

# Flintridge Building

(Tennessee Coal & Iron Co. Flint Ridge Building)



Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places

27 May 2003

Completed for the USS Real Estate  
A Division of United States Steel Corporation



**SCHNEIDER**  
Historic Preservation, LLC

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Flintridge Building

other name/site number Tennessee Coal & Iron Co. Flint Ridge Building (H.A.E.R.)

## 2. Location

street & number 6200 E. J. Oliver Boulevard  not for publication N/A

city or town Fairfield  vicinity N/A

state Alabama code AL county Jefferson code 073 zip code 35064

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the  
National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

removed from the National  
Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non contributing	
2	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls STEEL  
CONCRETE  
roof BUILT-UP  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Please see Continuation Sheet 7-1.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1951

**Significant dates**

1951

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Holabird, Root and Burgee  
Smith, Jack B.

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographic Data

Acreage of Property 20 ac.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 | 1 | 6 | | 5 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 2 | | 3 | 7 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 5 |  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 | 1 | 6 | | 5 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 3 | | 3 | 7 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 1 |

3 | 1 | 6 | | 5 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 2 | | 3 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 2 |  
Zone Easting Northing  
4 | 1 | 6 | | 5 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 8 | | 3 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 4 |

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David B. Schneider, Consultant; Christy Anderson, Alabama Historical Commission  
organization Schneider Historic Preservation, LLC date 31 May 2003; rev. 1/14/04  
street & number 411 E. 6th Street telephone 256-310-6320  
city or town Anniston state AL zip code 36207

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title USS Realty  
street & number 6200 E. J. Oliver Boulevard telephone 205-783-4702  
city or town Fairfield state AL zip code 35064

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number   7   Page   1  Flintridge Building  
Jefferson County, AL**7. Narrative Description**

The Flintridge Building property is located on a generally flat site atop Flint Ridge in Fairfield, Jefferson County, Alabama. The subject property encompasses approximately twenty acres in an irregular-shaped parcel that is bounded to the west and south by E.J. Oliver Boulevard, to the north by an undeveloped parcel and to the east by modern commercial uses. The steep slope of Flint Ridge runs immediately adjacent to the west side of E.J. Oliver Boulevard which forms the western property line. Despite modern retail development at the foot of the ridge, the site continues to offer “a breathtaking sight” of the U.S. Steel facilities which stretch “in a wide sweep from left to right” and comprise “the largest steel producing operations in the whole South.”<sup>1</sup>

Sited parallel to the ridge, the principal west facade of the Flintridge Building extends in a generally southeast to northeast direction. A narrow strip of lawn separates the building from E.J. Oliver Boulevard and is broken at the center of the building by a polygonal access drive. Lawns extend from the sides of the building to the street to the south and an access road to the north, north from the access road to the property line, in narrow strips to the rear around an adjacent parking lot, and along the eastern property lines. The parking lot covers some six acres and provides parking for more than six hundred cars. The lot is broken only by a series of concrete islands that separate and define parking spaces. The only other structure on the site is a small mechanical building located to the rear of the Flintridge building.

The Flintridge Building is a four-story office building (Ground, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd) with a full-height basement level and a rooftop enclosure. The building is clad with buff-colored brick with a flat roof concealed by low parapets. The building has a reinforced concrete frame with reinforced concrete slab floors. A large rectangular thirteen by four bay four-story core with its principal facade extending parallel to E.J. Oliver Boulevard is flanked at either side by three by three bay wings. Four six by three bay wings extend perpendicular to the rear of the core. Overall the building measures some 580 feet across and 210 feet deep. A T-shaped two level penthouse is located atop the building.

The principal west facade is nineteen bays wide with the central thirteen bays representing the core. The three outer bays at each side represent the side wings and are recessed one bay to the rear of the plane of the core. The roof penthouse is also recessed from the plane of the core. The central bays of the facade are visually dominated by the penthouse, a projecting bay of windows, and a two story entrance system all of which are faced with aquamarine-tinted plate glass with stainless steel framing. These elements offset the otherwise simple facade of buff brick with narrow horizontal bands of windows. The facade of the penthouse consists of an eleven-bay window wall surmounted by a stainless steel awning. The cantilevered stainless steel and glass window bay across the nine center bays of the the third floor projects out from the facade approximately eight feet. Full-height window walls extend from the first to the second floor level at the three central bays and are separated by stainless steel pilasters. Principal entrances are located at the middle bay and consist of a central

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revolving glass door flanked by fixed windows and single glass doors with transoms. An earthen ramp with brick retaining walls obscures the five center bays of the basement level. A circular drive on the ramp accesses a set of steps leading to the entrance bay. The steps are flanked on either side by large stone planter boxes. The remainder of the facade consists of buff-colored brick walls with a series of horizontal window openings at each level. Window openings typically contain six fixed single light windows with wide stainless steel frames and have continuous stainless steel clad sills. Two tiers of stainless steel louvered blinds, each extending across two windows, are set within each opening. These "solar shades" are adjustable from the interior.

The side and rear elevations repeat the buff-colored brick and window banding of the facade. Window groupings are similar to those at the facade except at the center bays of the end walls of the wings which contain only a single pair of windows. The four rear wings form a series of three courtyards. Secondary pedestrian entrances are located at the basement level in the center bays of the end walls of the side wings and at the rear elevation of the core within the two outer courtyards. The center courtyard contains the service entrances to the building. A one-story rectangular mechanical room is set within the northwest corner of the courtyard. A one-story concrete canopy and loading dock extend along the building's core southward to the adjacent wing and provide shelter and access to pedestrian and roll-up cargo doors. Freestanding within the courtyard is a one story building with a large rooftop mechanical unit.

The interior of the building includes four levels of offices at the first through the third floors and the basement. Office space accounts for 214,000 square feet of the 314,000 square foot building. As originally constructed, this space included three hundred offices providing work space for 1,500 people. A cafeteria and its supporting facilities and other mechanical rooms are enclosed within the two-level rooftop penthouse. A subbasement contains mechanical and other support spaces.

The principal entrance opens to a two-tier lobby with a reception area at grade and an upper mezzanine along the rear wall that provides access to flanking hallways at the first floor level. An angled single flight staircase ascends to the mezzanine at the north end of the room. Stainless steel railings are set along the stair and mezzanine. The lobby space is broken only by two large columns clad with stainless steel. Walls are faces with smooth marble. Floors are finished with terrazzo and ceilings are smooth plaster. Two lines of twenty-two intermediate structural columns run the length of the core of the building and are evenly spaced between the east and west walls. Within the side and rear wings, two intermediate column lines are narrowly spaced along their center lines. Vertical circulation is provided by two stacks of escalators and four staircases. There is also a single cargo elevator. The escalator stacks are located within the core adjacent to the east intermediate column line between the fifth and eighth and fifteenth and eighteenth columns. Each stack contains two escalators set in opposing directions. At the four main floors, a hallway located between the center and west column lines connects the elevator stacks. These escalator stacks and their connecting hallways represent the building's principal corridors and, along with the lobby and cafeteria, its major character-defining interior public spaces. Finishes within the corridors include dropped acoustical

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ceilings with integral lighting, smooth plaster walls, and carpeted floors with narrow marble baseboards. Offices and secondary hallways are grouped around the corridors on each level. Offices retain a mix of fixed and temporary partitions and are of a variety of sizes. Physical and documentary evidence indicates that considerable change has occurred to the layout and finishes within most of the office areas to meet the evolving needs of its users.

Offices along the center bays of the third floor extend into the cantilevered stainless steel and glass window bay. These spaces historically served as the office areas for upper management and afforded sweeping views of the company's plant facilities that extended along the valley below. The roof penthouse encloses a large cafeteria, kitchen, and other supporting rooms. An expansive window wall along the cafeteria also provides extensive natural light and views of the plant. Doors lead out to a partially covered deck along the roof's edge.

The basement includes a series of rooms that house the building's electrical and mechanical systems. A large vault is also located in the basement and historically stored cash that was used to pay the company's work force which at one time included almost 14,000 people.

The Flintridge building retains architectural integrity. There have been no appreciable alterations to the exterior of the Flintridge Building. The principal lobby is also unchanged as are the spatial arrangements of the corridors and escalator stacks. Alterations to the actual offices spaces have included considerable rearrangement of walls and the replacement of finishes. The overall physical condition of the building is good.

## Mechanical Building

A rectangular one-story mechanical building with a flat roof is located within the central rear courtyard. The building has buff-colored brick walls below a wide concrete band. Cargo and pedestrian entrances are located at the north elevation and remaining elevations have no openings. A large mechanical unit is set atop the building.

## Archaeology

While no formal archaeological survey has been made, potential subsurface remains could provide additional information about the historical development of the district.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> "Welcome to TC&I's New Headquarters," T.C.I. vertical file, Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, AL.



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Jefferson County, AL**8. Statement of Significance**

The Flintridge Building<sup>1</sup> is significant under Criterion A in the area of commerce for its role in the historical development of the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company (T.C.I., a division of United States Steel Corporation), having served as the company's principal office building from 1951 to the present. Located on a ridge overlooking T.C.I.'s Fairfield Works and Ensley Works, historically the largest and most diversified steel manufacturing complex in the Southeastern United States, construction of the building was part of the company's relocation and consolidation of its administrative functions from downtown Birmingham to sites adjacent to its manufacturing operations. The Flintridge Building is also architecturally significant as an example of the modern style of industrial office buildings popular in Birmingham in the immediate post World War II era and as an example of the work of its collaborating architects, Holabird, Root and Burgee of Chicago and Jack B. Smith of Birmingham. The building's period of significance is 1951, the year of its construction.

## Historical Narrative

The Flintridge Building was constructed to serve as the headquarters for the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company and its subsidiaries. T.C.I. was founded in 1852 as the Sewanee Mining Company of Tennessee and its original operations were limited to the mining of coal. Reorganized in 1860 as the Tennessee Coal and Railroad Company, the company began the production of coke in 1873 in response to an increased demand from the expanding regional iron industry. The company was renamed the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company in 1881 when it was again reorganized with the intent of adding the production of pig iron to its operations. In 1886, T.C.I. expanded its operations through the acquisition of the Pratt Coal and Iron Company and its extensive facilities in the Birmingham area. Shortly thereafter, the company established a new mill with four furnaces and developed the community of Ensley to house its work force. With its acquisitions of the Debarleben Coal and Iron Company, the Cahaba Coal Mining Company, and the Excelsior Coal Company in 1892, the company's total holdings reached 400,000 acres of land, seventeen blast furnaces and coal lands that produced 13,000 tons of coal per day.<sup>2</sup> An open hearth steel plant was added to the Ensley site in 1899 and the company continued to expand, becoming "the Birmingham District's strongest industrial corporation" by 1907.<sup>3</sup> Despite its success, an economic downturn in the autumn of 1907 resulted in circumstances which led to its acquisition by the the United States Steel Corporation on November 5 for \$35.3 million. T.C.I. became a subsidiary company of U.S. Steel and retained the T.C.I. name. At the time of its formation in 1901, U.S. Steel was "the nation's biggest steel company and the largest industrial organization of any kind worldwide."

In 1909, T.C.I. began developing additional facilities southwest of Ensley at a town originally called Corey in honor of the then president of U.S. Steel. Renamed Fairfield, a coke byproducts plant was

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soon completed by T.C.I., as was a firebrick and tile plant by Harbison-Walker Refractories and a wire and rod mill American Steel and Wire Company. T.C.I. added plate and structural steel mills during World War I. By the 1920s, T.C.I.'s Fairfield works were supplying "50% of the southern steel market."<sup>4</sup> During World War II, the company's total employment reached 28,000.<sup>5</sup>

Prior to the construction of the Flintridge Building, the numerous administrative offices of the Tennessee, Coal and Iron Company and its various subsidiaries were scattered among several locations, most of which were located in downtown Birmingham some eight miles from the principal manufacturing facilities. T.C.I. itself occupied space in the Brown-Marx Building in the city. In the mid-1940s, T.C.I. management began formulating plans to consolidate all of company's operations at the Fairfield site. On December 15, 1949, John W. Galbreath and Company, a real estate and land management firm based in Columbus, Ohio issued a press release announcing the "formation of the Flintridge Corporation, which will construct and rent a modern office building at Fairfield to three subsidiaries of the United States Steel Corporation having operations in the Birmingham District."<sup>6</sup> The three subsidiaries included the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company, the Birmingham-Southern Railroad Company, and Union Supply Company. T.C.I. president Robert Gregg stated that "we of the Tennessee Company are delighted that after years of planning...we are at last able to locate our general offices in their natural and most effective place near our principal operation."<sup>7</sup>

While the announcement of the relocation of the T.C.I. offices to a new site outside the city limits was lamented by some "as a sharp blow in some respects to Birmingham,"<sup>8</sup> newspaper accounts and editorials generally regarded the new facility as evidence of the growth of the larger Birmingham industrial district. "Whatever is good for the Birmingham District is good for Birmingham," stated one editorial." Another editorial continued: "This evidence of the faith of the U.S. Steel Corporation in the prospects for its operations here has very heartening aspects for all the people of that greater Birmingham—which is the Birmingham District."<sup>9</sup>

The new building was sited atop Flint Ridge overlooking the company's extensive manufacturing operations less than one-half mile away. Four hundred new administrative positions were added as part of the effort to coordinate the company's scattered office facilities. In addition to T.C.I. management, the offices of the coal division previously located in Pratt City, the engineering department previously located at Ensley, and the Fairfield engineering department were relocated to the new building.<sup>10</sup>

Construction of the \$6,000,000 building began on January 23, 1950 and was expected to be completed by June 15, 1951.<sup>11</sup> The building was designed by the Chicago architectural firm of Holabird, Root and Burgee, with Birmingham architect Jack B. Smith as a local associate. Daniel Construction Company of Birmingham served as the general contractor.

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T.C.I. began occupying the building in the late summer of 1951. By September 1951, three of U.S. Steel's subsidiaries: Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, Warrior and Gulf Navigation Company and the Southern Railroad occupied the building.<sup>12</sup> On December 22, 1951, 3,000 of the company's clients, suppliers and other business associates were invited to an open house. The formal opening of the building was combined with a Christmas party for the 1,200 member staff of the company's general offices on December 25th.<sup>13</sup>

T.C.I.'s consolidation of facilities at Fairfield also resulted in the construction of the Fairfield Employment Center in 1951. The Employment Center was built to "house the central employment agency for the Fairfield Steel Works, sheet and tin mills, wire works and byproduct coke plant, all of which employ some 13,600 workers" and was located adjacent to the Fairfield Works' main gate, directly between the Flint Ridge Building and the mill. With the completion of these two facilities, all of the company's administrative, employee and manufacturing operations were effectively consolidated at the Fairfield site.

During the 1950s, the Fairfield Works continued to expand. While smaller than T.C.I.'s Ensley facility in 1950, Fairfield was "considerably the larger of the Birmingham plants" by the end of the decade and had been "picked out as its district's growth point" by U.S. Steel.<sup>14</sup> By comparison, the Fairfield Works was the fifth largest of U.S. Steel's ten integrated steel works by 1959 and Ensley was its sixth largest.<sup>15</sup> In 1952, T.C.I. became a division of U.S. Steel. Prior to that time, the company had operated as a separate subsidiary company owned by U.S. Steel. By the mid-1950s, employment at T.C.I.'s various operations in the state of Alabama reached close to 30,000 with an annual payroll of approximately \$132 million."<sup>16</sup>

In 1963, T.C.I. announced that the newly created Southern Area Sales Office of the U.S. Steel Corporation would be located at the Flint Ridge Office Building. The change was part of a major reorganization of U.S. Steel that merged seven of the corporation's divisions, including T.C.I., into a single "steel making and selling unit under direct line management of U.S. Steel officers."<sup>17</sup> Beginning in 1964, the use of the name Tennessee Coal and Iron was discontinued in favor of U.S. Steel.

Most of the company's hiring, training and employee operations were relocated from the Fairfield Employment Center to the Flintridge Building in 1974. The move occurred as the company was seeking to comply with a consent decree issued by the Federal Northern District Court of Alabama that required nine steel producers and the United Steelworkers of America to take immediate steps to halt racially discriminatory practices. Also in 1974, U.S. Steel significantly expanded the Fairfield Works with the construction of two innovative Q-BOP furnaces. Another furnace was added in 1978, increasing the plant's capacity by twenty percent over its 1973 level.<sup>18</sup> In 1978, U.S. Steel eliminated the Southern Steel Division and merged it with the company's Eastern Steel Division headquartered in Pittsburgh.<sup>19</sup>

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The change did not significantly impact staffing at the company's offices in the Flintridge Building in the short term. In 1981, construction of a new 600,000 ton per year pipe mill at Fairfield was announced.

Despite the continued success of U.S. Steel's operations in the Birmingham District, administrative changes eventually greatly reduced the number of employees working in the Flintridge Building. By 1990, the U.S. Steel Division was occupying a mere 26,928 square feet of office space in the building and the company's real estate division gave serious consideration to closing the facility. Even with additional subsidiary offices for the company's Southern/Western Area Sales, Customer Technical Service, Regional Systems, Data Processing/Clerical Services, and Public Affairs, total utilization of the building had fallen to under twenty-five percent of its available office space. Citing its unsuccessful efforts to sell the property, an internal memo from USX's Realty Development Division<sup>20</sup> dated April 23, 1990 stated that "due to substantial cash and book losses over the last three years, Realty has concluded that the building will be completely shut down to minimize future losses."<sup>21</sup> Tenants were subsequently informed that the building would be closed on January 1, 1991. After further analysis of the cost of relocating the remaining offices, however, the company decided to continue use of the building for an additional three-year period during which time the Realty division would "aggressively market space" to other tenants and efforts would be made to reduce operating costs.<sup>22</sup> By 1993, eleven new tenants occupied space in the building including the Birmingham Southern railroad, Tenco Credit Union and the United Steelworkers of America.<sup>23</sup> USS Real Estate continues to own the building which is now managed by the Engel Realty Company.

## Architecture

Local press accounts celebrated the new Flintridge Building as being "among the most modern office buildings in the nation."<sup>24</sup> Stylistically, the building is part of a trend toward more streamlined geometric designs that became popular throughout the United States in the immediate post-World War II era. Often referred to as the International or Corporate International style, buildings of the period were typified by flat roofs, horizontal planes and geometric shapes. The style found expression in several industrial office buildings in the Birmingham area, the Flintridge Building being a prominent example, as is the office building Jack B. Smith designed for the Ingalls Ironworks in 1950.

The Flintridge Building was designed by the Chicago architectural firm of Holabird, Root and Burgee. Founded in 1881 as Holbird and Roche by William Holabird (1854-1923) and Martin Roche (1855-1927), the firm developed a reputation for the skyscrapers it designed and their contribution to the architectural movement known as the "Chicago School." Reorganized as Holabird and Root in 1929 by Holabird's son, John A. Holabird (1886-1945) in collaboration with and John Wellborn Root, Jr. (1887-1963), the company continued to build a national reputation for its skyscraper designs as well as for its corporate office buildings.

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Birmingham architect Jack B. Smith served as a local associate on the Flintridge Building project. Smith (d. 1974) was born in Elyton, Jefferson County, Alabama and graduated from the architecture school at the University of Pennsylvania in 1916. After serving in World War I, Smith returned to Birmingham and established an architectural practice. His works in Birmingham included the Chamber of Commerce Building, the Swann Company Research Laboratory, the Central Park Branch of the Birmingham Public Library, and the administration building for the Ingalls Iron Works. He joined Holabird and Root in 1958 and relocated to Chicago.<sup>25</sup>

The design of the Flintridge Building took full advantage of its elevated site to capture a spectacular vista of the company's Ensley and Fairfield Works below. The building's prominent 580-foot long facade faces the mills and its expanses of plate glass at the principal entrance, along a 180-foot cantilevered upper level extension, and at a large rooftop penthouse housing a cafeteria provide dramatic views. The design also incorporates the use of stainless steel as both decorative and structural elements to reflect the product of the company whose offices it was constructed to house. In addition to 1,672 tons of structural steel, 163 tons of stainless were used in the building.<sup>26</sup>

Notes:

1 The Flintridge Building was recorded by the Historic American Engineering Record as an addendum to documentation for the Tennessee Coal & Iron Co. under the name Flint Ridge Building. While constructed on Flint Ridge, all company documentation refers to the building as the Flintridge Building.

2 Robert Gregg, Origin and Development of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company (New York: The Newcomen Society of England, American Branch, 1948), pp. 16-17.

3 "Written Historical and Descriptive Data, Addendum to the Tennessee Coal & Iron Co., Fairfield Works," Historic American Engineering Record, Washington, D.C., 1

4 Ibid., p. 3.

5 Ibid, p. 4.

6 Press Release, John W. Galbreath and Company, Columbus, Ohio, December 15, 1949. Property files, USX Realty Development Division, Fairfield, Alabama.

7 "New T.C.I. Offices To Be Constructed," Birmingham News, December 15, 1949.

8 "The New T.C.I. Offices," newspaper editorial clipping with no source cited, T.C.I. vertical file, Birmingham Public Library.

9 "The New T.C.I. Offices."

10 "TCI Reveals Office Move," Birmingham Post-Herald, December 15, 1949.

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**Flintridge Building**  
Jefferson County, AL

- 11 "T.C.I. office building nearing completion," Birmingham News, March 15, 1951.
- 12 "Welcome to TC&I's New Headquarters," T.C.I. vertical file, Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, AL.
- 13 "TCI Holds Giant Party Today In New Building At Fairfield," Birmingham Post-Herald, 24 December 1951.
- 14 Kenneth Warren, Big Steel: The First Century of the United States Steel Corporation, 1901-2001 (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), p. 222.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 223.
- 16 "Welcome to TCI," p. 26.
- 17 "Weibel Says Location Plan Is Definite," Birmingham Post-Herald, November 5, 1963.
- 18 U.S. Steel Reaches Milestone in the South," The Alabama Purchasor, February 1975, p. 26.
- 19 "USS to end southern division at Fairfield," Birmingham Post-Herald, February 2, 1978.
- 20 U.S. Steel was reorganized as USX Corporation in 1986 to reflect the diversification of the company which by that time had resulted in steel being only one of many of its businesses. USX formed two separate business groups in 1991, dividing their oil and gas businesses from their steel business. The latter was renamed the U.S. Steel Group.
- 21 Memorandum, USX Realty Development Division, April 23, 1990. Property files, USX Realty Development Division, Fairfield, Alabama.
- 22 Memorandum, R.E. Fifield, General Manager Fairfield Works, June 21, 1990. Property files, USX Realty Development Division, Fairfield, Alabama.
- 23 Memorandum, G.P. Lander to Flintridge Building Occupants, February 24, 1993. Property files, USX Realty Development Division, Fairfield, Alabama.
- 24 "T.C.I.'s Hilltop Office Building," undated clipping from the Birmingham News, T.C.I. vertical file, Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, AL.
- 25 "Jack B. Smith, architect, dies at 80," Birmingham News, July 24, 1974.
- 26 "Facts About the Flintridge Building," USX Realty Corporation. Fairfield Alabama. Files, Flintridge Building.

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Jefferson County, AL

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## 10. Geographic Data

### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated boundary includes the entire parcel recorded in the Assessor's Office for Jefferson County, Alabama as parcel number 30-14-1-13-2.000.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire current parcel only, which represents the total remaining acreage historically associated with the resource.

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**Flintridge Building**  
Jefferson County, AL

Photographs:

1. Flintridge Building
2. Fairfield, Jefferson County, Alabama
3. David B. Schneider
4. January 2003
5. 411 E. 6th St., Anniston AL 36207
  
6. Oblique, camera facing NE
7. Photo #1
  
6. Oblique, camera facing N
7. Photo #2
  
6. Oblique, camera facing SW
7. Photo #3
  
6. Lobby, camera facing NE
7. Photo #4
  
6. Hallway, camera facing NE
7. Photo #5

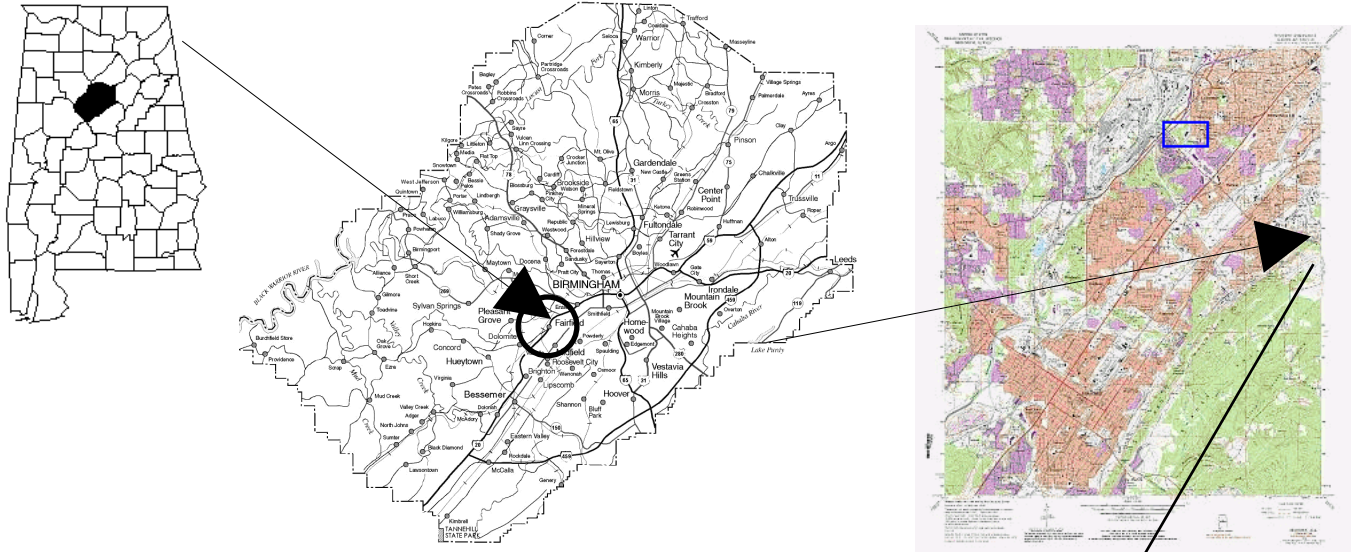
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

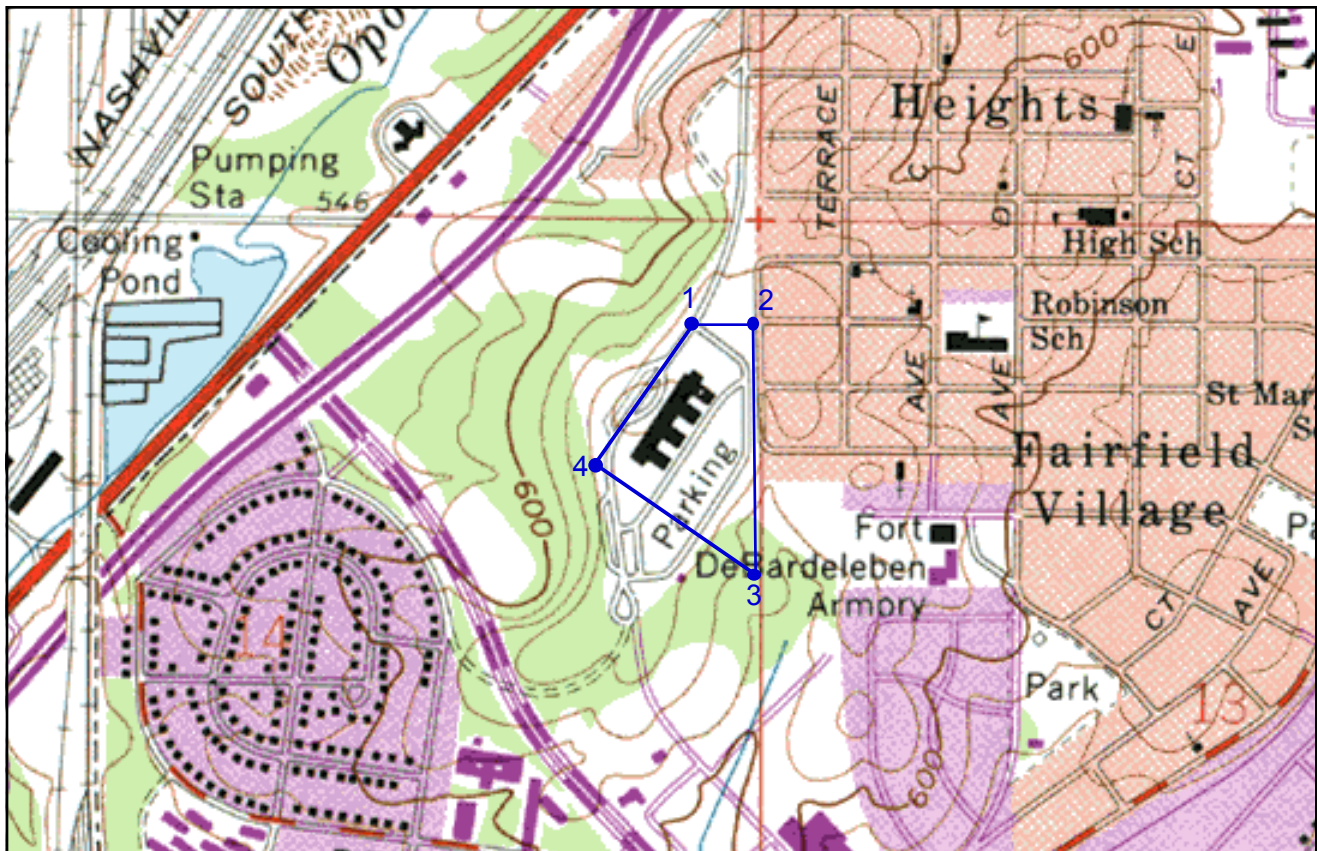
Accompanying Documentation, Continuation Sheet #1

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**Flintridge Building**  
Jefferson County, AL



USGS Quad:  
Bessemer



UTM: 1: 16 / 507502 / 3704045    2: 16 / 507593 / 3704041  
 3: 16 / 507592 / 3703642    4: 16 / 507338 / 3703834

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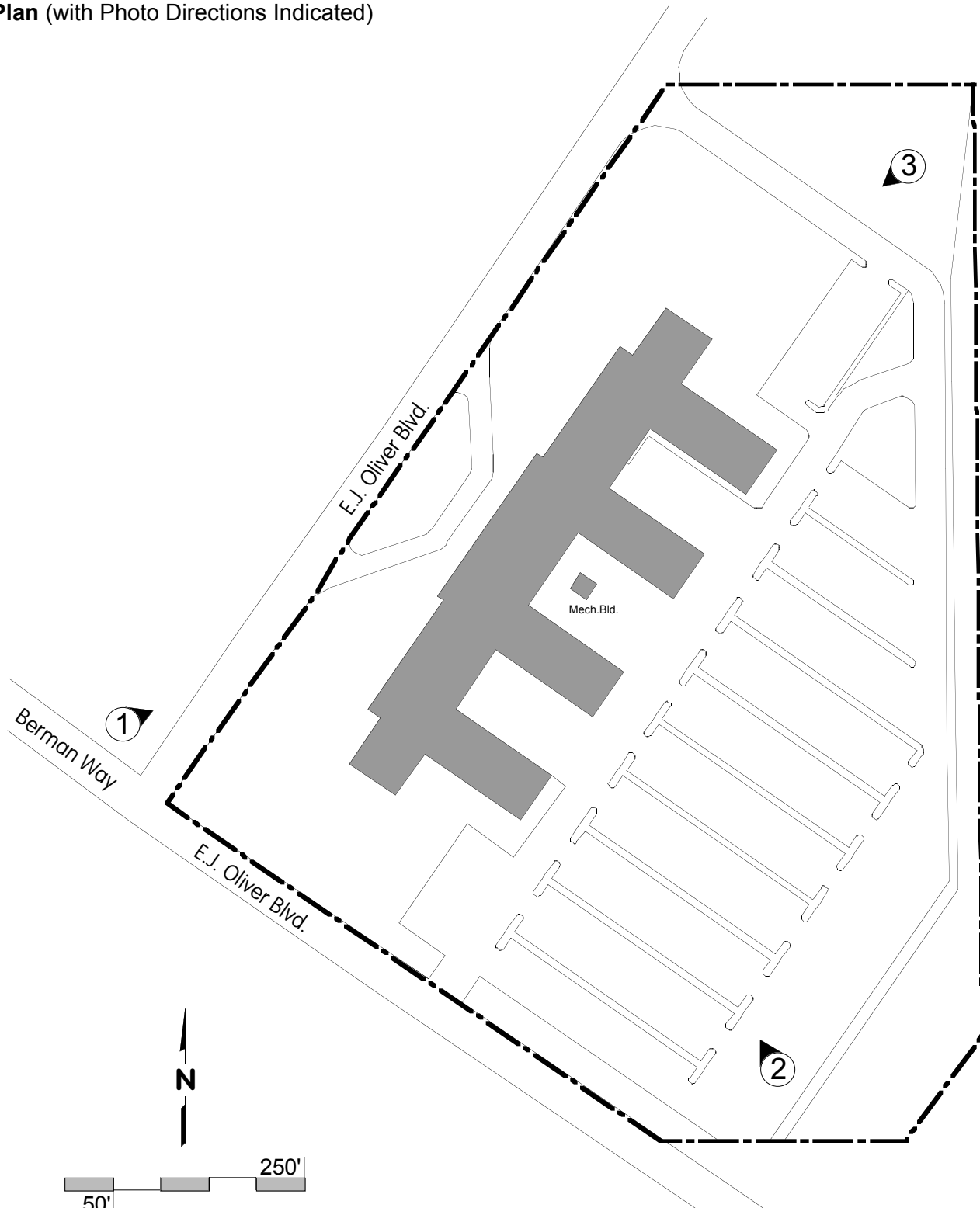
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Accompanying Documentation, Continuation Sheet #2

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**Flintridge Building**  
Jefferson County, AL

Site Plan (with Photo Directions Indicated)



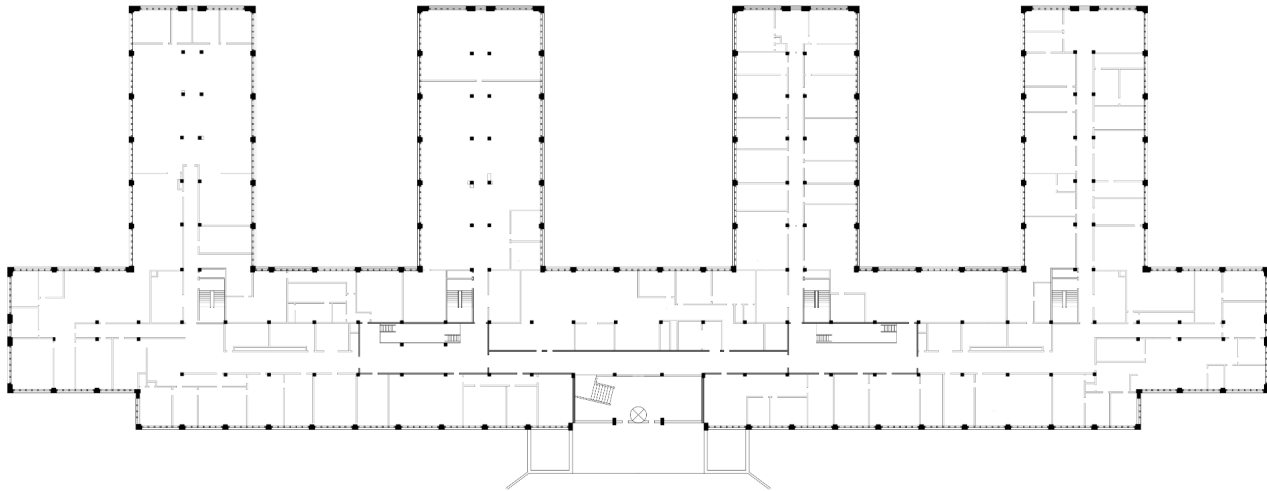
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

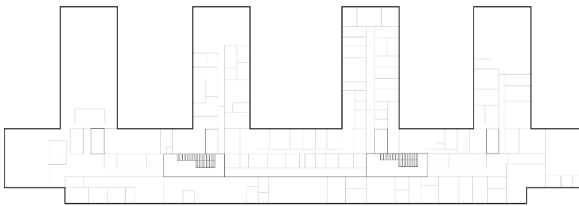
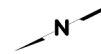
Accompanying Documentation, Continuation Sheet #3

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

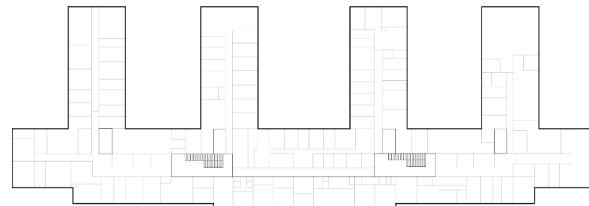
**Flintridge Building**  
Jefferson County, AL



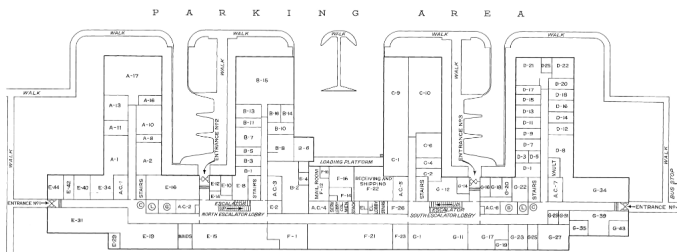
**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**  
Reduction Scale Not Determined



**LEVEL 3 SECOND FLOOR PLAN (SCHEMATIC)**



**LEVEL 4 THIRD FLOOR PLAN (SCHEMATIC)**



**LEVEL 1 GROUND FLOOR PLAN (SCHEMATIC)**



**ROOF PLAN (SCHEMATIC)**

Reduction Scale Not Determined



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**Flintridge Building**  
Jefferson County, AL

**Aerial Photograph, circa 1955**



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National Park Service

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Accompanying Documentation, Continuation Sheet #5

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**Flintridge Building**  
Jefferson County, AL



Photographs:

1. Flintridge Building
2. Fairfield, Jefferson County, Alabama
3. David B. Schneider
4. January 2003
5. 411 E. 6th St., Anniston AL 36207
6. Oblique, camera facing NE
7. Photo #1



6. Oblique, camera facing N
7. Photo #2



6. Oblique, camera facing SW
7. Photo #3



6. Lobby, camera facing NE
7. Photo #4



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Accompanying Documentation, Continuation Sheet #6

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**Flintridge Building**  
Jefferson County, AL



6. Hallway, camera facing NE
7. Photo #5