

Georgia Power Atlanta Division Building
143 Alabama Street
Atlanta
Fulton County
Georgia

HABS No. GA-2374

HABS
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GEORGIA POWER ATLANTA DIVISION BUILDING HABS No. GA-2374

Location: 143 Alabama Street
Atlanta
Fulton County
Georgia

U.S.G.S. Northwest Atlanta Quadrangle (7.5)
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
17.741339.3738001

Last Owner: City of Atlanta

Last Occupant: Georgia Power Company

Last Use: Office space for Georgia Power Atlanta Division personnel.

Present Owner: Georgia Department of Transportation
State of Georgia
#2 Capitol Square, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334-1002

Present Occupant: Vacant. To be demolished 2004.

Significance: This Art Moderne six story Flemish bond brick, marble, and limestone building features a flat roof, rounded corners, and horizontal bands of windows. The building was known as the Atlanta Constitution Building until the Atlanta Journal and the Atlanta Constitution consolidated and outgrew this facility in 1955. The building was occupied by the Georgia Power Company until 1972 and has been unoccupied ever since. The building is considered eligible for architecture under National Register Criterion C as one of the earliest, if not the earliest, "Modern" style building in the City of Atlanta. The property also possesses a local level of significance in the area of industry under Criterion A for its association with the Georgia Power Company.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: The building was constructed in 1947 from blue prints drafted in 1945.

2. Architect: Robert & Company Incorporated, Architects and Engineers designed the building. The company was established in 1917 by Lawrence Wood "Chip" Robert, Jr. and was a prominent firm in the southeast throughout the twentieth century. The company was involved on other Georgia projects such as the Lockheed Aircraft Assembly Plant, the Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport, the Atlanta Civic Center, Callaway Gardens, Grady Memorial Hospital, as well as the Spring Street Viaduct.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The original owner of the building was the Atlanta Constitution who occupied the building until 1952 when the newspaper merged with the Atlanta Journal and moved to a larger facility. The building was sold to a group of local businessmen in December, 1952 and was sold again to the Life and Casualty Company of Nashville, Tennessee in June 1953. The Georgia Power Company then leased the building with a 25-year agreement beginning in 1953.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown.

5. Original plans and construction: The original blue prints drafted by Robert & Company Incorporated are housed in the archives of the Atlanta History Center. The plans were drafted in 1945.

6. Alterations and additions: The interior of the building was extensively remodeled in 1953 to accommodate the Georgia Power Company. According to the company's internal newsletter dated June 1953, air conditioning was installed, and the different spaces of the building were re-configured to accommodate different uses. These new uses included spaces for merchandise, power and lighting sales, commercial offices, appliance repair, operating, steam heat, meter, and executive personnel.

The building was vacated by Georgia Power in 1972 and has since remained unoccupied. The building, while structurally sound, has sustained a significant amount of damage due to neglect. Most of the architectural features, both interior and exterior, associated with the Art Moderne style have been stripped from the building.

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B. Historical Context:

The Georgia Power Atlanta Division Building was built in 1947 for the Atlanta Constitution. The newspaper company moved into the new building on December 28, 1947 but only occupied the building until 1952 when the Atlanta Constitution and Atlanta Journal merged and required a larger facility to accommodate daily operations. Georgia Power then leased the building from the Life and Casualty Company of Nashville, Tennessee, the company who purchased the building from the Atlanta Constitution and Atlanta Journal, and began renovations in 1952.

The Georgia Power Company moved into their new Atlanta division headquarters by August of 1952. The lease agreement was for 25 years; the Georgia Power Company would pay \$70,000 a year and also be responsible for building maintenance, insurance, and taxes. The building housed the Atlanta division departments and personnel as well as the main Atlanta electrical appliances store and the commercial department. When the Georgia Power Company moved out of the building in 1972, the building remained vacant for the next 30 years.

The physical presence of this five story building anchors the intersection of Forsyth and Alabama streets. The Rich's building which was once located adjacent to the Georgia Power Atlanta Division Building on the west side has long since been demolished, so that this large building now stands alone on the corner of the intersection. The building is one of the earliest examples of the Art Moderne style of architecture at this scale in Atlanta.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

The Georgia Power Atlanta Division Building is a five story building of brick and reinforced concrete construction. The building also features a basement, sub-basement, and penthouse. In addition to the curved corner of the building and ribbon windows, the building also featured a stone sculpture by Julian Harris depicting the history of the Atlanta Constitution. This carving was located on the Forsyth Street elevation of the building and was removed when the building was abandoned in 1972.

1. Architectural character: The Georgia Power Atlanta Division Building is one of the earliest Art Moderne style buildings in the City of Atlanta.
2. Condition of fabric: The building has not been occupied for over 30 years and while structurally sound has suffered from the effects of exposure to water on the interior as well as the presence of transients.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: This five-story building is triangular in shape and contains 95,000 square feet. The building also features a basement, sub-basement, and penthouse.
2. Foundations: Poured concrete.
3. Walls: The building is constructed of brick and reinforced concrete and features Flemish bond brick, marble, and limestone materials. Narrow limestone courses visually separate the bands of windows from the Flemish bond brickwork. The east elevation of the building features a recessed area with black marble at street level with four long and narrow, horizontally oriented, rectangular grated openings which were previously window openings. Above this level, a horizontal band of six narrow horizontally oriented windows is located above a band of four large, tall, vertically oriented windows. A 72-foot wide and 6-foot tall horizontal band, which was formerly limestone articulated with bas-relief carvings and is currently stucco over metal studs, separates the two bands of windows. Vertical limestone posts separate each window within the bands. A large recessed entrance is located at the eastern end of this façade. The bas-relief carving was removed when the building was abandoned in the 1970s.
4. Structural system, framing: The building is a brick and reinforced concrete frame structure with a flat roof.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: NOT APPLICABLE
6. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys extend from the roof of the structure. The chimneys are large and square with no ornamentation. They are merely functional.
7. Opening:
 - a. Doorways and doors: There is a corner entrance on the corner of Forsyth and Alabama Streets and the main entrance on the east elevation, the north end along Forsyth Street. Currently, both of these entrances are boarded up, but historically, the corner entrance featured a large plate glass transom and swinging glass doors. The main entrance along Forsyth Street featured large doors in a recessed area.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Although currently, all of the windows are boarded up, historically, the windows were two-over-two double-hung sashes with horizontal muntins. The windows were primarily arranged in horizontal ribbons along the exterior walls of the building. Variations in the window openings occurred at the pedestrian levels of the building

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along Forsyth and Alabama Streets. These variations include large vertically oriented windows along the first and second floors along Forsyth Street. The first floor level along Forsyth Street features small horizontal openings within a black marble surface. The Alabama Street elevation features vertically oriented windows as well on the first floor.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Flat
- b. Cornice, eaves: NOT APPLICABLE
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: NOT APPLICABLE

C. Description of Interior:

Since 30 years have passed since the building was occupied, it was difficult to determine the historic and current conditions of the interior of the building. Both Georgia Power and the Atlanta Journal Constitution were contacted in order to obtain photographs of the historic interior; however, no photographs were available. In addition, current conditions inside the building preclude access by anyone other than trained remediation professionals.

- 1. Floor Plans: The building was primarily used as office space for both of the companies who occupied it historically. The first floor was used for some retail. See attached sketch plans.
- 2. Stairways: There appears to be one primary stairwell on the north side of the building.
- 3. Flooring: Unknown.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Originally, the interior was finished with plaster; however, this feature has deteriorated due to vandalism and neglect over the past 30 years.
- 5. Openings: Unknown.
- 6. Decorative features and trim: Unknown.
- 7. Hardware: Unknown.
- 8. Mechanical equipment: Unknown.

D. Site

1. General Setting and orientation: The primary elevation of the building faces east. The immediate environment around the building is urban and includes the railroad and the Spring Street Viaduct.
2. Historic landscape design: There are no landscape features associated with the building either historically or currently.
3. Outbuildings: NOT APPLICABLE.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings: Blue Prints dated October 15, 1945 and housed in the archives of the Atlanta History Center.

B. Early Views: Lane Brothers Commercial Photographers Photographic Collection, 1920-1976; Pullen Collection, Georgia State University.

C. Interviews: NOT APPLICABLE.

D. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Robert and Company Business Files, Atlanta History Center.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Barnwell, Katherine. "Georgia History, Constitution's Part In It Now Being Sculpted." *Atlanta Constitution* June 27, 1948, sec. A:8.

"Company Leases Constitution Building." *Snap Shots* 28 (June 1953): 1.

"Departments Absorb Space Vacated by Division Move." *Snap Shots* no. 8 (August 1953): 3.

Martin, Harold. "Julian Harris to Carve Giant Mural On Constitution Front." *Atlanta Constitution* January 11, 1948, sec. A:6.

McGill, Ralph. "The Constitution Moves: To a Greater Building, And a Greater Future." *Atlanta Constitution* December 29, 1947, sec. A:1.

"Operation Big Switch Goes Off Without Hitch." *Snap Shots* no. 9 (September 1953): 3.

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Price, Bem. "The Constitution Says Farewell to a Fabulous Building." *Atlanta Constitution* December 28, 1947, sec. A:16.

E. Likely Sources not yet investigated: NOT APPLICABLE

F. Supplemental Material: NOT APPLICABLE

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

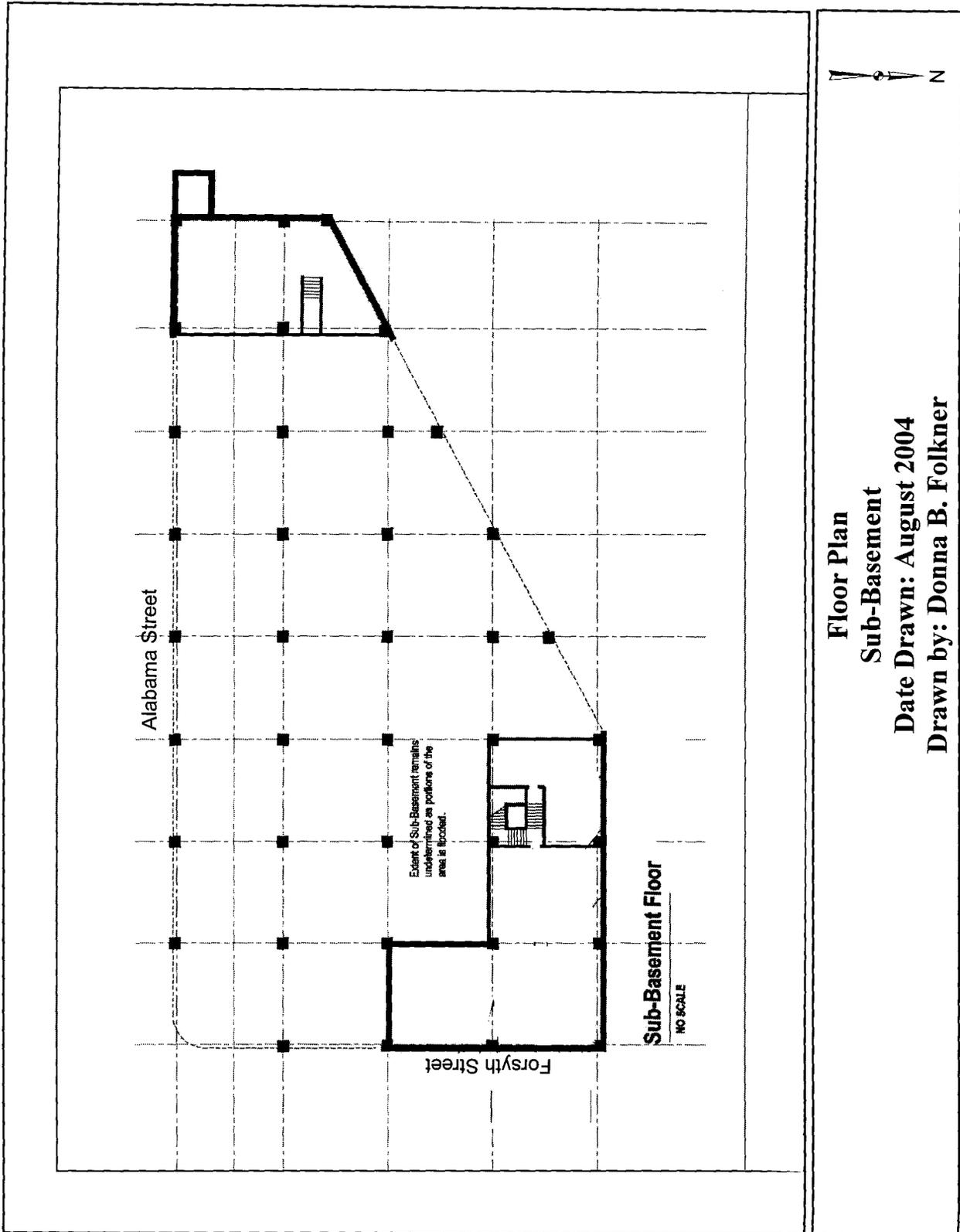
The HAER documentation of the Georgia Power Atlanta Division Building is required for mitigation of the resulting effects of the proposed construction of the Atlanta Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal [GDOT Project DPM-0011(001), Fulton County, PI#770310]. The building would be demolished as part of project implementation. The Federal Highway Administration, the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office, and the Georgia Department of Transportation are all signatories on the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) which prescribes the mitigation for the resource. The Georgia Department of Transportation is responsible for implementing the mitigation. The MOA was signed in 1995.

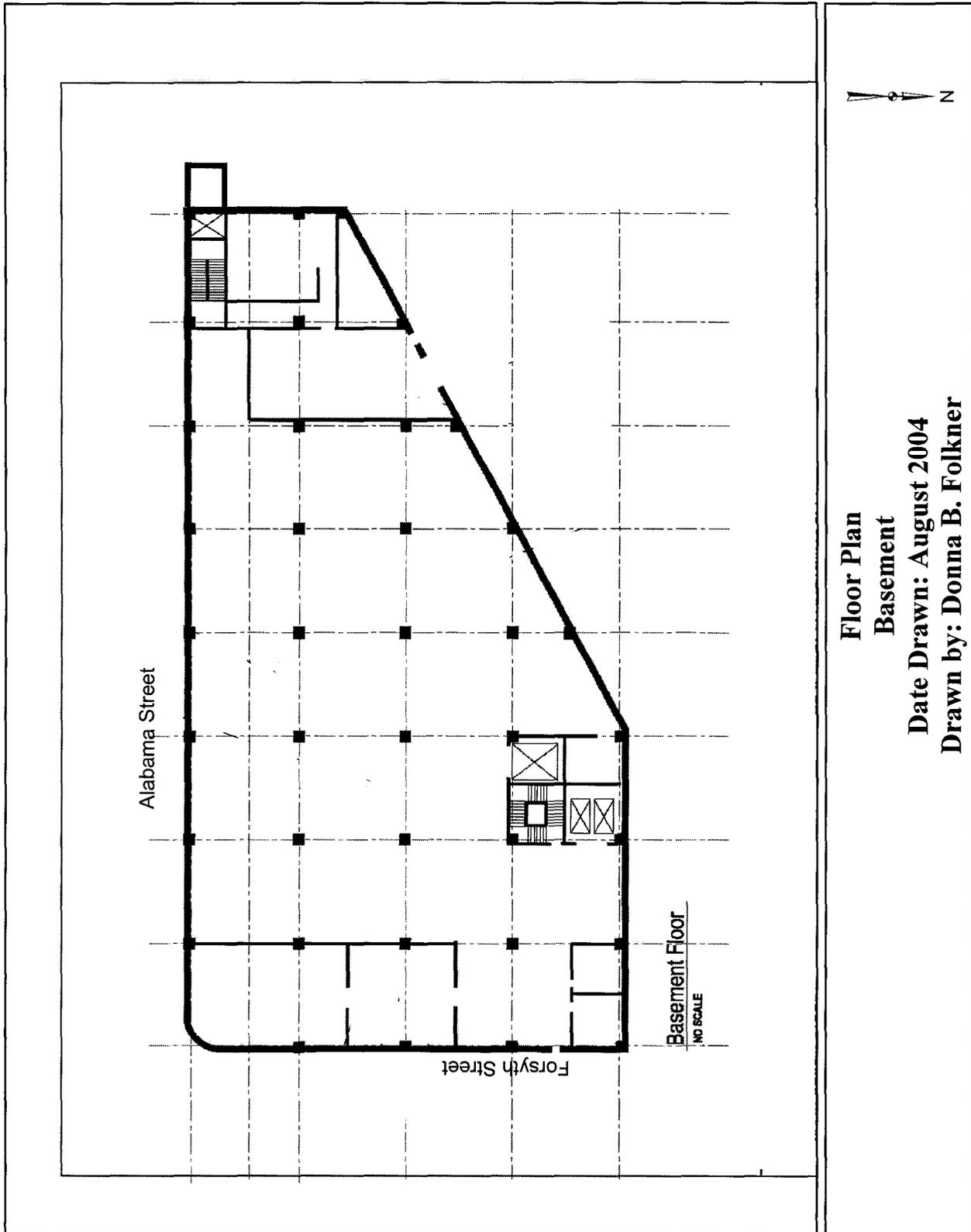
Prepared by: Sandy Lawrence

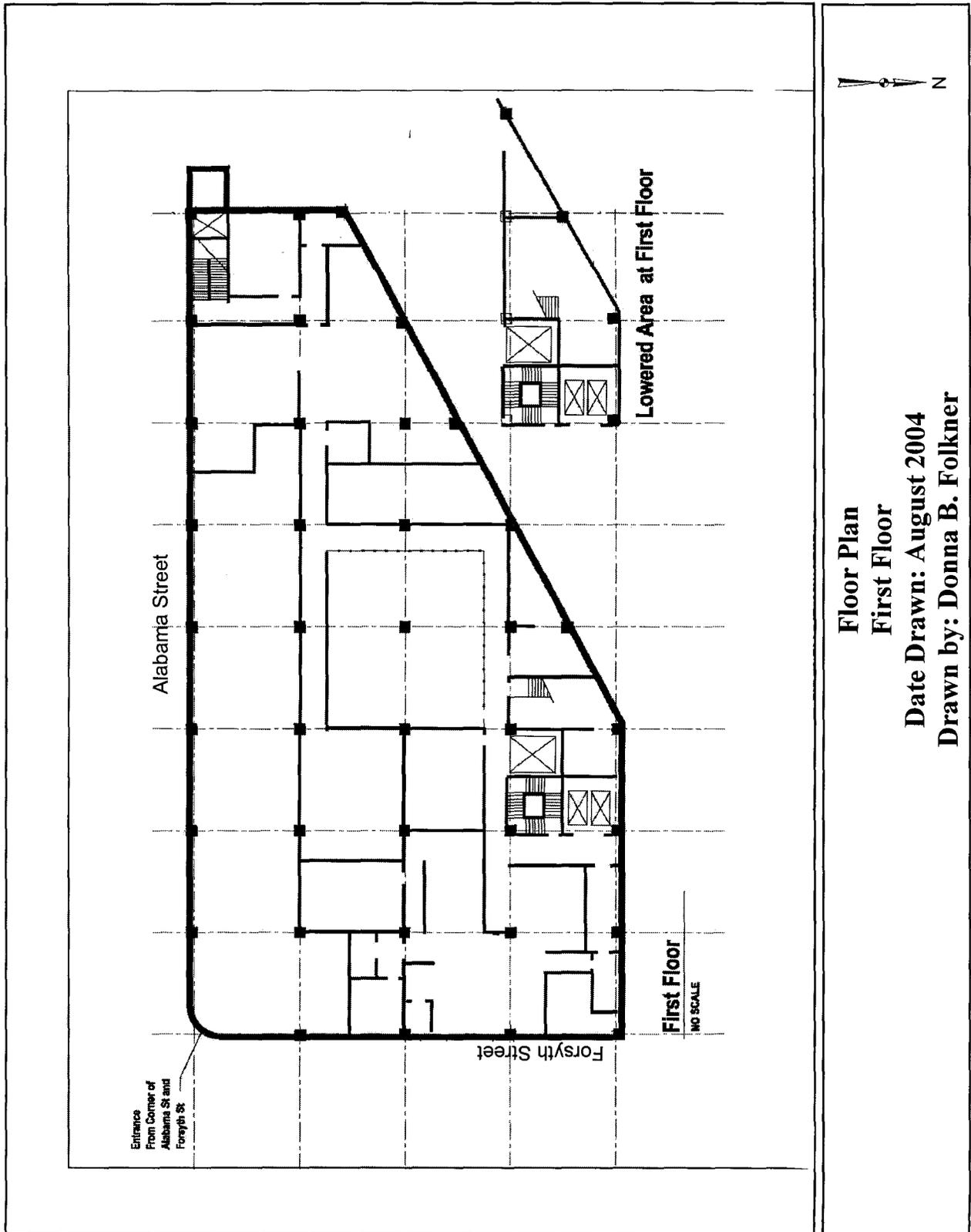
Title: Historian

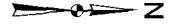
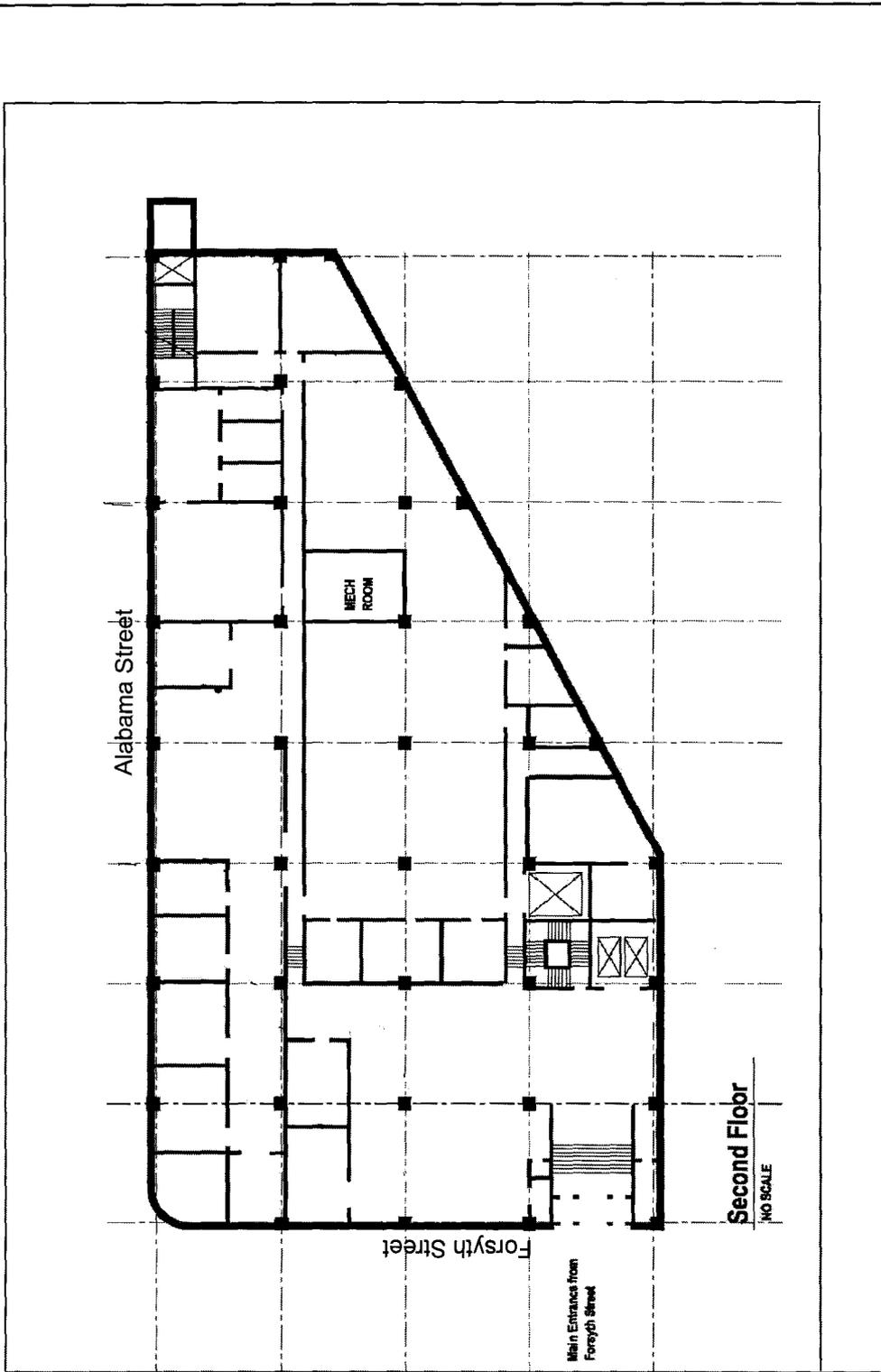
Affiliation: Georgia Department of Transportation

Date: 10/20/2004

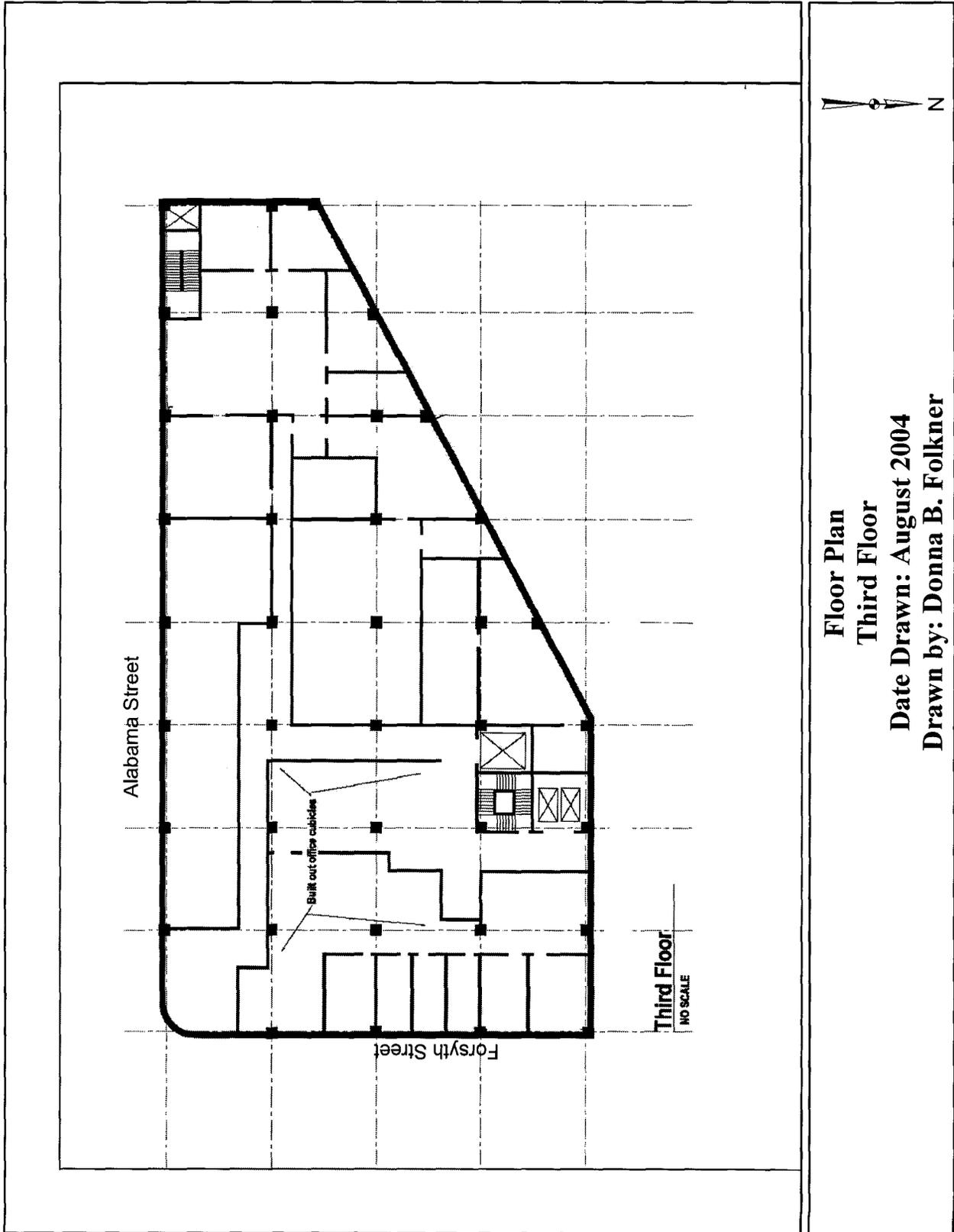


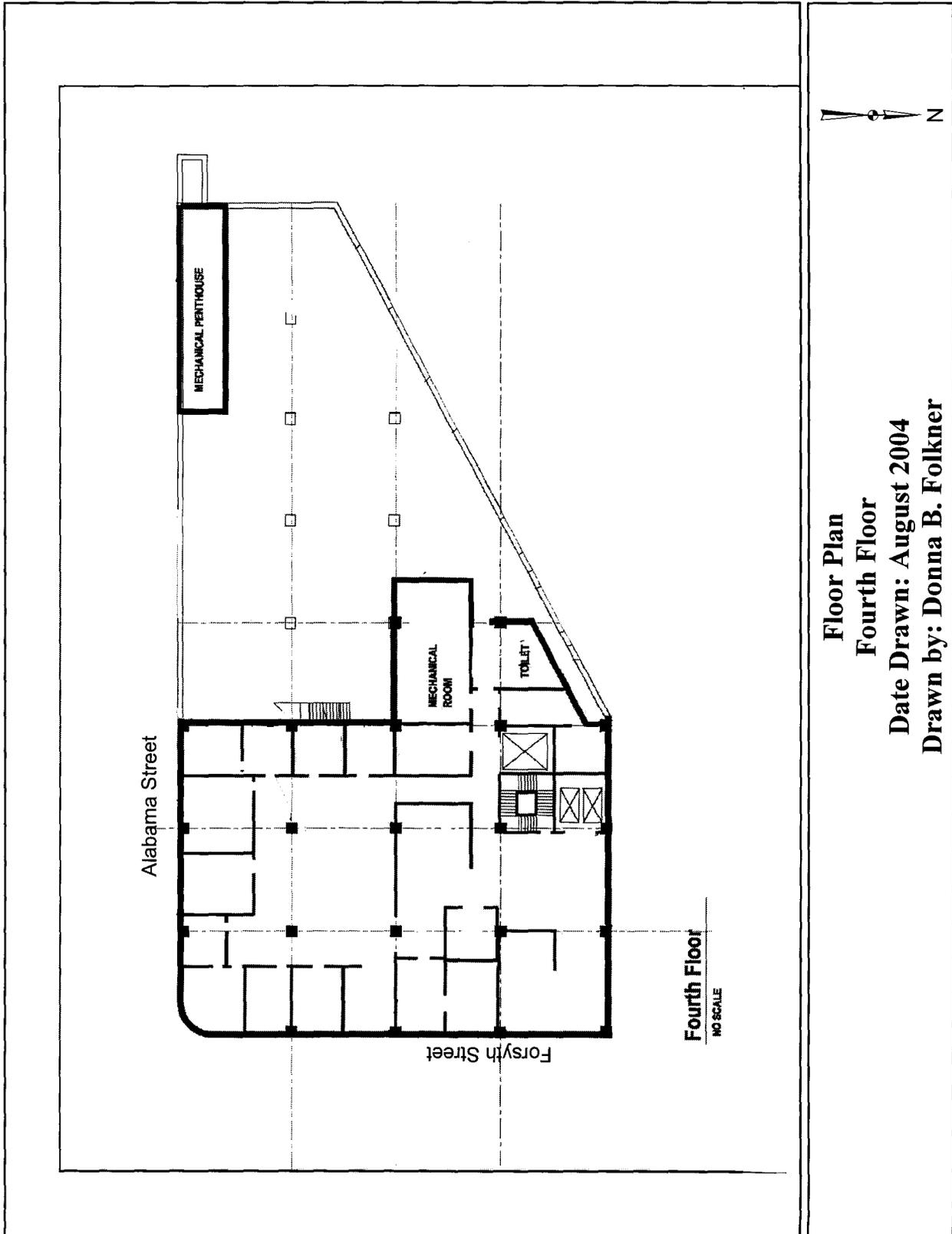


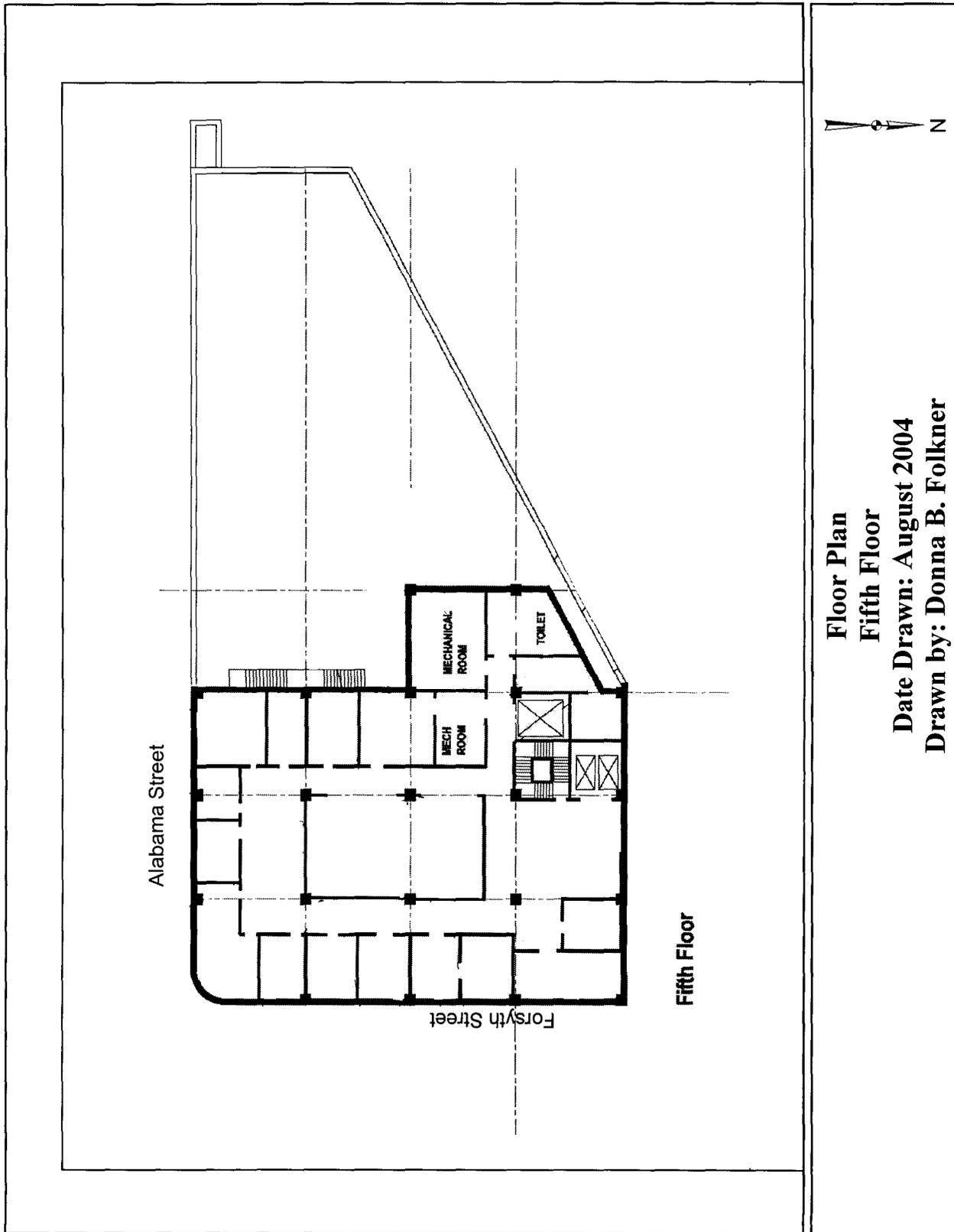




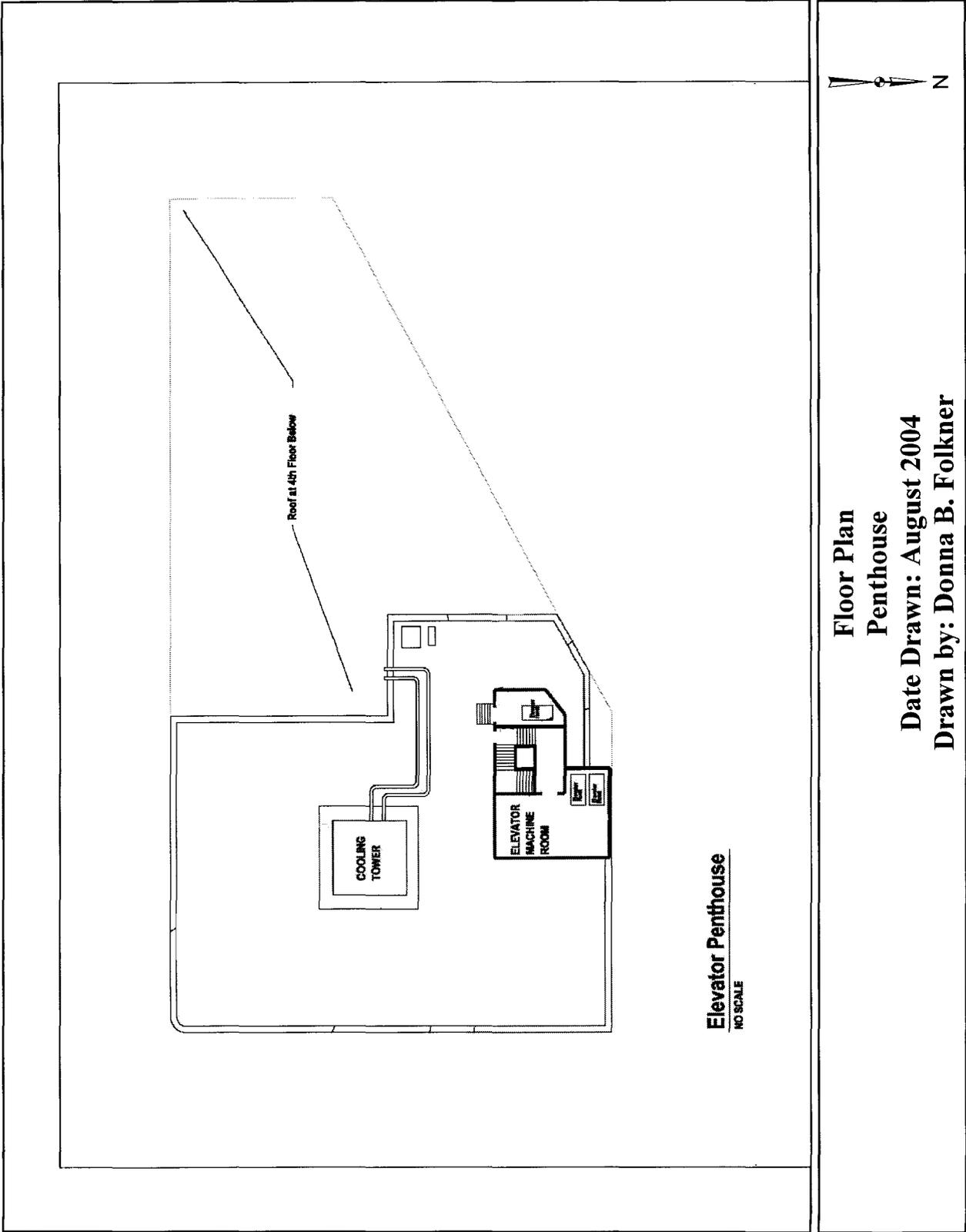
Floor Plan
Second Floor
Date Drawn: August 2004
Drawn by: Donna B. Folkner







Floor Plan
Fifth Floor
Date Drawn: August 2004
Drawn by: Donna B. Folkner

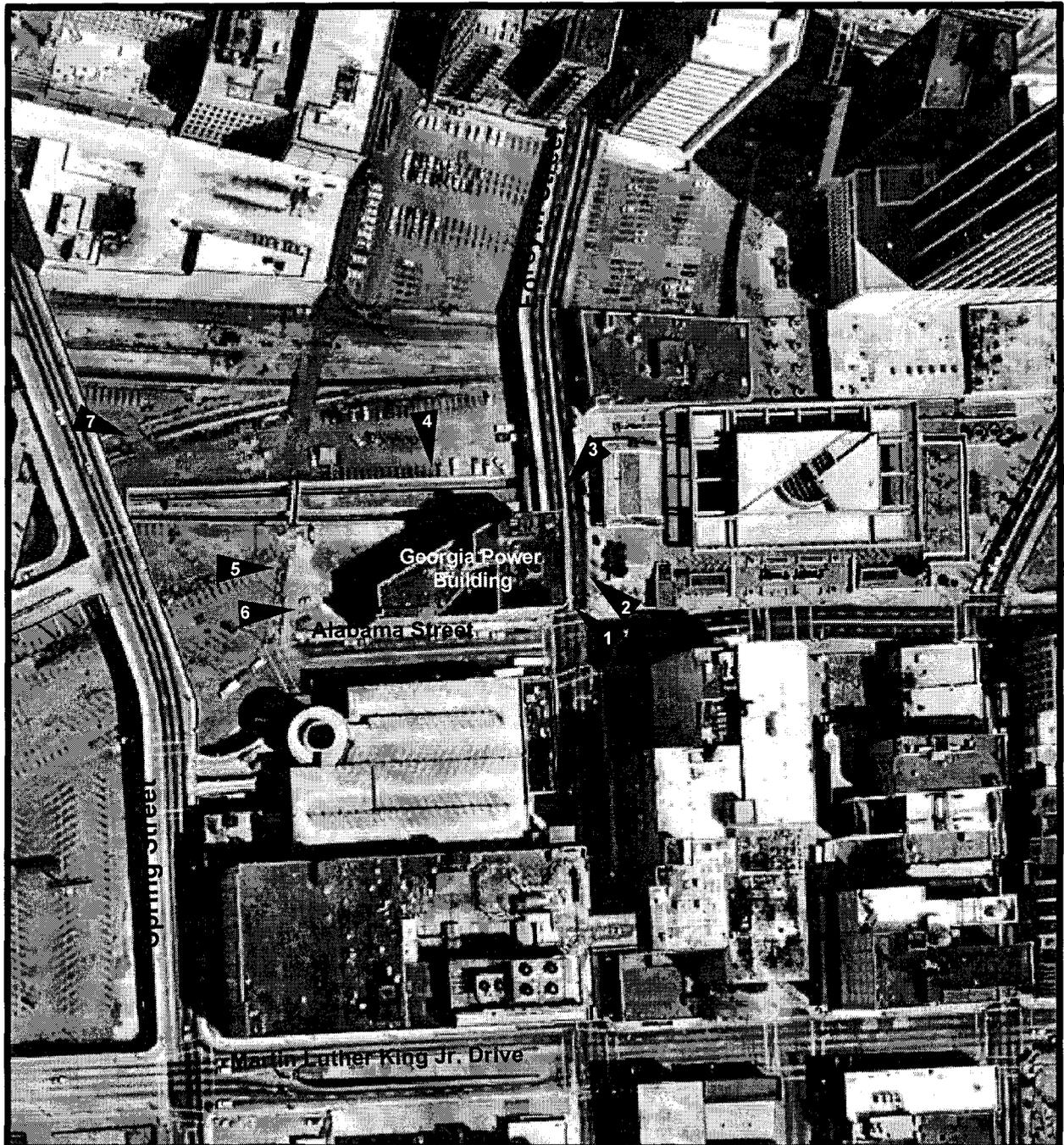


**Floor Plan
Penthouse**

**Date Drawn: August 2004
Drawn by: Donna B. Folkner**

Elevator Penthouse
NO SCALE

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Site Plan

Date Drawn: September 2004

Not to Scale

