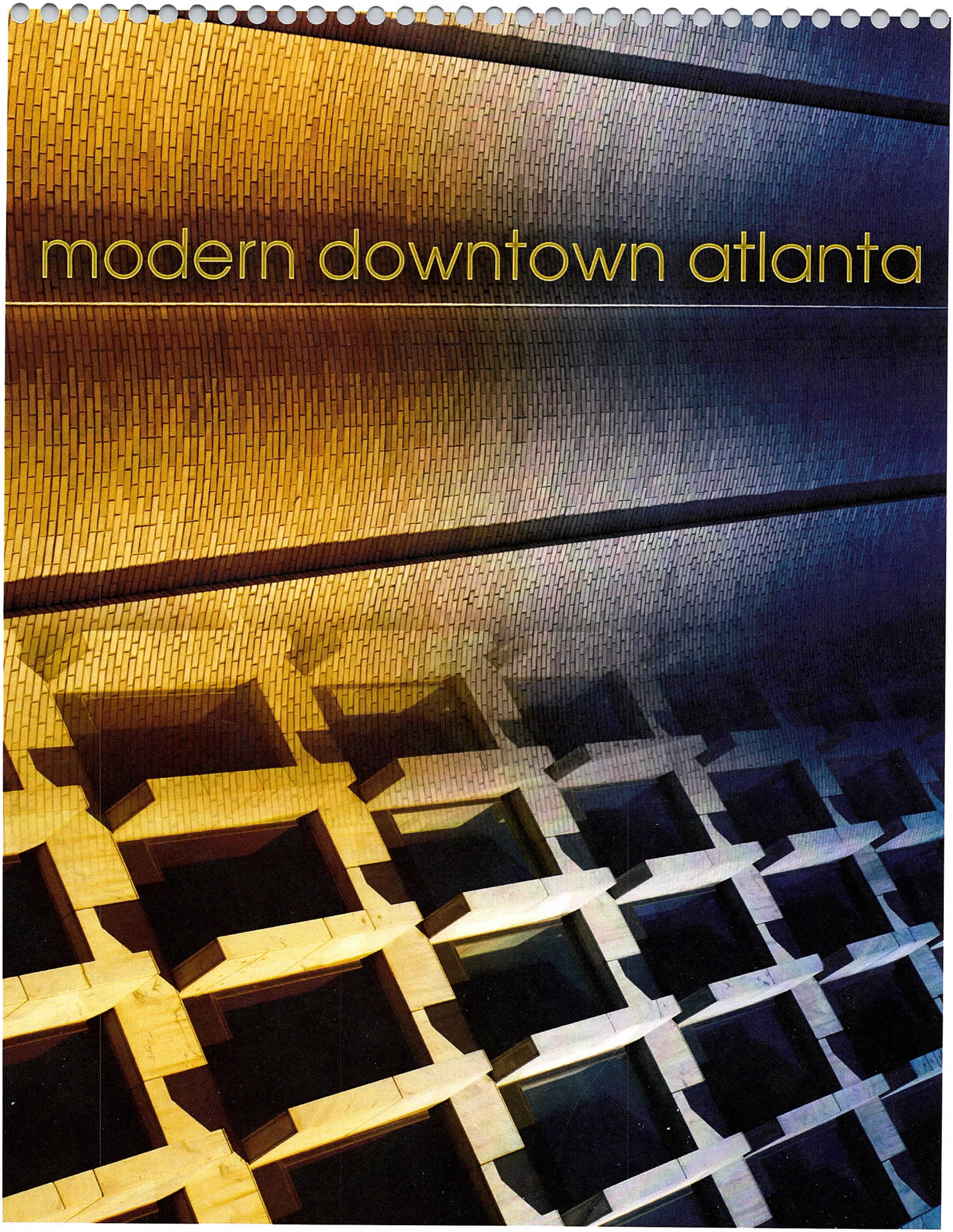

modern downtown atlanta

When I came to Atlanta [in 1971], the thing I liked about Atlanta, it [had] a lot of young people in strong positions. It was an exciting place...it was fresh. When you sat across the table in here, you would just see a lot of young people...about the same age or a little bit older than me. And they're in very strong positions. I've got Maynard Jackson just at the beginning stages of coming into [his term as mayor] so I said, "Well if I'm trying to be an architect and I'm looking for opportunity I want to be on fertile soil."

- Architect Oscar Harris, Turner and Associates







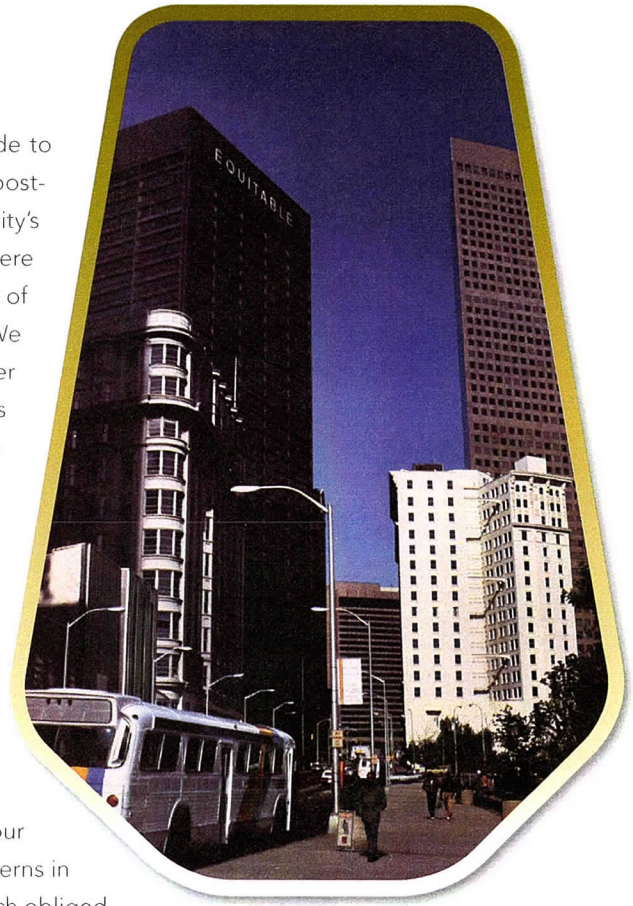
modern **downtown** atlanta

Authors: Patrick Sullivan and Karcheik Sims-Alvarado

Graphic Design: Tracey Fedor

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Peachtree Street, 1988. Source: Thomas, *Atlanta: A City for the World*, 1988.

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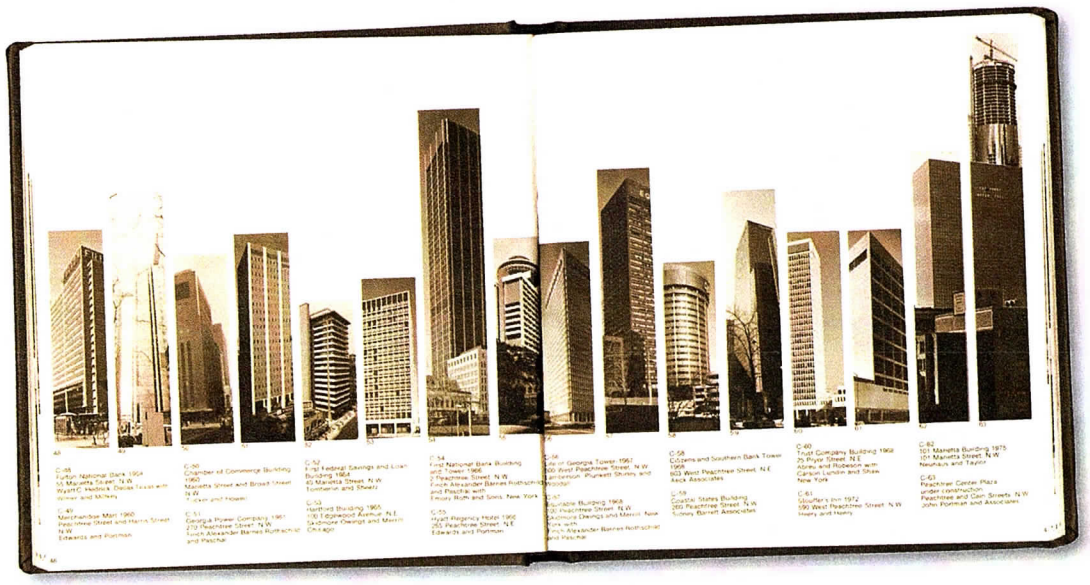
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Examples of Atlanta's Modern Architecture.
Source: The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Guide to Atlanta, *1975.*

INTRODUCTION. Downtown Atlanta during the mid-twentieth-century underwent unprecedented changes that were both physical and social. The year 1945 marked the end of World War II and the start of large-scale transportation planning in Atlanta to address increasing traffic congestion and the development of the downtown expressway. Over the ensuing decades, the city transformed itself from a railroad-oriented, southern transportation hub into a dominant commercial center catalyzed by a modern airport, interstate highway, and rapid rail infrastructure. A pro-business, political environment and relatively progressive handling of racial integration during the tumultuous Civil Rights Movement made the city an attractive place for corporate relocation and development. Atlanta secured its position as a regional economic leader in the Southeastern United States during the "Sun Belt" boom from the 1950s through the 1980s.

The city's extraordinary postwar growth is most clearly manifested in Atlanta's dynamic downtown skyline – a string of modernist, concrete, glass, and steel high-rise hotels and office towers that appear to stretch north along the Peachtree Street ridge from the gold-topped dome of the Georgia State Capitol to the northern bend of the downtown connector. In 1990, Atlanta was selected to host the 1996 Olympics, finally marking the city's arrival on the international stage. Architecturally, downtown Atlanta would step into the Post-Modern era the following year with the completion of the One-Ninety-One Peachtree Tower and its purposeful return to Neo-classical-influenced design. This booklet presents an illustrated history of this growth and its resultant skyline, drawing upon research and survey of Atlanta's downtown completed for a multiple property nomination to the National Register of Historic Places recognizing Modern Downtown Atlanta's historically significant resources.



Atlanta is not a city of magnolias and mockingbirds looking at the past and mourning for it... We are a city always looking ahead and going places.

-Ralph McGill
(Martin 1987, III:159)



ATLANTA'S GROWTH AS A SOUTHERN REGIONAL CENTER: 1842-1945.

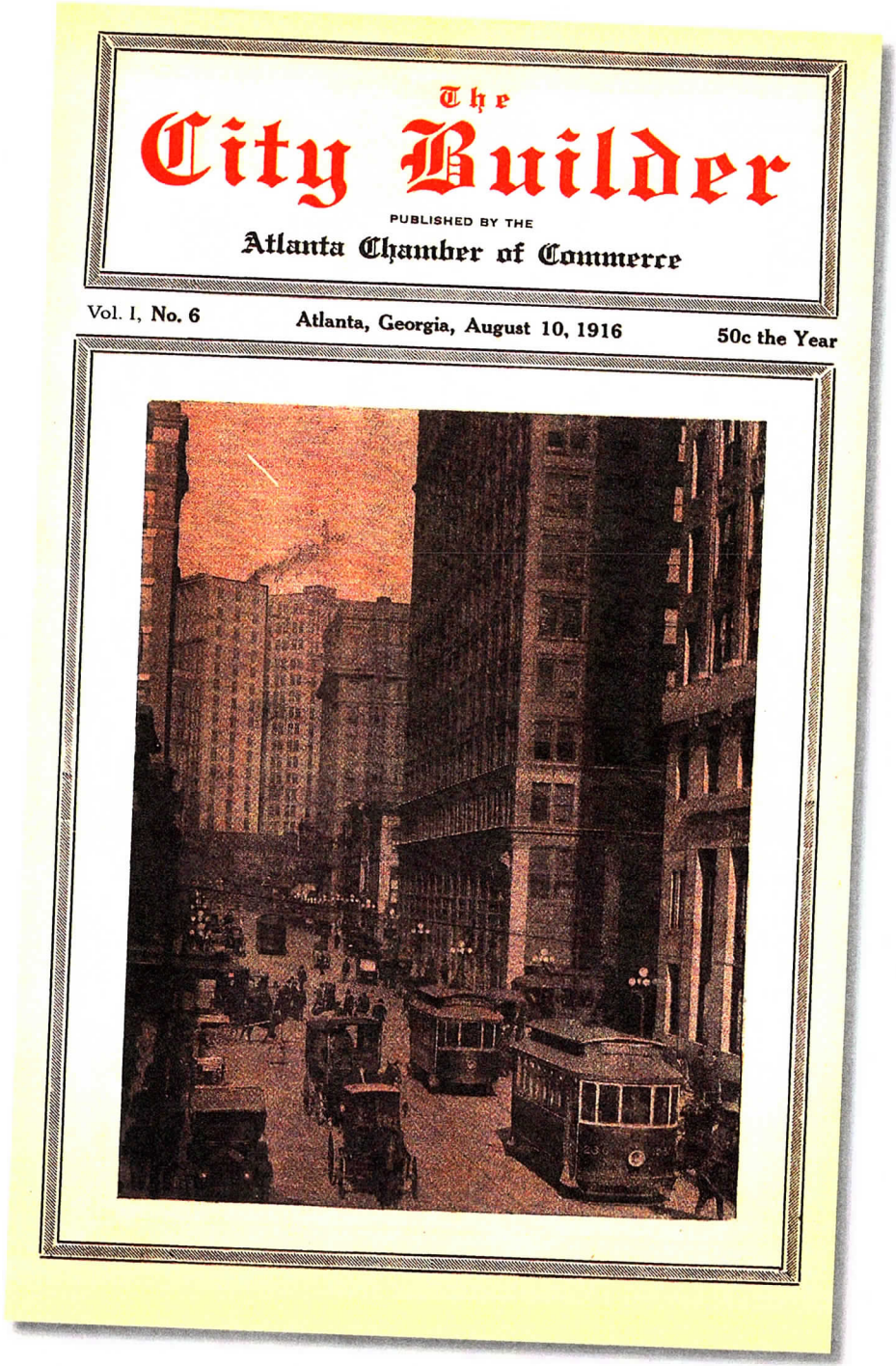
Atlanta owes its birth and early existence to the railroads. Founded in 1842 at the terminus of the Western and Atlantic Railroad, the settlement, originally known as Terminus and then Marthasville, began to develop in an unplanned fashion along ridge roads that converged at the 'zero mile post' near the current Five Points intersection in downtown. Renamed Atlanta in 1847, the town's population was 9,544 in 1860 (20 percent of this total were African American slaves). The town had grown around the nexus of four major rail lines that cut through the heart of the central business district (CBD). The railroads dominated both the commercial economy of Atlanta and the development of its urban physical form as the city's street network grew parallel and perpendicular to the rail lines, giving downtown its peculiar, multi-directional grid (Marsh et al. 1975). Although its railroad infrastructure and most of its downtown buildings were destroyed during the Civil War, the city quickly rebuilt itself as a distribution and mercantile center. In 1870, just five years after the conflict, Atlanta had grown to a city of 21,789 residents – a 128 percent increase. Freed African Americans flocked to Atlanta during this period in search of work and constituted 46 percent of the city's total population (J. M. Russell 1988, 267).

Atlanta Constitution editor Henry Grady's successful appeals to northern capital for investment in the Atlanta economy, the railroads, and success of the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition boosted the city's standing within the cotton economy among its Georgia rivals of Macon and Savannah and contributed to its growing regional status as the capital of the "New South" (Hartshorn and Association of American Geographers 1976, 3). Transportation, along with the trade and professional service sectors, formed the backbone of Atlanta's economy by the early twentieth century relative to other comparable southern cities, such as Birmingham, Alabama and Memphis, Tennessee, which relied more heavily on industrial manufacturing (Wilson and Ferris 1989, 733–734). The popularity of Coca-Cola beverage in the late nineteenth century also helped elevate Atlanta's national status and provided a source of local wealth that in turn benefited the city's cultural and educational foundations through philanthropic donations. Both northern and southern observers noted the aggressive business culture that infused the city's character and fed its growing ambitions to become a regional capital of the "New South" (J. M. Russell 1988, 126–127; Woodward 1951, 144–145).

(Opposite) *Mrs. Lillian Head, a milliner, in her Polaris restaurant-inspired hat, August 1968. Source:* Atlanta Journal-Constitution *Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.*

With economic growth came urbanization. The introduction of streetcar transit in the 1870s and 1880s had started to draw residential growth and attendant small businesses from the city's core to the newly developing suburbs at the periphery of downtown in the late nineteenth century (Marsh et al. 1975; Stone 1989, 15). By 1890, the city's population had jumped to 65,533 people (37,416 white/28,098 black) (J. M. Russell 1988, 267). It rose to 154,839 in 1910, largely through the city's annexation of surrounding communities such as Edgewood, East Atlanta, West End, and Ansley Park (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1998a; 1999). The wild popularity of the personal automobile among Atlantans and the mobility it afforded, significantly hastened the expanded physical growth of the city during the early twentieth century. As middle and upper class whites migrated to the bungalow suburbs north of the city limits, African American residents took their place in the older, Victorian-era neighborhoods that ringed the central business district to the east, west, and south (Preston 1979, 97–99).

The 1920s marked a period of explosive growth for Atlanta as the city's status as the major rail center of the Southeast helped it to eclipse previous leaders such as Charleston, Nashville, and


The City Builder

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Vol. I, No. 6 Atlanta, Georgia, August 10, 1916 50c the Year

A View of Broad Street in Downtown Atlanta, Looking North From Marietta Street, 1916. Source: The City Builder, *August 19, 1916.*

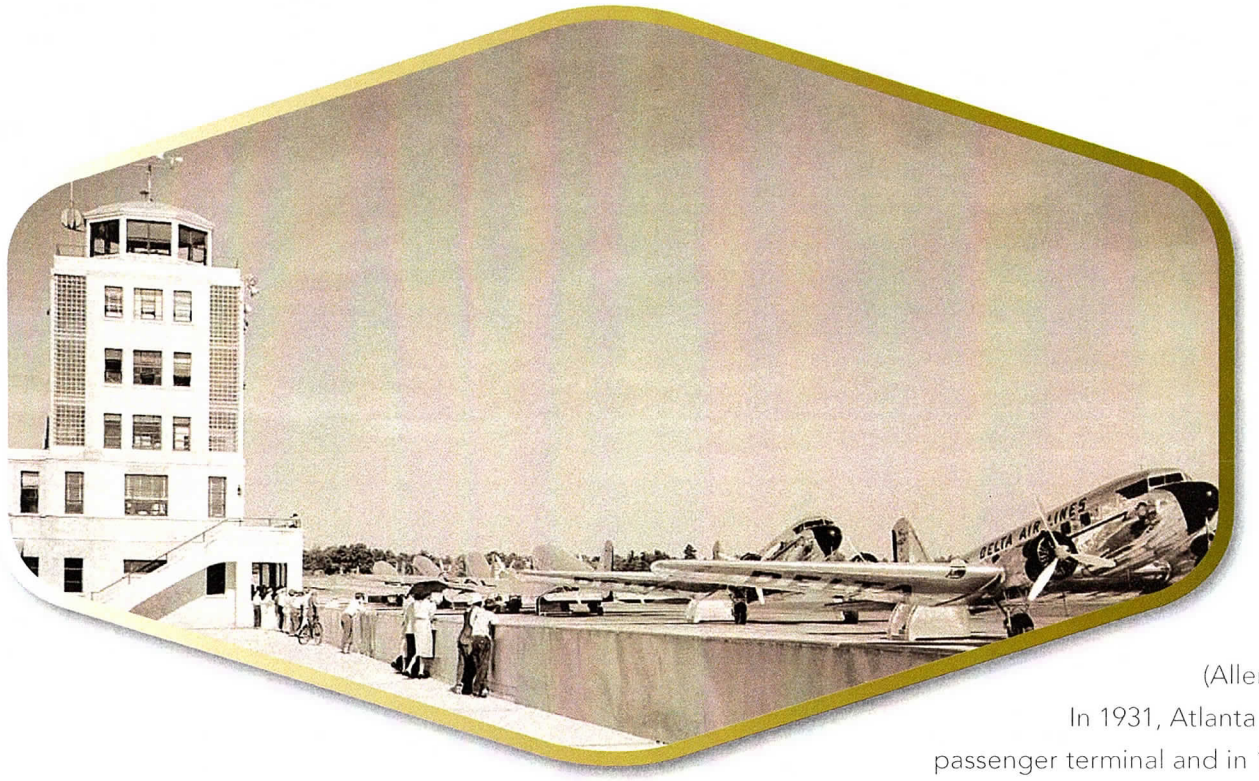
Memphis in population (Hartshorn and Association of American Geographers 1976, 2). By the start of the decade, Atlanta had 200,616 residents, making it the 33rd largest city in the United States, just ahead of other southern rivals Birmingham (36th), Memphis (40th), Dallas (42nd), and Houston (45th) (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1999). Seeking to capitalize on the city's progress, local boosters with the Chamber of Commerce heavily promoted Atlanta's business-friendly climate. Taking advantage of Atlanta's large number of hotels in close proximity to the busy passenger rail terminal, the Chamber of Commerce created the Atlanta Convention Bureau in 1912 to fashion the city as a regional convention center. The following year, the Bureau welcomed 75 convention groups totaling 20,000 delegates from across the nation. By 1926, 700,000 conventioneers had pumped over $21 million into the local economy as a result of the city's nascent convention industry (Henson 1965, 49).

The Chamber of Commerce, under the leadership of Ivan Allen, Sr. and W.R.C. Smith, launched the "Forward Atlanta" campaign in 1925 as a way to expand and broaden the local economy by luring national corporations to establish regional headquarters in the city. The successful four-year advertising program touted the city's favorable business climate and labor supply, strategic location within the state and region, and wealth of natural resources. As a result of the "Forward Atlanta" campaign, over 750 new businesses and 20,000 jobs were created in the city (Garrett 1969, 814–815). As the capital city of Georgia, Atlanta had also become an important government center within the region housing numerous regional offices of the Federal Government, as well as the Federal Reserve Bank, the United States District Court, and the Federal Penitentiary. It was a center of higher education that offered local and national companies a sizeable educated workforce to draw upon for employment in the professional finance and retail sectors. Among these schools were Agnes Scott College, the Georgia Institute of Technology (also known as Georgia Tech), Emory College (later University), the Evening School of Commerce (later Georgia State University), Oglethorpe University, as well as Atlanta University, Clark College, Morehouse College, Morris Brown College, and Spelman University, which attracted African American students from across the country (Ivey, Demerath, and Breland 1948, 94–95).

The Southeast is on wheels and Atlanta is the hub around which the wheels revolve.

- Ivan Allen, Sr.

Forward-thinking public investment in aviation during this period also helped establish a foundation for future economic development. During his time as an alderman in the 1920s, William B. Hartsfield became an ardent believer in the economic potential of air travel and in 1926, he worked to secure Atlanta's designation over Birmingham as a postal airmail stop on the route between New York and



Atlanta Airport, Candler Field, 1940. Source: Lane Brothers Commercial Photographers Photographic Collection, 1920-1976. Photographic Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.

Miami. Three years later, the city purchased Candler Field, a 300-acre former dirt racetrack located just south of the corporate limits, and converted it into a municipal airport. Atlanta soon became "the cross roads of the air," ranking third in the nation by the 1930s, behind Chicago and New York, for daily scheduled flights (Allen 1996, 24–25; Garrett 1969, 851). In 1931, Atlanta became the first airport to build a passenger terminal and in 1938, the first to erect an air traffic control tower (Hartshorn and Association of American Geographers 1976, 4). Over the course of the decade, both Delta Air Services and Eastern Air Transport established permanent passenger routes out of Atlanta to points along the Atlantic seaboard and throughout the southeastern United States. In 1941, Delta relocated its corporate headquarters to Atlanta from Monroe, Louisiana (City of Atlanta, Department of Aviation 2014; Martin 1987, III:91).

As with other cities throughout the country, Atlanta suffered mightily during the Great Depression as the economy ground to a halt and the city was forced to rely on loans from the Coca-Cola Company to cover municipal budgets (Hartshorn and

Association of American Geographers 1976, 24). However, the United States' entry into World War II would prove to be a boon for the city and the South as a whole as the Federal Government flooded the region with defense-related investment over the course of the conflict. The war encouraged mobility among those serving in the military and attracted rural residents to the cities in search of work related to the wartime effort (Wilson and Ferris 1989, 592). Because of Atlanta's status as the state capital, the region's largest railroad hub, and its close proximity to Fort McPherson and basic training camps scattered throughout Georgia and the South, the city emerged as a major military administration and supply center during World War II. Over 2.5 million military personnel passed through Atlanta's two major train terminals and downtown prospered as men and women in uniform crowded into bars, restaurants, stores, and theaters clustered around the railroad depots and the Five Points central business district (Martin 1987, III:61). Thirty-seven war-related federal departments and agencies established regional headquarters in the city, occupying many downtown office buildings and converting existing warehouses and parking garages into office facilities for civilian and military workers. In addition, 110 new industries and manufacturing plants were established in the metropolitan Atlanta area, with the 1943 opening of the Boeing Company's Bell Bomber plant near Marietta,

Celebrations Along Peachtree Street on Victory Over Japan Day (VJ Day), August 14, 1945. Source: Atlanta Journal-Constitution *Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.*



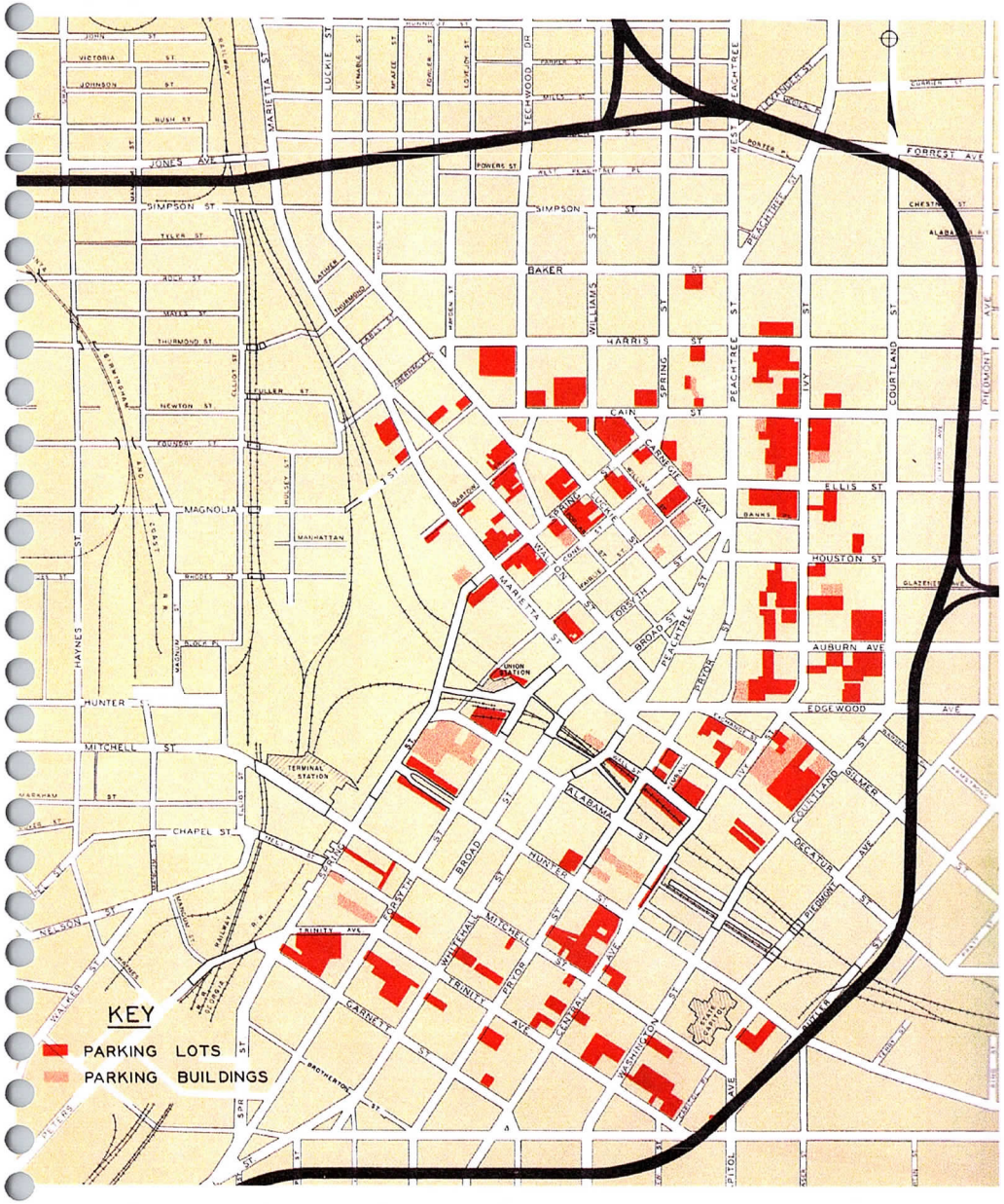
Georgia being among the largest. It provided almost 40,000 jobs for local residents. Finally, the U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) designated the Atlanta airport as a military airfield and over the course of the war, the government lengthened and paved the runways to facilitate emergency takeoffs and landings of B-29 bombers (Martin 1987, III:57, 75–78).

In many ways, World War II would prove to have more of a cultural and economic impact on Atlanta and the South than the Civil War. Military mobilization and the infusion of federal funding brought well-paying jobs into a region that had long been dependent on agriculture. In turn, these jobs would establish the foundation for significant demographic, economic, and social changes that created the postwar growth of the Sunbelt region throughout the southeastern and southwestern United States in the late twentieth century (Wilson and Ferris 1989, 592). The influx of military personnel to Atlanta and Georgia from other parts of the country exposed them to the state's mild climate and low cost of living. Meanwhile veteran benefit programs, like the G.I. Bill of Rights, opened the door to higher education for returning soldiers and helped make home ownership affordable for both southerners and non-southerners alike (Bartley 1983, 180).

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS AND EMERGING MODERN ARCHITECTURE AFTER WORLD WAR II: 1945-1950.

As a place where private corporate interests had always dictated the direction of public policy, Atlanta's governing coalition of public officials and the downtown business elite quickly turned their attention towards transportation planning and modernizing the city's existing infrastructure. In the decades before and after the war, Mayor William Hartsfield, working in tandem with the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce and the guiding hand of Coca-Cola president Robert Woodruff, established a governing coalition of whites and the minority African American leadership to achieve major economic development initiatives for the city and metropolitan area. The demise of Georgia's all-white Democratic Primary in 1945 and corresponding rise in the number of African American registered voters placed the city's black leadership on more solid footing in their dealings with the white business elite and forced Hartsfield to adopt a moderate racial tone in local political dealings (Bayor 1996, 14–16).

Although the railroads remained the lifeblood of Atlanta's economy after World War II, business and civic leaders staked future economic growth to the emerging airline and interstate highway transportation sectors. With the lifting of wartime rationing on



gasoline and rubber tires, traffic skyrocketed and the Atlanta central business district became jammed at rush hour with automobiles and streetcars clogging the city's narrow surface streets. Traffic mitigation and parking became the most pressing issues after the war according to city planners, politicians, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Central Atlanta Improvement Association (later changed to the Central Atlanta Association, and then Central Atlanta Progress in 1967), a group formed in 1941 among city merchants to advocate for issues directly affecting downtown businesses (Jenkins 1977, 16–19). Anticipating these looming transportation problems, in 1944 the Atlanta Board of Aldermen and the Georgia State Highway Department had commissioned H. W. Lochner and Company, a private consulting firm based in Chicago, Illinois, to study the city's existing transit infrastructure and produce a list of recommendations for improvement (Martin 1987, III:106).

The 1946 Lochner Expressway Plan. Atlanta's vision for its transportation future was unveiled in January 1946 with the release of the *Highway and Transportation Plan for Atlanta, Georgia* by H. W. Lochner and Company and DeLeuw, Cather and Company (Hancock 1945). Recommendations in the report

Route of the Downtown Expressway as First Proposed in the 1946 Lochner Plan. Source: Highway and Transportation Plan for Atlanta, *Georgia, H.W. Lochner & Company with DeLeuw, Cather & Company.*

(commonly referred to as the "Lochner Plan") included: improving vehicular traffic flow along downtown surface streets; building new off-street parking facilities, preferably at the perimeter of downtown; and developing a new passenger rail terminal in northwest Atlanta. (H.W. Lochner and Company and De Leuw, Cather and Company 1946). The centerpiece of the document however, was a 32.5-mile, limited-access expressway system that would provide direct automobile access through the city's central business district. The proposed network of six expressways would radiate from downtown Atlanta to the airport and the city's growing suburbs of the outlying metropolitan region (*Atlanta Magazine* 1961a, 17; Central Atlanta Progress, Atlanta Downtown Improvement District 2014). The system was designed to handle projected traffic volumes for the year 1970, and highways from the north, northeast, east, west, southeast, and southwest would converge at the planned "Downtown Connector," a 1.7-mile stretch of highway that closely skirted the east side of the city center. The transportation consultants couched the proposed locations of the connector in economic terms, claiming "the neighborhoods in Atlanta through which it would be feasible to purchase suitable rights-of-way [are] the most depreciated and least attractive" and "most in need of…rejuvenation" (H.W. Lochner and Company and De Leuw, Cather and Company 1946).

ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY SHOULD BE PROUD OF THEIR PROGRESSIVE CITIZENS... THEY WANT MODERN, PROGRESSIVE METROPOLITAN ATLANTA AND THEY WANT TO INSURE ATLANTA'S PLACE AS THE GATE CITY OF THE SOUTH.

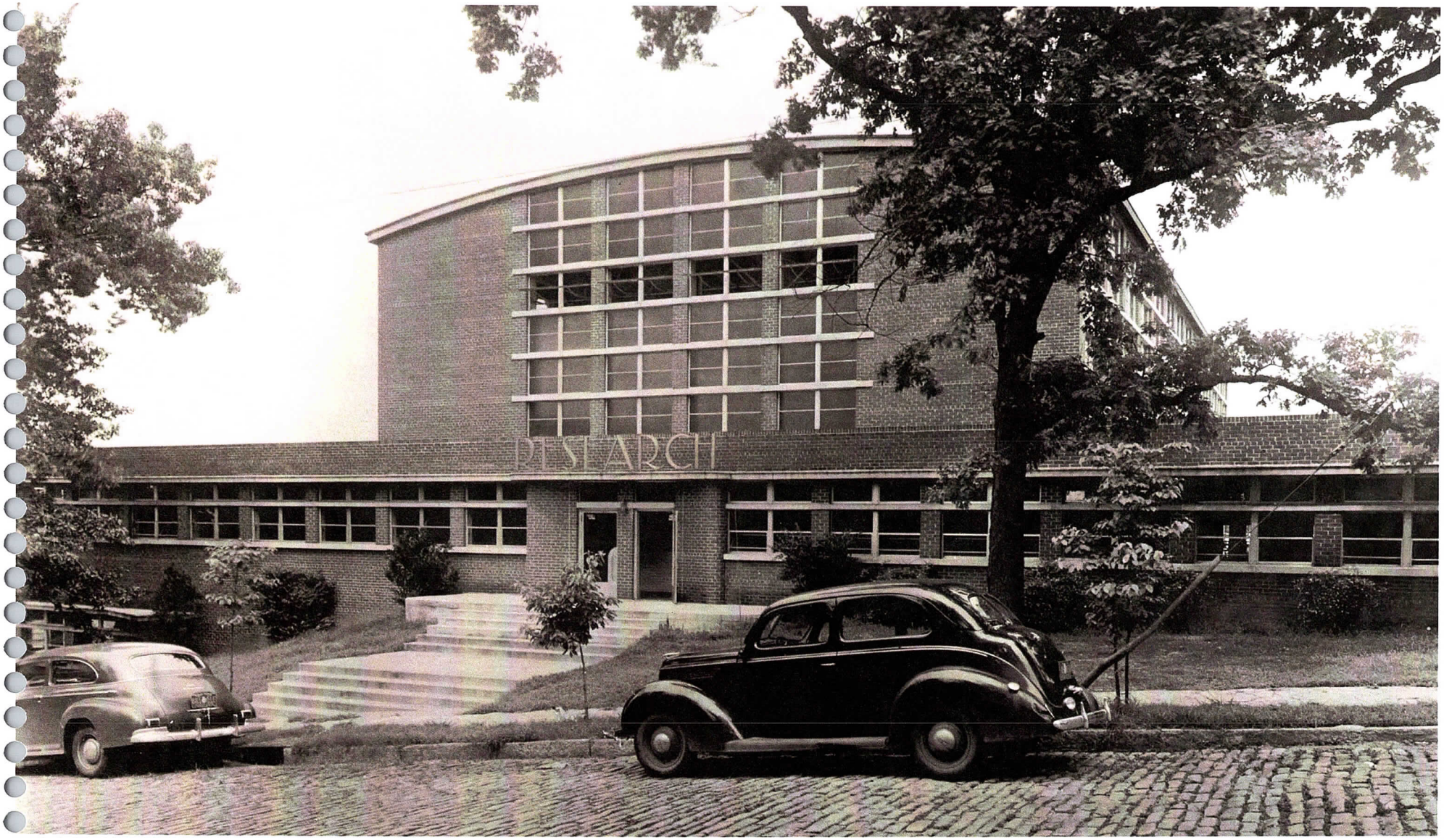
-Robert L. McDougall, Chairman of the Citizens Bond Commission, 1946.
Atlanta Constitution, *August 15, 1946*

Hailing Atlanta as the "Capital of the Southeast" and noting, "there is every indication that Atlanta is approaching a period of great growth and prosperity," Lochner argued, "improved highway and transit facilities are essential if the community is to capitalize on its natural assets. Failure to take prompt action would not only retard growth but add to the overall cost of the capital improvements required." The report's authors optimistically estimated the highway would take 10 years to build at a total cost of $47.7 million with half of the financing paid with city and county bonds and the other half provided by the state and Federal Government (H.W. Lochner and Company and De Leuw, Cather and Company 1946, xiii).

Modern Design and the Georgia Institute of Technology School of Architecture. In 1945, Atlanta's built environment had changed little in the previous 16 years as the economic collapse of the Great Depression in 1929 and material shortages in support of the war effort brought an end to all large-scale construction projects in the city. The last skyscraper erected in Atlanta prior to WWII, the William-Oliver Building, was completed in 1930 and private hotel, office, and residential development after that date was virtually non-existent throughout the city (Bush-Brown 1976, 32; O. Harris 2015). While pre-war Atlanta architects and firms had designed a number of notable commercial and government buildings in the ornamental, yet early modernist Art

The Georgia Institute of Technology Hinman Research Building, Bush-Brown, Gailey and Heffernan, Architects, circa 1940. Source: Georgia Tech History Digital Portal.

Deco, Streamline Moderne, and Stripped Classical styles, downtown remained untouched by the functional variant of modern architecture that had arose in Europe after World War I and strove for a new model for structural design based on mechanical efficiency (Craig 1995, 131, 133). Save for a few late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century mid-rise skyscrapers that



dotted the skyline in the vicinity of Five Points, the architectural character of downtown Atlanta, like most other mid-sized Southern cities of the era, was generally defined by Victorian-era urban development consisting of various revival style, low-rise, red brick and terra-cotta-clad masonry buildings (Lyon and Atlanta Historical Society 1976, 9–10).

To a great extent, the generation of postwar graduates of the Georgia Technical Institute's (Georgia Tech) School of Architecture would leave the greatest mark on downtown Atlanta's rapidly changing urban form in the Postwar Era.[1] The department was established in 1908 as one of the first public architecture programs in the South with a curriculum that placed a strong emphasis on engineering along with the multi-disciplinary approach of classical instruction and drawing espoused by the L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. In 1926, Harold Bush-Brown succeeded Francis Palmer Smith as the chairman of Georgia Tech's architecture program. It was under his directorship during the 1930s and 1940s that the school began to embrace the shifting attitudes within the profession to the European variant of modernism that favored function over ornament in building design (Bush-Brown 1976, 32–34; Georgia Institute of Technology, College of Architecture 2014a).

Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier (neé Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris) along with Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe of the German Bauhaus School emerged as the leading proponents of the new European design aesthetic in the 1920s. After Adolph Hitler's rise to power in Germany, the Nazi Party attacked modern art and architecture as "degenerate" and forced the Bauhaus School to close in 1933. Over the remainder of the decade, Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and other leading modernists, including architect and designer, Marcel Breuer, immigrated to the United States where they continued their practices and became involved in academic instruction. Both Gropius and Breuer began teaching at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, while Mies van der Rohe became the director of the Illinois Institute of Technology's (IIT) new architecture program in Chicago. In 1938, Gropius was appointed chairman of Harvard's Department of Architecture and quickly set about replacing the program's Beaux Arts curriculum with a new approach to functional design based on the Bauhaus concepts (Trachtenberg and Hyman 2003, 507–508).

At the urging of Bush-Brown, Paul M. (P.M.) Heffernan joined the faculty of the Georgia Tech School of Architecture during this period, becoming an associate professor within the program in 1938 and full professor in 1944. Heffernan had received his bachelors

1 Originally the Department of Architecture, it became the School of Architecture in 1948 and the College of Architecture in 1975 (Craig 2013a)

degree in Architectural Engineering from Iowa State University in 1929 and his Master of Architecture degree from Harvard University in 1935 (Georgia Institute of Technology, College of Architecture 2014b). According to architect and Georgia Tech graduate Stanley P. "Mickey" Steinberg (B. Arch 1949), Bush-Brown, Heffernan and James H. "Dot" Gailey, formed the nucleus of the School of Architecture in the years after the war:

> *Those were the three key people. Heffernan was a designer. Harold Bush Brown was an administrator. He was an academian, you know. He knew how to run a school. He was an architect. And a fellow named Dot Gailey who was one of the older kids there. But he was sort of the, I called it the technical part of the school. He would teach the courses in shades and shadows and stuff like that. Heffernan was the designer. The three of them had their own little firm. They called it Bush Brown, Gailey and Heffernan. And they did buildings. They designed buildings primarily for Georgia Tech (M. Steinberg 2015).*

Although educated in the Beaux Arts tradition, Heffernan brought Bauhaus modern design to Georgia Tech. Heffernan collaborated with Bush-Brown, Gailey and Heffernan, Architects on the design of the school's Hinman Research Building (1939, additions in 1947-1950), which is credited as one of the first examples of Bauhaus modernism built in Georgia and the South (Craig 2013a). He became a partner with Bush-Brown, Gailey and Heffernan, Architects in 1944 and designed subsequent modernist buildings on the Georgia Tech campus, including the Hightower Textile Engineering Building (1949, razed 2002), the Architecture Building (1952), and the Price Gilbert Memorial Library (1953) (Gournay et al. 1993, 157).

While enrollment at Georgia Tech's School of Architecture dropped steeply during the Great Depression and World War II, it swelled with returning veterans who took advantage of the education provisions in the G.I. Bill. With this generation of new students in the late 1940s and 1950s, modernism would experience a full flowering within the program. Under Bush-Brown's leadership, an industrial design department was established in 1940 and other Harvard-educated, practicing architects including H. Griffith Edwards, Thomas Godfrey, and Samuel T. Hurst, among others, were brought into the department as professors, visiting instructors, and design critics. Each was greatly influenced by the new, modern approach to functional design introduced at Harvard by Walter Gropius (Bush-Brown 1976, 29, 32–34,43). Jerome "Jerry" Cooper, who received his Bachelor's Degree in Architecture (B. Arch) from Georgia Tech in 1955, remembers:

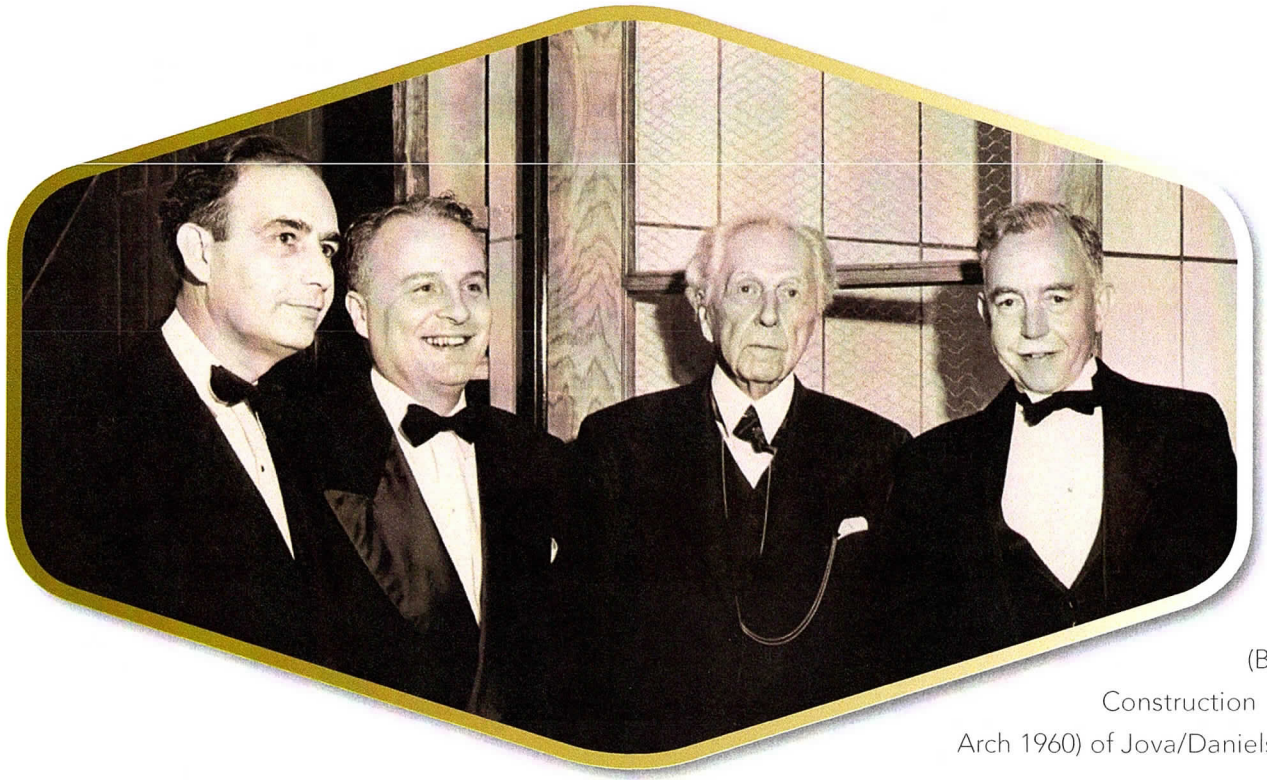
> *Their [the Harvard-educated architects] whole approach was that any of the architecture that was done before modern times was not worth much. It may be interesting, but it was not worth much (Cooper 2015).*

Following Bush-Brown's retirement, P.M. Heffernan became Director of the School of Architecture in 1956. Rather than abandoning the Beaux Arts, he incorporated its tenets into a modernist instruction regimen that focused on an economy of design driven by postwar mechanical innovations and a diversification of industrially produced building materials, such as steel, glass, plastics, and pre-stressed or pre-cast concrete. "Students [at Georgia Tech] were educated in the Bauhaus rigor, but not indoctrinated in it," said Cooper (Cooper 2004). According to former student, Preston S. Stevens, Jr., (B. Arch 1953), "we never heard the word 'style' at Georgia Tech. We were not expected to copy...we were to design with an open mind" (Stevens 2004).

Mickey Steinberg concurred, explaining that the emphasis on teaching at Georgia Tech was on problem solving and hands-on training rather than the more theoretical-based education he received at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT):

> *...they [the faculty at Georgia Tech] weren't locking us into any particular, in my opinion, to any particular type of architecture. ... People say, 'What's the most important thing I learned?' Well, I tell people that I learned that in studying architecture was the ability to solve problems...we didn't talk a lot about theory. All right? We did... it was about thinking through a problem, answer the problem. But first you've got to understand it. And you can see that's the way we approached everything. What's the problem? You know? And that's really what I learned at Georgia Tech was just make sure you know...how to solve problems (M. Steinberg 2015).*

In 1954, the School of Architecture established a city planning program, followed by a building construction program in 1958 (Craig 2013a). Nationally known modern architects were invited to speak at Georgia Tech including Gropius, Marcel Breuer, I.M. Pei, and most notably, Frank Lloyd Wright, who visited the school in 1952 and would have a profound impact on many students' development (Bush-Brown 1976, 43). The number of Georgia Tech alumni who graduated just before and after World War II represents a veritable "Who's Who List" of those professionals who helped shape Atlanta's late-twentieth-century, modern skyline: John Portman (B. Arch 1950) and Mickey Steinberg of Edwards and Portman (later, Portman and Associates); James Harrison Finch (B. Arch 1936), Miller Barnes (B. Arch 1932) and Caraker Paschal (B. Arch 1948) of Finch, Alexander, Barnes, Rothschild, and Paschal (FABRAP); George T. Heery (B.

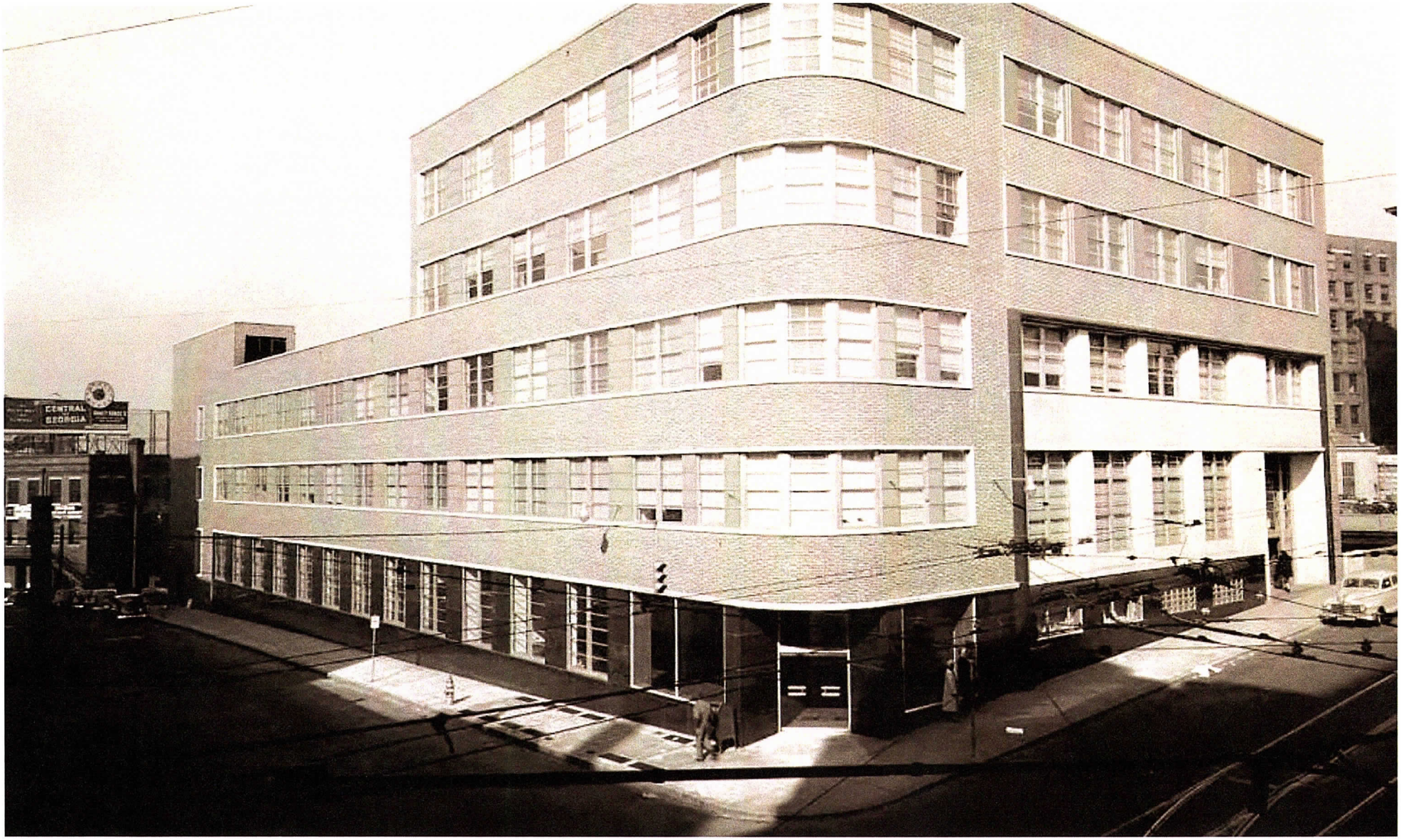


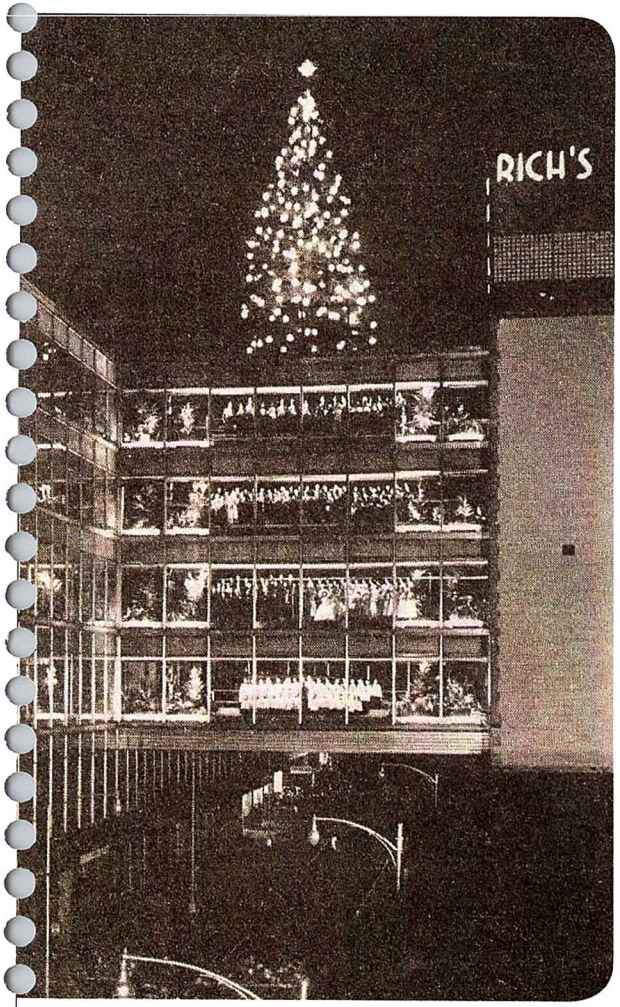
Frank Lloyd Wright's Visit to Georgia Tech, 1952. Pictured from left to right are: Paul M. Heffernan, Unknown, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Harold Bush-Brown. Source: Georgia Tech History Digital Portal.

Arch 1951) of Heery and Heery; Jerry Cooper of Cooper Carry Associates; Richard L. Aeck (B. Arch 1936) of Aeck Associates; Thomas Ventulett (B.Arch 1958), of Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback and Associates (TVS); Preston Stevens, Jr. of Stevens and Wilkinson; Theron "T.Z" Chastain (B. and Master's [M.A.], Civil Engineering 1943 and 1947) of Chastain and Tindell, Engineers; Lawrence L. Gellerstedt (B. Chemical Engineering 1945) of Beers Construction Company; and Stanley L. Daniels (B. Arch 1960) of Jova/Daniels/Busby, among a host of others.

Downtown Improvements and Initial Private Development. To finance the Lochner-recommended expressway project and a slate of other major capital improvements, a $40.5 million joint bond resolution was placed before City of Atlanta and Fulton County voters in November 1946. After passage of the measure, the city received $20.4 million in funding for airport, traffic, and sewer improvements along with new construction and renovation projects for various fire stations, libraries, and public parks. Fulton County dedicated $14.5 million of its share toward transportation and plans

The Constitution Building, 1948. Source: Lane Brothers Commercial Photographers Photographic Collection, 1920-1976. Photographic Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.





The Lighting of the Rich's Great Christmas Tree on the Crystal Bridge, 1952. Source: Givens Baker, Rich's of Atlanta: The Story of a Store SInce 1867, 1953.

for construction of a new courthouse annex, among other items (Martin 1987, III:119, 122). The City of Atlanta, along with Fulton and DeKalb counties established the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) in 1947 to assist with the planning and coordination for future growth in the region. The commission was the first multi-county and publically funded planning agency in the United States and the predecessor of the modern Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) (Marsh et al. 1975).

In 1948, Atlanta celebrated the centennial anniversary of its municipal charter and two major commercial developments heralded the start of postwar growth in the city. The new buildings also introduced new construction methods, materials, and modern design expressions that moved beyond the Art Deco and Modern Classic characterizing much of the city's early twentieth-century commercial and government architecture (Craig 1995). In January 1948, the *Atlanta Constitution* moved into its new offices and newspaper publishing plant housed in a five-story building at 143 Alabama Street, SW, on the northwest corner of the Forsyth Street intersection, across from the newspaper's former Victorian-era office (Lorenzo B. Wheeler, 1885; razed 1967). Designed by the Atlanta architectural firm, Robert and Company, in the Streamlined Moderne style and built at a cost of $3 million, the curving façade of the *Atlanta Constitution* Building was clad on its upper stories in alternating bands of red brick and ribbon windows. A 72-foot bas-relief mural by sculptor Julian Hoke Harris, entitled "History of the Press" was set above the property's main entrance along Forsyth Street (Buono 2004; Cardenas and Morris 2009).

The Rich's Store for Homes (razed 1994) opened a few months later and provided an even more dramatic architectural impression (Martin 1987, III:144). Designed by the local partnership of Toombs and Creighton, the store annex was among Atlanta's earliest examples of functional design associated with the German Bauhaus tradition. Built at a cost of $5.5 million, the Store for Homes addition was connected to the main department store via a four-story, glass and aluminum


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curtain wall sky bridge, commonly known as the "Crystal Bridge," which spanned Forsyth Street below. Because the state owned air rights over all public rights-of-way, construction of the skyway became a precedent-setting development within the state, requiring changes to Georgia's zoning laws allowing private entities the right to erect structures spanning public streets (Clemmons 2012:91–92; Gournay et al. 1993:16). The Crystal Bridge (also razed in 1994) would become more widely known among Atlanta residents as the site for the "Lighting of the Great Tree," a popular Christmas tradition established by Rich's on Thanksgiving evening in 1948.

End of Atlanta's Streetcar System. Although development of the Atlanta Expressway was expected to start once World War II ended, it would not be until 1948 when the first contracts were let for construction. A northern leg of the expressway between North Avenue and Brookwood Station and the southern segment from Richardson Street to the Fulton County line (just south of the Airport) were the first to get underway (*Atlanta Magazine* 1961a, 17). Construction of the Atlanta Expressway System predated the authorization of the Federal Interstate Highway System by eight years placing Atlanta in the select company of only a few American cities, including Columbus, Ohio, Miami, New York, Portland, Oregon and Washington D.C. with local highway routes approved and under development by 1950 (Rose 1990, 103).

Enhancement of existing airport facilities was another priority during this period as Hartsfield sought to "treat a passenger like a king on the ground" (Shavin and Galphin 1982, 255). The reality for those flying to Atlanta was more modest. As plans were made to build a larger passenger terminal at the airport, in 1948 operations moved into a repurposed Quonset hut that had been purchased by the city as surplus war material (City of Atlanta, Department of Aviation 2014; Martin 1987, III:91). Despite this temporary arrangement, the following year Southern Airways established its home-operations in Atlanta, making daily round trip flights to six cities (*Atlanta Magazine* 1961b, 17).

In April 1949, Atlanta's 78-year history with the streetcar came to an end as the Georgia Power Company completed the transition to a public transit system powered by rubber-tired, "trackless trolleys" electrified by the streetcars overhead wires and gas-powered

(Opposite) *Removal of Streetcar Tracks on Forsyth Street, circa 1950. Source: Tracy O'Neal Photographic Collection, 1923-1975, Photographic Collection. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.*

motorbuses. The following year, Georgia Power began transferring its transportation holdings to the private Atlanta Transit Company. With over 450 trackless trolleys operating along 36 lines, Atlanta would become the national leader in trackless trolley operations during the 1950s (the Atlanta Transit Company fully converted to motorbuses in 1963 and the overhead wiring in downtown was removed shortly thereafter). Meanwhile, the obsolete streetcar stock was sold off to Korea and the intricate network of interweaving track in city streets was either pulled up or buried beneath paving (Carson 1981; Shavin and Galphin 1982, 271). With the termination of the streetcars and work already underway on the modern expressway system and airport facilities, Atlanta's business and civic leaders showed a willingness to jettison or refashion the city's older transportation infrastructure in favor of attracting future economic growth through modern, twentieth-century modes of transit based on the private automobile, motor freight trucking, and airline passenger and cargo service (Hartshorn and Association of American Geographers 1976, 5).

THE AUTO-ORIENTED CITY, GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT, AND THE ONSET OF THE POSTWAR BUILDING BOOM: 1950-1960.

As Atlanta entered the 1950s, the central city's urban population of 327,081 stood on par with that of nearby Birmingham, Alabama (326,037); however, both municipalities lagged behind other major southern cities such as Houston (596,163), New Orleans (570,445), Dallas (434,462), and Memphis (396,000) (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1998b). World War II had bolstered Birmingham and Memphis as major southern industrial and manufacturing centers into the 1950s, whereas Atlanta's local economy remained tied to transportation, retail, and the financial sectors (Wilson and Ferris 1989, 1454–1455). Within the growing Sunbelt Region, only Dallas and Houston eclipsed Atlanta's total retail sales for fiscal year 1949 and with almost $12 billion in bank clearings, Atlanta trailed only Dallas among southern financial centers. Although the Atlanta Municipal Airport had dipped to seventh among U.S. Airports in volume of commercial traffic, the downturn would prove to only be temporary. The city's airport would soon reclaim its spot as the "busiest air transfer hub" in the world as it embarked on planning and construction of new concourses and a modern passenger terminal in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Hartshorn and Association of American Geographers 1976, 5; Martin 1987, III:148–149).

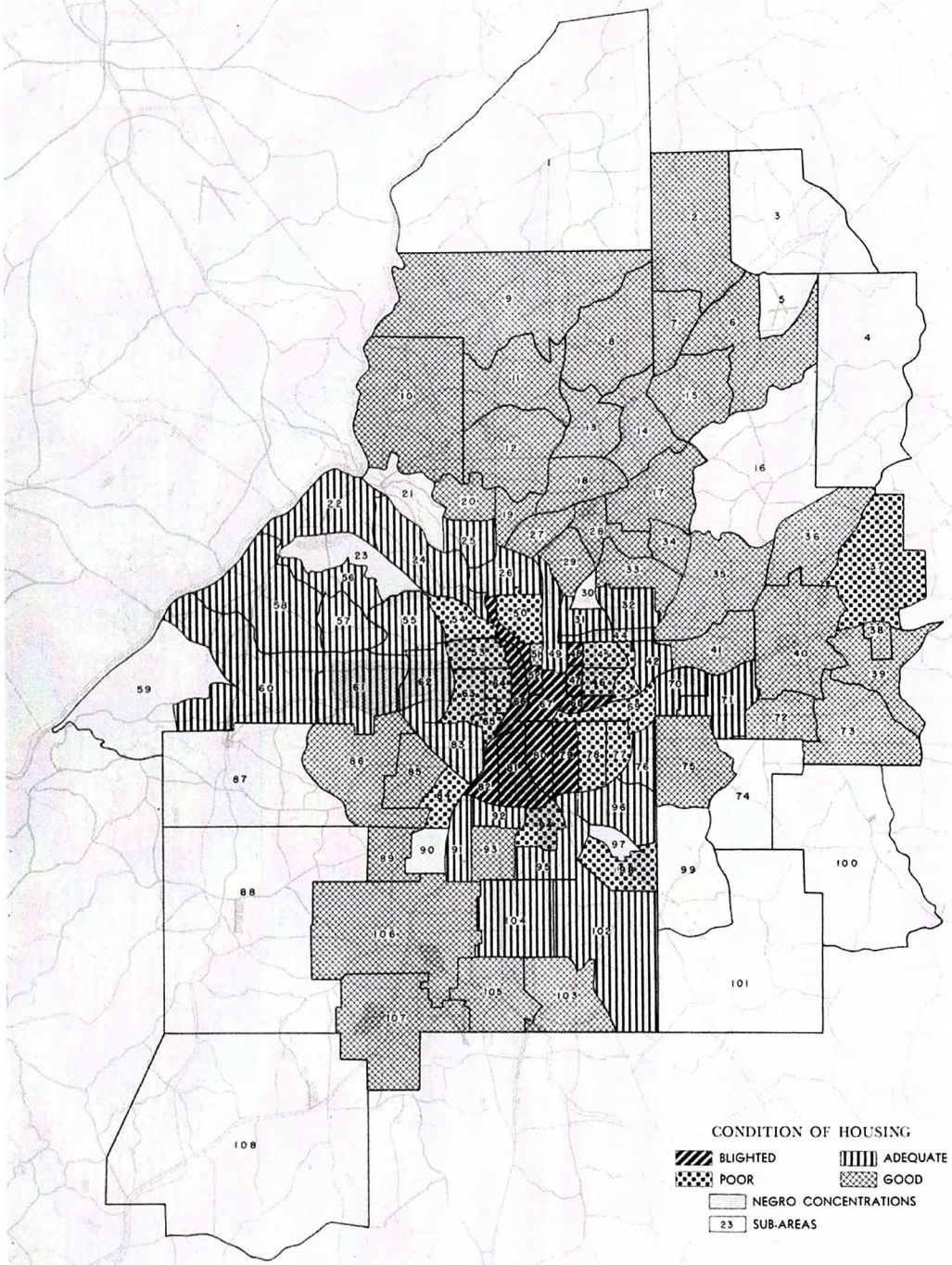
Locally, Atlanta's planners and politicians sought to confront the rising trend of postwar suburbanization in the metropolitan region. Relatively free of geographic limitations, the outward growth of the Atlanta area was spurred in large part by increased rates of car ownership and a boom in single-family housing construction as predominantly white, middle-class veterans returning from the war

flocked to suburban residential enclaves sprouting up on former agricultural land around the city. While the central city experienced an uptick in residents between 1940 and 1950, the population of metropolitan Atlanta, which included DeKalb and Fulton counties at the time, jumped more than 20 percent from 518,100 to 671,797 over the same period (Martin 1987, III:236; Metropolitan Planning Commission 1955).

With the strong support of the business community, Hartsfield pursued a "Plan of Improvement" campaign in 1950 and 1951 as a means of counteracting suburban white flight and strengthening Atlanta's declining tax base. The central tenet of the campaign was to annex the rapidly growing, unincorporated commercial, industrial and residential parts of surrounding Fulton County in order to consolidate county and municipal services and maintain majority white control in the face of rising African American political power in Atlanta's central core. Following voter approval in November 1951 and subsequent ratification by the state legislature in January 1952, the city added 100,000 new residents and tripled the size of its municipal land area from 34.7 to 118 square miles (Bayor 1996, 85–87; Stone 1989, 30).

Urban Renewal, Routing the Grady Curve, and City Parking. Construction of the Atlanta Expressway, urban renewal, and a shortage of downtown parking caused by rising automobile dependency among suburban commuters, played a significant role in reshaping land use within the downtown after World War II. Clearance of black and low-income white neighborhoods in close proximity to the central business district had been a major planning and policy initiative among Atlanta's business interests since the 1930s. Following passage of the Federal Housing Act of 1949, government funding was made available for urban renewal projects throughout the country and would cover two-thirds of the cost associated with planning, land acquisition, and implementation of local programs. The practice resumed after the war and became closely tied to federal housing initiatives and highway construction.

In 1950, the Federal Government granted the Atlanta Housing Authority almost $3 million for the purchase of "slum areas" that would be cleared and redeveloped for low income housing by private developers (Martin 1987, III:163). The *Up Ahead* regional planning report, released in 1952 by the MPC, in partnership with the Central Atlanta Association, prioritized six African American residential areas near the city center, including large parts of the Auburn Avenue commercial district, to be cleared using Urban Renewal funding. Unofficial city policy during this period involved the removal of African American communities on the east of the central business district and relocation of those residents to housing projects in designated outlying areas on the sparsely settled west side



Identification of Atlanta's Sub-Standard Housing. Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Up Ahead - A Regional Land Use Plan for Metropolitan Atlanta, *1952.*

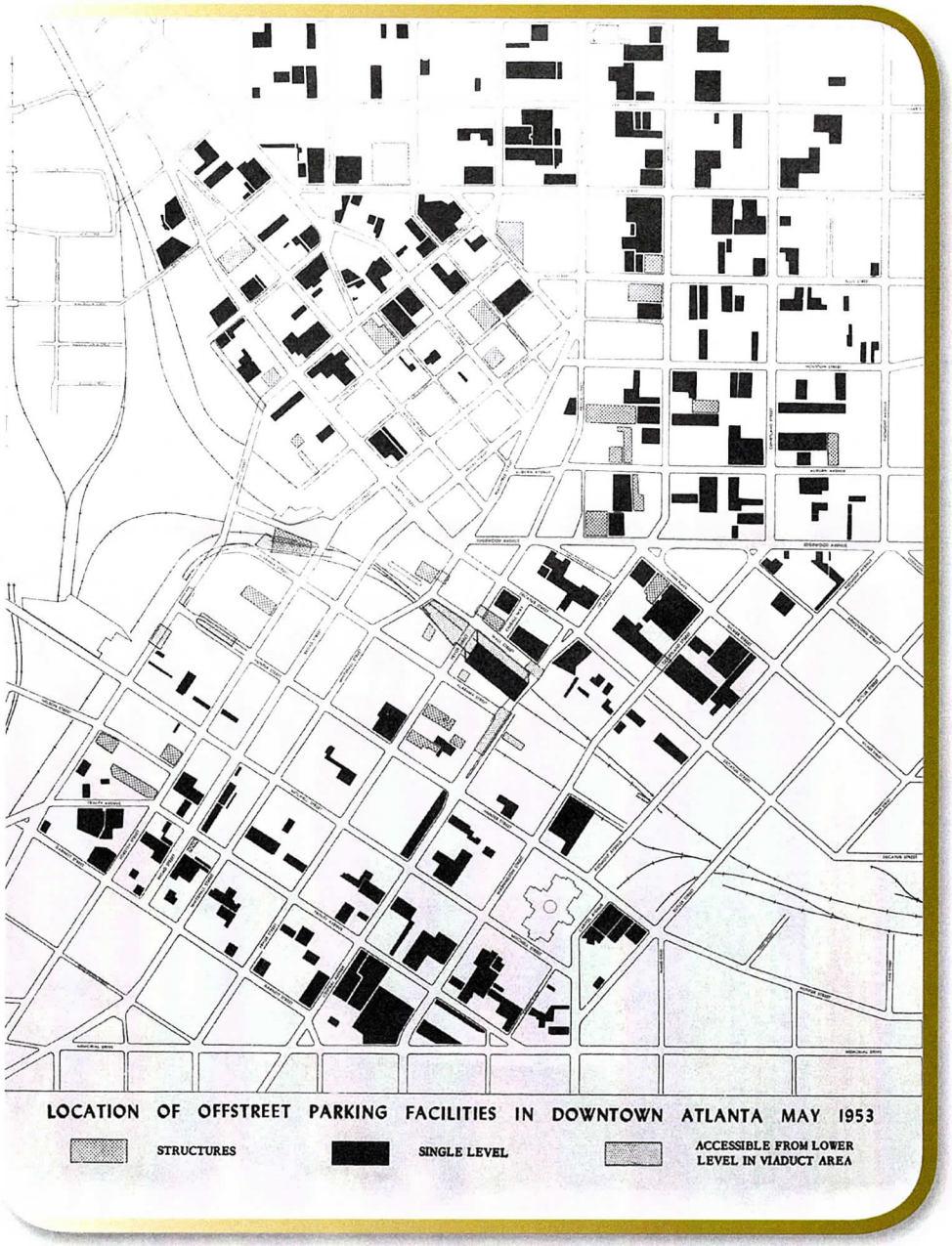
of Atlanta. However, urban renewal initiatives remained moribund in Atlanta during the early 1950s; held up by opposition among private landowners and real estate companies to public housing redevelopment of large parts of the city (Stone 1989, 39–41). Slum clearance activities started to resume on the east side in 1956 when the city began purchasing 316 acres of land in the African American Buttermilk Bottom community as part of the designated Butler Street redevelopment district, which roughly stretched from North Avenue to DeKalb Avenue (Martin 1987, III:305). Under the Hartsfield administration, the city only built 3,008 of its quota of 5,500 public housing units and jump-starting urban renewal projects would take on a greater emphasis within Atlanta electoral politics during the 1960s.

Problems associated with the acquisition of right-of-way through downtown, national steel shortages, and planning revisions also hampered construction of the Atlanta expressway during the early 1950s (*Atlanta Magazine* 1961a). In 1954, state traffic engineers proposed shifting the expressways route three blocks to the east, ostensibly so it "would pass through less valuable property and would allow more flexibility in handling traffic leaving the expressway to the west." For downtown business owners and city planners however, the new route would also serve as a mechanism for urban renewal and provide a physical buffer between the central business district and the densely settled African American neighborhoods located on the eastern and southern edges of downtown (Stone 1989, 32; Keating 2001, 91).

In December of 1954, construction bids were let for six highway underpasses in the city between Spring Street and Courtland Street as work resumed on the long-awaited connector. By curving the path of the downtown expressway (now known as the "Grady Curve") to the south and east, the highway would run between the Capitol Homes housing project and Grady Hospital, destroying four blocks of the low income residential development, and cut right through the heart of the traditional African American business district along Auburn Avenue (Hancock 1953, 11).

Two years later, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal Highway Act of 1956, which allowed the Federal Government to assume 90 percent of interstate construction costs with the state paying the remaining 10 percent. Relieved of its funding duties for the downtown expressway, the Atlanta-Fulton County Bond Commission was dissolved (*Atlanta Magazine* 1961a). That same year, transportation engineers realized that the capacity of the north and south legs of the expressway was insufficient as traffic counts were already in excess of the projected volumes for 1970. To alleviate this shortcoming and allow for the more efficient movement of freight traffic, plans were already underway within the State Highway Department to build a $40 million, 55-mile long ring route surrounding downtown (Martin 1987, III:237, 241).

The need for convenient parking also contributed to a reduction of density for downtown's built environment. While the Lochner Plan had called for a coordinated program to develop off-street parking near expressway egress points and at the perimeter of the central business district, Atlanta was one of the few cities in the country unwilling to issue bonds for the construction of public parking facilities. Deciding to forego a top-down planned approach, the Hartsfield administration looked instead to the private real estate market to meet the growing demands for downtown parking (Martin 1987, III:248; Riley 1955, 10). Between 1949 and 1956, the amount



Offstreet Parking in Downtown Atlanta, 1953. Note that the majority of parking facilities are "single level" surface lots. Source: Planning Atlanta City Planning Maps, Georgia State University.

of off-street parking jumped from an estimated 3,272 spaces to 21,543, as real estate developers demolished buildings throughout the central business district to make way for parking lots and multi-story garages. In 1955 alone, downtown parking garage capacity grew by 72 percent. By the end of the decade an estimated 50 percent of downtown land had been dedicated toward automobile use in some form, whether it be the expressway and interchanges, surface streets, or parking (Martin 1987, III:260; Stone 1989, 82).

Public Development in Lower Downtown: The Evening School, State Capitol Complex, and Grady Hospital. As the capital of the State of Georgia, the county seat for Fulton County, and regional center for several federal agencies, a sizeable portion of downtown Atlanta has been devoted to institutional and public office development since the late nineteenth century. A concentration of

government buildings within close proximity to the Georgia State Capitol (1889, Edbrooke and Burnham) began to take shape with the completion of the nearby Fulton County Courthouse in 1914 (A. Ten Eyck Brown) and continued into the 1920s and 1930s with the construction of Atlanta City Hall (1929-30, G. Lloyd Preacher), the State Highway Board Building (1931, A. Ten Eyck Brown, Morgan and Dillon, Architects) and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration Building (1939, Augustus E. Constantine) (Craig 1995, 127–131). Further to the west near Five Points and Terminal Station were the U.S. Courthouse and Post Office (1910, James Knox Taylor – now the Elbert P. Tuttle U.S. Court of Appeals), the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta (1918, razed), and the Post Office Building (1933, A. Ten Eyck Brown – now the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Building).

The continued growth of the Atlanta Center's Evening College (now Georgia State University) and expansion of government services at the federal, state, and local levels after World War II facilitated a host of new administrative office development in lower downtown Atlanta during the mid-1950s. While Fulton County erected an annex of the Fulton County Courthouse at 160 Pryor Street, SW in 1959 (Fulton County Court Complex; Charles L. Carnes Building), the creation of what would become the downtown campus of Georgia State University, expansion of the State Capitol complex, and construction of a new Grady Memorial Hospital represented the three most significant modern developments in the area during the decade.

To accommodate the large numbers of veterans returning to college under the G.I. Bill, the Atlanta Center's Evening College, under the leadership of Dr. George M. Sparks, took its first steps toward the development of a permanent downtown campus. The school purchased the 1920s era, six-story Ivy Street Parking Garage, converted it into classrooms and reopened the building (later renamed Wayne Kell Science Hall) in 1947 (Klipp 2013). Five years later, in 1952, the college began construction of the institution's first building at 33 Gilmer Street, SE, across from Hurt Park. The general purpose facility contained research classrooms, administrative offices, a cafeteria, and the school library on the top floor (Drummond and Kohr 2014, 6–7). Designed by local architects Cooper, Barrett, Skinner, Bond, and Cooper, Inc. the Classical Modern building displayed a strong Bauhaus influence with its rectilinear form, flat roof, and horizontal massing emphasized by thin bands of strip windows along the east and south walls. The education facility was clad in white Georgia marble similar to the material used in the 1949 renovation of the nearby Atlanta Auditorium by the Atlanta firm Robert and Company (Craig 1995, 125–126). Later named Sparks Hall, it was the first fully-air-conditioned building in the University System of Georgia when it opened in 1955 (*Georgia State University Magazine* 2013, 14–16).



Sparks Hall, circa 1955. Source: Office of Public Information Records, University Archives, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University.

Just a few blocks southwest of Sparks Hall, construction was proceeding on the largest building program undertaken by the state government of Georgia (Martin 1987, III:257). Four office properties, all designed by Atlanta lawyer and architect A. Thomas Bradbury (with Ralph E. Slay, associate) were completed in quick succession as part of the State Capitol complex development: the State Law and Justice Building (1954) at 40 Capitol Square; the State Agriculture Building (1954; with exterior bas-relief sculptures by Julian H. Harris) at 19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, NW; the Department of Labor Building (1955) at 244 Washington Street, SW; and the State Health Building (1958) at 47 Trinity Avenue. The exterior of each building was clad in Georgia white marble and they all shared the restrained monumental character and Stripped Classical design similar to the nearby State Highway Board and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration buildings. Only with his use of repetitive ribbon windows and cantilevered solar canopies in the design of the Transportation Building (1956 -1957; razed 2010), did Bradbury begin to show the influence of Bauhaus modernism in his civic work (Craig 1995, 127–131; Craig 2014).

At the county level, in 1952, the Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority opened the Hughes Spalding Medical Pavilion (now the Hughes Spalding Children's Hospital) at 35 Butler Street (now Jesse Hill, Jr. Drive) as a hospital for Atlanta's African American patients. The following year, the Fulton County Commission and the Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority agreed to provide $20 million in revenue certificates to fund construction of a new fireproof hospital. Hospital authorities also completed work on the Thomas K. Glenn Memorial Building, which provided office and laboratory space for the medical staff. The building was sited at 69 Jesse Hill, Jr. Drive, across from the main hospital (Moran 2012, 150, 174–175).

A 14-year effort on the part of the Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority to build a modern public hospital for City of Atlanta residents culminated with the opening of the new Grady Memorial Hospital in 1958 (Martin 1987, III:191). Planning began in the 1940s to replace the cramped and outdated buildings of the existing facility. Originally built in 1892 to serve 100,000 city residents, the hospital was treating 750,000 patients by the mid-twentieth century. Robert and Company unveiled a preliminary design for the new building in December 1945. The large, geometrically designed, H-shaped hospital plan included two of everything in order to maintain truly segregated medical facilities. Construction began on the new Grady Memorial Hospital in March 1954 and work continued over the next four years. When completed in January 1958 at a cost of $21 million, the facility was 21 stories tall and covered over 27.6 acres on the southeast edge of the lower central business district adjacent to the city's new downtown interstate corridor. The hospital contained 1,100 beds, 17 operating rooms, and automated elevators – one of the first buildings in the city to have them.



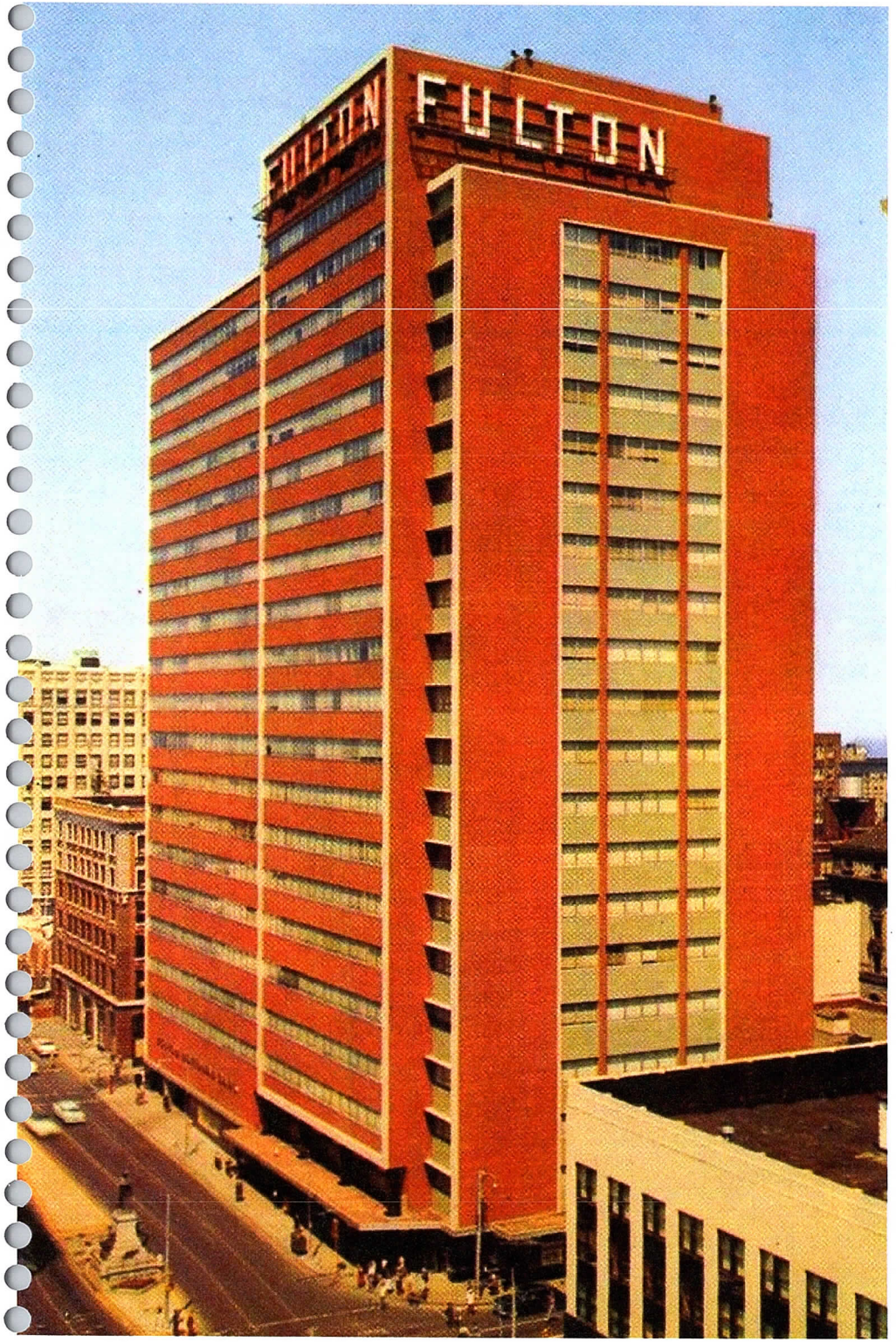
Grady Hospital, 1956. Source: Lane Brothers Commercial Photographers Photographic Collection, 1920-1976. Photographic Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.

At the grand opening, Mayor William Hartsfield praised the new Grady as the "fruition of a great dream of our community" (Moran 2012, 160–164). Over time, it would become the focal point of a larger district of healthcare facilities in lower downtown that also included the Fulton Department of Health and Wellness clinic (1961), located at 99 Jesse Hill, Jr. Drive, SE.

Reemergence of Large-Scale Private Development. The physical growth of Atlanta's municipal boundaries coincided with an expanding national economy during the 1950s. After the drawdown of the Korean War in 1953, loan profits soared for banks in Georgia and throughout the country as the financial industry entered a veritable "golden age." Receipts at Citizens and Southern National Bank had multiplied four-fold by 1956 and by the end of the decade, metro Atlanta banks boasted a combined revenue of over $1.6 billion. As limits on corporate lending were eased in the 1950s and 1960s, Atlanta's private capital began to flow into expanding businesses and industries, underwriting the city's explosive postwar development (Pogue 1992, 102; Martin 1987, III:317).

In 1954, top executives with the Fulton National Bank gathered at the corner of Forsyth and Marietta streets, on the site of the former U.S. Post Office and Customs House (1878; razed 1930), for the groundbreaking of the company's proposed 25-story, high-rise office building. The bank specialized in small business lending and its history in Atlanta reached back to 1910, when it opened its first office in the English-American Building (a.k.a. the Flatiron Building) on Peachtree Street. As the first skyscraper erected in downtown since the completion of the William-Oliver Building in 1930, the Fulton National Bank Building (now the 55 Marietta Street Building) symbolized the company's growth, having become the fourth largest bank in Atlanta by the 1950s (Westbrook and Burton 2009).

The design contract for the office tower project was awarded to the Texas-based practice Wyatt C. Hedrick and Company, which partnered with the local firm of Wilner and Millkey, Architects. The Henry C. Beck Company, also of Texas and a frequent collaborator of Hedrick, was selected as the general contractor for the project. The estimated cost of construction was listed at $10 million (Westbrook and Burton 2009). Hedrick's design for the new Atlanta skyscraper consisted of steel frame and curtain wall construction on a reinforced concrete foundation. The curtain walls were solidly sheathed in alternating bands of Georgia red brick (now painted) and ribbons of operable, awning windows (Appendix C:50). Reflecting the growing popularity of the automobile in downtown, the three basement levels featured an underground garage – possibly the first high-rise office building in the city to include integrated parking facilities. Reaching almost 300-feet in height and with 527,000 square feet of floor space, the Fulton National Bank Building was the tallest and largest office tower yet built in the city when it opened in October 1955 (Westbrook and Burton 2009). With highly



Fulton National Bank (now 55 Marietta Street), circa 1955. Source: Dexter Press, Inc., West Nyack, NY.

visible and illuminated "FULTON" signs emblazoned on the south and east sides of its roof, the building became an instant landmark over the low Atlanta skyline. The following year, the Atlanta Chapter of the Georgia Society of Professional Engineers listed it as one of the "ten outstanding engineering achievements" in the city (Martin 1987, III:245, 263).

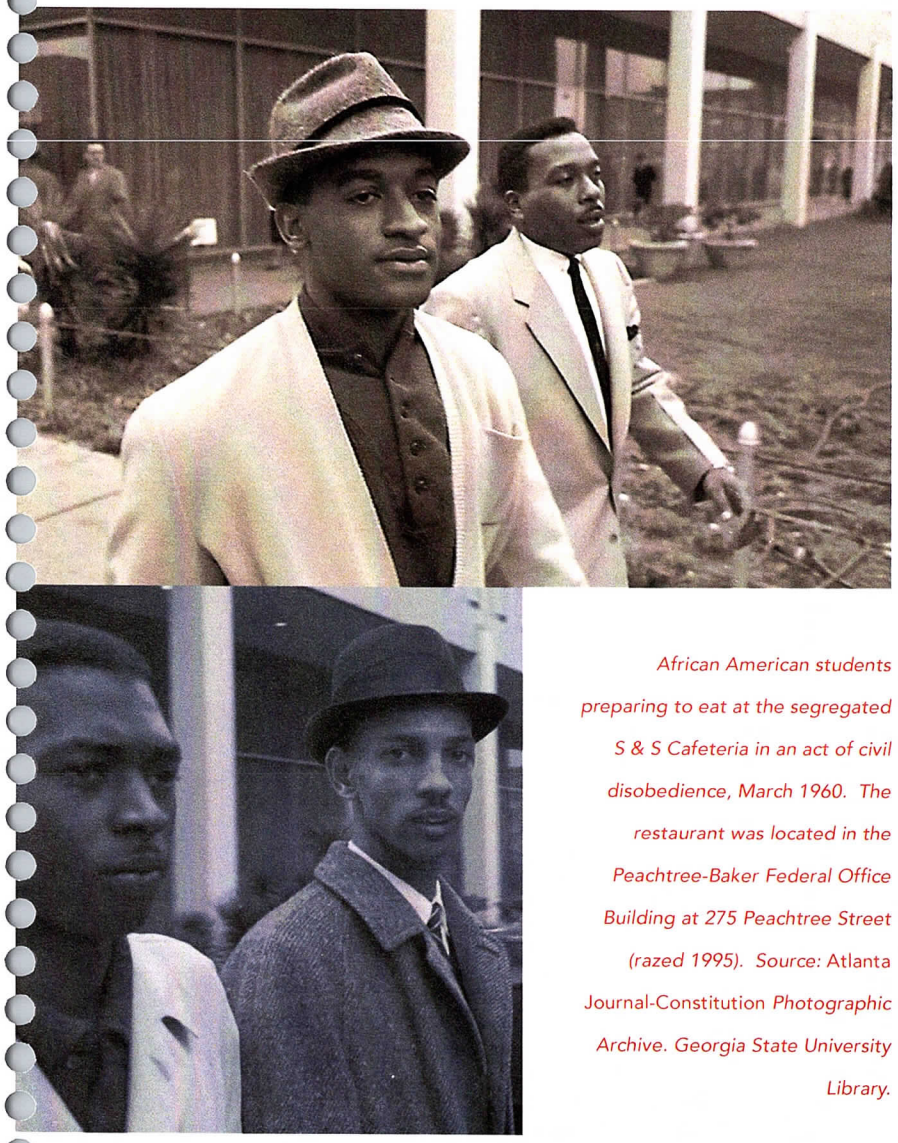
Although the 1959 opening of Lenox Square Mall in Buckhead started the shift of retail to the northern suburbs of the city, downtown Atlanta solidified its claim as a transportation hub, banking capital, and leading government center in the Southeast (Wilbur Smith and Associates et al. 1972, 12). In 1956, *U.S. News and World Report* announced, "Atlanta has recaptured the atmosphere of a boom town. You can sense it as soon as you set foot on the busy airport" (Martin 1987, III:235). Another writer described the city as "neurotically growth conscious," and the amount of public and private development occurring throughout downtown helped underscore that assertion. Local residents were eager to shed the architecture of their past in pursuit of that which was new, functional, or progressive in design. Upon returning to his native city in the 1950s after living in the Northeast, architect Cecil Alexander was surprised to find "that native Atlantans were more accepting of [contemporary architecture] than the

people that had moved here" (C. A. Alexander 2004). The point was illustrated at the close of the decade, when the once prestigious Kimball House hotel (1885, L.B. Wheeler), nicknamed the "Grand Old Lady of Five Points," was razed in 1959 and replaced with a five-and-a half-story parking garage (Martin 1987, III:294, 302).

CIVIL RIGHTS, FORWARD ATLANTA, AND REMAKING THE CITY'S SKYLINE: 1960-1970.

In 1960, the population of the Metropolitan Atlanta area, which now included Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett, reached the one million mark, making it the second fastest growing region in the United States (Helling and Sawicki 1994, 11). Over 800,000 square feet of rentable office space had been built in downtown Atlanta since the end of World War II, although this number was outpaced by almost four million square feet of commercial development in the Midtown area north of Baker Street during this same period. Residential construction was the engine that drove the bulk of the growth, accounting for 55 percent of the total value of construction in the metropolitan area between 1954 and 1960. Atlanta's manufacturing production also exploded over this period, with 14 million square feet of manufacturing and warehouse space erected between 1946 and 1955 – primarily in industrial parks located along the highways north and south of the city, near the airport (*Atlanta Magazine* 1962, 25–28). In contrast to Atlanta's rising economic fortunes, the City of Birmingham had begun to falter in the wake of violent bombings and race riots of the 1950s that severely tarnished the city's image and scared away investment by national corporations (Wilson and Ferris 1989, 1454–1455). While Atlanta's population within the city limits grew to 487,455 people over the previous decade, making it the 24th largest city in the United States, Birmingham fell to 36th place with a population of 340,887 residents - an increase of only 10 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1999, 14).

Student Sit-Ins and the Civil Rights Movement in Downtown Atlanta. Roiling beneath Atlanta's burgeoning development and the Chamber of Commerce's gloss of civic pride was the growing social turmoil of the Civil Rights Movement throughout the South in the 1950s. Hartsfield and Atlanta had largely managed to steer clear of the violence and damaging publicity that had rocked Little Rock, Arkansas, and Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama during this period. Atlanta maintained its moderate image in the face of growing racial unrest, unlike other southern cities where working and lower middle class whites dominated municipal politics. Hartsfield publicly presented Atlanta as the racially progressive "city too busy to hate," while privately working

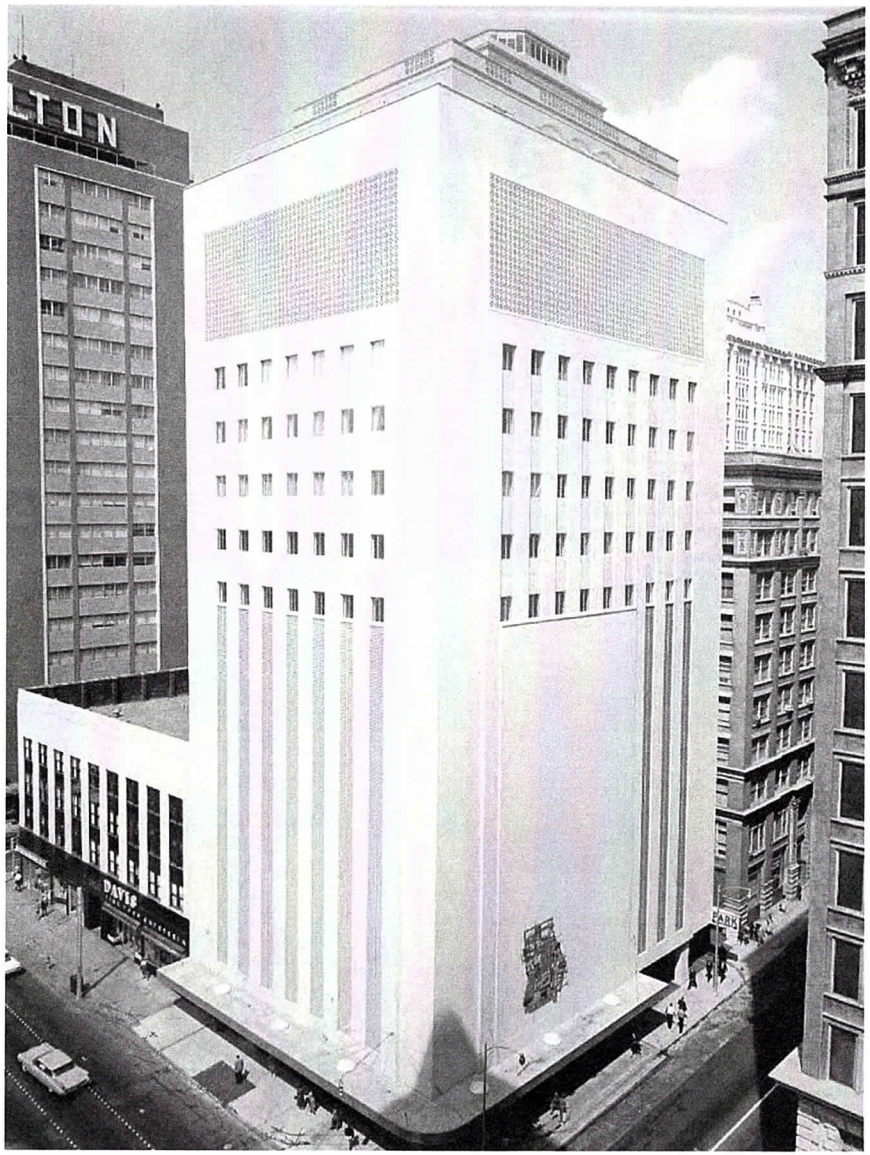


African American students preparing to eat at the segregated S & S Cafeteria in an act of civil disobedience, March 1960. The restaurant was located in the Peachtree-Baker Federal Office Building at 275 Peachtree Street (razed 1995). Source: Atlanta Journal-Constitution *Photographic Archive. Georgia State University Library.*

behind the scenes with the city's black leadership and the white business community to diffuse tensions during desegregation of the public transit system and the racial transitioning of former all-white residential areas on the city's west side (Bartley 1995, 330–331; Stone 1989, 46–49).

The city's progressive reputation on racial matters was soon sorely tested when students of Atlanta's historic black colleges began a coordinated campaign of boycotts, picketing, and sit-ins at segregated restaurants, stores, and public buildings throughout the central business district. The protests gained momentum after Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. joined the picket lines and was arrested at Rich's Department Store in the fall of 1960. As the demonstrations stretched into the following year, financial losses mounted among downtown establishments and fears grew among Hartsfield and Atlanta's business leaders that a national backlash could damage the city's cultivated image (Allen 1996, 96–97; Bayor 1996, 31–32).

Downtown merchants agreed to sit down with student representatives and the city's older generation of African American leadership in an attempt to resolve their problems in March 1961. Ivan Allen, Jr., president of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, mediated the contentious meetings, which were held on the top floor of the recently completed Chamber of Commerce Building (now the Georgia State University Bennett Brown Commerce Building) at 34 Broad Street on the corner of Marietta Street (Martin 1987, III:319). Designed by architectsTucker and Howell in a minimalist, classical aesthetic reminiscent of the firm's prewar Art Deco work, the Commerce Building was completed in September 1960. The 18-story, rectangular office tower featured street-level retail and nine



Chamber of Commerce Building, circa 1960. Located at the corner of Marietta and Broad Streets, It is now known as the Georgia State Unviversity Bennett Brown Commerce Building. Source: Lane Brothers Commercial Photographers Photographic Collection, 1920-1976. Photographic Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.

levels of parking. Of greater note, it also was home to the newly formed Commerce Club, an exclusive social organization founded by Richard Rich and Citizens and Southern Bank president Mills B. Lane. Unlike the older Piedmont Driving Club and the Capital Club, the Commerce Club allowed Jewish members and was intended as a refuge for the city's business and civic leaders to talk over issues in an informal setting (C. A. Alexander 2009).

Ivan Allen, Jr. and the Forward Atlanta Campaign. Based on his successful handling of the downtown desegregation negotiations, Ivan Allen, Jr. ran for the mayor's office and he succeeded William Hartsfield in 1962. Ivan Allen's father, Ivan Allen, Sr., was a successful businessman, former state senator, and the driver behind the Chamber of Commerce's Forward Atlanta campaign of the 1920s. As such, the younger Allen was born into the city's traditional power structure, rooted in its commitment toward civic engagement, and familiar with the booster attitude of the "Atlanta Spirit" that had been a hallmark of the business class' economic development initiatives since Henry Grady's New South era of the 1880s (Pomerantz 1996, 209–210). While serving as president of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce just prior to his run for mayor, Ivan Allen drafted a new agenda designed to attract growth and propel Atlanta's standing onto the national and international stages.



Coca-Cola Executive Robert W. Woodruff (Left) Conferring with Former Mayor William B. Hartsfield (Center) and Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr. (Right), circa 1965. Source: Shavin, Atlanta: Triumph of a People, *1982.*

ATLANTA: A NEW KIND OF CITY.

-Phillip Hammer, Forward Atlanta Campaign, 1961

Entitled the "Six Point Forward Atlanta Program," itself a direct reference to his father's Chamber of Commerce Forward Atlanta national campaign of the late 1920s, the plan called for the following items: the city's schools to remain open in the face of impending desegregation; accelerated expressway development; expansion of the city's urban renewal and public housing programs; construction of a new municipal auditorium and modern sports venues to attract major league franchises; and the creation of a rapid transit system to alleviate the region's steadily growing traffic issues. The Chamber of Commerce heartily endorsed Allen's vision and the city's downtown business community pledged almost four million dollars in funding over a three-year period to help cover costs for the national advertising campaign, which included publication of *Atlanta Magazine*, to market the city and tout its progress (Allen 1996, 113–114; Martin 1987, III:320).

The Forward Atlanta program would serve as a template for Allen's tenure as mayor from 1962 to 1970, an unprecedented "golden era" in the city's history, characterized by advances in Civil Rights, explosive regional growth, and a physical transformation of the downtown Atlanta skyline. Between 1960 and 1965 alone, 22 new office buildings were erected in the central business district and the city consistently ranked among the top 10 national markets with regard to downtown construction starts, banking transactions, and employment figures over the course of the decade (Martin 1987, III:417; Shavin and Galphin 1982, 278, 283).



(Opposite) *View of Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium with the Downtown Atlanta Skyline in the Background, circa 1965. Source:* Atlanta Journal Constitution *Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.*

Urban Renewal and Completion of the Downtown Connector. As key elements in Allen's Forward Atlanta campaign, large-scale urban renewal initiatives and the completion of the downtown connector were bound more tightly together and propelled to the forefront of municipal politics during the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1959, the Atlanta-Fulton County Joint Planning Board released *Shall We Rebuild Again? Atlanta Faces the Problem of Central Area Blight*, which echoed the earlier *Up Ahead* plan. The report again identified the Auburn Avenue community as part of the 170-acre Butler district, east of the city center, and the 332-acre Rawson-Washington area, located just south of downtown, as two prime areas, or "study units," targeted for urban renewal near the central business district (Atlanta-Fulton County Joint Planning Board 1959). In June that same year, the Federal Government authorized $50 million for the clearance of both sections of the city. As part of the proposed redevelopment, 143 acres of the Washington-Rawson land would be used to secure right-of-way for the construction of the long-delayed downtown connector. New, low-income high-rise apartments, schools and parks, commercial buildings, and industrial facilities were supposed to be built on the remaining acreage (*Atlanta Constitution* 1959).

Approximately 19,000 families (an estimated 80,000 individuals) were displaced by the construction of the downtown connector between 1960 and 1965 and promises by Atlanta city leaders to build new housing for uprooted African American residents in the cleared areas never fully materialized (Atlanta-Fulton County Joint Planning Board 1959). Instead the Urban Renewal land was used for the development for large civic projects that could also double as racial barriers between the downtown and remaining black neighborhoods to the east and south (Bayor 1996, 74–75). In 1963, work began on the 57,000-seat Atlanta Stadium and acres of surface parking on a part of the land once occupied by the Rawson-Washington renewal area (the Atlanta Civic Center was built later on a swath of the former Butler Urban Renewal area). Rapid development of the stadium in 1965 (Finch, Alexander, Barnes, Rothschild and Paschal [FABRAP] in joint venture with Heery and Heery; razed 1997) was used to lure the Milwaukee Braves to Atlanta and helped the city secure the National Football League's (NFL) Falcons expansion franchise the following year. The arrival of professional sports combined with the construction of a new $21 million passenger airport terminal, further boosted the national profile of Atlanta as a young, energetic city.

High-Rise Office Development in the Five Points District. Fourteen banks and savings and loan associations, including the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, were located within a six-block radius of the Five Points financial district that would become the epicenter of the city's high-rise office boom during the 1960s (Atlanta Board of Realtors 1967, 10). Looking to project an image of corporate dynamism and strength, corporate executives erected modern skyscrapers built of concrete, steel, and glass. Most offered customers spacious, well lit, banking lobbies and the postwar convenience of air-conditioning, while white-collar workers accessed commercial offices on upper levels via high-speed, electronically operated elevators. As the spate of new office towers quickly sprang up around Five Points, a competitive commercial environment developed, where seemingly every new building eclipsed its predecessors in height. The character of the city's center continued to be transformed as downtown further specialized as a government and financial district with hotels, recreational establishments (theaters and nightclubs), and retail moving north, along Peachtree Street, or decamping to the suburbs (Galphin 1967, 47).

The National Bank of Georgia Building (now the 34 Peachtree Building) was the first high-rise office tower erected in Five Points in the new decade. Located at 34 Peachtree Street, it was built on the site of the company's old bank headquarters adjacent to the William-Oliver Building. Like the Fulton National Bank Building, it was designed by Hedrick and Stanley and built by Henry C. Beck Company. Construction began in the summer of 1959 and the National Bank of Georgia Building was completed in the spring of 1961 with a formal opening held on April 3rd, of that year. The 31-story, reinforced concrete building had an aluminum and glass panel curtain wall. It was the tallest reinforced concrete building in the United States and the tallest in the South at the time of its construction. Retail shops lined the building's first floor along Peachtree Street, while escalators in the entrance lobby provided access to the second story, banking lobby. Development of the National Bank of Georgia Building was a successful attempt to raise the bank's profile within the local business community and the company became the fifth Atlanta member of the Federal Reserve shortly after its completion (Birnie 1978, 80–81).



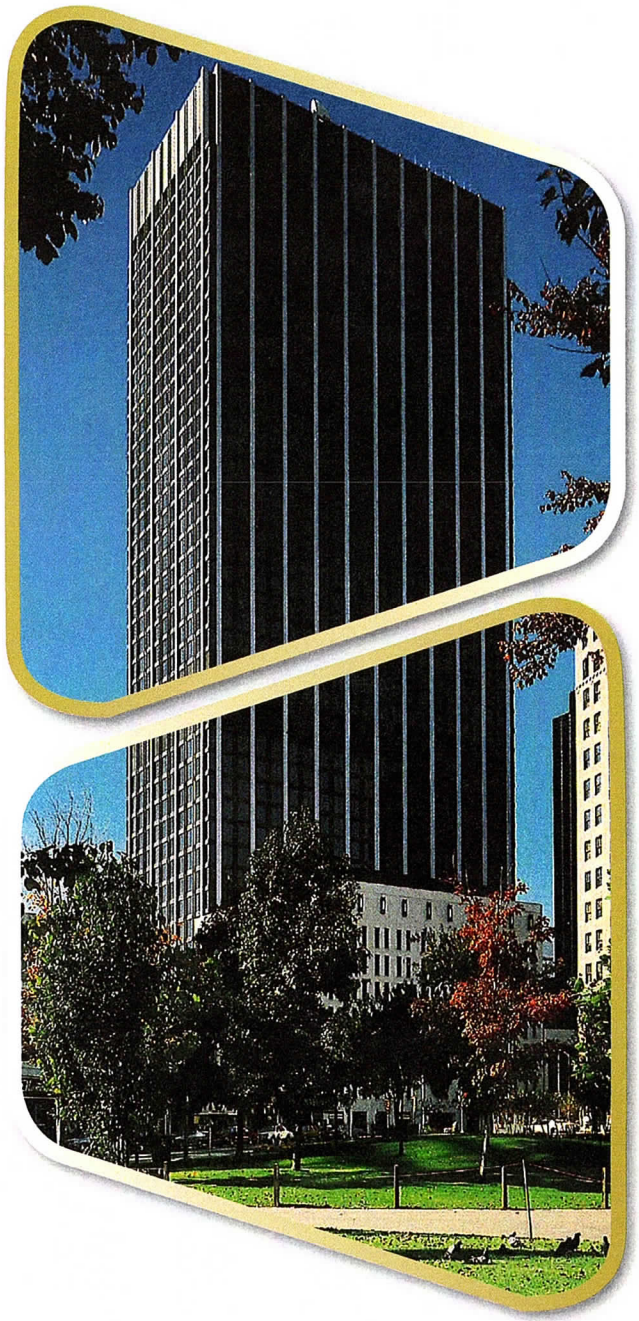
Bank of Georgia Building (now 34 Peachtree Street), 1961. Source: Birnie, The History of the National Bank of Georgia, *1978.*



The opening of the First Federal Savings and Loan Association Building (now known as the 40 Marietta Building) followed three years later in 1964. The local firm Tomberlin and Sheetz was awarded the architectural commission for the First Federal Savings and Loan Association's new Atlanta home office through Wilber Tomberlin's personal connection with bank president, George West, Jr. (Sheetz 2006). Located on the former site of the Grant Building (1876, William H. Parkins; later named the Ivan Allen-Marshall Building) at the corner of Marietta and Forsyth streets, the First Federal Savings and Loan Association Building was designed by Charles "Chuck" Robisch, with Chastain and Tindel, Structural Engineers (Lyon and Atlanta Historical Society 1976, 27). Robisch conceived the building as a freestanding form built of "exposed sculpted concrete, free of unnecessary ornamentation, arising from a spacious, pedestrian plaza" (Robisch 2006). The 17-story tower, one of the few examples of Neo-Expressionist architectural design in the city, also featured distinctive structural framing. It was built with six, pentagonal, concrete columns on the east and west sides spanned by post-tensioned beams, which allowed for open floor plans on the upper levels to maximize office flexibility and commercial rental space. Post-tensioned concrete construction, a structural engineering method rarely used in the late 1950s and early 1960s, was employed for the building due to its greater tensile strength than simple reinforced concrete and for its allowance of thinner floor slabs (Bennett 2002, 241–246; Gournay et al. 1993, 26). Built at a cost of $3.9 million with a total of 150,223 square feet of space, the First Federal Building was one of the tallest post-tensioned concrete buildings in the country (Tomberlin-Sheetz Architects Inc. 1964).

First Federal Savings and Loan Association Building (now 40 Marietta Street), 1964. Source: Curt Teich Company, 1964.

Just to the west, at 104 Marietta Street, work was also completed on a new office for the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta in July 1964. Plans to renovate the original 1914 neoclassical style bank fell through in 1962, when project architects and engineers discovered that the building was structurally unsound due to shoddy construction methods. Unwilling to build an architectural replica of the building, bank directors followed architect Henry Toombs' recommendations, which called for the existing structure to be razed, while retaining the original 16 marble columns along its façade. Toombs, Amisano, and Wells designed



the six-story, modernist office building that was erected in its place to match the east wing addition to the property that had been completed in 1962. The new Federal Reserve Bank (now the headquarters of the State Bar of Georgia) was sheathed in white Georgia marble and built at a cost of $8.5 million. A 16-foot, 3,000-pound cast bronze eagle, sculpted in Italy by American artist Elbert Weinberg, was perched atop one of the original, 48-foot marble columns located near the building's entrance (Gamble 1989, 103–105).

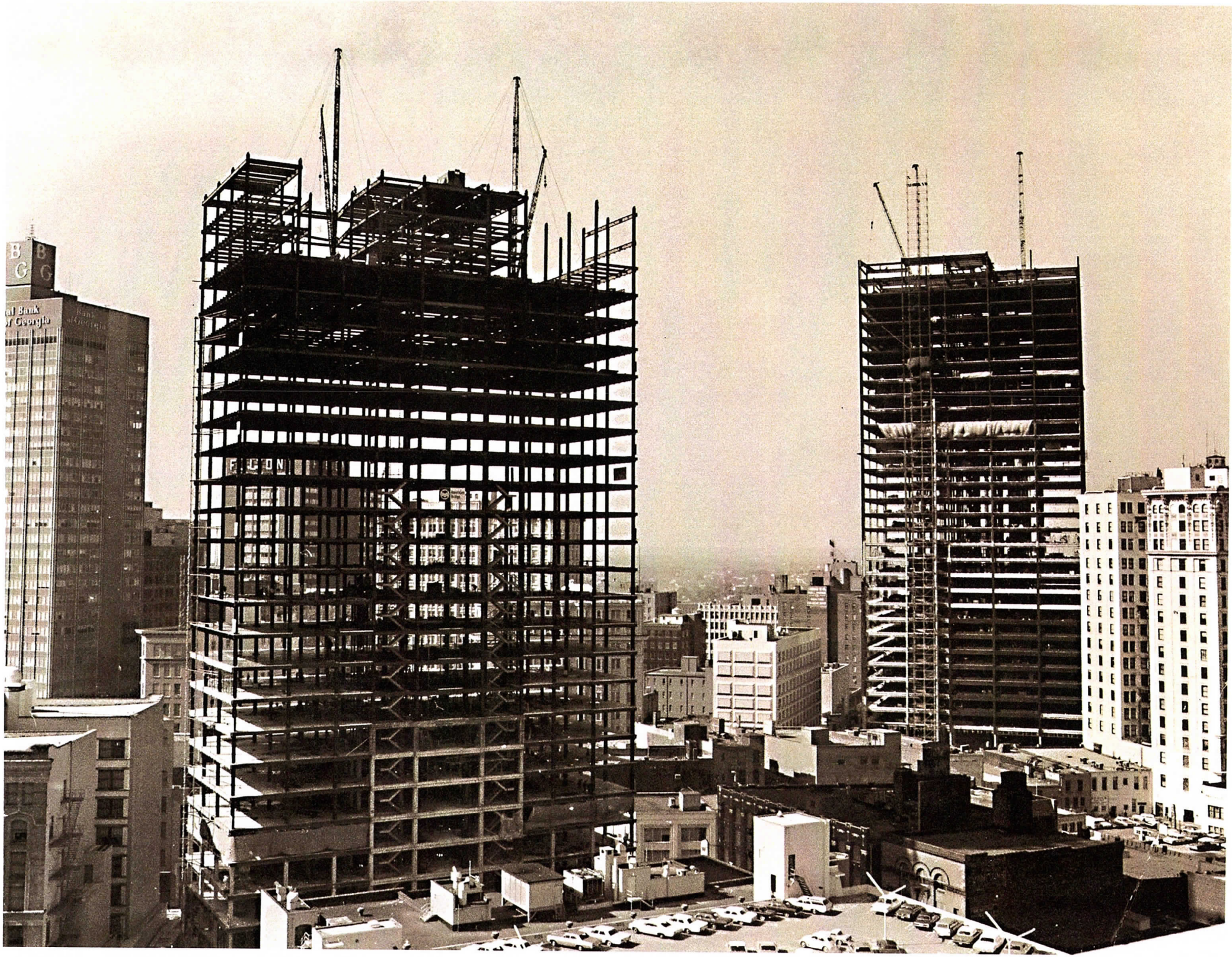
At 100 Edgewood Avenue, on the eastern fringe of the Five Points district, the 17-story Hartford Building (now the Robert C. Woodruff Volunteer Service Center Building) opened in 1965 as the first Atlanta project by the nationally renowned architectural firm Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) (Marsh et al. 1975, 40). That same year, the 11-story Piedmont Hotel (1903, William F. Denny; razed 1966), an Atlanta landmark located at 100 Peachtree Street at the intersection of Luckie Street, was closed and later razed to make way for the new office headquarters for the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States. Development of the two new skyscrapers demonstrated the growth of the insurance industry in Atlanta during the early 1960s as 47 of the 50 largest national insurance companies established regional offices in the city (Martin 1987, III:454).

A notable addition to the city's skyline arrived in 1966 with the completion of the First National Bank Building and Tower (now the State of Georgia Building). Designed by Cecil Alexander of the local Atlanta firm of FABRAP in joint venture with Emory Roth and Sons of New York, the 41-story monolith was built by the Henry C. Beck Company on the site of the former Peachtree Arcade (1916-1917, A. Ten Eyck Brown) at 2 Peachtree Street. The dark aluminum, glass, and marble building towered over the city's center. The $19 million skyscraper was the tallest in the Southeast and remained

(Opposite) *First National Bank Building (now State of Georgia Building). Source: Finch, Alexander, Barnes, Rothschild and Pascahal (FABRAP), Inc. Architects and Planners, 1990.*

(Below) *The Principal Partners of FABRAP. From Left to Right: Miller D. Barnes, Cecil A. Alexander, Caraker D. Paschal, Bernard B. Rothschild, and James H. "Bill" Finch, circa 1963. Source: FABR&P, 1963.*




B
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(Opposite) *Construction of the new Trust Company Building (Left) and Equitable Building (Right), November 1967. Source:* Atlanta Journal-Constitution *Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.*

the tallest office tower in Atlanta until the Westin Peachtree Plaza eclipsed it height in 1976. To provide an unobstructed view of the modern high-rise building, the top eight floors of the adjacent 1903 First National Bank were removed and the structure was refaced with white marble panels during the 1970s (Gournay et al. 1993, 22; Lyon and Atlanta Historical Society 1976, 73).

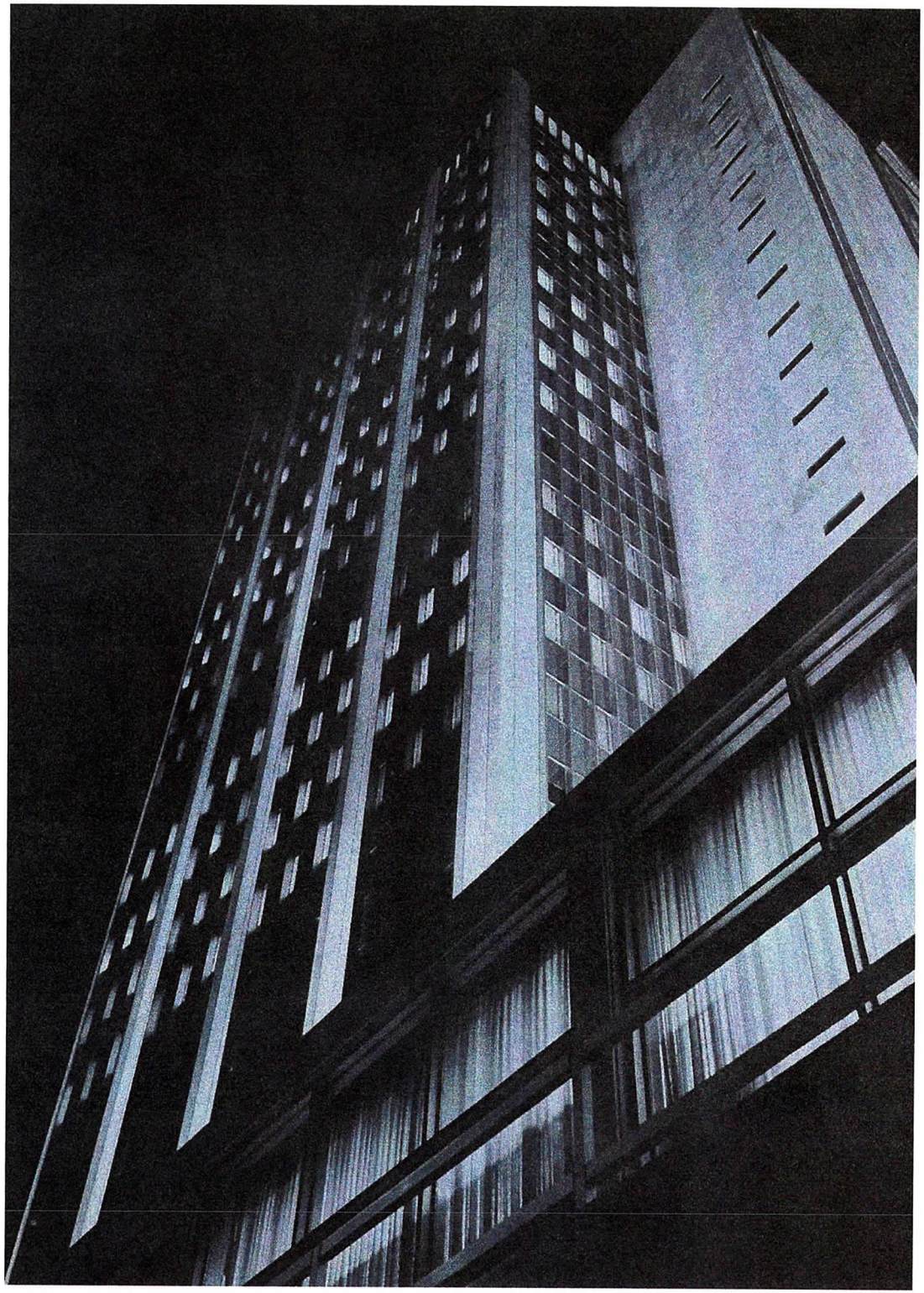
Completion of the Equitable Building in 1968 and the Trust Company Building in 1969 ended the furious pace of office tower construction in the Five Points area that occurred over the course of the decade. The exposed black girder skeleton and repetitive symmetry of SOM's 35-story Equitable Building (with FABRAP serving as consulting architects) recalled the pioneering modernist design first explored by Mies van der Rohe and disseminated by SOM in the 1950s and 1960s with various commissions that hewed closely to the Miesian aesthetic (Whiffen 1992, 256). The new 26-story Trust Company Building was designed by the New York firm Carson, Lundin, and Shaw, Architects with a refined, white, marble exterior. The bank tower was erected at 25 Pryor Street (now Park Place), next to the firm's longtime home and Atlanta's first skyscraper, the venerable Equitable Building (1892, Burnham and Root). The old building was later replaced in 1973 by the Trust Company Building's adjacent four-story banking hall (Gournay et al. 1993, 42–43).

Early Development along the Upper Peachtree Corridor. Once lined with mansions inhabited by the city's political and social elite during the late nineteenth century, upper Peachtree Street rapidly commercialized after widespread adoption of the automobile during the 1910s and 1920s. Wealthy whites relocated to suburbs north of downtown and by World War II, the former residential neighborhood was occupied by large department stores, older hotels, restaurants, garages, and parking lots (Gournay et al. 1993, 45; Preston 1979, 78). Along this upper stretch of Peachtree Street, just beyond the booming Five Points district, architect and developer John Portman began building the foundation blocks for what would become a mixed-use complex of commercial retail, convention space, hotels, and office towers that would eventually define and dominate the northern edge of downtown Atlanta.

Real-estate developer Benjamin Massell's contracts to build office buildings for federal agencies helped jumpstart development along upper Peachtree Street in the 1950s. Mayor William Hartsfield called Massell a "one man boom" and architect Cecil Alexander,

credited him as "the one guy who got Atlanta moving to being office center of the South, because when other cities didn't have any space, they could come to Atlanta and move in" (C. A. Alexander 2009). Massell started his development firm, Massell Companies, with his brothers Samuel and Levi just after World War I. He built over 1,600 properties throughout Atlanta over the course of his career and emerged as the largest developer after World War II. Beginning in 1950, Massell Companies erected the six-story Peachtree-Seventh Building in Uptown Atlanta (now referred to as "Midtown" and located to the north of the context area) for the General Services Administration (GSA) to house federal agencies that had been scattered throughout the city. The first design commission for the young partnership of Alexander and Bernard "Rocky" Rothschild, it was the largest office building constructed in Atlanta since the war and was also the first to have air-conditioned climate control (*Augusta Chronicle* 1949; Martin 1987, III:151).

Massell's second development for the Federal Government in Atlanta was the 12-story Peachtree-Baker Building at 275 Peachtree Street (1956; razed 1995). Also designed by Alexander and Rothschild, it featured curtain wall construction with glass and blue aluminum porcelain-enameled panels and a two-story,





open-plan lobby with white marble paneling (C. A. Alexander 2009; Williford 1962, 156). Based on their existing relationship with Massell, Alexander and Rothschild's succeeding firm, FABRAP, was awarded the exterior and interior design commissions for the Georgia Power Company Building, which was erected at 270 Peachtree Street between 1959 and 1961 (altered in 1999). Eventually built by the Henry C. Beck Company at a cost of $5 million, the 22-story corporate headquarters had a structural concrete frame, full-height, columns with marble veneer, a metal curtain wall. The tower was set back from Peachtree Street to allow for a raised courtyard plaza, which featured a two-tiered water fountain and reflecting pool lining the entrance lobby (FABRAP 1965).

John Portman, the Merchandise Mart, and Formation of the Peachtree Center Concept. Completion of the Georgia Power Company Building overlapped with the July 1961 opening of Edwards and Portman's Atlanta Merchandise Mart (expanded in 1969 and 1985) just to the south at 240 Peachtree Street at the intersection with Harris Street. Born in South Carolina but raised in Atlanta, John Portman graduated from the Georgia Tech School of Architecture in 1950. After working at various Atlanta architectural firms, Portman established his own practice in 1953 and primarily designed residential projects. Eager to work on larger commissions, he formed a partnership in 1956 with H. Griffith Edwards, his former professor at

(Left) *Architect John Portman. Source: Portman and Barnett,* The Architect As Developer, *1976.* **(Opposite)** *Georgia Power Building. (Now 270 Peachtree). Source: FABR&P, 1963.*



Atlanta Merchandise Mart, 1961. Source: Portman and Barnett, The Architect As Developer, 1976.

Georgia Tech (for further information, see Appendix A). In 1957, Portman also became part owner of a furniture market located in the converted, five-story Belle Isle Parking Garage on Peachtree Street (Heery et al. 2015; J. C. Portman and Barnett 1976, 192).

The success of the market demonstrated to Portman that demand existed for a larger wholesale trade center in downtown Atlanta that could attract retail professionals from throughout the Southeast. Portman was able to secure a partial mortgage commitment from the Metropolitan Life Company on a large parcel at the corner of Peachtree and Harris streets. Convinced of the soundness of Portman's Merchandise Mart concept and looking to boost the value of his real estate holdings in the area, developer Ben Massell agreed to purchase the land and finance the remaining two million dollars needed to build the building. John Portman served as the architect and primary developer for the project with the Massell Company as the builder. Construction on the Mart began in 1959 and the 22-story high-rise took just over two years to erect at a cost of $15 million. Massell, became the owner of the Merchandise Mart

"I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I'M GOING TO HEAVEN OR HELL BUT I KNOW FOR SURE, WHICHEVER IT IS, I'LL HAVE TO CHANGE PLANES IN ATLANTA."

JOKE AMONG SALESMEN TRAVELING IN THE SOUTH.

(Source: Atlanta Magazine, *June 1961)*

upon completion but later sold it back to Portman for the original price of the two-million dollar loan (J. C. Portman and Barnett 1976, 23–26; O. Harris 2015).

In building the facility, Portman sought to further capitalize on the city's growing wholesale and trade convention industry. Atlanta's geographical proximity to large markets along the Eastern seaboard, Midwest and Southeast along with its bustling airport made the city accessible to nearly two-thirds of the United States population via a two-and-a-half hour trip by plane. In 1955, Atlanta hosted 498 conventions, attended by 177,540 people who pumped $20.5 million into the local economy. By 1960, 623 conventions were held in the city with 236,910 convention-goers spending just over $28 million (Henson 1965, 49–50).

A showcase for clothing, home furnishings, and decorative accessories, the concrete-frame, one million square foot Merchandise Mart was the largest building in the southeast at the time of its completion. It was a major commercial success for Portman and "marked a new era for merchandising in the southeast" (Martin 1987, III:292, 334). The Merchandise Mart featured an all-electric climate-control mechanical system and offered a number of amenities for both wholesalers and convention goers. These included a first-story restaurant and lounge and the fine dining, Top of the Mart Restaurant on the building's penthouse floor. John Portman insisted that the Stouffer-managed restaurants serve black patrons, making them the first racially integrated dining establishments in Atlanta when the Mart opened in 1962 (O. Harris 2015; Hunter 2013). The Merchandise Mart demonstrated Portman's vision for his business model, which engaged in large-scale commercial real-estate development as an engine to drive commissions for his architectural practice. It was also the first phase of a planned Peachtree Center complex that would consist of seven buildings (including a hotel, bus terminal, and parking garage) spread out over four city blocks.

Construction of the 30-story, 300,000 square-foot, 230 Peachtree Building (Peachtree Center Building) office tower in 1963-65, was John Portman's second major project in Atlanta. Located just south of the Merchandise Mart, the 230 Peachtree Building is notable as one of the first computer-aided designed (CAD) buildings in the city, if not the United States (O. Harris 2015; Martin 1987, III:449). Set back from the street with an open, art-filled plaza and sunken garden, the distinctive organization of the skyscraper's design



The 230 Peachtree Building (Left) and Atlanta Merchandise Mart (Right). Source: Baker, 2015.

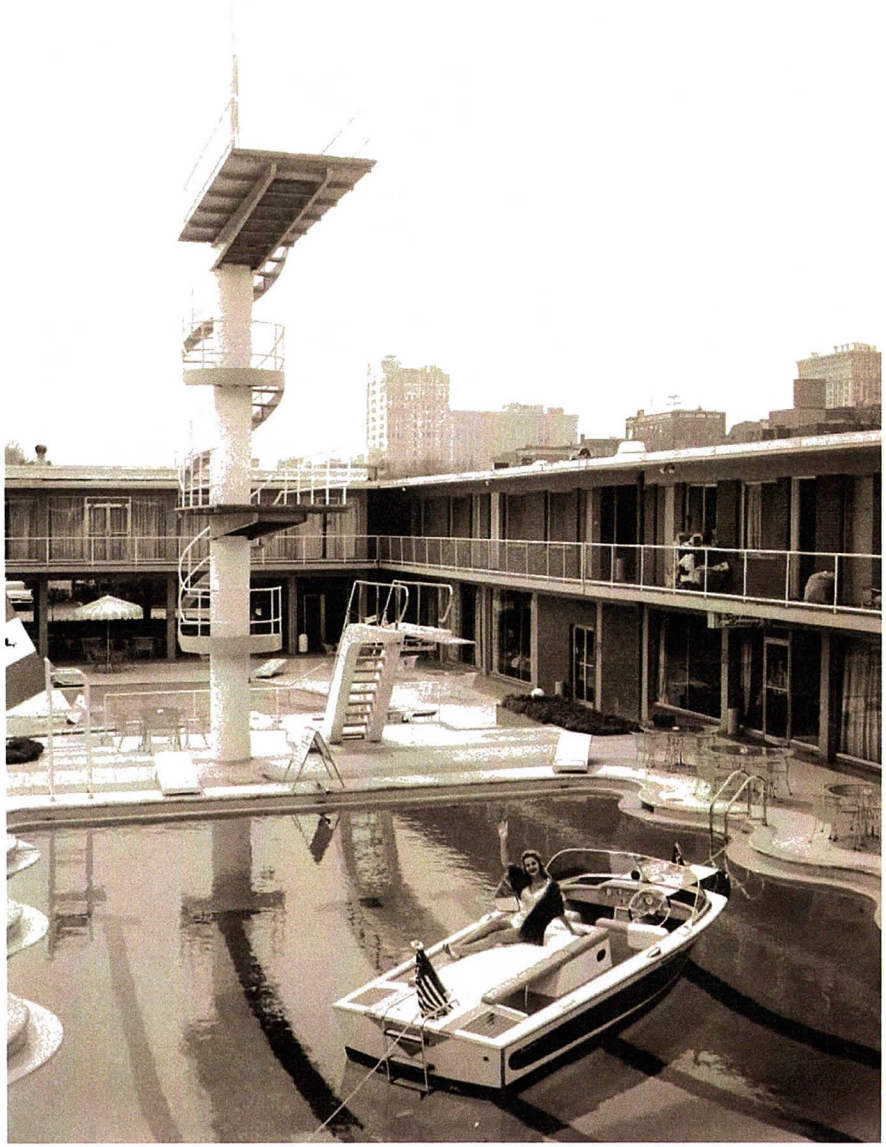
gave the appearance of a thin, central tower closely flanked by lower, offset wings. The two, narrow separate lots that comprised the site defined the plan and structure of the 230 Peachtree Building. To accommodate the dual ownership of the two land lots (currently both lots are combined under one ownership), Portman and his associate Stanley "Mickey" Steinberg used new, high-strength (50,000 psi) steel-frame construction, which allowed for the potential detachment and demolition of the southern wing of the building, while keeping the central structure intact. In order to determine the complex structural analysis of moment distribution (compression and tension) caused by wind loads on the tower's steel structure with, and without, the bolted-on wing, Steinberg used a variant of the original Structural Design Language (STRUDL), computer program. The punch card software originally operated on International Business Machine (IBM) mainframe computers and was first



developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the late 1950s for use by the U.S. Navy in submarine design and engineering. Working with computer engineers at Georgia Tech, Steinberg and Portman adapted the program (now known as GT STRUDL) for analysis and structural design of the 230 Peachtree Building - one of the earliest examples of computer-aided architectural design in Atlanta and the Southeast (Sanders 2000; Steinberg 2015).

For the exterior design, panel dimensions of the 230 Peachtree Building's pre-cast concrete curtain wall closely adhered to those of the adjacent Mart to provide a sense of visual balance. The two buildings were joined by a short, pedestrian sky bridge that provided pedestrian access to the Top of the Mart restaurant without having to navigate the street below (J. C. Portman and Barnett 1976, 26–27). Portman would often return to the architectural massing and extensive use of the gridded, precast concrete curtain wall he first explored with the 230 Peachtree Building, for subsequent office tower developments as part of his Peachtree Center complex in Atlanta and in other cities throughout the country (most notably the Embarcadero Center in San Francisco, California).

Development Along Upper Peachtree Street, 1968. Just beyond the parking garage are Portman's 230 Peachtree Building and Merchandise Mart. The white highrise in the distance is FABRAP's Georgia Power Company Building. Source: Atlanta Board of Realtors and Quest Travelbooks Ltd., This is Atlanta, *1968.*



The Heart of Atlanta Motel Swimming Pool, 1960. Source: Lane Brothers Commercial Photographers Photographic Collection, 1920-1976. Photographic Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.

Portman and Edwards next turned their attention to hotel development following the completion of the 230 Peachtree Building. No major hotel had been built in the central business district since the 1920s and in 1949 there were only 5,000 rooms for lodging in the city. Motel development in downtown during the late 1950s pushed that number up to 6,500 rooms by 1961. The Heart of Atlanta (razed 1976) was the first motel built in the city when it opened at 255 Courtland Street in September 1956. Conveniently located near the expressway interchange and expanded in 1961, the Heart of Atlanta offered over 200 air-conditioned motel units, a full size swimming pool, cocktail lounge, conference rooms, and free downtown parking for white business and tourism guests (Martin 1987, III:150, 247, 333). The motel would gain national notoriety as the target of large student demonstrations in 1963 and later as the Plaintiff in the landmark United States Supreme Court case *Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States* (1964) when the business owners challenged the application of "public accommodations" provisions in the 1964 Civil Rights Act to the private sector (Stone 1989, 58). The Supreme Court's case decision found the motel's steadfast policy of refusing accommodations to African American customers to be in violation of the "equal protection" clause of the Fourteen Amendment and that private businesses must abide by the racial

antidiscrimination measures of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as part of Congress' power to regulate interstate commerce under Article 1, Section 8 (the "Commerce Clause") of the United States Constitution (Coenen 2013; Kruse 2007, 208).

Other new downtown motels soon followed the Heart of Atlanta, including: the Atlanta American Motor Hotel, the city's first integrated motel when it opened in 1962; the Parliament Motel at 112 Courtland Street (later Atlanta Palms, now renovated as a part of the One12 student residential development) in 1964; the Travelodge Motel, designed by Wilner and Millkey (also in 1964) at 311 Courtland Street; and the Marriott Motor Lodge (now the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel), designed by James M. Hunt and built by Beers Construction Company, which opened in 1966 at 165 Courtland Street. Like the Heart of Atlanta, these new motels were located in close proximity to the expressway at the eastern edge of downtown along streets such as Courtland, Luckie, and Houston (now John Wesley Dobbs Avenue) (Huebner, Morrison Design, LLC, and Atlanta Preservation & Planning Services, LLC 2013; Wyndham Hotels Resorts 1999).

While growing market demand for expanded lodging options in Atlanta was somewhat offset by downtown motel development during the late 1950s and early 1960s, the shortage of accommodations in close proximity to Five Points and the Merchandise Mart was frequently cited at the time as one of the city's weaknesses in attracting new convention business (Martin 1987, III:333). In 1964, a joint press release by Granger Hansell of the Phoenix Investment Company, Charles Massell of the Massell Companies, John Portman, and Trammell Crow announced the proposed development of a new hotel at 265 Peachtree Street. The $15 million project would be built by the J.A. Jones Construction Company of North Carolina and contain 800 rooms, making it the largest hotel in the southeastern United States. It would also include a 24,000 square-foot exhibition hall and grand ballroom with a maximum capacity of 3,000 people (Martin 1987, III:393). According to Portman's associate, architect Mickey Steinberg,

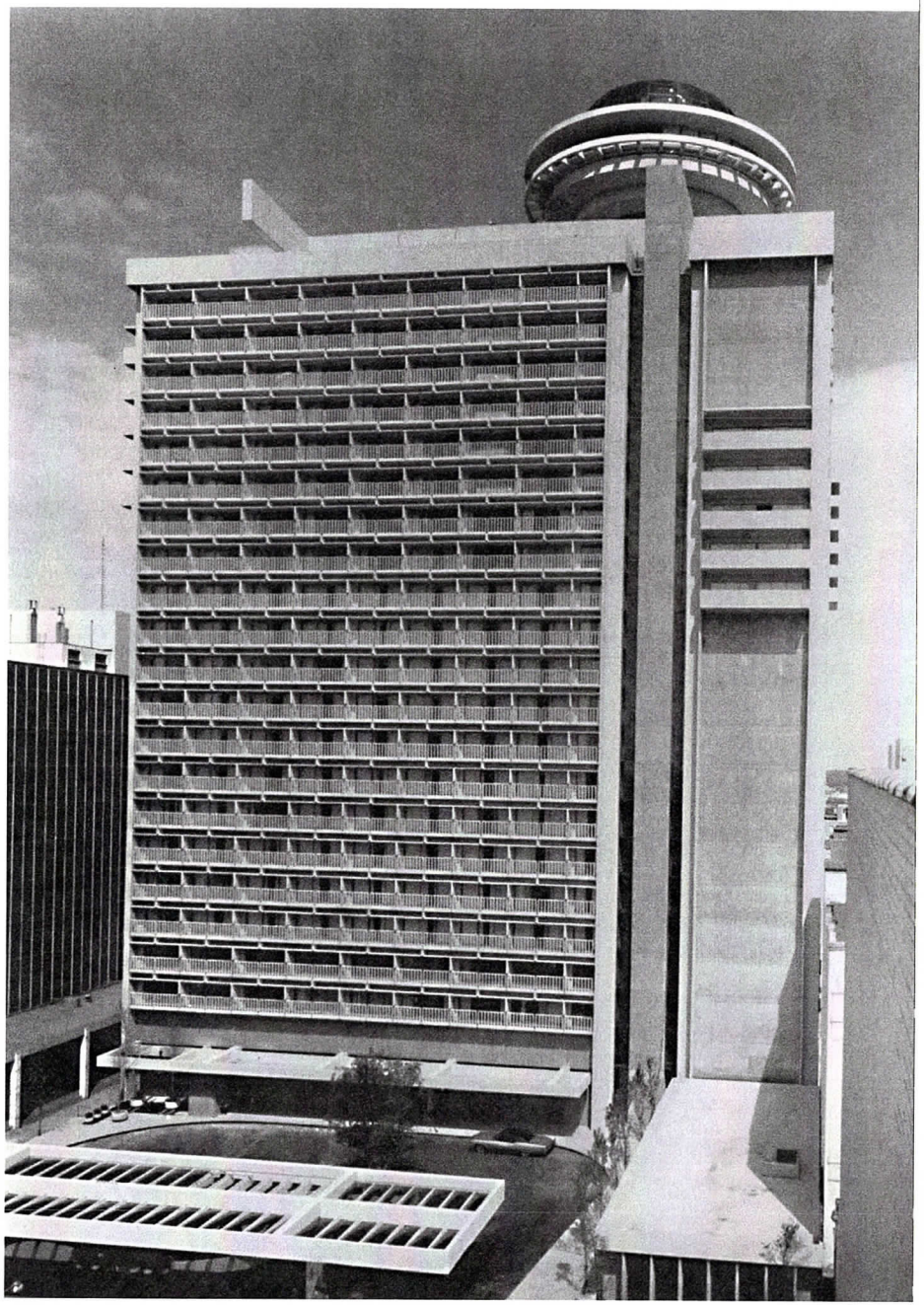
> *"[the hotel] had to be built to compete with the motels…he [Portman] had to design it based on something like a 12 or 15 dollar room rate. That was the only way we could get a loan and that's what we did. We used every trick in the business on that building. Everybody thought that was an expensive building…[but] no" (Heery et al. 2015).*

Portman's initial design for the property consisted of a single tower with the standard, double-loaded corridor floor plan common to most hotels of the period; however, this idea was shelved in favor of a groundbreaking interior plan based around the shared, active

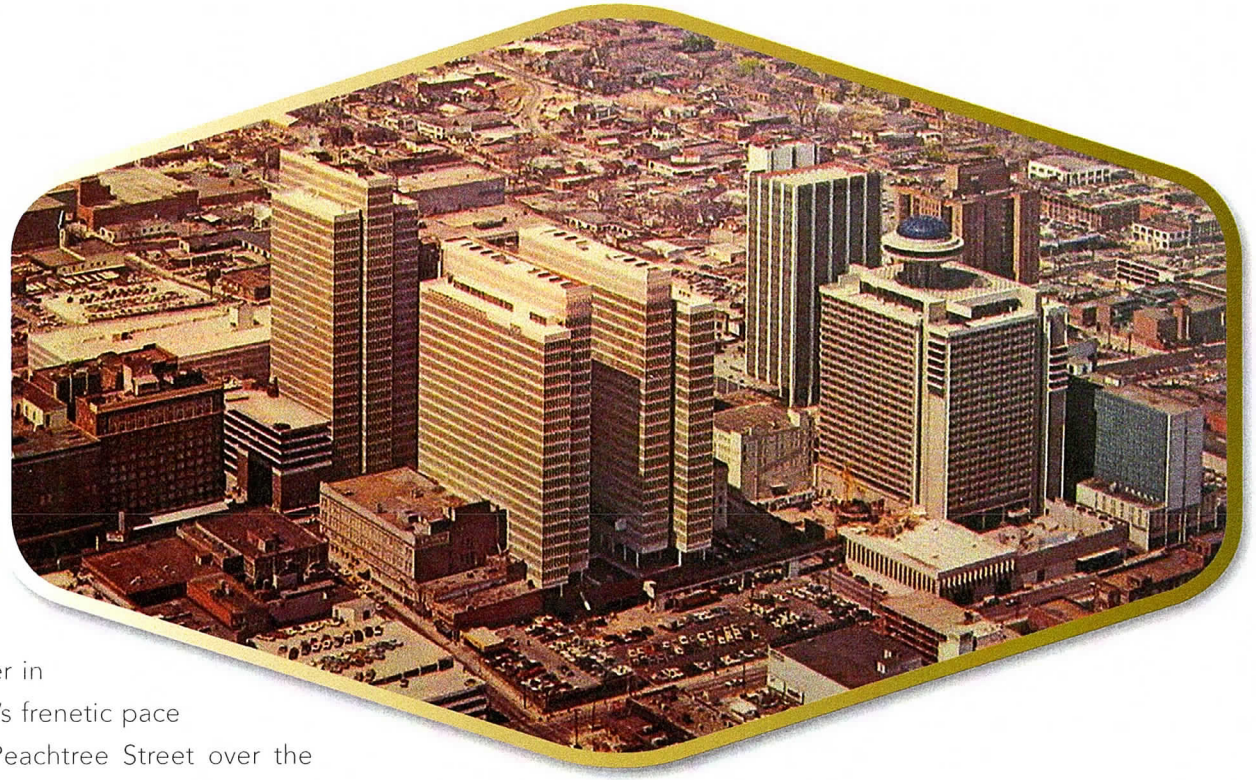
(Right) *Hyatt Regency, circa 1970. Source: Labor Photographs, North Georgia Building and Construction Trades Council records, Southern Labor Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University, Atlanta.* **(Opposite)** *Hyatt Regency Atrium. Source: Sullivan, 2015.*

space of a full-height central atrium lobby (J. C. Portman and Barnett 1976, 28). With the atrium concept, Portman sought to emulate the immense spatial experience found in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and Frank Lloyd Wright's design for the Guggenheim Museum (J. Portman 2009). Portman and his associate, Mickey Steinberg, first explored the idea of the central atrium in 1962-63 with the firm's commission for the Atlanta Housing Authority to design Antoine Graves Homes (razed 2009), an eight-story mid-rise housing development for low-income, African American seniors located in the Butler Street urban renewal area east of the central business district.

When the Hyatt Regency Hotel (originally known as the Regency Hyatt House) opened in May 1967, the *Architectural Record* proclaimed the atrium as "an idea whose time had come" (Saxon 1983, 10). The 21-story, 800-room hotel was oriented around a dramatic, full height atrium lobby, an architecturally unique feature at a time when the cost of interior square footage was considered at a premium (Goldberger et al. 2009, 26). The exposed elevator shafts also became part of the atrium experience, not receding into the background as was customary, but designed as "pod-shaped glass elevators-trimmed in lights like dressing room mirrors" (Chen 2006). At the elevator summit was the revolving Polaris restaurant, located



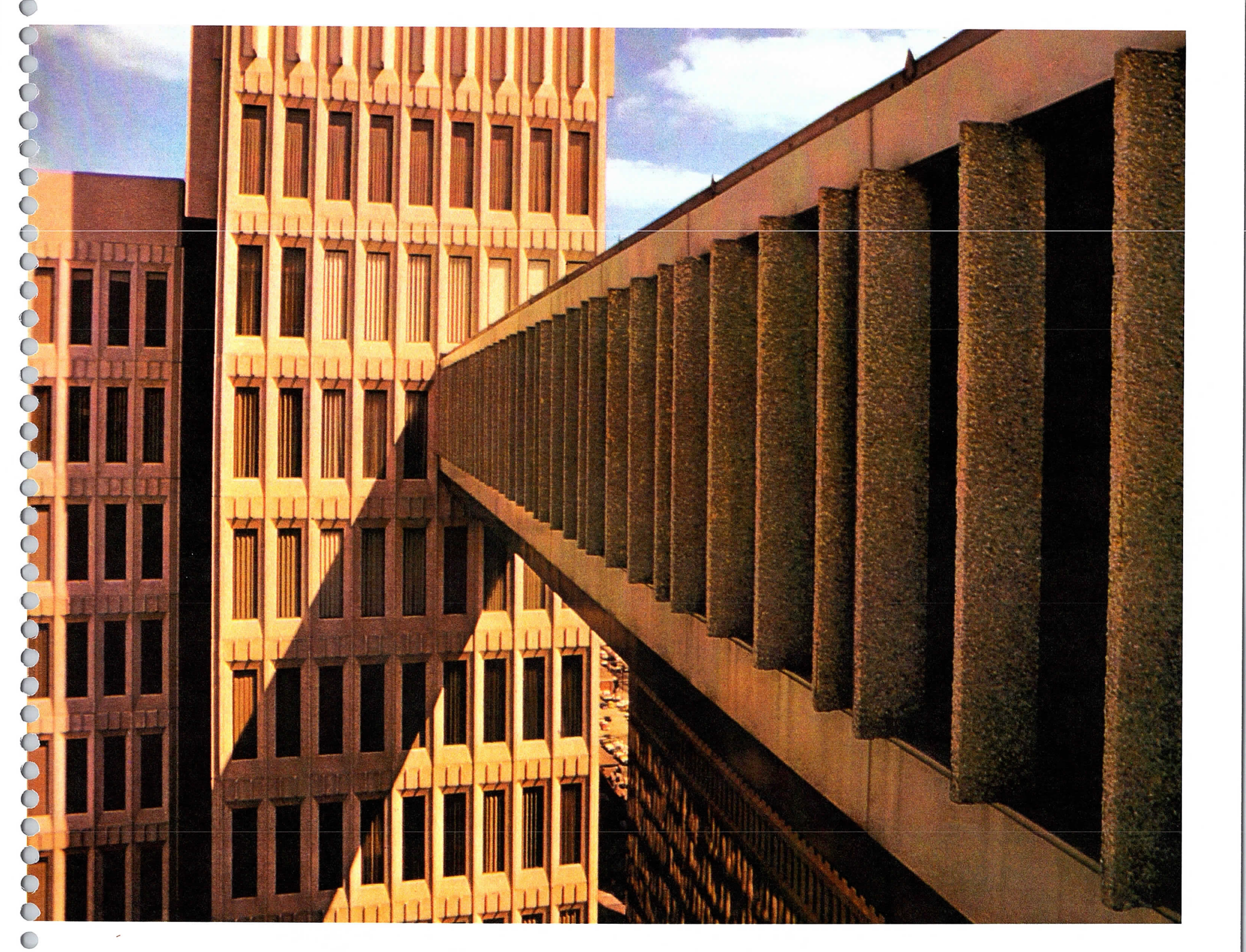


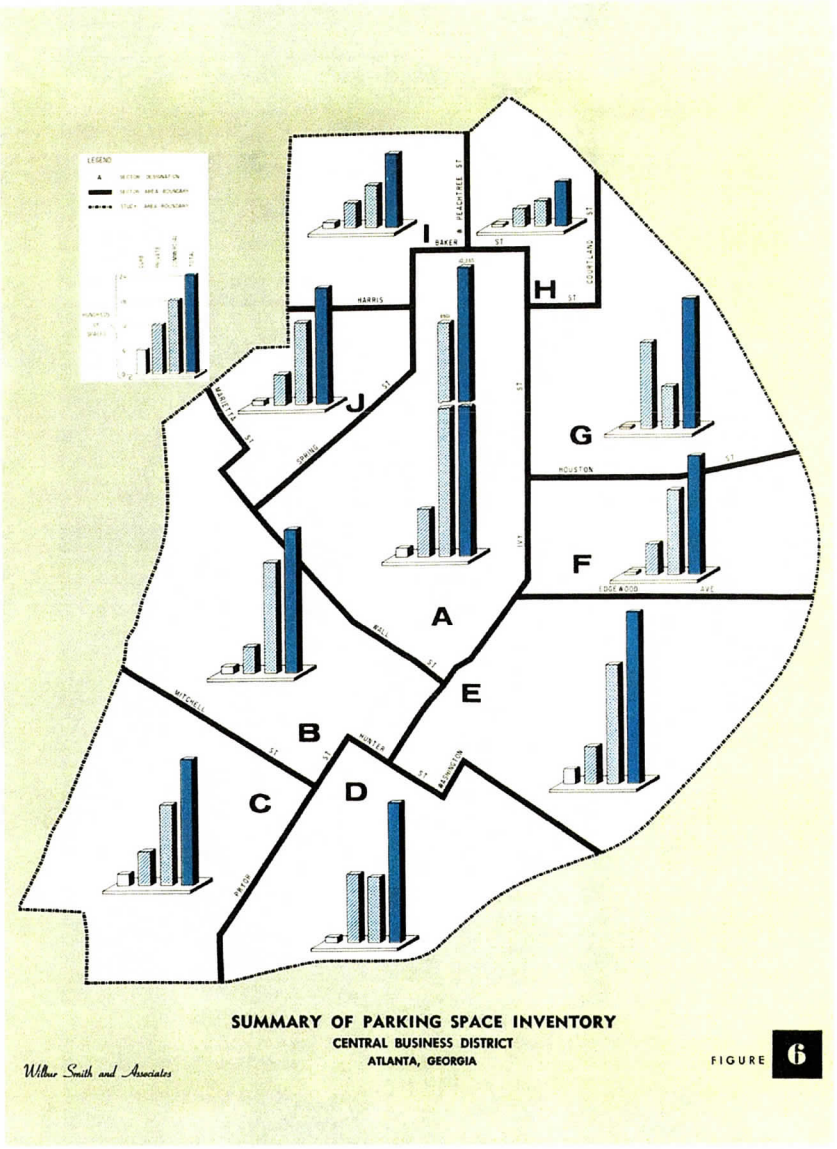


in a blue glass-domed circular structure, "perched atop the building like a flying saucer" (Goldberger et al. 2009, 24). Guest rooms were arranged along the outer corridors surrounding the sky-lit atrium, and each room had an exterior balcony. The excitement on its opening was palpable, with thousands of people arriving to see the atrium lobby (Auchmutey 2007).

Two more additions to Peachtree Center in 1968 rounded out Edward and Portman's frenetic pace of development along both sides of Peachtree Street over the course of the decade. The five-story, reinforced concrete Continental Trailways Bus Terminal and Parking Garage was built at 200 Spring Street providing parking for hotel, office, and mart patrons all connected by sky bridge access (Appendix C:147) (Marsh et al. 1975). Of greater note was the completion of the Peachtree Center North Tower at 235 Peachtree Street. Originally known as the Atlanta Gas Light Tower, after its primary tenant and entirely powered by natural gas in contrast to the Merchandise Mart building, the 24-story skyscraper contained 290,000 square feet of office and retail space. The architectural design of the building was similar to that of its counterpart across the street, the 230 Peachtree Building. Like its predecessor, the North Tower included a sky bridge on the 21st story that connected to the Top of the Mart restaurant (Baker 2013; John Portman and Associates 1984).

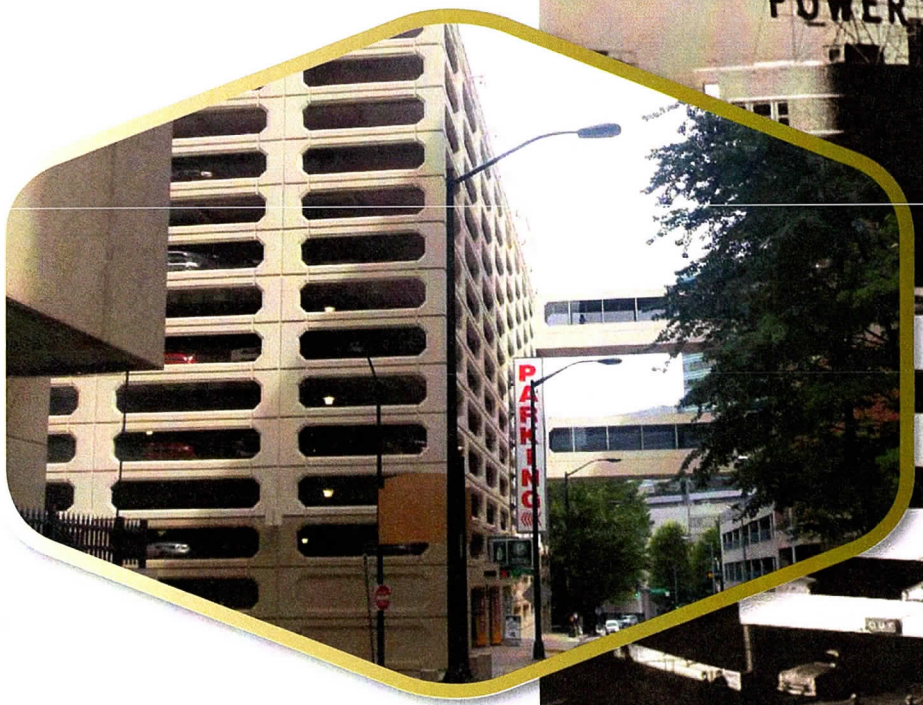
(Top) *Aerial View of Peachtree Center, Looking West, 1969. Source: Atlanta News Agency, Inc., 1969.* **(Opposite)** *Skybridge between the Peachtree Center North Tower (formerly Atlanta Gas Light Tower) and the Top of the Mart. Source: Quest Travelbooks, This is Atlanta, 1973.*

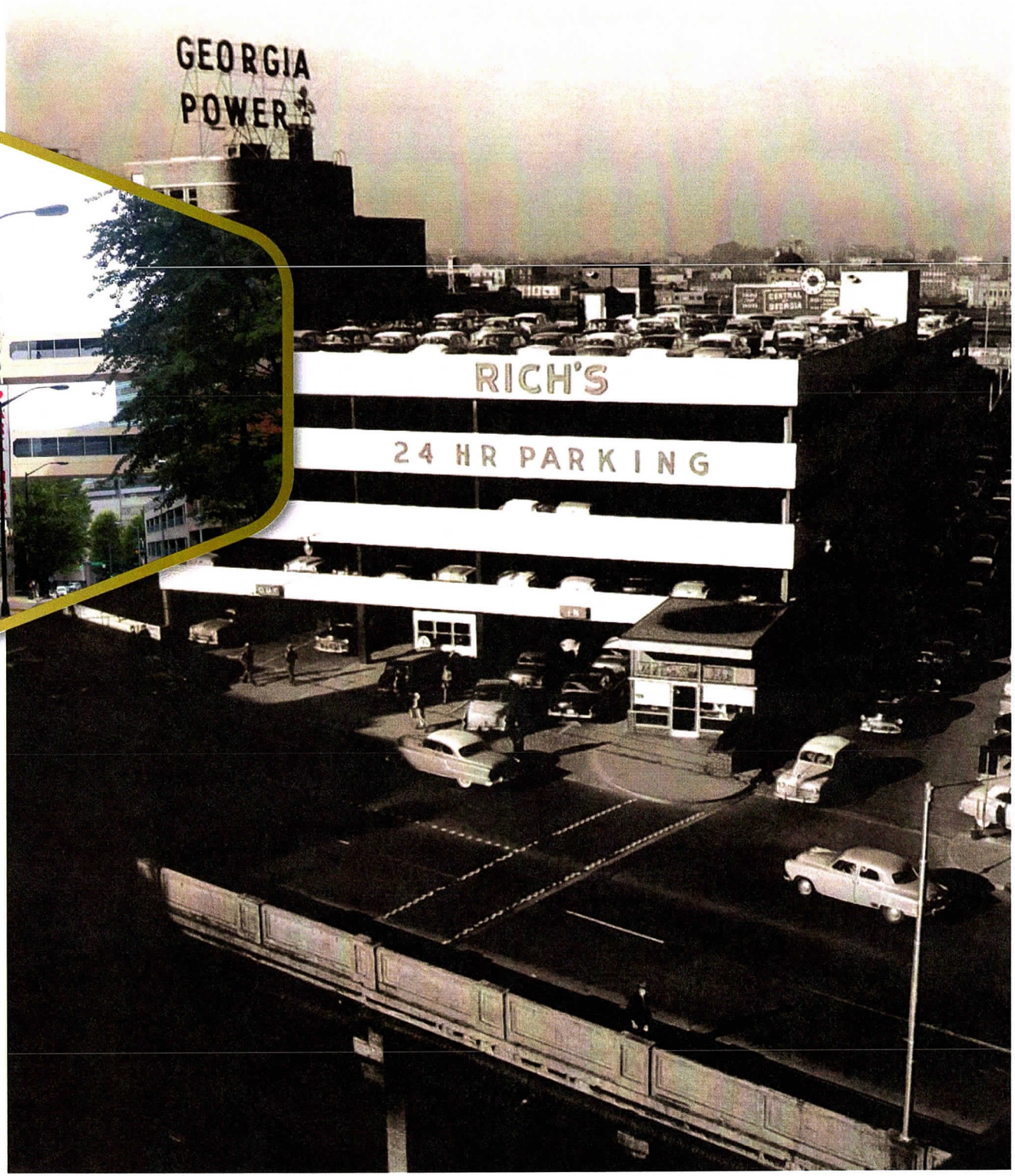




Parking Decks, Public Development, and the Georgia State Master Plan. Beyond the Five Points financial district and Portman's expanding urban center along Peachtree Street, other modern development occurring throughout downtown helped significantly reshape Atlanta's built environment during the 1960s. The 23-story Peachtree Towers Condominiums was erected in 1962 (architect Francis M. Daves, built by the C.D. Spangler Construction Company) at 300 Peachtree Street, NE. It was the tallest residential building Atlanta at the time and the first built in the downtown area after World War II (Peachtree Towers Condominiums 2014). Peachtree Towers was followed a year later by the Landmark Condominiums located at 215 Piedmont Avenue near the downtown expressway (Huebner, Morrison Design, LLC, and Atlanta Preservation & Planning Services, LLC 2013). Despite construction of the two high-rise condominiums, residential construction in downtown Atlanta remained relatively rare, primarily due to the city's unwillingness to build housing on land near the central business district that had been cleared for urban renewal and the lack of market demand for upper-scale housing in the central city (Bayor 1996, 74–75; Stone 1989, 40).

Meanwhile, construction of parking decks continued to proliferate in downtown Atlanta with the number of parking spaces increasing by almost 42 percent over the course of the decade. In 1961, there were an estimated 28,000 parking spaces located in downtown Atlanta. By 1966, that number had grown to 36,300 and would eventually stand at 47,834 by 1970 (Wilbur Smith and Associates et al. 1972, 21). Many of these were attendant parking structures for the new downtown high-rise office





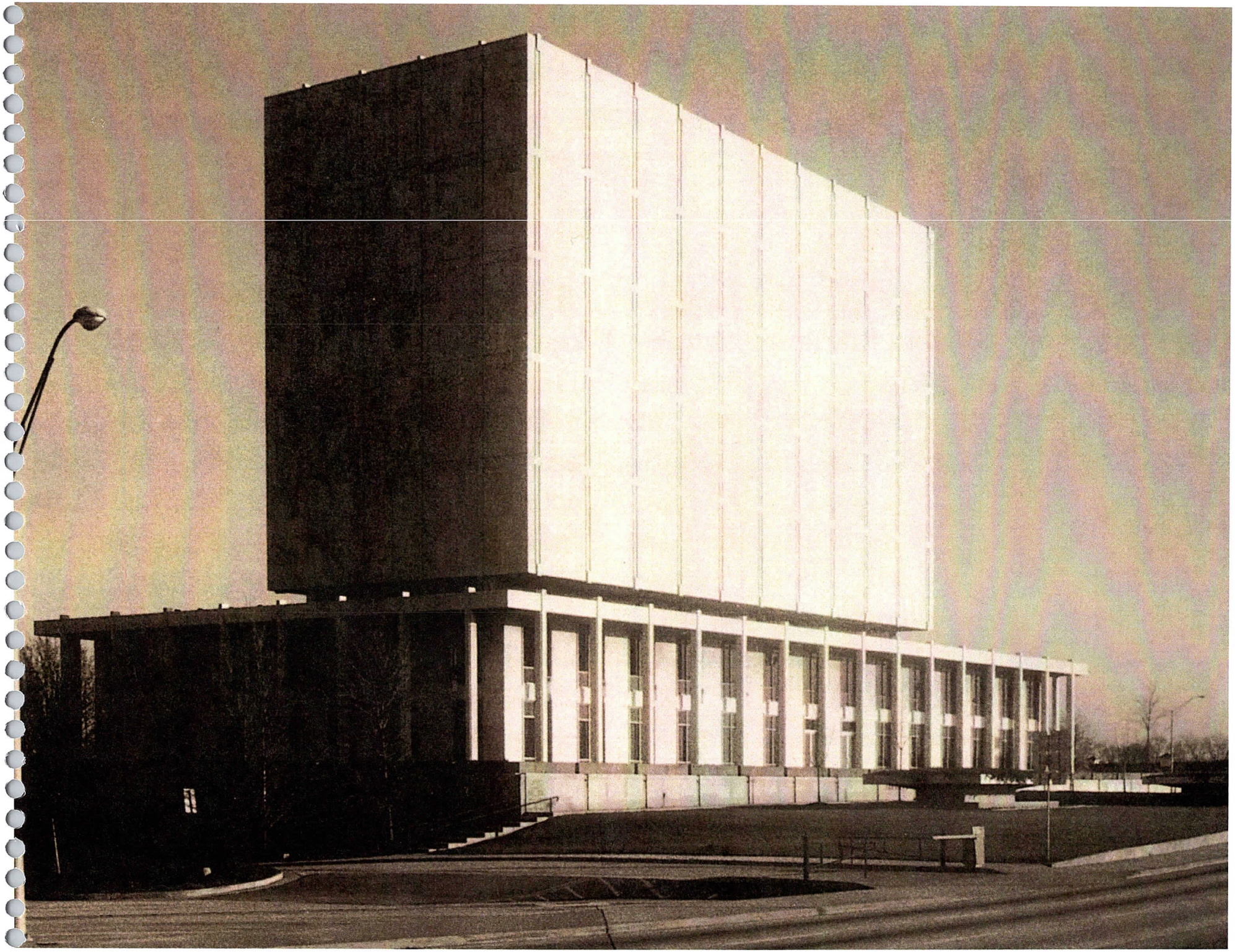
(Opposite) *Parking Space in the Central Business District, 1967. Source: Planning Atlanta City Planning Maps, Georgia State University.* **(Above)** *Davison's (later Macy's) Garage. Source: Morrison and Drummond, 2013.* **(Right)** *Rich's Garage, 1954. Source: Lane Brothers Commercial Photographers Photographic Collection, 1920-1976. Photographic Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.*

(Opposite) *The Georgia Archives Building (later known as the Ben Fortson Building). Source: Craig,* Atlanta Architecture: Art Deco to Modern Classic, 1929-1956, *1995.*

towers, built by companies to house the automobiles of their commuting workforce. In addition to the aforementioned Continental Trailways Bus Terminal and Parking Garage by John Portman, there was the Davison's Department Store Garage, erected in 1966 at Cone Street and Carnegie Way and designed by the firm Toombs, Amisano, and Wells, the International Garage (1967) at the southwest corner of Ivy (now Peachtree Center Avenue) and Cain (now Andrew Young International Boulevard), and the C&S Bank Parking Deck, which was built in 1968 at Mitchell and Forsyth streets (Marsh et al. 1975; Huebner, Morrison Design, LLC, and Atlanta Preservation & Planning Services, LLC 2013).

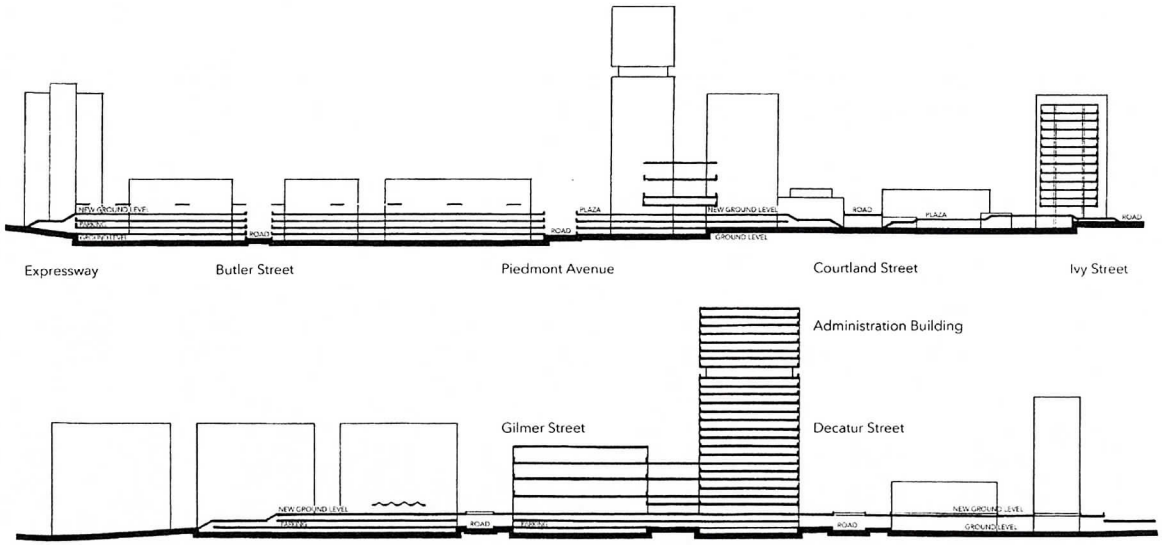
Lower downtown experienced continued public development in the vicinity of the State Capitol and surrounding government district. Most prominent was the modernist Georgia Department of State Archives and History building at 330 Capitol Avenue, SE overlooking the downtown interchange at I-75/85 and the new, east-west I-20 expressway. Designed by A. Thomas Bradbury and built between 1962 and 1965, the Georgia Archives Building, later known as the Ben Fortson Building, shares the white marble veneer of the architect's earlier Modern Classic works at the State Capitol complex, but its strict symmetry, full-height columns surrounding the two-story podium, and monumentality of the windowless, block tower point toward the stylistic qualities closely associated with the New Formalism variant of modernist architecture (Craig 2014; Whiffen 1992, 261–263).

Bradbury returned to Modern Classic features for his design of the State Industry and Trade Building in 1966 (also known as the Trinity-Washington Building) (Appendix C:173) while other public architecture from this period consisted of a number of smaller government office and support facilities (Huebner, Morrison Design, LLC, and Atlanta Preservation & Planning Services, LLC 2013). Also of note was the state-owned Georgia Plaza Park (renamed Talmadge Plaza in 2002; also known as City Plaza Park, Steve Polk Plaza) at the northeast corner of Mitchell Street and Central Avenue, which opened in March of 1969. The Massachusetts landscape architecture firm, Sasaki, Dawson, Demay Associates designed the unique urban plaza, which included a sub-grade, 225-space parking garage. A federal "Open Space Land Grant" helped offset the $6.5 million cost of construction for the park, which originally included trees, a waterfall, and fountain (Saporta 2007).

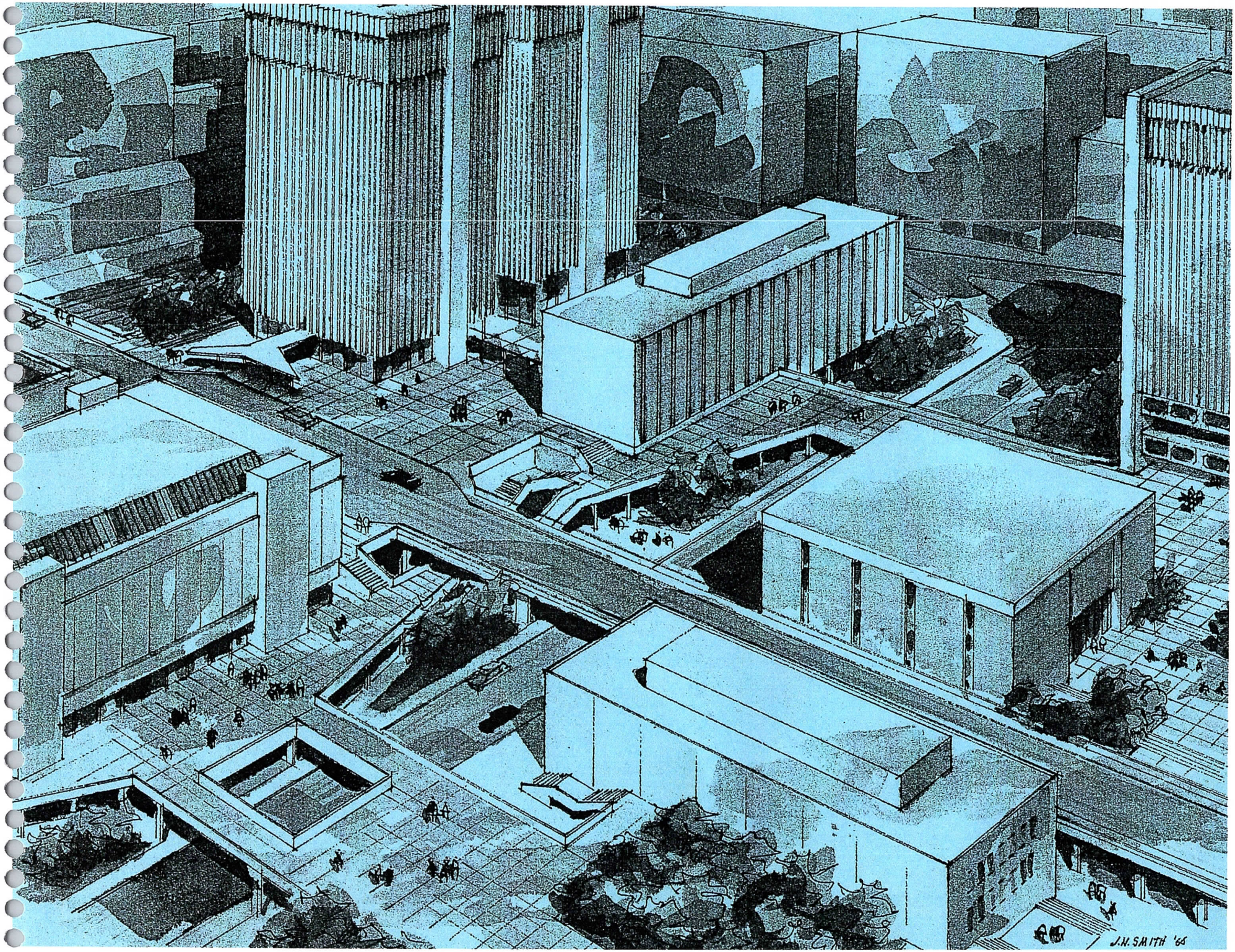


Under the leadership of new school president Noah Langdale, Jr., Georgia State University (then known as Georgia State College) began planning in the early 1960s for the expansion of its downtown campus to accommodate the projected growth of its student population. In 1962, the College quietly began accepting African American students and prepared a joint campus plan with City of Atlanta Planning Department to help guide $3 million in new school construction on approximately 10 acres of land acquired through urban renewal slum-clearance along Decatur Street between Ivy Street (now Peachtree Center Avenue) and the Courtland Street viaduct (Drummond and Kohr 2014, 8–9; Martin 1987, III:493). Over the next eight years, Georgia State would engage in a significant building campaign that included the Student Activities/University Center Building (1965), a library (1968, Richard Aeck of Aeck Associates), Counseling Center, and Business Administration Building (1968, Gregson and Associates) (Drummond and Kohr 2014, 39–40).

Uniting the new development was a comprehensive master plan prepared in 1966 by architect and planner Andre Steiner of Robert and Company. Steiner's ambitious 60-acre plan called for a multi-level, campus with landscaped open plazas and pedestrian walkways built over covered parking lots and city surface streets. According to Steiner, the elevated campus would extend over 10 city blocks



(Left) *Schematic of the Georgia State University Urban Campus Plan Concept.* **(Opposite)** *Rendering of the Georgia State University Urban Campus Plan Concept. Source:* Atlanta Magazine, *March 1966.*


J.N. SMITH '66

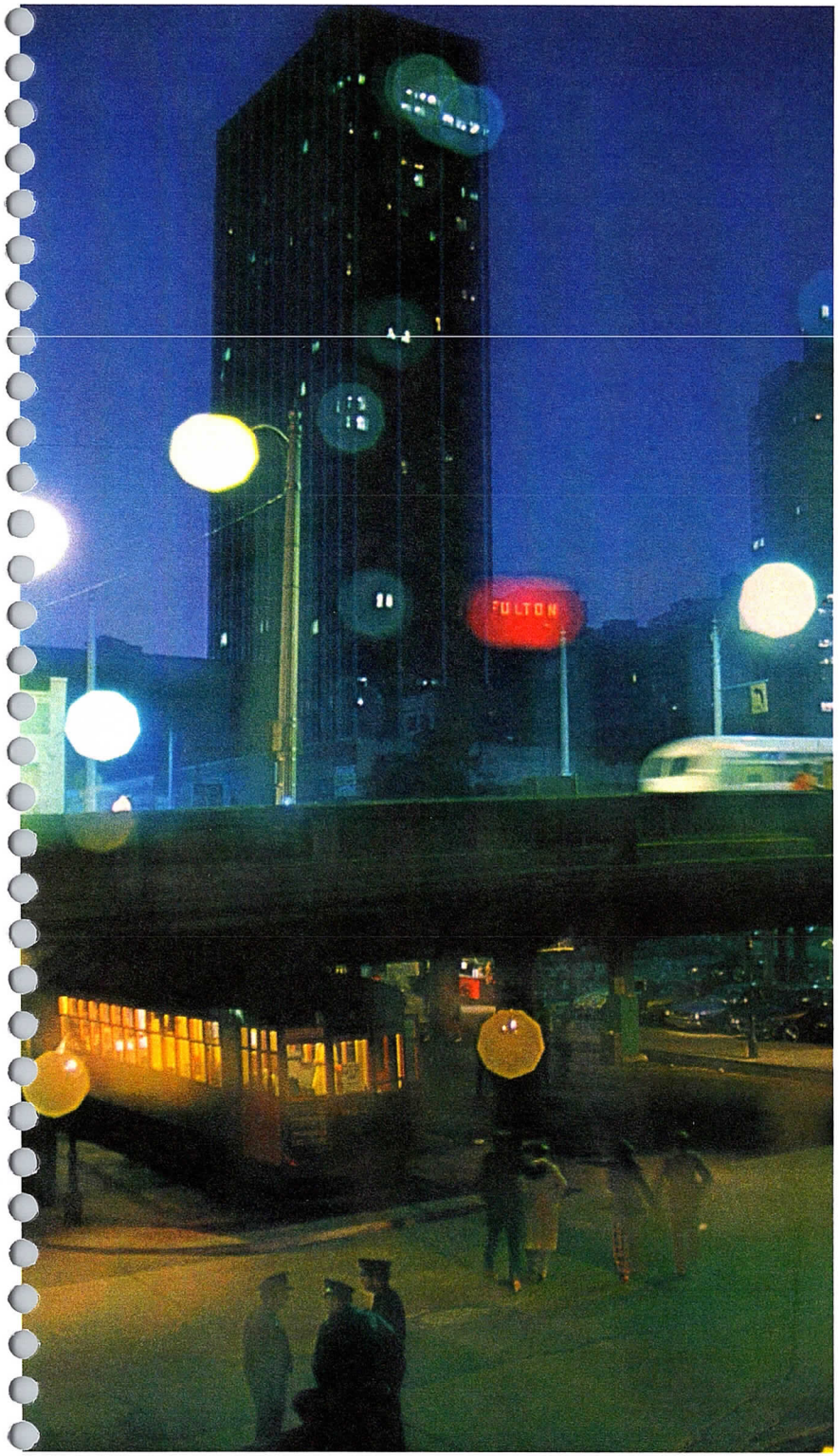
and "encourage the unplanned meetings that are an important part of university life." Not content to just interconnect the major buildings on the campus, he also sought to unite the College with the government district to the south and the financial district to the west (Galphin 1966).

Underground Atlanta and the Atlanta Civic Center. In 1963, the North Georgia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) unveiled *Improving the Mess We Live In* at a luncheon attended by the city's business, civic, and city leaders. The 125-page study heavily criticized Atlanta's existing architectural character and haphazard urban planning, leading Mayor Ivan Allen to establish the advisory Atlanta Beautification Committee, which later became the Atlanta Civic Design Commission in 1967 (American Institute of Architects 1965, 72,76). The 15-member volunteer advisory board, composed of artists, registered architects and engineers, urban planners, and lay residents, sought:

> *"to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the old, historic, or architecturally worthy structures in quaint areas and neighborhoods which impart a distinct aspect to the city of Atlanta."*

During its first year, the commission recommended the development of Margaret Mitchell Square, a small pocket park on a triangular plot at the intersection of Forsyth and Peachtree streets (Martin 1987, III:460–461). The Civic Design Commission later approved the design and proposed location for a new public artwork commissioned by Rich's Department Store. Designed by the Italian sculptor Gemba Quirino and executed by Ferrucia Vezzoni, the bronze sculpture, *Atlanta from the Ashes,* was publicly unveiled two years later in 1969 at the intersection of Hunter (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard) and Spring streets (it was later moved to the southwest corner of Woodruff Park prior to the 1996 Olympics) (Clemmons 2012, 146).

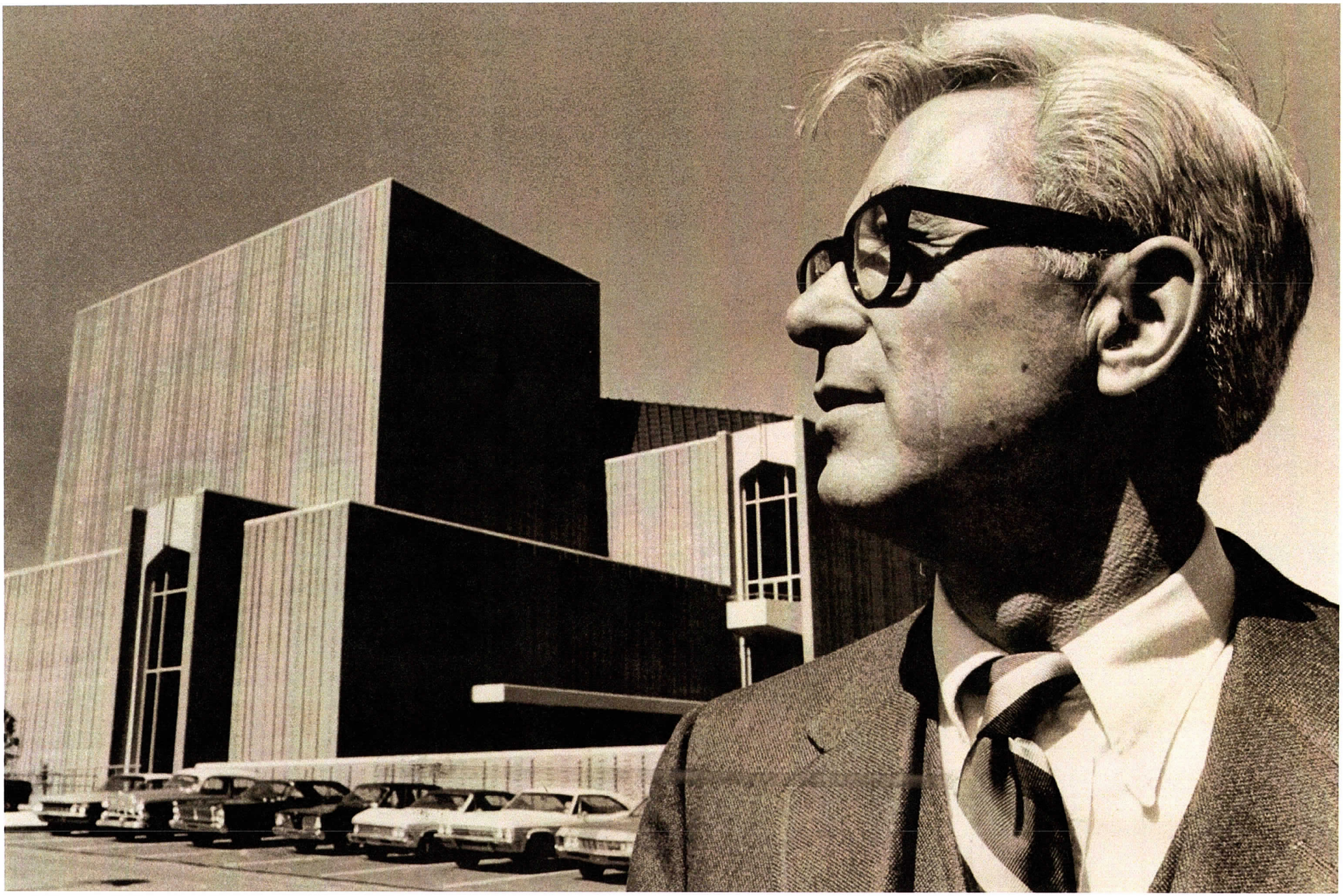
The Civic Design Commission also strongly supported a concept presented by businessmen Steven Fuller, Jr. and Jack Paterson to turn a forgotten stretch of late nineteenth-century commercial storefronts located in the center of the city and covered with bridges, viaducts, and overpasses during the 1920s into a historic site and tourist attraction. In 1967 the two men formed Underground Atlanta, Incorporated and selected the firm of Jova/Daniels/Busby to prepare a master plan for the complex and restore the historic interiors and facades of the storefronts below Alabama Street (Rinehart and Jova 2007). Underground Atlanta opened in 1968 and quickly became



Underground Atlanta at Night, 1973. Source: Quest Travelbooks, This is Atlanta, *1973.*

a popular entertainment district within the city. Festooned in faux Victorian décor, the concentration of restaurants, bars, nightclubs and souvenir shops attracted city dwellers and suburbanites alike, benefitting from Atlanta's 4:00 A.M. bar closing times on weekdays (2:55 A.M. on Saturdays) and the strict Bible Belt liquor laws in the surrounding counties that prohibited the sale of mixed drinks (Martin 1987, III:495; Shavin 1971, 1).

The year 1968 marked the opening of the new Atlanta Civic Center and Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr. was able to check off one more of his Forward Atlanta campaign objectives before leaving office. William Hartsfield had once described the city's existing Atlanta Municipal Auditorium as "Ideal for nothing, but it can accommodate anything" (Martin 1987). Plans to replace the outdated building with a larger, new facility coalesced in 1963. The city commissioned Harold Montague of Robert and Company to begin designing the new auditorium and exhibition complex that would be located at 395 Piedmont Avenue, northeast of downtown, on urban renewal property obtained through clearance of the African American community of Buttermilk Bottom. Montague's New Formalism design employed a reinforced concrete fame, striated, ocher brick walls, and white concrete, ogee arched balcony windows (Gournay et al. 1993, 62). Labor strikes and poor weather extended the construction process over a five-year period. Completed at a cost of $4 million and wheelchair accessible throughout, the Atlanta Civic Center Complex included a 4,600-seat concert hall and a 70,000-square foot exhibition space located under one roof. Adjacent to the building was a large 1,000-space, surface parking lot (Dial 1968). Called



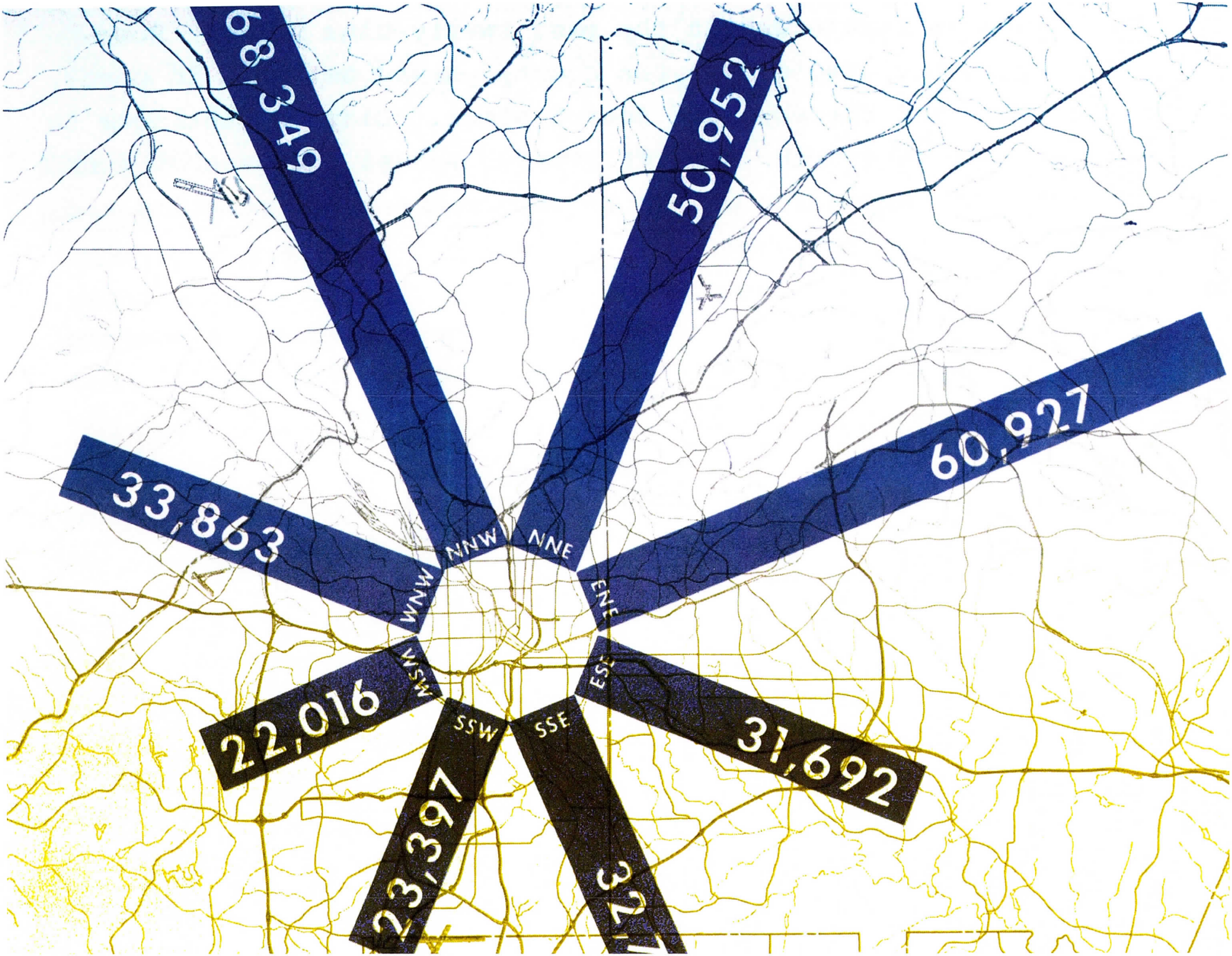
"rather cozy for its size" by the architect, the new Atlanta Civic Center was almost outdated by the time it opened and was soon considered too small to host modern concert events and convention trade shows (Allen 1996, 168).

Citizens Trust Bank. In 1969, Vice Mayor Sam Massell defeated Rodney Cook, the business community's favored candidate and Ivan Allen, Jr.'s handpicked choice as his successor, to become the Atlanta's first Jewish mayor. That same election also ushered in Maynard Jackson, a grandson of the prominent Atlanta Civil Rights leader John Wesley Dobbs, as the first African American vice mayor in the city's history. The victories of both men illustrated the declining influence of the downtown business power structure and the ascendant political strength of the city's African American population, which now constituted a majority of Atlanta's 496,000 residents (Stone 1989, 77).

The growing economic and political clout of Atlanta's black middle-class was demonstrated in 1969, when the African American-owned Citizens Trust Bank left its historic headquarters on Auburn Avenue and relocated to a new office facility located at 75 Piedmont Avenue. The Citizens Trust Bank's new corporate headquarters represented the growing economic power of the 48-year-old company, placing it on par with the region's white-owned financial institutions. The 12-story mid-rise building featured steel frame and glass curtain wall construction and integrated parking on the basement level. Italian marble columns adorned the exterior of the first floor banking and office lobby. The Citizens Trust Bank continued to experience success in the late 1960s despite efforts by major banks to court African American customers by offering more competitive services in the wake of integration and the Civil Rights Movement (Lewis 2002, 20).

(Opposite) *Atlanta Civic Center and Architect Harold Montague, 1968. Source:* Atlanta Journal-Constitution *Photographic Archive. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.* **(Below)** *Citizens Trust Bank. Source: Morrison and Drummond, 2013.*




64,389
50,952
60,927
33,863
NNW
NNE
ENE
WNW
WSW
22,016
SSW
SSE
ESE
31,692
23,397

(Opposite) *Directions of Population Growthin Metropolitan Atlanta, 1960-1969.*

Source: Planning Atlanta City Planning Maps, Georgia State University.

MARTA RAPID TRANSIT, POLITICAL SHIFTS, AND THE PRIVATIZED "URBAN CENTER," 1970-1980.

Looking back over the extraordinary growth of previous decade, former Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr. proudly declared,

> *"In 1959, we were known for Coca-Cola, Georgia Tech, dogwoods, the Atlanta Crackers and easy southern living; by 1969 we were known for gleaming skyscrapers, expressways, and the Atlanta Braves..."*

This economic boom continued into the early 1970s. The five-county, core metropolitan area of Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett accounted for nearly 48 percent of all new jobs created in the state and the city ranked in the top 10 for leading growth indicators with regard to downtown construction, bank clearings, air traffic, and employment (Bartley 1995, 436; Hartshorn and Association of American Geographers 1976, 14). Over the previous decade, downtown general office space had grown from 10.6 to 17.6 million square feet, while the number of hotel and motel rooms more than doubled from 3,400 to 7,700 (Wilbur Smith and Associates et al. 1972).

Despite this optimism, emerging evidence pointed to a growing trend of economic outmigration that would prove problematic for downtown Atlanta as the decade wore on. While the city grappled with racial and political changes, the unincorporated suburbs continued their rapid pace of development. Although the number of retail firms increased by 78 percent in the City of Atlanta between 1963 and 1972; it was dwarfed by the 286 percent raise in retail firms within the suburban ring over that same period. Furthermore, only 12 percent of the metropolitan Atlanta workforce worked within the city limits by the mid-1970s (Bartley 1995, 436). National companies that established branch offices in Atlanta or relocated to the city during the 1960s avoided the downtown central business district, opting instead to place their corporate headquarters in the landscaped suburban office parks sprouting up along the recently opened I-285 perimeter highway along the city's northern edge. Pioneering developments such as Cobb Galleria, Executive Park, and Presidential Parkway offered the conveniences of easy highway access, free parking, and closeness to the apartment complexes and neighborhoods where most company executives and employees lived (Pacione 2002, 2:161–163) According to developer Michael Gearon, whose Executive Park opened in 1968 as the first suburban office park in the nation, business travelers increasingly valued quick

access to the airport over a traditional downtown office location. Architect John Portman criticized this new shift toward suburban office campuses and what he felt was their detrimental economic effect on the city's core. For Gearon and other developers however, "the geographic center of Atlanta [was] no longer downtown" (Heery et al. 2015; Martin 1987, III:547–549).

Creation of the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority. Creation and funding of the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) in 1971 was the hallmark of Sam Massell's single term as mayor (Massell 2008). Ivan Allen and local business interests had long viewed rapid transit development as a catalyst for downtown economic growth and a benchmark confirming Atlanta's status as a national city. While the Allen administration formed MARTA in 1964 and initiated long-term planning for rapid rail transit, a referendum to fund the system was decisively defeated in 1968 (Martin 1987, III:531). Massell revived the issue during his administration and with Central Atlanta Progress, under the leadership of John Portman and the Atlanta Action Forum, an informal, bi-racial coalition of white and black business leaders, campaigned heavily for the passage of MARTA in November 1971. Of the five counties forming metropolitan region, only the voters in the City of Atlanta, DeKalb and Fulton approved the measure and the corresponding penny sales tax funding mechanism. Although the smaller system limited the effect that rapid transit would have on metropolitan Atlanta's mounting traffic issues, downtown developers looked with promise at the potential for commercial office and retail growth around future MARTA rail stations (Allen 1996, 174, 200).

Downtown Development, Points East, West, and In Between. While the MARTA vote consumed City Hall and dominated newspaper headlines, other significant developments were underway throughout downtown during the early 1970s. East of Five Points, Georgia State University continued the build-out of its "concrete campus," which had grown to encompass 19.5 acres around Decatur Street. Phase one of Steiner's campus plan and a number of new buildings were completed by 1971 to accommodate a student population that had grown from 3,447 in 1961 to 12,833 by 1970 (Martin 1987, III:594). Richard Aeck designed both the Art and Music Building (now Arts and Humanities) and the 10-story, Arts and Sciences Building (now Langdale Hall; also known as the General Classroom Building), which opened in 1970 and 1971, respectively. In a nod to the University's past, Aeck sheathed the Art and Music Building in the white Georgia marble common to older school buildings, such as Sparks Hall. For the New Formalism elements of the Arts and Science Building, Aeck employed a contrasting concrete and dark brick veneer similar to that of his earlier commission for the Library Building. The Physical Education Complex and the Urban Life Center (FABRAP, J.A. Jones Construction

Company, builder) followed in 1973 and marked the end of campus development during this period. The two-tiered, concrete sports facility included a sports arena and athletic complex and was executed in the solid massing of Brutalism, a subset of the Modern movement, which was gaining traction within architectural design circles in Britain and the United States during the late 1960s and 1970s. Bill Finch's industrial design for the Urban Life Center hewed more closely to the design aesthetic and materials first established by Aeck's work on campus (Drummond and Kohr 2014, 44–45; *Progressive Architecture* 1975, 42–43).



Georgia State University Campus, circa 1975. University Archives, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University.

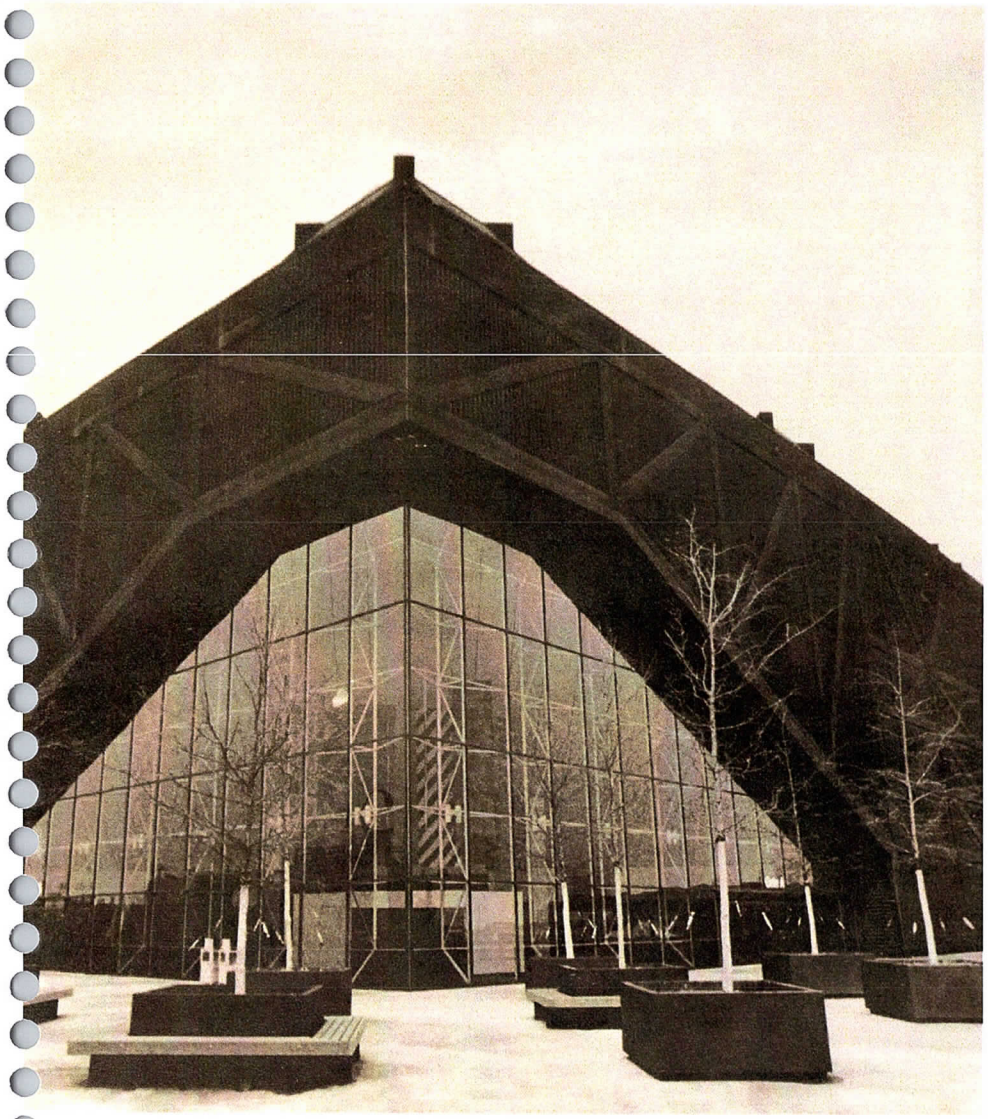
On the industrial west side of downtown, in an area that many considered "unbuildable," residential real estate developer Tom Cousins was building a modern indoor sports coliseum to permanently house the National Basketball Association (NBA) Hawks franchise that he and former Georgia Governor Carl Sanders had purchased from St. Louis and relocated to Atlanta in 1968 (Ventulett 2008). Cousins wished to build the arena over the downtown railroad gulch with the air rights he had purchased from the state in 1966. Eager to see a new indoor venue built in Atlanta that could handle concerts and other events that exceeded capacity of the cramped Civic Center, but unwilling to commit taxpayer money to the project, Cousins and Massell established a private-public funding plan in 1971 whereby net revenues collected from coliseum events and Cousins' two-story, 200-space parking garage (1968, Toombs, Amisano, and Wells) over the gulch

would pay off construction bonds underwritten by the managing Atlanta-Fulton County Recreation Authority (AFCRA) (Allen 1996, 168–168; Shavin and Galphin 1982, 286, 288).

The 16,500-seat Omni Coliseum was built at a cost of $11 million and opened in 1972 (razed 1997). Designed by the Atlanta firm Thompson, Ventulett, and Stainback, Architects (TVS) and built by the Hardin Construction Company, the multipurpose venue was hailed as "The Madison Square Garden of the South" (Blass 1991, 48). The 377,000-squre foot building featured a unique, Cor-Ten all-weathering steel and glass exterior that its designer, Thomas Ventulett, called a "milestone for the steel industry" (Gournay et al. 1993, 66; Ventulett 2008). More importantly, Tom Cousins viewed the Omni Coliseum as just the first step in his broader plan to build a sprawling, multi-use hotel, retail, and office complex on the west side of Atlanta that would rival John Portman's expanding Peachtree Center development to the north (Allen 1996, 169).

As Cousins' projects were getting underway on the west side of downtown, Atlanta received an anonymous gift in 1971 that helped transform the heart of the city. The unnamed benefactor was





(Opposite) *Central City Park (Later Woodruff Park), 1975. Source:* Atlanta Journal-Constitution *Photographic Archive. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.* **(Left)** *The Omni Coliseum. Source: Shavin,* Atlanta: Triumph of a People, *1982.*

Coca-Cola Company president Robert Woodruff, who donated 1.7 acres of downtown real estate worth $1.3 million for use as a city park. Woodruff gave an additional $10 million to the city to clear and landscape the site, which was primarily occupied by one and two-part commercial office/retail buildings that dated from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Originally named Central City Park (later renamed Woodruff Park) when it opened in 1973, it was bounded by Peachtree Street, Pryor Street (now Park Place), Edgewood Avenue, and Luckie Street (Auburn Avenue was rerouted during construction of the park to align with Luckie Street). The greenspace was expanded north of Edgewood Avenue in the late 1970s with a 600-seat amphitheater and water fountain (Central Atlanta Progress 1978b, 1).

Mayoral Election of Maynard H. Jackson. In 1974, the city's majority black population elected Maynard H. Jackson to become the first African American mayor of Atlanta. Jackson entered office determined to change how the city had traditionally operated and his relationship with the city's white business community was frosty at the outset. "I came to the job as an advocate," he explained, "I believe in actually changing how the system operates" (Bayor 1996, 49).



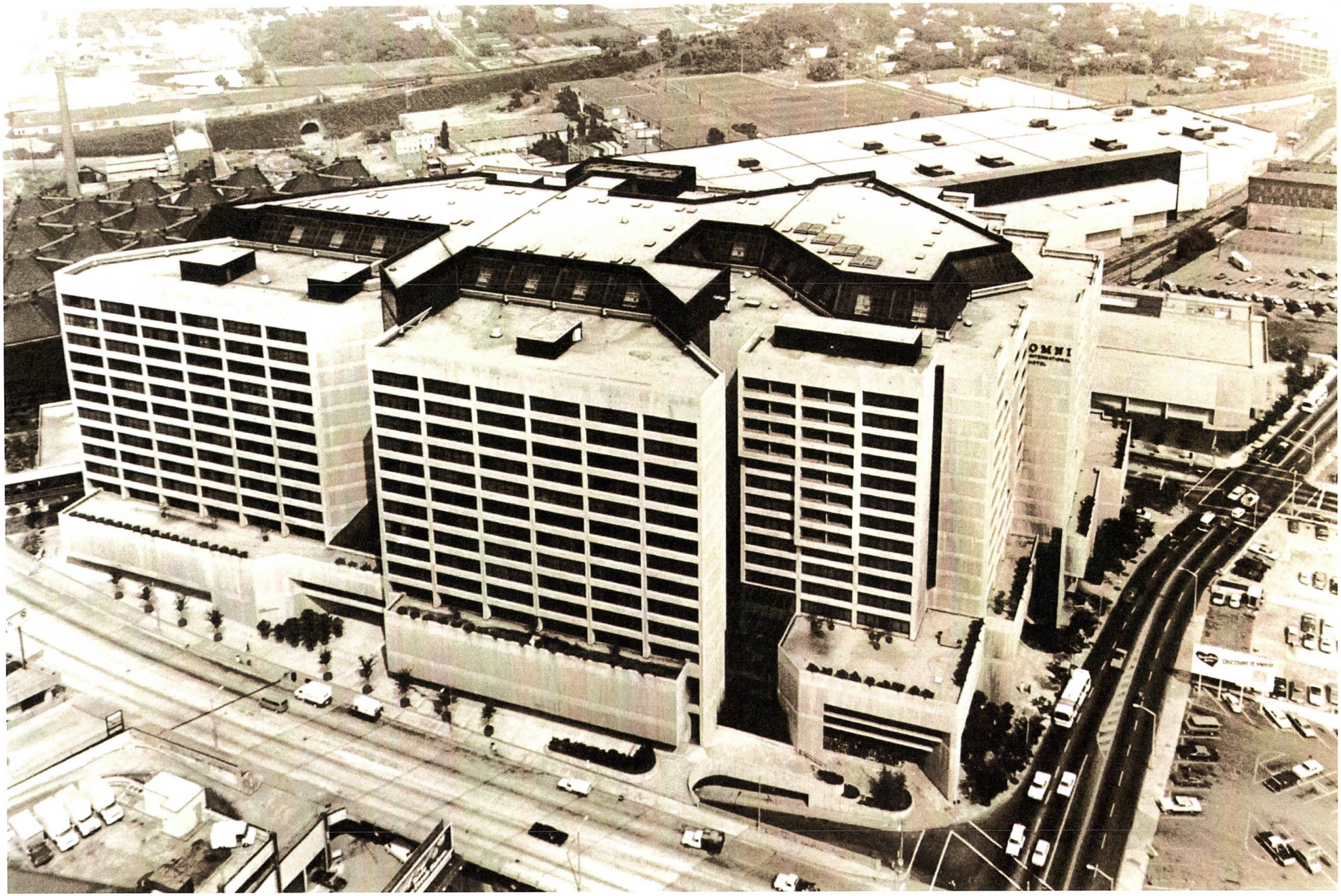


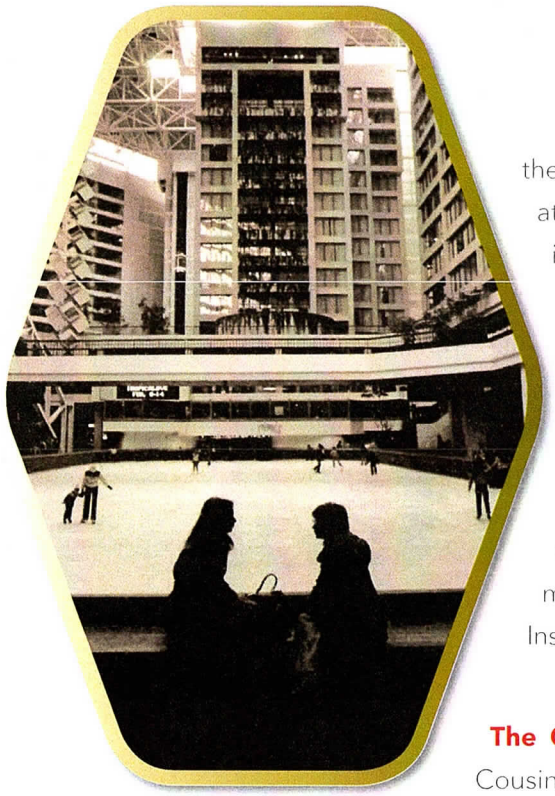
(Top) *Maynard Jackson at his first press conference after being elected mayor of Atlanta, January 1974. Source:* Atlanta Journal Constitution *Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.* **(Left)** *Developer Herman J. Russell (far left) dining in Atlanta with his young son, Michael (center), and wife Otelia (far right), 1968. Source: Osborne,* The Old South, *1968.*

Maynard Jackson's election coincided with the reorganization of the city charter and the creation of the Strong Mayor system of municipal government, which handed powers to the executive that had recently been shared with the Board of Aldermen (now the Atlanta City Council). Armed with this new authority, Mayor Jackson sought to democratize Atlanta's City Hall by expanding opportunities for local involvement with the creation of Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU), which allowed residents to provide input on historic preservation, planning, and zoning issues affecting their communities. More importantly, he opened city contract bidding to Atlanta's minority-owned businesses that had been traditionally shut out of the process. During the Jackson administration, the Minority Business Enterprise program raised the percentages of municipal contracts reserved for minority firms from less than one percent to 25 percent, allowing African American and women-owned businesses to participate more fully in the city's booming economy, often through joint-venture arrangements (Stone 1989, 86–87). One of the biggest beneficiaries of this policy was contractor and developer Herman Russell who engaged in a number of significant infrastructure and construction projects including expansion of the airport and development of the MARTA rapid transit system.

The Rise of Atlanta's Urban Centers. As Atlanta entered the 1970s, continued population loss to the suburbs combined with fears of rising crime rates caused business and civic leaders to look at the emerging development trend of large-scale commercial, urban center projects underway in other municipalities that were nationally-touted as a way to reestablish vibrant, downtown retail zones at a time when most Americans were abandoning the city. Typically a mix of office, hotel, and retail businesses, urban centers were often built as a cohesive superblock development on vacant or cleared downtown land, located near rapid transportation nodes, or integrated within the existing street grid and commercial fabric of a city (Rifkind 2001:337). Later coined the "mall-in-the-megastructure" by author and historian Carole Rifkind, the mixed-use commercial center became the inner-city counterpart to the enclosed, suburban pedestrian shopping mall, first designed by the Austrian-born architect, Victor Gruen outside Edina, Minnesota in 1956.

While John Portman may not have been the originator of the post-war urban center concept with his Peachtree Center complex, he was at the forefront of a planning and commercial development trend that took hold in Atlanta during the late 1960s and into the 1970s. The self-contained urban center, with its privatized interior public spaces and mix of shopping, hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues, was ideally suited for bolstering downtown's growing convention industry. Just to the north, in Midtown Atlanta,


OMNI



(Opposite) *The Omni International Complex, July 1979. Source:* Atlanta Journal-Constitution *Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.* **(Above)** *The Omni Interior, 1980. Source:* Atlanta Journal-Constitution *Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.*

the first phase of developer Jim Cushman's Colony Square development opened in July 1969 at 1197 Peachtree Street NE. Designed by Jova/Daniels/Busby Architects and completed in 1973, it was the first mixed-use urban center, or "micropolis," in the South to include residential condominiums along with interconnected high-rise office towers, a hotel, and an atrium shopping center (Gournay et al. 1993, 119; Barta Media Group 2015). In addition to John Portman's expanding Peachtree Center development and the growth of the Georgia State campus, three additional urban center projects were built in the central business district during the 1970s: the Omni International, The Georgia World Congress Center, and the Atlanta Center (Hamer 1980, 40–41). By the mid-1970s, Atlanta was nationally recognized as being at the "leading edge" in the development of urban, mixed-use projects, prompting architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable to brand it as "The Instant City" in 1975 (*AIA Journal* 1975, 33; Walker 1977).

The Omni International. Looking to capitalize on the success of the Omni Coliseum, Tom Cousins began planning and development of an adjacent, multi-purpose office, retail, and recreation complex to entice Atlanta suburbanites into downtown for entertainment. Designed by Thompson, Ventulett, and Stainback, Architects and built by Hardin Construction at a cost of $65 million, the rhomboid-shaped megastructure was connected to the adjacent sports arena and parking garage. When it opened in 1976, the Omni International included a 550-room luxury hotel and two 14-story office towers enclosing a soaring 14-story interior atrium flooded with natural light. A skating rink, movie theaters, high-end retail shops, and restaurants were located on the first floor, while the world's longest free-span escalator climbed 200 feet to the World of Sid and Marty Krofft amusement park on the top floor (*AIA Journal* 1975, 43; Gournay et al. 1993, 66–67). The five-and-a-half acre complex at 190 Marietta Street was expected to be the second phase of a planned 35-acre development that would counterbalance John Portman's growing Peachtree Center on the north side of the city (Allen 1996, 169).

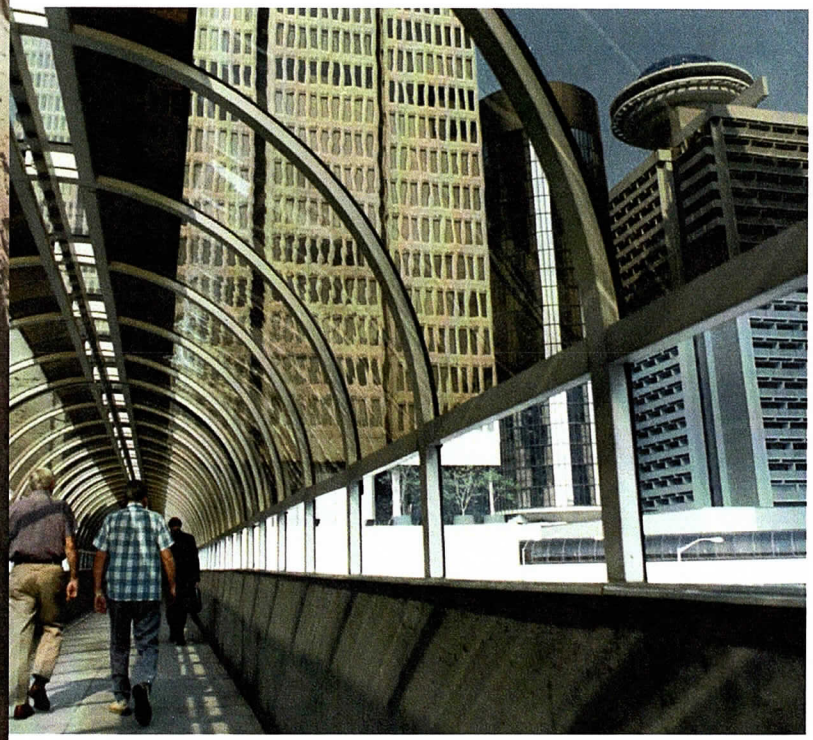
The Georgia World Congress Center. Cousins' investment on the west side of Atlanta spurred interest among state officials who were eager to develop a convention/trade show facility in the area. In 1970, the Georgia General Assembly provided $175,000 for preliminary planning and market feasibility of the proposed project. Three years later, Cousins offered to donate property north of his Omni complex, inviting lawmakers to build the convention facility in the area. State authorities eventually tapped TVS and Hardin Construction Company, the architecture firm and builder of Cousins' Omni properties, for the $35 million state project known as the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC) (Allen 1996, 170; Galloway, Hart, and Thompson, Ventulett & Stainback 2001, 36).

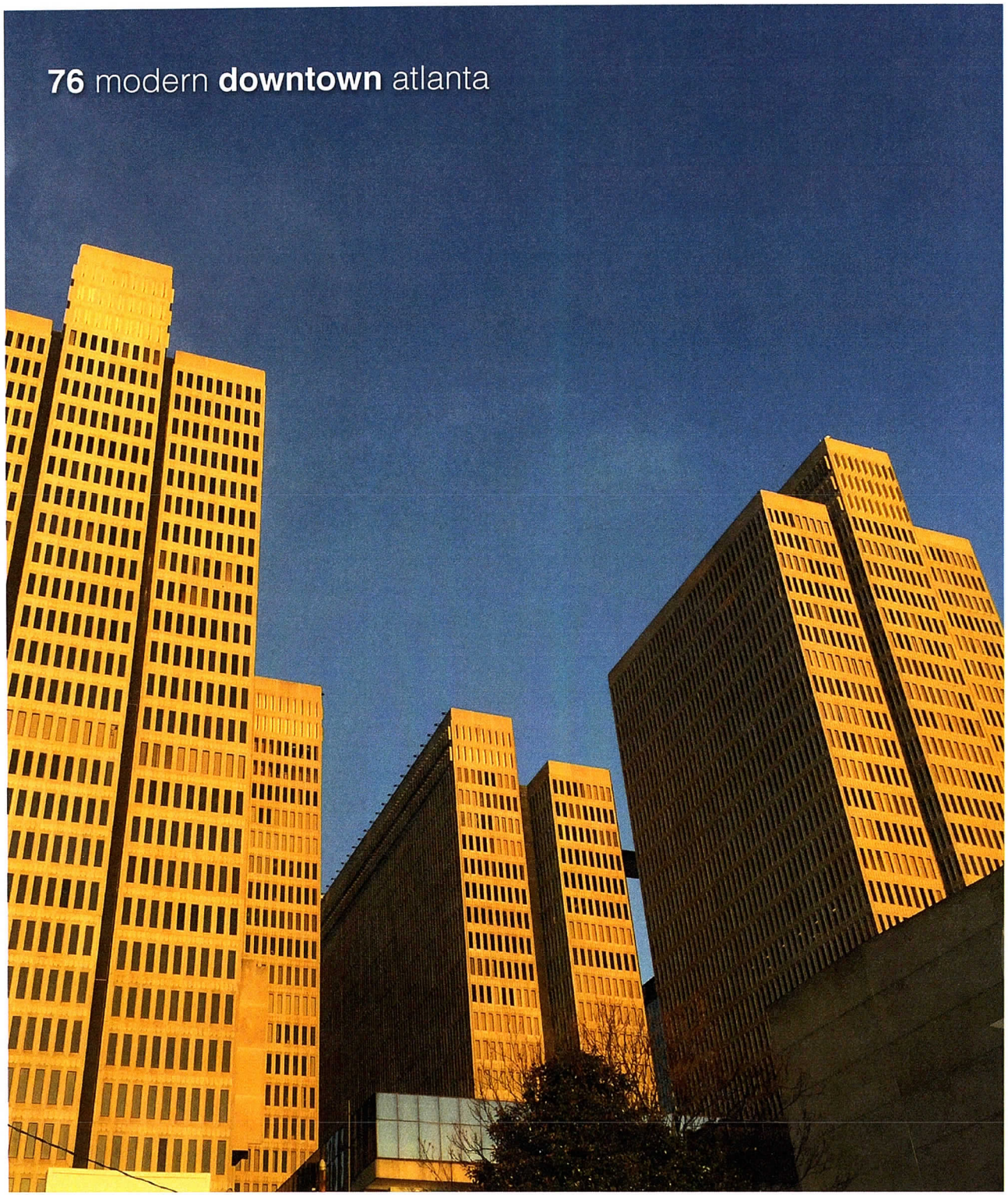
Located at 285 International Boulevard (now Andrew Young International Boulevard), the 305,000-square-foot convention center and exhibition hall was designed and built over the course of 26 months and opened in September 1976. According to Thomas Ventulett, the search for space and light drove the architectural design of the massive building (Gournay et al. 1993, 68; Ventulett 2008). At the time of its dedication, the GWCC was the largest convention and trade show space in the United States and provided Atlanta with a facility able to handle large international conventions, as well as rooms for smaller seminars (Shavin and Galphin 1982, 309). The success of the GWCC resulted in subsequent expansions of the original building, increasing the total exhibition area to an excess of 3.5 million square feet (Galloway, Hart, and Thompson, Ventulett & Stainback 2001, 37).

Peachtree Center. The remarkable success of the Regency Hyatt House, opened new doors for John Portman's practice as he worked on a number of high-profile commissions and real estate projects in other cities, including the Embarcadero Center in San Francisco. However, Portman continued to expand Peachtree Center throughout the 1970s, calling the coordinated building complex his "private urban renewal program" (Allen 1996, 169). Designed to be "a total environment for the human being on foot," Peachtree Center would serve as an architectural laboratory to explore new design ideas and real estate concepts or further build upon existing ones (Erickson 1970, 8M; *AIA Journal* 1975, 37).

An architectural colleague's observation that "Portman uses buildings as other people use bricks" was an apt description for the series of additions he made to Peachtree Center between 1970 and 1976 (Marsh et al. 1975). Three new office towers, similar in design to his 1968 Gas Light/North Tower, were erected and symmetrically arranged to create the Peachtree Center Promenade, a cohesive central court plaza and enclosed shopping mall filled with fountains, plantings, and commissioned artwork. Firmly believing

(Left) *Peachtree Center Streetscape, 1975. Source:* AIA Journal, *April 1975.*
(Below) *Portman used pedestrian sky bridges high above the street to provide access between various Peachtree Center buildings. Source:* Atlanta Journal-Constitution *Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.*





WHEN JOHN DID THE HYATT REGENCY, I THINK ALL OF A SUDDEN, PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD THE POWER OF ARCHITECTURE, AND WHAT IT COULD DO. MERCHANDISE MART DIDN'T DO THAT BUT THAT HYATT — BOY IT CAPTURED THE IMAGINATION OF EVERYBODY. IT CERTAINLY DID FOR ME. OUR FIRST OFFICE, WE PUT IN PEACHTREE CENTER BECAUSE I BELIEVED IN WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO DOWNTOWN...WE WANTED TO BE PART OF THAT.

- Architect Thomas Ventulett of Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback and Associates

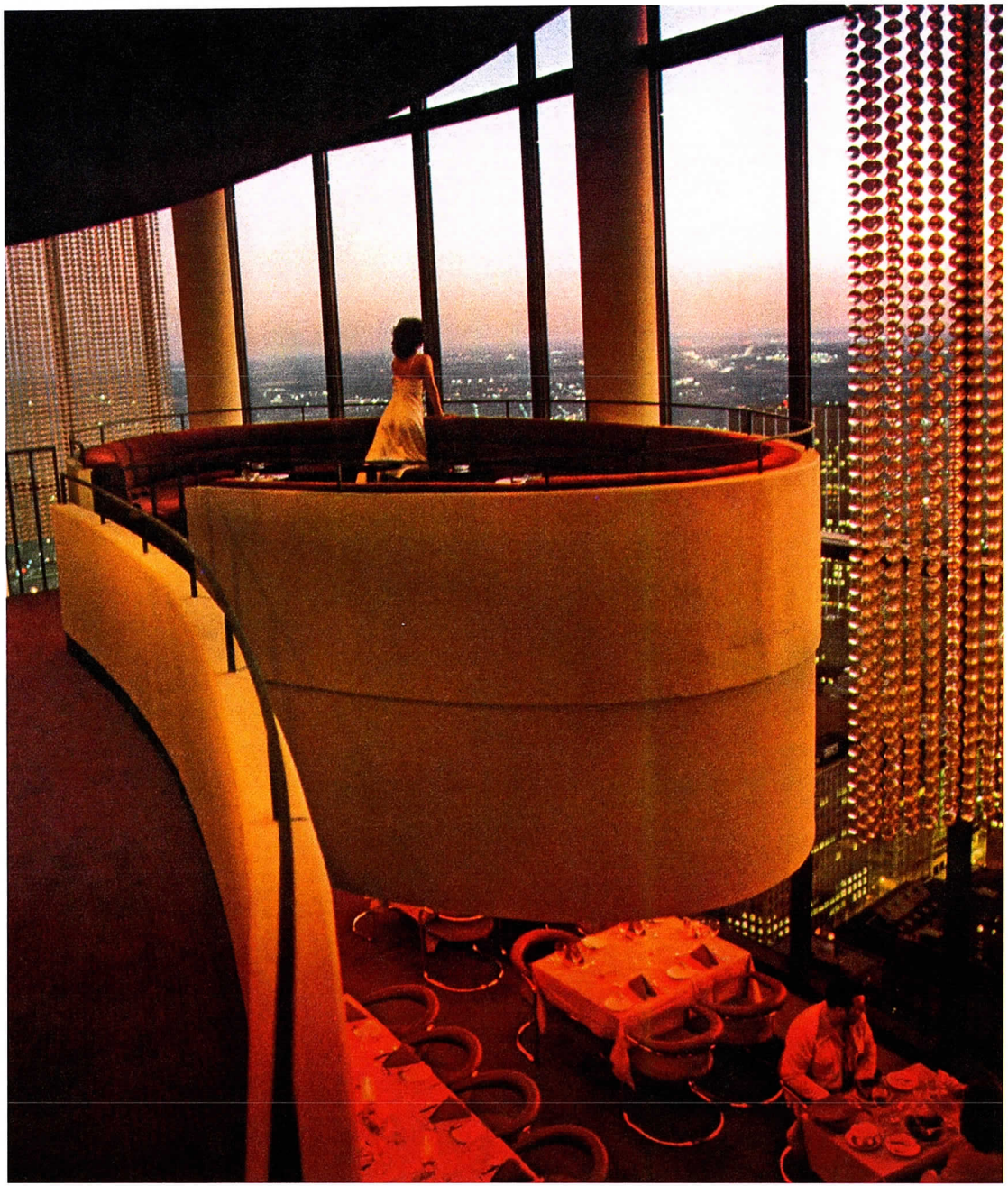
(Opposite) *The Peachtree Center Tower. Source: Baker, 2015.* **(Right)** *The Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel was the tallest hotel room in the world at the time of its completion in 1976. John Portman and Associates, photograph on file at Central Atlanta Progress.*



that "people and cars don't mix," Portman connected all the buildings in the complex with a series of sky bridges located above the city streets (*Atlanta Constitution* 1969). Detractors often criticized the visual repetitiveness of Portman's buildings and their tendency to either dominate or neglect surrounding city streets. However, Portman's creative focus was on the development of dramatic interior spaces through the use of elaborately designed elevators, works of art, and the spectacle provided by the interior atrium with its multiple levels of balconies (Baker 2013; Gournay et al. 1993, 53–54). According to John Portman's associate, Mickey Steinberg:

> *John always designed ways that would excite people. Not just excite them, that they liked it. Those people loved it! He said, 'Well...let's get everybody off the street.' You know? The streets down here were scary...*

The continued success of the Hyatt Regency resulted in a 1971 expansion of the hotel with a cylindrical tower added to the south side of the building due to space constraints. The Hyatt tower addition was a design antecedent of John Portman's Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, located at 210 Peachtree Street, just south of the main Peachtree Center complex (Gournay et al. 1993, 56). Built on the former site of the Henry Grady Hotel at a cost of $55 million, the 1,100-rooom Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel was touted as the tallest hotel in the world at the time of its completion in 1976. The building consisted of a 70-story, bronze mirrored glass column set on a nine-story base. A revolving restaurant and cocktail lounge occupied the top three stories of the tower, providing panoramic views of the surrounding Atlanta area (John Portman and Associates 1984).



The Peachtree Plaza's Sun Dial Restaurant, circa 1976. Source: Portman and Barnett, The Architect As Developer, 1976.

In November 1979, Portman opened the massive Atlanta Apparel Mart annex that occupied the entire block bounded by Harris (now John Portman Boulevard), Williams, Baker, and Spring streets. Located at 250 Spring Street and sited diagonally from his existing Merchandise Mart facility, the two buildings were joined by a second story, plexiglass domed skywalk and the entire integrated complex was rebranded as the Atlanta Market Center (Shavin and Galphin 1982). The new mart was designed to be a major outlet for southeastern apparel manufacturers and contained 2.1 million square feet of exhibition space. Modeled after Portman's earlier concept for the Brussels World Trade Mart, which opened in 1975, the Atlanta Apparel Mart's hulking, almost windowless, concrete panel exterior featured distinctive spiral stairs at the four corners of the building. Inside was a five-story, fan-shaped atrium lined with balconies reminiscent of his design for the Hyatt Regency Hotel (Gournay et al. 1993, 54; J. C. Portman and Barnett 1976, 42–43).

Atlanta Center. At the eastern edge of the city's growing hotel and motel district, a joint venture by Atlanta developers Crow, Pope, and Land Enterprises, Inc., Hilton Hotels Corporation, and the Kuwait Investment Company financed the $100 million construction of "Atlanta Center." A 1,270-room Atlanta Hilton Hotel, built on the site of the former Heart of Atlanta Motel at 255 Courtland Street, was the flagship of the complex, which also included an integrated 20-story office tower, a three-story shopping concourse, and an 1,150 parking garage (*AIA Journal* 1975, 42). Designed by Wong and Tung Associates of Hong Kong with Mastin and Associates of Atlanta, the complex was largely completed in 1975. The 29 stories of the reinforced concrete building were erected on a Y-shaped floor plan and interspersed with "space lounges" that allowed private gathering areas for conventioneers (*Progressive Architecture* 1976, 21).



Construction of the Atlanta Hilton Hotel and the Atlanta Center Complex, 1975. Source: AIA Journal, *April 1975.*

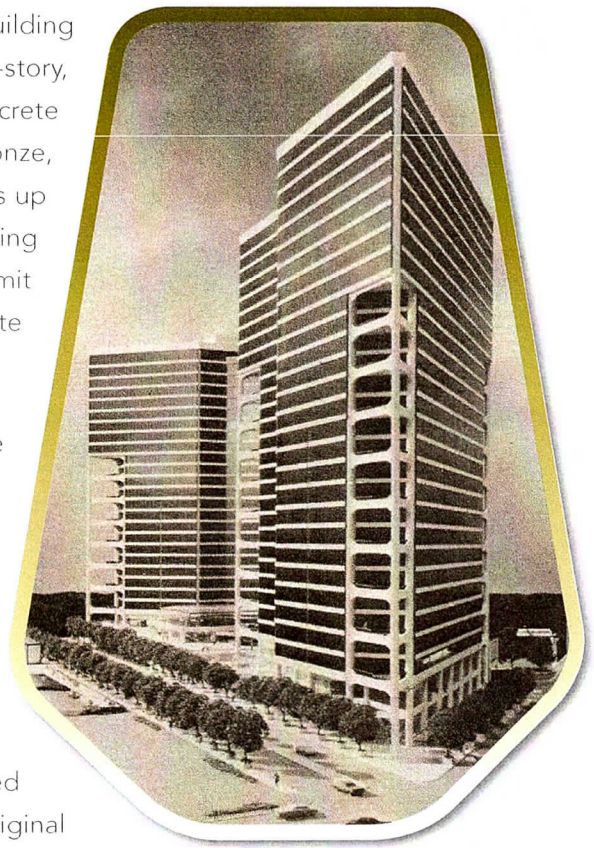


The Coastal States Insurance Building, circa 1972. Source: Quest Travelbooks, This is Atlanta, *1973.*

Notable Commercial High-Rise Office Construction. In addition to Cousins' and Portman's competing mega-structure developments, a host of other new office towers continued to grace the downtown skyline despite the onset of the economic recession in the mid 1970s. The 27-story Coastal States Insurance Building (1971, Sidney R. Barrett and Associates) at 260 Peachtree Street was among the first corporate office towers in downtown to feature a curtain wall almost entirely composed of reflective, solar glass. In 1972, employees of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* moved to their modern headquarters located at 72 Marietta Street in the heart of Five Points. Jova/Daniels/Busby designed the nine-story office tower to blend with the nearby Federal Reserve building and it was built by the Ira H. Hardin Company (Rinehart and Jova 2007, 61; Shavin and Galphin 1982, 393). Three years later, the Standard Federal Savings and Loan Building (1975, Toombs, Amisano, and Wells; also known as the Forty-One Marietta Building) opened across Marietta Street, as did the 36-story, reflective glass edifice at 101 Marietta Street (now the Centennial Tower) further to the west designed by the Houston, Texas firm Neuhaus and Taylor, with Cooper Carry, Inc. Associates (Huebner, Morrison Design, LLC, and Atlanta Preservation & Planning Services, LLC 2013).

A high-rise office tower of particular note was the triangular-shaped Peachtree Summit Building located at the northern edge of downtown overlooking the Downtown Connector. The 30-story, 866,217- square foot building was constructed of reinforced, cast-in-place concrete on a concrete mat foundation. All exterior elevations were clad with alternating concrete spandrels and bronze, solar glass ribbon windows and distinctive, open triangular buttresses extending 23 stories up the south, east, and west corners of the tower provided a wind-bracing system for the building and also served as office balconies (Gournay et al. 1993, 61). Plans for the Peachtree Summit Building were originally conceived in the early 1970s by the Atlanta speculative real estate firm, Diamond & Kaye Properties, Inc.

The local architectural firm of Toombs, Amisano, and Wells was selected to produce the original plans and designs by Joseph Amisano and Ronald Sineway called for a mixed-use office, residential, and retail complex consisting of two office buildings flanking a central parking deck topped by condominiums. Development began circa 1973 and continued over the next few years. Whereas other MARTA rail stations were located and built near existing downtown developments (i.e. the Omni and Peachtree Center) the Peachtree Summit Building opened at 401 West Peachtree Street in 1976 as the first building in Atlanta designed specifically for direct access to a rail station. While the project was intended to capitalize on the development of MARTA, a softening of the office market caused financing problems that plagued construction from the beginning and eventually scuttled original plans that called for the development of a three building complex (Marsh et al. 1975). Additional transit-oriented development (TOD) built in conjunction with MARTA stations remained on hold in Atlanta through the rest of the decade and did not resume until the construction of the IBM Tower (now One Atlantic Center) on a three-acre vertical air-rights lease at Arts Center Station in Midtown during the late-1980s (Floyd 2014).



The original plans for Peachtree Summit envisioned two towers on the site. Source: AIA Guide to Atlanta, *1975.*

State and Federal Office Development.

Public development during the latter half of the decade consisted of new state and federal office buildings on the east and west sides of lower downtown. The Capitol Hill Master Plan was prepared by the architect design team of Jova/Daniels/Busby with urban planners Eric Hill Associates and released during the early 1970s. It provided an ambitious, three-phase plan that would expand the State Capitol Complex over a 10-block area with the construction of number of high and mid-rise office buildings (*Progressive Architecture* 1975). Only the first phase of the plan was undertaken with the construction of the James H. "Sloppy" Floyd Veterans Memorial Building at 200 Piedmont Avenue, adjacent to the Georgia State University MARTA station. Designed by Richard Aeck and built between 1975 and 1980, the 800,000 square-foot administrative office building consisted of two, red brick veneer 20-story towers joined by the flat-roofed, central base adjoining the rapid rail station (Georgia Department of Administrative Services 2014).

Going up on the western edge of downtown was the 25-story Richard B. Russell Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse at 75 Spring Street between West Hunter (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard) and



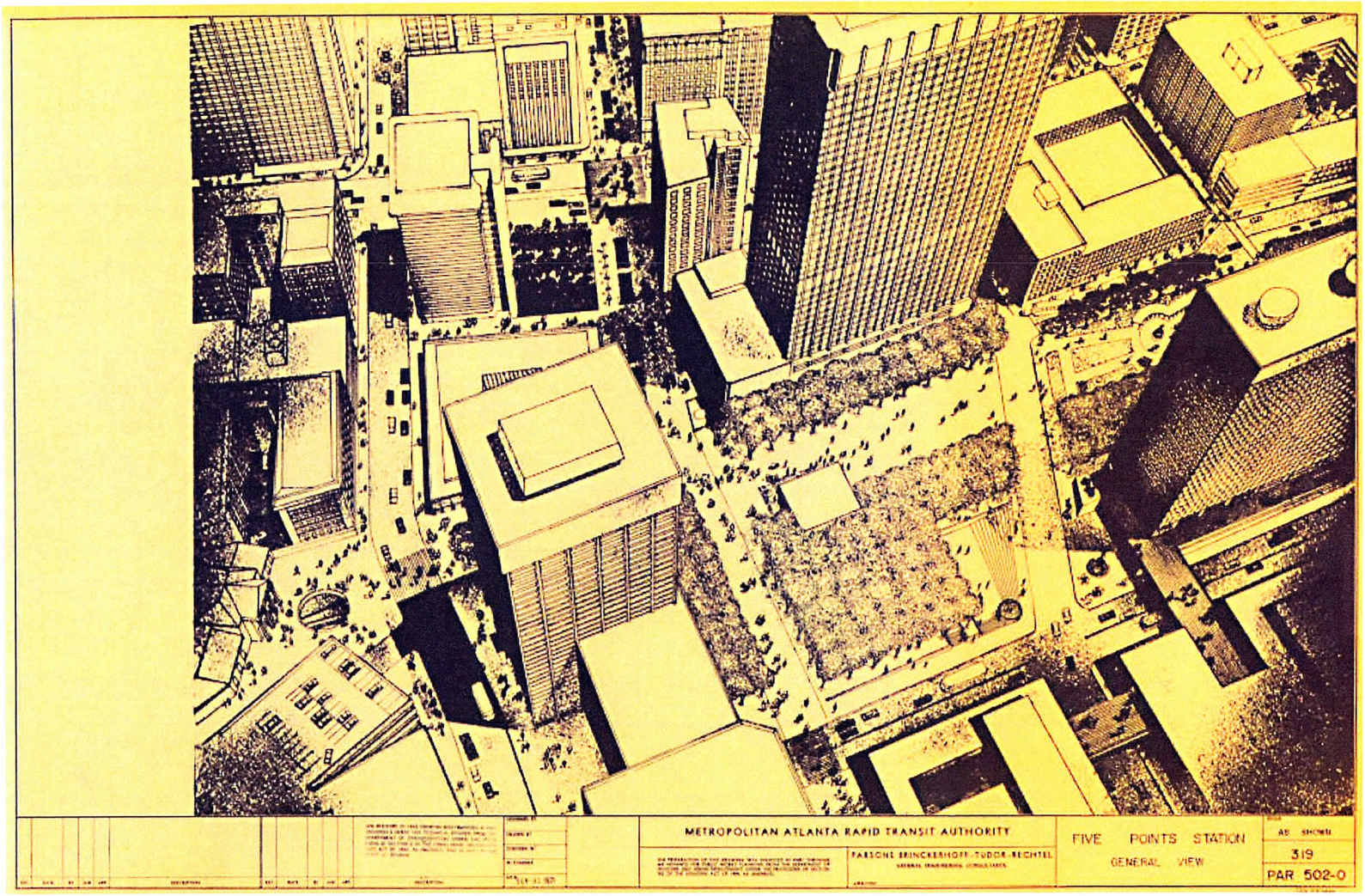
(Opposite) *The Richard B. Russell Federal Building was erected on the site of the Atlanta Terminal Train Station and completed in 1979. Source: Photograph on file at the General Services Administration, Southeast Sunbelt Region 4, Atlanta.*

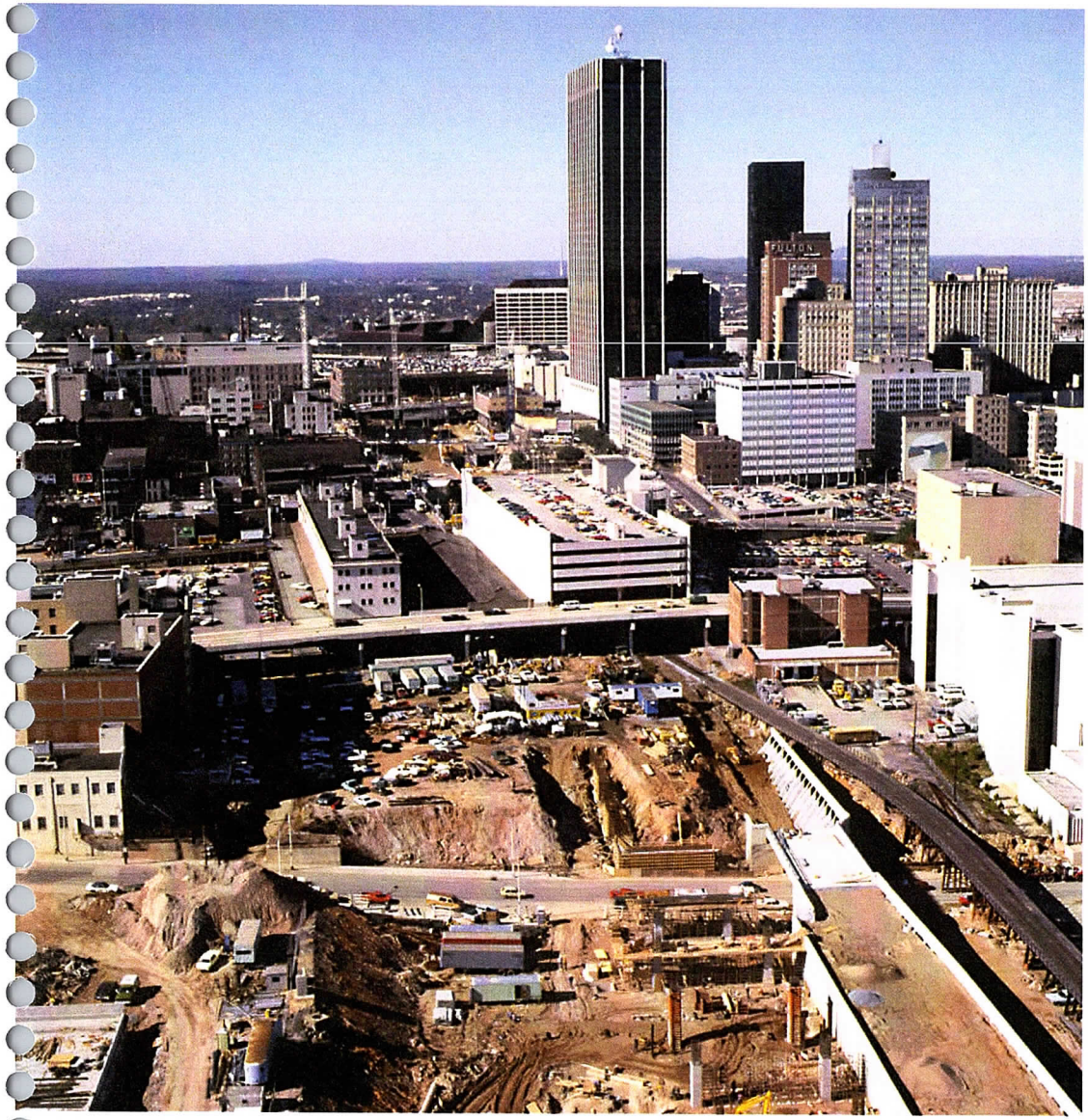
Mitchell streets. Built on the former site of the ornate, Spanish Colonial Revival Terminal Station (1905, P. Thornton Mayre; razed 1972), the new government office tower was a manifestation of the expanded Federal presence in Atlanta during the postwar era. Congress had authorized $27 million in 1966 to construct a federal courthouse and office complex as a way to consolidate federal agencies and courts in one downtown area (Hosendolph 1975). The local firm, FABRAP was selected by the General Services Administration (GSA) to design the project, based on their previous design experience with the federal Peachtree-Baker Building in downtown and the Peachtree and Seventh Building (1950) in Midtown. The Frank J. Briscoe Company of East Orange, New Jersey was awarded the bid as prime contractor (*Atlanta Journa*l 1977). However, political wrangling, design changes, and construction delays drove up costs and hampered development of the 831,368 square-foot federal office tower, which was built with a reinforced concrete frame on a pier foundation and designed with a simple, articulated white concrete exterior. Adorned with commissioned artwork in its first floor lobby, the Richard B. Russell Jr. Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse finally opened in 1979 and was named after the powerful and long-serving Georgia U.S. Senator who died in 1971 (Galphin 1977).

Development of the MARTA System. Following approval of rapid rail transit in 1971, MARTA moved into a preliminary planning and design phase for the projected 60-mile, $2.1 billion system over the next three years - the largest public works project in the city's history (Dunlop 1975, 54). The east-west line through downtown was built adjacent to the existing railroad lines to minimize the right-of-way (ROW) and reduce costs. Twenty-seven of the planned 41 MARTA transit stations were located within the city. Of this number, six rail stations were located in downtown Atlanta: the Omni (now Dome/GWCC/Philips Arena/CNN Station); Five Points; Georgia State; Civic Center; Peachtree Center; and Garnett Station (Atlanta Regional Commission 1974, 3–4).

Local architectural firms were commissioned to design the rapid-transit stations according to MARTA engineering requirements and standards established by PBTB project architect Oscar Harris and the transit agency's consultant, Vincent Kling of Philadelphia. Durability of materials, security, accommodation of track levels and pedestrian traffic flow into, out of, and within the stations,

Conceptual Plans for the Five Points MARTA Station, 1971. Source: Parsons Brinkerhoff/ Tudor/Bechtel, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, Georgia State University Library.





Construction of the MARTA East Line, Downtown Atlanta, 1977. Source: Atlanta Journal-Constitution *Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.*

were key considerations (O. Harris 2015; Galphin 1977). Located at 30 Alabama Street in the center of the central business district, the Five Points Station was the nexus between the north-south and east-west rail trunk lines. The design contract for MARTA's centerpiece station was awarded to the joint venture of Finch-Heery, Architects and consisted of two-subgrade train platforms accessed by stairs, elevators, and escalators from the street level, landscaped promenade. A pre-cast concrete canopy covered the lower levels and much of the open, 3.5-acre pedestrian plaza. The upper façade of the Eiseman Building (1901, Walter T. Downing), demolished to make way for the construction of the rail line, was recreated as a design feature on the northbound track platform wall (Central Atlanta Progress 1978c; Gournay et al. 1993, 17).

Parsons Brinckerhoff in joint venture with, Tudor Engineering and the Bechtel Corporation (PBTB) was awarded the primary construction contract for the project. The company had earlier served as the prime consultant on San Francisco's Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), the first large-scale rapid transit system built in the United States since the early twentieth century (Gustafson and Associates, Inc. and Muldawer and Patterson 1973, 1, 12). Planners likened the

construction of the underground portion of the rail system to "major surgery on the downtown business district. The operation will benefit the patients in the long run, but the anticipation, surgery, and recuperation may be painful for many businesses and crippling for several" (Gustafson and Associates, Inc. and Muldawer and Patterson 1973, 1). Tunneling began in 1975 and service first started along the MARTA east line in 1979.

DOWNTOWN CHALLENGES AND NEW DIRECTIONS: 1980-1990.

With the hotel boom of the 1970s and construction of the Omni Area, the enormous GWCC exhibition hall, and Portman's expansion of his mart complex, Atlanta's convention and trade show industry swelled in size. By the 1980s, the city's convention business was the third largest in the nation, behind New York and Chicago, and downtown played host to an average of one million convention-goers annually (Atlanta Regional Commission 1984, 15–16). Atlanta's extensive transportation infrastructure contributed to this growth and was augmented by the ongoing development of the MARTA rapid transportation system and the new William B. Hartsfield International Airport, which opened in 1980 as the largest passenger air terminal in the world (City of Atlanta, Department of Aviation 2014).

Despite these advances, the central business district and the city in general faced a number of rising challenges moving forward into the 1980s. Increasing population loss within the city limits over the course of the 1970s, business closures due to ongoing construction of the MARTA rapid rail lines, which included Underground Atlanta, and fears of rising crime magnified by the Atlanta Murdered and Missing Children cases from 1979 to 1981, had a draining effect on downtown economic development at the start of the decade. General occupancy by office space tenants in central Atlanta declined from almost 64 percent of the metro area total in 1970 to 44 percent just seven years later (Hamer 1980, 93). In 1981, Andrew Young, the esteemed Civil Rights leader, former congressman, and onetime United States Ambassador to the United Nations, succeeded Maynard Jackson as the 55th Mayor of Atlanta. Young promised to work closely with the downtown business interests and during his time in office he worked to elevate Atlanta's profile on the international stage (Stone 1989, 107, 111).

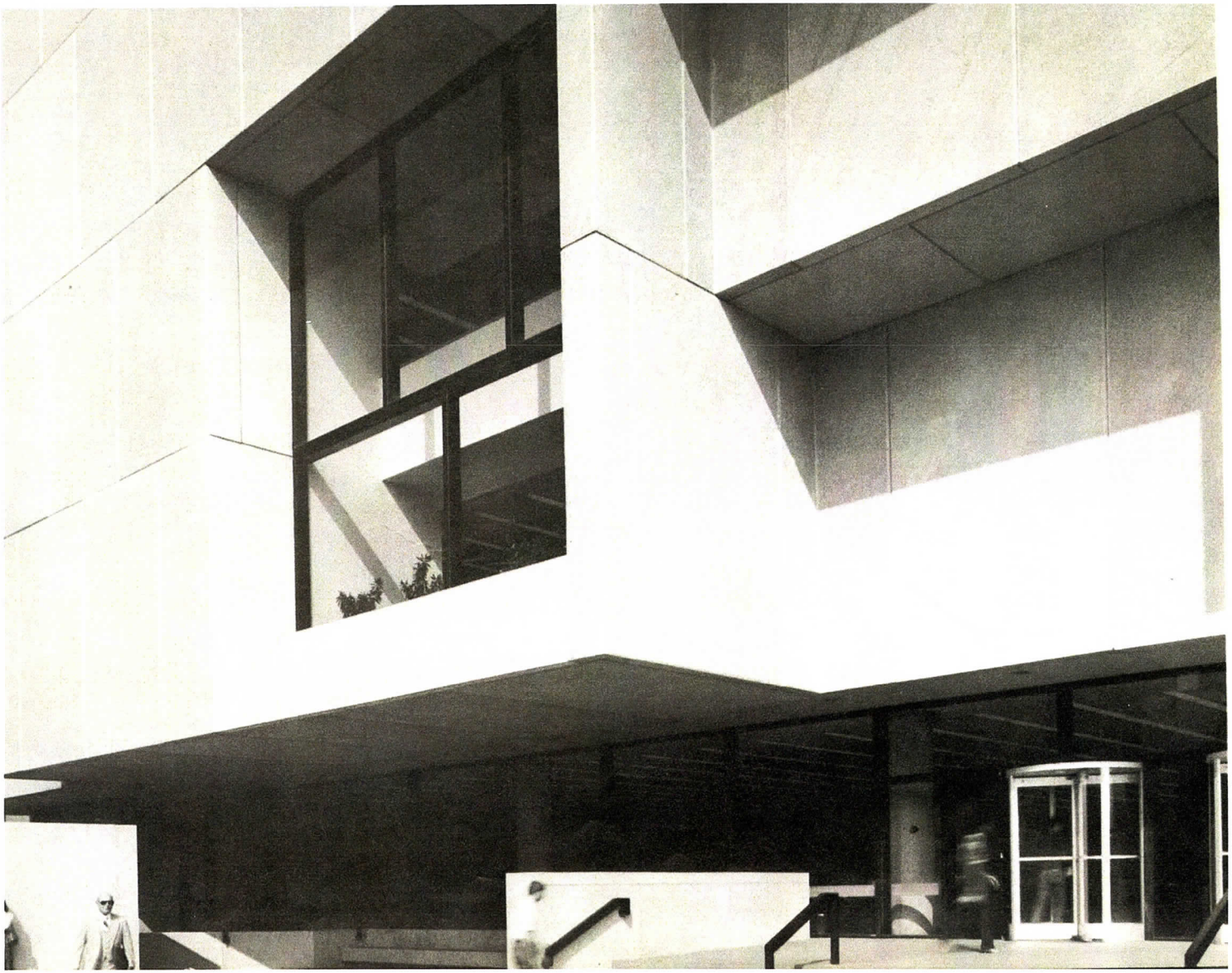
The Atlanta Central Public Library.

The opening of the new Atlanta Central Public Library on May 25, 1980 was the first high-profile architectural event of the 1980s in Atlanta and a much-needed boost for the downtown area at the start of the decade.

Proposals to build a new central library first surfaced as far back as 1968. Despite extensive renovations and additions in 1950 and again in 1965 to the existing Beaux Arts style Carnegie Library (1902, Ackerman and Ross; razed 1977), library director Carleton C. Rochelle considered the building too cramped and functionally obsolete for contemporary use, calling it "as friendly looking as mausoleum" (Martin 1987, III:590).

Wanting a "world class building" for a "world class city," Rochelle urged the library board to interview Bauhaus architect, Marcel Breuer and his partner Hamilton P. Smith for the commission, based on their successful design of the Whitney Museum of American Art, completed two years earlier in 1966 (Hyman 2008; Sibley 1971). Breuer and Smith worked in joint venture with the local firm, Stevens and Wilkinson, to prepare initial design and engineering concepts in 1971. A lack of funding prohibited any further action on the project until 1974 when the passage of a city/county bond referendum provided $19 million in construction financing. Development was delayed again for three more years due to the poor economic environment (Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System n.d.). Despite protests among local preservationists, including architect Joe Amisano, the original library was razed in October 1977 to make way for the new building (Amisano 2004).

Construction continued over the next three years. The 10-story (two below grade levels), 245,000 square-foot library building at 1 Margaret Mitchell Square included a lower-level exhibition hall, cafeteria, two upper levels for future expansion, and a structurally integrated 75-car parking garage. Conceived as sculptural object, its design shared the "severe, hard-edge geometric form" of its predecessor, the Whitney Museum. However, unlike the Whitney, which featured a granite stone exterior, the stepped cube monolith of the Atlanta-Fulton County Central Public Library was faced with striated, precast concrete panels set in diagonal patterns. The use of bush-hammered concrete significantly lowered construction costs and also allowed for large spans for the casting of L-shaped panels that could continue along two sides of the building (Gatje 2000, 248; Hyman and Breuer 2001, 188–189). Ella Gaines Yates, the first African American director of the Atlanta-Fulton County Public Library, presided over the dedication ceremonies for the new building. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* hailed the Atlanta Central Public Library as "a miracle in concrete" and it was the last major commission of Breuer's long and notable architectural career. Suffering from a long-term illness and living in retirement, Breuer was unable to attend the dedication and died a year later in 1981 (Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System n.d.; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* 1980, 4A).



(Left) *The Atlanta-Fulton County Central Public Library, 1981. Source:* AIA Journal, *Mid-May 1981.*
(Opposite) *Library Interior, circa 1981. Source: Hyman, Marcel Breuer,* Architects: The Career and the Buildings, *2001.*







(Above) *Architect Oscar Harris, on the left. Source: Harris,* Oscar: The Memoir of a Master Architect, *2013.*

(Right) *Fulton County Courthouse Annex. Source: Harris,* Oscar: The Memoir of a Master Architect, *2013.*

The opening of the 610,000-square foot Fulton County Courthouse annex in 1983 was another example of the growing government presence in the city center and, aside from the Public Library and development of the Garnett Street MARTA station, one of the few major projects built in the southern edge of downtown Atlanta during this period. Oscar Harris of Turner Associates designed the monumental white stone and tinted glass building, in joint venture with Rosser International. Located adjacent to the Ten Eyck Brown's historic 1914 building, the new Fulton County Courthouse, which housed 16 courtrooms and an underground parking deck, was the largest courthouse building in the State of Georgia at the time of its construction (O. Harris and Kimbrough 2013, 174–175).

Civic Center, Garnett Street, and Peachtree Center MARTA Stations. By 1981, approximately one-fourth of the entire MARTA rapid rail system had been completed and a number of new stations opened in downtown Atlanta along the North-South Line running under the city's historic spine of Peachtree Street (Atlanta Regional Commission 1984, 7–10). At the northern edge of the central business district, the MARTA Civic Center Station opened in December 1981 after years of construction that required the elevation of West Peachtree Street to accommodate the rail track. M. Garland Reynolds and Partners with Welton Becket Associate Architects of Los Angeles designed the transit stop, which spanned the downtown connector and provided direct access to the adjacent Peachtree Summit building. The Garnett Street Station opened that same month at Forsyth and Garnett streets on the southern end of downtown. Cooper, Carry, and Associates with Jones and Thompson, Joint Venture Architects designed the three-level, open-air station, which featured post-tensioned waffle-slab construction, exposed concrete columns, and aluminum panel screens (*Architectural Record* 1983, 65; Gournay et al. 1993, 18, 61).

The most visually expressive of the new MARTA stations was Peachtree Center, which opened in September 1982; almost a year after the north-south line began operation between the Garnett and Civic Center stations. Architect Joe Amisano of Toombs, Amisano, and Wells used the exposed granite bedrock walls as a prominent design feature, contrasting the roughness of the stone with the smooth, slate gray tiles of the train platform and the sleek, curving aluminum acoustical paneling and inset lights running the length of the station. Located 120 feet below ground, Peachtree Center was the deepest of MARTA's rapid rail stations. Riders accessing the station from inside Peachtree Center or at the south entrance on Peachtree Street and Carnegie Way used triple banks of escalators, the longest in the Southeast, to descend to the train platform below (Gournay et al. 1993, 48; Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority 2009).


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Continued High-Rise Office Development in Downtown. The number of private construction starts in downtown Atlanta during the financial downturn of the late 1970s early 1980s paled in comparison to the fervent pace of development that had marked the previous two decades. The metropolitan Atlanta commercial office market that had been slowed by the recession soon became oversaturated with the new office high-rise projects in Midtown and the growing Buckhead district along with the proliferating development of multiuse retail and suburban office parks near I-285 in Cobb, north DeKalb, and Fulton counties (Atlanta Regional Commission 1984, 7–10; Martin 1987, III:547–549). Despite the poor economic climate, business and city leaders could still point to more than a few noteworthy examples where local and national companies remained committed to maintaining a presence downtown.

In 1980, Atlanta Life Insurance Company (ALIC) employees moved into the company's new corporate headquarters building at Herndon Plaza. The six-story modern office was constructed at 100 Auburn Avenue, next to the company's earlier neo-classical buildings located at 142 and 148 Auburn Avenue (Hamilton 2002). Designed by TVS in joint venture with J.W. Robinson and Associates, the 105,000 square foot building was built with a marble veneer exterior and featured a distinctive multi-story atrium lobby enclosed by a full-height glass wall (Shavin and Galphin 1982, 356–357).



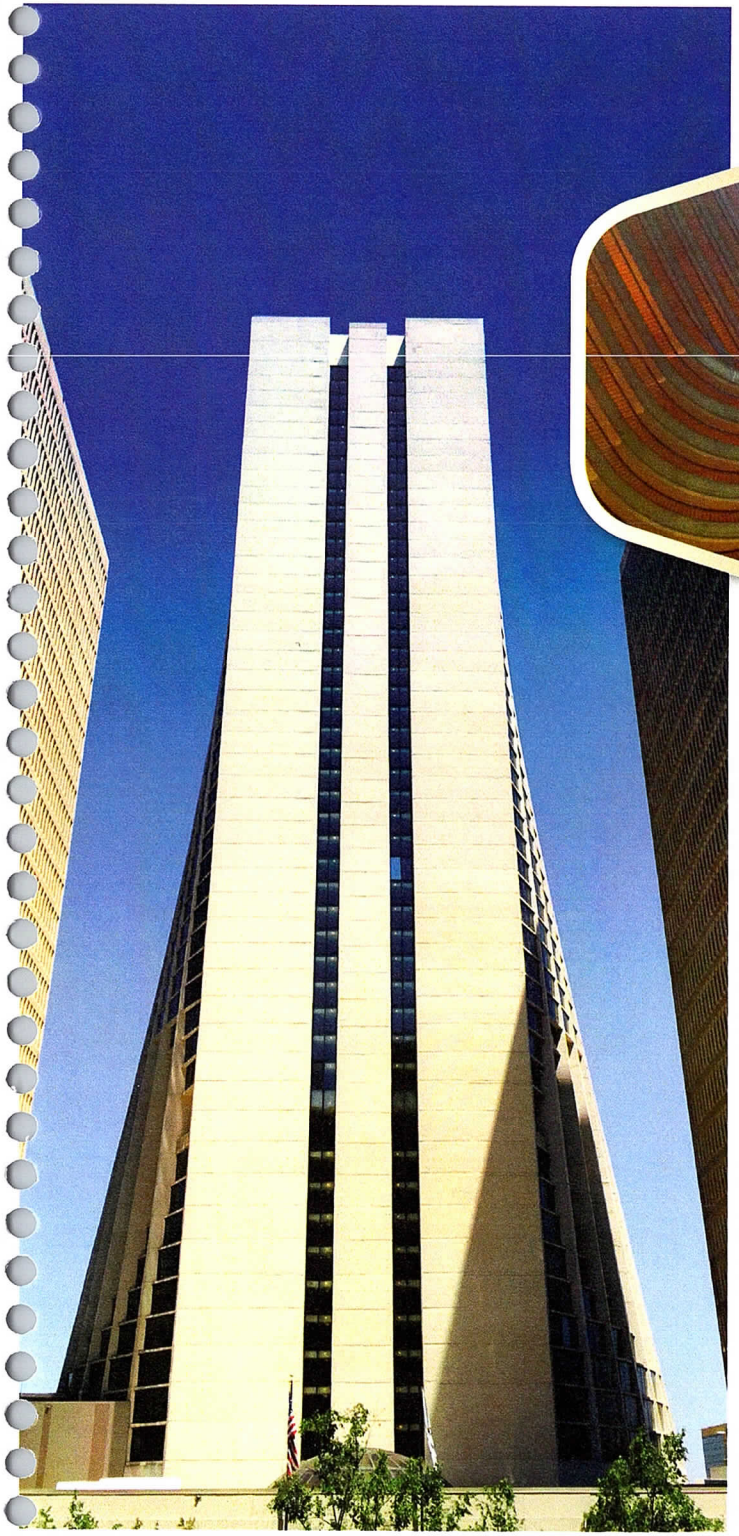
(Opposite) *Peachtree Center MARTA Station. Source: Parsons Brinckerhoff Inc., Parsons Brinckerhoff Through the Years: 1885-2012, 2013.* **(Below)** *Architectural Rendering of the The Atlanta Life Insurace Company, 1980. Shavin,* Atlanta: Triumph of a People, *1982.*

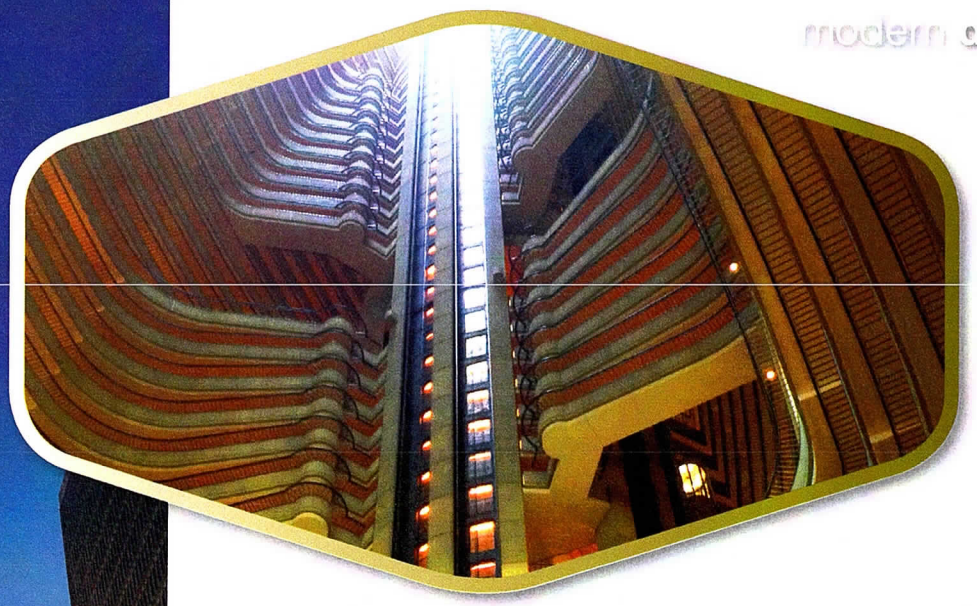


The SOM-designed Georgia Pacific Center (center) was added to Atlanta's growing skyline in 1982. Source: Shavin, Building Atlanta, *1987.*

Dedication of the new Georgia Power Company Headquarters in 1981 marked the end of a five-year construction process for one of the most energy-efficient office buildings in the United States. Conspicuously sited at 333 Piedmont Avenue, just northeast of downtown on former urban renewal land near the highway connector, the $62.5 million corporate campus was designed by the Atlanta firm Heery and Heery, Architects (with Mack Scoggin acting as the design coordinator). The 24-story structural steel and glass, angled tower and three-story, brick and granite low-rise building employed passive and active solar design technology and advanced heating and cooling systems to reduce energy consumption and demand to 55 percent of that used by office buildings of similar size (Central Atlanta Progress 1978a, 1–2; Gournay et al. 1993, 62).

The Georgia-Pacific Center was another landmark addition to the downtown skyline during the early 1980s. The company relocated from Portland, Oregon to Atlanta in 1978 and selected the former site of the Lowe's Grand Theater at 133 Peachtree Street as the site for its new corporate headquarters building. SOM used a stepped profile in its design of the building to prevent the 52-story, 1.36-million-square foot skyscraper from towering over neighboring buildings (Gournay et al. 1993, 37). Built by H.J. Russell in Company and sheathed in a pink granite exterior, the Georgia-Pacific Center was the tallest building in the city when it was completed in 1982 (eclipsing the 70-story Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel due to the taller floor heights) (Central Atlanta Progress 1978d, 1–2).





(Left) *Atlanta Marriott Marquis.*
Source: Baker, 2015.
(Above) *Mariott Marquis Atrium Interior.*
Source: Sullivan, 2015.

The Georgia Pacific Center and the 19-story, 500,000-square-foot 55 Park Place Building (also designed by SOM) both experienced considerable vacancies when they opened in 1982; however, the downtown office market showed signs of strengthening by the middle of the decade. Meanwhile, the city's convention and trade show market remained robust during this period (Walker 1980; Atlanta Regional Commission 1984, 15–16). This improving economy was greeted by the opening of two, new hotels in downtown Atlanta: the Ritz-Carlton Hotel at 181 Peachtree Street (1984, John Sumner and Associates) and the Atlanta Marriott Marquis, John Portman's most recent addition to his Peachtree Center holdings. The "mammoth," 50-story, 1,674-room building was the largest convention hotel in the Southeast when it opened at 265 Peachtree Center Avenue in 1985. The reinforced, poured concrete building enclosed a 48-story, organic-shaped atrium that dwarfed Portman's previous explorations of the concept. The Atlanta Marriott Marquis development was accompanied by the development of the Marquis One Office Tower at 245 Peachtree Center Avenue and an associated parking deck on Courtland Street, which provided access to the hotel via a pedestrian sky bridge (Gournay et al. 1993, 58; Shavin and Hogben 1987, 178).





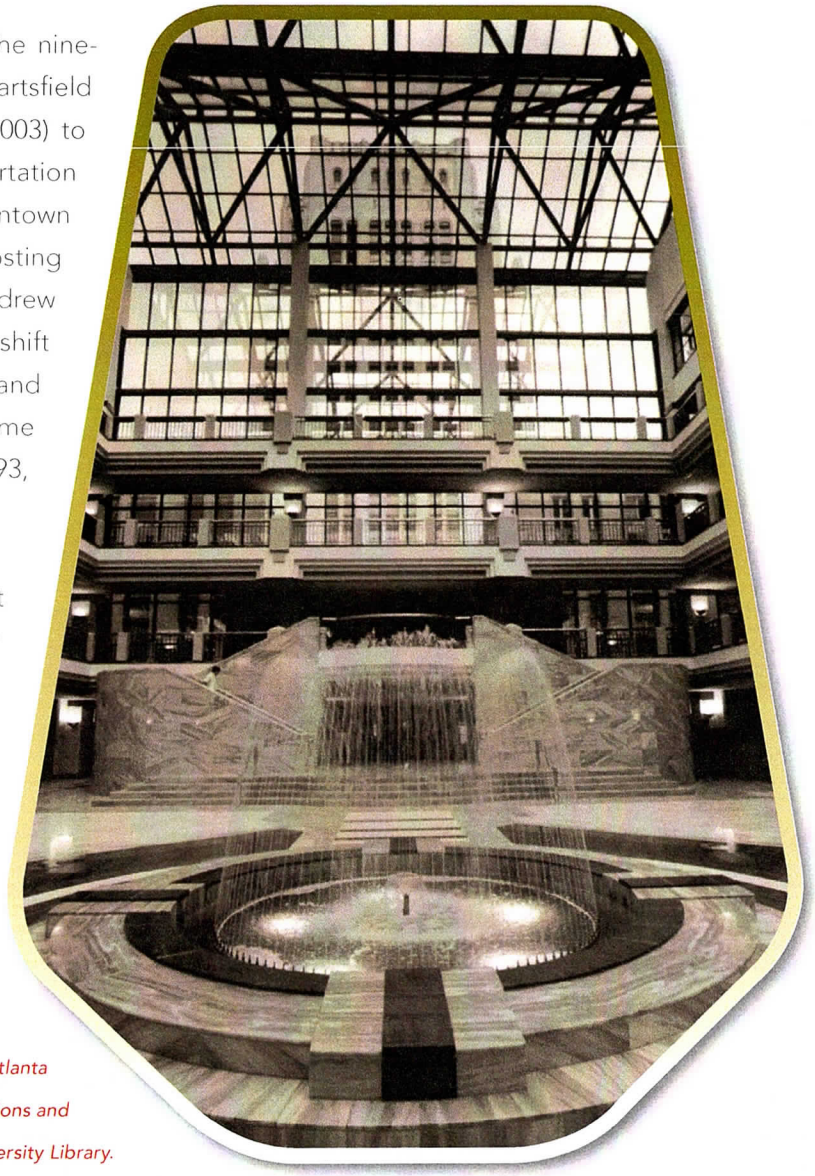




Atlanta's Expanding Skyline, 1940-1990. **(a)** *circa 1945;* **(b)** *1970;* **(c)** *1978* **(d)** *2010. Source: Atlanta Skyline from Brenda's Hospital Room, 2010. http://hyperphysics.phy-astr.gsu.edu/nave-html/w10/amc.html*

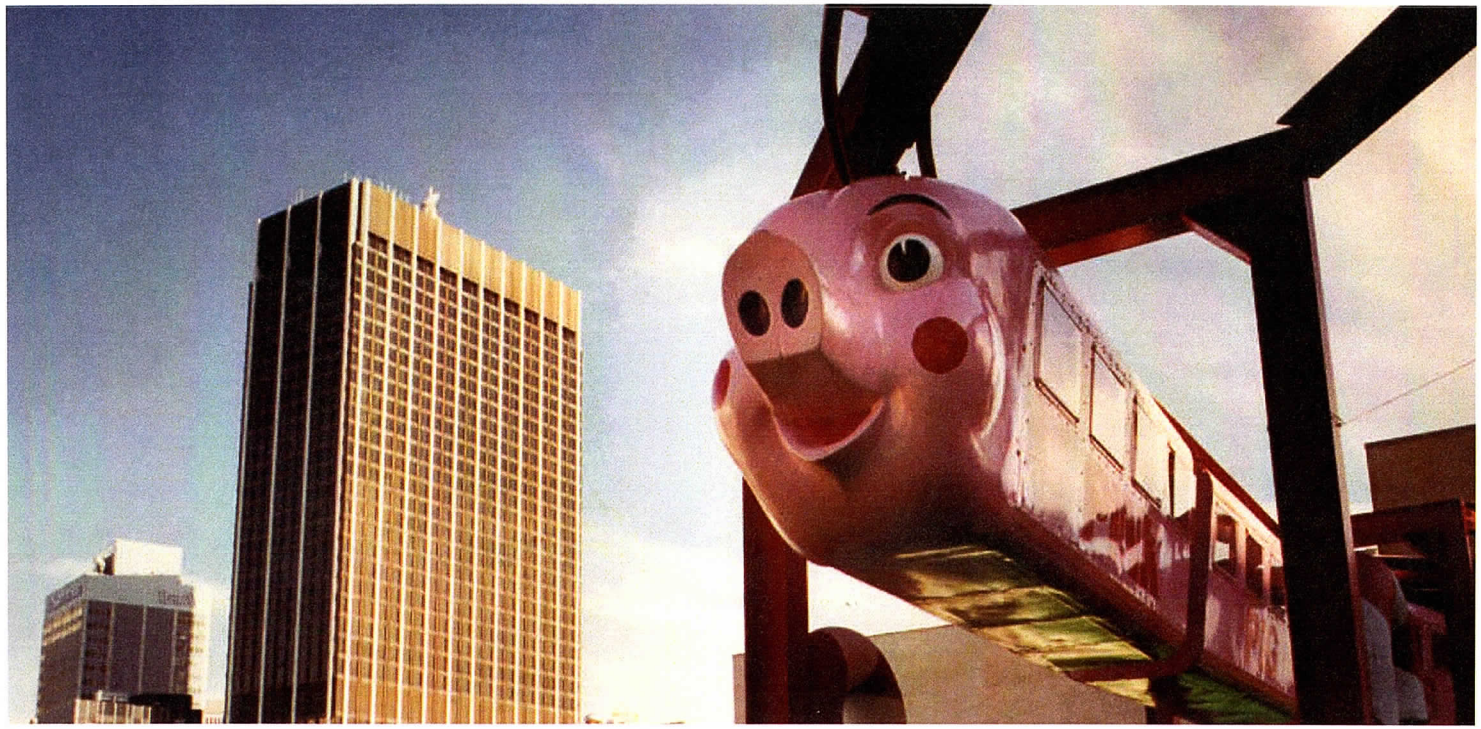
Conclusion. In 1988, MARTA completed construction of the nine-mile rapid transit line connecting the Atlanta's William B. Hartsfield Airport (renamed Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in 2003) to Five Points Station - finally providing a quick and direct transportation link for domestic and international visitors who flocked to downtown hotels and convention centers, during the City of Atlanta's hosting of the Democratic National Convention that year. As the 1980s drew to a close, new development in Downtown Atlanta started to shift from the functional ahistoricism of the Modern architecture and returned to the classicism and contextualism that has since become a hallmark of the Post-Modernist Movement (Gournay et al. 1993, 50; Whiffen 1992, 293–299).

In 1987, the Atlanta City Council awarded a $31 million contract to the Holder Construction Company- H.J. Russell and Company joint venture for the restoration of City Hall's deteriorated terra-cotta exterior and the construction of a new, five-story, rear annex designed by Muldawer + Moultrie with Jova/Daniels/ Busby and Harris and Partners, Joint Venture Architects. The Post-Modern, 265,000-square-foot annex and its large, five-story glass atrium opened in 1989 and echoed stylistic elements of the historic City Hall's Gothic-Deco tower (1930, G. Lloyd Preacher), providing an apt metaphor for Atlanta's



Interior of the Atlanta City Hall Annex, 1989. Source: Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photographic Archive. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.

architectural legacy after World War II (Patureau 1987, C1; Wallace 1989, C3). The atrium concept was also used as a key design feature for the Fulton County Government Center (1989, Turner Associates in Joint Venture with Rosser FABRAP International). The glass-walled, interior courtyard included a central fountain landscaped with palm trees and other tropical greenery (O. Harris 2015; O. Harris and Kimbrough 2013, 120–121). By 1990, new Post Modern additions to the city's skyline, including the 50-story One-Ninety-One Peachtree Tower (1991, John Burgee Architects and Philip Johnson, Architects), had started to obscure the blue-domed Polaris restaurant of Hyatt Regency, which had served as an iconic landmark during the growth of downtown in the 1960s and early 1970s – a period that witnessed Atlanta's emergence as an international business and convention center, as well as a beacon in the Civil Rights Movement, and set the stage for the city's hosting of the 1996 Centennial Olympic Summer games - the largest civic undertaking in its history.



The Pink Pig Ride on the Roof of Rich's Department Store, 1990. Source: Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photographic Archives. Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library.

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