
STEVENS & WILKINSON OF GEORGIA, INC.  
100 PEACHTREE STREET, ATLANTA, GA. 30303



FINAL CONFIGURATION IN 1994

### *Interior Modifications*

Given the nature of the retail business, department stores' interiors tend to be modified, updated and revised on a regular basis, and this is what happened to almost all portions of the Rich's complex. The interior modifications appear to have begun as early as 1936, and the last major renovation occurred in the early 1980s. By 1994, almost all interior areas had been modified. The major elements which had not been significantly modified were:

- A group of wood paneled offices on the fifth floor of the 1924 building. These offices were used as executive offices from the outset until the building was vacated.
- Some areas of plaster ceiling in the 1924 building that were later concealed by dropped-in ceilings.
- Most fire stairs (including those in the 1924 building), most freight elevators, and most escalators.
- Portions of the entry to the 1951 building.

### *Summary*

The building complex development of the downtown Rich's store was characterized by several trends:

- The piecemeal addition of new buildings over a long period of time based on the incremental acquisition of property. The building configurations were based on preexisting property lines.
- The gradual relocation of freight areas to the west of the complex accessed from under the Spring St. viaduct.
- The connection of the two blocks with tunnels and a 4-story bridge building that contained retail space.
- The use of beige brick or concrete in colors consistent with the original 1924 building as a means of unifying the separate buildings into one complex.
- A consistent effort to build in the latest style with the most technologically advanced systems.

- A continued tendency to design buildings to accept vertical additions.

With the continued shift away from downtown shopping in favor of suburban locations, the need for the amount of square footage represented by the downtown store disappeared. Additionally, the central shipping area that served the suburban stores from the downtown location was moved to a more efficient suburban warehouse in the 1970s. The functional utilization of interior spaces went through some transformations until, in the early 1980s, a large portion of the Store for Homes was leased out to the Fulton County Government and other individual lessees. Fulton County moved out into its own space, and then, in 1991, the decision was made to close the downtown store. The building was vacated by Spring of 1992, except for some continued storage use and the continued use of the parking decks by downtown workers.

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ADDENDUM TO:  
RICH'S DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT STORE  
(Rich's Downtown)  
45 Broad Street  
Atlanta  
Fulton County  
Georgia

HABS GA-2290  
GA-2290

HABS  
GA-2290

FIELD RECORDS

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SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE  
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U.S. Department of the Interior  
100 Alabama St. NW  
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