

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER/GEORGIA REGISTER NOMINATION

1. Name: Trust Company of Georgia Northeast Freeway Branch

2. Location: 2160 Monroe Drive NE; Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia

3a. Description: The Trust Company of Georgia Northeast Freeway Branch is located in northeast Atlanta, close to I-85 just north of its split from I-75. Built in 1962, the building occupies a one-acre oval-shaped lot formed by the creation of the Buford-Spring Connector, then known as the Northeast Expressway, between 1948 and 1952. Constructed of reinforced concrete and concrete block with brick veneer, the building is composed of a round two-story main block with three single-story teller kiosks telescoping off the main block to the west. A substantial nonhistoric asymmetrical canopy floats above the three teller kiosks, and steel supports for the canopy extend to the ground. The 56-foot diameter upper level of the main block cantilevers over the 40-foot diameter lower level base. The reinforced concrete roof is an undulation of scalloped overhanging eaves capping 10 bays. Original tall, narrow fixed windows bracket each bay. A concrete bridge links a large asphalt parking lot that defines the western third of the property with the primary entrance into the upper level. The upper level comprises a single large room approximately 15 feet in height with the scalloped underside of the roof serving as the ceiling. Two freestanding elliptical enclosures that housed meeting space and the bank vault have been removed, save for a portion of the former meeting space wall, which remains to delineate the single stair down to the partially below-grade lower level. On the lower level, a hallway divides the plan in half, accessing multiple small rooms including bathrooms, offices and a commercial kitchen. The hallway terminates in an exterior entrance to the west, adjacent to a small room designed as a teller booth. Further east, a door off the hallway accesses a spiral stair which leads underground to a tunnel accessing three U-shaped openings that once each housed a spiral stair leading up to each of the three teller booths above. Landscaping includes small trees and shrubs, and planting beds defined by granite and concrete retaining walls. One of these beds houses the property's original freestanding signage. Composed of three concrete pylons with staggered curved panels, the signage is approximately three stories tall and is considered a contributing object to the property. Despite loss of original interior finish material, the property retains integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. The relationship to the highways and surface streets that define the property's integrity of location and setting also remain intact.

3b. Period of Significance: 1962-1967

3c. Acreage: 1 acre

3d. Boundary Explanation: The boundary of the nominated property comprises the current legal boundary of the property.

4a. National Register Criteria: A and C

4b. National Register Areas of Significance: Architecture; Commerce; Community Planning and Development

4c. Statement of Significance: While Atlanta began highway construction as early as 1948, it would take passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 for that construction to gain momentum. By 1964, the Downtown Connector would be complete, securing the dominance of the automobile in the Atlanta landscape. Simultaneously, a robust post-World War II economy and changing regulations positioned banks such as the Trust Company of Georgia ideally to take advantage of the new highways to grow their business. The Trust Company selected the architectural firm of Abreu & Robeson to design a branch bank to service then-explosive development in the area of Monroe Drive and the Northeast Expressway, and exploit the visibility afforded by the new highway. Groundbreaking for the Trust Company of Georgia's new Northeast Freeway Branch occurred on May 15, 1961, and the branch was open for business by March, 1962. The Trust Company of Georgia's Northeast Freeway Branch is significant in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Commerce. Its construction is a direct result of the confluence of several trends in the banking industry and development patterns and growth of the city of Atlanta during the mid-20th century: more liberal bank branch regulations and the popularization of car-centric "motor banking" dovetailed with the unprecedented suburbanization of the city as a result of highway construction. The building's orientation to and location beside the new Northeast Expressway is representative of the change in the city's physical form during the 1950s and 1960s as a result of commitment to automobile- and highway-oriented development patterns. The Northeast Freeway Branch is also significant in the area of architecture as an outstanding example of New Formalism in Atlanta. Character-defining features of this style include the building's pedestal form and simplified classical features such as symmetrical bays and arches. Smooth finished concrete and glazed brick walls are typical New Formalism finish treatments. Designed by architect Henri Jova, who was Chief of Design for Johnson and Abreu at the time, the building is representative of the banking industry's evolution to embrace Modern architecture during the mid-20th century as one means of building a progressive corporate image.

4d. Suggested Level of Significance: The property is being nominated at the local level of significance as a representative example of New Formalism, and a branch bank evidencing the impact of mid-20th century development and commercial banking trends in Atlanta.

5. Sponsor: The nomination is sponsored by the property owner. Materials were prepared by Ray, Ellis, and LaBrie Consulting.

June 2017/SLC-F