

SECTION 1
GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Historic Name of District (see Section 3.B.1):** Peachtree Center Historic District

2. **Location of District:** List principal streets, highways, and geographic features within and around the district (indicate whether highways are federal, state, or county routes):
The north / south corridor of the district is situated along Peachtree Street from its intersection with Baker Street to the north to its intersection with Andrew Young International Boulevard to the south, and the east / west corridor of the district is situated along John Portman Boulevard (Formerly Harris Street) starting at its intersection with Courtland Street to the east, to its intersection with Williams Street to the west.

City or vicinity of: Atlanta
County: Fulton
Zip Code of the district: 30303
Approximate distance and direction from county seat: One mile

3. **Acreage of district to be nominated (approximately):** 24 acres

4. **a. Total Number of Historic/Contributing Resources in district (from Section 2.A. p. 6):** Fifteen (15) buildings; eleven (11) structures; zero (0) sites; six (6) objects;

b. Total Number of Noncontributing Resources in district (from Section 2.A. p. 6):
There are two (2) noncontributing buildings, fifteen (15) noncontributing structures (sky bridges); zero (0) noncontributing sites, and zero (0) noncontributing objects within the district.

5. **Are a majority of buildings in the district less than 50 years old?** If yes, see instructions on page 29 and explain on page 14: Yes, thirteen (13) of the fifteen (15) buildings are less than 50 years old.

6. **Property Ownership:** See *Attachment 1: Property Owners*

Does a federal agency (ex. U.S. Postal Service, General Services Administration) own property within the district? If yes, provide the name of the agency/agencies and the name and address of the federally owned building(s): No.

NOTE: A letter of support for the district nomination from an agency or organization that represents property owners in the district must be included with the HDIF. Acceptable agencies/organizations are: city or

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county governments, neighborhood associations, historical societies, or preservation organizations.

NOTE: In districts of 50 property owners or less, a list of the property owners of record must be submitted. The list should include the name, address of the property within the district, and mailing address for each property owner. This information can be obtained at the county tax assessor's office.

Do the property owners within the district support nomination of the district to the National Register? Explain:

Yes, the property owners of the district support the nomination of the Peachtree Center Historic District. The original developer, and architect (John Portman, Jr. / Portman USA), and properties within and adjacent to the district have been informed of this effort and have offered support. These include: Banyan Street Properties [North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower, South Tower, Harris Tower, International Tower, Marquis One Tower, Marquis Two Tower, International Parking Deck, and the Mall at Peachtree Center.] Portman Holdings [230 Peachtree Building, Atlanta Merchandise Mart, (America's Mart Building 1) Atlanta Apparel Mart (America's Mart Building 3), Atlanta Gift Mart (America's Mart Building 2); The independently owned hotels; Hyatt Regency Atlanta, Atlanta Marriott Marquis, and the Westin Peachtree Plaza, along with the Development Authority of Fulton County; Central Atlanta Progress, a consortium of local business and property owners in the area of the district, is one of the project sponsors.

Have any of the following been informed about the nomination of this district to the National Register? What has been their involvement, if any, in the nomination process? Be as specific as possible.

Regional Development Center: The Atlanta Regional Commission is fully aware of this effort and has been supportive and has freely offered assistance.

County government: Fulton County has been notified of the application.

City government: The City of Atlanta has been very supportive of this effort and has sponsored two successful historic preservation fund applications to help lay the groundwork for this project.

Local historical society or preservation organization: The Atlanta Preservation Center and the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation have been supportive of the effort and the previous grant applications.

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Neighborhood, homeowners', Business or civic association: Central Atlanta Progress, a private nonprofit community development organization devoted to preserving and strengthening the economic vitality of urban Atlanta, have been the main organizer of preservation efforts in the city's Downtown. This includes supporting survey and historic context work of the area.

Is the nomination of the district part of a larger formal or informal preservation program in the area? Explain:

This nomination is part of an informal preservation program partnership between the City of Atlanta and Central Atlanta Progress, along with interested and concerned citizens. This initiative to promote the preservation of downtown Atlanta's modern architecture.

Sponsor of Nomination (the district sponsor must represent property owners in the district).

Name(s) of local sponsor:
Organization or agency (if applicable): Central Atlanta Progress
Mailing Address: 84 Walton Street, Suite 500
City, State, Zip Code: Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Telephone: 404-509-0104
E-mail: jball@atlantadowntown.com

8. Form prepared by

Name: Dean Baker
Organization or Company: Big RIG: Revitalization Infrastructure Group
Mailing Address: 1005 McLynn Avenue NE
City, State, Zip Code: Atlanta, Georgia 30306
Telephone: 404-509-0104
E-mail: bakerdean@gmail.com
Date: October 6, 2014
February 29, 2016
August 8, 2016
October 31, 2016
February 14, 2017 (partial)
April 24, 2017

What is your relationship to or interest in the district?

A private consultant hired by Central Atlanta Progress whose long-standing interest and expertise in Peachtree Center leads me to believe its unique nature should be recognized with a listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

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9. Reasons for nominating the district (Explain all that apply)

Recognition (explain):

The Peachtree Center Historic District was mainly designed and developed by the original architect-developer John C. Portman, Jr. between 1961 and 1988. Peachtree Center was conceived as an urban destination: a sculptural complex of buildings, enlivened with original art and innovative urban design. The development of Peachtree Center reflects an era of architecture and urban design theory when different approaches attempted to slow the population shift from the urban core to suburban areas. The original intent was to connect all of the Peachtree Center buildings with sky bridges, occasionally described as “elevated promenades.” The purpose of these bridges was to create a “coordinate unit” a series of interconnected blocks that can provide a variety of urban elements, spaces, and services to act as a city within a city.

This self-contained, intensively designed space was very different from what had been seen previously in downtown Atlanta. The first indication of a change in urban form was the setback plaza in front of the 230 Peachtree Building, followed by the Peachtree Center Promenade. These structures were influenced by the massing and form of the Rockefeller Plaza Channel Gardens (AIA 1975, p.13). The four office towers on the east side of Peachtree Street are based on the original 230 Peachtree Building model, a pattern that would carry over to the Marquis Buildings after the four original promenade tower sites had been built out.

Later developments in Peachtree Center typically took up an entire block. This reflected of Portman’s development success and ability to increase the size and financial resources for projects such as the Apparel Mart. The complex within the district includes three atrium hotels, seven office buildings, a shopping mall, two mart buildings, and multiple sky bridges that connect the structures, public spaces, and accessory buildings and parking. The approach of Peachtree Center was to provide spectacular spaces and urban forms that cannot be found anywhere else.

Peachtree Center is a truly unique location for the development of both modern architecture and contemporary urban design. The new modern atrium hotel building types can be seen in Peachtree Center in three variations. The first is the original rectilinear Hyatt design, followed by the ‘exploded’ lobby atrium, innovated for the Westin Peachtree Plaza, is one building form that is unique to Portman’s developments were first innovated here (Saxon 1983, 75). The third variation seen in the Atlanta Marriott Marquis relate to these two earlier designs and represent a continuing evolution of this form that can be found nowhere else. These structures combined represent John Portman's early innovations as an architect and

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developer during a period of shifting architectural practices. John Portman was also notable among his peers for his iconoclastic ways that include the first architect to proudly serve both as architect and developer during a time of great change in the practice of architecture.

John Portman never simply sought to be a mall or office building owner. While automobiles and interstate highways increasingly dominated the city landscape, Portman's designs brought a pedestrian scale back into America's urban downtowns. His concept was a Coordinate Unit, a pedestrian-oriented environment that could then be connected to another Coordinate Unit. The result would be checkerboard pattern of interconnected developments, a pattern best seen at Peachtree Center.

Portman's Peachtree Center kept the concept of pedestrian-oriented design alive through a period of automobile-centric planning. However, these pedestrian environments were usually separate from the exterior street life, often happening above or below the sidewalk level. This disconnect from an active street life is one of the most frequent criticisms of Portman's works. While these shortcomings can be seen at Peachtree Center, the incremental nature of development keeps these elements from completely overwhelming the street-level pedestrian experience.

The relationship to John C. Portman Jr., the first Architect-Developer, shows the evolution of his style over time and represents the urban ideal of the Coordinate Unit. Portman's interconnected developments took a downtown area decimated by white flight and gave it a second life a vital economic urban center.

Grant Assistance (explain; have you inquired as to the availability of grants or received a grant application?):

This project grew from the initial findings of the Downtown Atlanta Contemporary Historic Resources Survey completed in 2012. Along with the identification of potential historic districts and the multi-property approach for additional buildings (that may not have the individual significance or location to form a district), the significance of the Peachtree Center historic district is reinforced by the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Part 1* historic context that supports this application.

Tax Incentives (explain; have you inquired about the applicability of tax incentives or received application forms?):

There is the intent to complete a tax incentive project for the 230 Peachtree Building, a contributing building within the potential Peachtree Center

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Historic District. There has been interest in using tax incentives by other property owners in the district for rehabilitation of other buildings.

Protection (explain need):

The buildings in Peachtree Center originally developed by John Portman in downtown Atlanta have been divided into separate owners. The three major hotels, Hyatt Regency Atlanta, Westin Peachtree Plaza and the Atlanta Marriott Marquis, all have individual owners. The Peachtree Center and Marquis office buildings and mall have individual owners as well. The only structures still owned by the Portman companies are the three Americas Mart buildings (Atlanta Merchandise Mart, Atlanta Apparel Mart and the Atlanta Gift Mart) and the recently purchased 230 Peachtree Building. A nomination to the National Register will bring different benefits, but the most important will be raising awareness about Peachtree Center's historical significance in design and architecture to its current owners. It is hoped that following this effort, a greater sense of history and sensitivity to the original design intent will be applied to future hotel and office building renovations. The potential use of tax credits for these buildings can be viewed as an incentive to preservation. The appreciation of this style of architecture, important in presenting the story of Atlanta, and Georgia, during this period of transition

Part of a larger preservation plan (explain):

Central Atlanta Progress will be focusing additional effort to develop Peachtree Center as an identifiable location and destination for residents and visitors and will make further improvements to the district. This work is just beginning, and these efforts will be assisted by the awareness brought by the district nomination.

Minority Resource (explain):

Peachtree Center does have some association with the American Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta. The two original restaurants in the 1961 Atlanta Merchandise Mart, Stouffers Restaurant (located at street level) and the Top of the Mart, were the first new restaurants to be opened as integrated following the voluntary "Atlanta Negotiation" that supported greater integration" of restaurants and public spaces that same year. (*Atlanta Daily World*, Dec.13, 1961, 31) This series of actions was a delicate dance from the point of view of continuing to attract white patrons from the suburbs. While the welcoming of all patrons was good for the ongoing businesses and placing the development on the progressive side of history, the transition period was a delicate time in Atlanta.

Additionally, the Regency Hyatt House, now Hyatt Regency Atlanta, was the first new hotel to open following the end of accommodation segregation in Atlanta. Almost immediately after it's opening, the Atlanta Hyatt Regency

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began a long relationship with the Atlanta Civil Rights community, notably welcoming the meetings of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference after another downtown hotel rejected them. The significance of the Hyatt Regency and the rest of Peachtree Center as a welcoming place for all people can also be seen in 1967 at the newly opened Hyatt Regency as the first fully-integrated location of the Bronner Brother's Hair Show, a showcase for the local Atlanta company that began selling hair care products on Auburn Avenue. They started the shows to highlight innovative uses for their products. This legacy of inclusiveness continues to this day with the Annual Trumpet Awards, a ceremony recognizing service to the African-American community, continuing to be held at the Atlanta Hyatt Regency in Peachtree Center. Peachtree Center was also the location of regular meetings of the Action Forum, hosted by founding member John Portman, a group dedicated to supporting racial harmony during the period of full racial integration and the continual peaceful development of Atlanta. The motto of this group "No press or politicians" has left a very slight record for researchers.

Other public interest in this nomination (explain):

Peachtree Center was an attempt to develop a walkable pedestrian urban center using the evolving theories and revolutionary construction and development models of the time. There is a growing awareness that the Modern post-war era is especially significant in the realm of design. This overall awareness combined with the influence of John Portman's works and developments of make this application very timely. There have been numerous tours of the Peachtree Center area to highlight the unique nature of this district, notably the 2013 Docomomo US – GA Tour Day event and the 2014 American Planning Association Mobile Workshop for Peachtree Center along with regular tours sponsored by the Atlanta Preservation Center and Central Atlanta Progress.

A. Number of Contributing and Noncontributing Resources:

Provide the number of each type of contributing resource in the district. Contributing resources are generally over 50 years old (or within the period of significance for a district that is less than 50 years old) and retain their historic physical features.

Buildings (house, barn, store, office, school, etc.):

There are fifteen (15) contributing buildings to the district, which are:

1. **Atlanta Merchandise Mart** (Americas Mart Building 1) – 1961, Expanded 1968, 1985.
240 Peachtree Street

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(Photos 1-7, Historic Images 1, 3 & 7-8)

2. **230 Peachtree Building** (Peachtree Center Tower) - 1965
230 Peachtree Street
(Photo 8-10, Historic Images 1, 2 & 4-8, the original architectural plans are included in *Attachment 8*)
3. **Hyatt Regency Atlanta** – 1967, 1971 (Ivy/Radius Tower), 1982 (International Tower), 1995 Centennial Ballroom
245 Peachtree Street
(Photos 11-23, Historic Image 1)
4. **North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower**, Peachtree Center Promenade, (Midnight Sun Restaurant) – 1969
235 Peachtree Street
(Photos 24-27, 33-35, Historic Image 1)
5. **South Tower**, Peachtree Center Promenade - 1971
225 Peachtree Street
(Photos 36-44, 56, Historic Image 1)
6. **International (Cain) Tower**, Peachtree Center Promenade – 1974
229 Peachtree Street
(Photos 45-72)
7. **Shopping Gallery** – 1974,
231 Peachtree Street
(Photos 72-97)
8. **International Parking Deck** - 1975
30 Andrew Young International Boulevard
(Photos 51-53)
9. **Harris Tower**, Peachtree Center Promenade, Peachtree Center Concourse - 1976 Top of the Galleries (Midnight Sun) Dinner Theater - 1976
233 Peachtree Street
(Photos 98-120)
10. **Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel** - 1976
210 Peachtree Street
(Photos 142-166)
11. **Atlanta Apparel Mart** (Americas Mart Building 3) - 1979
250 Spring Street
(Photos 167-182)

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12. **Atlanta Marriott Marquis** - 1985
265 Peachtree Center Avenue
(Photo 183-221)

13. **Marquis One Tower** - 1985
245 Peachtree Center Avenue
(Photos 221-235)

14. **The Mall at Peachtree Center Renovation** [Midnight Sun Restaurant (1969), Shopping Gallery (1974), Peachtree Center Concourse – (1976) Top of the Galleries (Midnight Sun) Dinner Theater – (1976)] – 1986
231 Peachtree Street
(Photos 122-141)

15. **Marquis Two Tower** - 1988
285 Peachtree Center Avenue
(Photo 236-250)

Structures (windmill, bridge, ship, corncrib, power plant, etc.):

There are twenty-six (26) sky bridges, skyways, or “elevated promenades” connecting the buildings within the proposed district. These structures span the public right-of-way between buildings and are original to the design and construction. The exceptions to this rule are the two short span bridges that connect between the North and Harris Towers, and the South and International Towers. These smaller bridges above the pedestrian level were added to expand the leasable floor area for a specific tenant combining spaces between two office towers. The two original and formerly public bridges that connected to the Top of the Mart space at the twenty-second-floor level are closed but are included in the count of contributing structures. Fifteen of the non-contributing sky-bridges connect to the Atlanta Gift Mart. Of these thirteen, eight (8) connect between the Gift Mart and the Atlanta Apparel Mart and seven of the fifteen connect between the Gift Mart and the Atlanta Merchandise Mart. The remaining eleven (11) sky bridges are contributing to the district and connect the following buildings to each other:

1. Atlanta Apparel Mart to Atlanta Merchandise Mart (Photo 15);
2. Atlanta Merchandise Mart to Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel (Photo 12);
3. Atlanta Merchandise Mart to Peachtree Center North (Gas Light) Tower (Photo 81);
4. The Mall at Peachtree Center to Peachtree Center South Tower (Photo 84);
5. Peachtree Center South Tower to Peachtree Center International (Cain) Tower (Photo 85);

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6. Peachtree Center International (Cain) Tower to International Parking Deck (Photo 89);
7. Peachtree Center Harris Tower to Hyatt Regency Atlanta (Photo 73);
8. Peachtree Center Harris Tower to Marquis Tower One (Photos 75-76); and
9. 230 Peachtree Building/Merchandise Mart Addition to Former Continental Trailways Parking Deck/Gift Mart
10. North Tower to Harris Tower
11. 230 Peachtree Building to Atlanta Merchandise Mart

These contributing sky bridges are noted with a dashed gold line on the Peachtree Center District Map Marked (in the attachments) Although there are two-story bridges connecting portions of Peachtree Center outside the period of significance, all contributing bridges are at least one (1) story in height. The bridges that were not connected to the Top of the Mart Restaurant or directly between office floors are located one floor above street level within the proposed historic district. The variation in grade falling away from either side of Peachtree Street along the Peachtree Ridge occasionally results in pedestrians being able to enter on the Peachtree Street level and being able to continue to the opposite of the block to enter pedestrian bridges connecting to buildings one block to the east and west of Peachtree Street. This can most notably be seen in the Hyatt Regency and the Atlanta Merchandise Mart Building. This change in grade can also be seen with above-grade sky bridges being located on different levels within the Marriott Marquis.

Sites (prehistoric or historic: battlefield, ruin, cemetery, archaeological sites, landscape features, etc.): There are no contributing sites within the district,
Objects (sculpture, monument, statue, fountain, etc.):

There are six (6) contributing sculptures within the district, which are:

1. "The Big One" by Willi Gutmann remains on the Peachtree Center Promenade – 1970, moved within district in 1986¹;
2. "Flora Raris" by Richard Lippold inside the Hyatt Regency Atlanta – 1974; and
- 3-6. Les Lion d'Atlanta by Oliver Strebelle that guard the Peachtree Center Avenue entrances to the Marquis One and Two Towers – 1985 (2 Lions Marquis Tower One), 1987 (2 Lions Marquis Tower Two).

NOTE: Report the total number of contributing resources in Section 1, number 4.

**Provide the number of each type of noncontributing resource.
Noncontributing resources are either less than 50 years old (or outside the**

¹ Its original location was inside the courtyard of the Midnight Sun Restaurant, and it was relocated within the period of significance of the district.

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period of significance for a district that is less than 50 years old) OR are over 50 years old but have lost their historic physical features due to additions, alterations, deterioration, etc. to the extent that they are unrecognizable as historic.

Buildings (house, barn, store, office, school, etc.):

There are two (2) noncontributing buildings in the district.

Structures (windmill, bridge, ship, corncrib, power plant, etc.):

There are twenty-four (24) sky bridges, skyways or “elevated promenades” within the proposed district. Fifteen (15) bridges are non-contributing, mainly those eight (8) bridges connecting the Atlanta Gift Mart to the Atlanta Apparel Mart and the seven (7) bridges connecting the Gift Mart to the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, with one (1) exception, within the district, the noncontributing sky bridge that connects the Atlanta Marriott Marquis to the Hyatt Regency Atlanta. This bridge was built well after the end of the period of significance. These structures span the public right-of-way between buildings and are an original design element. The fifteen (15) sky bridges connect the following buildings to each other: eight (8) of these noncontributing sky bridges connect the Atlanta Apparel Mart (Americas Mart Building 3) to the Atlanta Gift Mart (Americas Mart Building 2) across John Portman Boulevard from it; seven (7) of these noncontributing sky bridges connect the Atlanta Merchandise Mart (Building 1) to the Gift Mart (Building 2) across Ted Turner Drive.

Sites (prehistoric or historic: battlefield, ruin, cemetery, archaeological sites, landscape features, etc.):

There are no noncontributing sites within the district.

Objects (sculpture, monument, statue, fountain, etc.):

There are zero (0) noncontributing objects within the district boundary.

NOTE: Report the total number of noncontributing resources in Section 1, number 5

SECTION 2 DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Peachtree Center is a development in downtown Atlanta, Georgia that spans fourteen blocks, just north of the historic city center. This area is roughly bounded by Andrew Young International to the south, Piedmont Avenue to the east, Baker Street to the north and Ted Turner Drive (formerly Spring Street) to the west, with variation for individual parcels. This development was the work of the first Architect-Developer, John Portman. Portman initiated this new role and style of an architect who retains a financial interest in the projects they design and develop. The Portman led development includes office buildings, hotel towers, retail combined with the office and hotel functions, and semi-public gathering spaces, both indoor and outdoor.

Portman successfully completed his Atlanta Merchandise Mart in 1961 (Photos 1 & 2, Historic Photos 1-4) with the help of many partners, including Trammell Crow (arguably the first 'developer' to describe himself as such) and his architectural practice partner, H. Griffin Edwards (Nocera, 1984 p. 6). Edwards was Portman's former professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology. The partnership between Portman, Crow, and Edwards contributed to much of Peachtree Center, including the 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-10, Historic Photos 4-8), North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower (Photos 24-27, 33-35, Historic Photos 13-19), the Midnight Sun Restaurant (Historic Photos 17-19) and the South Tower (Photos 36-44, 56, Historic Photos 19-26). The partnership eventually dissolved with the death of H. Griffin Edwards and the departure of Trammell Crow to pursue independent projects" (Nocera, 1984, 7).

The initial success of the Mart encouraged Portman to expand his design from a single building to an Urban Center, or as described by Portman, "a 'Coordinate Unit' of city blocks, fully redeveloped into inwardly focused semi-public urban spaces that are fully interconnected by above-grade pedestrian bridges" (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 73). Portman's idea was to bring a pedestrian environment back to downtown, one that would require a combination of function within a master-designed series of spaces that would show a new path for downtown development.

Portman's Peachtree Center was unified by consistent design. This was achieved first with the use of exposed aggregate pre-cast concrete panels, representative of the brutalist style that defined Portman's architectural design for over 20 years. Along with his refined permutation of brutalism-styled office buildings, Portman introduced geometric towers covered in reflective glass. The glass gave the appearance of a crystalline membrane, simultaneously reflecting and contrasting the concrete elements that surrounded it.

Aside from design, John Portman physically connected Peachtree Center with pedestrian sky bridges, these bridges allowed for an environment completely

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oriented to those traveling on foot, connecting blocks above street level, providing an alternative to the busy streets below. The sky bridges can be divided into three distinct periods. The first form is seen in the early sky bridge design from 1965-1969 includes the two bridges that connect to the former Top of the Mart Restaurant atop the Atlanta Merchandise Mart. The first of these bridges is the shorter span that connects the 230 Peachtree Building to the Top of the Mart. The second longer span also connects the North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower to the Atlanta Merchandise Mart at the twenty-second floor. Both of these bridges have a similar design of a plank bridge base with a knee wall height enclosure with glazed sides with a pattern of vertical exposed aggregate decorative fins running the length of the bridge. There is a second enclosure above the windows with the ceiling formed by bubble top Plexiglas skylights.

Once the plan for the Peachtree Center skybridge network moved to the first floor above street level (above grade) the design transitions to an interim design. In this case, the bridges have transformed to a more simple concrete plank bridge that was topped by a smoked Plexiglas dome that does not quite make a half-barrel or circular arch. Instead, these transitional period bridges were constructed from 1970 to 1975. The first of the two major bridges constructed in this style connect between the 230 Peachtree Building to the former Continental Trailways Bus Station and parking deck. The second connected the Hyatt Regency Atlanta to the Midnight Sun Restaurant. A shortened segment of this bridge remains, allowing for the construction of the Harris Tower and Shopping Gallery.

The remainder and majority of the bridges constructed during the period of significance at Peachtree Center were constructed in the Peachtree Center 'Standard' sky bridge design, following these first two periods of bridge development when the style becomes further refined. These bridges still consist of a concrete plank base and are topped by a true half circle barrel arch. These bridges most often have a strip of exposed Tivoli lights running at the highest center point of the circular arch. These bridges continue to be constructed through the remainder of the period, into the twenty-first century.

There have been later, post-2008 additions of sky bridges to the district. These more closely follow the pattern of the original sky bridges that connected to the Top of the Mart. In these cases, the bridges that are outside the period of significance are usually a modified Warren truss bridge form enclosed at the top and bottom with continuous glazing along the sides. In the district, these bridges connect the Hyatt Regency Atlanta to the Atlanta Marriott Marquis, and the Hilton Atlanta to the Atlanta Marriott Marquis.

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NATURAL TERRAIN

The Peachtree Ridge dominates the topography of Peachtree Center. This ridge, topped by Peachtree Street, is the highest point in the district falling away naturally on either side of Peachtree Street. This natural topography provides a natural high point to site buildings. It also allows those buildings in Peachtree Center that front Peachtree Street to extend back at the same level to be connected by pedestrian sky bridge to the building to the east or west on the block behind those fronting Peachtree Street. This natural topographical ridge lends to the unique nature of Peachtree Center, where a pedestrian entering a building from the Peachtree Street pedestrian entrance and may continue to walk to the adjoining block of buildings without changing levels. This can be seen both in the connections between the Atlanta Merchandise Mart building and the Atlanta Apparel Mart Building on the west side of Peachtree Street, and in the connections between the Atlanta Hyatt Regency and the Marriott Marquis complex on the east side of Peachtree Street. This topographical situation in Atlanta is one that few other sites have. This topography also complicates wayfinding within the district when the buildings extending further away from Peachtree Street require that the sky bridge connections be located on different levels to connect to the same buildings. Such is the case for the skybridge that connects the main floor at Peachtree Street level in the Hyatt Regency connecting to the fourth-floor Atrium Level in the Marriott Marquis, crossing above Peachtree Center Avenue. Visitors seeking to make the connection between the Marriot Marquis and the Atlanta Hilton need to go down two levels to connect between the second floors of each building, crossing above Courtland Street.

DISTINCT PARTS, AREAS, OR SECTIONS OF THE DISTRICT

Peachtree Center can be roughly divided into two sections: the AmericasMart complex dominates the portion of the development to the west of Peachtree Street. This includes the original Atlanta Merchandise Mart (Americas Mart Building 1) (Photos 1-7, 273, Historic Photos 1-4) and the Atlanta Apparel Mart (Americas Mart Building 3) (Photos 167-182, 260-267, Historic Photos 42-44). Along with these buildings, there are two buildings connected to and developed as part of Peachtree Center but are either noncontributing, as is the Gift Mart (Americas Mart Building 2) (Photos 259), or outside of the district, as is the Inforum (American Cancer Society Center) (Photo 266). Joining the Mart complex on the west side of Peachtree Street is the 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-10, Historic Photos 4-8) and the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel (Photos 142-166, 253-257, Historic Photos 37-41).

The east side of Peachtree Street is dominated by the office towers surrounding the Mall at Peachtree Center and the combined full block hotel and mixed-use developments of the Hyatt Regency Atlanta (Photos 11-24) and the Atlanta Marriott Marquis (Photos 183-221). The six office towers on the east side fully

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mimic the pattern, form and style established by the original design of the 1965 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-10, Historic Photos 4-8) on the west side of the street. The mall serves as a central hub, directly connecting to the Hyatt Regency and Marriott Marquis developments by skywalks located just below the Peachtree Street level. The mall can be directly accessed through an escalator entrance on Peachtree Street (Photos 97-99, 140) or a by a sky bridge connection just below the Peachtree Street sidewalk level (Photo 121). While the hotel structures vary their design, the common use of curtain wall panels composed of precast concrete, reflective plate glass, and poured-in-place concrete elements unify the buildings

PATTERN OF LAND SUBDIVISION

Peachtree Center is a continuation of the northerly street grid established at Five Points, the historic center of Atlanta (located roughly one mile south). The original subdivision of regular square blocks continues throughout Peachtree Center, providing a regular rhythm and block pattern. This stands in contrast to Five Points, which is comprised of three individual grids that meet at irregular angles. Peachtree Street through Peachtree Center is straight and conforms to the grid pattern.

To the east of Peachtree Center, just past Piedmont Avenue, is the Downtown Connector, the local designation for the combined Interstates 75 and 85 that run through downtown Atlanta. There is a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) interstate entrance at the eastern end of John Portman Boulevard (formerly Harris Street). There is also an interstate exit and entrance to Peachtree Center and downtown Atlanta at Andrew Young International Boulevard. Another interstate entrance lies just to the south of the Peachtree Center complex on John Wesley Dobbs (historically Houston Avenue).

Within the square blocks of Peachtree Center, the land was historically subdivided with the narrow frontage along Peachtree Street. Moving back from the valuable street frontage, the majority of the lots were in length running east to west. The 230 Peachtree Building shows the most significant impact of this lot subdivision in its final form. The deep lots created by the original property subdivision within the district helped enable the assemblage of properties for the redevelopment into Peachtree Center (Photos 251). In the rest of the district, the assemblage of property for this redevelopment has obscured most of the previous subdivision, but its impact can still be seen the 1982 International Tower (Photos 17,18) addition of the Hyatt Regency.

Peachtree Center was, for the most part, a redevelopment of downtown Atlanta's less intensive property use (such as parking garages and automobile showrooms) into modern urban spaces, designed to handle the high densities of metro populations. These more intensive use properties reflect Portman's genius

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for urban design as well as his signature refined permutation of brutalism architecture.

ARRANGEMENT OR PLACEMENT OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES ON LOTS WITHIN THE DISTRICT

John Portman was not the originator of the post-war urban center concept with his Peachtree Center complex. However, he was at the forefront of a planning and commercial development trend. 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 (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 38). Designed as an "urban center," Peachtree Center was an urban experiment in city planning in Atlanta. The buildings and sky bridges in the district demonstrate Portman's original idea of a Coordinate Unit, or series of interconnected urban blocks that could act as a "city within a city." Creating a space where people could walk from destination to destination was crucial to his approach, and Portman attempted to achieve this goal in all of his city-center designs. This idea of a transit-centered, art-filled, pedestrian-oriented space first offered by John Portman in his Coordinate Unit concept could be further understood as an Urban Center.

In the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Part 1* context, the urban center type is described as "a relatively new concept that post-dates the late 1960s and contains a multiplicity of integrated spaces and uses...It seeks to redefine urban space through insularity and adherence to separating pedestrians from the automobile." Examples of the urban center type usually include a mix of hotels, offices, restaurants, retail, shopping, and recreational facilities.

Peachtree Center fits this example of a unified megastructure by occupying a cohesive complex of interconnected buildings spanning a number of city blocks; that feature a deliberate separation of pedestrians from automobiles through planned internal circulation (sky bridges spanning public streets, elevated walkways, and plazas). The exterior may possess blank elevations along the public street that reinforce this detachment from the surrounding built environment (albeit from the street), and automobile is accommodated directly through integrated private parking garages

Portman's concept of a completely integrated "coordinate unit" that was able to function as a "city within a city" was revolutionary for its time. The development of Peachtree Center led to a new urban style oriented toward the interior, utilizing a modern architectural vocabulary and innovative construction methods to renovate and promote downtown areas. Typically, a mix of office, hotel, and retail businesses, urban centers were often built on vacant or cleared downtown

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land, located near rapid transportation nodes, or integrated into the existing street grid and commercial fabric of a city.

Peachtree Center was a planned development, but the plan was opportunistic and dependent upon external financing. This resulted in a less formal plan that took advantage of properties coming on the market, such as the former Saint Joseph's Hospital on the current site of the Marriott Marquis and Towers complex. The individual blocks, especially on the east side of Peachtree Street, display a much more formal composition and complex set of interrelationships than the original development of the Merchandise Mart (Photos 1-3) and 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-11). The placement of the four office towers around the Peachtree Center Promenade, above the Mall at Peachtree Center (Photo 34) is a demonstration of this more formal style of layout that brings the buildings to the sidewalk's edge while creating public spaces between the towers. This development pattern results in a very dense series of compositions that present a building wall along the block edge with public spaces either enclosed or open air toward the center of the block. A more formal example is the composition and placement of the Marriott Marquis and Towers (Photo 185) whose placement on the individual blocks do not necessarily relate directly to previous developments. An example of this is the very urban block face of the Marquis development is the pool and back-of-house functions of the Hyatt Regency block (Photo 14). This is not to imply that buildings were placed without consideration. It is more that they had to respond to the market conditions at the time. Each development would need to be self-sufficient and not dependent upon previous decisions.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISTRICT

The precast panels used in the construction of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart (Photos 1-7, 273 Historic Photos 1-4) first defined the broad architectural components of what would become Peachtree Center. This use of curtain wall technology to hang the pre-cast concrete panels would become one of the defining features of Peachtree Center. These panels, enlivened by the inclusion of shallow fins to provide a decorative element, were further refined with the 1965 development of the 230 Peachtree Tower (Historic Photo 6). The use of pre-cast concrete panels would become the most visible feature on the seven office buildings that provide the repetitive and most visible feature of the district. This pattern established in the 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-11 Historic Photos 4-8) would be carried over to the six subsequent towers, the North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower, the South Tower, the International (Cain) Tower, the Harris Tower and the Marquis One and Two Towers.

Moving into the 1970's, the inclusion of reflective glass and geometric forms moved Portman further away from the rectilinear orthodoxy. This work brought forth John Portman as one of the earliest proponents of the use of membrane-like reflective glass to cover pure geometric forms (Jenks 1980, 73). This pure

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membrane-glass covered forms can be seen in the Ivy (Radius) Tower addition to the Hyatt Regency (Photos 14-16, Historic Photo 28) and the Westin Peachtree Plaza (Photos 147-150), along with the Shopping Gallery and Dinner Theater (which would later be incorporated into the Mall at Peachtree Center in 1986, Photos 72, 76-77). These forms reflect and add contrast to the concrete forms that surround them.

A dedication to preserving the uniform style and design within Peachtree Center led to the use of the same forms first explored in the 1965 230 Peachtree Building for over the next twenty years, through the 1988 Marquis Two Tower (Photos 236-239). The concrete forms of the Hyatt Regency (Photos 272-273) and the Marriott Marquis (Photos 203, 207), along with the more purely brutalist Atlanta Apparel Mart (Photos 169-177), provide a complimentary concrete based form that interact harmoniously with the adjacent office towers (Photo 50).

Beginning in Peachtree Center around 1990, the second major phase of Portman's designs is apparent. Here the concrete exterior is completely abandoned. Instead, it is replaced by multi-colored reflective glass, granite banding, and decorative elements, combined with reflective chrome accents. This style appears in Peachtree Center later than its sister development in San Francisco, John Portman's Embarcadero Center, where distinctly postmodern elements appeared around 1986. In Peachtree Center, these buildings are considered outside the era of significance and therefore outside the district. These buildings include the Atlanta Inforum (American Cancer Society Center) 1989, (Photo 266) One Peachtree Center (Sun Trust Plaza) 1991, (Photo 141) Atlanta Gift Mart 1992, West Wing Addition 2008, (Photos 254-256, 259, 261-264) Sun Trust Plaza Garden Offices 2000 (Photo 275).

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Peachtree Center was one of the multiple developments that sought to bring together multi-functional structures in what would later be called mixed-use development. As defined in *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Part 1*, "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." John Portman innovated this convention industry in downtown Atlanta in the Hyatt Regency, which provided resort-like amenities along with convention space. This innovation was rewarded with great financial success, and the need for more convention space was met with an additional meeting areas in the base of the 1971 Ivy (Radius) Tower addition to the Hyatt. These practical uses, combined with the intangible but spectacular sights of the hotel atrium spaces, created the first convention and visitors destination for downtown Atlanta.

The expansion of Peachtree Center carried a consistent design throughout the period of significance. The use of precast concrete curtain wall panels was

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initiated with the 1961 Merchandise Mart, refined with the 1965 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-11, Historic Photos 4-8), and then carried forward for all office developments in the center through 1988. This use and repetition of these design elements give(s) Peachtree Center a distinct and easily identifiable appearance. For the hotel buildings, pre-cast and poured-in-place concrete essential design elements, but the necessities of construction introduced new building treatments, including the adoption of glass-skin curtain wall membranes enveloping a concrete framework and internal space (Jenks 1977). First seen in the cylindrical form of the 1971 Ivy (Radius) Tower addition to the Atlanta Hyatt Regency (Photos 14-16, Historic Photos 25-26), this contrasting style that was carried over to the 1976 Westin Peachtree Plaza (Photos 148-150, 164-166) provided a dynamic interplay of form and surface treatments, along with a new pinnacle for the Atlanta skyline.

The core public spaces of Peachtree Center include the three large hotel atriums. The first and original "Modern Hotel Atrium" is found in the Atlanta Hyatt Regency (Portman & Barnett 1976, 10) (Photos 19-23, Historic Photo 10). This space brings together the elements previously used by the contemporary architect to John Portman, Victor Gruen, and others, who incorporated elements such as fountains, greenery, and sculpture in their development of climate controlled interior spaces to try and improve upon the experience of an outdoor spaces. This added to the experience of the atrium as an outdoor space. The design concept for the Hyatt was the modern interpretation of a European square. The space for the interior 'European' square was formed by the 'walls' of stacked rooms (Photos 11-12), topped with a perforated ceiling that floods the space with natural light (Photos 20-21). The Hyatt Regency was a sensation, introducing Portman's name to the world and providing an opportunity for further design exploration. Following the opening of the Hyatt, further office and retail development continued until the 1976 opening of the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel. The atrium space at the Westin is a form unique to Portman where a central hotel tower, reduced to its skeletal supports and vertical transportation, is surrounded by an enclosed space formed by an exterior wall (as opposed to the banks of rooms that surround the central space at the Hyatt) (Photos 153-163). The main floor of the Westin was originally dominated by an interior lake or lagoon to emulate a modern interpretation of Venice (Historic Photo 37). The third major space shows the evolution of Portman's hotel design during this period outside of Atlanta, primarily in Singapore, where Portman developed four distinctly designed atrium hotels before the Marriott Marquis was constructed. The atrium of the Marriott Marquis was the largest in the world at the time it opened and was designed to be the ultimate Atlanta convention hotel. Its poured-in-place exterior and organically shaped interior space faced by precast concrete panels show the evolution of form and technology in a space that has few equals for a dramatic interior space (Photos 190-202).

In later years, as market conditions warranted, new office buildings would be constructed in the singular Peachtree Center style, along with spectacular new

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hotels, each more elaborate than the last. Woven within the office and hotel spaces are retail and other service functions, all connected by above grade sky bridges, occasionally described by Portman as 'pedestrian promenades.' But long before there was Peachtree Center, there was 'The Mart.' This Portman designed mixed-use structure served as the impetus for his future downtown Atlanta developments.

**1961 - Atlanta Merchandise Mart (Photos 1-7) (Americas Mart Building 1),
Top of the Mart Restaurant - Edwards & Portman
1968 Addition - Edwards & Portman
1985 Addition John Portman & Associates**

**Other architects: Darby & Associates, John F. Curtis, Yeakle & Associates, Ted Taylor Associates, Neal Goldman & Associates, Bryant Forney, June Gussin Associates, Inc., Greer, Holmquist, & Chambers;
Building Contractor: Ben Massell, George A. Fuller, Foster & Cooper, Inc., Speir & Son, Parker & Company**

The Atlanta Merchandise Mart (240 Peachtree Street) was the first building constructed in what would become Peachtree Center (Photos 1-7, 273 Historic Photos 1-4). Originally designed with an unfinished interior as a series showroom spaces that expanded upon a model first tested by Portman in the Belle Isle Parking Garage that had been converted to mart use by John Portman.

Designed to minimize costs, the 22-story and 300-foot tall building used then innovative precast concrete panels on all of its sides, for nearly all of the building's elevations beyond the first-floor street level. These panels are detailed by exposed natural pea gravel aggregate and vertical rectangular concrete 'ribs' that run most of the height of each panel. These panels have a break to represent the interior floor plate that has much shorter rectangular ribs, offset in a way that establishes a repetitive rhythm. Near the top center of each panel is a vent for the original individual electric heating and cooling unit (Photos 1-2). These vents were less noticeable when originally placed, but decades of use have left distinct staining, establishing an additional unintentional pattern.

Each of these ribbed precast concrete panels is positioned between vertical bands of narrow rectangular windows that extend from the first floor to the top of the building. These clear glass windows are held in by bronze colored aluminum mullions, which include an additional metal panel between the windows at the floor plate. These windows align with the smaller rectangular ribs of the precast panels. The windows are twinned on either side of the visible concrete support structure. The vertical structural beams are painted white to contrast with the glass and naturally exposed aggregate of the concrete panels. At the corners, the windows are set at either side of the corner supporting vertical beams.

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At the ground floor, the lowest rank of panels is slightly extended, and the smaller rectangular ribs are set lower, breaking the rhythm of the panels above. The ground floor is set back slightly from the upper floors, forming something of a false colonnade, too narrow to be entirely useful. The series of square-shaped columns that support the portion of the building above the narrow colonnade are covered in white marble. The walls of the set back lower level are covered in blue glazed brick, with most of the Peachtree Street elevation being taken up by commercial storefronts and sheet glass windows. For the building's north-facing elevation and main entrance on John Portman Boulevard (formerly Harris Street), there are a series of vertical concrete louvers that are flush against the main façade. They then angle back at roughly 45 degrees and then tilt back parallel to the original façade. If these louvers were viewed from the top, they would form something of a flattened 'Z' shape (Photo 3). These extend from the corner of Peachtree and John Portman Boulevard to the glazed entrance door.

The entrance is indicated with a half-barrel arch covered by white fabric canopy that is emblazoned with the AmericasMart logo (Photo 2). Beneath the canopy is a series of black granite steps with matching planters on each side. The steps lead to a glass wall, behind which is a white marble floored lobby. The remainder of the ground floor exterior wall is covered with the same blue glazed brick as seen on the Peachtree Street facade.

The building's massing is very heavy, and the lack of any setbacks or variation overwhelms the sidewalk and the buildings that originally surrounded the structure. Its façade is enlivened by some variations in color pattern and fenestration, but these elements do little to mitigate its massive proportions. The truncated concrete "fins" seen on the pre-cast concrete panels of the Merchandise Mart are the one element that is consistently repeated throughout Peachtree Center. This is one of the few design elements carried forward from The Mart. Later buildings utilize a variety of setbacks and massing variations to better mitigate their size.

Crowning the Atlanta Merchandise Mart Building was the Top of the Mart Restaurant, since closed. This restaurant was one of the high-end "Top of..." chain run by Stouffer's Restaurants. There was also a Stouffer's branded restaurant in the building lobby. There are two sky bridges still in place on the twenty-second floor, one crossing Peachtree Street to connect to the North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower, (Photos 1, 7, 24-26 28-29, 33, 35, 43 Historic Photos 3-4, 8) and a much shorter one that connects to the 230 Peachtree Building (Photo 81, Historic Photos 3, 14-15) that was originally designed to provide easy access to the restaurant. These bridges have plank construction with plate glass panes decorated by vertical exposed aggregate panels. The restaurant and both bridges are currently closed. The design and placement of these bridges was unique. Later sky bridges, constructed during the period of significance, would be placed one floor above street level, and the design would change to a plank

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bridge base topped by a smoked or bronze Plexiglas half-barrel arch with a string of Tivoli-style lights running across the high point of the dome (Photos 60, 71).

Following the success of the Mart, an addition roughly equal in size to the original structure (and designed along with the original Merchandise Mart building before the original building's construction), was begun. The building plan for the addition is roughly a mirror image of the initial structure, with a connector that denotes the two phases that would immediately more than double the square footage of the original building. (Photo 4) This section opened in 1968. The design of the addition is nearly identical to the original construction, with the narrow expansion gap on the north facing façade finished in gray granite indicating the break between construction periods. A loading dock took the place of the retail space at the corner of John Portman Boulevard (formerly Harris Street) in the original building, and the elevation dropping away from the ridge at Peachtree Street further extends the height of the false colonnade. The blue glazed brick is continued for the new addition, but the 'Z' shaped louvers were not carried over (Photo 269).

A second addition to the Merchandise Mart was completed in 1986. (Photos 5-6, 276) This addition is smaller in footprint, due to the other structures on the block, including the 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-11), but appears to be equal in size due to the full height and width of the matching façade as seen from the Street. This addition would extend the Merchandise Mart façade for the entire block of Ted Turner Drive, (formerly Spring Street) (Photo 6) between Andrew Young International Boulevard and John Portman Boulevard. It later enabled multiple sky bridge connections to the 1992 Gift Mart building across the street (Photo 261). The addition also served another purpose, to attach an aerial walkway to the 1976 Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, directly connecting the hotel development to the rest of Peachtree Center via an elevated pedestrian bridge (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 22 April 1979, 1J) (Photo 145, 260). For this addition, the rhythm and symmetry were kept from the earlier designs, but in some locations, primarily the east facing façade that overlooks the 230 Peachtree Building (Photo 5), the same gray granite used in the 'expansion joint' between the additions of the building replaced the ribbon windows. As the HVAC technology changed, the vents on the precast panels were no longer needed and were filled in for the additions. There is a canopied entrance along Ted Turner Drive that opens to an escalator which leads up to the main (Peachtree Street) level and a second set of escalators to reach the main lobby level as well as an expansive sky bridge connection of the Westin Peachtree Plaza (Photo 145, 260).

Located just behind the 1985 addition to the Merchandise Mart (Americas Mart Building 1) is the next building developed by the Edwards & Portman partnership, the design of which would come to set the pattern and form for most of the Peachtree Center Development.

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1965 - 230 Peachtree Building (Peachtree Center Building) – Edwards & Portman

The 31-floor, 382 feet tall, 230 Peachtree Building (230 Peachtree Street) (Photos 8-11, Historic Photos 4-8), now known as 230 Peachtree, was designed to be set back from the street to allow space for an art-filled plaza that originally featured a sculpture entitled 'Renaissance of the City' by Robert Helmsmoortel (Historic Photos 5-8).

The building has a unique shape that is formed utilizing precast concrete panels that incorporate window openings within the panels. These panels continue the use of the smaller rectangular fins found in the Merchandise Mart Building as a decorative element and an exposed aggregate finish that relates to the Merchandise Mart's design. The individual panels used in the building consist of three near full height vertical rectangular windows, set back into the panel by recessed angled forms. These angled forms create an inset concrete frame for each glass window pane. Between each window, the framing continues to form a raised fin, similar to those seen at the Merchandise Mart. Rather than having the smaller rectangles remain offset, as in the Merchandise Mart, a different rhythm is formed by the extension of the ridge between window pane to join the smaller rectangular fins to form an extended vertical ridge line (Photo 8). Between these long continuous rectangular ribs are smaller rectangular ridges, evenly spaced between the window frame insets to indicate the floor plate (as first seen on the Merchandise Mart) (Photo 9). The other element directly carried from the Mart is the equal floor heights, which are continued throughout Peachtree Center to enable the placement of additional sky bridges.

The design of the 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-11, Historic Photos 4-8) shows a determined stylistic attempt to incorporate the design of the neighboring Atlanta Merchandise Mart building while mitigating some of the criticism of the first building's massive form with the placement of the front plaza. These design decisions were undoubtedly influenced by some of the contemporary development innovations at the time, such as the 1958 Seagram Building in New York City with its building mass set well back from the sidewalk to create an expansive public plaza, imitated on a smaller scale in front of this building (Historic Photo 5). The varied massing of the building and setback from the sidewalk also helps make the Merchandise Mart building more approachable and inviting, at least from the South. The current plaza orientation has lost the uniquely urban sculptural forms of 'Renaissance of the City' by Robert Helmsmoortel, and 'The Spiral' by Willi Gutmann that was located in a small sunken garden.

The original engineering mandated by the real estate and lending requirements led to a steel frame construction. These regulations resulted in a form for the Peachtree Street elevation of three parts, or bays (Photo 8). The central bay is

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slightly extended forward from the matching bays on either side. In between each bay is a recessed black colored inset that extends the full height of the building between each of the three bays. The construction budget introduced the use of pre-cast concrete panels. Each of these three window wide panels is combined in sets of three to form an entire nine window wide bay. Each bay or segment has a repeating pattern of rectangular 'fins' that extend out between the window courses, similar to those seen on the Atlanta Merchandise Mart Building, with the recessed corners coming together to form a slightly chamfered edge for the building's edges. The windows are long and narrow, similar to the aesthetic of the vertical ribbon windows on the Mart building. The center bay is extended vertically for three more floor-height rows of windowless concrete panels to form a parapet crown, with the window pattern being modified by an additional vertical fin placed in the opening. The placement of the vertical fin creates a ventilated screen that surrounds the buildings HVAC equipment (Historic Photo 6).

The building plan and function are consistent with its original intent on the ground level to have the central bay used as the main building entrance. This bay would provide elevator access to the upper floors, with either ground floor side bay being build-to-suit retail spaces (Photo 9). Recently, the building has undergone a renovation to convert the northern retail bay to the lobby of the Hotel Indigo that occupies the floors above (2 through 9). Currently, the ground floor entrances maintain the original configuration of a three-part plate-glass storefront. There is some variation from the earlier version to accommodate the insertion of fire suppression equipment, slightly narrowing the central bay from its original configuration. The front plaza has been renovated to be analogous to the original layout with a new sculptural piece, "Belle" by John Portman being added to the plaza along with three shallow water features.

Due to the irregular lot pattern, the 230 Peachtree Building has a southern bay that is much shallower when compared to the near full-length northern bay (Photo 10). This planned irregularity would later be carried over to the International (Cain) (Photos 45-71) and Harris Towers (Photos 98-108) along the Peachtree Center Promenade. The North (Atlanta Gas Light) and South Towers (Photos 33-36) also mimic the offset pattern of building massing first seen in the 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-11 Historic Photos 4-8), but there are only two bays, and both are equal depth when accounting for the offset shift.

On the twenty-second floor, a short sky bridge connects the building to the former location of the Top of the Mart Restaurant (Photos 1, 7, 24-26 28-29, 33, 35, 43 Historic Photos 3-4, 8). This bridge follows the pattern and style of the much larger bridge that connects the Merchandise Mart to the North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower, a rectangular form of bridge beam with full-length windows and exterior exposed aggregate concrete louvers to provide visual interest, as well as bubble dome skylights at the top for natural lighting (Photo 81, Historic Photos 3, 14-15). The sky bridges were originally constructed with fluorescent light fixtures

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below the bridge to emphasize its form and help illuminate the space below (Historic Photo 7, 14).

Alterations to the 230 Peachtree Building have occurred in two main phases. The first related to the construction of the Peachtree Center Marta Station in 1980 that necessitated changes to the plaza in front of the building. The sunken garden and “The Spiral” were removed from the plaza along with the two ground inset enclosures for the building’s exterior lighting. The lighting was removed as the new construction of Peachtree Center limited the once expansive views to the building from the I-75/I-85 Downtown Connector, and the energy crisis of the 1980s diminished public acceptance of dramatic lighting displays (Steinberg, 2016, n.p.).

Currently, the building includes a boutique hotel on floors 1-9. The rest of the building remains used as office space, hosting a variety of long-term tenants. The building is functional with current tenants and street-front retail spaces being leased.

The 230 Peachtree Building was followed in 1967 by Portman’s best-known work, the Hyatt Regency Atlanta (Regency Hyatt House). The Hyatt still comes next in the chronology but was originally intended to open at the same time as the 230 Peachtree Building. Its opening was delayed by the labor trouble of Portman’s longtime contractor, J. A. Jones, on a project in North Carolina. While the impact of the combined opening may have diminished the concept of a Peachtree Center, it certainly did not lessen the impact that this new hotel would have in downtown Atlanta and the career of John Portman.

Sky bridges

The two sky bridges connecting the former Top of the Mart space show an early use of a new application of existing technology, using pedestrian bridges above street level and the related concepts of urban design to help create a pedestrian-oriented environment (Photos 4, 25, 34). These bridges represent something of an experiment with the new concept and technology of connecting individual buildings above street level. The fact that all subsequent bridges follow an updated design and are located roughly 20 stories lower than these predecessors. just one floor above street level. The changes in program reflect the early adaptation taking place at Peachtree Center as the experimental elements of the early development continue to respond to market conditions.

Early Sky Bridge Designs

The design of these two early bridges is a truss form, constructed of metal members with an enclosure on the exterior that includes plate glass windows with vertical concrete louvers and Plexiglas bubble skylights along the roof line.

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This model was quickly abandoned following the two connections to the Top of the Mart area.

Interim Sky Bridge Design

The next pedestrian bridge to be constructed was a direct connection from the 230 Peachtree Building to the parking deck built above the Continental Trailways Bus Station (Photo 259, Historic Photos 8, 12). This sky bridge that crosses Spring Street is one of the earlier elevated connections in Peachtree Center, and the first that connects from the Peachtree Street level, to cross the adjoining streets, taking advantage of the shift in grade as the elevation drops away from the Peachtree Street ridge. This bridge, and the one connecting the Mall at Peachtree Center to the Hyatt, are of an earlier, wider design of concrete beam bridge base topped by smoked Plexiglas (Historic Photos 8, 27). This is very similar in its design to the subsequent bridges, but rather than a half circle barrel arch, this is more of a rounded and flattened Gothic or Manueline arch.

There is a similarly styled bridge connecting the Hyatt Regency with the Midnight Sun Restaurant prior to construction of the Shopping Gallery or the Mall at Peachtree Center. A portion of this bridge remains but had been shortened to accommodate construction of the Harris Tower and the Mall at Peachtree Center

Peachtree Center 'Standard' Sky Bridge Design

Following these first two interim connections, a more consistent design was created for Peachtree Center based on the second interim model, with a concrete plank form bridge. This version is more narrow, allowing for a half circle, or barrel arch form, rather than the widened and flattened arched found on the interim versions. This form is carried through the period of significance. Later bridges outside the period of significance vary widely from this consistent form.

During the period of significance, all sky bridges mentioned after the Hyatt Regency follow the standard Peachtree Center model for this period of a half barrel Plexiglas arch with individual Tivoli lights running along the central spine that is set atop a standard plank form concrete bridge.

1967 - Regency Hyatt House (Hyatt Regency Atlanta) – Edwards & Portman
1971 - Ivy (Radius) Tower - John Portman & Associates
1982 - International Tower (Photos 17,18) - John Portman & Associates
1995 – Centennial Ballroom – TVS Design

Interior Designer: Ray Lang, Inc.;
Structural Engineers: Edwards & Portman;
Mechanical Engineers: Britt Alderman;

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Contractor: J.A. Jones Construction Company; Craftsmen: William & Brothers Lumber & Concrete Company, Otis Elevator Company, Carmichael Tile Company, Harry G. Painters, Gilman Wall Coverings Inc. with Goodman Decorating Company

A stunning breakthrough in urban form, the then Regency Hyatt House (265 Peachtree Street) (Photos 11-23, 269-270 Historic Photos 9-11) was a unique combination of public square, hotel lobby and a modern interpretation of a grand hotel. This was the first modern atrium hotel. Earlier grand hotels had open central spaces, but this was the first to reorient the public spaces of the hotel to an open void created by a surrounding wall of hotel rooms, all while incorporating modern design on a scale far larger than had ever been seen before.

Pre-cast concrete balcony railings dominate all four exterior façades of the original square-plan main tower building. These forms have a similar rectangular verticality to the patterns seen on those based on the 230 Peachtree Building model. Behind these railings is the void of the balcony, punctuated by beams supporting the railing. There are two rail sections for each balcony, along with an upper wall segment that divides each balcony space (Photos 11, 13). On each narrow end of the four larger rectangular blocks of rooms that form the interior atrium space, there are five balconies near the top of the narrow wall, except the south-facing façade that has the balconies starting five floors below the rest (Photo 12). These narrow end walls are finished with exposed aggregate concrete panels, scored with a series of vertical lines. The use of the exposed aggregate concrete also continues just above the sidewalk level, surrounding the original conference center. This unifies the later additions where there are a series of vertical rectangular 'fins' approximately two-feet deep set perpendicularly to the street, placed approximately six feet apart on the exterior facing walls along the Peachtree Street, John Portman Boulevard, and Peachtree Center Avenue facades (Photos 14, 16). Smooth finished concrete is used below the 'fin-line' as the topography drops away from the Peachtree Street ridge line. On the Peachtree Center Avenue side, the fins come together and are more closely spaced, with varied lengths to form an arch that highlights the staircase entry from the street leading to the Hyatt's outdoor pool (Photo 14). This addition to the Hyatt Regency was added to create visual interest during the construction of the Marriott Marquis complex, Portman's third modern atrium hotel in Peachtree Center, which opened in 1985 and is discussed in further detail later in this document.

At the top of the building, each of the corners has an inset that, when combined with the surrounding parapet, forms a square which contains a lighting fixture to highlight the architecture (Photo 273). Atop the parapet wall is a signature Portman design element that first appears at the Hyatt: the floating decorative beams. These beams add visual interest by extending beyond the facades of each of the four building 'walls' created by the four rectangular blocks of rooms in the original atrium building (Historic Photo 9). These beams run in line with the

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length of the rectangular hotel room buildings and then extend over to cross the width of the adjoining rectangular 'exterior wall' structure of individual hotel rooms on each facade, unifying and connecting each part of the composition symbolically (Photo 12, 15).

Atop the main original tower building is the Polaris revolving restaurant, a form often compared to a flying saucer (Historic Photo 11). The circular plan space sits atop the elevator tower. The base of the square elevator tower is a two-cantilevered disk that supports the cylindrical restaurant space, distinguished by two narrow grille-like extensions. An internally lit, blue, glass dome tops this composition (Photo 12, 15).

Entering the main building, visitors originally passed a row of shops perpendicular to Peachtree Street, (since converted to office space) from beneath an extended concrete porte-cochere canopy. The canopy was replaced in the 2008 renovation to form a more shallow entrance canopy, and the visitor now enters a narrow marble lined enclosure to access the main lobby. Inside, the 22-story atrium is punctuated by the sculpture 'Flora Raris' by Richard Lippold and the main elevator shaft still includes the original John Portman designed glass elevators, lined with Tivoli lights and capped at each end by lighted domes (Photos 19, 20). The elevator supports use the same exposed aggregate concrete found on the exterior (Photos 20, 21). Formerly located in the main atrium space was the Parasol Lounge that had been removed during the 1971 renovations, leaving the parasol shaped canopy until the 2011 renovations. The floor is covered with large rectangular ceramic tiles that replaced the original cobblestone-like, fan-shaped tiles during the 2008 renovation of the interiors of the hotel. Above, there is a solid first-floor balcony that then extends into a uniquely Portman rhythmic composition of balconies with alternating depths. Rectangular, grille concrete forms designed to hold pots of dangling ivy finish these balconies. At the corners, the balcony is extended to form a square outcropping that continues up for the length of the atrium. The ceiling is topped by a series of skylights set in a repeating grid pattern, with a tensile fabric screen below to baffle the light (Photo 21). At the northeast corner of the atrium ceiling is a clear glass dome, unobstructed by the baffle (Photo 23).

Soon after opening, the hotel realized there was an unmet demand for convention space. The Peachtree Center Avenue (Ivy Street) level of the Hyatt podium that originally contained restaurants was remodeled to be exhibition and conference rooms. The hotel began a series of expansions pushing its footprint out to the street.

Soon after the remodeling of the convention space, there was still an unmet demand for hotel rooms beyond the original capacity. Rather than alter the initial form of the building, the decision was made to proceed with a radically different design. A sleek black steel and glass tower was proposed: a monolithic cylinder that created a dynamic relationship with the exposed, aggregate, box form of the

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atrium tower. The opening of the 25-story Ivy Tower, now Radius Tower, would introduce a new concept in Portman hotel design (Photos 14-16). The cylindrical hotel tower is the same height as the 22-story main atrium building. The difference in numbering is because it is placed atop the conference center which is mainly located below the Peachtree Street level of the main building. The height of the tower addition was also limited to the height of the original building to not impact the views from the Polaris restaurant. This form would be repeated at the nearby Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel and the Portman's developments in Los Angeles (the Bonaventure and Detroit at the Renaissance Center).

In 1982, a second addition was undertaken. The 24-story International Tower (Photos 17,18) addition included both guest rooms and more event space. The new tower utilized the original exterior design of the Hyatt at a smaller overall scale. This building was set to the south and forward from the original hotel tower building further emphasizing the enclosure of the entry space that had been previously only flanked by a row of shops. The row of awning shops at the entrance of the hotel was demolished and moved into the atrium. William Martin & Associates designed the new shops. The new International Tower (Photos 17-18, 273) is only linked to the main building at the southwestern corner of the open atrium space through a narrow hallway. While the International Tower reflected the facing and order of the original tower, the two buildings do not touch beyond the Peachtree Street lobby level (City of Atlanta Building Permit, 1981, 1). These alterations were also designed by John Portman and Associates and undertaken by J.A. Jones Construction.

During the early 1990's in the period before to the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, there was an immediate increase in demand for events space, resulting in the addition of the Centennial Ballroom (Photo 272). This expansion is located on the site of a former Federal Building that was demolished for its construction. The expansion is built directly to the north of the original atrium building, creating an additional 400,000 square feet in meeting space and 300,000 square feet in ballroom space that filled the footprint of the former office building. The design created a strong horizontal line and has allowed the Atrium Tower to gain a greater presence to the north and on the Peachtree Street with an unobstructed view. The new design has a curved arch roof which is also included the redesign of the entrance portico of the hotel. Instead of a rectangular form parallel to the street, a new arched cover perpendicular to Peachtree Street was installed to replace the previous concrete canopy (*The Atlanta-Journal Constitution*, August 25, 1994, 1C). This new space connects to the original structure below the lobby level and preserves the original feel of the atrium lobby space. These alterations were designed by Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback, & Associates.

In 2011, \$65 million in renovations that began in 2008 were completed. The dramatic changes initiated during this renovation led to significant alterations of the atrium experience, including removing the parasol form that had remained from the previous parasol lounge space and completely renovating all the

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restaurant, lounge, front desk, retail market spaces, and the guest rooms (Atlanta Regency Hotel). The Polaris restaurant was reopened in 2015 after being closed since 2004. The palette of the entire space of the Atrium Tower lobby has been muted to creams, tans, and chromes. The uses of the atrium space are now pushed to the outer walls (due to the traffic patterns from the added towers) rather than engaging the entire area as was the original intent. The open, lush and active garden atmosphere has been completely lost. Most notable is that the floor now has large rectangular cream tiles, replacing the original fan-cobblestone pattern tiles that helped create the outdoor square experience (Photos 19, 22-23). The interiors of all the rooms have been refurbished with very contemporary designs, with clear references to retro modern design motifs in bright colors similar to those found in the original atrium space. The major ballroom spaces have also been redecorated to match the new design intent (City of Atlanta Building Permit 2008, 1). TVS Designs was the architectural firm associated with this project.

The building continues to function as a high-end full-service hotel and convention center that draws international clients. The building has the core atrium space with the front desk, shops, a restaurant, and a bar. There are 180,000 square feet of convention space in the lower levels, the north wing, and International Tower as well as 1,260 guest rooms amongst the three towers (Atrium Tower, the Radius, and the International Tower (Photos 17,18), of the Hyatt Regency Atlanta.

Due to the commercial success of the hotel, the building has been well maintained with only minor damage to the concrete surface finishes on the interior and the exterior with some cracking especially at corners. Paired with the economic competitiveness of the building over time is the number of updates to the building for it to maintain that position in the market. The alterations have considerably altered the original courtyard gardens intention to become a very sterile space with a muted palette of pale tans and chrome with a radial floor plan and services along the perimeter of the space. There is some seating around the central elevators, but the space does not invite you to dwell unless you are at the peripheral restaurant or bar/cafe. The umbrella bar and other sitting spaces that once formed a patchwork on the lobby floor have been removed to create a much wider open space (*Atlanta Business Chronicle*, March 2, 2012, 1). The number of plants and greenery inside the atrium has also been reduced to only some circulating ivy planters. Even up into the 1990s, there were full trees and the garden feel of the space was intact (Hyatt Hotels, 1990, 1).

The hotel's identity as a conference and event space has exploded over the years. The most recent addition, the Centennial Ballroom, was designed to create more event space along Baker Street in 1994. Despite the various additions over time, the core Atrium Tower does still hold dominance over the other additions as the main entry point from any traffic flow between the towers. Now instead of being the open space to stop and dwell; it is the open conduit to

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navigate in between the three towers or the rest of Peachtree Center (*Atlanta Business Chronicle*, March 2, 2012, 3).

Building upon the success, notice, and renown of the Hyatt Regency, John Portman sought to create another engaging space for downtown Atlanta. Rather than create another indoor public space, Portman sought to extend the plaza set up in front of the 230 Peachtree Building across the street to create a new and uniquely urban space. The first portion designed of what would become the Peachtree Center Promenade was conceived as something of a gateway design. Consisting of three parts, the new portion would include two identical mirror image towers, based on the design of the 230 Peachtree Building and continuing its precast concrete panels with the exposed aggregate as its primary design feature. These towers would be a narrower two bays, with the outer bay set back further from the street. Between these two 'gateway' towers was a public plaza at street level, centered on a light well that had 'The Big One' by Willi Gutmann rising from its center (Photo 44, Historic Photo 19). Just below this street level was the intensely designed Midnight Sun Restaurant (since renovated to be a part of the Mall at Peachtree Center) (Historic Photos 17-19). The first tower constructed was named for the original primary tenant, the Atlanta Gas Light Tower, now simply known as the North Tower. This building would demonstrate the continuing evolution of early Portman design.

1969 - Peachtree Center North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower - Edwards & Portman

This building is one of a set of a series of buildings described as "a series of planned functional relationships" (Portman & Barnett, 1976, 14). As the first building in the intended composition of four towers, very loosely based upon the Channel Gardens area of Rockefeller Center (AIA 1975, 9), this building is important as it echoes the first 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-11) across the street with its similar massing and design.

Following the standard set by the 230 Peachtree Building, the Atlanta Gas Light Tower (235 Peachtree Street) (Photos Photos 24-27, 33-35, Historic Photos 13-19) and its mirror-image twin, the South Tower, (Photos 36-44, 56, Historic Photos 19-26) are constructed using the same precast exposed aggregate panels as the street of the 230 Peachtree Building. Completed in 1969, this would be the last building produced in the partnership between Edwards and Portman. Following Edwards' retirement, the successor firm, John Portman and Associates, would design all subsequent buildings. J. A. Johnson was the contractor, and the developer was Trammell Crow.

The North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower, was named for its main tenant the Atlanta Gas Light Company, looks a bit like the 230 Peachtree Building if the shorter southernmost bay had been removed. A contrast is an offset between the two

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front bays, facing Peachtree Street, is much deeper than on the 230 Building, and at the rear, the building the bays are the same lengths, with the black band inset breaking the overall massing (Photo 24).

The 27-story building is four stories shorter than the original 230 Building and tops out at 331 feet. On the twenty-second floor is an early sky bridge design that includes the exposed aggregate decorative fins. The sky bridge extends across Peachtree Street and once connected the building to the Top of the Mart restaurant but has been closed with the restaurant (Photos 3-4, 25, 34, 81, Historic Photos 3, 14-15).

Aside from only having two bays compared to the 230 Peachtree Tower's three, the building also adds an architectural detail of cut out framed squares near the top most level of the northern (outer) bay section grouped into two parts: one with eight openings and the other with three boxed openings, and a small two-story balcony projecting north (out) from the top two floors of the building's south bay. These cutouts enliven the composition, especially when seen from the former Top of the Mart restaurant. The openings provide light and views to the offices in the taller section of the tower that opens to these spaces as a patio area (Photo 24). Lower on the building, facing the former location of the Midnight Sun Restaurant (now a part of the Peachtree Center Promenade) is a long balcony extending from the third floor that nearly runs the length of the south façade (Photo 27).

1969 - Midnight Sun Restaurant - John Portman & Associates

Following the construction of the North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower is the development of the Midnight Sun Restaurant (Historic Photos 17-18). Located below the sidewalk level, and directly connected below grade level to the adjoining towers by interior passage connections to the North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower building's elevators at the same level as the restaurant. The restaurant could also be reached by an escalator at the promenade level that ran parallel to the North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower's south façade. The Midnight Sun was centered on a light well that is currently the skylight closest to Peachtree Street in the promenade (Historic Photo 19). A precast concrete bench, serving as a rail around the opening includes the grille designed to hold the ivy planters similar to those used at the Hyatt Regency extends from the back of the bench/rail. These planters were initially filled with English Ivy, which is more accommodating to the Atlanta climate, rather than the variety used in the Hyatt. This restaurant introduced some signature Portman design elements like the extended decorative column capitals formed from wooden sheets arraigned in a radial pattern surrounding the column. Hanging from these capitals were 'elemental strands' long strings of geometric shapes that hang from the ceiling. "The Big One" by Willi Gutmann that now sits in the middle of the promenade was once partially obscured by its location in the light well set atop a white onyx fountain

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that was lit from within (Photos 17-18). (The ovoid shape of the banquettes and seating areas would also be carried over to the Westin Peachtree Plaza.) The restaurant was an attempt to set a new standard for dining in downtown Atlanta, similar to the idea of the Four Seasons Restaurant in the Seagram Building on Park Avenue in New York City. During the 1986 renovations, The Midnight Sun, and fountain were removed, and the light well converted to a skylight for the conversion of the space into the front retail portion of the Mall at Peachtree Center nearest to Peachtree Street (Photos 37-41).

1971 - Peachtree Center South Tower - John Portman & Associates

The South Tower (225 Peachtree Street) was commissioned in 1967, but not completed until 1971 when the market demand for office space enabled this speculative office building to be constructed (Photos 36-44, 56, Historic Photos 19-26). The building is the same height as The North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower its near twin, 27-stories and 331 feet tall. The South Tower is the first building produced after the partnership between Edwards and Portman ended. This and all subsequent Peachtree Center buildings would be designed by the successor firm John Portman and Associates. J.A. Jones Construction was the contractor for this building, and Trammell Crow was the developer.

The Peachtree Center South Tower (225 Peachtree Street) is the mirror image of the Peachtree Center North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower. The massing and form are the same, with all the distinctive details such as the third-floor promenade facing balcony, the small two-story balcony at the top two floors and the framed cutouts on the lower and shorter southern portion of the structure. The main distinction between the two is the lack of a sky bridge to connect to the Top of the Mart.

A sky bridge in the newer style in the 'standard' Peachtree Center Style of concrete beam construction topped by a smoked Plexiglas half-barrel arch with a line of individual lights along the upper part of the beam exists at the back of the promenade. The sky bridge once connected the Franklin Simon ladies clothing store from the second floor of the South Tower to the Shopping Gallery constructed four years after the tower was finished (Photo 60-61, 64, 71, 84).

At the front of the tower along Peachtree Street, there is a black granite pedestal near the sidewalk that once held the sculpture "Early Mace" by Charles Perry (Historic Photo 24). The piece has since been relocated to the reflecting pond at the base of the SunTrust Plaza (One Peachtree Center) Tower just outside of the district.

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1974 - Peachtree Center International (Cain) Tower & 1975 International Parking Deck - John Portman & Associates

The International (Cain) Tower, (229 Peachtree Street) is essentially a mirror image of both the 230 Peachtree Building and the latter Harris Tower, which shares the same orientation related to its three bays as the 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 45-72, Historic Photos 28-29). Completed in 1974, John Portman and Associates was the architect, and J.A. Jones Construction was again the contractor for this building.

The placement of the International (Cain) tower atop the podium that contained the Shopping Gallery (1974) that would be renovated into the Mall at Peachtree Center (1986) necessitated a different approach to the building entrance than the approach seen in the 230 Peachtree Building. The main promenade entrance is on the building's north façade with the entrance located on the northwest corner closest to Peachtree Street. (Photo 62) The tower can also be accessed by elevator within the Shopping Gallery/Mall at Peachtree Center podium at all interior levels. The marble covered columns used on the North (Atlanta Gas Light) and South Towers are continued along the promenade and pilasters in a similar pattern are used along the south and east facades of the building.

This portion of the Peachtree Center complex was designed as part of a larger composition as was the two previous Atlanta Gas Light/North and South Towers. This part of the promenade area was not as intensely designed as the initial developments surrounding the Midnight Sun Restaurant. The plan included a connection between the North (Atlanta Gas Light) and South Towers and the Shopping Gallery, a one-sided, multi-level arcade that faced a giant skylight looking toward the Peachtree Center Promenade that would later be incorporated into the rest of the space below the promenade as the Mall at Peachtree Center (Photos 60-61).

There are some stylistic differences from its predecessor, the 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-11). The most obvious are the placement of the entrance on the northwest corner of the building to face the promenade, rather than the Peachtree Street entrance seen at the 230 Peachtree Building (Photo 62). The installation of the International (Cain) Tower atop the podium built to support the Shopping Gallery and developed at the same time is another dramatic difference from its 230 Peachtree Building predecessor. For this building, John Portman added two four-story balconies placed in a similar fashion to those in the North (Atlanta Gas Light) and South Towers. Constructed from the same exposed aggregate concrete as the rest of the building, the balconies provide a visual punctuation to the massive forms. One set of balconies is located near the top of the west end of the building on the south elevation running from floors 24-28. (49-50, 56) On the promenade side, the four-story set of balconies is lower, located on the northern façade and running from floors 6-10 (Photos 46-47).

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The International (Cain) Tower directly connects to a parking deck opened in 1975 as a part of the Peachtree Center complex (Photos 41, 43). This parking deck was expanded vertically for four additional parking levels during construction of the International (Cain) Tower in 1974 to make a connection slightly higher than the rest of the Peachtree Center development, by connecting at the fourth floor by a sky bridge over Andrew Young International Boulevard in 1975. (Photos 52, 55, 68, 89). This sky bridge connection leads directly into the Shopping Gallery two floors above the Peachtree Street Level, passing through the International (Cain) Tower, below the main office floors. The tower's elevator lobby can be accessed just after entering the building from the sky bridge. This connection would originally allow for a nearly direct link to the Franklin Simon department store (Photos 65, 71). Since the bridge connecting the International (Cain) Tower and Parking Deck is two floors above the other connections that lead directly to the main shopping level just below the Peachtree Street level, this sky bridge does not easily flow into the other sky bridge connections two floors below that connect to the Hyatt and Marriott developments. On the twentieth floor, there is another sky bridge that connects two office floors in the South and International Towers (Photo 32, 49, 56, 85).

All the bridges that connect to the International (Cain) Tower follow the new pattern and style of concrete beam construction, topped by a half-barrel arch smoked Plexiglas top supported by bronze aluminum mullions that connect at the top of a beam that contains lighting in the top connecting beam of the arch (Photos 52, 68).

The 1986 remodeling of the surrounding space as The Mall at Peachtree Center had little effect in the vicinity as this space was originally developed as the Shopping Gallery.

1974 - Shopping Gallery, (1986 - The Mall at Peachtree Center) - John Portman & Associates

Completed in 1974 the design for the Shopping Gallery (231 Peachtree Street) by John Portman and Associates breaks from the original cast concrete with exposed aggregate design seen in the rest of Peachtree Center (Photos 72-97). An angled glass wall that rises from the east edge of the Promenade at Peachtree Street level, the shopping galleries façade is pierced by two rectangular box entrances that lead to revolving doors that open on to two bridges that cross the multi-leveled interior atrium space toward the shops stacked on the east side (Photos 77-80). This area is dominated by the interior circulation system of crisscrossing escalators that connect the upper Shopping Gallery spaces that face the atrium (Photos 86-88). The Peachtree Center Avenue entrance to the Shopping Galleries space sits between the base of the International (Cain) Tower and the shopping galleries space (Photo 54, 56). The precast exposed aggregate panels are continued from the International (Cain)

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Tower base, with an inset with a glass storefront on the east Peachtree Center Avenue façade of the Shopping Galleries building at the Promenade level. The remainder of the building is completed in the exposed aggregate panels with a horizontal band of windows on the fifth level (Photos 114-115).

The small footprint of the building, located between the International (Cain) and Harris Towers does not allow for a more traditional retail development. The orientation around a one-sided atrium space incorporates Portman's desire to create internal spaces, but the lack of connection to other high traffic areas limits the complex as a shopping destination. The use of reflective glass provides a contrast to the exposed aggregate precast concrete panels and is a foreshadowing of the next phase of glass-skinned Portman designs to follow.

1976 - Peachtree Center Shopping Gallery Concourse – (1986 - Mall at Peachtree Center)

Running along the north side of the North tower at street level is a short colonnaded building that connects the tower, with the building that formerly housed the Atlanta Gas Light Company headquarters, before the construction of Peachtree Center, that have since been remodeled to have a bronzed glass curtain wall exterior. (Photos 130-140) This opens to a space between the North and Harris Towers that contains a smaller skylight and open space that connects to the larger Promenade spaces. This building continues below grade level to house most of the Food Court at the Mall at Peachtree Center (Photo 134). The central connection from Peachtree Street is covered but open air, with no climate control, opening on a smaller portion of the promenade. This space is accounted for by the asymmetrical sizes of the buildings at the Peachtree Street corners of the block, with the smaller buildings at the corner of Peachtree Street and John Portman Boulevard allowing for the larger promenade space and additional connection.

1976 - Top of the Galleries/Midnight Sun Dinner Theater (1986 - Mall at Peachtree Center)

Atop the shopping gallery was the Dinner Theater alternatively known as the Top of the Galleries and later the Midnight Sun Dinner Theater, that opened in 1976 along with the Harris Tower and Shopping Gallery Colonnade (Photos 72, 74-76). The Midnight Sun Restaurant and the Top of the Galleries (Midnight Sun) were both operational and open at the same time, with the Dinner Theater closing in 1978. (To avoid confusion, references to the Midnight Sun refer to the restaurant, and any references to the Dinner Theater will simply be referred as such.) Originally designed to be topped by a stepped park-like space, the addition of the dinner theater, attempted to provide a full-service entertainment area for the hotel visitors along with the rest of downtown Atlanta.

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The addition utilizes the same materials as the angled skylight façade of the Shopping Galleries Building but extends them vertically to create a box form above the angled plane. This rectangular box form is broken by a bowed protrusion, a fragment of a cylindrical shape (Photo 72). This cylindrical protrusion is placed to the north side of the rectangular Dinner Theater structure on the west facade. On the interior, this shape held the main stage of the dinner theater. The exterior of this form is contrasted to the reflective glass by its opaque metal vertical panels, distinctively marking the shape and form. The asymmetrical cylindrical protrusion provides visual interest and an irregular variation to the building.

At the same time as the dinner theater's construction, John Portman and his firm were building the Harris Tower, which would make the space surrounding the promenades symmetrical and provide further expansion to the Shopping Galleries.

1976 - Peachtree Center Harris Tower - John Portman & Associates

The Peachtree Center Harris (233 Peachtree Street) Tower is an exact mirror image of the International (Cain) Tower, 318 feet tall with 30 floors (Photos 98-120, Historic Photo 29). Its construction completed the symmetrical composition of the four office towers surrounding the Peachtree Center Promenade. The Harris tower follows the original orientation form and massing of the 230 Peachtree Building, but as with its mirror image twin in the International (Cain) Tower, its placement atop the podium of the Mall at Peachtree Center and its altered orientation of the main entrance off the Peachtree Center Promenade make it distinct from its predecessors (Photo 74).

The Harris Tower is constructed out of the same style of pre-cast concrete panels as the previous four Peachtree Center office buildings. Windows set in a vertical pattern that runs up and across the facade of the building. The orientation of the building is nearly identical to that of the 230 Peachtree Building including the shortened bay on the southernmost side. This tower is connected to the former Shopping Gallery building with the same pre-cast panel connection as the International (Cain) Tower (Photos 73-74). Unlike its near twin, the International (Cain) Tower, the elevators for the Harris Tower only descend to the Promenade Level, not continuing below to the Mall at Peachtree Center levels. The mall below that has further connections to the surrounding buildings of Peachtree Center that is reached by the former Shopping Gallery building escalators.

Designed to be the fourth and final tower in the composition surrounding the Peachtree Center Promenade. The location of the Harris Tower had been considered for other uses, including a shopping area, similar to those seen at

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Embarcadero Center in San Francisco, under development by Portman and partners at the same time. The tower is comparable to its predecessor and its design and orientation, make it nearly identical to the 230 Peachtree Building except for its placement away from Peachtree Street with its entrance on the southwest corner of the building along the Peachtree Center Promenade and atop the platform of The Mall at Peachtree Center (Photo 74). There is one upper-level sky bridge connection on the nineteenth floor that connects directly between office floors in the Harris Tower and the North Tower (Photo 45, 98-100, 120). The design of this bridge continues the concrete plank bridge form topped by the half barrel smoked Plexiglas dome.

The Mall at Peachtree Center was reoriented with a widened pedestrian corridor and direct connection to the former Shopping Gallery as a part of the 1986 repositioning of spaces into the mall and food court concept. The Peachtree Center Avenue and John Portman Boulevard facades continue the pattern seen in the balcony addition of the International (Cain) Tower (Photos 118-119). The one variation is the addition of an exterior staircase that directly connects the street level with the main mall level (Photos 107-110).

Completed the same year was the next Portman atrium hotel, designed with the intention to surpass the Hyatt Regency Atlanta.

1976 - Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel (Peachtree Center Plaza Hotel) - John Portman & Associates

J.A. Jones Construction was the contractor for this building. Other subcontractors included: Britt Alderman Engineers for mechanical; William C. Lam & Associates for lighting design; and all other design aspects were by John Portman and Associates.

The Westin Peachtree Plaza is an example of the unique atrium form developed by John Portman in Atlanta (Saxon, 1983, 75). Its narrow site dictated the design of the Westin Peachtree Plaza (210 Peachtree Street) (Photos 142-166, 253-257, Historic Photos 37-41). Too thin to allow for rooms surrounding an atrium space, the design incorporated an open lobby topped by a reflective glass-sheathed cylindrical hotel tower. This form is a variation on the Ivy/Radius cylindrical tower first seen in the 1971 Hyatt Regency addition (Photos 14-16). Rather than utilizing the comparatively small tower footprint to preserve convention and meeting spaces, the Westin takes advantage of this smaller footprint to form the centerpiece of the long but narrow lot. The expansive multi-level semi-public interior atrium is similar to the hotel buildings that followed, but singular both in its tower placement and form.

The Westin was commissioned in 1969, with the earliest version of the plan still referring to the development under its predecessor's name, the Henry Grady

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Hotel, which had stood on this location until its demolition in 1972. Completed in 1976, the tower was a new landmark and symbol of a progressive Atlanta and economically rising southeast (Photos 164-166). John Portman and Associates are the architects with long time contractor, J.A. Jones Construction managing the development for this building. Consultants include Britt Alderman mechanical engineers and William C. Lam & Associates for lighting design. In an attempt to choose the best financial solution, Portman and his team ran a series of structural analysis on either a steel or concrete frame for the hotel. The concrete frame was chosen even though it would take longer to construct due to cheaper cost.

Originally conceived to surpass the Hyatt Regency in design and amenities, this hotel was oriented around a large lake or lagoon that covered the lower level. Described as a modern interpretation of a Venetian Plaza, the central, circular, elevator core on the main level was surrounded by a series of oblong, 'floating islands,' or 'cocktail pods,' that looked out over the lake that held fountains and tropical birds in cylindrical cages (Historic Photo 37). The lake and pods have been removed, but these forms remain and can still be seen in the Sundial Restaurant on the top floor.

Approaching the building from the street, it is easy to understand why the lower three floors of this building's exterior façade were probably the most criticized in Peachtree Center. For the three exposed facades, (the fourth is a shared wall) the façade is completely poured in place concrete, only enlivened by a vertical reeded pattern of recessed concave cylinders of different and varied widths in a repeating pattern, with a horizontal scored line indicating each floor plate (Photos 43, 44). The entrances at Peachtree Street and Ted Turner Drive are each capped by an open box canopy, with the Ted Turner Drive side also including a horizontal balcony extension nearly running the length of the façade at the top due to the lower elevation of the street at this level (Photo 142, 253). Most of the interior of this concrete shell is an internal void, topped by a skylight spanning the gap between the exterior façade and the circular base of the cylindrical hotel tower (Photo 146). Just above the skylight, at the base of the tower is the 'collar', a two-story collection of small meeting rooms that is reached by its own elevator in the upper atrium space (Photos 146-147, 149).

The upper exterior tower facade is "a cylindrical tower clad in mirror glass, with elevators in a tubular glass structure providing a spectacular journey up and down along its reflecting surface" (Portman & Barnett 1976, 36) (Photo 148). The express elevators that serve the Sundial restaurant are attached to the outside of the structure on the northwest side in a smaller cylinder that mimics the main form (Photo 148). Directly opposite the sundial express elevator are the elevators that serve the collar meeting rooms also visible from the inside of the atrium creating a diagonal symmetry with their placement (Photo 156). This mirror glass with bronze tinted hue maintains a consistent color until it terminates at the sundial restaurant atop the structure - at this point the glass becomes darker,

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denoting a change in the program, suggesting that the normative repetition of the floor to floor heights has a new dynamic. This use of color gradients serves as a termination or visual crowning of the hotel. At the very top a series of lights mimics the Portman Tivoli light aesthetic and punctuates the skyline (Photos 154-156).

Entering the hotel from Peachtree Street, guests climb a short set of stairs to reach an extended hall of meeting spaces that lead to the central atrium space (Photos 151-152). Visitors entering from Spring Street, enter through the Porte Cochere tucked beneath the rectangular base of the main building to reach a set of revolving doors. Through these doors are the escalators that carry guests to the main lobby floor. The ground floor is finished in black terrazzo for the main traffic areas with muted blue and brown floral carpeting covering the rest of the spaces. The atrium space is dominated by the cylinder of the elevator banks, enlivened by a basic mural of leaves in black and white (Photos 156-157). Surrounding the cylinder is a floating circular bridge connecting all areas at the Peachtree Street level. Above this elevated circular walk are two additional arc segment bridges following a similar pattern (Photos 154-157). At either narrow end of the atrium are cantilevered large open balcony like spaces finished with the ivy holding grilles that are currently empty (Photos 159-163). At the west, Spring Street side of the atrium, the balconies narrow as they rise to the top. For the east, Peachtree Street side of the atrium, the balconies cantilever forward as they rise. At each end at the corner of these spaces are open staircases with semi-circular balcony-like ends, allowing circulation between levels (Photos 162-163). Surrounding the main elevator bank are ten large columns that support the cylindrical hotel tower (Photos 156-159).

Portman's attention to every detail was evident in how he designed the connection between the tops of the columns in the main space. In this, lighting baffles were used to express structural support but were done in a "nonstructural way" (Portman & Barnett, 1976, 174). These columns topped by internally lit capitals supporting the hotel tower are, very similar to those originally found at the Midnight Sun Restaurant (Photo 156).

In 1986 \$31 million in renovations took place in order to transition the hotel to more upscale decor (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, February 27, 1987, 1C). Maintenance and floor space issues doomed the lake in the lobby of the Peachtree Plaza. The 1986 renovation introduced then very new post-modern concepts that would show themselves in subsequent Portman designs (Historic Photos 40-41). The broken pediments columns, arches and other elements used in the lobby renovation show the beginning shift to post-modernism by Portman and these elements in new interpretations would begin to show themselves in Portman's later works. These architectural elements and their placement on the lobby floor also restricted the flexibility to use the space and were removed during a subsequent renovation.

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A 2008 tornado destroyed a large number of the specially made curved reflective glass panels. The combination of changes in code regarding glass thickness and the absence of any existing replacements required that all of the glass in the tower be replaced with the new slightly thicker glass, and was completed in 2010.

The current use of this building is very close to its original use. The main differences being the many changes seen in the renovations to the lobby area. The tower spaces have been redecorated, but the layout primarily remains as built. The hotel is currently in excellent condition. A lobby-redecorating project has recently been completed in 2013. The exterior of the cylindrical structure has had all of the original windows replaced due to tornado damage in 2008, returning the tower structure closely to its original facade appearance.

The next building built at Peachtree Center, the Atlanta Apparel Mart, is the next variation on the atrium form seen at the development.

1979 - Atlanta Apparel Mart and 1988 Vertical Addition (Americas Mart Building 3) - John Portman & Associates

Originally designed to be expanded, the 1979 Atlanta Apparel Mart (250 Spring Street) opened at eight stories with a seven-story fan-shaped atrium that featured fashion shows and other events on the ground level (Photos 167-182, 260-267, Historic Photos 42-44).

The original eight-story building opened with 2.1 Million square feet of exhibition space (AIA Guide 1983, 27). The ground floor has a recessed glass storefront with the overhang of the bulk of the building being supported by cylindrical concrete piers (Photos 171, 175). The four outer corners that feature distinctive circular stair towers provide the only enlivenment of the original exterior of precast brushed concrete panels on the upper floors (Photos 172-174). The 1988 addition brought the building to its total designed height, adding another seven stories to reach its current height of fifteen floors. The addition expands the original floor plan by extending the addition over the stair towers. There is a recessed gap similar to those on the first floor of the original building and the addition also supported by piers. The corner areas have insets and setbacks to reduce the overwhelming massing of the added space. These folded or corrugated corners that have alternating set backs and insets for one story above and below the four-story central portion of the addition. The uppermost level of the building is the Penthouse Theater, set back even further from the corners and exterior walls and is barely visible from street level.

The Apparel Mart occupies an entire city block in Atlanta. Ted Turner Drive (formerly Spring Street) bounds it on the East, Williams Street on the West, Baker Street on the North, and John Portman Boulevard (formerly Harris Street) on the South. The Apparel Mart is labeled Building 3 in the Mart complex with

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Building 2, the Gift Mart, lying directly South, and Building 1, the Merchandise Mart, lying Southeast.

Each façade of the apparel mart is nearly identical, with a box canopy entrance extending over the sidewalk (Photo 170). As the grade changes, the large expanses of glass used for the ground floor on John Portman Boulevard and Baker Street are continued as a band across the building, with additional concrete panels reaching from the glass band down to the sidewalk level. On the Ted Turner Drive western façade, there are loading docks that front the sidewalk (Photo 177).

One significant and evident variation between the four facades is the inclusion of sky bridges along the John Portman Boulevard façade that connect the building to the 1992 Atlanta Gift Mart (Photos 263, 270). On the Ted Turner Drive, there are two nearly identical sky bridges that connect the Atlanta Apparel Mart to the American Cancer Society Center (Inforum) that is outside the district. They were also designed and built by Portman but all of these bridges were constructed after the period of significance (Photos 176, 266-268).

The interior of the building has a fourteen-story atrium surrounded by balconies that once held hanging ivy (Historic Photo 44). The top floor of the building includes the Penthouse Theater, formerly known as the Fashion Show Theater, and the opening for the fan-shaped skylight system, retained and reused from the original construction, that provides natural lighting to the atrium. (Photo 178) The Apparel Mart includes many distinctive John Portman design elements such as, the open atrium, recessed main level with piers supporting the main bulk of the building, glass elevators, and sky bridges that connect the other Americas Mart and Peachtree Center buildings. The building is directly connected to the Atlanta Merchandise Mart building by a unique skywalk, built at the time of the original building's construction that splits to avoid piercing the sculptural stair tower (Photos 15, 260, Historic Photo 42). The style is concrete plank bridge with a half circle smoked Plexiglas canopy (Photo 179). The sky bridge exits the Merchandise Mart Building at the corner, proceeding across the intersection diagonally, before forking in two directions at a forty-five degrees angle to avoid piercing the stair tower, entering the Apparel Mart Building at a regular perpendicular angle (Photo 182, 262). There are additional bridges of similar design, without the fork, that connect directly to the Gift Mart-AmericasMart Building 2 (Photos 179-180, 263).

The one major alteration to the exterior of the building came with the two-year expansion that began on January 1, 1987. John Portman and Associates was again the architect for the expansion and J. A. Jones Construction Company again served as the builders. The project included the addition of seven stories containing 1.2 million square feet to the reinforced concrete structure, with the final result being a fourteen-story building with 2.1 million square feet. The skylight system was removed from the original seven stories to be added and

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then replaced at the top of the structure near the end of construction. Additionally, the original elevators were modified to serve the new floors, and twenty-four escalators and a new central electrical system were added. Using the same architect and builders, the planned expansion fit with the style and materiality of the original building. In the end, the expansion took exactly two years to the day and cost \$43,722,534. The original Apparel Mart building remained open and operational for the entire construction period.

The Apparel Mart still serves its original purpose as a wholesale space for fashions and accessories, although the use of the space has expanded beyond those categories. As part of the larger AmericasMart complex, it has become the world's largest permanent center for wholesale buying and selling. Since the 1988 expansion of the Apparel Mart, business has remained steady with numerous permanent and temporary exhibitions as well as trade shows throughout the year. As a result of such high traffic, the building has been maintained very well to continue to be an attractive space for potential buyers. The exterior of the building has also been kept very well including its sky bridge system to the other buildings in the AmericasMart complex.

Constructed between the two phases of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart is Portman's third major atrium hotel in Peachtree Center.

1985 Atlanta Marriott Marquis - John Portman & Associates

2008 Conference Center Addition - TVS Design

The Atlanta Marriott Marquis (265 Peachtree Center Avenue) and its 47-story, organically-shaped interior space demonstrate the continuing evolution of the Portman atrium hotel form and the stylistic revisions that occurred as John Portman and Associates continued its practice designing outside the United States, most notably in the four different atrium hotels built in Singapore (Photo 183-221, 271-272, Historic Photos 45-47). Commissioned July 31, 1982, the commission coincided with Portman taking control of the former Saint Joseph's Hospital site following the hospital's relocation to suburban Atlanta. Completed in July 1985, along with the adjoining Marquis One building. J.A. Jones Construction was the contractor for the building complex.

The general composition of the development is a unifying three-story podium space that is finished in lightly vertically patterned concrete topped by the 47-story hotel tower (Photos 206-207). The base connects the hotel with the two adjoining office towers to form an independent composition that honors the previous design of Peachtree Center while expanding the architectural vocabulary of the district with the hotel design (Photos 205, 223).

The plan for the hotel rooms and atrium space atop the is an ellipse or oval atop the rectangular podium base that then rises to meet the long narrow rectangular

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skylight at the top of the building (Photos 204-208). From here, the structural chords, or structural members, that supports the guest rooms suspended between each of them to form the interior atrium space that comes together in the traditional rectangular form at the top. This rectangular space extends directly upward in a straight line from floor 41 upward until the space terminates at the skylight atop the 47th floor (Photos 183-186).

Within this superstructure, the open interior corridors that lead to the guest rooms and serve as interior balconies undulate, coming in at a sharper angle to the tenth floor, where the pattern resets and extends beyond the narrowest point to then taper at a less acute stacked pattern (Photo 198). The window walls of each guestroom form an undulating exterior wall with the indention around the tenth floor exposing some additional concrete of the support chord walls (Photos 184, 203). The narrow ends of the hotel are mainly blank concrete with two vertical strips of windows running the entire height at each narrow end (Photos 185, 189). The top of the building has a parapet that holds the skyline signage. On the north facing façade, additional balconies, placed near the top and east, are colored blue and red and give some visual interest and variation to the structure (Photo 216).

The building constructed as an exposed structure, made of concrete in the Portman's refined permutation of Brutalism style. The main lobby level containing restaurants, lounges, and a swimming pool, sit atop the platform or pedestal of the building that is built to the sidewalk. From the street level, the building appears to be one large rectangular concrete mass. There are insets on the Southwest and Northwest corners along Peachtree Center Avenue that break up the form, accessing grand entrances with staircases and sculptural lions. In between the towers along Peachtree Center Avenue is the porte-cochere, or motor lobby for the Hotel, an inset space topped by hotel convention space (Photos 190, 220-221). The upper level between the Marquis Office Towers is the same brushed precast concrete panels as the rest of the podium. At the center of the upper level on the Peachtree Center Avenue façade are three flagpoles attached to the concrete panels flanked by two rectangular extensions marking the vehicular entrance and exit (Photo 220). These were once each topped by four half-barrel metal arches placed to emphasize the entrances and have since been removed. Along the John Portman Boulevard façade, there is a secondary entrance to the Marquis One Tower that still retains its barrel arches (Photos 234-235). Further down along the main hotel portion of the structure, the podium is cantilevered over the sidewalk, and below are a series of free-standing forms that were designed to serve as display windows for the small shops located in the lower levels of the hotel interior (209-210, 211). Along the Courtland Street façade, the upper levels continue their cantilever extending out to cover a secondary motor entrance (primarily used for bus loading) (Photos 214-215). Along the John Portman Boulevard side, the façade is dominated by the brown metal skinned addition designed by TVS Design that now rests atop the podium, which proceeds the length of the podium until it reaches the

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secondary entrance of the Marquis Two Tower, which never had a half-barrel arch atop this entrance (Photos 217-219).

Above this level are 47 floors of hotel rooms, with a clerestory on the tenth floor that serves as additional hospitality space, and to deliver additional light to the atrium (Photo 198). The main lobby level is on the third floor and connects to the Hyatt and Mall at Peachtree Center via sky bridges. The intent of the public areas is to provide easy access to street level. The 1,526,235 square foot building has 32 elevators; some provide views view of the atrium spaces while others are enclosed (Photo 194).

The 9.5 million cubic feet atrium reaches all the way up to the 47th floor and is topped by a large skylight bringing natural light to the entire interior space (Photo 201). The shape of the atrium is completely organic and flowing, with concrete panels topped by a metal frame or grille for holding ivy containers (Photos 191-194, 196-200). The balconies that lead to the guest rooms flow from the central cylindrical elevator tower (Photos 193-194). Short bridge extensions that are punctuated with small half-circle balcony-like spaces before flowing to the portions of the balconies that front the guest rooms (Photo 197). Arriving in the atrium from the street level Porte Cochere, or the skywalks, the main portion of the atrium becomes visible. The three levels within the podium are open, and crossed by escalators and curved staircases, but follow patterns independent from the guest room floors (Photos 201-202). At the base of the elevator tower is a small reflecting pool, the only water feature remaining in the district's atrium hotels (Photos 195, 201). Looking up toward the guest floors, the pattern of balcony bridges is broken into three segments before reaching the rectangular portion of the atrium (Photos 191-192, 198). As the elevator tower is offset, there is a second slightly smaller portion with similar pattern massing at the eastern end of the atrium space (194-195).

In 2008 a 40,000-square-foot addition for meeting space was a necessity due to large numbers coming to the Marriott Marquis. The early ballroom spaces were too small for the conventions and conferences seeking to use the hotel. The new meeting spaces were added above the top of the original platform space, replacing the original park like setting atop the podium. The exterior finish with metal panels makes it visibly different from the original concrete finish. The additional meeting space cost \$138 million and was designed by TVS Design (Photos 217-219).

In 2014, the sealing of the original unfinished concrete exterior of the entire building had both aesthetic and functional effects. The unfinished concrete was able to absorb and transmit water throughout the superstructure. The water features that were originally located on the top lobby level also demonstrated this with the damage to the conference spaces below and were removed at the same time. The lighter beige color of the sealant paint gave the hotel a brighter cleaner

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look without any of the natural concrete darkening with age and staining from rainfall (Photo 185).

There has been little change to the original use and program of the hotel. The 2008 renovations that added the conference space also included expansion of the restaurant areas replacing the outdoor park-like setting and water features. The changes to the hotel have been mainly within the standard remodeling cycle for conference hotels of new carpeting and interior repainting. The hotel is currently in excellent condition having recently undergone a significant remodeling, redecorating and refreshing. This effort led to the removal of the exterior water features and sculptures and the expansion of restaurant and meeting spaces. The hotel is arguably the best known in downtown, and its condition reflects this status.

1985 - Marquis One Tower - John Portman & Associates

The Marquis One Tower (245 Peachtree Center Avenue) (Photos 45-46 & 70) was designed to match the Cain and Harris tower, but with a slightly lower crown parapet. The Marquis One features elegant lobby spaces and a shared Porte-Cochere with the Atlanta Marriott Marquis Hotel (Photos 221, 232). The most notable difference from the other buildings at Peachtree Center is the direct street access off Peachtree Center Avenue with grand staircases protected by black granite walls topped by abstracted lion forms designed by Oliver Strebelle (Photos 229-230, 233). These lobbies are expanded from the models seen in the 230 Peachtree Building and the four office towers that surround the Peachtree Center Promenade. These new versions featured double height lobbies to incorporate both the street level and sky bridge entrances. These changes can also be seen on the exterior with double height piers supporting the main office building. The form and massing also differ in its symmetry. The other three bay buildings, Harris, International (Cain) and 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-11), have one bay that is noticeably shorter than the others. The Marquis Towers have a shorter central projection, with the bays on either side of the central bay running nearly the entire length of the building, rather than one being shortened for the original lease requirements on the 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 223-227). The strips that separate the bays are fenestrated, allowing windows between the three bays, for more light and leasable floor area. Finally, the parapet crown for this building is one course shorter than the previous buildings making them identifiably different from the original Peachtree Center office designs.

These changes to the building design make them identifiably different from the original Peachtree Center office designs. The elevator lobbies on the ground and second level or skywalk level include full height brass insets that match the brass elevator doors in the two-level lobby area (Photo 231). Continuing the use of reflective brass in the interior retail spaces located on the second-floor skywalk

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level include brass arches designed in a flat stepped rectangle style that mark the main entrances to the individual retail spaces, matching the nearby elevator doors.

1986 – The Mall at Peachtree Center (Former: Midnight Sun Restaurant, Shopping Galleries, Top of the Galleries (Midnight Sun) Dinner Theater)

The 1986 remodeling that created The Mall at Peachtree Center removed the Midnight Sun Restaurant, located below the promenade near Peachtree Street, which had fallen out of fashion, by the mid-1980's. (The Dinner Theater closed in 1978, with John Portman & Associates occupying the space for many years) (Photos 37-41). During this change, the escalators along the promenade that were inset in line with the building façades of the North (Atlanta Gas Light) and South Towers were removed and relocated to their current location parallel to Peachtree Street alongside the sidewalk. This renovation also remodeled the interior lobby spaces of the North (Atlanta Gas Light) and South Towers office towers.

The renovation of the space into the Mall at Peachtree Center in 1986 had far less impact on the Shopping Gallery space compared to the location of the Midnight Sun Restaurant. Most of the original infrastructure was retained with extensive changes to the decoration and design of the interior spaces (Photos 72-97). Skylights were placed in the former openings of the Midnight Sun Restaurant, and the lower plaza in front of the Shopping Gallery building (Photos 58-60). This concept was to make this space a hub, connecting to all other portions of the development, including the Courtland Street Parking Deck and Peachtree Center Athletic Club also developed during this period, all the way to the Westin Peachtree Plaza.

The commercial spaces on the mall level with sky bridge connections to the Hyatt and Marriott complexes are still used as commercial spaces. Those above the main mall level are either vacant or used as additional office spaces. The dinner theater space was used as the offices of John Portman and Associates and related companies for a period of time but is now vacant as it currently lacks acceptable Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility to the space. The mall-level retail, especially the food court, is thriving and the spaces just above that connect to the parking deck are partially leased by professional offices, but the upper levels leading to the former dinner theater are closed. The escalators are blocked from use with all the space above currently vacant. The lighting that enhanced the original escalator design have been removed as have the tiny strip lights that once made the promenade-facing people scoops more inviting. The skyway connections remain, and the long skyway that connects to the Courtland Street Parking Deck and the Peachtree Center Athletic Club remain (Photo 121). The development of this portion more closely relates to the series of developments proposed during the period of significance.

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1988 Marquis Two Tower - John Portman & Associates

The Marquis Two building (285 Peachtree Center Avenue) is a near clone to the Marquis One (Photo 236-250). The two main differences are the unique window pattern on the north-facing wall that includes larger glass panes and the single spiral staircase in the John Portman Boulevard lobby entrance rather than the two curved staircases of the Marquis One Tower (Photos 236-239). This building was designed as a part of a composition that included the Marriott Marquis Hotel and Marquis One office tower. As a speculative office space, its completion depended on upon having enough space leased to justify the construction cost, resulting in its 1988 completion date.

The form, massing, and scale of this building are nearly identical to the Marquis One building. It has the same symmetrical alignment of bays, shortened crown parapet, and windows in the strips dividing the bays. It also has the same entrance with Oliver Strebelle's Les Lion d'Atlanta on Peachtree Center Avenue (Photos 241-244, 245). Its most significant difference is the variation of the window pattern on the north-facing wall. The window pattern shares the same spacing between floors, but as the floor numbers increase certain glass panes are double width in pattern, forming a series of elongated 'V' shapes extending from the top of the building to the lobby levels (Photos 236, 239). This fenestration pattern is an original design element that shows the start of the evolution of Portman's design aesthetic during this period.

The other significant difference is in the lobby elevator door granite surrounds in the Marquis Two show the evolution of Portman's style following the design work on the Embarcadero Center West project in San Francisco, which occurred between the construction of the two Marquis Towers. The brass arches on the sky bridge level found in the Marquis one are missing from the Marquis Two. Overall the interior differences between the two Marquis towers are subtle when considering the overall composition (Photo 245).

- 8. Landscape characteristics of the district**, including streetscapes; front, side, and rear yards; parks and squares; recreation grounds; fields, wooded areas, hedgerows, etc.; and the relationship of these landscape characteristics to the natural terrain and the pattern of land subdivision:

The primary landscape features of the Peachtree Center are the streetscape of the grid pattern of streets of the city of Atlanta. This streetscape includes wide sidewalks, street trees, street furnishings (benches, trash bins, etc.), curb and gutter, and on-street parallel parking. The plaza in front of the 230 Peachtree Building was originally designed with original art and some greenery. Similarly, the Promenade at Peachtree Center used potted trees and hanging ivy to soften

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the hard edges of the buildings. All of the atrium spaces utilized in the buildings were designed to use some, ivy and potted trees. This greenery has been dramatically reduced since the construction period of these buildings.

9. **Physical features of historic transportation routes**—highways, streets, rail lines, street railways, etc.:

Peachtree Center has always been focused on transportation. The genesis of Peachtree Center, the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, has always been about transporting people and merchandise together to both expose a vendor to the widest possible audience and the buyer to the most options so that they might make the best possible decisions. The development of the Top of the Mart Restaurant and its two connecting sky bridges on the twenty-second floor show the concern for safely and quickly moving pedestrian patrons to the location. The most significant transportation infrastructure element that influenced Peachtree Center is the introduction of the I-75/85 Downtown Connector which began construction in the mid-1950's and began to open for service starting in 1961. The new direct transportation access would bring mart, and hotel visitors, as well as office workers directly to their parking decks where the rest of Peachtree Center could be accessed by sky bridges. This nearby connection to the interstate highway system contributed to the long-term success of the Peachtree Center complex. It might be said that Peachtree Center is a product of the development of the Interstate Highway System.

Moving beyond vehicular transportation, the 1968 development of the Continental Trailways Bus Station as a part of Peachtree Center highlights the constant intention to make Peachtree Center a nub and destination, not just for hotels, offices, or shopping, but a transit point, where even more connections can be made. Although the Continental Trailways building remains, it has been subsumed beneath the 1992 Atlanta Gift Mart Building, making it a non-contributing resource in the district due to loss of integrity.

The 1968 Continental Trailways Bus Station was the first attempt to connect Peachtree Center to the broader transportation network, and the first step in providing a variety of transportation options to Peachtree Center (Historic Photo 12).

John Portman had been a longtime proponent of mass transportation in downtown Atlanta. One of the ways this was expressed was through his leadership of Central Atlanta Progress and their development of the 1971 Central Area Plan, adopted by the City of Atlanta in March 1972 that included a proposal for a mass transit system that would become MARTA. Also included in this plan was Interstate 485, a second interstate parallel to the Downtown Connector that would destroy a significant portion of the Old Fourth Ward, Poncey-Highland, Virginia-Highland, and Morningside historic neighborhoods. It was this proposal and Portman's support of it as Chairman of Central Atlanta Progress at the time that brought John Portman his strongest criticism (*The Great Speckled Bird*, May 8, 1972, 14).

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The initiation of what would become MARTA had a difficult beginning. Originally proposed to the larger metro area, the initial 1965 referenda failed along with its 1968 successor. For the third 1971 referenda to enact a 1% sales tax to fund the system, John Portman, serving as Chairman of Central Atlanta Progress was instrumental in bringing the support of many organizations to support the second vote, including the Atlanta chapter of the American Institute of Architects. As a condition for gaining the support of the Atlanta architects, it was decided that each station should be individually designed, rather than having a standard station layout (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 66).

The construction period for MARTA, beginning in 1975, brought a great deal of disruption to downtown Atlanta. It was during the design period that Portman explored making the stretch of Peachtree Street within Peachtree Center a pedestrian mall. A variety of options were considered, but the ultimate decision to tunnel into the Peachtree Center MARTA station, rather than trench dig, as most of the other stations had been constructed, doomed this proposal (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 66).

The Peachtree Center MARTA Station opened in 1982. Its addition brought with it a few changes. The most notable were the removal of the sculptural group 'Renaissance of the City' in front of the 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-11) that now contains elevator access to the Peachtree Center MARTA station. On the opposite side of the plaza in front of the 230 building, a portion of the ground floor retail in the Merchandise Mart building that faced the plaza was replaced with a new MARTA station entrance. Across Peachtree Street, the other station entrance was added near the secondary entrance to the Mall at Peachtree Center and the Shopping Gallery Concourse, with little direct effect on the surrounding structures. The two other entrances at the southern end of the Peachtree Center station are located outside of the district.

When MARTA connected to the Atlanta Airport in 1988, it brought new significance and connectivity to Peachtree Center. A direct connection from airline to hotel room or mart booth would become a significant competitive advantage.

10. **Archaeological potential, if known or reliably inferred** (primarily sites of previously existing buildings or structures, landscape features, activities, or undeveloped areas with little or no ground disturbance). Discuss any formal archaeological investigations performed in the area:

There is little undisturbed area left in the Peachtree Center area. The potential for archaeological resources will be very low.

Exceptions to the general rule and/or historic anomalies:

Peachtree Center displays a strong unity of design. There are nearby buildings from earlier development periods and some earlier buildings that were remodeled to fit better with the modern aesthetic.

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1. **A description of representative noncontributing properties within the district.** Noncontributing properties are properties less than 50 years old, are outside the period of significance for a district that is less than 50 years old, modern intrusions, and historic properties which have lost their historic integrity (so altered that they cannot be recognized as historic properties today). Provide a list of noncontributing resources by address. Also, provide a general description of the various types of noncontributing properties within the district and the reason why they are considered noncontributing or in the case of a few noncontributing properties identify by location and describe each one.
Noncontributing

Due to the small size of the district and the relatively compressed development period, there are two non-contributing buildings. The first is the historic Atlanta Gas Light Building constructed in 1900, also known as the Atlanta Savings and Loan Building following its 1971 renovation. While this structure is altered to blend in with its surroundings of Peachtree Center during the period of significance, this building was not designed or developed by John C. Portman Jr., making it ineligible for inclusion within the district. The second building is the 1992 Atlanta Gift Mart, and its 2008 West Wing Addition. The Gift Mart was mainly constructed atop the parking garage that had been built above the 1968 Continental Trailways Bus Station, making the bus station ineligible for inclusion due to alterations and new construction outside the period of significance.

c.1900 - Former Atlanta Gas Light Building – Atlanta Savings and Loan

Just to the north of Peachtree Center, just past the MARTA entrance, is a two-story building completely sheathed in bronze or smoked glass (Photos 99-102). This building was the former headquarters for the Atlanta Gas Light Company. When they moved to the new tower next door in 1969, the old building was skinned of its former façade and remodeled with a new bronze glass curtain wall exterior to blend in better with the new building next door, reopening in 1971 as Atlanta Savings and Loan (Permit).

1992 - Atlanta Gift Mart (West Wing Addition 2008)

The third building in the Americas Mart Atlanta joining the 1962 Merchandise Mart (Americas Mart Building 1) and the 1978/1988 Atlanta Apparel Mart (Americas Mart Building 3) is the 1992 Atlanta Gift Mart (Americas Mart Building 2) (Photos 254-255, 261). The first phase of the building was primarily constructed over the former 1968 Continental Trailways Bus Station and Parking Deck, with an extension to a street-level entrance at the corner of Ted Turner Drive (former Spring Street) and John Portman Boulevard (former Harris Street) (Photos 262-263).

The Continental Trailways Bus Station was a recessed street level with a plate glass storefront the bulk of the four-story/five parking level building above

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supported by piers. The upper levels have a horizontal floor orientation, with a series of louvers in a pattern that follows the design seen in the Merchandise Mart and 230 Peachtree Building (Historic Photo 12). In this case, there are long vertical louvers that serve as a screen for the open parking floors with smaller fins, which are directly applied to the structural floor that is in horizontal alignment with and created out of the same material as the louvers. At with the top and second floor of the parking deck are concrete panels that include the louver/fins as seen in other building patterns that use similar concrete panels.

Above the parking deck is a 13-story vertical addition covered in reflective glass in a pattern that shows an homage to the parking deck, with the colored glass bands roughly corresponding to the louver fin pattern seen on the Continental Trailways Bus Station and Parking Deck (Photo 261). The size of this addition overwhelms the former bus station and parking garage. Because of the addition, the Gift Mart building is considered non-contributing. There are three horizontal bands of colored glass that for each floor, with a narrow concrete band in between that indicates each floor plate. On each floor, the horizontal glass pattern has two more narrow strips with the central horizontal glass band for each floor being three times as wide as the narrower strips at the top and bottom. The building uses green and gray colored glass in a pattern that alternates for each half of the building. The pattern is a green central band sandwiched between the two more narrow gray bands on the northern half of the building, with the pattern reversed in the southern half of the building. Where the alternate bands meet at the center of the building, there is a checkerboard pattern twelve squares wide and five squares high on each floor.

The corner entrance at Ted Turner Drive and John Portman Boulevard has a recessed entrance the full height and width of the parking deck dominated by two columns, the larger more centrally located white concrete column is hollow, with a rectangular entrance to pass through and a vertical notch that runs the full height of the column (Photo 180). The second column is a structural pier, covered in red panels. Behind this recessed area is the main glass storefront entrance to the Gift Mart.

For the 2008 Gift Mart West Wing addition, the massing and the glazing pattern are similar, with the base continuing the horizontal plane from the original 1968 parking deck. The structural piers are extended along the John Portman Boulevard façade to reach the new recessed entrance at the intersection of John Portman Boulevard and Williams Street that continues the two column pattern with the large white column being pierced by large rectangular cutouts. For the Williams Street façade, the Instead of continuing the louver pattern seen on the parking deck, the building uses a combination of smooth concrete panels combined with additional fenestration in a grid pattern. These square windows are set in a combination of rectangles at the upper levels along John Portman Boulevard. These large squares of grid windows are added at the lower levels below the rectangles along the Williams Street façade. The Andrew Young

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International façade of the gift mart addition follows the horizontal line of the parking deck continuing the use of concrete panels with a centrally located large square window covered by a screen of a square within a circle pattern. Above this varied lower façade is a five-story continuation of the glazing pattern seen on the original building (Photo 259).

13. Boundary Description

Beginning at the intersection of Baker and Courtland Streets, the boundary follows Baker Street as the Northern boundary with the exception of the block between Peachtree and Ted Turner Drive, (formerly Spring Street) where the boundary follows the streets above making John Portman Boulevard (formerly Harris Street) the northern boundary. The northern boundary extends to the intersection of Baker and Williams Streets. The westernmost boundary extends southward from this intersection along Williams Street, crossing John Portman Boulevard until it meets Andrew Young International Boulevard. The boundary then extends eastward from the intersection of Williams Street and Andrew Young International to the intersection of Ted Turner Drive and Andrew Young International to include the Westin Peachtree Plaza property at 210 Peachtree Street. Continuing the southern boundary along Andrew Young International Boulevard excluding the parcel at 215 Peachtree Street, extending down Andrew Young International Boulevard to include the parcel at 192 Peachtree Center Avenue. From the corner of Andrew Young International Boulevard and Peachtree Center Avenue, from the intersection of John Portman Boulevard and Courtland Street, the boundary then extends northward up Courtland Street to Baker Street to the starting point. See the *District Map Marked* in the attachments.

13b. Explain the choice of boundaries according to one or more of the following rationales. Explain all that apply:

- Intact historic boundaries of the district from principal historic period;

This proposed boundary includes all of the parcels within Peachtree Center that were designed and developed during the period of significance.

- Concentration of significant historic resources (the boundaries reflect the contiguous historic resources);

These boundaries form around the concentration of late modern / Brutalist period of Portman's work in downtown Atlanta that form the character-defining features of Peachtree Center.

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- Political or current legal boundaries

Not Applicable.

- Natural topographic features (ridges, valleys, rivers, creeks, and forests);
-

Peachtree Center sits on either side of the Peachtree Ridge, with Peachtree Street following the ridgeline. There is a steep drop in elevation from the ridge peak creating a drastic grade change between the east and west side of blocks bounded by Peachtree Street. The unique ways that buildings at Peachtree Center navigate this grade change create character-defining features for the buildings within the district.

- Visual barriers or a change in historic character or land use (new construction, highways, or development of a different character);

There are other buildings developed by John Portman as a part of Peachtree Center, but these buildings show a style shift toward a more postmodern style and a change in the materials used for construction in the period following the 1988 completion of the Marquis Two Tower.

- Other; explain:

Not Applicable.

13c. If applicable, discuss alternative boundaries or uncertain boundaries and identify areas where assistance in defining boundaries is needed:

Not Applicable.

13d. Describe how the area outside the district boundaries is generally different than the area within the district and include representative photographs:

The feel, scale, and design of the buildings surrounding the Peachtree Center Historic District are different from those found within the district. (Photos 252-276) For the most part, these distinctions relate to the different periods of development. Most of the buildings surrounding the district were developed during an earlier period and reflect their times of construction rather than the period of significance for the Peachtree Center Historic District. These buildings tend to be constructed to the building line, relate to the sidewalk in a traditional fashion, are limited in total height and are designed in a style that relates more to the Beaux Arts orthodoxy than the post-World War II modernism that originated in the original Bauhaus in Dessau Germany before the Second World War. (Photos 252-253, 255, 264, 274)

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These buildings relate to one another in the traditional ways of orientation to the street and pedestrian. They differ from the buildings within the district in that they don't directly relate to the more contemporary buildings, nor does the Peachtree Center development make much of an attempt to relate to them, mainly in that Portman's development approach treated these buildings more as potential development locations rather than permanent structures.

The area within the boundary is representative of the early style of Portman or was significantly influenced by his character-defining features of Peachtree Center. There are later developed buildings that are connected to Peachtree Center that have a different feel, scale and design excluding them from the district. These buildings outside the district lack the symmetry and form of Portman designs, but also lack the repetitive use of building materials and forms, especially the use of pre-cast concrete panels. (Photos 254, 256, 257-259) Primarily these buildings outside of the district are brick structures; some with stone facing that were built as the downtown Atlanta commercial district extended northward from five points. (Photos 252, 253, 255, 264-265, 274, 276) These buildings were typically constructed at the turn-of-the-twentieth century (late nineteenth into the twentieth centuries) and are indicative of the prevalent architectural styles of that period.

This buildings built by Portman outside the period of significance show the evolution of his style and form, especially in the use of patterned reflective glass rather than concrete panels and the introduction of decorative elements that introduce more of a post-modern approach to design. These shifts not only mark the ongoing progress of Portman's style but also his ventures into suburban office development that broadened Portman's architectural vocabulary. (Photos 260, 268-269, 272)

Make sure the boundary description coincides with the boundaries marked on the map(s). Provide a written history of the district to be nominated. The history of the district should be straightforward and factual.

The history is comprised of four separate but interrelated themes: (1) the physical development of the district, (2) the uses of the properties within the district, (3) the people associated with the district, and (4) events and activities that took place there.

For additional guidance on documenting the history of the district, refer to Section 6 "Additional Guidelines."

A. Summary of Historical Facts

1. **Original owner(s) or developer(s) of the district**, if applicable:
The original owner and developer of the majority of the district is John C. Portman Jr., who through a series of companies and partnerships that included E. Griffin Edwards as architectural partner and Trammell Crow as a development

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partner from 1960-1971, constructed all of the contributing buildings within the proposed district.

2. Subsequent developers of the district, if applicable:

The current owners are listed previously. The individual changes are documented and most significant changes fall within the period of Portman ownership.

3. In general, the original use(s) of properties in the district (give dates):

The area that is now considered Peachtree Center before redevelopment was formerly the northern edge of the Atlanta central business district. As a secondary space, this location contained auto retailers, parking garages and the continuation of the intensive retail uses along the Peachtree Street Corridor. Previous to the commercial development, the area was residential, most notably as the location of the 1870 Georgia Governor's Mansion at the current site of the Westin Peachtree Plaza, and later as the site of the 1923 Henry Grady Hotel. This early residential style can also be seen in the 1911 Donn Barber designed Capital City Club, built to blend in with the then surrounding residences, just outside the district at the intersection of John Portman Boulevard and Peachtree Street.

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 (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 41).

Prior to the start of development for Peachtree Center, redevelopment had already begun in the area with local landowners and developers.

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" (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 42).

As a young John Portman was working on developing the merchandise mart complex in Atlanta, he eventually joined forces with Ben Massell to develop the Atlanta Merchandise Mart the first building in what would become Peachtree Center.

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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. (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 43)

In general, the subsequent use(s) of properties in the district (give dates):

There has been little change in use of the properties within the district. Some spaces are unused due to changes in market conditions. These changes are documented in the building chronology.

4. In general, current use(s) of the properties:

Current uses are for the most part the original uses, aside from those buildings and spaces that are currently unused

6. Architects, engineers, builders, contractors, landscape architects, gardeners, and/or other artisans and craftsmen associated with the design of the development or historic resources within the district:

- John C. Portman Jr., Trammell Crow, Ben Massell, H. Griffin Edwards, J.A. Jones, Stanley P. (Mickey) Steinberg

If an architect(s) or engineer(s) designed historic resources in the district, provide the location and a description of these resources.

The original uses are documented in the building chronology below.

7. Date(s) of development and source(s) used to determine date:

The dates of development used in this documentation and are informed by the records of The Portman Archives. General dates used throughout the document are based on in-service dates. Research for these buildings has been supplemented by the City of Atlanta Building Permits collection at the Atlanta History Center. These records are incomplete, and those dates obtained from the historic building records have been indicated as such.

1. Significant persons associated with the district; summary or brief account for their significance; dates of association with the district or a property or properties within the district:

- John C. Portman Jr.

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9. Significant events or activities associated with the district, if different from routine historical functions; summary or brief account of their significance; dates of these events or activities:

- Civil Rights Movement – The events related to Civil Rights and Peachtree Center primarily relate to the coinciding of the opening dates of the Stouffer’s restaurants in the Atlanta Merchandise Mart building with the Atlanta Student Movement. Management of the Mart preferred to be on the progressive side of the racial issue, as it was becoming apparent in Atlanta following the 1960 boycott of Rich’s Department Store that segregation and the related protests against the practice were bad for business.

B. Name of the District

1. List all names by which the district is and has been known, and indicate the period of time known by each name (the preferred historic name should appear in Section 1, number 1)
 - Peachtree Center is the name that has been used to refer to the construction that was initiated by John C. Portman Jr. to revitalize the north end of downtown Atlanta.
2. Explain the origin or meaning of each name (such as original owner or developer; significant persons or events associated with the district; original or subsequent uses of the district; location/address; innovative, unusual or

Peachtree Center Historic District Chronological Building List

16. **Atlanta Merchandise Mart** (Americas Mart Building 1) – 1961, Expanded 1968, 1985.

240 Peachtree Street
(Photos 1-7, 273 Historic Photos 1-4)

17. **230 Peachtree Building** (Peachtree Center Tower) - 1965

230 Peachtree Street
(Photos 8-10, Historic Photos 4-8, - the original architectural plans are included in *Attachment 8*)

18. **Hyatt Regency Atlanta** – 1967, 1971 (Ivy/Radius Tower), 1982 (International Tower), 1995 Centennial Ballroom

245 Peachtree Street
(Photos 11-23, 269-270 Historic Photos 9-11)

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- 19. North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower**, Peachtree Center Promenade,
(Midnight Sun Restaurant) – 1969
235 Peachtree Street
(Photos 24-27, 33-35, Historic Photos 13-19)
- 20. South Tower**, Peachtree Center Promenade - 1971
225 Peachtree Street
(Photos 36-44, 56, Historic Photos 19-26)
- 21. International (Cain) Tower**, Peachtree Center Promenade – 1974
229 Peachtree Street
(Photos 45-72, Historic Photos 28-29)
- 22. International Parking Deck** - 1975
30 Andrew Young International Boulevard
(Photos 51-53)
- 23. Shopping Gallery** – 1974, Top of the Galleries (Midnight Sun) Dinner
Theater - 1976
231 Peachtree Street
(Photos 72-97, Historic Photos 30-36)
- 24. Harris Tower**, Peachtree Center Colonnade, Top of the Galleries
(Midnight Sun) Dinner Theater- 1976
233 Peachtree Street
(Photos 98-120, Historic Photo 29)
- 25. Westin Peachtree Plaza** - 1976
210 Peachtree Street
(Photos 142-166, 253-257, Historic Photos 37-41)
- 26. Atlanta Apparel Mart** (Americas Mart Building 3) – 1979, Vertical
Expansion - 1988
250 Spring Street
(Photos 167-182, 260-267, Historic Photos 42-44)
- 27. Atlanta Marriott Marquis** - 1985
265 Peachtree Center Avenue
(Photo 183-221, 271-272, Historic Photos 45-47)
- 28. Marquis One Tower** - 1985
245 Peachtree Center Avenue
(Photos 221-235, Historic Photo 45)
- 29. The Mall at Peachtree Center** (Renovation of 1974 Shopping Gallery,
1969 Midnight Sun Restaurant, and 1976 Colonnade) – 1986

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231 Peachtree Street
(Photos 122-141, Historic Photos 17-21, 30-36)

30. Marquis Two Tower - 1988
285 Peachtree Center Avenue
(Photo 236-250, 271-272, Historic Photo 48)

distinctive characteristics of the district; and/or accepted professional, scientific, technical, or traditional name).

- “Peachtree” is derived from both the main thoroughfare (Peachtree Street) that traverses the complex, and “Center” was chosen, as the development would become the new center for downtown Atlanta.

NOTE: The National Register lists districts by their historic names or by location.

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EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY

The Peachtree Center Historic District is an intact grouping of architecturally significant commercial buildings that includes three atrium hotels, seven office buildings, a shopping mall, two retail mart buildings, as well as multiple sky bridges, public spaces, accessory buildings, and parking garages. The district retains integrity as a whole because the exterior of the fifteen buildings and eleven sky bridges that make up the district's historic character possess integrity and the relationships among these historic resources have not been significantly altered since the end of the district's period of significance.

Location

These historic properties were constructed in downtown Atlanta, and their important relationship to this location continues. Peachtree Center is now synonymous with – and still at the heart of - downtown Atlanta.

Design

The overall designs of these historic properties have been preserved, including forms, plans, spaces, structures, and styles. The designs reflect the conscious decisions made by John Portman (and associated designers/architects) during the original conception and planning of these properties. As a whole, the contributing resources convey Portman's architectural style as it evolved during the period between 1961 and 1988.

Among the many architectural features of Portman's designs for Peachtree Center that have been retained, the most important are: the cylindrical form, as seen at the Westin Peachtree Plaza, (Photos 148-150, 154-156) the Hyatt Regency Ivy (Radius) Tower (Photos 14-16) Addition, and the Mall at Peachtree Center former Shopping Gallery façade (Photos 72, 75); the grand, multi-storied hotel atrium space with interior balconies and central elevators at the Westin Peachtree Plaza, (Photos 153-163) the Atlanta Hyatt Regency (Photos 19-23) and the Atlanta Marriott Marquis (Photos 191-202); the innovation in design of appropriating the successful hotel atrium space to other building types, as seen in the Shopping Gallery (Photos 78-86) and Atlanta Apparel Mart (Historic Photos 43-44); the use of precast concrete panels and exposed aggregate, which defines the facades of the office towers; the outdoor plazas at the Promenade and the 230 Peachtree Building; the compositions of mirror image buildings with repetitive floor plans, including the North/South Towers, the International/Cain Towers, and the Marquis One/Two Towers; and the sky bridges to connect pedestrians between buildings, which have all been preserved in the district.

Other design features that have been retained are: "people scoops", exterior entrances to main buildings that are defined and most easily seen as a horizontal rectangular enclosure located at many of the building entrances, such as the

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Shopping Gallery (Photos 75-78), Marquis One and Marquis Two Towers (Photos 231, 244); free-standing elevators of the central core, such as in the hotels; (Photos 19-21, 192-195) exterior glass elevators at the Westin (Photos 148-149); and open curved staircases, like those at the Westin (Photos 162-163), Marriott (Photo 191, 198, 202), and Marquis Towers. Another common design element is the escalator, which is used throughout the district, including those that crisscross the Shopping Gallery atrium space contributing to its distinct character (Photo 86).

A recurring theme among the buildings in Peachtree Center is the decision to dedicate a unique function for the top floor, typically a restaurant, such as the iconic “flying saucer” Polaris above the Hyatt (Historic Photo 11) and the revolving Sundial atop the Westin. The Sundial has remained in operation since it first opened and the Polaris has recently reopened in 2015 after being closed for several years. The Dinner Theater space at the top of the Shopping Gallery has also been preserved, mainly due to accessibility issues although it is not used at this time.

Setting

The physical environment of these historic resources and the urban character of this part of downtown Atlanta is very similar to what it was in the 1960s. The relationships between the buildings and structures within the district and between the district and its surroundings have been preserved. The three hotels, two mart buildings, seven office towers, shopping gallery, mall, and parking deck reflect the physical conditions under which these properties were built and each of these buildings still functions as it was originally intended. Of the eleven sky bridges, all but two still operate as originally designed to provide pedestrian access between buildings within the district.

Materials

The choices and combination of materials among the historic properties reveal both the design preferences of John Portman and the regional building traditions in Atlanta and in Georgia during the time. His use of precast concrete with exposed aggregate combined with a minimal amount of ornamentation is seen throughout the district; this is especially illustrated in the facades of the office towers, which have changed very little since constructed. Furthermore, the ways that Portman contrasted precast concrete walls with glass forms provided a dynamic interplay of surface treatments that still remains. Other exterior materials that have been retained include: bronze, smoked and reflective glass in curtain wall systems; (some individual panes of glass have been replaced as necessary, but matched in coating and color to be indistinguishable from the originals, much like replacing the glass in kind from a historic wood window); white marble that

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wraps freestanding piers and interior walls; Tivoli strip lights; and glazed blue brick. All of the contributing buildings and structures in the district retain the key exterior materials dating from the period of significance.

Workmanship

Portman's designs at Peachtree Center reveal his individual interpretations of the changing practices in construction and the late modern Brutalism aesthetic principles, focused on poured in place elements, and the use of brushed or exposed aggregate concrete panels, creating his unique permutation of Brutalism. The exteriors of the buildings are physical evidence of Portman's innovative use of precast concrete panels and curtain wall systems, which were evidence of the technological advances in construction at that time. This is illustrated in the round glass facades of the Westin Peachtree Plaza and the Atlanta Hyatt Regency, and the angled atrium wall of the Mall at Peachtree Center's former Shopping Gallery, which have all been retained. Other examples of workmanship that have been preserved include the glass elevators and skylights in the hotel atriums, the vertical "fin" details of precast concrete used throughout the district, the integral pots to hold hanging ivy plantings, integral concrete benches, and interior water features. The buildings and structures are evidence of the evolving technologies during the period of significance.

Feeling

As a district, Peachtree Center retains much of its original design such that it evokes a sense of urban life in downtown Atlanta during the period from the 1960s through the 1980s. The physical features of the buildings and structures, taken together, convey the district's historic character and the aesthetic sense of this time period – the "Swinging 60s and 70s" in Atlanta. This was also a time leading into the early to mid-80s when a more global mindset gained focus in Atlanta that helped to promote the further development and expansion of the region.

Association

These historic properties provide a direct link with both the cultural and architectural history of Atlanta and Georgia. The buildings and structures are sufficiently intact to convey their association with the development of downtown Atlanta and the architect John Portman. This association includes the expansion of the modern architectural style across Georgia and the related experimentation with new building forms and materials during this period.

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Essential physical features

These properties retain the essential physical features that made up the character and appearance of the historic district during the period of significance. And these properties are important for illustrating the architectural designs and construction techniques of John Portman during this time period. The major features of Portman's development are present and visible such that these properties still represent and convey the significance of the district. Although these properties have lost some historic materials and details, these retain the majority of features that illustrate his unique architectural style, such as form, façade designs, materials, and lack of ornamentation. Furthermore, the changes in popular American architectural styles that expanded the popularity of the International Style and later evolution of form during the late-20th century are readily apparent from the exteriors of these buildings.

Interiors

While their exteriors can define these historic resources, their contributions to the district and the built environment can also be appreciated at the interiors, even if most of the interiors have been rehabilitated over time. As part of standard refurbishment cycles, hotel rooms and lobby spaces have been renovated to keep up with changing styles, and the office tower interior layouts have been adapted for new tenants; however, the loss of historic fabric at the interiors has not affected the value of these historic resources. The essential floor plans of each building have been retained, including core functions and main lobby spaces. The distinct character of the interior atrium spaces in the hotels has not been changed. And while most of the finishes in the Mall are modern, the original interior spaces of the retail area have been preserved. The continuity of integrity in these buildings and structures shows the persistence and significance of Portman's architecture, as these properties have the capacity to withstand decorative surface changes and still represent his original designs.

Alterations

In general, the buildings and sky bridges in the district have all been altered at various times since the period of significance; however, the historic materials and significant features of each building and structure have been preserved. Much of the original historic fabric remains, especially at the facades of the buildings, whose essential forms have not been altered; this includes the facades of the Mart Buildings and the three hotels (although the Marriott and Hyatt exteriors have been sealed and painted). The iconic precast and glass facades of the seven office towers are original and essentially unchanged. The original exterior

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structure of the Mall atrium space remains intact, and the light wells and surrounding built-in benches have also been preserved. The parking garage is essentially as it was when first constructed.

Intrusions

The impact of intrusions upon the district's integrity is minimal. There are only two noncontributing buildings within the proposed boundaries. One of these was originally built within the Period of Significance but a large additional built outside the period of significance overwhelms the original building (the Gift Mart atop the Continental Trailways Bus Station); a different architect renovated the other and was later renovated to better match the surrounding Portman designed buildings (historic Atlanta Gas Light building, which was renovated in 1971 to be more compatible with the surrounding developments of Peachtree Center). Of the twenty-six (26) sky bridges that Portman designed to connect all of the buildings in Peachtree Center, fifteen (15) are considered noncontributing.

Summary

In summary, the district is eligible because its character has been retained through setting, location, feeling and association. And the essential forms and features of John Portman's designs are intact, such as the hotel atriums, compositions of office towers, and sky bridge connections. Most of the original historic materials are present, especially at the exterior facades of the buildings. Examples of craftsmanship and technology are present, such as the ubiquitous use of precast concrete throughout the district. Finally, all of the buildings still serve in the original functions, as essential commercial components of downtown Atlanta.

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Examples of original and historic features and materials that have been retained:

Atlanta Merchandise Mart (Americas Mart Building 1) (1961) [including Top of the Mart Restaurant (1961), 1968 Addition, and 1985 Addition]

240 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA

(Photos 1-7, 273 Historic Photos 1-4)

- Continued use as originally designed
- Original footprint and exterior form retained
- Original façades retained, including: precast concrete panels with exposed natural pea aggregate, vertical concrete “rib” detailing, narrow rectangular windows with bronze aluminum frames, vents at top of each panel, square columns covered in white marble at ground level, vertical concrete louvers at John Portman Boulevard entrance, half-barrel arched fabric canopy (1985 addition), blue glazed brick
- Original interior layout and character retained; interior was originally left unfinished as a showroom space and this interior character has been maintained

230 Peachtree Building (Peachtree Center Tower) (1965)

230 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA

(Photos 8-10, Historic Photos 4-8)

Continued use as originally designed (offices) – although a portion of the building was recently converted to use as a hotel

- Original footprint and exterior form retained – including steel frame construction required to create three separate bays
- Original façades retained, including: precast concrete panels with exposed aggregate finish, window openings and frames smaller rectangular “fins” as a decorative element, parapet crown of ventilated screens, blue bricks
- Character of original exterior plaza has been maintained (although features and finishes are new)
- Original interior core layout retained (elevators, stairs, etc.) (interior offices have been renovated)

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Hyatt Regency Atlanta (1967) [including Ivy Tower Addition (1971) and International Tower Addition (1982)]

245 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA

(Photos 11-23, 269-270 Historic Photos 9-11)

- Continued use as originally designed (hotel)
- Original footprint and exterior form retained
- Original facades retained, including: precast concrete balcony railings, exposed aggregate concrete with “fin” detail, floating decorative beams that extend beyond the facades
- Original interior layout retained, including: innovative use of atrium form, interior semi-public spaces with distinctive railings, balconies, and overlooks – reflects Portman’s variation and expansion of the atrium space as a modern urban form
- Original interior character of atrium space has been retained, as Portman’s modern interpretation of a European square, including: walls of stacked rooms, perforated ceiling that floods the space with natural light, glass elevators lined with Tivoli lights and lighted domes, composition of balconies of alternating depths, rectangular grills to hold pots of hanging ivy plantings, series of skylights in repeating grid form with tensile fabric screen below to baffle the light, clear glass dome
- Iconic Polaris revolving restaurant atop main building has been retained and was restored in 2011, including circular plan with cantilevered disks, internally lit blue glass dome (interior has been renovated but original spaces have been retained)
- 1971 addition (to provide more hotel rooms) has been retained and includes the iconic sleek black steel and glass tower in a monolithic cylindrical form (known as the Ivy Tower/Radius Tower)

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North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower (1969)

235 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA

(Photos 24-27, 33-35, Historic Photos 13-19)

South Tower (1970)

225 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA

(Photos 36-44, 56, Historic Photos 19-26)

International (Cain) Tower (1974)

229 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA

(Photos 45-72, Historic Photos 28-29)

Harris Tower (1976)

233 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA

(Photos 98-120, Historic Photo 29)

- Continued use as originally designed (offices with ground floor retail)
- Original footprints and exterior forms retained – tall, narrow rectangular forms with flat roofs
- Original facades retained, including: uniform grid of vertical fixed glass windows and precast concrete panels with natural exposed aggregate finish and decorative “fins”, darker precast concrete to articulate vertical separation between bays, precast panels with square cut-out detail at top of building to provide ventilation, two-story and four-story ornamental projecting balconies at some upper facades, linear projecting balconies along the Promenade facades, tall piers clad in white marble at ground level, glazed blue brick
- Original interior layout retained, including: long narrow bays shifted in plan to create stepped facades
- Promenade space retained, including original light wells and skylights
- Round black granite pedestal in front of South Tower (once held sculpture that has been relocated)

The Mall at Peachtree Center (the Mall) (1986) [renovation and expansion of the former Midnight Sun Restaurant (1969) and direct connection to the former Shopping Gallery (1974)]

231 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA

(Photos 72-97, 122-141, Historic Photos 17-21, 30-36)

- Continued use as originally designed (retail)
- Original footprint and exterior form retained
- Original 1969 facades retained, including: atrium structure of angled reflective glass, “people scoops” clad in white marble, band of precast concrete panels at secondary facades, glazed blue brick at ground level facades; original 1986 facades also retained

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- Original interior layout retained, including: innovative use of atrium form, interior semi-public spaces with distinctive railings, balconies, and overlooks – reflects Portman’s variation and expansion of the atrium space as a modern urban form
- Original interior layout of Shopping Gallery retained, including: four-story atrium space, bridges, crisscrossing escalators, vertical stack of shops, light wells (now filled with skylights)
- Original interior layout of Mall retained, including: arrangement of retail and food courts, skylights (that filled existing light wells), round columns, escalators (note: interior finishes are modern)
- Original features retained from 1986 renovation: two large skylights of clear glass and steel space frame structure – surrounded by integral benches of precast concrete and integral grates to hold planters (in Promenade space)
- Escalator at Peachtree Street with glass canopy (at Promenade space)

International Parking Deck (1975)

30 Andrew Young-International Boulevard, Atlanta, GA

(Photos 51-53)

A six-story open parking deck, with an internal central circulation system with sky bridge connection from the fifth level. The exterior consists of precast concrete panels with decorative scoring to tie together the variation of angle for each floor.

- Continued use as originally designed (parking)
- Original footprint, exterior form, and materials retained

Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel (Peachtree Center Plaza Hotel) (1976)

210 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA

(Photos 142-166, 253-257, Historic Photos 37-41)

- Continued use as originally designed (hotel)
- Original footprint and exterior form retained, including reflective glass cylindrical tower
- Original exterior facades retained, including: exterior elevators in tubular glass structure (express elevators to Sundial Restaurant), design scheme of color gradients in exterior mirrored glass (original glass was replaced in-kind after the 2008 tornado), series of lights at top of cylinder form (similar to Portman’s use of Tivoli lights elsewhere in the district), open box canopies at street level entrances, horizontal balcony at Spring Street façade
- Original interior layout retained, including: innovative use of atrium form, interior semi-public spaces with distinctive railings, balconies, and overlooks – reflects Portman’s variation and expansion of the atrium space as a modern urban form

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- Original interior features retained, including: atrium space with central hotel tower (reduced to its skeletal supports) and vertical transportation surrounded by enclosed space formed by exterior walls, cylinder of elevator banks, skylight with “collar” above, interior balconies with ivy holding grilles, open round staircases, large round columns
- Sundial Restaurant space at top floor retained

Atlanta Apparel Mart (Americas Mart Building 3) (1979, 1988)

250 Spring Street, Atlanta, GA

(Photos 167-182, 260-267, Historic Photos 42-44)

- Continued use as originally designed (retail)
- Original footprint and exterior form retained
- Original facades retained, including: exterior precast brushed concrete panels, open circular stair towers at four corners of building
- Original interior layout retained, including: innovative use of atrium form, interior semi-public spaces with distinctive railings, balconies, and overlooks – reflects Portman’s variation and expansion of the atrium space as a modern urban form
- Original interior features retained, including: seven-story atrium space with balconies, fan-shaped skylight was relocated to new ceiling in 1988 addition/expansion; glass elevators, 24 escalators (1988 addition)

Atlanta Marriott Marquis (1985)

265 Peachtree Center Avenue, Atlanta, GA

(Photo 183-221, 271-272, Historic Photos 45-47)

- Continued use as originally designed (hotel)
- Original footprint and exterior form retained
- Original facades retained, including: three-story podium, vertical patterned exposed concrete (note: some concrete facades have been painted)
- Original interior layout retained, including: innovative use of atrium form, interior semi-public spaces with distinctive railings, balconies, and overlooks
- Original interior features retained, including: organically shaped interior space, ellipse or oval atrium base, rectangular top of skylight terminus, interior balconies, large curved stairs, small reflecting pool at base (only one remaining in district), cantilevered spaces for display

SECTION 2

DESCRIPTION

Marquis One Tower (1985)

245 Peachtree Center Avenue, Atlanta, GA

(Photos 221-235, Historic Photo 45)

Marquis Two Tower (1988)

285 Peachtree Center Avenue, Atlanta, GA

(Photo 236-250, 271-272, Historic Photo 48)

- Continued use as originally designed (offices and retail)
- Original footprints and exterior forms retained
- Original facades retained
- Original secondary entrance with barrel arches on Harris Street façade of Marquis One Tower
- Large curved stairs

Sky bridges (1979-1986) Located throughout the district

- Continued use as originally designed (pedestrian circulation) – although two sky bridges are no longer in service
- Original forms and materials retained, including: concrete plank base, half-barrel arched tops of clear glass or smoked Plexiglas, bronze aluminum framework of regularly spaced metal ribs, exposed aggregate concrete panels or louvers, bubble dome skylights, lines of Tivoli-style lights (note: this list reflects the materials of the two different sky bridge designs within the period of significance)

(Please note: this list is not exhaustive. This list includes elements found across the entire Peachtree Center Historic District. There are additional elements that are not listed that should be taken into consideration for each individual building and structure).

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INTRODUCTION

The history of Peachtree Center is tied to the vision of John Portman, the first to combine the roles of Architect and Developer to meet his vision of modern downtown development during the Post-World War II development boom. Portman sought to develop spaces focused on the pedestrian in traditionally developed downtown areas, called a coordinate unit, that worked to incorporate the automobile separate from the pedestrian into the existing urban context.

In forging his own path, John Portman first gained notice locally, where the rising behemoth of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart announced his intention to build a new type of place in downtown Atlanta. As would be expected in combining the roles of architect and developer, and the lack of the traditional push-pull relationship that traditionally exists between a client and architect. Much of his developments were built on a speculative basis, challenging Portman to innovate on a budget, utilizing new develop approaches and employing existing materials in new ways. Undoubtedly the best example of this thrifty approach to innovation during this initial local phase of development is when John Portman introduced the internally focused semi-public enclosed atrium space of the Hyatt Regency Atlanta in 1967. This new “modern hotel atrium” first seen at the Hyatt brought Portman national attention and a series of high-profile commissions. These commissions did not protect John Portman from criticism. Other architects had more difficulty anticipating the changes occurring within the profession. This resulted in John Portman being called an “inside dealer” or someone who would reward commissions to themselves by his peers. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) perceived this new model of architect as developer a threat to their then standard way of operating, even initiating an attempt to remove Portman from the organization. This stigma would eventually fade with success, as Portman’s distinct art-filled developments would be completed, and other architects adopted his development model. The AIA would even make John Portman a Fellow in the organization.

As these new developments across the United States were coming on line, Portman began to develop internationally, taking the design solutions and forms first developed at Peachtree Center and placing them in new locations. This process was not only one-way. Often these concepts were then refined, and often these new variations were brought back to Atlanta. This history will emphasize three periods of Peachtree Center development: Local, National and International, focusing on the chronological development of Peachtree Center and its place in Portman design and development history. Paul Goldberger of The New York Times wrote “He (Portman) is the only architect of his era to create not only a series of significant buildings but a new urban type...Countless

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other architects have copied him but the music just isn't the same" (Riani, Goldberger 1990, 9).

One of the ways John Portman has distinguished his developments is the incorporation of original art. Since his first project in 1953 where he personally made his first sculpture commission, Portman has committed to incorporating art into all his projects, thereby making art an integral part of their success. The incorporation of artworks was first seen with the "Renaissance of the City" sculpture in front of the 1965 230 Peachtree Building (since removed). This use of sculpture continued with Willi Guttman's "The Big One" located today on the Peachtree Center Promenade and the looming Flora Raris inside the Atrium of the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, continuing to the bronze lions by Olivier Strebelle he commissioned for the Marquis Towers on Peachtree Center Avenue that are among the works of art commissioned by John Portman for Peachtree Center.

Before we can focus on Peachtree Center, we must first consider the biography of John Portman as well as the history of Atlanta that is intertwined with the story of John Portman and Peachtree Center, immediately preceding Atlanta history that placed Peachtree Center at the forefront of Atlanta's Civil Rights History.

John Portman's Early History

Peachtree Center's history was shaped by the vision of one man, John C. Portman Jr., and the team of professional colleagues he brought together to develop and design what would become an exploration of urban design concepts and development practices during this period from 1961 to 1988.

John Portman was born in 1924 in Walhalla, South Carolina, before relocating to Atlanta with his family when he was five years old. His father worked with the U. S. Government during the Depression, and his mother owned and operated a beauty salon. At the age of 12, Portman sold *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Liberty* magazines on the street. He also organized other children to sell gum and candy at the local theaters. While John Portman was completing his early schooling, Atlanta continued to develop as a regional hub.

John Portman and his Peachtree Center were not only shaped by his personal experiences, but also by the history of Atlanta itself. Long before Peachtree Center's development, Atlanta was a regional commercial center on a similar scale as Montgomery and Birmingham, Alabama. The development of Atlanta as the dominant regional commercial logistics and distribution center followed the successful navigation of social protest during this period when the Modern American Civil Rights Movement (1942-1968) was being led from Atlanta. The

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success of Atlanta was the result of a longstanding understanding between black and white leaders built upon mutual trust to keep Atlanta peaceful and mostly racially harmonious in the post-World War II period.

Downtown Atlanta before World War II

The area that is now considered Peachtree Center was formerly the northern edge of the Atlanta central business district. As a secondary space, this location contained auto retailers, parking garages and the continuation of the intensive retail uses along Peachtree Street. Previous to the commercial development, the area was residential and was most notably the location of the 1870 Georgia Governor's Mansion (later the site of the 1923 Henry Grady Hotel, followed by the current site of Portman's Westin Peachtree Plaza). This early residential use can also be seen in the 1911 Capital City Club just outside the district, at the intersection of John Portman Boulevard and Peachtree Street that had first been constructed as a residence before its conversion to a social club.

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 (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 41)

This development pattern continued through the 1920's and 1930's in a limited fashion due to the global recession and limited access to capital and other resources for development. The biracial nature of the city meant that the racial harmony in Atlanta that would eventually be publicized was limited. To understand the eventual success of the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta, the racial history needs to be understood.

Atlanta in the 1940s

Atlanta in the 1940s was a powder keg of racial hostility and violence. Much of the violence was instigated by an all-white city police force, which comprised, allegedly, of Ku Klux Klan members. In response to the unwarranted attacks on members of the Black community, African-American leaders responded by organizing demonstrations, increased voter registration efforts, and solicited support from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Regional Council (SRC), and other leading advocacy organizations.

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In 1945, black World War II veterans returned to the US only to be confronted by discrimination, racial intimidation and violence from whites. In Atlanta, the United Negro Veterans and the Women's Auxiliary organized hundreds of Atlantans to march from the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church to Atlanta City Hall on March 4, 1946 to protest rampant white police brutality. Further, several black leaders pressured Atlanta Mayor William B. Hartsfield to hire African-American police officers. In response, Mayor Hartsfield indicated he would listen to their request once 10,000 blacks were registered as voters.

This challenge, as well as other factors, led to African Americans pursuing an aggressive voter registration campaign that subsequently caused whites to take note of the mobilization efforts of the black Atlanta community. They also went out in droves to vote to show their newfound voting strength and their ability to determine the outcome of Atlanta elections. For the remainder of the decade, multiple black-led organizations, such as the Atlanta Civic and Political League and the Atlanta Urban League worked tirelessly to educate and register voters. Collectively, their actions led to an increase in black voters from 7,000 in 1945 to 25,000 in 1948.

The exponential growth of the black electorate in Atlanta gave African-American leaders the leverage necessary to more forcefully negotiate for improved services by the city. As an example, Mayor William Hartsfield agreed to hire eight black police officers in 1948, albeit with limitations not placed upon white officers. In return, blacks overwhelmingly supported Hartsfield during his 1949 reelection campaign.

The actions taken by blacks throughout the 1940s were foundational for future events that transformed the city. Black leaders established a give-and-take relationship with the white power structure predicated on gradualism, the incremental approach to integration and civil rights supported by the 'old guard' leadership that included Martin Luther King Sr., William Holmes Borders, A.D. Walden, and others. This approach was less confrontational but also meant that changes were slow to come and minor in shift and approach. This relationship had limitations in that full equality and civic participation, although desired, would be piecemealed to African Americans regardless of their new voting strength.

During this time, John Portman was a young student, part of a segregated Atlanta. This period undoubtedly influenced Portman's later approach to integration.

John Portman's Early Development As An Architect

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In the ninth grade, Portman took a mechanical drawing class and knew what he wanted to do with his life: "I took to it like a duck to water and from that experience decided I wanted to be an architect" (Loeterman, 2011, n.p.). After high school, Portman attended the U. S. Naval Academy until World War II ended in 1945, at which time he transferred to the Georgia Institute of Technology. During his time at Georgia Tech, Portman worked for the architectural firms Ketchum, Gina and Sharp and H.M. Heatley Associates, who he has described as "the leaders in retail design at the time." (Reed & Sullivan 2010, 28)

John Portman began his architectural education as a student in the then Beaux-Arts oriented style of the Georgia Institute of Technology. During a change in administration, the educational focus shifted to the new modern and International styles. The new styles were pioneered in Europe during the inter-world war period in the early 1930's, most notably in the Dessau, Germany Bauhaus School that produced Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, among others. The installation of future Dean Heffernan at the Georgia Tech School of Architecture in 1946 brought forth a massive shift in educational concepts and priorities, leaving behind the more classical Beaux Artes approach for a Modern approach to design, emanating from the Bauhaus school in Germany. This shift greatly affected the nascent style of Portman and his peers, combining a more traditional sensibility of massing, building placement, harmonious structural relationships with a very modern style language that was more released from the International Style orthodoxy. At the time, Atlanta was relatively isolated from the influence of the center architectural and design criticism in the Northeast and New York. Thus, Portman and his peers were able to experiment with not only style but also the practice of architecture.

Portman received a B.S. in Architecture from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1950. As a married student and father, he worked at various jobs to support his family and put himself through school.

Ben Massell And North Downtown

Prior to the construction of Peachtree Center, redevelopment had already begun in the area with local landowners and developers, including real-estate developer Benjamin Massell. Massell contracted to build office buildings for federal agencies helped jumpstart development along upper Peachtree Street in the 1950s. Atlanta Mayor William Hartsfield (1937-41, 1942-61) called Massell a "one man boom" and Atlanta architect Cecil Alexander credited him as "the one guy who got Atlanta moving to being office center of the South, because when other

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cities didn't have any space, they could come to Atlanta and move in" (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 42).

In May 1949, Ben Massell spoke during a meeting of the Atlanta Real Estate Club: "Atlanta needs—and badly needs—three or four big improvements to keep pace with other large and growing cities." Massell's list included a modern hotel, a large parking garage, and a merchandise mart. Less than a decade later, Atlanta would have its merchandise mart (*The Atlanta Constitution*, May 15, 1949, 12C).

John Portman's Local Period

During this time, John Portman was a young architect with a growing family, searching for regular commissions for his architectural practice. In September 1956, Portman merged his small firm with his former Georgia Tech professor, H. Griffith Edwards. In the early years of the firm (spanning from 1956 to 1968), Edwards and Portman received some fifty commissions. These commissions were generally small, typically involving buildings that cost less than \$200,000 and thus garnered little publicity from local newspapers (Henry 1985, 21).

One of his earliest entrepreneurial achievements was renovating the 220,000-square-foot Belle Isle Garage, a downtown Atlanta building which Portman leased with partners Herbert Martin (Portman's friend from the Navy) and E. Randolph Macon (whose father, Ed Macon, had started a campaign for an Atlanta regional market 25 years prior) (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Feb. 3, 1957, 9D). Together, the three men formed the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, Inc., incorporated July 30, 1956. The Atlanta Merchandise Mart, Inc. sought to become the regional center for the Southeastern furniture market, ousting the long-established furniture mart in High Point, North Carolina. "We are bringing to market to the buyers in its logical location," Macon asserted to Atlanta newspaper reporters, "and Atlanta can amply provide visiting buyers with the hotel, restaurant and entertainment facilities lacking in the nearest regional market place" (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Oct. 21, 1956, 16D). John Portman worked out a deal with the owner of the Belle Isle to allow him to convert one floor at a time, gradually transforming the parking garage into exhibition space. Renovations of the Belle Isle Building by Portman & Edwards were well underway by Dec 1956 and were completed in time for the Belle Isle Building's first furniture exhibition in January 1957. The first furniture trade show only had 32 exhibitors but attracted some 1,500 buyers. By the second trade show in June, the Mart expanded to 155 exhibitors and 3,000 retailers. That following January, 248 firms exhibited at the Mart, accompanied by 5,300 dealers (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Jul. 16, 1961, 7F). It was clear that the demands of a growing furniture trade show were

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exceeding space in the Belle Isle's Building. Portman, Martin, and Macon were determined to construct a new Mart (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Oct. 21, 1956, 16D).

The decision to expand the furniture mart was enthusiastically endorsed by Atlanta's civic and business leaders. The earliest promoters, excluding Portman, Martin, and Macon, were trade organizations such as the Georgia Wholesale Furniture Salesman's Association, Southeastern Travelers Exhibitors, Southern Mart of Infants' & Children, and the Georgia Retail Furniture Association, who wrote: "We know that there are individuals who think of the management of a merchandise mart as the simple real estate transaction of leasing exhibit space, and who inadvertently or perhaps purposely disregard the retailers' welfare. Having followed closely the operation of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart throughout the past year and a half, during market periods and otherwise, we realized that your organization considers retailers as an integral part of the operation of the Mart, and we take this opportunity to express our appreciation. We endorse your plans" (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Jul. 16, 1961, 7F). By the time formal plans for a new Mart headquarters were announced in August 1958, it had the support of Major Hartsfield and the Atlanta Chamber Commerce, whose spokesperson stated: "Trade associations, industry groups and directors of trade shows here and in other parts of the nation have watched with keen interest the development of plans for a modern, adequate merchandise mart for Atlanta. As we rapidly approach the million mark in population, Greater Atlanta has assembled all of the allied facilities and services needed to support such an operation" (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Aug. 24, 1958, 15D).

Despite growing support, and the initial success of the furniture mart in the Belle Isle Building, Portman and the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, Inc. still faced a major hurdle: money. The "young Atlanta business and professional men" (as *The Atlanta Constitution* referred to them in 1957) faced the challenge of finding financing in what newspapers called "one of the tightest money market periods [the country] had ever known" (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Feb. 3, 1957, 9D) (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Jul. 16, 1961, 7F). After months of consideration, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. of New York granted the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, Inc. an \$8,000,000 loan, reportedly the largest loan for a commercial building in the Southeast to that date (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Aug. 30, 1959, 1C).

The Mart owners then turned to Ben Massell, who was considered the largest property owner and builder in Atlanta (and Georgia) at the time.

Massell was convinced of the soundness of Portman's Merchandise Mart concept and looking to boost the value of his real estate holdings in the area. He

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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 23-story high-rise took just over two years to erect at a cost of \$15 million. Massell became the owner of the Merchandise Mart upon completion but sold it back to Portman for the original price of the two-million-dollar loan two years later (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 43).

Commissioned in February 1959, the Merchandise Mart project announcement was listed as the most expensive property transaction in the city of Atlanta up until that point. It was also the largest building ever to be constructed in the city and the southeast at over one million square feet. Actual construction work started on December 2, 1959, with the building being mostly completed by October 1961 (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Dec. 3, 1959, 45). The grand opening was held July 17-21, 1961; during the Atlanta Merchandise Mart's annual summer show (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Jul. 16, 1961, 1F).

In building the facility, Portman and Edwards sought to 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, the city held 623 conventions with 236,910 convention-goers spending just over \$28 million. 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" (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 43).

The new Merchandise Mart was built with comfort in mind. It featured an all-electric climate-control mechanical system, reportedly the largest in the Southeast (Steinberg 2014, n.p.). It also offered several amenities for both wholesalers and convention goers. These included two Stouffer's restaurants: one located in the first-story lounge and the other a 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 1961 (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 43). The push for an integrated restaurant made headlines. An article in the *Atlanta Daily World* on December 13, 1961, reported "5 Negroes Served at Stouffer's Here" This progressive stance avoided any sit-ins and preceded the voluntary City of Atlanta integration of Herren's Restaurant

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on Luckie Street in 1963 and the federal requirements of the federal Civil Rights Act in 1964.

Along with having a vision for a more equitable Atlanta, John Portman was also beginning to see the benefits of a larger ongoing real estate development. 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. On the eve of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart's opening, Portman was already contemplating its expansion. In an article for *The Atlanta Constitution*, Portman told reporters, "The Atlanta Mart still has not reached full maturity. This building already is nearing complete occupancy and we will be faced with another waiting list for space before too long. Months and months ago, we anticipated this continuing need and incorporated plans for expansion in our construction of the new AMM building. A second phase of construction, consisting of a building that will be identical to the new one and providing another million square feet of showroom space, will be erected on the other half of our block-long site" (this Mart expansion was completed in 1968) (*Atlanta Mart: Infant Yesterday, Today a Giant* 1961). Portman's confidence in the success of his building and Atlanta as the central market to the Southeast motivated much of his development in the city. (*Atlanta Journal & Constitution*, Sunday Edition, July 16, 1961, 7F)

The Mart was the first building designed by Edwards and Portman in what became Peachtree Center. Other architects working on the Mart included Darby & Associates, John F. Curtis, Yeakle & Associates, Ted Taylor Associates, Neal Goldman & Associates, Bryant Forney, June Gussin Associates, Inc., and Greer, Holmquist, & Chambers.

The Mart's contractor was Ben Massell, along with George A. Fuller, Foster & Cooper, Inc., and Speir & Son, Parker & Company. At the time of its construction in the 1960s, the Merchandise Mart was unique and gained much attention for its size and innovations used in its construction and development. *The Atlanta Journal* noted that even "the walls of the 23-story Atlanta Merchandise Mart building have a story of their own to tell," referring to Portman's use of precast concrete panels, designed, as the article asserted, "for architectural beauty as well as for strength" (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Jul 16, 1961, 2F). During development of the Mart, Trammell Crow, a Dallas developer, who was one of the few people with any experience in building a mart from scratch, came on as a development and financial partner. The initial success of the Mart necessitated an expansion that doubled its size in 1968 (Photo 4, 270, Historic Photo 3). The added space could accommodate additional, larger and longer shows. A second addition followed in 1986 to link the complex to the Westin Peachtree Plaza (Photos 5-6, 276). The second expansion was "built to meet the core industries'

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needs and to accommodate a new industry: contract furnishings, which includes office furniture, carpeting, and accessories" (Walker 1986, 4).

Outside of Peachtree Center, Edwards & Portman continued to take on other design work, including a variety of buildings for the Atlanta Public Schools. This period also included the design of the Greenbriar Mall (1965) in south Atlanta and the Dana Fine Arts Building (1965) on the campus of Agnes Scott College in nearby Decatur.

The success of the 1961 Atlanta Merchandise Mart created "demand for ancillary services," which Edwards & Portman met by designing an office building to be constructed to the south of the Merchandise Mart on Peachtree Street (Henry 1985, 7). This next development was the start of Portman's ability to initiate projects, providing the seed money to get a project started and attract new investors. The shift to an office building away from the Mart that Portman and Edwards had nurtured reflects a reorientation away from the very specialized and insular mart business into a more traditional landlord and developer. The need for additional mart development outside Atlanta would be very limited, with most of the natural regional centers at the time already having a mart development. (Steinberg 2016, n.p.)

Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta During the 1950s

In the late 1950s, southern sister cities, such as Birmingham, Charlotte, Greensboro, and New Orleans, were ambivalent and unaccepting of the social changes taking over the region and nation. In Atlanta, progress was gradual but evident throughout the city. As the social fabric of the Georgia capital city began to evolve, the built environment of the city also began to experience an architectural transformation-- ushering in a new, more modern Atlanta.

This shifting and newly modern Atlanta also began its transition to the headquarters of the Modern American Civil Rights Movement and is recognized as the "cradle of the civil rights movement" because of its long organizational history, leadership, and institutions that have assisted in grooming multiple generations of African Americans to achieve social, political, educational, and economic equality in the United States. While the quest for civil and human rights was long and arduous, it was during the mid-twentieth century when Atlantans, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Andrew Young, John Lewis, and other leaders were successful in securing civil rights for African Americans and other marginalized groups. Locally, black Atlantans, with their history of nonviolent protest, sought to use the ballot, their economic strength, and the courts to improve their quality of life and to eradicate discriminatory practices in the city.

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African Americans also used their negotiating powers to work in concert with white business and political leaders to build a city that both races envisioned as an inclusive, modern metropolis with a thriving and dynamic commercial center.

Always looking forward and growing, Atlanta branded itself as a “City Too Busy to Hate.” A phrase first used by Mayor Hartsfield during his administration in the 1950’s this slogan carried over to his handpicked successor, Ivan Allen Jr., when he took office in 1959. Espousing ideals of equality and growth, black and white leaders worked toward the common goal of building the downtown commercial district of Atlanta and making it the international city that it is today. This shared vision of creating a Modern Atlanta occurred simultaneously during the Modern Civil Rights Movement, which spanned from World War II to the Vietnam War (Sims-Alvarado 2017, 17).

The actions taken by African Americans in Atlanta during the previous decade did not go unnoticed by Georgians. State officials and the Georgia General Assembly used the full breadth of their power to undermine black advancements in Atlanta. As a result, African Americans continued to struggle, under even greater duress, for first-class citizenship.

Less than two weeks after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called off the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a group of African-American ministers established the Triple L Movement (Law, Love, and Liberation) to end racial segregation on Atlanta city buses. Their actions (based upon the 1956 U.S. Supreme Court case *Browder v. Gayle* that declared segregation on buses as unconstitutional) led to the U.S. District Court Northern District of Georgia desegregating the Atlanta city bus system in 1959.

Also in 1959, Whitney Young, dean of the Atlanta University School of Social Work, Professor Howard Zinn of Spelman College, and students of the Atlanta University Center (AUC) sought to desegregate the Atlanta public library system by filing a federal lawsuit. As part of their legal strategy, Morehouse student Otis Moss and Professor Irene Dobbs Jackson of Spelman College agreed to serve as plaintiffs. Facing mounting pressure from Mayor Hartsfield, the library board of trustees changed its policy to allow for the immediate integration of its libraries. On May 22, 1959, Professor Dobbs Jackson became the first African-American recipient of a library card (Sims-Alvarado 2017, 48).

The Early 1960s: Direct-Action Demonstrations and Political Power

The 1960s was a time of heightened civil unrest with organizations and individuals emboldened by the actions of the time to forge a new pathway toward

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equality and civil rights. This pathway was unlike their predecessors where gradualism through negotiation was the normative practice. Rather, it was one where young African-American leaders demanded their seats at the table and defined their own terms for achieving civil and human rights.

On February 1, 1960, the nation learned of four African-American students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, North Carolina, who sat down at a “White-only” lunch counter at a local Woolworth’s department store. The sit-in demonstration caught the attention of several AUC students. Inspired by the actions of the North Carolina students, Morehouse College students Alton Hornsby and William Andrews, along with a white professor from their college, Dr. Ovid Futch, tried to integrate the House gallery in the Georgia State Capitol on February 2. They were immediately removed from the building for violating state segregation laws.

In response to the growing tensions amongst students to engage in nonviolent protests, the presidents of the AUC schools met with student representatives to create a strategic plan before any action being taken. Dr. Rufus Clement, president of Atlanta University, suggested that the students outline their concerns and demands in the form of a manifesto. He also suggested the political document be advertised as a full-page ad in the Atlanta Journal, Atlanta Constitution, and the Atlanta Daily World. Clement agreed to help raise \$12,000 for the advertisements.

On March 9, local newspapers published “An Appeal for Human Rights” written by Spelman College student Roslyn Pope, and supported by five additional signatories. Reflecting the sentiments of the students, the “Appeal” declared, “We do not intend to wait placidly for those rights, which are already legally and morally ours to be meted out to us one at a time. Today’s youth will not sit by submissively while being denied all of the rights, privileges, and joys of life.” The manifesto received both local and national attention. Georgia Governor Ernest Vandiver found it difficult to believe that a student, let alone one of color, wrote the “Appeal.” He argued, unconvincingly, that foreign left-wing radicals possibly wrote the document. Atlanta Mayor Hartsfield praised the students for their non-violent approach toward stating their grievances.

Less than a week after the manifesto was published, hundreds of AUC students participated in the first of many sit-ins throughout the city of Atlanta. They attempted to integrate lunch counters at local department store, five-and-dime stores, and bus stations in the downtown commercial district. Over seventy-seven students were arrested with their bonds posted by various black religious and business leaders. Building upon the momentum gained from the manifesto and sit-ins, AUC student leaders convened in mid-March to establish the

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Committee on Appeal for Human Rights (COAHR) with the purpose of organizing additional direct-action demonstrations in the city.

With two eager student-led civil rights organizations in Atlanta, a generation of youth activists emerged. On October 19, COAHR launched their nonviolent direct-action campaign, which consisted of a second wave of sit-ins that targeted eight department stores in downtown Atlanta. Rich's department store at 45 Broad Street became the primary focus for demonstrators. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., along with students Lonnie King, Blonden Orbent, and Marilyn Price were taken into custody by police on the day of the non-violent protest. An additional forty-eight students were arrested on the same day.

As a result of Dr. King's arrest at Rich's, the civil rights leader was transferred from the Atlanta city jail to appear before DeKalb County Judge Oscar Mitchell, who summarily revoked his probation and ordered Dr. King to serve four months of hard labor on a road gang at the state prison in Reidsville, Georgia. On October 27, due to the intervention of Democratic presidential candidate Senator John F. Kennedy, Dr. King was released from prison. The action of Senator Kennedy energized the African-American vote behind his candidacy, which subsequently caused a political shift in American politics with blacks becoming ardent supporters of the Democratic Party.

In March 1961, COAHR student leaders Lonnie King and Herschelle Sullivan were asked to attend an urgent meeting at the Chamber of Commerce. Unaware of secret preliminary discussions held by Mayor Ivan Allen, attorney A.T. Walden and other black and white city leaders, the two student leaders were asked to enter into an agreement that would end the boycott against local businesses. In return, lunch counters and public schools in Atlanta would become integrated by fall. Many in the African-American community were unwilling to support the deal without some form of written agreement. On August 1961, as a result of the "Negotiation" (as this agreement between black and white leaders came to be called), nine African-American students integrated several Atlanta public schools, but not all businesses complied with the agreement to allow their facilities to be integrated.

It is upon this backdrop of social change that the origins of Peachtree Center began with the construction of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart (with its grand opening in 1961). Concurrently, John Portman petitioned the Stouffer's Corporation to ensure that the two restaurants that were under development as a part of the Mart, the eponymously named restaurant on the ground floor as well as the "Top of the Mart," part of Stouffer's chain of upscale downtown restaurants, would open as integrated establishments. This accommodation of

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all races began two years before the voluntary integration of Herren's restaurant in 1963 and preceded the Federal Civil Rights Act by two years.

John Portman, Architect-Developer

As John Portman created the Architect-Developer role by developing, owning, managing and designing real estate projects, his ambition expanded. At the beginning of Portman's career, the profession of the architect was in flux. The traditional process of financing an architect to manage all phases of construction was shifting to the current role of a designer who hands off the construction functions to a developer and builder. The method of financing had changed as well. In order to secure a mortgage, a developer needed to present a building's design and program to traditional bankers. During this transitional period, especially for a then regional developer like Portman, financing depended on relationship and reputation. This gave bankers influence over projects. In Portman's case, the architect was able to use his skills as a promoter to secure funding.

During the post-World War II era, the demand for office space, along with residential and industrial space, was at an unprecedented high. This demand required some innovation, including the arrival of developer as a profession (as well as a few hybrid architect-developers like John Portman).

The concept of a developer building a speculative building was a relatively new one, born of the deferred expenditures and investments of the World War II period (Nocera 1985, pg 19). One of John Portman's partners for the first buildings in Peachtree Center was Trammell Crow, who Portman had been introduced to by Atlanta developer Frank Carter during a lunch in 1960. Crow could be considered the first independent, 'speculative builder,' a term which would soon be described as a developer (Nocera 1985, pg 21). Crow had been developing speculative warehouses in the Dallas area before opening the Dallas Home Furnishings Mart on his own in 1957. This experience in developing and managing a then brand new mart in Dallas made Portman and Crow natural partners. Portman followed Crow's example in subsequent buildings, building the rest of Peachtree Center as a speculative venture in partnership with investors. All buildings in Peachtree Center were built as speculative, meaning that the role of developer during this period was to assume the risk to build space for market rental rather than for an owner client. In this relationship, Crow brought his mart and development expertise to the partnership and Portman brought his specific design capabilities. Before Crow started developing his mart in Dallas and Portman in partnership with Crow and others started developing the Atlanta Mart, the concept of a merchandise mart in the United States first comes

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from the Merchandise Mart in Chicago, originally developed by Marshall Field & Co. in 1930 (Mart History). Other such marts existed in New York and Detroit. This was not a revolutionary concept, but the business opportunities for a successful mart operation are limited by geography and transportation networks. By design, the United States would never need more than a few regional mart centers (*The Atlanta Constitution*, 18 Jan 1956, 8).

As John Portman was gaining notice for his work in designing and developing the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, he was offered an opportunity to travel to the American Institute of Architects. In 1961, Portman traveled to Brasilia, Brazil's new capital city that was completely designed by architects and urban planners, led by Oscar Niemayer and Lucio Costa. The severe, modernist insistence on uniformity of building design and disregard of public and private spaces in Brasilia had a profoundly adverse effect on Portman and led him "to question the direction of modern architecture." The plan and execution of Brasilia proved to be the embodiment of Portman's dissatisfaction with Modernism, which he felt sacrificed "innate human spiritual needs" for the "spirit of the scientific and technology." Citing the widespread view of modern architecture as "cold" and "emotionally lacking," (Reed & Sullivan 2010, 13).

Portman sought to distance himself from Modernism, stating:

"What I am seeking is a new synthesis, a synthesis that accepts much that came out of the Modern Movement, salvaging what has proven to be valid over time, while correcting those aspects to which people didn't react positively." (Reed & Sullivan 2010, 13).

After Brasilia, he refocused his attention on solving large-scale urban planning problems while reworking his philosophical approach to architecture and its relation to human needs. Although reticent to admit the influence of other architects, Portman admired Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier for their approach to design as part of a comprehensive system of social thought. Wright's concept of "organic unity as a design ideal," meaning the integration of basic geometric shapes, such as squares, circles, and triangles, into the organization and structure of a building, also held a particular attraction (Reed & Sullivan 2010, 13).

In 1963, *The Atlanta Constitution* reported Portman, as the developer, had acquired a two-block area bounded by Spring, Harris, Ivy and Cain Streets that, in addition to his existing Merchandise Mart, he intended to transform into a "Rockefeller Center-type complex" to be designed with his partner H. Griffin Edwards. (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Nov. 3, 1963, 1). Portman called this

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complex Peachtree Center. He described a master plan to “develop this two-block area into...one of the most outstanding coordinated areas in the United States,” complete with “two theaters of the performing arts, three towering office buildings and two retail merchandising facilities all combined in a single harmony of design” (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Nov. 3, 1963, 1). The Atlanta Merchandise Mart would be its cornerstone. The complex would ultimately consist of seven buildings (including a hotel, bus terminal, and parking garage) spread out over four city blocks. The first product of this new style of development was first called the Peachtree Center Tower to mark the start of this new development.

230 Peachtree Building (Peachtree Center Tower) – 1965

230 Peachtree Building was an architectural statement. Its steel and cast concrete panel construction was innovative for Atlanta (Photos 8-10, Historic Photos 4-8). Its design would be emulated in six other Peachtree Center office towers. Office buildings in Peachtree Center were constructed for lease on a speculative basis, with one or two key tenants. In the case of the 230 Peachtree Building, Travelers Insurance Company was announced as the main tenant. Other early tenants included the Federal Housing Administration, the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, and the General Mutual Investment Corporation (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Nov. 3, 1963, 1). The shift in the office market from build to suit for an owner/tenant began in the post-World War II era in response to the immediate demand for new office space (Nocera 1984, 78).

Financing for the 230 Peachtree Building came from of the First National Bank of Atlanta upon seeing the success of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart and realizing the potential for additional office space requirements from the vendors of the Mart (Steinberg 2016, n.p.).

The 30-story, 300,000 square-foot, 230 Peachtree Building (Peachtree Center Building) was built with pre-cast rusticated concrete, exposed aggregate, exterior panels, design choices that were a character-defining feature of the expansion of Peachtree Center for over 20 years. These panels are a variation from those used on the Atlanta Merchandise Mart building and represent an evolution of this modular style of construction. The incorporation of window openings within the panels gives them a much lighter and open face to the street and surrounding buildings, presenting a semi-permeable exterior, offering a glimpse inside of the building.

The building’s unique form was partially a function of the land lots below the building. The south bay of the building was built on a property with a long-term land lease and was designed for removal at the behest of the lenders (Loeterman

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2011, n.p.). This resulted in a unique form that was continuously used at Peachtree Center during the period of significance.

The 230 Peachtree Building is notable as one of the first computer-aided designed (CAD) buildings in the city, if not the United States. Set back from the street with an open, art-filled plaza and sunken garden, the distinctive organization of the skyscraper's design 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 movement 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), a 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, 156; Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 46); Steinberg 2015, n.p.).

The 230 Peachtree Building was architect-developer John Portman's second building as Edwards & Portman and the first and only to bear the singular name Peachtree Center. This office building was an opportunity for John Portman to expand beyond the mart business. This was an expansion of a new type of leasable floor space within Peachtree Center, when compared to the rented spaces within the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, and its specialized demands from manufacturers. The 230 Peachtree Building is built with the same floor heights as the Merchandise Mart so that the building could be an extension of the Mart.

When the tower first opened in 1965, it was spectacularly lit with lights located on the plaza and at the top of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart (Historic Photo 7). The building's plaza emulated the Seagram building in New York, designed by Mies van de Rohe and Philip Johnson, with open public spaces set back from the street that incorporates pedestrian amenities. This new approach first popularized with the Seagram Building pushed the building line back from the street, shifting how new office development was perceived (Historic Photos 5-6).

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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. A short, pedestrian sky bridge that provided pedestrian access to the Top of the Mart restaurant without having to navigate the street below joined the two buildings. 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) (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 47).

Parking for the 230 Peachtree Building and Atlanta Merchandise Mart followed in 1968 with the completion of the Continental Trailways Bus Terminal and parking deck that connects to the 230 Peachtree Building and the Mart by an elevated pedestrian sky bridge (Photo 259, Historic Photo 12). The bridge connects at the original gap between the 230 Peachtree Building and the Atlanta Merchandise Mart (Historic Photo 8).

Being removed from the critical and literary center of New York City at the time John Portman was starting out meant that his early career is mainly documented by smaller publications, such as the trade press relating to the Merchandise Mart and the wholesale business. John Portman was always seeking notice, as seen with the dramatic lighting installed when the 230 Peachtree Building first opened. Probably the most humbling early notice was on February 23, 1961, edition of the Atlanta Constitution where Mr. Portman is referred to as "John C. Porter Jr." This anonymity would not last for much longer. Before the completion of the parking deck and bus terminal, Portman would focus on providing lodging for the visitors to the Mart.

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. 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 (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 49).

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Initial financing for the hotel was a combination of a mortgage obtained by Portman and a local syndicate of investors who were taking advantage of accelerated depreciation from the 1954 income tax law changes. According to *Fortune Magazine* from 1963, "With ready mortgage money and the prospect of a 20 percent return on equity, it is not surprising that the motel field has been invaded by many general contractors and small investor syndicates..." This investment in hotel properties can be seen during this period in the development of the Atlanta Americana Motor Lodge (now the Doubletree Atlanta), the Heart of Atlanta Motel (since demolished and now the location of the Hilton Atlanta), and the Marriott Motor Lodge (now Sheraton Atlanta).

Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta 1963-1967

Direct-action demonstrators intensified from 1963-64 as student activists pushed to integrate hotels, hospitals, theaters, and restaurants in the downtown commercial district of Atlanta. SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), along with the assistance of comedian Dick Gregory and his wife, launched a series of organized pickets against the downtown Atlanta restaurants that denied service to African Americans. The demonstrators were often jailed, confronted by the Ku Klux Klan, and threatened by business owners. Mayor Ivan Allen Jr. represented the white Atlanta establishment by testifying on behalf of President John F. Kennedy's Civil Rights Legislation, the only Southern mayor to do so.

1964 and 1965 were watershed years in civil rights history. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. As well, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on December 10, 1964, and honored in Atlanta at the Dinkler Hotel the following month. This event was initiated by local clergy, led by Rabbi Jacob Rothschild, of The Temple (Hebrew Benevolent Congregation), whose support for Civil Rights led to the Temple being bombed on October 12, 1958. Pressured by Robert Woodruff of Coca-Cola, the Atlanta business community showed up at event to honor Dr. King at the first interracial gala held in the city.

It is during this period where both Peachtree Center and John Portman as Architect-Developer begin to come into their own and initiate the newly modern pattern of development for downtown Atlanta.

For the next two years, black Atlantans continued to mobilize for greater autonomy and inclusion within the public sphere. While great achievements were made, Atlanta public schools were still slow to integrate, African Americans were

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not equally represented on the Atlanta school board or city council. Moving forward, the greatest concern for black Atlantans following the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 was economic equality- a campaign championed by Dr. King since his involvement in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Despite demands made by civil rights activists of various races, the federal government was failing in reducing poverty throughout the US.

In response to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling, in *Heart of Atlanta Motel, Inc. v. United States*, holding that the U.S. Congress could use the power granted to it by the Constitution's Commerce Clause to force private businesses to abide by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Atlanta hotels were forced by law to integrate public accommodations. Following this landmark decision, two new hotels opened in Atlanta and willingly enforced integration at its public facilities.

In 1965, the Americana Motor Lodge became the first hotel to offer integrated accommodations in the city, a requirement of Major League Baseball in permitting the Braves to move from Milwaukee to Atlanta. The second new modern hotel to open in downtown Atlanta following the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the Regency Hyatt House (now Hyatt Regency Atlanta). Unlike anything that had been seen before, this new hotel also opened as integrated, as ensured by John Portman and the Pritzker family, the new owners of the California based chain. The opening of this full-service hotel was especially important for its willingness to rent new and modern convention and meeting space to all people.

Hyatt Regency Atlanta (Regency Hyatt House) – 1967

It is difficult to imagine what path the career of John Portman might have taken had the Hyatt Regency not been so well received (Photos 11-23, 269-270 Historic Photos 9-11). 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 on the shared, active space of a full-height central atrium lobby (J. C. Portman and Barnett 1976, 28). The idea of an internal atrium space had a precedent in Atlanta: the Antoine Graves Homes.

Portman and his associate, Mickey Steinberg, first explored the idea of the central atrium in 1962-63 with the firm's commission from the Atlanta Housing Authority to design Antoine Graves Homes (razed 2009). The Antoine Graves Homes was 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

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Regency Hyatt House) opened in May 1967, the Architectural Record proclaimed the atrium as “an idea whose time had come” (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015).

To begin construction on what would become the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, John Portman solicited funds from private investors even before financing had been secured from a bank or other lending institution. “To Portman the Regency Hyatt House in Atlanta appears in retrospect to have been an incredibly risky venture. Yet he persuaded associates who owned 80 percent of a \$20,000,000 building of unprecedented design prior to a commitment for a loan from permanent financing and before a worthy hotel operator was enlisted” (Edward, 28). This commitment to building this vision of a new style of hotel superseded all other considerations. It was the unique combination of Architect and Developer that caused the construction on this new style of building to begin.

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, 14) (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 50).

The 21-story, 800-room hotel oriented around a dramatic, full height atrium lobby, an architecturally unique feature at a time when the cost of interior square footage was at a premium. 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, 47) At the elevator’s 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 of its opening was palpable, with thousands of people arriving to see the atrium lobby (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 52).

The hotel was an oasis in downtown Atlanta for visitors, Mart buyers, and conventioners. The lobby featured a floor set with cobblestone, fan-shaped tiles that reinforced the idea of an indoor public square (Historic Photo 10). Unique glass elevators offered spectacular views to visitors and provided a memorable kinetic element to the atrium space and then continued one floor down to appear behind the bar in the Club Atlantis nightclub (formerly located one floor below the lobby level, along with Hugo’s Restaurant). Both were removed for the construction of the 1971 Ivy (Radius) Tower addition and the creation of additional meeting and conference space.

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This demand for convention and conference space in a downtown hotel contradicted the conventional wisdom of the time that people preferred motels, or the expanded version the Motor Hotel, such as the Marriott Motor Lodge and the Americana Motor Lodge (both then nearby) that provided a more urbanized motel experience, usually just providing a restaurant and swimming pool. These spaces lacked any significant meeting spaces or convention facilities. The perception of hotels at the time of the construction of the Atlanta Hyatt Regency was that they were tired and old, spaces designed more for a traveling salesman or businessman, and not for the family touring together in their own car. The Hyatt was part of a modernization effort by the existing hotel chains, like Hilton that were building new modern buildings, but in a more traditional design.

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" (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 49).

The lobby originally featured a towering fountain that rose from the terrace level along with an elevated bar known as Le Parasol Lounge, featuring a birdcage filled with tropical birds. A 1974 renovation removed Le Parasol Lounge, leaving the former parasol shaped canopy as a sculptural piece above the escalator opening below. The fountain tower was replaced by the sculpture 'Flora Raris' by Richard Lippold (Photo 19). Subsequent renovations in 2011 removed the "original flooring and many decorative lobby elements" (Photos 20-23).

Although the hotel was commissioned in 1964 from an Edwards & Portman design, there were delays due to construction funding and a strike related to contractor J.A. Jones Construction Company's operations in Charlotte, North Carolina. During construction, the building was sold to the Pritzker family who had recently purchased the Hyatt House chain of hotels in California and was seeking to expand. The original local investors were bought out at this time. Interior Designer, Ray Lang, Inc., was brought on after the building was financed by the Pritzker family and flagged as a Hyatt. Structural engineers for the project were also Edwards & Portman with Britt Alderman serving as mechanical engineers.

John Portman intended the Hyatt Regency to be the antithesis of the traditional downtown hotel. This included turning the focal point of his architecture to the interior courtyard, where all the activity would take place as stated by John Portman:

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“We wanted to create a significant space that offered a place of refuge and release within the building instead of the small cramped public spaces that were the norm for hotels at the time. After the experience of the atrium at Antoine Graves, we knew that an atrium could provide a great indoor piazza, which, if properly designed, would satisfy all these requirements” (Reed & Sullivan 2010, 31).

Although Portman sought to distance himself from the various styles of Modernism that emerged in Europe and the United States during the post-World War II era, the architectural vocabulary of his work produced during the 1960s and 1970s is most often categorized as a refined permutation of Brutalism. This association, based on the exterior aesthetic employed by Portman for the Merchandise Mart, the 230 Peachtree Building, and most notably, the Hyatt Regency. This pattern established in the early 1960’s would continue through the 1988 opening of the Marquis Two Tower. Later commissions, would also feature the pre-cast concrete curtain walls punctuated by rows of rectangular windows and the use of offset massing to produce variations in the repetitive fenestration first seen in the 1965 Peachtree Center Tower. The Hyatt Regency’s façade was a concrete wall void of windows, reflecting Le Corbusier’s rejection of the street, while features commonly associated with urban social space, including sculpture, plantings, and lounge areas, and restaurants are reserved for the interior atrium. The result of the inward focus of the Hyatt Regency was what some critics remarked was an exterior that did not relate to the street and that it was not pedestrian oriented (Reed & Sullivan 2010, 30).

Portman was mindful of this critique, explaining in his 1990 interview with Paolo Riani:

As urban designers, architects frequently over-emphasize the street facade to the exclusion of many other pressing concerns. I say, never mind just the facade, the street is not everything. We must go behind it and think of substance...The idea of the atrium is to create an interior park. Therefore, when you enter the atrium from a busy street and move into it, a resort-like image is projected. The atrium is an antithesis to congestion and anxiety...The design becomes a study of space within space. Movement through the atrium creates fun, dynamic, visible activity...It was this kind of thinking that led to our concept of the hotel design and the atrium. We were addressing the evolution of the City and the relief of congestion by seeking a more humane environment.

It was the Hyatt Regency Atlanta in 1967 that redefined hotels for decades with its atrium lobby design. An article about the hotel in *The Atlanta Constitution* several years after its opening noted it “was more than a hotel – it was a tourist attraction. People lined up to ride its glass elevators to the top of the hotel, which

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was capped by a rotating restaurant inside a blue glass bubble. The space-age bubble, lit from within, glowed over the Atlanta skyline at night like a monument to the future.”

Along with the spectacular atrium space, the blue-domed Polaris revolving restaurant was the most notable punctuation point on the Atlanta Skyline. According to William Pate, president and CEO of the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau "I remember when you would drive into Atlanta, that would always be the first thing you would see on the skyline, so you knew you were getting close. And you know, it's just a wonderful structure. For residents, I think it has a very personal and emotional attachment."

According to an article in *Atlanta Magazine* soon after the reopening of the Polaris in 2014, the origins are remembered as starting out as an afterthought.

Dreamed up when the first four floors of Portman’s futuristic hotel had already been erected. The idea came to Portman during a Saturday afternoon shopping trip with his daughter Jana, then in second grade. Portman took Jana by the construction site and told her about the glass capsule elevators that would serve as kinetic artwork for the mammoth lobby. “But what about the people who don’t have rooms here?” Jana asked. “Won’t they get to ride the elevators?”

“I couldn’t get it out of my mind,” Portman remembers nearly fifty years later. “We had been racking our heads about how to get the public more invested, to create a more synergistic space, something that would bring the hotel and the community closer together. We wanted it to be more than just a set of bedrooms.”

The following Monday morning, Portman rushed to the drafting table of Stanley Steinberg, the structural engineer on the project, with an announcement: “We’re going to put a rooftop restaurant on this thing.” As Steinberg recalls, “It was my job to figure out how to support the thing and ensure it didn’t fall down.”

Portman faced another dilemma: It wasn’t his hotel anymore. The original investors bailed on the project following hotel magnate Conrad Hilton’s declaration upon gazing out at the structure under construction and proclaimed, “That concrete monster will never fly.”

As a result of the previously discussed strike during construction, the project had been sold to the Pritzker family, owner of the then fledgling Hyatt hotel chain in 1965 after pursuing all other hotel companies of any size at that time. This would be an exception to John Portman’s usual style of retaining control of the buildings

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as a landlord and rent collector. This method usually included a private investor group, involving many different financial partners for each building.

Undeterred, Portman made a sketch of a flying saucer–accented hotel, took it to Don and Jack Pritzker, and sold them on the idea. The original price tag for Downtown’s future blue night-light was \$600,000. “The key was that John didn’t go in as an architect and say, ‘Isn’t this pretty?’” Steinberg explains. “He went in and told the new owners, ‘This will make money for you.’” Before exiting Steinberg’s office that day, Portman threw him and lead architect John Street one last spherical curve ball: The restaurant should revolve. “Oh, fine,” Steinberg, responded. “Do we know how to make a restaurant go around? Portman’s response, ‘How the hell do I know?’”

Working with Portman, Steinberg says, “was never a question of ‘Can we do this?’ but ‘How do we do this?’” So Steinberg and Street flew to Jacksonville to inspect Ember’s, a revolving restaurant perched on the eighteenth floor of the Universal Marion Building. They hired the Ember’s wizards of rotation, the Connecticut-based Macton Corporation, to create a turntable for the 4,682-square-foot Polaris. While these are called “revolving restaurants,” it’s actually the floor that rotates. Wheels are attached to the building, a track is on the floor of the restaurant, and a giant turntable helps the track glide over the wheels. It took a motor with just three-quarters of a horsepower to drive the entire thing.

The circular shape owed more to necessity than to any inspiration from the 1960s space race. “I wanted to move 100 to 200 people around the space, so a circle was just the most logical shape,” Portman explains. “I said, ‘Let’s circulate them and have them see all of the city.’ The idea was much more interesting to me than something static where you sat for two hours and saw the same thing.”

Before the Hyatt could welcome guests into Polaris, Portman had to figure out how to get 200 people out of the spaceship in the event of an emergency. In addition to two elevators, the Polaris had just one exit stair. Building codes dictated there be a second. Enter Atlanta building inspector Norman Koplun, who suggested exiting people out of the Polaris, down onto the Hyatt’s roof, and into the rooftop exit stair (Etheridge 2014, 57).

The Hyatt officially opened May 1, 1967, when it accepted its first paying guest. At the time, the hotel had a reported: “\$20 million in advance bookings, more than any American hotel ever opened outside of New York City” (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Apr. 30, 1967, 50). The Hyatt hosted its formal opening June 1967 and was considered a financial success, boasting an occupancy rate of 95% only three months later (Newman 2002, 8, Section A).

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Soon after opening, the hotel wanted to attract more convention business, so the Ivy Street level was remodeled to serve as exhibit halls. Following this renovation, the hotel attracted even more business from outside of the state, beginning a history of expansions related to conventions and their specific needs.

One of the first contracts to utilize this new convention space was the Atlanta-based Bronner Brothers hair show, beginning in 1967. The importance of the Atlanta Hyatt Regency to the minority community in hosting conventions and events for the minority community can be summed up by Xernona Clayton, former Southern Christian Leadership Conference worker, recalls one afternoon in the mid-1960s when she and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. were thrown out of the Holiday Inn across the street for arranging a luncheon for blacks and whites together. King peered up at the Hyatt and told Clayton, "You know, Xernona, maybe that will be our hotel of hope." Says Clayton: "Not only was it beautiful, new, and exciting, but it was integrated. They welcomed everybody. We could lunch and visit with each other, regardless of our color. The Hyatt treated black conventioners royally. That's why to this day, the minority community still supports and is loyal to the Hyatt" (Etheridge 2014, 61).

Mayor Andrew Young in the book *Andrew Young and the Making of Modern Atlanta* says that Young has admired the work and impact of Portman since Portman's development of the Hyatt during the civil rights movement. Over the years, he has developed a close relationship with the architect and designer. He said,

I followed the Hyatt very closely because we had one of the first [Southern Christian Leadership Conference] conventions in there in 1967, so when I go back to meet with the Hyatt when they have the annual employee award dinners and the like, I meet people that have been there thirty to forty years. (Young et al. 2016, 160)

Regarding the Hyatt, Young said that in building the hotel, John Portman, created one job per room. Young also recognized the importance of the Hyatt and other Portman-designed buildings that also welcomed African American conventions. He continued, " So simply by adding black conventions and getting churches, family reunions, [and] college visits . . . we got our hotel occupancy rate up to 89 percent, and that was before the Olympics " (Young et al. 2016, 162).

According to a local business reporter, Maria Saporta, when the Hyatt Regency opened in 1967, it instantly became one of the popular attractions in Atlanta.

The famous blue dome of the Polaris Restaurant introduced the revolving restaurant high above Peachtree Street. But it was the Hyatt's unique entrance

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that created the greatest dramatic effect, also known as the “Jesus” moment. Portman had designed the Hyatt’s front door as a tunnel that got increasingly narrow until one stepped into the mind-blowing atrium complete with the sparkling lights on the glass elevators — leading people to either say “Wow” or “Jesus” — even after repeated visits. (Saporta 2011, 3)

The Hyatt Regency was well-featured in the popular press, most notably *The Atlanta Constitution’s* ‘Section R,’ a section which highlighted all of the newly opened hotel’s new features (and represented “Regency” in its ‘R’-lettered designation.) *The Atlanta Constitution* newspaper provides a wealth of historical detail and shows the local enthusiasm for the development. Following the breakthrough of the innovative Hyatt Regency design, Portman’s work tends to be put in context following the opening of the hotel. This focus on Portman’s style usually ignores the private financial engine of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart that provides both the purpose and reason to originally construct the hotel.

The immediate impact of the design of the Atlanta Hyatt Regency is difficult to place as time has passed and the innovation of the modern hotel atrium has been adapted and adopted universally. One of the best known and most immediate adaptations of the form was the Welton Beckett design of the Contemporary Hotel at Walt Disney World outside of Orlando, Florida. During the preliminary planning for Walt Disney World, the design team came to see the newly opened Hyatt Regency during a stopover in Atlanta, after seeing the press related to the hotel’s opening. The Disney team, along with Beckett, modified the form into an extended A-frame enclosing a massive atrium space that includes an interior monorail train station within the atrium lobby. (Sklar 2013 252) The timing of the Contemporary Hotel’s opening just four years after the debut of the Atlanta Hyatt Regency provides some idea of the rapid diffusion of the concept and form. Even Portman’s next atrium hotel would come three years after Disney’s in the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero Center in San Francisco

This building and its widespread acclaim mark the beginning of Portman’s national and later international reputation. The immediate success of the poured-in-place concrete Hyatt soon required an addition to keep up with the demand for rooms.

The limited space available required a creative design solution. Instead of reflecting the design of the original structure, Portman inserted an addition that contrasted the atrium tower in materiality and form. The simplicity of geometries linked the two towers, and the new cylindrical reflective glass tower of the 1971 Ivy Tower Addition (Radius Tower) did not restrict the view from the original atrium building (Photos 14-16). Edwards & Portman designed these alterations, and J.A. Jones undertook construction in 1971. The block that contained the

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Hyatt was now even more confined, further extending the complex up to the street and sidewalk. The Hyatt Corporation was slowly beginning to absorb the entire block.

In 1982, the Hyatt Regency added the International Tower, the third hotel tower in the complex. This new section emulated the original exterior design pattern of balcony grills and openings (Photo 17). As with the Ivy/Radius Tower, the new tower only connected to the rest of the complex at the base podium level (Photo 18). This prevented the tower from distracting from the original geometry and centrality of the main atrium building.

The upcoming Olympics in 1996 created a huge demand for event space. The completion of the Sam Nunn Federal Building relocated the offices that were in the small Baker-Peachtree Federal Building located to the north of the Hyatt atrium tower. This plot was the last remaining non-hotel building on the block. Its demolition led to the Centennial Ballroom Addition (Photo 272). The immediate success of the Hyatt Regency upon opening led John Portman to consider what might become of Peachtree Center from this core of three buildings, resulting in a series of plans for future development.

The remarkable success of the Regency Hyatt House, opened new doors for John Portman's practice as he worked on many 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." 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 (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 74).

Peachtree Center Alternate Proposed Plans

The evolution of Peachtree Center has always been according to a flexible plan. Following the initial development of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, the commissioning of the 230 Peachtree Building (Peachtree Center Tower) and what would become the Atlanta Hyatt Regency (Regency Hyatt House) formed the core of what would be expanded into Peachtree Center.

From this initial core of mart, hotel, and office functions, the general program for Peachtree Center was set and would be followed for the next three decades.

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The first set of plans, the *ca. 1966 Peachtree Center 3-Tower Promenade Plan* shows the addition of the “Future Trailways Bus Terminal” along with the two towers North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower, and the South Tower, designated simply as “Future.” The terminus at the end of the proposed promenade is intriguing, what appears to be a building roughly the size of the 230 Peachtree (Peachtree Center) Building, with all three ‘bays’ being equilateral. In front of this proposed building is an ovoid shape that seems to be a reflecting pond. This plan would be the first of many proposals for the area behind the ‘gateway’ composition formed by the North (Atlanta Gas Light) and South Towers that **are** connected below-grade to the Midnight Sun restaurant. It is unclear if the Midnight Sun was included in this proposal, but there is an indication of a square green space at roughly the location of the former central light well of the restaurant.

While plans and alternates were considered for the future direction of Peachtree Center, functional development continued with the addition of accessory, support and transportation buildings.

Continental Trailways Bus Terminal and Parking Garage - 1968

Following completion of the Hyatt Regency, the next element was introduced to Peachtree Center: the five-story reinforced concrete Continental Trailways Bus Terminal and Parking Garage was built at 200 Spring Street, providing parking for the hotel, office, and Mart patrons all connected by sky bridge access (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015) (Photo 259, Historic Photo 12).

The Continental Trailways Bus Terminal and Parking Garage was announced on February 21, 1965, by representatives of the Trailways and Continental Trailways companies. The new bus terminal and garage replaced an existing Trailways Terminal on the Spring Street site (dedicated October 1953). Edwards and Portman were announced as the designers, and the unit would be more than three times larger than the current terminal, a move intended to serve the Peachtree Center development better. Once completed in early 1968, the 60,000-square-foot building included “ticket agents, a tour department, a waiting lobby, offices, a restaurant and shops” (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Feb 21, 1965, 1).

The incorporation of a transportation element in the design and flexible plan for Peachtree Center further reinforces the idea of a coordinate unit where all elements necessary for an enjoyable experience are available to the pedestrian, including a place to leave your vehicle or find an alternative to an individual automobile.

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The building still stands and serves as parking for Peachtree Center and the 1992 Atlanta Gift Mart building that was partially constructed atop the parking deck. The Bus Terminal had been previously closed before the addition (Photos 254-255).

The Death & Funeral of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

As the development of Peachtree Center continued, so did the work of Martin Luther King Jr. Encouraged by the successes related to the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, Dr. King continued pushing for social justice. In January 1968, Dr. King announced his plan to launch his Poor People's Campaign. As his conviction to end poverty became more pronounced, the media worked to portray him as "radical." Consequently, white and black leaders began to distance themselves from the civil rights leader.

On April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. Atlanta responded by welcoming and accommodating those who admired the life and work of Dr. King to the city. His funeral was attended by more than 200,000 mourners and was watched by more than 120 million viewers on live television (Sims-Alvarado 2017, 46). This demonstration of a peaceful gathering broadcast nationwide changed many perceptions of Atlanta and helped its leaders focus on further development of the city

Ongoing Peachtree Center Development

The next phase of Peachtree Center's development would extend across Peachtree Street to the east, with a three-part 'U'-shaped gateway-style development that included two office towers connected below sidewalk level by the Midnight Sun Restaurant. This phase of development, already under construction when the Hyatt Regency Atlanta opens, expands upon the notices the hotel had been receiving to show a series of integrated pedestrian-oriented spaces developed within a traditional downtown area. This next phase of office development shows the expansion of the Peachtree Center idea first announced by Edwards & Portman with the construction of the 230 Peachtree Building, but also demonstrates the ongoing variation in the development of the center, with mart buildings preceding office buildings, alternated with hotel construction as market conditions demanded.

In *Andrew Young and the Making of Modern Atlanta* by Young, the mayor lauds Portman's vision of downtown Atlanta and his contribution to the tourism industry centered in a downtown convention business district. Portman's Peachtree Center also encouraged employers to create jobs for lower-income residents.

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According to Young, “When John Portman built Peachtree Center, he envisioned the type of urban environment he had seen in Europe—people living, working, shopping, and experiencing entertainment in a walkable area.” This design was the reverse of suburban life and culture. Portman used the concept of a “coordinate unit” to plan a multi-faceted walkable central city that allows one to conduct all of his/her daily activities within an eight to ten minute walkable distance. According to Portman, “. . . .We were premature, and the concentration on building the coordinate unit was to build a job base first” (Young et al., 175). Like Portman, Young shared this vision of a livable-walkable community in downtown.

This focus on creating a new place, combined with the ongoing response to market demands, demonstrated in the naming of the North Tower after its newly signed primary tenant, the Atlanta Gas Light Company. The naming of this tower both reflects the importance of Portman signing established tenants for the future of Peachtree Center and the reputation of Portman and his partners by this time.

North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower - 1969

The North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower was the next step in what John Portman described as a Rockefeller Center-type complex. How the commission came to be between Portman and Atlanta Gas Light came to be is unclear. It seems likely that the leadership of the Atlanta Gas Light Company was aware of Portman’s developments surrounding their original office building at the corner of Peachtree and then Harris (now John Portman Boulevard). The development of the Merchandise Mart and the 230 Peachtree Building, combined with the ongoing construction of the hotel that would become the Atlanta Hyatt Regency would have made John Portman and his development style very familiar to the company’s leadership, as it could be seen from their then headquarters building. Whatever the case, Portman praised the Atlanta Gas Light Company at the building's groundbreaking on June 1, 1966, describing it as an important partner in the "overall effort to 'develop order in our crazy-quilt pattern of expansion—government can't do it alone.'" Portman further articulated a belief that "the renewal of cities could only come about through private enterprise and government joining hands" (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Jun. 2, 1966, 54).

Completed in 1969, the Atlanta Gas Light Tower (235 Peachtree Street) would be the last building produced in the partnership between Edwards and Portman (Photos 24-27, 33-35, Historic Photos 13-19). Following Edwards’ retirement, the successor firm, John Portman and Associates, would design all subsequent

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buildings. J. A. Jones was the contractor, and the developer was Trammell Crow. The Gas Light Tower, named for its main tenant, Atlanta Gas Light Company, looks a bit like the 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-11) if the southernmost bay was removed. The 24-story skyscraper contained 290,000 square feet of office and retail space.

For a young developer like Portman was at the time, landing a large commercial tenant was significant. Part of the reason the tower took the main tenant's name was to amplify the arrival of Portman to the greater Atlanta development community. This developer/tenant relationship would have some significant impacts related to the building's development aside from the name.

In front of the building stood the original sculpture "Candelabra" by Hans Van De Bovenkamp that was lit by natural gas flames, which burned with blue glass flames, reflecting the signature tenant's product (Historic Photo 16). Unfortunately, the flames could only be seen at night, significantly lessening the impact of the sculptural piece (Steinberg 2012).

As a contrast to the all-electric Mart building across the street, natural gas-powered the entire building, utilizing a natural gas-fired turbine in the basement for heat and electricity (Steinberg 2012, 2016). *The Atlanta Constitution* declared it "the first high-rise building in Georgia powered by gas turbines" (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Jun. 2, 1966, 54). The lobby of the building featured the Blue Flame room, a showroom for gas appliances. On the twenty-second floor was a sky bridge, originally lit from the below, that connected the building to the Top of the Mart Restaurant (Historic Photos 14-15). Also accessible from the North (Atlanta Light Gas) Tower was the Midnight Sun Restaurant (opened August 23, 1968) (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Aug 16, 1968, 45). Constructed below the sidewalk level, this space was accessible from the lower level of the North (Atlanta Light Gas) Tower, and later the South Tower, below grade (Historic Photos 17-19).

Following the construction of the North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower at Peachtree Center was the development of its near-mirror image twin: the Peachtree Center South Tower. The South Tower was built as a speculative endeavor without a main tenant and took an extra year before construction could begin. By this time, Portman was gaining experience as a landlord, as well as a developer. The realization that potential tenants would now have a good sense of the space they would be leasing allowed the development of the next building in the series to follow once enough tenants had been lined up and space leased to begin development (Steinberg 2016, n.p.).

In between the completion of the North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower and the South Tower, there was a change in Atlanta mayoral administrations. Sam Massell Jr.

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was the surprise winner of the 1969 city elections, beating the establishment candidate, Rodney Cook with the help of the African-American block vote to succeed Ivan Allen Jr. as mayor. This transition period also marks the rise of the Atlanta Action Forum, a biracial group of business leaders formed by Citizens and Southern Bank President Mills B. Lane and Bill Calloway that included John Portman as one of the original members. One of the early organizational meetings for the Action Forum was held at the Hyatt Regency, and later the group regularly met in the Midnight Sun Restaurant.

South Tower - 1971

The mirror image of the Peachtree Center North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower is the South Tower, a 24-story skyscraper, containing 290,000-square-feet of leasable space (Photos 36-44, 56, Historic Photos 19-26). The speculative nature of the building shows in the adaptability of the space. The South Tower once featured on its first floor, just above the lobby level, the Franklin Simons women's clothing store that was reached from Peachtree Street by a butterfly decorated cylindrical glass elevator (since removed): "taking a cue from Atlanta's famed Hyatt Regency House...a gleaming, transparent outside elevator will whisk customers right up from the sidewalk our front to the store. Butterflies, the FS motif, are etched on both the cage and the shell to produce a fluttering effect as the elevator moves up and down" (Historic Photo 23) (Atlanta Daily World, Nov 4, 1971, 2). When the Shopping Gallery was built to the east of this building in 1974, the store was also connected to The Shopping Gallery by a sky bridge, constructed by 1974, that is still visible at the back of the promenade (Photos 59-60, 64).

The incorporation of Franklin Simons, then a well know chain of stores, was the first consideration of including retail space beyond the incidental spaces already included on the ground floor of the then-current Peachtree Center buildings. Following the introduction of Franklin Simons to Peachtree Center, a reconsideration of the development as a retail center began. This would continue through the next phase of development that introduced more retail space and functions along with new office space (Steinberg 2016, n.p.).

The building combined with the North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower and the Midnight Sun Restaurant, which was sunk below-grade in the Peachtree Center Promenade between these two towers, formed the original core of what we now think of as Peachtree Center before the two larger towers and the Shopping Gallery were built in the mid-1970's.

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The black granite pedestal near the Peachtree Street sidewalk once held the sculpture “Early Mace” by Charles Perry (Photo 42, Historic Photo 24). This piece remains in the area and can be seen outside of the district next to the Peachtree Street Entrance to the SunTrust Plaza (One Peachtree Center) building.

Peachtree Center Promenade & Midnight Sun Restaurant - 1969

The completion of the South Tower also completed the first phase of what would become the Peachtree Center Promenade (Photo 35). This street level extension of the sidewalk created a new public space between the North (Atlanta Gas Light) and South Towers that was centered on the light well with its fountain and sculptural piece “The Big One” by Willi Gutmann at the center rising above the level below to be seen and noticed from the sidewalk level (Photo 43, Historic Photo 19). The light well is surrounded by a poured-in-place concrete bench backed by a concrete grille that is similarly designed to those found in the Hyatt Regency to hold ivy planters (Photos 37-38). During the time the Midnight Sun Restaurant was open, the ivy hung down into the light well and seen from the restaurant level below. These planters were originally filled with English Ivy, which is more accommodating to the Atlanta climate, rather than the variety used in the Hyatt.

Opened in 1969, the Midnight Sun Restaurant was located below the sidewalk level, and directly connected to the below-grade level of the adjoining towers by interior passage connections to the North (Atlanta Gas Light) Tower building’s elevators at the same level as the restaurant. The restaurant was also reachable by an escalator at the promenade, or street, level that ran parallel to the Atlanta Gas Light Tower’s south façade.

The Midnight Sun Restaurant was an attempt by Portman to bring some of the architectural glamor and notice to Atlanta in another attempt to emulate the program of the Seagram Building, as had been done with the plaza in front of the 230 Peachtree Building. The Midnight Sun would bring in an art-filled space uniquely designed to meet the needs of 1960’s businessmen, much as the Phillip Johnson-designed Four Seasons Restaurant had done in New York’s Seagram Building. The restaurant was an attempt to set a new standard for dining in downtown Atlanta, also mimicking the Four Seasons. Featuring a menu of Danish-inspired foods and pastries, the restaurant soon became a “culinary landmark, a handsome room looking out onto a lighted fountain, a restaurant featuring Scandinavian specialties from Gravad Lax (home cured salmon in a mustard-dill sauce) as an appetizer to Danish Aebleskiver for dessert” (The Atlanta Constitution, Dec 4, 1976, 16T). The restaurant space was dominated by

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interior ‘trees’ designed out of a series of wooden planar shapes arranged around the building’s central columns (Historic Photos 17-18). These ‘trees’ surrounded the central light well and provided an additional artistic element that could be provided on Portman’s budget, rather than the much larger acquisition budget of Johnson and Mies van de Rohe.

The one remaining element from this space is the front skylight along the Peachtree Center Promenade nearest to Peachtree Street that was once the focal point of the Midnight Sun Restaurant (Photos 37-41). The escalators, today located along the Peachtree Street sidewalk, were originally located on the sides of the promenade in the open bays of the North (Atlanta Gas Light) and South Towers. This presented something of a visible and physical barrier to enter the outdoor space. The escalators were relocated to the current location during the 1986 conversion of the space to the Mall at Peachtree Center. The planters and hanging ivy that once brought an inviting green lushness to the space have been removed, as have nearly all the pieces of original art that once brightened the promenade.

The Midnight Sun Restaurant introduced some signature Portman design elements like the extended decorative column capitals formed from wooden sheets arranged in a radial pattern surrounding the column and ‘elemental strands’ long strings of geometric shapes that hung from the ceiling (Historic Photos 17-18). These elements would reappear, most notably in the lobby of the Westin Peachtree Plaza, where similar capital forms top the massive columns supporting the cylindrical hotel tower. Originally dangling from these capital forms were elemental strands that reached down to the lake in the lobby. These elements can also be found in the original designs of the atrium spaces of the Westin Bonaventure and Shopping Gallery in Los Angeles and in the Renaissance Center in Detroit, both of which were developed during this same period.

The Midnight Sun, along with the Hyatt Regency, also served as host to the Atlanta Action Forum. The Action Forum was an organization formed to represent Atlanta’s black and white business communities and assist in the peaceful transition to integration. First formed following the surprise election of Atlanta’s first Jewish mayor, Sam Massell Jr., in 1969, the forum provided a discreet and candid space for frank discussions on the future of Atlanta.

The Midnight Sun restaurant even advertised its services as a private meeting place: “You know the Midnight Sun restaurant—the cuisine, the service, the ambience. Now you can plan your next meeting, breakfast, luncheon, dinner or reception in our new Banquet, a series of handsome Danish-inspired rooms. Flexibility to provide expansive comfort for 10 to 300; sound-proof design for

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undisturbed privacy; audio-visual and special equipment available" (The Atlanta Constitution, Mar 26, 1970, 8D).

At this phase, the Peachtree Center development had a substantial presence on both sides of Peachtree Street. Portman began giving further consideration to what might come next. It is during this period that John Portman moved forward without his former partner, Trammell Crow, truly coming into his own as the Architect as Developer. The notice the Atlanta Hyatt Regency had received, combined with the ongoing developments in a traditional downtown, brought much notice to Portman's efforts in Atlanta. Portman was developing his own unique niche in downtown redevelopments during this period.

John Portman's National Period

Edward Henry notes in his dissertation published in 1985, that "While most large architectural firms engage in competitive presentations and negotiations involving other firms, Portman's office conducted little of this sort of activity between the years 1972 and 1976...Of late, clients have sought out Portman rather than vice versa..." (32-33).

It is during this time in the early to mid-1970's that the early development of Portman's next project had begun in San Francisco. First dubbed Rockefeller Center West (due to the participation of the Rockefeller family as a financial development partner) the development would become Embarcadero Center. The Embarcadero Center was where the development style first seen at Peachtree Center was expanded and refined. This is the first refinement of design that would come from the Peachtree Center proving ground. This is the beginning of Portman's nationwide reputation and the first of his projects during this National development period.

The design of Embarcadero Center is something of a refined and expanded Peachtree Center, with a greatly expanded retail presence. The office buildings are larger as well, with a form similar to Peachtree Center, but are designed with additional step backs (six compared to three at Peachtree Center). The retail elements are on the scale of a regional mall, but with a focus on semi-public pedestrian spaces. The direct influence of Peachtree Center as a model can be seen in this project far more than subsequent projects, most notably with the anchor of the San Francisco development in the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero Center. This hotel follows the basic form of the Atlanta Hyatt Regency with its internal atrium space, but the irregular building side brings a different geometry and experience to the internal spaces.

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Peachtree Center Alternate Plans

The second proposed plan for Peachtree Center was the *ca. 1973 Henry Grady Hotel/Retail Pavilion Peachtree Center Plan*. As the title would suggest, this plan includes the first indication of what would become the Westin Peachtree Plaza (Peachtree Center Plaza Hotel), but at this point is still indicated by its predecessor's name, the Henry Grady Hotel. Also included in this plan were the completed additions to Peachtree Center, some not seen in the previous proposal. What had been the proposed bus terminal was now the "Trailways Bus Terminal and Parking Garage 800+ spaces," the Atlanta Merchandise Mart had also completed its 1968 addition, more than doubling the building's square footage, and the Ivy (Radius) Tower had appeared at the Hyatt Regency Complex. For the promenade block, the North Tower was indicated as the "Gaslight Tower Building," its mirror image twin was the "Peachtree Center South Building." Newly appeared was the proposal for the "Peachtree Cain Building," (Located at the intersection of Andrew Young International (formerly Cain Street) and Peachtree Center Avenue, (formerly Ivy Street.) with a hand-drawn addition for the International Parking Garage. In place of the Shopping Galleries was the "Retail Pavilion, with no indication of what would become the Harris Tower. Located at the intersection of John Portman Boulevard (formerly Harris Street) and Peachtree Center Avenue, (formerly Ivy Street.) Instead, the document indicated the first appearance of a "Rapid Transit Station" showing the approximate future location of MARTA. The discussion and initial planning for this system were already underway at this point. The initial map of the proposed system was likely publicized and at this point, leading up to the first MARTA referendum in 1975, and indicated the approximate locations of stations. Undoubtedly, Portman encouraged the placement at Peachtree Center (but since the placement of the North-South Line beneath Peachtree Street the placement of a station to serve Peachtree Center would have been a natural consideration at this point.) Portman was a major supporter of MARTA, especially through his work with Central Atlanta Progress and the local AIA chapter.

The next iteration of the Peachtree Center Proposed Plan was depicted by the *ca. 1974 Comprehensive Peachtree Center Plan*. This version went beyond the earlier versions to include some speculative considerations. The most noticeable of these was the addition of the "Proposed Apartment Tower" on the future location of the Atlanta Apparel Mart at the northwest corner of the development near the intersection of Spring and Harris Streets (now John Portman Boulevard and Ted Turner Drive). This proposed design would continue in this location for many years. However, the lack of interest from financiers to fund residential projects in the downtown areas kept any of the proposed residential for Peachtree Center from being realized. The plan for what would become the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel was at the same location, but the program was

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different than the previous plan and showed a square central hotel tower, rather than the ultimate cylindrical form. On the east side of Peachtree Street, the final configuration of the North and South Towers, with the Midnight Sun Restaurant, were on this map, as well as the two additional office towers based on the 230 Peachtree Building flanking the "Proposed Retail Pavilion." Just to the east of the promenade block, there was a proposed 70-story office tower serving as a terminus to the central channel view from Peachtree Street down the promenade. Further back on this block with the 70-story office tower were two more office buildings based on the 230 Peachtree Building plan. Directly to the south was a third proposed office tower similar to the other two. Directly south of the 70-story tower was another proposed hotel with additional retail on extending south from the site of the International/Cain Parking Garage. These outlying proposed developments primarily represent properties that the Portman Companies held under option, on a speculative basis, so that there would be a plan that could be put into construction quickly if an interested tenant or investor was found.

As Portman's partnerships both with H. Griffin Edwards and Trammel Crow came to an end, so did the initial Local Development Period for John Portman. As the publicity for the Hyatt Regency Atlanta went nationwide so did the requests for new Portman developments. The success of Peachtree Center as a successful downtown development during this period when both residents and business were leaving the traditional downtown areas would result in requests for the combination of elements seen at Peachtree Center to be repeated in other locations. It was in this period between the Local and National Peachtree Center development phases that the first buildings opened at Embarcadero Center, including the central office tower, One Embarcadero Center and the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero Center. These structures represented the next variation in Portman design. In this version of the Hyatt Regency atrium form, the interior atrium space is formed by the irregularly shaped building lot, creating a uniquely shaped and stepped back building form that presented additional possibilities for the atrium design.

This new interest with incorporating retail and office spaces at Embarcadero Center would show itself at Peachtree Center in the next phase of development with the International (Cain) Tower and the Shopping Gallery. The earliest proposals for incorporating additional retail into Peachtree Center followed the form first seen in Embarcadero Center. The eventual built forms would be unique to Peachtree Center and would reflect maximization of space and symmetry rather than the San Francisco model.

Racial Progress in the 1970s

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The 1970s was a decade of changes in Atlanta. The election of its first Jewish mayor, Sam Massell, Jr., was followed by the election of its first African-American vice-mayor Maynard H. Jackson, Jr., who later served as mayor from 1974-1982 and also from 1990-1994. During this period, the city's racial demographics shifted dramatically as more African American moved into the city with whites moving away into suburban communities.

Simultaneously, Atlanta was growing in response to development at Hartsfield Airport (now Hartsfield-Jackson) and the convention and commercial district of downtown Atlanta. Securing relationships, white business leaders and black political leaders worked to expand the growth of the city. Unlike the decades before, African American business leaders, architects, developers, and vendors wanted to ensure, under a black mayor, that they too acquired contracts to benefit monetarily just as their white counterparts.

Mayor Jackson wanted minorities and women to benefit from economic development opportunities at the airport and announced that 25 percent of contracts for all work done at the airport would go to African American and women business owners. This change in policy to ensure equity and the creation of economic opportunities for African Americans caused white business leaders, including John Portman, to become upset, but Jackson did not acquiesce to their opposition. The total cost of the new mid-field (currently domestic) terminal, completed in 1980, was around \$400 million (Young et al. 2016, 95). Prior to this change, white contractors usually required a much less formal bidding procedure that usually resulted in a much smaller percentage of work being granted to minority bidders. (Young et al. 2016, 95).

The Minority Business Development (MBD) program, granting 25 percent of contracts to minorities and women, was initially introduced by Mayor Massell, but Jackson used it immediately after being elected to office in 1974. Mayor Jackson required joint ventures between blacks and whites for contracts on the airport terminal and MARTA.

As the early design for the new Atlanta mid-field terminal was underway, the long-recognized importance of creating a transit system that would transport passengers to the commercial and convention district of downtown was also ongoing.

The Atlanta Action Forum discussed the united support for the MBD (Young et al., 92). The number of contracts granted to minorities and women grew from 2 to 33 percent and created 20 black millionaires as the development for the airport and MARTA ensued. One would be Herman Russell, who began as a plasterer working with architect and developer John Portman in the late 1960s as the Hyatt

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Regency was being constructed (Young et al., 2016 115). Herman Russell was able to take his experience in working with white developers to built a major contracting company. This success, especially that related to the construction of the new Atlanta International Airport during the first administration of Maynard Jackson. His connections and wealth led Russell to help support the efforts in ending segregation in Atlanta.

International (Cain) Tower - 1974

The first Peachtree Center development of this National period shows the changes in approach that Portman's new national success would inspire. Rather than just an office building with some amenity elements like restaurants, the plan for the Cain Tower expanded beyond this office oriented pattern to include a total integration of retail space to seamlessly blend into the Shopping Gallery opened the same year and combined with integrated parking directly connecting to the new International Parking Deck across Andrew Young International (formerly Cain Street). The Cain Tower, initially named for the street that bordered it to the south, was renamed when the street name changed to Peachtree Center International Tower. The street's name later was expanded to Andrew Young International Boulevard (Photos 45-72, Historic Photos 28-29), becoming the Peachtree Street International (Cain) Tower.

The Peachtree Center and International Avenue Parking Deck added four stories, designed by local Atlanta structural engineer William E. Edwards, (no relation to H. Griffin Edwards) who was a regular engineering sub-contractor to John Portman & Associates. Due to the large volume of work underway at the time, William Edwards handled the permitting for the International Garage project. (Steinberg 2016 n.p.) in 1975, expanding and mostly replacing the previous construction. This new deck would expand the parking area vertically to provide a direct sky bridge connection to the International (Cain) Tower (Photos 51-53). The design for this parking deck varies from the previous designs in its simplicity. This is most likely due to Portman's proposed plans for redeveloping the entire block, which never came to fruition. This connection would place the office tower at the center of an interconnected mixed-use development that integrated parking and retail space along with the office uses.

The design of the International (Cain) Tower shows the return to a symmetrical composition as opposed to the different development options considered during the preliminary design for the Cain Tower and Shopping Gallery. The integration of shopping spaces, along with the existing restaurant and office spaces, shows the continuing dedication to the development of Portman's all-encompassing

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coordinate unit concept, bringing together all elements of urban life on a pedestrian scale.

The Shopping Gallery - 1974

During the earlier phases of construction for Peachtree Center, a series of different treatments punctuated the east end of the Peachtree Center Promenade, including a decorated fence surrounded by greenery. Various conceptual plans show the space was proposed for a massive 70-story office or residential tower, depending on the description among other suggestions.

Ultimately, the next step in Portman's Peachtree Center was not a residential tower or another office building. It was the Shopping Gallery. *The Atlanta Constitution* newspaper announced in December 1973 "Atlanta's John Portman isn't going to be satisfied with only a wealth of pace-setting hotels and office building around the nation to his credit. [He]...is going to hop into the lucrative retail business too." The Shopping Gallery was to be "A five-story, 120,000 square-foot specialty shopping pavilion," targeted at tourists, business travelers, and people who worked in downtown Atlanta. Additionally, the unique shops would attract other Atlantans looking for specialized goods and services. Portman declared his Shopping Gallery "signal[ed] a new era in downtown Atlanta retailing" (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Dec. 6, 1973, 24D).

The Shopping Gallery at the back of the Peachtree Center Promenade originally featured original art, hanging ivy and escalators lit by Tivoli lights (Photos 72-97, Historic Photos 30-36). Aspiring to bring a new approach to retail in downtown Atlanta, the Shopping Gallery's anchor was Rich's II. Rich's II was a division of Rich's Inc., the prominent Atlanta department store company, whose main branch was nearby on the south side of the downtown business district at 45 Broad Street. Rich's II represented the department store's move towards smaller, boutique shops, described as a specialty shop for the "sophisticated young career men and women" who worked at Peachtree Center and the surrounding office buildings. Opening August 4, 1974, the Rich's II at The Shopping Gallery was the first in the city (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Mar. 5, 1974, 5D). Other tenants included Brentano's (books, records, and gifts), Ann Taylor, Little Norway, Grabel Gallery (glass sculptures), and The Library (dining and dancing). When describing his concept for the Shopping Gallery, Portman noted, "the traditional shopping center concept involves getting a major department store or two as anchors and depending on them to attract enough people to justify the smaller shops in between. In Peachtree Center (with the Shopping Gallery), we're turning that complete around...Growth in downtown Atlanta has created an entirely new army of shoppers looking for fashion merchandise whose

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needs must be served better. The Shopping Gallery.... will be a powerful magnet which Atlanta's downtown surge has created" (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Dec. 6, 1973, 24D).

Atlanta's first black Mayor, Maynard Jackson, initiated the grand opening of the Shopping Gallery on November 18, 1974 (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Nov. 19, 1974, 7D).

Following the opening of the International (Cain) Tower and the Shopping Gallery, Portman's first internationally developed project opened. The Brussels Trade Mart opened in 1975, bringing the merchandise mart format to Europe. In Atlanta, the first MARTA referendum approached a vote, and Portman's next two major projects in the United States, the Renaissance Center in Detroit and the Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Shopping Gallery were under construction in Los Angeles. The completion of Peachtree Center's Harris Tower in 1976 usually escapes much notice due to the other projects competing for attention and is often just seen as the last companion building that completed the symmetrical grouping for this block (Photo 141).

Harris Tower - 1976

The Peachtree Center Harris Tower (233 Peachtree Street) is a mirror image of the International (Cain) Tower (Photos 98-120). Its 1976 construction completed the symmetrical composition of the four office towers surrounding the Peachtree Center Promenade (Photos 35, 43, 141). The Harris Tower follows the orientation form and massing of the 230 Peachtree Building (Photos 8-10).

The orientation of the building is nearly identical to that of the 230 Peachtree Building including the significantly shortened bay on the southernmost side of each building. The tower connected directly to the Shopping Gallery building, and the mall below that has further connections to the surrounding buildings of Peachtree Center (Photos 73-74, 105-107, 109-110).

The Harris Tower was designed to be the fourth and final tower in the composition surrounding the Peachtree Center Promenade. The tower is comparable to its precedent and its design and orientation, making it nearly identical to the 230 Peachtree Building except for the balcony additions (matching those in the Cain Tower) and its placement away from Peachtree Street atop the platform podium of what became The Mall at Peachtree Center (Photos 118-119, Historic Photo 29).

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The retail space located immediately below the Harris Tower building was an innovative attempt to bring some smaller merchants and enterprises to Peachtree Center on the mall level, just below Peachtree Street. This space was a series of small stalls, similar to retail kiosks (something that had not yet become ubiquitous in American retailing at the time). The retail space was removed in 1986 for the conversion to The Mall at Peachtree Center. In 1985 the remodeling of the retail spaces beneath the Harris Tower office tower followed the connection by sky-bridge to the Atlanta Marriott Marquis hotel complex (opened 1985). The subsequent remodeling removed the small retail spaces first seen following construction.

Top of the Galleries (Midnight Sun) Dinner Theater - 1976

Built atop the shopping galleries at the same time as the Harris Tower was the Top of the Galleries (Midnight Sun) Dinner Theater, that added a nightlife option to the Peachtree Center complex (Photos 75-76, Historic Photo 36).

Originally designed to be topped by a stepped park-like space, the addition of the dinner theater attempted to provide a full-service entertainment area for the north end of downtown, but more importantly to the hotel visitors staying in the Hyatt and the soon to be completed Westin Peachtree Plaza. The Shopping Gallery and Dinner Theater design was a concept that had more cultural relevance at the time of its construction. The dinner theater was short-lived as was the concept it was based upon, closing in 1978.

The dinner theater space was later used as the offices of John Portman and Associates and related companies for a period but is now vacant.

There is a brief colonnade that connects to the MARTA station entrance fronting Peachtree Street that was built at the same time as the Harris Tower in 1976. (Photos 130-140) It connects the North Tower and the historic Atlanta Gas Light building that had been renovated to have a bronze glass curtain wall for its new tenant, the Atlanta Savings and Loan. As with the development of the International (Cain) Tower, the 1976 development of the Harris Tower also included the construction of the Dinner Theater atop the Shopping Gallery and a smaller retail space parallel to the main Promenade. This expansion of retail was intended to include an anchor store for Peachtree Center. This proposal was floated as both a full feature Rich's department store as well as a Neiman Marcus. Neither of the department store proposals came to fruition and the concourse remains a quiet and somewhat isolated corner of Peachtree Center.

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The sky-bridge connection to the Atlanta Marriott Marquis complex initiated a remodel of the retail spaces in 1985. This connection was diagonal, as seen in the connection between the Atlanta Merchandise Mart and the Atlanta Apparel Mart. The sky-bridge reoriented the space and was a part of the 1986 repositioning of the former Shopping Gallery spaces into the Mall at Peachtree Center (Photo 228). This introduced the food court concept to Atlanta (Retail History). There have been some changes to the lobby and retail areas of the building, but no significant changes that might significantly alter the look or feel of the building since the 1986 renovations.

Across Peachtree Street, the building that cast its metaphorical shadow across the development of the Harris Tower would open the same year.

Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel (Peachtree Center Plaza Hotel) - 1976

John Portman's Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, located at 210 Peachtree Street, just south of the main Peachtree Center complex. Built on the former site of the Henry Grady Hotel at the cost of \$55 million, the 1,100-room 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. (Gournay et al. 1993, 56)

Commissioned by Portman in 1969, but not finished until 1976, the Peachtree Center Plaza Hotel (210 Peachtree Street) signified John Portman and Associates new approach to hotel construction (Photos 142-166, 253-257, Historic Photos 37-41). Built upon the site of the former Governor's Mansion and its immediate predecessor, the Henry Grady Hotel. The location of the Henry Grady, adjacent to the earlier Peachtree Center developments made this location a natural site for expansion. As the property was originally the location of the Georgia Governor's Mansion, the property is owned by the State of Georgia and was controlled by Portman with a 99-year lease. The Westin Peachtree Plaza was proclaimed 'The Tallest Hotel in the World' upon its opening. (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2014 77) Commissioned in 1969, the Westin remained labeled in early plans as "the Henry Grady Hotel." Completed in 1976, the Hotel was a new landmark and symbol of a progressive Atlanta and economically rising southeast.

From Peachtree Street, visitors first came across a cascading fountain that served as a backdrop for the restaurants just below street level. The entrance led to a long corridor of a shopping arcade and into the main lobby atrium space.

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Guests entering the Spring Street motor lobby would rise via escalator to reach the main lobby area. The lobby featured a fountain filled the lake with oblong 'floating' islands that offered conversation areas and cocktail service (Historic Photo 37). "The 70-story Peachtree Plaza," the *New York Times* reported, "with its tall terraced lobby, lakes, and plants, is one of the grandest displays since the hanging gardens of Babylon" (New York Times, Mar. 14, 1976, F13).

This building can be considered not only a landmark amongst Atlanta's skyline but also a major component in the development of the core of downtown. Portman was not pleased with the way his previously designed Hyatt Regency Atlanta was being run: "he did not feel it lived up to the standards he was trying to establish for Peachtree Center" (Barnett, 156). The decor and what he felt was below standard operation pushed him to develop this hotel.

In the book *Atrium Buildings: Development and Design*, by Richard Saxon, the atrium design first seen at the Westin Peachtree Plaza is recognized as a unique form, exclusively used by John Portman (Photos 153-159). This form can be best described as a skeletal hotel tower, supports and elevators, surrounded by an enclosed atrium space at least five stories in height that terminates in a finished hotel tower, or multiple towers, as also seen in the Los Angeles Bonaventure and the Renaissance Center in Detroit. This form differs from the others in that there is not a full depth functional building space serving as one of the 'walls' of the atrium area, as can be seen in the Atlanta Hyatt Regency or the Atlanta Marriott Marquis. This form of intentionally developing an interior focused space and enclosing it by a wall without utilizing a portion of a building as an exterior wall for the atrium space is uniquely Portman's.

This form would be carried over to the 1974 Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles and the 1977 Renaissance Center in Detroit. The nearly identical hotel tower at the center of the Renaissance Center is four feet taller due to the different atrium spaces surrounding and supporting the hotel tower, supplanting the Westin Peachtree Plaza as the tallest hotel in the world, just four months after its opening.

During the presidential administration of Jimmy Carter in 1980, a Chinese trade delegation came to Atlanta during a tour following the normalization of relations with mainland China, for a stay at the Westin Peachtree Plaza. Chinese Premier Deng Xiaoping stayed in the presidential suite atop the tower and soon after, discussions were begun to bring the Portman 'coordinate unit' development concept to China (Shanghai Center History n.d. n.p.)

The Westin lobby design with its interior lake and modern 'Venetian' styling was an attempt to top the spectacular design of the Hyatt Regency. Unfortunately,

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the permeable nature of poured-in-place concrete doomed the lake, and in 1986, as a part of the renovations to unify Peachtree Center thematically the lobby was completely transformed. Recently, starting in 2010, another complete renovation of the hotel redecorated the lobby spaces to incorporate a botanical theme (Photo 155).

Portman's Contemporary Critique

The opening of the Westin Peachtree Plaza coincides with the publication of Portman's first major book, *The Architect as Developer*. This is the book that put John Portman on the map as an architect willing to explore nearly every aspect of the practice, including serving as the developer for the projects he designed. Sometimes called a manifesto, the cover of the book highlights the completion of the Westin Peachtree Plaza, a hotel that was designed by Portman with the intention to surpass the Hyatt Regency as the pinnacle of both Portman and Atlanta hotel design. It also documents the work of the firm until that time, providing some deeper insight into projects that receive little notice today, such as the 1971 Hyatt Regency O'Hare, located near the main Chicago airport in Rosemont, IL, and the Portman run businesses, like the Midnight Sun Restaurant at Peachtree Center.

It was also during this National Period, when Portman had active projects coming online in multiple American cities, including Detroit, San Francisco and Los Angeles. He was at his peak in developing around the coordinate unit concept. As these projects opened, their shortcomings were also noted. Rather than follow the open air linear plans as seen in Atlanta and San Francisco, the Los Angeles and Detroit projects shared a multi-level atrium space, similar to a shopping mall without any interior anchors, or points that visitors could use to assist with orientation within the space. This difficulty in orientation seen at the Renaissance Center is lessened in Atlanta at the Westin Peachtree Plaza by the restriction of the narrow building lot for the Westin Peachtree Plaza that placed the hotel into an individual context separate from any surrounding office spaces. Despite the improved orientation, the hotel faced criticisms of its own.

The criticism of the hotel's approach to the street and sidewalk would be echoed in the criticism related to the Detroit Renaissance Center (1977) that contained near copy of the Westin Peachtree Plaza at the center of the development, this time designated as a Marriott in Detroit. The Westin Bonaventure (1974) development in Los Angeles was dogged by the same criticisms, most notably by William C. Whyte, the urban critic, who was not fond of Portman's inwardly, focused spaces. He felt that the Portman approach to interior space sacrificed the interaction with the street and sidewalk, lessening interest to the pedestrian

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located outside the development which was too often faced with blank concrete walls (Historic Photo 39).

Writing in the *Guardian* newspaper, on the history of cities, Colin Marshall comments in response to the state of American cities at the time:

It speaks to the state of American cities in the 1970s that any development meant to entice people back in had first to guarantee their protection; hence the number of downtown buildings of that era, especially Portman's, that were accused of "turning their backs" on the streets, if not actively sucking life out of them. "Cities...have at least the image of being unsafe places," said Portman. "To reverse that, we have to give people city environments where they feel safe."

It is also during this period when these new Portman projects were opening in other cities that his profile and stature were raised, and positive notice was also made about his role as an innovator of new concepts for approaching downtown areas.

One of the better indications of Portman's place within the architectural community was the critical response to the ongoing innovations in the redevelopment of downtown areas. Critical notice for John Portman comes in two forms. The first is through recognition by the architectural historian and critic Charles Jencks who in his 1977 book *Late-Modern Architecture* uses the cylindrical volumes of Portman's Bonaventure Hotel, completed in 1976 as a part of the Bunker Hill redevelopment project in Los Angeles, California, of an example in his section on "Enclosed Skin Volumes." This definition shows the technological advancement of the glass curtain wall to near a point where the muntins and mullions start to disappear into a reflective pane. These forms rather than appearing crystalline, still have the appearance of a stretched grid due to the technological limitations of the time. This pattern can be best seen on the similar Westin Peachtree Plaza tower in Peachtree Center constructed during the same period.

The following year in Jencks' *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, Jencks refers to the geometry of the Bonaventure as banal and describes its themes as "Mega-Maniacal." The post-modern referenced in the title shows little of the historicist reference in design that we relate with the term today. This book probably best represents the brief transitional period between what we would now refer to Late Modern and true Post Modernism as defined today.

Aside from the criticism of his early architectural style, Portman was enthusiastically received by those academics that studied areas beyond purely stylistic concerns. Louis G. Redstone's 1976 book *The New Downtowns*:

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Rebuilding Business Districts, which serves as something of a primer for innovative mixed-use developments for this period, represents all of Portman's projects under development at the time: Peachtree Center, Embarcadero Center, The Bonaventure (called Bunker Hill Redevelopment), New York Marriott Marquis, (called Times Square), and the Renaissance Center, this is the single largest representation of any architectural firm. Redstone makes special note of Portman's incorporation of art into his developments. This book is essentially an encyclopedia of projects in American downtowns in any state of development, from proposal to completion, during the period from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. Within this book, no single developer is better represented than Portman.

Eherhard H. Zeidler's later 1983 book *Mixed Use Architecture in the Urban Context*, takes a similar approach to Redstone in highlighting developments with substantial illustrations and plans, but broadens the scope internationally, making Portman notable as one of the few American developers represented.

Portman's developmental approach first seen at Peachtree Center had been adapted and reinterpreted both by his own firm and other designers and developers to create the beginnings of what would be called mixed-use development. This is different from the all-encompassing nature of the coordinate unit that would include residential and related uses. The idea of mixed-use development during this period is the incorporation of office, retail and hotel use combined in a way to be most easily financed and developed. This shift in approach is especially notable following the financial failures of earlier mixed-use developments such as Colony Square in Midtown Atlanta, which originally had great difficulty trying to attract residents and shoppers back to the urban core.

It was also during this time that John Portman published his first major book, with Jonathan Barnett, *The Architect as Developer*. In this book, Portman details his approach as an architect/developer as well as why this approach is required to fulfill the demands and promise of the Coordinate Unit concept that was able to provide pedestrian-oriented spaces during a period of a dominant automobile-oriented approach to urban development. The book also serves as something of a promotional piece that helped to counteract some of the negative impressions related to this approach that had been considered 'inside-dealing' during the traditional role of the architect as designer, developer and project manager. More importantly, the book documents Portman during his most active and influential period, marking the transition from local designer/developer to influential architectural force during a period when few were offering any design solutions to the next iteration of American downtown areas. This success led to larger projects financed by more traditional means. This shift from developing individual buildings as a part of a coordinate unit to redeveloping entire city

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blocks and all the related buildings planned for the development caused Portman to approach later developments differently. This new bigger approach would be seen in the next series of proposals.

Peachtree Center Alternate Proposed Plans

Following the successful development phase that concluded in 1976 that saw the opening of the Westin Peachtree Plaza, the International (Cain), and Harris Towers, along with the Shopping Gallery and Dinner Theater brought forth further considerations for the expansion of this urban center.

The ca. 1976 Peachtree Center Portman Controlled Properties plan showed the proposed expansion locations without indicating any proposed buildings. This map included the locations of future Peachtree Center additions, the Atlanta Apparel Mart at the intersection of John Portman Boulevard and Ted Turner Drive, the 1986 addition to the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, located at Andrew Young International Boulevard and Ted Turner Drive and a piece of the properties that would become the location of the Inforum (American Cancer Society Center) at John Portman Boulevard and Williams Street. There were large portions of four additional blocks, one directly north and three to the south and east of Peachtree Center that had been under control that would not see any Portman developments.

A more specific variant of this plan is the *ca. 1976 "Peachtree Center Site Analysis Southern Block Addition Office Towers."* This version still included the proposed apartments on the site of the Atlanta Apparel Mart at the intersection of John Portman Boulevard and Ted Turner Drive and included an additional triangular parcel where Peachtree Street and Peachtree Center Drive meet, just past Baker Street, under control across the street from what would become the location of the 1992 One Peachtree Center/SunTrust Plaza. Most notable in this plan was the block south of Cain (International) and east of Peachtree, outside of the district. Here Portman proposed a new development that includes a massive office tower with a design similar to his 1974 Fort Worth Bank Tower, a rectangular form with chamfered corners and a base that flared out at an angle to the ground. Occupying the rest of the block were a large pedestrian and retail space with a smaller residential tower proposed for the southernmost portion of the block. It seems that this proposal was a combination of two projects Portman was developing outside of Atlanta. The first was the before mentioned Fort Worth Bank Tower and the other is Embarcadero Center in San Francisco (which includes large pedestrian areas surrounded by built up retail that adjoins buildings to form the block edge). Directly to the east of this block at Peachtree Center Avenue and Andrew Young International Drive was a variation of the

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hotel on the previous plan, reoriented east to west rather than north to south. Occupying the southern portion of the same block were two additional office buildings that mimic the form of the North and South Towers.

A second variation of this proposal, the ca. 1976 "Peachtree Center Site Analysis Southern Block Addition Parking," kept the full block proposals for the apartment building on the location of the future Apparel Mart at the intersection of John Portman Boulevard and Ted Turner Drive and the Office Tower/Retail/Residential block, with the proposed hotel and office buildings disappearing replaced by additional parking on two of the parcels under Portman's control at Peachtree Center Avenue and Andrew Young International Drive.

The *ca. 1976 Peachtree Center Building Group - Georgia World Congress Center (at Civic Center) Proposal* highlighted a proposed location for the Georgia World Congress Center just to the north of Peachtree Center and the Downtown Connector and across the street from the Atlanta Civic Center, along Piedmont Avenue, north of Ralph McGill Boulevard. This location and its unique design were surpassed by the current location adjoining CNN Center. The plan retained a good bit from the previous proposals, eliminating the office tower/retail/residential block directly south of the Peachtree Center promenade block. Still included were the apartment complex at the eventual location of the Apparel Mart at Peachtree Center Avenue and Andrew Young International Drive, the block with the hotel and the twins of the North and South Towers on the block south of International between Courtland and Peachtree Center Avenue, and reappearing was the 70 story office tower to the east of the promenade block across Peachtree Center Boulevard north of Andrew Ypoung International Boulevard. Probably the best indication of future development on this map were the properties indicated as under Portman control but otherwise unmarked. These areas would become the locations for the 1985 Courtland Street Parking Deck/1989 Peachtree Center Athletic Club, and the 2000 Sun Trust Plaza Garden Offices.

A more practical development plan can be seen in the *ca. 1976 Peachtree Center Development MARTA Mezzanine & Parking*. This plan showed the entirety of Peachtree Center as developed up to this point with two additions. The most significant were the appearance of the Atlanta Apparel Mart, replacing the previous location of the apartment tower at Peachtree Center Avenue and Andrew Young International Drive. The second addition was an unrealized parking deck on the block just to the east of the promenade block. More intriguingly was the "Marta Mezzanine" which was a proposal to place a portion of Peachtree Street that runs through Peachtree Center underground at the same time trenching for MARTA construction was occurring, resulting in a pedestrian plaza above the street and rapid transit that would connect the public

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spaces in Peachtree Center on either side of Peachtree Street. Ultimately, the decision to tunnel, rather than trench-dig this portion of the Peachtree Street for MARTA construction doomed this proposal.

The next variation, *ca. 1977 Peachtree Center Development Alternate Office Addition* took the previous plan with its addition of the Atlanta Apparel Mart and replaced the proposed parking to the east of the promenade block with two new office towers configured similarly to the South Tower, with the northernmost bay of both towers being slightly extended to the west. In between these two towers was a roughly cruciform connector, with a small square of green space indicated on the eastern end of the parcel.

John Portman's International Period

The late appearance of the Apparel Mart in the planning process shows the influence of the constantly flexible plan for Peachtree Center. This revision also shows the impact that projects outside of Atlanta had on the planning for Peachtree Center. During this time, Portman's development of the Brussels International Trade Mart developed in partnership with Trammell Crow, Portman's former partner in the initial development of the Mart and the early promenade developments of Peachtree Center, led to a reconsideration of the Mart experience. Stanley Marcus, of the Dallas-based Neiman Marcus department store chain, was a supporter of the Brussels Mart along with Portman's former partner and developer of the Dallas (Home Furnishings) Mart, Trammell Crow. Marcus sought to replicate the success he had in consolidating the locations that Marcus' apparel buyers would need to visit in the United States. Marcus' encouragement in replicating the focus of the Brussels Mart in supporting the consolidation of the number of locations his apparel buyers needed to visit in the United States. The success of the Brussels Mart also reflects the constant expansion of the Mart business over time (Steinberg, 2016 n.p.).

The Apparel Mart would surpass the Brussels Trade Mart in size and helped reinforce the attraction of the Mart functions to Peachtree Center, consolidating the different categories in the new building and allowing further expansion for the vendors in the existing Merchandise Mart as space was vacated. The Atlanta Apparel Mart also marks the beginning of the international period of development at Peachtree Center, where an internationally developed model, such as the Brussels Trade Mart is reinterpreted for Peachtree Center. This interchange of ideas and forms would continue for the rest of the period of significance for the Peachtree Center Historic District.

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Atlanta Apparel Mart (Americas Mart Building 3) - 1979

The Apparel Mart is centered on a fan-shaped atrium and is Portman's first Atlanta development that was planned to take up an entire city block (Photos 167-182, 260-267, Historic Photos 42-44). The Atlanta Apparel Mart (250 Spring Street) opened with a *Gone with the Wind*-themed grand opening on November 2, 1979.

The major alteration to the exterior of the building came with the two-year expansion that began on January 1, 1987. John Portman and Associates was again the architect for the expansion and J. A. Jones Construction Company again served as the builders. The project included the addition of seven stories containing 1.2 million square feet to the reinforced concrete structure, with the final result being a fourteen-story building with 2.1 million square feet. The skylight system was removed from the original seven stories, to be added and then replaced at the top of the structure near the end of construction. Additionally, the original elevators were modified to serve the new floors, and twenty-four escalators and a new central electrical system were added. Using the same architect and builders, the planned expansion fit with the style and materiality of the original building. In the end, the expansion took exactly two years to the day and cost \$43,722,534.00. The original Apparel Mart building remained open and operational for the entire construction period.

In between the construction of the Atlanta Apparel Mart and the next portion to be developed at Peachtree Center, there was a major recession, limiting the demand for new commercial developments.

The Election of Andrew Young

During this period, the election to succeed Maynard Jackson Jr. was underway. This contest set another African-American candidate against a white, Jewish community leader, Sidney Marcus. When Young was elected as mayor, he won with a 55 percent majority against Sidney Marcus. Despite the support he received from African American voters, Young understood the importance of sustaining a relationship with white business leaders in downtown Atlanta and Buckhead. Just days following his election victory, Young invited 85 Atlanta CEOs to John Portman's Top of the Mart Restaurant. He said to the white business leaders,

...I won without you, but if I mess up I just mess up a \$55,000 a year job and I go off and get another job somewhere else. But, if I'm not a good mayor, your

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businesses are going to suffer far more than I will. I need you to help me succeed so I can help your businesses succeed. (Young et al. 2016, 74).

This statement ignited the beginning of a new relationship between political and business leaders that consisted of African Americans and whites. According to Andrew Young, this public-private partnership was “public-purpose capitalism,” which allowed capitalism to benefit everyone. (Young et al. 2016, 74)

Under Young’s leadership, the relationship between business leaders and the mayor strengthened. As development grew on both sides of the city, the airport and the downtown district, Young understood its economic impact and how it increased jobs for citizens. This applied particularly to the commercial district developed and designed by Portman.

Additional Peachtree Center Proposals

The *ca. 1982 "Peachtree Center Preliminary Marquis Office Tower Proposal"* was one variation that showed everything that has been constructed up until the Atlanta Apparel Mart, with a sky bridge in place of the 1986 Atlanta Merchandise Mart addition, and a proposed tower, in the location of the Marquis One at John Portman Boulevard and Peachtree Center Avenue. This tower had the same dimensions, with a slightly longer central bay with two flanking bays that were both the same length and slightly shorter than the central bay. Curiously, there wasn’t anything else proposed for the Marquis block.

The next variation of this plan, the *ca. 1985 Peachtree Center ‘SITE’ Plan*, showed everything that was in the previous proposal with the first appearance of the Inforum (American Cancer Society Center) directly to the west of the Atlanta Apparel Mart. On the east side of Peachtree Street was a full rendering of the Marriott Marquis block with the tower as previously seen and its mirror image Marquis Two on the north portion of the block. Just south of the Marquis block was an entire city block simply labeled ‘SITE.’ Just to the east of SITE was the location of the ‘Courtland Garage.’ Following this indication, there were a few more explorations of what Peachtree Center might become.

MARTA Comes to Peachtree Center

The arrival of MARTA began the process that would lead to the creation of the Mall at Peachtree Center in 1985. The ongoing evolution of retail in the United States led to a further reconsideration of the retail functions at Peachtree Center, moving away from the boutique focused retail of the shopping gallery to a more

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standard mall form. Portman pursued an anchor department store tenant to occupy the space that now contains the Concourse, with renderings prepared for both Rich's and Nieman Marcus. While the anchor department store never came to be, the space did become the first food court in Atlanta, providing something of an anchor replacement to bring office works into the retail spaces.

On September 11, 1982, the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority opened its Peachtree Center station. This station filled a gap in the system at the northern end of downtown Atlanta. MARTA had already been operating the North-South Line since 1978. The station as built differed from the initial proposals for the MARTA mezzanine. The initial proposals were based on a trenching construction method that would require the streets to be excavated. Instead, the Peachtree Center MARTA station was tunneled through the solid rock. This meant that there was much less disruption during the construction period, but it also meant that the final product was less transformative to the public and pedestrian space in the area. For Portman, the arrival of MARTA represented a turning point for Atlanta's fight to bring suburbanites back to the city, noting that with the increased infrastructure in Atlanta, "the pendulum will swing back to downtown" (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Dec 20, 1984, 1B).

At this time, the spaces in Peachtree Center that would become by 1986 the Mall at Peachtree Center were held in a series of partnerships with 18 individual investor groups. These parcels were tied to each individual original office building construction and were not interconnected. These would need to be replatted to separate the portions of the retail area from the office buildings and consolidate the retail portions into one separate parcel. The negotiations to transform these spaces would then result in the eventual consolidation of these properties to Portman. Portman said that the public perception at the time was that he owned and managed all the properties and a part of the impetus for the deal was to provide better customer service. Another factor in the change of ownership was the 1986 revisions to the federal tax code that eliminated the benefits related to the types of partnerships and tax shelters that had provided the financial incentive to get the majority of Peachtree Center built.

Simultaneous to the preparation for the creation of the Mall, the former site of Saint Joseph's Hospital was targeted as the site of the next major Peachtree Center development. As would be expected by this point, the trust that owned the hospital was aware of John Portman's potential interest in the property, and private negotiations began soon after the decision to relocate the hospital north of the city had been made.

Atlanta Marriott Marquis - 1985

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The final wave of development in the refined permutation of Brutalism that defines Peachtree Center was the Marquis complex that included the massive Atlanta Marriott Marquis Hotel (Photo 183-221, 271-272, Historic Photos 45-47). Located on the site of the recently relocated St. Joseph's Hospital, the Marquis, finished in 1985, contained the world's largest atrium when it opened. Daniel Graffin's fabric Atrium Sculpture enlivened the large open space (Historic Photo 46). The design of the Marriott Marquis reflects the evolution of Portman's atrium hotel design since the Atlanta Hyatt Regency and the Westin Peachtree Plaza were opened. John Portman reportedly commented on the design of the hotel saying, "I've built a square hotel (the Atlanta Hyatt Regency) and I've built a round hotel (the Westin Peachtree Plaza). I think I will make this one both" (Steinberg, 2016, n.p.). This statement just begins to reflect the interplay between the circle and the square in Portman's work. Both of the previous Portman hotels at Peachtree Center show the interplay of the most basic geometric forms without being completely one or the other. In these buildings, the interplay between the circular and square form can especially be seen in the interior podium portion of the atrium, where the shapes of the openings that surround the central elevator core vary between the two.

The Marquis also shows the influence of the four hotels Portman designed in Singapore. The first, the Regent Singapore opened in 1982, with the next three opening the same year as the Atlanta Marriott Marquis. The exploration of variations, to create three distinctly different Atrium spaces undoubtedly informed the overall design of the Atlanta Marriott Marquis. This hotel provided a chance to show what was learned from the design exercise, bringing these innovations back to Atlanta and Peachtree Center.

Construction on the Marquis Marriott began the fall of 1982. By the time the top of the building was being completed in July 1984, it had already booked 180 convention groups "definitely through the year 2000, with an additional 374 booked on a tentative basis" (*Atlanta Daily World*, Jul. 19, 1984, 8). City leaders believed it would "boost Atlanta's convention industry to a new record level" (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Nov. 17, 1983, 1B). The president of the Atlanta Convention & Visitors bureau was quoted by *The Atlanta Constitution* newspaper: "This is absolutely awesome. Because it is so spectacular, it sets a whole new stage for the hotel industry in Atlanta. I think it's going to be able to bring in business that has never been able to meet here before" (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Nov. 17, 1983, 1B).

Atlanta Marriott Marquis' 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 47-story,

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organic-shaped atrium that dwarfed Portman's previous explorations of the concept. The Atlanta Marriott Marquis development accompanied the development of the Marquis One Office Tower at 245 Peachtree Center Avenue (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan 2015, 95). The Marquis Two Tower would begin construction soon after the original complex opened.

The 47-story organically shaped atrium space is unique and many consider this John Portman's masterpiece. The exterior space atop the podium that contained convention and service areas once featured fountains, restaurants and lounges and the sculptural grouping 'South Music' by Angel Orensan (Historic Photo 47). The sculptural group's current location is at the Atlanta Decorative Arts Center located in the Buckhead area of Atlanta a few miles to the north.

The placement of the Atlanta Marriott Marquis as the pinnacle of downtown hospitality is represented by the fact that this hotel served as the main hotel during the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games, housing dignitaries and officials.

In 2012, a massive addition atop the podium level on the northern elevation of the hotel tower created additional meeting and function spaces (Photos 217-219, 271-272). This was accompanied by a total renovation that removed the Daniel Graffin's sculpture, while introducing a multi-story LED lit sail-like form atop a bar called Pulse (Photos 196-199). Aside from the addition of the conference space, the removal of art and lobby greenery, along with some minor physical renovation, the form and design of the Marriott Marquis is little changed from when it opened in 1985.

Along with the hotel, the original design planned two office towers. The first, the Marquis One Tower opened in 1985 and the second, Marquis Two Tower was completed in 1987. These adjacent buildings also utilized sky bridges to provide direct access and provide safe, climate-controlled access to parking.

Marquis One Tower

Commissioned and constructed along with the Atlanta Marriott Marquis hotel, the Marquis One Tower (245 Peachtree Center Avenue) was originally designed to match the International (Cain) and Harris Towers (Photos 122-141, Historic Photos 17-21, 30-36). However, the final version eliminated the four-story balcony additions and has a slightly lower crown parapet with two ranks in the screen, rather than three, due to the smaller size of the HVAC equipment it was designed to hide (Steinberg 2012, n.p.).

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Aside from a refinement of design from the previous towers, the Marquis One demonstrated the ongoing office demand at Peachtree Center. Following the completion of the Harris Tower and the completion of the Portman plan for the block containing the Mall at Peachtree Center, the plans for the next tower, that would become the Marquis One, were already being considered. The Marquis One and Two Towers do a better job addressing the sidewalk than any predecessor, aside from the original 230 Peachtree Building, by bringing sculptural pieces to the sidewalk and providing a marble staircase into the main two-story lobby. This shows Portman's reaction to earlier criticism of this office tower spaces and relation to the sidewalk (Photos 229-230, 233).

Also opening the same year as the first phase of the Marquis complex are two New York projects. The primary project is the New York Marriott Marquis on Times Square. This hotel, designed far earlier than its Atlanta counterpart, shares much more in common with the design for the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero Center. The other New York project has another connection to the San Francisco Embarcadero Center in its relationship with the Rockefeller family, this time bringing the Portman's work to Rockefeller Center. There he designed renovations to the below-ground concourse level, most notably the still remaining Tivoli bulb lit elevator entrance canopies at the sidewalk level that lead down to the concourse spaces. The remainder of the renovations to the Rockefeller Concourse spaces aside from the elevator entrances were later removed.

At Peachtree Center, the next set of renovations was also reaching completion.

The Mall at Peachtree Center - 1986

The redevelopment of the Mall at Peachtree Center (1974), incorporating the Shopping Gallery and the Midnight Sun Restaurant (1969) space, is a rare instance of John Portman revisiting a previous work (Photos 122-141, Historic Photos 17-21, 30-36). The 1982 arrival of MARTA near the entrance to what would become the Mall space was part of the impetus, but the renovation also represents some of the shifts in American Culture at the time (Photos 138-140). The best example of this is the transition of the space that once held the Midnight Sun Restaurant.

This space reflected the then necessity of having a fine dining restaurant attached to an office space. As the years passed, the focus of business operations changed, and a new food court would be what the market demanded at the expense of the high design of the Midnight Sun Restaurant space. Furthermore, the target audience of the Shopping Gallery was changing. When it first opened in 1974, it hoped to attract traveling businesspeople, tourists, and

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downtown workers. By 1983, the focus turned entirely to “the daily needs of office workers rather than convention visitors,” as downtown office workers accounted for an estimated 70 percent of downtown retail business. Renovation proposals intended to add life and color to the Shopping Gallery, and increase its visibility (*The Atlanta Constitution*, Jan. 20. 1983, 1C).

Also occurring with this unification of Peachtree Center was the expansion of the Merchandise Mart complex to include the addition to the Atlanta Merchandise Mart running behind the 230 Peachtree Building, now owned by Trammel Crow, as a part of the settlement at the end of their partnership in 1971 (Steinberg, 2016). The addition allowed the Westin Peachtree Plaza to be directly connected to the Mart complex and the rest of Peachtree Center. These changes also allowed for the removal of the Venetian-themed lobby at the Westin Peachtree Plaza to be replaced by a colorful lobby that introduced an early vision of post-modern architecture to Atlanta.

The renovation and connection of the former Midnight Sun Restaurants' space to the Shopping Gallery to create The Mall at Peachtree Center was a part of the effort to better connect and thematically integrate the entirety of Peachtree Center. The renovation provided a direct connection below the Peachtree Center Promenade between the Shopping Gallery and the former Midnight Sun Restaurant (Photos 122-141). This renovation introduced new patterned flooring and two black onyx fountains, similar to the lighted fountains that once were located inside the Midnight Sun Restaurant. The remodel also introduced the first food court in Atlanta, one based on the model first seen at Faneuil Hall in Boston as a part of the Rouse festival marketplace redevelopment (*Retail History* 1994, 44) (Photo 95).

Subtle additions to the exterior included half barrel arched entryways, mimicking the new design element introduced on the Marriott Marquis porte-cochere entrance (Historic Photo 45). The rectangular bases still remain of these arches and can be seen (if one looks carefully) from the sky bridge that connects the Marriott and Hyatt blocks. There is one remaining archway that can still be seen on the John Portman Boulevard entrance to the Marquis One Tower (Photos 234-235). This form was again repeated atop the rectangular boxed entrances, occasionally called ‘people scoops’ by Portman to the Shopping Gallery entrances, presenting a unifying element across the complex.

The changes that shifted the market to favor a Mall at Peachtree Center, and a unified ownership, also showed themselves in the next and last office tower to be built in the refined permutation of Brutalism style by John Portman.

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Marquis Two Tower

Originally commissioned in 1983 along with its twin tower and the Marriott Marquis Atlanta, the Marquis Two Tower (285 Peachtree Center Avenue) opened in 1988 (Photo 236-250, 271-272, Historic Photo 48). As a speculative office space, like its predecessors, completion depended on having enough space leased to justify the construction cost.

Although from certain angles, the tower looks like a clone of its twin, the changes to the north façade and the lobby detailing reflect the changes to come in John Portman's designs and the impact of the Post Modern movement on design overall (Photos 237-239). These designs were first explored in the Embarcadero West expansion in San Francisco. The Embarcadero West building was placed out of alignment with the previous towers, and mall spaces were a later addition. This space includes Portman's first preservation effort, the restoration of the San Francisco Federal Reserve Building. The form and design of the main Embarcadero Center West Tower reference the previous design of Embarcadero Center but introduces some new elements of style. Some innovations first seen in the Embarcadero Center West development get repeated in the Marquis Two Tower, such as the new window spacing that breaks with the earlier standard pre-cast panel form and rhythmic spacing used on the 230 Peachtree building and replicated on other Peachtree Center towers, incorporation of larger glass panes in a distinctive pattern, and incorporation of decorative elements and the use of stone finishes rather than the original evenly spaced rhythmic fenestration pattern first seen in 1965 on the 230 Peachtree Building. On the interior, these changes can be seen in the finishes of the elevator lobbies, incorporating stone surrounds for the elevators (Photo 245). Once Portman moved away from following his previous development pattern first established in the mid-1960's Portman then uses these design elements freely. Portman's Post-Modern architectural vocabulary would also be incorporated into the SunTrust Plaza (One Peachtree Center) Tower, across the intersection from the Marquis Two Tower. It is in the Marquis Two; especially in the revised fenestration pattern that first signals the upcoming shift in Portman's style.

Unrealized Future Developments

Soon after the completion of the Marquis Two Tower, the Savings and Loan crisis of the late 1980's began to unravel the underlying financing of Peachtree Center. This caused John Portman to lose control of most of the development. Before this occurred, there were additional considerations of new developments for Peachtree Center.

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A ca. 1985 "Peachtree Center Location Plan," named 'SITE' in the map key, shows all of Peachtree Center up through the late 1980's construction period, with proposed completion dates, and indicating the 'SITE' as the 'Future Retail and Entertainment Complex.'" The next three iterations, *ca. 1985 Peachtree Center Entertainment Center Addition*, *ca. 1985 Peachtree Center Retail & Entertainment Complex Location Plan*, and the *ca. 1985 The New Peachtree Center Shopping Mall Location Plan*, were all variations on the 'Retail and Entertainment Complex' design.

The *155 Peachtree Proposal with Suggested Peachtree Center Additions*, from February 1988, showed a much more expansive Peachtree Center. This version included the Retail and Entertainment Complex Site and added a parking garage directly to the south on the next block along with another version of a Marquis Tower to the south to form a more symmetrical composition. Along with an indication for the location of the future 191 Peachtree Tower, just to the south of the International parking deck, on the other side of Ellis Street (further south of where any other Peachtree Center proposal had gone), is the proposed 155 Peachtree Tower. This building would have had a distinctly postmodern design and be dramatically different than what had been seen previously in Peachtree Center. Also appearing for the first time in this proposal was the 1992 One Peachtree Center (Sun Trust Plaza) Tower, eventually constructed at address outside the district, along with an early version of the Garden Offices (Now known as the SunTrust Garden Offices) with a different orientation and name: 400 Peachtree. Still yet to appear on any proposal was the 1992 Gift Mart, built partially atop the Trailways Bus Station. Following the proposals that included 155 Peachtree, a financial crisis hit, related to the collapse of the Savings and Loan industry in the United States. This economic crisis would shift the trajectory of Peachtree Center, causing John Portman to lose control of most of the buildings, separating the buildings to different owners and shattering the unifying design of the complex.

Following the division of Peachtree Center between multiple owners, the development of the area varied. The *ca. 1997 Peachtree Center As Built Wayfinding Map* includes nearly all the current elements eventually included in Peachtree Center, with the exception of the 2008 Gift Mart West Wing addition. There was one additional proposal, 'Sun Trust Plaza Phase 3,' which sits to the north of the Sun Trust Plaza Garden Offices. This map with its still unrealized Phase 3 development showed that even without the single ownership, the concept of Peachtree Center continues to evolve and change while meeting and connecting the core design elements of modern form, pedestrian connection, and social interaction as originally intended by the first Architect Developer, John Portman.

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During this period, when Portman lost controlling financial interest in many of his developments, including most of Peachtree Center. Portman maintained control of the three Mart buildings and began his development as an artist.

John Portman's Honors & Recognition

Six books feature Mr. Portman's work, as well as the documentary, *A Life of Building*, the story of Mr. Portman's designs, developments, and accomplishments.

The Georgia Institute of Technology, his alma mater, presented him its highest honor, the Exceptional Achievement Award in 1986 and then, in 2014, named the endowed Dean's chair at the College of Architecture after him. Harvard Graduate School of Design also has a chair named for him. His numerous architectural awards include a lifetime achievement award from the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat in 2009, the Silver Medal Award in 1981 from the AIA Atlanta Chapter for innovative design, and AIA Medal in 1978 from the National American Institute of Architects for innovations in hotel design.

A Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and a member of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, he received the 1978 National AIA Medal for Innovations in Hotel Design. Active in numerous civic, cultural, and business organizations, he was Atlanta's Honorary Consul to Denmark for more than 30 years. Portman's profound contributions to architecture, art and design have earned him numerous awards including the Urban Land Institute's Award of Excellence (1984). In 1992, the Atlanta College of Art awarded Portman an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts.

Portman says, "Success comes from an ability to see, believe, and pursue life's opportunities with determination and conviction." He believes that our current generation of young men and women may be among the most entrepreneurial we have yet seen. "They are capitalizing on innovations and technologies no one dreamed of a decade ago. Still, my advice is to see possibilities in situations others find unpromising, then create results that exceed your own expectations. Don't overlook the obvious. Prepare for the unexpected. Don't be afraid to fail. Never give up. Always believe in yourself." (Goldberger et. al. 1990 92)

John Portman & Associates Ongoing Practice

As an innovator, John Portman and his intentions as an Architect and Developer were not always immediately understood. This is why critical notice separated

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from the openings of individual buildings is so important in determining Portman's long-term impact on the built environment. It is only after others have tried and failed to meet the initial success of Portman does his talent of focusing on place and the pedestrian become evident.

In the book *Interior Pedestrian Places: Arcades, galleries, Marketplaces, Atria, Winter Gardens, Skyways, and Concourses*, by Michael J Bednar, Portman is recognized as the innovator in creating these interior pedestrian spaces and primarily documents their development following Portman's and the Peachtree Center peak design period. As the book was delivered in 1989, it unintentionally contrasts Portman's high late modern style with the then dominant Post-Modern style at the time.

In 1990, the recognition and consideration of John Portman's career as a whole began with the monograph *John Portman* published by the American Institute of Architects Press with text by Paul Goldberger. This book captures Portman's peak Late Modern design period, with the cover image and penultimate project being the One Peachtree Center Tower (1992), now Sun Trust Plaza. This is also the first work to acknowledge Portman's work at an artist highlighting a small section of his works along with his furniture designs.

The true comprehensive consideration of Portman's work, especially that of the Peachtree Center Historic District period of significance, is the book catalog of the 2008 exhibition *John Portman: Art and Architecture*. This exhibit, which opened at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta and then traveled worldwide, brought together the highlights of John Portman's architectural designs up until 2008, along with a retrospective of his paintings and sculptures. This book also includes essays by former *New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger, who has extensively chronicled Portman's career and Robert Craig, former professor of architectural history and criticism at Georgia Tech.

Young recognized Portman as one of the pioneering Atlantans that helped shaped the city's development and history. In his book, Young considers Portman as one of a few leaders "who represented the ethics of community service that characterizes the "Atlanta Way." (Young, et. al., 266)

The capstone of the retrospective consideration of the work of the architect is *John Portman: A Life of Building*, a film directed by Emmy Award winner Ben Loeterman that was released in 2011 and entered in film festivals around the world, finally airing on Georgia Public Broadcasting, on May 23, 2012.

It would be safe to say that John Portman's architecture has reached a level of high scholarly attention and history has already proved his style successful. It is

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interesting to note that while Portman's architecture was highly criticized as introverted and insular in earlier years, more recent publication and scholarly evaluations give him high grades for developing a style and concept that are very successful and long lasting. His concepts are not considered a fad but are lauded, followed, and copied on an international level. John Portman also is known as an artist, including canvases, sculpture, and furniture. Portman's innovative approach has changed the way we consider pedestrian places but also what we expect in any public space to make it welcoming inviting and walkable.

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Peachtree Center Historic District Information Form – continuation sheet Section 4: Significance

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A. Period of significance

The period of significance for the Peachtree Center Historic District begins in 1961 with the completion of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart and continues to 1988 when the Marquis Two Tower was completed.

Period of significance justifications

In 1961, the Atlanta Merchandise Mart was the first building constructed in Peachtree Center. This time also coincides with changes in the momentum of the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta, as integration was legislated by the State of Georgia during the same year. The Marquis Two Tower was the last building of the Peachtree Center Historic District that utilized the exposed/rusticated concrete exterior panels, vertical ribbing, and narrow ribbon windows that were character-defining features of the initial phase of Peachtree Center.

After construction of the Marquis Two Tower in 1988, Portman's design aesthetic at Peachtree Center shifted direction. The architecture of subsequent buildings moved away from the experimental designs of metal-framed glass and membrane panels of the Westin Peachtree Plaza and the cylinder tower of the Hyatt Regency Atlanta to a polychromatic plate glass style that introduced elements of Post-Modern design into Portman's architectural vocabulary. This change in building materials and techniques for Portman shows the influence of the suburban office development that was occurring at the time rather than the pedestrian-focused coordinate unit intention that had motivated the previous phases of development.

Elements from earlier buildings - such as the multiple clear-glass window openings, the decorative concrete fins on pre-cast panels, and the decorative parapet walls atop the office towers - were then replaced by large expanses of patterned glass, continuing Portman's use of geometric forms. But the scale and use of materials give the post-1988 buildings a distinctly different appearance, even from the earlier reflective glass buildings like the Westin Peachtree Plaza.

Shifts in design and buildings outside the period of significance

Along with the atrium forms as considered and evolved by Portman, the urban form beyond the buildings is regarded with varying degrees of success. Following this period of significance for the district, there was a financial break, starting in 1988, that changed Portman's approach to development, along with a design break that shows his continuing evolution as a designer as well as his restrained approach to postmodernism. Portman constructed several buildings bordering the Peachtree Center Historic District after the 1988 end date for the period of significance. The design period for the Peachtree Center Historic District extends from the late 1950s to roughly 1984, with the construction period for these plans not concluding until the construction of the Marquis Two Tower in

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1988. The design shift to a more corporate style after 1988 is shown in both the influence of the postmodern style (which influenced many architects practicing in the mid-1980s) along with Portman's suburban office development work.

The buildings that are outside the period of significance and the historic district boundaries are:

- Inforum Technology Building (American Cancer Society Building) (1989), 250 Williams Street
- Atlanta Gift Mart (1992, 2008), 40 John Portman Boulevard
- Sun Trust Plaza (One Peachtree Center) (1993), 303 Peachtree Street
- Sun Trust Garden Offices (2000), 303 Peachtree Center Avenue

These buildings continue to connect to the rest of the complex by sky bridges, and the style of these buildings is still distinctly Portman, but the materials he used changes considerably. The loss of the strict rectilinear geometry of the International Style continues, introducing newly varied geometric massing and purely decorative elements applied to the exterior facade. This new style includes patterns of colored glass along with polychromatic stone and finish treatments that provide a stark aesthetic contrast with the precast concrete panels used in the earlier designs. These later developments have all been meant to maximize the use of their building lots, usually taking an entire city block or the full building lot, as first seen at the Atlanta Apparel Mart. These later buildings shift in their approach to the semi-public gathering spaces, including the interior atrium spaces, as well as the exterior promenade and plazas found in Portman's developments during the period of significance.

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B. Criteria for evaluation and considerations

Criteria for evaluation

The Peachtree Center Historic District retains the integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. And the district meets the following criteria for evaluation:

Criterion C: areas of architecture and community planning and development (national, state and local significance)

The Peachtree Center Historic District is significant at the national, state, and local levels in the areas of architecture and community planning and development for its association with the productive life and work of architect and developer John Portman. The Peachtree Center Historic District is also significant at the *local* level in the area of community planning and development as a representative example of the Commercial Urban Center subtype as defined in the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Phase 1* context.

Criterion A: area of social history (local significance)

The Peachtree Center Historic District is significant at the local level in the area of social history for its strong association with the Modern Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta, Georgia.

Criteria considerations

Criteria consideration G: properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years

The Peachtree Center Historic District has achieved significance within the past 50 years and meets Criteria Consideration G because it is of exceptional importance (see Section on Criteria Consideration G below).

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C. Statement of Significance Summary

The Peachtree Center Historic District is located in downtown Atlanta, Georgia, and was designed and developed largely by architect John C. Portman, Jr., between 1961 and 1988. The district is an intact grouping of architecturally significant commercial buildings that includes three atrium hotels, seven office buildings, a shopping mall, two retail mart buildings, as well as multiple sky bridges, public spaces, and parking garages. The district is significant in the areas of architecture, community planning and development, and social history. Under Criterion C, the district is significant at the national, state, and local levels in the areas of architecture and community planning and development for its association with the productive life and work of architect and developer John Portman. Now 93 years old and near the end of his career, John Portman is recognized as one of the world's most celebrated and most successful architects and Peachtree Center is one of his earliest and most significant projects. As such, the innovative ideas and approaches to architectural design and community planning that he explored at Peachtree Center formed the foundation of much of his professional success. Also under Criterion C, the district is significant at the local level in the area of community planning and development as a representative example of the Commercial Urban Center subtype as defined in the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Phase 1* context. And under Criterion A, the district is significant at the local level in the area of social history for its strong association with the Modern Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta, Georgia. Though the majority of the district is not yet 50 years old, the Peachtree Center Historic District meets Criteria Consideration G because there is "sufficient historical perspective and scholarly analysis to justify its exceptional importance" (under Criteria Consideration G).

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D. Significance under Criterion C: areas of architecture and community planning and development (local, state, national significance)

The Peachtree Center Historic District is significant at the national, state, and local levels in the areas of architecture and community planning and development for its association with the productive life and work of architect and developer John Portman. Now 93 years old and at the end of his career, Portman is recognized as one of the world's most celebrated and successful architects. His career has already been the subject of much scholarly work, and a retrospective of his designs has been produced. Peachtree Center was Portman's "proving ground" and is the project that crystallized his reputation as a master architect. According to the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Phase 1* context, "Peachtree Center often served as Portman's urban laboratory, allowing him to explore and implement design and planning concepts that were then replicated and expanded upon in other commissions throughout the United States and Europe." As such, Portman's innovative ideas and approaches to architectural design and community planning at Peachtree Center formed the foundation of much of his professional success.

With regard to Portman's career and Peachtree Center, some notable topics emerge. First, the development of Peachtree Center was the occasion for Portman to create a new role for himself as "architect-developer" where he operated in both roles by assisting in financing many of the projects in the district. Second, in the architecture of Peachtree Center, Portman was able to experiment with, and fully develop, his designs both in style and form: his signature architectural style, which was a "refined permutation of Brutalism" focused on the interior; and his signature design forms, which were the atrium and the pedestrian bridge. Peachtree Center's Hyatt Regency is the earliest extant example of this interior-focused architecture, and various buildings in the district exemplify refinement and advancement of this concept over time and for different needs. And, third, at Peachtree Center, Portman introduced and developed his unique "coordinate unit" theory of urban planning where his signature designs were clustered and connected by elevated pedestrian bridges, in what was at that time a very different approach to pedestrian-oriented development.

1. Architect as developer

Unlike the approaches of other architects at the time who designed for clients, at Peachtree Center, Portman's architectural vision was intertwined with his goals as a developer and a real estate speculator. The district's buildings were not for a particular client; rather, they were a kind of advertisement for potential clients and big city renewal projects. In essence, Portman was saying, "Look at what I have created and imagine what I can build for you." Portman's use of minimalist exterior designs and low-cost materials like concrete allowed him to create what was at the time considered very unconventional interior-focused architecture.

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Despite his status as an architect-developer (or as a designer-client), Portman has argued throughout his career that he had loftier aims. In his view, he was trying to transform the way people thought about cities and the role of design in cities (Desiderio 2009, 87).

Portman's early career and the shift toward developer

As architecture students of the late 1940s and early 1950s graduated and entered the rapidly changing post-World War II marketplace, a new model for development was emerging. Rather than the classical model of a patron hiring an architect to manage all aspects of the building process from design to completion, this new style of architect had a reduced role, focusing mainly on building design rather than managing the rest of the construction process.

Portman was able to perceive how the practice of architecture was shifting and, with his early development partners (including Trammell Crow), he combined his interest in design with the development and financing process to become a new kind of architect: one freed from being a seeker of work and only fulfilling another's vision to a fully independent corporate entity that would use the power of the marketplace to fulfill his own vision.

Portman realized that to control the implementation of his designs he would have to become a developer, as well. By doing so, and by getting involved with the real estate and financial sides of architecture, Portman would be able to exercise more control over his designs. Most architects of that era found Portman's dual role distasteful; however, Portman worked himself into a formidable position where he could present and reshape downtown Atlanta (Desiderio 2009, 88), and the model of such embodied in Peachtree Center would lead him to do the same in cities nationally and worldwide.

Portman's original partnership: Edwards and Portman

Portman's original partner was H. Griffin Edwards, and together they created the firm Edwards and Portman. Edwards was a professor of architecture at the Georgia Institute of Technology and had taught Portman while he was a student there. Portman's and Edwards' educations and connections to Georgia Tech are significant both in the adoption of modern architectural design throughout the state of Georgia and in their ability to experiment with style and form away from the national center of design and criticism at the time, which was New York City and the New England Ivy League schools. This freedom from conventional orthodoxy and critical oversight allowed Peachtree Center to be an urban center of innovation that brought forth those ideas that had been adopted by the faculty and students at Georgia Tech and allowed them to be built. For instance, this freedom enabled the use of new and sometimes experimental building techniques. And it also brought forth new design ideas: incorporating the modern style first seen at the Bauhaus in Dessau, Germany, while still using a more

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traditional site development plan and program, highlighting the progression of spaces, without much initial thought given to the wider critical reception of these forms and ideas beyond Atlanta. This freedom allowed Portman to experiment not only with form but also with the financial and ethical structure of architectural practice. He became the first architect-developer, inspiring new consideration of what urban development and redevelopment might be and how these new forms could be funded and constructed.

Initial local phase of development at Peachtree Center

Portman sought to create places as much as individual buildings. His work in Atlanta defined his specific and individual style that would later be carried to other locations. From 1961-1966, Peachtree Center was a modern style development by a brash young architect who had partnered with his former professor at Georgia Tech, and it was Edwards who handled most of the operational efforts at the young architectural firm. The first two buildings they developed at Peachtree Center - the Atlanta Merchandise Mart (1961) and the 230 Peachtree Building (now Peachtree Center Tower)(1965) – indicated that this new development of theirs was intentionally a place apart from downtown Atlanta. This was accomplished through their use of contemporary modern design and adoption of new approaches to site development, such as pushing the 230 Peachtree Building back from the street to incorporate a new semi-public space that included landscaping and original art. Portman aspired to echo Henry Grady's hope for a New South with a new approach to design and development that hinted at the new integrated Atlanta that was on its way. Grady's vision was of commercial and industrial development combined with racial harmony that promoted Atlanta and the region in the period following Reconstruction and the Civil War. His ideas are described in the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Phase 1* historic context:

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." 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.

John Portman's development of Peachtree Center represented another shift for the Atlanta economy with a hospitality-oriented focus. Peachtree Center was intended to be a "New Atlanta," a place free from racial strife and the accompanying negative publicity. This new approach to design and development

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was indicated through the modern style, which soon would include the new approach to race relations and integration found at Peachtree Center soon after the 1961 opening of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart and its two integrated restaurants that preceded the Federal Civil Rights Act by three years. Portman's breakthrough came with the opening of the Hyatt Regency Atlanta in 1967. When the Hyatt Regency opened in 1967, the modern design and the massive semi-public interior space immediately ignited a reconsideration of what both a public and indoor space could be. This new concept in form and style brought forth a flurry of press in architecture and trade magazines such as *Architectural Record* and general national publications such as *Time* and *Newsweek*. The twenty-four story building was groundbreaking for its bold interior space that rejected the modernist principals that treated buildings as functional machines with conservative interiors (first seen in the Bauhaus and with Le Corbusier and the later International Style). Also, the incorporation of natural elements in the interior design at the Hyatt Regency, such as the hanging ivy and interior fountains, brought a new kind of resort atmosphere to downtown Atlanta lodgings.

Peachtree Center expansion after initial phase of development

Between 1967 and 1988, the combination of elements that came together in the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, the 230 Peachtree Building and the Hyatt Regency Atlanta were then expanded, enhanced, and refined to create the next series of places in Peachtree Center. This subsequent period of development included the two other spectacular variations on the interior atrium hotel form: the Westin Peachtree Plaza and the Atlanta Marriott Marquis. The second period of development also included six additional office buildings based on the model of the 230 Peachtree Building. Along with offices and hotels, an additional mart building and an evolving retail destination were built along with lively pedestrian-oriented spaces that were physically and symbolically tied to its use. The modern architectural tradition was expanded and tied to its location with repetition used throughout to create an identifiable district that was truly unique.

2. Portman's unique architectural style

The design of the Peachtree Center buildings included within the proposed district is characteristically different from the adjacent buildings in downtown Atlanta. Most Peachtree Center buildings have distinctively heavy massing, vertical ribbing, vertical ribbon windows, and exposed aggregate rusticated concrete panel exteriors. These character-defining features identify the fifteen buildings of the district as Peachtree Center and visually stand out against the backdrop of the more classically inspired buildings outside of the district. Furthermore, the atria, used by Portman at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta and again at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis (both contributing buildings to the Peachtree Center Historic District), have been copied and reused by Portman and other

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architects throughout the United States and internationally.

At Peachtree Center, Portman created his own unique interpretations of architectural trends of the time. Broadly, the architecture of Peachtree Center can be linked to late modernism in style, which had broken free of the rigid rectilinear forms of the International Style and pre-World War II early modernism. The architectural style of the district incorporated many elements of Brutalism; however, it mainly utilized precast concrete panels, rather than formed concrete and poured-in-place. These concrete panels also incorporated exposed aggregate rather than the more severe brushed forms typical of the works of well-known Brutalist architects Marcel Breuer and Le Corbusier. The shape and massing of the office buildings reflected some earlier German examples - specifically the Phoenix Rheinrohr building mentioned by Portman in *The Architect as Developer* - where the massing of the structure was broken up to present a more varied façade. But the fin details on the concrete panels of the office buildings showed a more Beaux Arts-influenced dedication to decorative elements and provided an indication of interior space and delineation of floor levels. This decorative approach to Brutalism could also be seen in elements such as the screen parapets of the central bay found in the office towers. These elements separated Portman's style from the more rigid Brutalism and International styles. One critic even described Portman's style as "modernism at happy hour" (Portman and Barrett, 1976).

Portman's design influences

Portman is a product of an architectural educational system that was shifting its style from the Beaux Arts classical architectural education that had changed little since the initiation of architectural studies at the Georgia Institute of Technology. During his studies at Georgia Tech, Portman and his contemporaries faced a dramatic shift in stylistic orientation, with the introduction of a new head of the Architecture program in 1946, Julius Heffernan, and his selected team from Harvard. They brought with them new theories and styles first developed in Europe, specifically the Bauhaus in Germany during the interwar period. This new stylistic orientation resulted in something of a hybrid, with the style of the Georgia Tech students shifting to modernism, while their form and massing remained firmly planted in the classical tradition.

Portman's definition of his own style

As he noted in a 1988 interview, Portman's architectural style sought "a synthesis that accepts much that came out of the Modern movement, salvaging what has proven to be valid over time, while correcting those aspects to which people didn't react positively." Portman explains that too much reliance on the tenets of modern architecture had produced cold and inhuman spaces such as Brasilia, the new capital of Brazil, which was an example he returned to constantly in his interviews about what had gone wrong with Modernism. Portman thought that the

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challenge for architecture was not to build new cities, but rather to work within the existing built environment (Desiderio, 2009 86).

Materials and construction methods at Peachtree Center

For Portman, as “architect-developer,” the choice of construction materials was always strongly influenced by cost, especially in his earliest Peachtree Center building designs. The technological advancements related to curtain wall installation and the production of precast concrete panels allowed for the new hybrid style that Portman used, which can best be described as a refined permutation of Brutalism. This hybrid style utilized the concrete and exposed aggregate of the trending Brutalism style of the time; however, the relative lightness of precast concrete panels, combined with the use of an interior steel frame, allowed for these panels to be pierced with multiple windows. This allowed Portman to create his refined permutation of Brutalism that incorporated decorative detail, while keeping with the orthodox rectangular form of the dominant International Style of the time.

This architectural style was first foreshadowed with the Atlanta Merchandise Mart. Portman later refined this style with the 230 Peachtree Building, which established the most common aesthetic design for the district over the next 28 years (Photos 1-8, Historic Photos 1-8). Since the primary driver in the decision-making process was cost, it is not surprising that Portman repeated this approach to development in the design of the six subsequent office buildings at Peachtree Center.

Marketplace demands and how these influenced Portman’s designs

The evolution of design in Peachtree Center is evidenced in the variety of models and renderings that were produced. This evolution reflects Portman’s constant desire to incorporate the newest technologies while pursuing a singular design vision that met the immediate demands of the marketplace. This market orientation informed the exterior stylistic differences among his designs and required flexibility over a predetermined master plan. In doing so, Portman had a vision for Peachtree Center, just not one that manifested itself in an unchanging plan.

3. Portman’s signature architectural designs: the atrium space and the pedestrian bridge

The atrium

The concept of the modern hotel atrium space became Portman’s signature design after the Hyatt Regency was constructed – and following his further refinements of the idea within other projects at the Peachtree Center complex.

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The hotel atria became a prototype of hotel design that was copied by others in the State (most notably the Hyatt Regency in Savannah, built in 1982), the U.S., and internationally by other architects/designers.

Within the development period of Peachtree Center, the atrium as a form became a constant interpretive theme of Portman's designs. The evolution of the "Portman atrium," later copied by others, can be clearly traced from Peachtree Center to projects elsewhere and then back to Peachtree Center. At Peachtree Center, the atrium was first seen in the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, as Portman's uniquely modern reinterpretation of the traditional open spaces of grand hotels. Then the evolution of the atrium concept was developed further by Portman, first in San Francisco where it took a more irregular form at the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero Center. Following that project, his atrium design was explored again at Peachtree Center with the Shopping Gallery building at the end of the Peachtree Center Promenade. Subsequently, the atrium was reconsidered again at Peachtree Center in the Atlanta Apparel Mart where it also became the focus of a commercial space. Next, the atrium form evolved to include the distinctly Portman form of the hotel tower extending above a combined atrium that links to other buildings; this design was first seen at the Westin Peachtree Plaza in Atlanta before being used at the Renaissance Center in Detroit and the Westin Bonaventure in Los Angeles. Portman's consideration of the atrium then further evolved in Singapore before reappearing once again at Peachtree Center in the design of the Marriott Marquis, the final hotel in Peachtree Center, and one which set a new standard for hotel design in Atlanta.

The elevated pedestrian system and pedestrian bridge

The incremental nature of the development of Peachtree Center required some unique innovations by Portman. The most notable of these is the elevated pedestrian system of sky bridges that Portman designed to connect all the pieces of the overall development. The idea for an urban enclosed pedestrian system was first seen in the United States in the early 1960s in downtown Minneapolis when a local developer initiated the Minneapolis Skyway System. The developer, Leslie Park, was inspired by – and pressured to compete with - the newly built Southdale Mall in the nearby suburb of Edina, which had opened in 1956. Designed by the Austrian architect Victor Gruen, the mall was the first fully enclosed and climate-controlled suburban shopping mall in the country. In the cold climate of Minnesota, the ability to connect parking decks to department stores was a competitive advantage. As the growth and success of the Minneapolis Skyway System became apparent, the concept evolved to serve as something of a retrofitted ad hoc mall connecting multiple blocks and uses in a traditionally developed downtown.

However, rather than connecting existing buildings, what Portman did at Peachtree Center was to intentionally connect new developments that were specifically designed for the inclusion of skywalks. In this way, he created a multi-

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block mixed-use development that would keep pedestrians comfortable, safe and separated from street level. As a result, Peachtree Center has the largest privately developed skywalk system in the United States (Baker 1995, 27).

4. Portman's theories of urban planning at Peachtree Center

The master plan and design of Peachtree Center represents one of a variety of new approaches to city planning that took shape in the early 1960s, following the construction of the Interstate Highway System and the initiation of large-scale urban renewal programs in response to the shift in population and development to the suburbs as a way to bring workers and residents back to the downtown areas. This particular approach was in response to the Civil Rights Movement and the change in traffic patterns created by the Interstate Highway System that had recently been completed through Atlanta. As sit-ins and other protests occurred in cities throughout the U.S. (and in Atlanta), many white businesses and families began to perceive cities as unsafe. So they moved from urban areas into the suburbs, using the new interstate system. This new approach to master planning as defined by John Portman was intended to make downtown viable again by creating an urban center that felt safer and more appealing; the intent was to create more clients and customers for downtown businesses. This new approach to urban development was eventually widely copied.

“White flight” from central Atlanta sparked the abandonment of downtown as a viable hub for business since it was fairly easy for commerce to move to the suburbs and stay connected via the new interstate system. Peachtree Center was developed to combat this trend by creating an urban center that felt safer and more appealing with its controlled access parking decks, sky bridges and interconnected buildings. The location of Peachtree Center with easy access to this new interstate system and secure parking facilities allowed easy access from the suburbs. A bus terminal further connected Peachtree Center to the airport. This allowed for out of town businessmen to come directly to Peachtree Center where they could work, shop, eat and lodge without having to go to other areas of Atlanta.

Peachtree Center represents an early attempt at the new concept of “mixed-use” urban development in downtown Atlanta. Its design contained all the necessary facilities of urban life within a walkable distance. As the architect-developer, John Portman referred to the complex as a “coordinate unit,” or interconnected blocks of development that were focused on the pedestrian and the needs of the pedestrian, trying to serve as many of these needs without requiring the use of a vehicle. Creating a space where people could walk from destination to destination was crucial to his approach, and Portman attempted to achieve this goal in all of his city-center designs. Others define it as an Urban Center or mixed-use development, the latter usually following the model established at Peachtree Center with retail, office and hotel uses combined in one location and

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development project. The significance of Peachtree Center lies more with the definition of Urban Center than the loosely defined coordinate unit. Regardless of different definitions, its construction represents the impetus of modern development in downtown Atlanta (Mahbub 1999, 7).

The Peachtree Center historic district encompasses fifteen buildings that contribute to the district, which are linked by the following attributes: buildings were designed and developed by John Portman as an interconnected multi-use development; building exteriors are similar in style, clad with precast concrete panels in a Brutalist finish (Oxford); and all buildings are connected via sky bridges. These elements combined with Portman's coordinate unit concept show his intention toward meeting the needs of the pedestrian through his architectural designs. Peachtree Center and its place in the modern development of downtown Atlanta is significant because it represents the development of a new style and form within the idea of what an Urban Center could be, utilizing a modern architectural vocabulary and innovative construction methods to renovate and promote downtown areas.

A new urban style oriented toward the interior

As an architect-developer, Portman was not just seeking to become a self-financing architect - someone who could initiate a project rather than wait for a commission. He also sought to transform the traditional American downtown by building new styles of spaces that were interior-oriented and part of the urban fabric, while seeking to provide a welcoming, protective, semi-public space. These downtown transformations were interconnected physically and symbolically creating a new kind of urban area. First seen in the atrium at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, this new interior-oriented style was based on pedestrians being separated from their vehicles and their engagement with spaces that were different than anything seen before.

Focus on the pedestrian

Peachtree Center was developed to create a walkable urban space that incorporated innovative design and development solutions while responding to the most notable result of the new interstate system, which was the flight of residents and businesses from urban Atlanta to the suburbs. This depopulation of the city center continued to increase following the federal legislation that ended racial segregation (Steinberg 2012, np). Portman's intention at Peachtree Center, following the opening of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, was to create a new space quite unlike any other seen in Atlanta.

The creation of these new public spaces, urban centers and pedestrian areas - oriented toward the visitor on foot rather than in the automobile - was contradictory to the conventional wisdom of the time. Portman's concept of a completely integrated "coordinate unit" that was able to function as a "city within

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a city” was revolutionary for its time (Loeterman 2011, np). Many of the pedestrian-oriented concepts used in Peachtree Center were later found in the elements espoused by the New Urbanists (best known for the development of the Seaside community in Florida).

Rather than using a historical development pattern as a guide, Portman innovated at Peachtree Center using the styles and new construction technologies of the time. This pedestrian orientation can be seen in the sky bridges that connected the various uses within the development: office, retail, restaurant, hotel, showroom, and parking. An added benefit of these elements was the ability to shield users from inclement climate and the hot, humid weather of Georgia (Baker 2013, 57).

The “coordinate unit” idea: a city within a city

The idea of orienting toward the interior went against the grain of an American culture whose increasing dependence on automobiles had done much to fragment cities and metropolitan regions. Portman defined the coordinate unit as a “cellular pattern” based on the distance a person would walk before wanting some form of transportation. He measured this distance as about seven to ten minutes walking time. Creating a coordinate unit meant creating what he termed a “total environment” or “village.” In his ideal vision, people within this unit could walk to work, school, church, recreation, shopping, and entertainment. “For a coordinate unit to succeed,” Portman declared, “it must lift the human spirit; at the same time it must be economically feasible and follow a sensible, efficient, plan. In addition to providing places for work, residence, shopping, and recreation, it must draw on all the elements that I have been discussing. There must be a total life involvement.” In many ways, this approach to design creates a “city within a city,” and the structure is consequently somewhat isolated from the surrounding environment (Desiderio 2009, 27).

Urban design issues in the post-World War II era

This pedestrian focused “coordinate unit” model of interconnected, pedestrian-oriented, blocks in a traditionally developed downtown area was first conceptualized and brought to realization in Atlanta at Peachtree Center, although the ‘red-lining’ of the area eliminated the possibility of being able to finance any residential development. According to John Portman, this was one of his biggest disappointments, saying, “What has disappointed me most has been the inability to develop housing in connection with the complex (Peachtree Center). This is one of our big goals. We think a city has to have people living in it.” This exploration of pedestrian-oriented form was in response to issues of the post-World War II era related to downtown development and the development of the Interstate Highway System that was prompting urban renewal in the city centers.

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Mixed-use development and the new urban center

John Portman was also involved in promoting the growth of Atlanta, especially in connection with the development of the convention and tourism business category. Since the start of development at Peachtree Center in 1961 with the Merchandise Mart, the district has always focused on a vibrant city center. This idea of combining uses and focusing them around the pedestrian that Portman and partners first innovated in downtown Atlanta had been mimicked and codified into a new style of mixed-use development.

Building for public transportation

The importance of transportation in the development of Atlanta played a major role in Portman's concept of providing a safe environment for visitors to the Peachtree Center complex. Two buildings that he designed specifically for transportation were the Trailways Garage and Parking Deck (1964) and the Trailways Bus Terminal (1968). A portion of the Gift Mart was built atop the bus terminal building in 1992 and the earlier garage was demolished in 2007 when construction for the Gift Mart expansion began. Portman was active in encouraging public transportation for Atlanta, focusing on connecting Peachtree Center to underground rail service starting in 1979 with the introduction of MARTA – the Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority.

Besides providing a safe environment for conventioners, many of them women, a key element of Portman's plan was closeness and connection to the Atlanta Airport. Portman achieved this by building the two facilities for Continental Trailways Bus Service. The first was constructed in 1964 and the second larger one in 1968. Both buildings still remain and have been incorporated into the much larger 1992 Atlanta Gift Mart Building. The earlier 1964 bus terminal was demolished for the 2008 West Wing addition to the Atlanta Gift Mart. Further key elements were wholesale and retail facilities to attract patrons from the entire southeast as well as pleasant, theatrical-themed, hospitality spaces and hotel rooms. The connectivity via sky bridges and to MARTA via underground tunnels allowed travel between these buildings without ever touching street level, allowing visitors to avoid coming into contact with the potentially dangerous aspects of downtown Atlanta.

Urban Land Institute analysis of Peachtree Center

The Peachtree Center complex was an early urban renewal effort at a time when the downtown area of Atlanta was struggling to grow and attract business. According to the Urban Land Institute (ULI), an independent nonprofit research and educational organization incorporated in 1936, the multi-building urban mixed-use development concept started in the early 1960s, mostly in blighted urban areas. In a mixed-use development handbook published in 1987, ULI used the Peachtree Center complex in Atlanta as an example to give insight into the

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multi-use design concept. It further called Portman's atrium design a hallmark in the revival of people-oriented urban development. This atrium concept was duplicated in numerous projects of Portman's, and copied by other architects throughout the country.

This development style of a city within a city that was started by Portman at Peachtree Center is best understood in the context of the Civil Rights Movement and its effects on downtown Atlanta. The concept that would eventually develop a cohesive 14-block area of a major metropolitan city over a span of 50 years deserved special attention as it represented Portman's commitment to the rehabilitation of downtown Atlanta, using a consistent style and form. This design concept of building a small city geared to commerce and hospitality has often been criticized as introverted and pedestrian unfriendly. This concept needs to be analyzed in relation to the societal and political changes and turmoil happening in Atlanta and the rest of the nation at that time (ULI 1987, 33). This shift was not achieved by John Portman alone, but his development and design for Peachtree Center were instrumental and marked the beginning of this process for downtown Atlanta.

5. The influence of Peachtree Center on Portman's later works

As Peachtree Center evolved, it became the "proving ground" and "experimental center" for Portman and greatly influenced his subsequent development projects – both within Atlanta and in other cities. New designs, based on similar forms first used at Peachtree Center, can be seen in later Portman developments, such as Embarcadero Center in San Francisco and Renaissance Center in Detroit. These later developments have the benefit of being designed and refined as a whole, rather than the more piecemeal, checkerboard-style, pattern of development over time as seen at Peachtree Center.

While Portman first theorized the "coordinate unit" concept in the early development of Peachtree Center, this idea was further tested and refined in his subsequent developments. Specific architectural aspects of this concept were also recombined and modified to create further iterations. Sometimes, these more refined forms that had been further developed in other projects would be incorporated at Peachtree Center; for example, when the Marriott Marquis hotel was constructed, its design represented a more refined and expanded version of the adjacent Hyatt Regency Atlanta hotel which had been constructed years earlier. In this way, Peachtree Center continually served as a proving ground for Portman and his development, and the district today evidences the evolution of signature Portman concepts, such as the atrium hotel, throughout Portman's career.

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6. The adoption of Peachtree Center designs by other developers and architects

These new forms and models for development that first appeared at Peachtree Center, such as the modern interior hotel atrium and the linking of developments by pedestrian bridges, were hugely influential. Numerous developers and designers have appropriated Portman's distinctive concept of the "coordinate unit" designed around the needs of the pedestrian and his belief in the urban center having a mixture of uses over the years. However, often the direct connection to Portman's original ideas can be difficult to see, as many of these subsequent projects were far removed from his original designs. A level of refinement is evident in viewing the progression of Portman's own developments, which obscures how quickly these ideas were adopted and disseminated across the nation. Without the unique set of circumstances that came together in Atlanta – and, particularly, at Peachtree Center – which led John Portman to become an architect-developer, the landscape of many American downtowns would have developed dramatically differently during the post-WWII era.

7. Criticism of Portman's work

Critical review of the pedestrian circulation system at Peachtree Center by Rashid Mashub

Although there are many opinions about the success or downfall of Peachtree Center in relation to urban development, very few true context studies exist. However, in 1997, Rashid Mashub, a doctoral candidate from the Georgia Institute of Technology, presented a paper studying "Configurational properties and their effects on the patterns of movement in the off-grade movement system of the Peachtree Center complex." This study examined Peachtree Center as an early example of an off-grade multi-level pedestrian movement system. (An off-grade pedestrian system is an intentionally connected series of buildings or sites above the sidewalk or street level [grade] that is planned beyond the connection between two related uses, i.e. a sky bridge connecting parking to an office building. Examples of this include the Minneapolis, Duluth, and Saint Paul Skyway Systems and the Calgary, Alberta, Canada Plus 15 Skyway network.) At Peachtree Center, Portman tried to accommodate shifts in demographic patterns due to racial tension and traffic engineering with his "coordinate unit," a walkable distance. Rashid states:

The Peachtree Center complex provides for enough service facilities and job opportunities in downtown Atlanta. It generates a traffic flow from suburbs to the central city, which supports the existing traffic network of the city. It also tries to keep the middle class population in the downtown by providing a livable environment. (Mahbub, 1997, 17)

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Rashid further explains that to understand and criticize Peachtree Center one has to study the pattern of relationships between spaces. After analyzing many traffic patterns and comparing off-grade (above street level) to on-grade (sidewalk) movement - as defined by Michael J. Bednar in his book *Interior Pedestrian Places* - around Peachtree Center and other places in Atlanta, he mostly criticizes the transition between the city and Peachtree Center. He comes to the following conclusion:

But the major conclusion can be drawn from the preceding analysis that mixed use, density and accessibility to transportation do not in themselves produce a vibrant urban environment without configurational realization which is appropriate. Though movement densities are quite high both in the external and the internal movement systems of the Peachtree Center Complex, the paper shows that the internal system substantially detracts from the potential liveliness of the external system due to the configurational relationship between the two. It is conceivable that a proper configurational layout would provide for a condition where these systems would complement each other, and thus convey the interior liveliness to the external urban environment.

This contrast between the on-grade sidewalk pedestrian and the above grade sky bridge visitor provides a distinctly different experience. Therefore, the exterior-facing walls of some of the buildings in the development present a mostly blank façade to the sidewalk area and pedestrians.

Critical review of Portman's city-within-a-city design by Rem Koolhaas

Although Portman received praise regarding his urban design concepts, he was also criticized by many of his fellow architects and urban planners. His city-within-a-city design was called insular without a true link to surrounding city streets or features. In 1999, Rem Koolhaas, a well-known Dutch architect and theorist, wrote about Portman's influence on Atlanta as an architect and developer: "With these two identities merged in one person, the traditional opposition between client and architect – two stones that create a spark - disappears." In the same book he goes on to say:

He resoundingly rejected the notion that his project should be built in dialogue with the site, context, or any space shared by the larger public – allowances that are widely considered the building blocks of a traditional urban environment. His mega structures, spectacular and functional though they are, allow their occupants (largely transient conventioners) to completely evade participation in the urban fabric. (Koolhaas, 1998)

At the time of its construction, Peachtree Center was considered a powerful symbol against the downfall of the inner city, especially by downtown boosters and the business establishment. However, the Center's interconnection through various walkways also underlined the idea of a (very convenient) city-within-a-

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city, and Portman's design was accused of leaving out undesired people, like the African American poor.

Criticism of Portman's designs as being exclusive and racially segregated

Despite later interpretations of Portman's designs as being exclusive or economically and racially segregated, the reality of developing in downtown Atlanta meant that racial equality was an unavoidable early component of Peachtree Center as it would be for the other developers working in downtown Atlanta during the period. This helped distinguish the development from some of its competitors at the time. Portman's commitment to the development of Atlanta and the State of Georgia extended beyond the boundaries of the Peachtree Center district to include support for those projects that were important to both the white and black communities in Atlanta. Examples include MARTA and the new Atlanta Airport (opened in 1980), that both introduced the Minority Business Enterprise program for their construction, ensuring that all Atlantans could directly benefit from the city's growth.

The "Commercial Urban Center" subtype

The Peachtree Center Historic District is also significant at the local level in the area of community planning and development as a good example of the "Commercial Urban Center" subtype as defined in the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Phase 1* context. Designed as what Portman called a "coordinate unit," Peachtree Center was a new approach to city planning in Atlanta during the early 1960s to create a more viable downtown in response to urban changes prompted by the interstate system, the political climate, and the Civil Rights Movement. The buildings and sky bridges in the district reinforce Portman's original design, which was to create a series of interconnected urban blocks that could act as a "city within a city." This approach to urban design and development was unique to Atlanta – and to the State of Georgia. Peachtree Center is significant as the earliest example – and one of only three - of this subtype in downtown Atlanta.

Definition and characteristics of the Commercial Urban Center subtype

(the following refers to the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Phase I, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*, draft dated 11-12-15, on file at the Georgia SHPO)

In Section F of *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Phase 1*, "Associated Property Types," the context divides associated property types based on either shared *physical* attributes or shared *associative* attributes. Historic resources with significant associative attributes in modern downtown Atlanta include those representative of a property type known as the Urban Center. The modern Urban

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Center-related Resources in downtown Atlanta are divided into two subtypes: Commercial Urban Centers and Urban University Complexes. The Peachtree Center Historic District is significant as a representative example of the Commercial Urban Center subtype, as defined in the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Phase 1* context.

In the context, the urban center type is described as “a relatively new concept that post-dates the late 1960s and contains a multiplicity of integrated spaces and uses.” And “it is recognized by the way it seeks to redefine urban space through insularity and adherence to separating pedestrians from the automobile.” Commercial examples of the urban center type may include a mix of hotels, offices, restaurants, retail, shopping, and recreational facilities.

There are several character-defining features of the Commercial Urban Center. It may be a unified “mega structure” occupying a large superblock or a cohesive complex of interconnected buildings spanning a number of city blocks (densely massed resources). It features a deliberate separation of pedestrians from automobiles through planned internal circulation (sky bridges spanning public streets, elevated walkways, and plazas). It can be either a product of one time or built in phases over time. The exteriors may possess blank elevations along the public street that reinforce this detachment from the surrounding built environment (albeit from the street). The automobile is accommodated directly through integrated private parking garages; however, convenient access to rail rapid transit stations is also a key feature. And it may incorporate public art.

Evidence that Peachtree Center meets the definition of Commercial Urban Center subtype

Peachtree Center is a very good example of the Commercial Urban Center subtype because it exhibits all of the characteristics as defined in the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Phase 1* context.

Portions of the district can be described as a unified “mega structure” occupying a large superblock and include: the block containing the Atlanta Apparel Mart (America’s Mart Building 3) on Spring Street; the Mall at Peachtree Center block, including the four office towers; the Hyatt Regency Atlanta block; and the Marriott Marquis block, including the two Marquis office towers. However, at the same time, the whole of the Peachtree Center Historic District – including contributing resources – is also a cohesive and densely massed interconnection of individual buildings that spans across eight city blocks.

Within the district, pedestrians are separated from automobiles through Portman’s planned circulation patterns via sky bridges spanning between buildings and across public streets. The sky bridges are part of Portman’s coordinate unit concept, connecting the pedestrian-oriented blocks of Peachtree Center. This was the first construction of its kind in Georgia and the southeast,

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and it was created in response to the development of the Interstate Highway System after World War II which would come to dominate the urban landscape. This coordinate unit concept of Portman's would later be refined and adapted to become a core component of the New Urbanism design movement, which also focused on the primacy of the pedestrian but did not try to physically separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic and the streets.

Within these blocks of the coordinate unit development, Portman sought to further enrich the pedestrian experience by creating public spaces and plazas beyond the city sidewalks, which include: the exterior Promenade at Peachtree Center; the interior food courts in the Mall at Peachtree Center; the smaller exterior plaza in front of the 230 Peachtree building; and, most significantly, the large, interior, atriums at the Hyatt, the Westin, the Marriott, the Merchandise Mart, and the Shopping Gallery.

As the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Phase 1* context suggests, the creation of large superblocks and the deliberate separation between pedestrians and automobiles meant that the exteriors of some of the buildings in Peachtree Center were designed with fairly blank elevations along the streets, void of fenestration or details. These types of elevations can be seen along the lower portions of the north and east sides of the Mall at Peachtree Center block, the exteriors of the Mart buildings, and at the base structures of the hotel buildings. These rather "closed" facades reinforce the detachment of the interiors of these buildings from the surrounding urban environment.

As Atlanta entered the 1970s, continued population loss to the suburbs combined with fears of rising crime rates caused business and civic leaders to keep supporting the ongoing development trend of large-scale, commercial, urban center projects first seen at Peachtree Center. These projects 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 as established at Peachtree Center, urban centers were often built as a cohesive superblock development on vacant or cleared downtown land, located near rapid transportation nodes, or integrated into the existing street grid and commercial fabric of a city. 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

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convention industry (Sims-Alvarado & Sullivan, 2015).

Peachtree Center is also an example of an urban center that was built in phases over time. The district's period of significance spans from 1961 with the opening of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart and continues to 1988 when the Marquis Two Tower was completed. The development of Peachtree Center was steady over this twenty-seven (27) year period. Some years there was more than one project under construction, such as in 1976 when both the Harris Tower and the Westin Hotel were being built. The period of significance also includes multiple additions to the contributing buildings; for instance, the Hyatt Hotel block includes the original 1967 hotel building, the 1971 Ivy Tower, the 1982 International Tower, evidencing the evolution of the urban center concept over time.

As outlined in the context, within the district, the automobile is accommodated directly through integrated parking garages - both public and private. The block containing the Mall at Peachtree Center does not include parking; however, each of the other blocks within the district includes integrated parking garages as part of Portman's original designs; this includes parking at each of the hotels and the Mart. In addition, the district includes a separate, contributing, parking deck: the Peachtree Center International Parking Deck (1975) on Andrew Young/International Boulevard across from the Mall at Peachtree Center and the four office towers.

Also, regarding transportation, a key feature of Peachtree Center is the access to MARTA which was added in 1980. At first, the addition of MARTA was conceived as a layered addition to Peachtree Center, but the station was eventually built much further below ground level. The Peachtree Center MARTA Station has entrances that connect directly to the Atlanta Merchandise Mart and the Mall at Peachtree Center on either side of Peachtree Street.

Finally, one of Portman's original intentions in his designs for Peachtree Center was to incorporate public art throughout the district. There are six (6) sculptures counted as contributing objects within the district today:

- "The Big One" by Willi Gutmann (1970), located on the Peachtree Center Promenade (the sculpture was relocated in 1986 within close proximity of its original location within the Promenade)
- "Flora Raris" by Richard Lippold (1970), located inside the Hyatt Regency Atlanta hotel
- "Les Lion d'Atlanta" ("The Lions"), four sculptures by Olivier Strebelle (1986), which are located at the entrances to the Marquis One and Marquis Two Towers along Peachtree Center Avenue

These six remaining sculptures represent the larger collection that was originally on display throughout Peachtree Center. The inclusion of large art pieces helped

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to further unify and enliven the district. Also, Portman's incorporation of public art in his designs demonstrated his attention to aesthetics, which set him apart from other architects and developers at the time.

Comparison of Peachtree Center to other Urban Center examples in Atlanta

Along with Peachtree Center, the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Phase 1* context recognizes two other Commercial Urban Centers in downtown Atlanta: the Omni International/CNN Center and Underground Atlanta. In addition, the context also identifies the raised plaza campus of Georgia State University as an example of the second urban center subtype, the Urban University Complex.

Unlike Peachtree Center which was developed over many years, the Omni International Complex (now CNN Center) was built at one time (1976). When it first opened, it included multiple amenities inside – such as a skating rink, movie theater, and amusement park – to create an indoor city, similar to Portman's vision for Peachtree Center. The Omni also includes a large open atrium space similar to those in the hotels at Peachtree Center. And, like some of the buildings at Peachtree Center, the Omni can be characterized as a “mega structure.”

Like Peachtree Center, Underground Atlanta was built in phases over time (beginning in 1969, although it incorporated existing storefronts and architectural features from earlier periods). And it includes large public gathering spaces below street level, similar to those of the Mall at Peachtree Center. Both of these projects allowed for pedestrian circulation among city blocks but isolated away from the sidewalks and streets.

All three of these developments – Peachtree Center, the Omni, and Underground Atlanta – were designed to offer a variety of services and activities in an attempt to revitalize the inner city and attract more patrons to downtown Atlanta. Peachtree Center, as the earliest of the three, established the standard and demonstrated that downtown development could be profitable.

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E. Significance under Criterion A: area of social history (local significance)

Under Criterion A, the Peachtree Center Historic District is significant at the local level in the area of social history for its strong association with the Modern Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta. The district serves as evidence of the conscious and deliberate shifts by the Atlanta business community in their approaches to integration and civil rights. More specifically, the district demonstrates John Portman's commitment to invest in the downtown area and his desire to build a new Atlanta that was integrated and socially progressive.

Portman's design for Peachtree Center was influenced by both his personal commitment to integration and his desire to revitalize downtown Atlanta during a time of great social change. His Regency Hyatt House hotel and Top of the Mart restaurant were among the first public facilities in Atlanta to open as fully integrated, predating the mandated integration of facilities in the city. At the same time, his coordinate unit plan allowed him to create an insular network of urban spaces that was in many ways isolated from the rest of the city.

The modern architectural style of Peachtree Center also represents this ongoing shift and is a visible reminder of the power of the built form to represent the goals and aspirations of the local community. At Peachtree Center, Portman's use of the architectural language of late modernism allowed him to provide a visible break with a segregated past, which demonstrated motion toward positive social change. Most importantly, Portman's use of modern architecture in his designs for Peachtree Center represented inclusivity and openness to all. This purposeful break in architectural design represented a break with regressive societal norms that showed a new Atlanta to the world – and a continuation of the post-Civil War reorientation toward a New South.

The 1960s and social change

The development of Atlanta as the dominant regional commercial and distribution center of the southeast followed the successful navigation of nearly a decade of social protest in the city. Following the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Atlanta, with its history of black and white leaders working in concert for social and political progress, was dubbed by Atlanta Mayors William B. Hartsfield and Ivan Allen Jr. as the "City Too Busy to Hate."

As the city grew, black and white business and political leaders, espousing ideals of equality and growth, worked toward the common goal of building the downtown commercial district of Atlanta and making it the international city that it is today.

This shared vision of creating a Modern Atlanta occurred during the Modern Civil Rights Movement. As Atlanta expanded to become a more welcoming city for all its citizens and visitors, its skyline did as well. Building and designing, it was

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architect John Portman's vision and leadership that were vital to the development of downtown Atlanta during the latter half of the twentieth century. Through his planning for Peachtree Center, reportedly the first privately integrated restaurant (not owned by the government or part of a department store) opened in the city – and possibly all of Georgia. And his service as a founding member of the Atlanta Action Forum was instrumental in creating positive changes toward greater equality in Atlanta.

The Atlanta Merchandise Mart and Stouffer's Restaurant, 1961

It is upon this backdrop of social change that the origins of Peachtree Center began with the construction of the Atlanta Merchandise Mart, which opened in 1961 (while the building was still under construction). It was during this time that John Portman petitioned the Stouffer's Corporation to operate two restaurants in the new Mart building: the Stouffer's Restaurant on the ground floor and the Top of the Mart restaurant at the uppermost floor, which was part of Stouffer's chain of upscale downtown restaurants. These two restaurants were the first new restaurants to be opened as integrated following the voluntary "Negotiated Integration" of Atlanta restaurants and public spaces that same year (*Atlanta Daily World*, December 13, 1961, 1) and three years before mandatory integration in the city. The opening of the Stouffer's restaurants at Peachtree Center as integrated reflected the impact that civil rights demonstrations had on Atlanta, encouraging business owners to welcome all patrons rather than seeing their establishment in the press as a protest site.

Integration and direct-action

In 1962, African Americans pushed even harder for full integration in Atlanta. Direct-action demonstrators – those using non-violent protests, such as sit-ins or marching with picket signs outside a business - intensified from 1963-64 as student activists pushed to integrate hotels, hospitals, theaters, and restaurants in the downtown commercial district of Atlanta. These actions followed the informal "Atlanta Negotiation of 1962" that called for the complete integration of public facilities, among other associated goals. The "Negotiation" was a result of the peaceful direct-action protests at Rich's Department Store downtown, which later caused the store a massive loss during the 1960 Christmas shopping season. It was during this period when Peachtree Center began to come into its own and when John Portman as architect-developer began to expand his newly modern pattern of development for downtown Atlanta.

The process of integration caused Portman to establish a delicate balance as Peachtree Center sought to continue its efforts to attract white patrons from the suburbs. While welcoming all patrons was good for the district's ongoing businesses and placed the development on the progressive side of history, the downside was that a development perceived as too welcoming to African Americans might be avoided as well. This dance was undoubtedly complicated

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by the need to keep a local clientele while accommodating the intensity of the national spotlight that was focused on Atlanta and the American South at that time.

The Action Forum

Peachtree Center was also the location of regular meetings of the Action Forum, a local group dedicated to racial harmony and the continued peaceful development of Atlanta. In the early 1960s, a group of savvy white and black business leaders formed an organization called the "Action Forum" in response to the "direct-action" movement at the time. Mills B. Lane, President of C&S Bank, and W. L. Calloway, President of the prominent black real estate firm of Calloway Enterprises, were the founders of the Action Forum. James Paschal, owner of Paschal's restaurant, was involved in the group and his restaurant was often a meeting place for Forum members. Starting in 1969, the Forum addressed the emerging needs of Atlanta's black and white communities as they navigated the challenging period of interracial discomfort and disharmony. According to Paschal, other local businessmen who were founders and early members included: John Portman, Tom Cousins (both Portman and Cousins had eponymous development firms), Paul Austin (President of Coca-Cola), Dave Garrett (President of Delta Airlines), Jesse Hill (President of Atlanta Life Insurance Company), John Cox, (Morehouse College), Bill Stern (President of Trust Company of Georgia), and Herman Russell (prominent African American entrepreneur and philanthropist).

This Forum addressed issues like substandard housing and the need for more jobs for African Americans. The white community supported these issues to curb race riots, as well as to promote new commerce and tourism in the city. Commerce and tourism would prevent further decay of downtown and increase employment opportunities for African Americans through new tourist attractions and businesses. Bi-racial committees like the Atlanta Forum were integral to helping cities throughout Georgia integrate.

Although Atlanta remained generally peaceful, the violence during the ongoing Civil Rights Movement across the nation - and the resulting fear of the white patronage - explains the plan of business leaders to give resurgence to a safe and busy downtown. All members of the Forum pursued the same goal of racial harmony to benefit the further development of Atlanta and were each influential in their own ways; but John Portman was the only one who was fortunate to have the personal wealth and the architecture and development background, to put a multi-block development plan in motion.

In 2010, the Atlanta City Council members passed a resolution, authorizing the creation of a joint commission to study and propose an appropriate honor

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befitting Mr. John Portman and Mr. Herman Russell. This study names Portman as a founding member of the Action Forum and states that this influential group of behind-the-scenes leaders helped to establish Atlanta as a role model for racial integration in the 1960s.

The opening of the Regency Hyatt House, 1967

As Atlanta was being recognized as the headquarters of the Modern Civil Rights Movement, two hotels opened. In 1965, the Americana Motor Lodge became the first hotel to offer integrated accommodations in the city. In 1967, the Regency Hyatt Hotel (Hyatt Regency) at Peachtree Center became the second hotel in downtown Atlanta to open as a fully-integrated facility, in response to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The opening of this full-service hotel was especially important for its willingness to rent new and modern convention and meeting space to all people, regardless of race. This was in contrast to the Heart of Atlanta Motel which took their segregationist ideal to the Supreme Court in 1964.

Refusing to participate in “accommodation segregation,” the Regency Hyatt House began a long relationship with local civil rights leaders, notably welcoming the meetings of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the civil rights organization led by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., when another downtown hotel rejected them. The significance of the Hyatt and Peachtree Center as a welcoming place for all people was further demonstrated when the Hyatt served as the location of the Bronner Brothers Hair Show just after opening in 1967 – the first time the show had been located outside of their home base on Auburn Avenue. The Bronner Brothers were an early manufacturer of hair care products for African-Americans. Their successful business was founded in Atlanta, and their hair show, originally a showcase for their products, became an artistic outlet for African-American hairstyling.

1970s and 1980s

Following the death of Dr. King, many white business leaders abandoned the downtown Atlanta district as white residents moved to suburban communities. With a significant reduction of white residents living in the city, black leaders were able to increase their mobilization efforts, and Atlanta made history by consecutively electing two African American men as mayor. During the 1970s and 1980s, Mayors Maynard Jackson and Andrew Young worked to make Atlanta a burgeoning international city. To attract the attention of the world, the downtown district needed to be revitalized. Inspired by John Portman’s vision and architectural designs that promoted interaction between people, both mayors offered him their support.

During the 1970s, the Peachtree Center Historic District expanded with the construction of the South Tower, International Tower, Parking Deck, Shopping Gallery, Harris Tower, Westin Hotel, and the Apparel Mart. Following in the

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1980s, four additional buildings were developed within the district: the Marriott Hotel, Marquis One and Two Towers, and the Mall at Peachtree Center. Decades later, Jackson and Young continued to applaud Portman for breathing life into the downtown district and assisting in making Atlanta a thriving world-class city.

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F. Criteria Consideration G

Though not all resources are 50 years old yet, the Peachtree Center Historic District meets Criteria Consideration G because there is “sufficient historical perspective and scholarly analysis to justify its exceptional importance” (from the *National Register Bulletin*). The career of John Portman has been the subject of much scholarly work such that there is sufficient perspective to enable an objective evaluation of his work. Further, the application of recent research regarding the historic resources in downtown Atlanta from the modern era demonstrates the importance of the district within the context of modern architecture, community planning, and urban development in the city. And, finally, there is sufficient scholarship and evidence of historical perspective regarding the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta to be able to assess the significance of the Peachtree Center Historic District during this important period of social history.

Architecture

The Peachtree Center Historic District is exceptionally significant in the area of architecture for its association with the productive life and work of architect and developer John Portman. The development of Peachtree Center is exceptionally significant as the development in support of which Portman first created a new role for himself where he operated as both architect and developer for a project. This allowed Portman to establish a unique architectural style focused on interior atrium spaces, a style and form that might never have existed had Portman been under the control of a client by whom he was commissioned.

Portman was able to perceive how the practice of architecture was changing, combining his interest in design with developing projects to become a new kind of architect: a fully independent corporate entity that would use the power of the marketplace for this new “architect-developer.” The ability to experiment with style and form, away from the national center of design and criticism, allowed Peachtree Center to be an urban center of innovation. This freedom allowed Portman to experiment with the financial and ethical structure of architectural practice, inspiring new consideration of urban development and redevelopment and how these new forms could be funded and constructed.

Spaces at Peachtree Center were developed using his “coordinate unit” concept focused on a pedestrian-oriented experience. Portman's architectural vision was intertwined with his goals as a developer and a real estate speculator. The design of Peachtree Center reflects Portman's incorporation of the newest technologies combined with a singular design vision. This vision was intended to meet the demands of the marketplace that required flexibility within a master plan. Technological advancements related to curtain wall installation and precast concrete panels allowed for this new hybrid style of Portman's, incorporating decorative detail while staying within a budget and the dominant forms and style of his refined permutation of Brutalism.

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The design of Peachtree Center is exceptionally significant for its use of the atria. First used by Portman at Peachtree Center at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, this form has been copied and reused by Portman and other architects throughout the United States and internationally. During the period of significance for Peachtree Center, the atrium as a form became a constant theme of Portman's practice. As such, Peachtree Center was the "proving ground" in the career of an internationally renowned architect.

Community Planning and Development

Peachtree Center is exceptionally significant as a representative early example of the Commercial Urban Center subtype in Atlanta because it exhibits all of the characteristics of the type as defined in the *Modern Downtown Atlanta: 1945-1990, Phase 1* context. The whole of the Peachtree Center Historic District is a cohesive and densely massed interconnection of individual buildings that spans across eight city blocks. Within the district, pedestrians are separated from automobiles through Portman's planned circulation patterns via sky bridges spanning between buildings and across public streets. This pedestrian-focused coordinate unit concept of Portman's would later be refined and adapted to become a core component of the New Urbanism design movement, which also focused on the primacy of the pedestrian but did not try to physically separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic and the streets.

Within these blocks of the Peachtree Center "coordinate unit" development, Portman sought to further enrich the pedestrian experience by creating public spaces and plazas beyond the city sidewalks. Portman's original intention in his designs for Peachtree Center was to incorporate public art throughout the district. Within the district, the automobile is accommodated directly through integrated parking - both public and private - including integrated parking garages as part of Portman's original designs. A key feature of Peachtree Center is the access to MARTA.

Peachtree Center is also exceptionally significant as a representative early example of "mixed-use" urban development in downtown Atlanta. Its revolutionary design contained all the necessary facilities of urban life within a walkable distance. 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 was ideally suited for bolstering downtown's growing convention industry. According to the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the Peachtree Center complex in Atlanta example gives insight into the multi-use design concept. It further called Portman's atrium design a hallmark in the revival of people-oriented urban development.

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Social History

The Peachtree Center Historic District is exceptionally significant at the local level for its strong association with the Modern Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta. The district serves as evidence of the conscious and deliberate shifts by John Portman and the Atlanta business community's commitment to invest in downtown. The modern architecture of Peachtree Center represents this ongoing shift to build a new Atlanta that was integrated and socially progressive. Portman's use of the architectural language of late modernism at Peachtree Center allowed him to provide a visible break with a segregated past, which was intended to demonstrate motion toward positive social change, inclusivity and openness to all. This purposeful break in architectural design represented a break with regressive societal norms that showed a new Atlanta to the world. As the city grew, black and white business and political leaders espousing ideals of equality and growth worked toward the common goal of building the downtown commercial district of Atlanta. This shared vision of creating a Modern Atlanta occurred simultaneously during the Modern Civil Rights Movement. It was during this time in 1961 that John Portman petitioned the Stouffer's Corporation to integrate the two new restaurants opening in the Atlanta Merchandise Mart at Peachtree Center. This decision reflected the impact that civil rights demonstrations had on Atlanta, encouraging business owners to welcome all patrons rather than seeing their establishment in the press as a protest site.

As Atlanta was being recognized as the headquarters of the Modern Civil Rights Movement, the Regency Hyatt House (now Hyatt Regency Atlanta) opened. The opening of this full-service hotel was especially important for its willingness to rent new and modern convention and meeting space to all people, regardless of race. The Regency Hyatt House began a long relationship with local civil rights leaders, notably welcoming the meetings of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference when another downtown hotel rejected them. Embracing the Civil Rights Movement leaders at the Hyatt Regency in this way was significant; the hotel went well beyond quietly renting a room to a few people of color, potentially placing white guests in a situation where they might perceive of themselves as being in the minority. This was a very risky approach at the time when the hotel might have found itself the target of a boycott or other protest.

Peachtree Center is exceptionally significant as the location of regular meetings of the Atlanta Action Forum, a local group dedicated to racial harmony and the continued peaceful development of Atlanta. The Forum addressed the emerging needs of Atlanta's black and white communities as they navigated the challenging period of interracial discomfort and disharmony. Commerce and tourism would prevent further decay of downtown and increase employment opportunities for African Americans through new tourist attractions and businesses. John Portman wanted to help create a progressive city where the

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prejudices of the past could no longer be seen in this new modern place in downtown Atlanta.

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The following Docomomo US Register Fiche were created for the Atlanta Architecture class at Georgia Tech during the Summer of 2012 led by Dr. Leslie Sharp and Dean Baker. Portions of these documents have been adapted for use in the Modern Downtown Atlanta Historic Resources Survey and the Peachtree Center HDIF document.

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