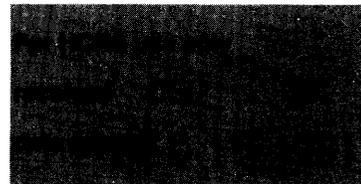


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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



1. Name

historic Bell Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 207 Montgomery Street ___ not for publication

city, town Montgomery ___ vicinity of congressional district 2

state Alabama code 01 county Montgomery code 001

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name T.O.T. Corporation

street & number 314 Bell Building/207 Montgomery Street

city, town Montgomery ___ vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse

street & number 142 Washington Avenue

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1970-present federal state county local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Design features of the Italian Renaissance were utilized in the Bell Building by the Austrian-born architect Frederick Ausfeld. Composed of steel and masonry, the building has a 100' frontage on Montgomery Street and a depth of 100' extending down Lee Street. It is U-shaped, with a 21' x 56' 9" inset. Elevators are situated in the base of the U.

The building rest on concrete footings which vary from 6' to 10' and are composed of six squares of concrete stacked one on top of another. The typical base square being 10' x 10', progressively diminishing to a typical 5' x 5' square where a 1' steel column joins the footing at a cast iron plate. The structural steel is faced with stone, pressed brick, and terra cotta on the exterior.

The U-plan affords natural light to each office by means of double-hung plate windows, each about 7' x 3', mounted in pairs or triplets with sills composed of 2-3 courses of pressed brick, unpressed brick being utilized on rear windows. In the 4' 6" interstitial space of the vertically stacked windows, ornate terra cotta spandrils were placed.

The third through twelfth stories are similar, while the first and second form the base and the major points of emphasis. The main entry is off Montgomery Street and consists of four 26' Corinthian columns, 2' 6" in diameter at the base. The entire entry is formed after the Parisian Arch de Triumph and is symmetrically flanked by 9' 6" wide and 6' deep recesses of beveled glass windows and granite sills which are subsequently bordered by 16' wide show windows which protrude an equi-distance as the entry. The 3' stone cornice which caps the Lee and Montgomery Street elevations protudes 2' 6" beyond the wall and is supported by alternating paired and single console brackets. The building is 160' tall, and is composed of a 17' 7" first floor, a 13' second floor and subsequent ten floors of 11' 6" each. A built-up roof is enclosed by a 2' 6" stone parapet which extends the entire periphery of the building. Directly below runs a galvanized iron cornice, which protrudes 6' to create an overhang.

INTERIOR

The main entrance is from Montgomery Street and leads into a vestibule and lobby, both with marble wainscoted walls and paneled plaster ceilings. Beyond are three elevators; to the rear of the elevators is a staircase. Originally it was open to all stories, but has been enclosed above the third floor. The basement contains the heating and ventilating plant, limited office and restaurant space, and a cold storage which connects with every office, capable of supplying all tenants with ice water. The building was heated with steam and provided with gas and electric heat.

Each floor above the first contained 24 offices, making a total of 259 in the building, all finished in oak and provided with a stationary washstand and wardrobe. The corridors have ceramic tile floors with wainscoting and interior windows and transoms, taking maximum advantage of shared natural and artificial lighting as well as ease of ventilation. Each floor was provided with a bath with tile floors and marble partitions. Baths originally alternated floors, with men on one floor and women on the next. Baths have been partitioned to allow two baths for each floor.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1907-10 **Builder/Architect** Ausfeld & Blount Architects/ Wescott and

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Ronneberg, Chicago Consulting engineers.

The 1907-10 Bell Building is architecturally significant as Alabama's finest example of a Sullivanesque skyscraper based on the 1890-1891 Wainwright Building and is locally significant as the finest of the remaining early steel-framed buildings in Montgomery. At the time of its construction, it was one of the two largest buildings in the state, the other building the First National Bank Building located a few blocks away. Begun during a period of expansion in Montgomery, the Bell Building provided high quality office space finished in oak, supplied with cooled water and central vacuuming and reached by three high-speed elevators.

* * * * *

The building was planned in 1906 by N. J. Bell, a local entrepreneur and designed by the firm of Ausfeld and Blount, assisted by Westcott and Ronneberg, a Chicago based engineering firm. Little is known about the firm of Ausfeld and Blount, except that they designed a number of buildings in Montgomery during the turn of the century and that Frederick Ausfeld was a native of Austria. The structure remained in the Bell family until May of 1967 when it was purchased by a Montgomery Corporation of businessmen consisting of John Overton, Robbins Taylor and M. R. Thomason.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Construction Plans, Ausfeld and Blount, Architects 1907, copies at Watson & Nichols Architects
PA, 614 S. Lawrence Street, Montgomery, Alabama
'Montgomery Advertiser' February 4, 1907, May 4, 1907, September 12, 1968.
'Montgomery Independent' May 31, 1967
Personal Inspection, Virginia Connor, Associate Member, A.I.A., June 12, 1980

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Montgomery

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED
Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

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5	6	4	8	5	0
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Verbal boundary description and justification

Part of lots 1 & 2 in Block 16, East Alabama Plat. See continuation Sheet.

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Connor/Watson & Nichols Architects, PA/ Ellen Mertins

organization Alabama Historical Commission date December 15, 1980

street & number 725 Monroe Street telephone 832-6621

city or town Montgomery state Alabama

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Thos B. Howard, Jr.

title SHPO Alabama date Dec. 16, 1980

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet

Item number

10

Page

2

Beginning at the intersection of the southeasterly side of Montgomery Street and the southwesterly side of Lee Street, thence southeasterly along Lee Street a distance of 201.05 feet to the southeasterly side of a masonry building; thence southwesterly along the southeasterly wall of said building a distance of 70.5 feet more or less to the corner of said building; thence northwesterly along the southwesterly wall of said building a distance of 88.1 feet to the corner of said building; thence southwesterly along the extension of the northwesterly wall of said building a distance of 41.45 feet more or less to a point that is on the extension of the northeasterly wall of the Whitley Hotel, thence northwesterly along the extension of and along the northeasterly wall of the Whitley Hotel a distance of 113.9 feet more or less to the southeasterly side of Montgomery Street a distance of 111.68 feet to the point of beginning; the said land being a part of Lots 1 and 2 in Block 16 in that part of the City of Montgomery, Alabama formerly known as East Alabama.