

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Lonice C. Barrett, Commissioner

Historic Preservation Division

W. Ray Luce, Division Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 7, 2002

Blair-Rutland Building Listed in National Register

ATLANTA - The Blair-Rutland Building, located in Decatur, DeKalb County, Georgia, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 12, 2002. The property owner sponsored the nomination and prepared the nomination materials.

The Blair-Rutland Building is a two-story brick office building designed in the Art Deco style. Constructed in 1939 by the contractor, Farnell Blair Company, the rectangular-shaped building features plain rear and side elevations with most of the stylistic elements concentrated on the three-part main façade. The center entrance is set within a monumental brick arch that includes a stepped keystone, typical of the Art Deco style. Similarly, Art Deco ornament was applied to the cast-aluminum door and surround in the form of a sunburst above the transom, zigzag-patterned muntins in the sidelights, and a Greek fret across the door.

In 1945, architect Jes R. Johnston shifted the doubled-loaded corridor on the second floor to create larger workspaces and added a two-story brick addition to the rear of the building. By

-more-

- Blair-Rutland Building, page 2 -

1946, Guy Rutland, Sr. purchased the building and located his personal offices on the first floor and let the remainder of the building to a variety of businesses. Guy Rutland served in the state legislature from 1953 to 1964. After his death in 1986, the building remained in the Rutland family until 1994. In 2000, the office building was rehabilitated as part of a certified tax incentives project that included the removal of interior walls on the second floor and the retention of the original first-floor plan and much of the building's historic fabric.

The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts worthy of preservation. According to Richard Cloues, deputy state historic preservation officer, listing in the National Register recognizes a property's significance and ensures that the property will be taken into account in the planning of federally funded or licensed projects. In addition, owners of income producing National Register properties may be eligible for rehabilitation tax incentives.

For more information on the National Register and other preservation programs, contact Ariel Lambert, Survey and Register Specialist, at (404) 651-5911 or visit our Web site at www.gashpo.org.

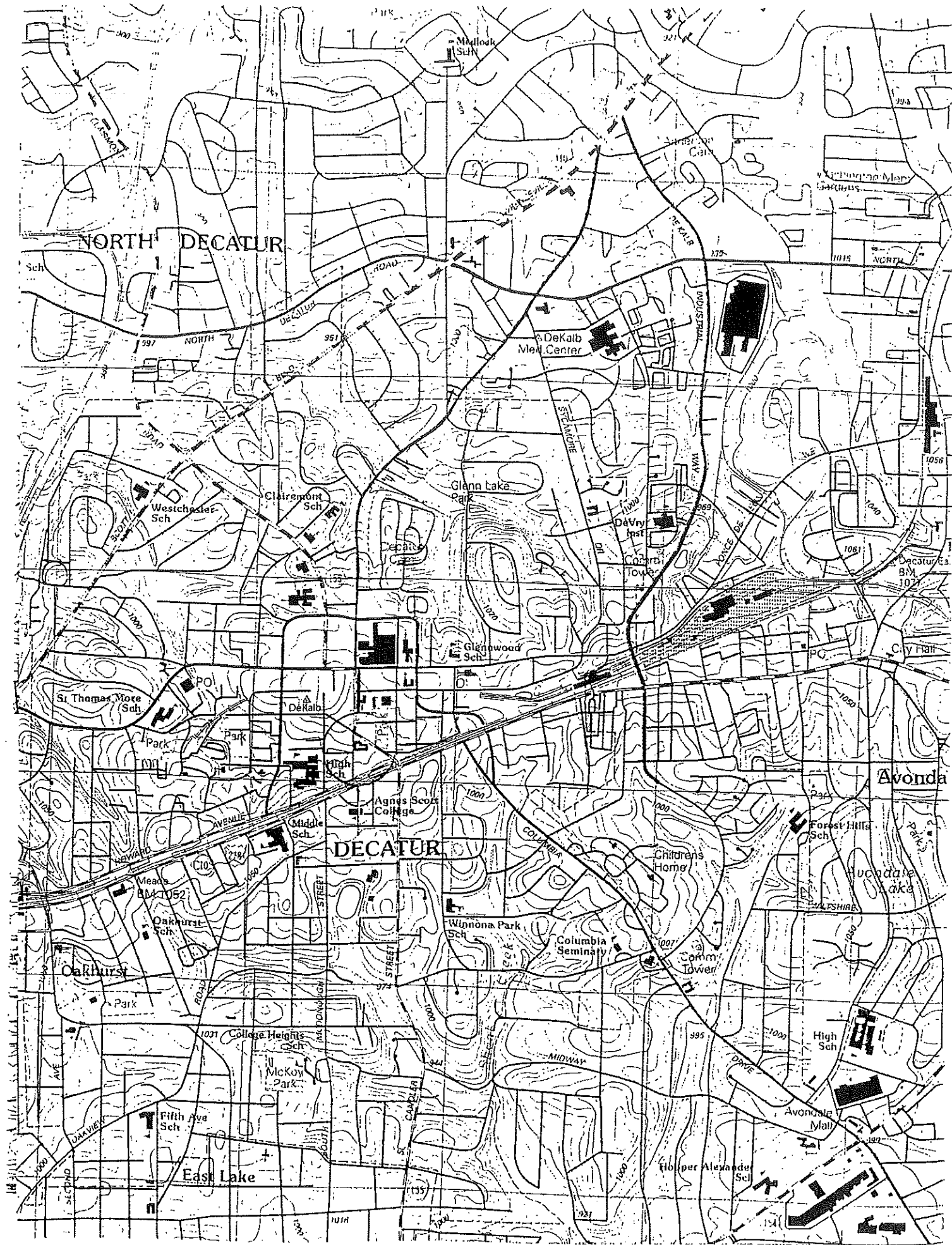
"The mission of the Historic Preservation Division is to promote the preservation and use of historic places for a better Georgia."

This press release is available in electronic form under What's New at www.gashpo.org.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

1. Name: Blair-Rutland Building
 2. Location: 215 Church Street, Decatur, DeKalb County, Georgia.
 - 3a. Description: The Blair-Rutland Building is a two-story brick office building designed in the Art Deco style. Built in 1939, the rectangular-shaped building features plain rear and side elevations with most of the stylistic elements concentrated on the three-part main façade. The center entrance is set within a monumental brick arch that includes a stepped keystone, typical of the Art Deco style. Similarly, Art Deco ornament was applied to the cast-aluminum door and surround in the form of a sunburst above the transom, zigzag-patterned muntins in the sidelights, and a Greek fret across the door. The streamlined corners filled with structural glass block are also characteristic of the style. Large steel-sash windows are located across all four sides of the building. The first-floor interior retains its original plan: a double-loaded corridor through the center of the building with small offices on both sides. In 1945, architect Jes R. Johnston shifted the doubled-loaded corridor on the second floor to create larger work spaces and added a two-story brick addition to the rear of the building. In 2000, the building was rehabilitated as part of a certified tax incentives project that included the removal of interior walls on the second floor and the retention of the original first-floor plan and much of the building's historic fabric.
 - 3b. Dates of Development: 1939-1945.
 - 3c. Acreage: 0.6 acres.
 - 3d. Boundary Explanation: The boundary includes the entire city lot historically associated with the building.
 - 4a. National Register Criteria: A and C.
 - 4b. National Register Areas of Significance: Architecture and Commerce.
 - 4c. Statement of Significance: The Blair Building, as it was first called, was constructed in 1939 by the contractor, Farnell Blair Company, which used the second floor for its offices. In 1945, A. Farnell Blair, the company's principal, hired architect Jes R. Johnston, Jr., to make the second-floor plan more open and design a rear addition. By 1946, Guy Rutland, Sr., purchased the building and located his personal offices on the first floor and let the remainder of the building to a variety of businesses including Consolidated Quarries, Wil-Cox Shoes, U.S. Selective Service System, Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance, Jerry's Beauty Salon, Morrow Realty, Eugene R. Martini, landscape architect, and Jes R. Johnston, Jr., architect of the 1945 renovations to the building. Headquarters for Rutland's trucking business was located on the other side of Decatur on Commerce Drive. His company, Motor Convoy, now called Allied Holdings, emerged as the largest automobile-hauling company in North America. Guy Rutland served in the state legislature from 1953 to 1964. After his death in 1986, the building remained in the Rutland family until 1994.

The Blair-Rutland Building is significant in the area of architecture as an outstanding example of the Art Deco style in Georgia. During the period between the wars, the Art Deco style emerged as the first widely popular style to break with the revivalist tradition in architecture. Art Deco was largely a style of decoration that was applied to jewelry, clothes, and furniture as well as architecture. The polychromatic style featured low relief geometric designs in straight lines, zigzags, chevrons, and stylized foliated forms, often with gilt, mirrors, and Carrera glass. The form and massing of buildings was either stacked in recessed planes (ziggurats) or streamlined for futuristic effect. The Blair-Rutland Building, with its monumental entrance and streamlined corners, is among the few surviving Art Deco buildings in Decatur. The Blair Rutland Building is also significant in the area of commerce as an excellent example of a small-scale speculative office building in which the builder, in this case the principal tenant, sought to attract tenants with an architecturally stylish building.
 - 4d. Suggested level of Significance: Local.
 - 4e. National Register Status: The Blair-Rutland Building received final certification from the Technical Services Branch of the National Park Service on April 8, 2002.
5. Sponsor: The nomination is sponsored by the property owner, who also prepared the nomination materials.



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ANNOUNCEMENT OF LISTING IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

W. Ray Luce, Division Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, is pleased to announce that the property identified below was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on the date indicated:

Blair-Rutland Building

DeKalb County, Georgia

December 12, 2002

We hope that the recognition of the architectural and historical significance of this property, combined with the benefits of National Register listing, will assist in the preservation of the property. Additional information on preservation programs is available from our office.

Thank you for your interest in historic preservation.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Blair-Rutland Building
other names/site number Blair Building

2. Location

street & number 215 Church Street
city, town Decatur () vicinity of
county DeKalb code 089
state Georgia code GA zip code 30030

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-state
☐ public-federal

Category of Property:

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

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	1	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	1	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Richard Caves
Signature of certifying official

10-23-02
Date

W. Ray Luce
Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

() entered in the National Register

() determined eligible for the National Register

() determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Commerce/Trade: business

Current Functions:

Commerce/Trade: business

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Modern Movement: Art Deco, Moderne

Materials:

foundation	Concrete
walls	Brick
roof	Asphalt
other	Glass

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Blair-Rutland Building is a two-story office building located on Church Street in Decatur, the county seat of DeKalb County and a suburb of nearby Atlanta. The Blair-Rutland Building is located about one block south of Decatur city hall and the historic DeKalb County courthouse. Church Street between Trinity Avenue and East Howard Avenue is mostly lined with one-story bungalows, which are now used as office buildings. The Blair-Rutland property is mostly paved with a parking area to the south. A small grass lawn and several foundation plantings are located along the front and north sides of the building.

The Blair-Rutland Building is a two-story brick office building designed in the Art Deco style. Built in 1939, the rectangular-shaped building features plain rear and side elevations with most of the stylistic elements concentrated on the three-part main façade. The center entrance is set within a monumental brick arch that includes a stepped keystone, typical of the Art Deco style. Similarly, Art Deco ornament was applied to the cast-aluminum door and surround in the form of a sunburst above the transom, zigzag-patterned muntins in the sidelights, and a Greek fret across the door. The streamlined corners filled with structural glass block are also characteristic of the style. Large steel-sash windows are located across all four sides of the building.

The first-floor interior retains its original plan: a double-loaded corridor through the center of the building with small offices on both sides. In 1945, architect Jes R. Johnston shifted the doubled-loaded corridor on the second floor to create larger work spaces and added a two-story brick addition to the rear of the building.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

The Blair-Rutland Building received final certification from the Technical Services Branch of the National Park Service on April 8, 2002. The rehabilitation, which was begun in 2000, included the removal of interior walls on the second floor, which now serves as an architect's office. The original first-floor plan and much of the building's historic fabric have been preserved.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): ☒ N/A

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture
Commerce

Period of Significance:

1939-1952

Significant Dates:

1939 – A. Farnell Blair built the Blair-Rutland Building.
1945 – Blair built addition to rear of the Blair-Rutland Building.
1946 – Guy Rutland, Sr., purchased the Blair-Rutland Building.

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Farnell Blair Company (builder)
Jes R. Johnson (architect)

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Blair-Rutland Building is significant at the state level in the area of architecture as an outstanding example of the Art Deco style in Georgia. During the period between the wars, the Art Deco style emerged as the first widely popular style to break with the revivalist tradition in architecture. Art Deco was largely a style of decoration that was applied to jewelry, clothes, and furniture as well as architecture. The polychromatic style featured low relief geometric designs in straight lines, zigzags, chevrons, and stylized foliated forms, often with gilt, mirrors, and Carrera glass.

After 1930, the Art Deco style was influenced by the increasing popularity of the International Style, which resulted in reduced polychromatic patterning and simpler bas-reliefs. The Art Moderne or Streamline Moderne, as this variant of Art Deco is sometimes called, was also influenced by streamlined industrial design for ships, airplanes, and automobiles. Buildings relied on bold massing and monumental forms and often featured rounded corners, horizontal stripes or bands, and sometimes porthole windows. It was not uncommon for Art Deco buildings to be built alongside buildings designed in the International Style. Art Deco architecture was built in cities throughout the United States but was most popular in New York and Miami.

Art Deco-style buildings were never built in Georgia in the numbers that were constructed in other states. Moreover, those that were built in Georgia were smaller in scale and often with a conservative decorative program. The form and massing of buildings was either stacked in recessed planes (ziggurats) or streamlined for futuristic effect. The Blair-Rutland Building, with its monumental entrance and streamlined corners, is one of only two surviving Art Deco buildings in Decatur. (The other surviving Art Deco building in Decatur is the Sharian Building, designed by Bothwell and Nash in 1946.) The Atlanta area has lost and continues to lose important Art Deco buildings, including Decatur Chevrolet (1936), Morris Plan Bank (1936), and the Atlanta Police Station and Jail (1934-35).

The Blair Rutland Building is locally significant in the area of commerce as an excellent example of a small-scale speculative office building in which the owner/occupant, first A. Farnell Blair and later Guy Rutland, Sr., sought to attract tenants with an architecturally stylish building. It was also one of the most technologically advanced office buildings in Decatur when it was completed in 1939. Promotional literature from the early 1940s stated that it was "one of the county's modern office buildings. . . . Modernistic in design and air conditioned, it is typical of what Decatur offers the business executive." Few buildings in the Atlanta area offered air conditioning before World War II.

The Blair-Rutland Building, located across the street from the white marble Decatur post office (1935), was popular among small and large businesses in Decatur. The building was leased to a variety of businesses, including Consolidated Quarries, Wil-Cox Shoes, U.S. Selective Service System, DeKalb County Engineers, American Monorail Company, the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance, and Morrow Realty. Between 1941 and 1952, city directories list over thirty different tenants. In 1945, six years after the building's completion, A. Farnell Blair built a rear addition to

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

accommodate additional tenants.

National Register Criteria

A—The Blair-Rutland Building is significant in the area of commerce as an excellent example of a small-scale speculative office building.

C—The Blair-Rutland Building is significant in the area of architecture as an outstanding example of the Art Deco style in Georgia.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1939 when the Blair-Rutland Building was built and ends in 1952, the last year it was historically used as an office building.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The Blair-Rutland Building is the only resource associated with this nomination and is counted as one contributing building.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

The Blair Building, as it was first called, was constructed in 1939 by the contractor, Farnell Blair Company, which used the second floor for its offices. In 1945, A. Farnell Blair, the company's principal, hired architect Jes R. Johnston, Jr., to make the second-floor plan more open and design a rear addition. By 1946, Guy Rutland, Sr., purchased the building and located his personal offices on the first floor. Headquarters for Rutland's trucking business was located on the other side of Decatur on Commerce Drive. Rutland used his office in the Blair-Rutland Building to manage his personal real estate business and a farming operation.

In 1934, Rutland established the Motor Convoy company to haul automobiles for car manufacturers. Motor Convoy, now called Allied Holdings, emerged as the largest automobile-hauling company in North America. In 2000, Allied hauled 11.7 million vehicles with its fleet of 5,200 trucks. Currently, Allied hauls 60 percent of new cars manufactured in the United States and Canada.

Guy Rutland, Sr., let the second floor and the remainder of the first floor of the building to a variety of businesses, including Consolidated Quarries, Wil-Cox Shoes, U.S. Selective Service System, Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance, Jerry's Beauty Salon, Morrow Realty, Eugene R. Martini, landscape architect, and Jes R. Johnston, Jr., architect of the 1945 renovations to the building.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Guy Rutland served in the state legislature from 1953 to 1964. After his death in 1986, the building remained in the Rutland family until 1994.

The Blair-Rutland Building received final certification from the Technical Services Branch of the National Park Service on April 8, 2002. The rehabilitation, which was begun in 2000, included the removal of interior walls on the second floor, which now serves as an architect's office. The original first-floor plan and much of the building's historic fabric have been retained.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Craig, Robert M. *Atlanta Architecture: Art Deco to Modern Classic, 1929-1959*. Gretna: Pelican Publishing, 1995.

Riley, Michael T. "The Rutland Building." Historic Preservation Certification Application Part 1--Evaluation of Significance. 2000. United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C. On file at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division, Atlanta, Georgia.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) N/A

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

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.6 acres

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 750560 Northing 3740170

Verbal Boundary Description

The property boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached map, drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary follows the current legal boundary and includes the property historically associated with the Blair-Rutland Building.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Steven Moffson, Architectural Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 156 Trinity Avenue, S.W., Suite 101
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** September 1, 2002
e-mail steven_moffson@dnr.state.ga.us

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

name/title Michael T. Riley
organization Martin Riley Associates – Architects, P. C.
mailing address 215 Church Street
city or town Decatur **state** GA **zip code** 30030
telephone (404) 373-2800
e-mail N/A

- (x) **property owner**
() **consultant**
() **regional development center preservation planner**
() **other:**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Same as above
organization (if applicable)
mailing address
city or town **state** **zip code**
e-mail (optional)

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Blair-Rutland Building
City or Vicinity: Decatur
County: DeKalb
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: September 2002

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 17

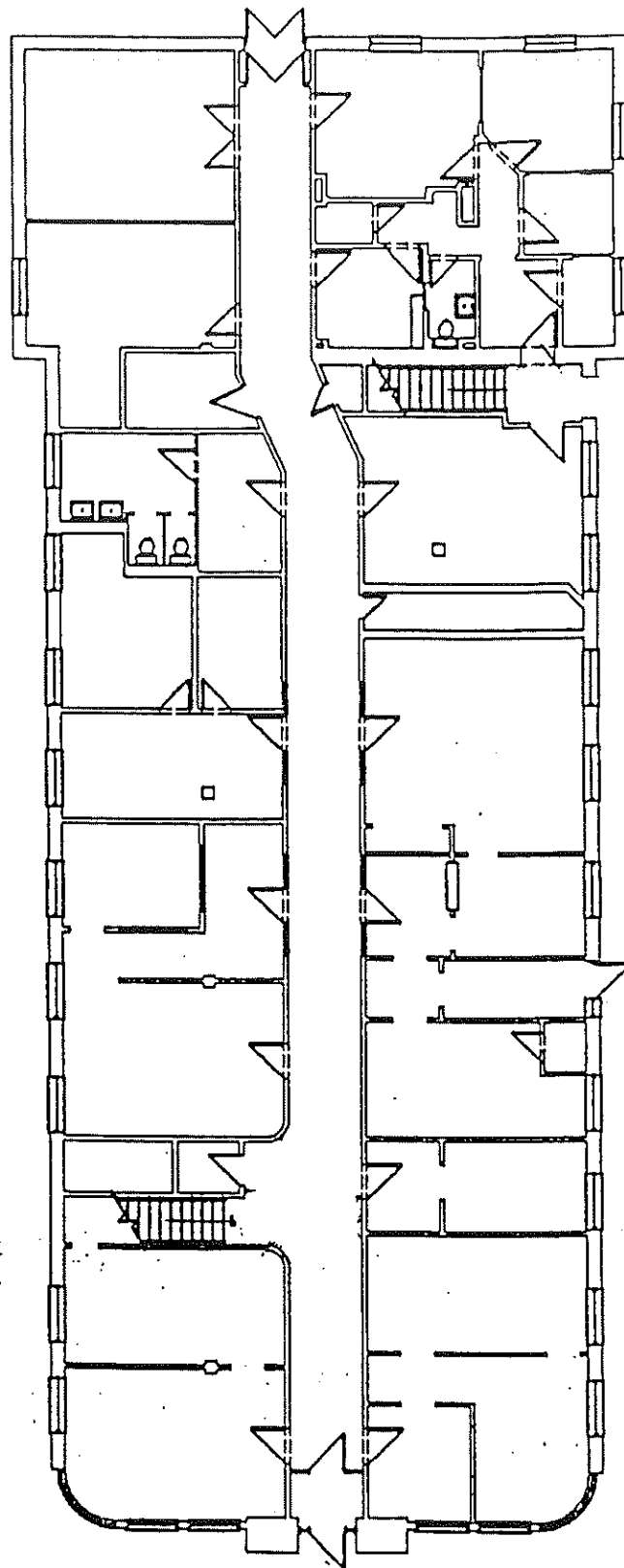
1. Main façade, photographer facing east.
2. Main façade and south side, photographer facing northeast.
3. Main façade, detail, photographer facing northeast.
4. South side and rear façade, photographer facing northwest.
5. Window on south façade, photographer facing northwest.
6. Rear façade, photographer facing west.
7. Interior, first floor, corridor, photographer facing west.
8. Interior, first floor, southwest office, photographer facing west.
9. Interior, first floor, office along north side, photographer facing north.
10. Interior, second floor, front stair, photographer facing north.
11. Interior, second floor, corridor, photographer facing west.
12. Interior, second floor, southwest office, photographer facing southeast.
13. Interior, second floor, northwest office, photographer facing west.
14. Interior, second floor, conference room along south wall, photographer facing east.
15. Interior, second floor, studio space, photographer facing east.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

16. Interior, second floor, reception area, photographer facing east.
17. Interior, second floor, reception area skylight.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)

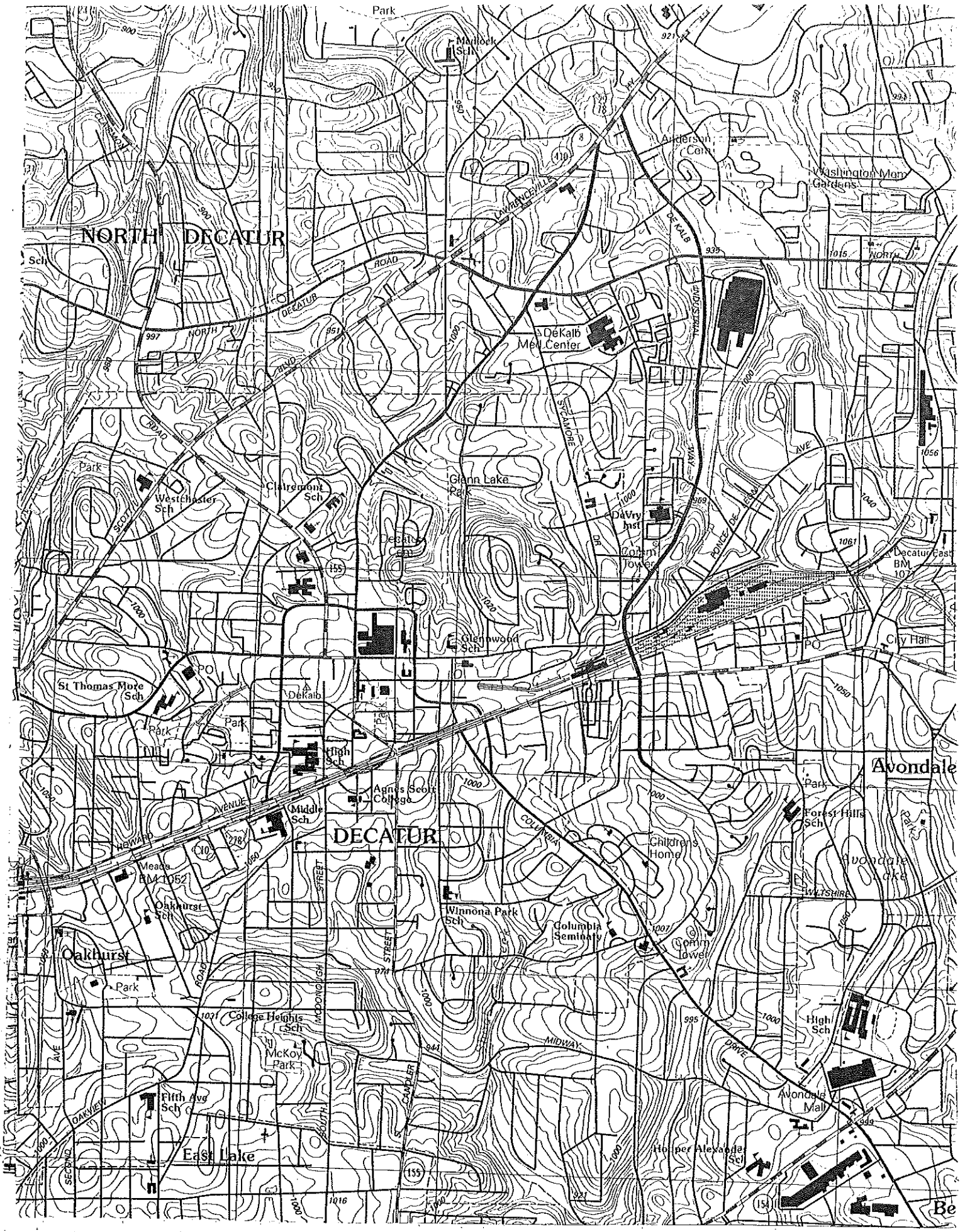


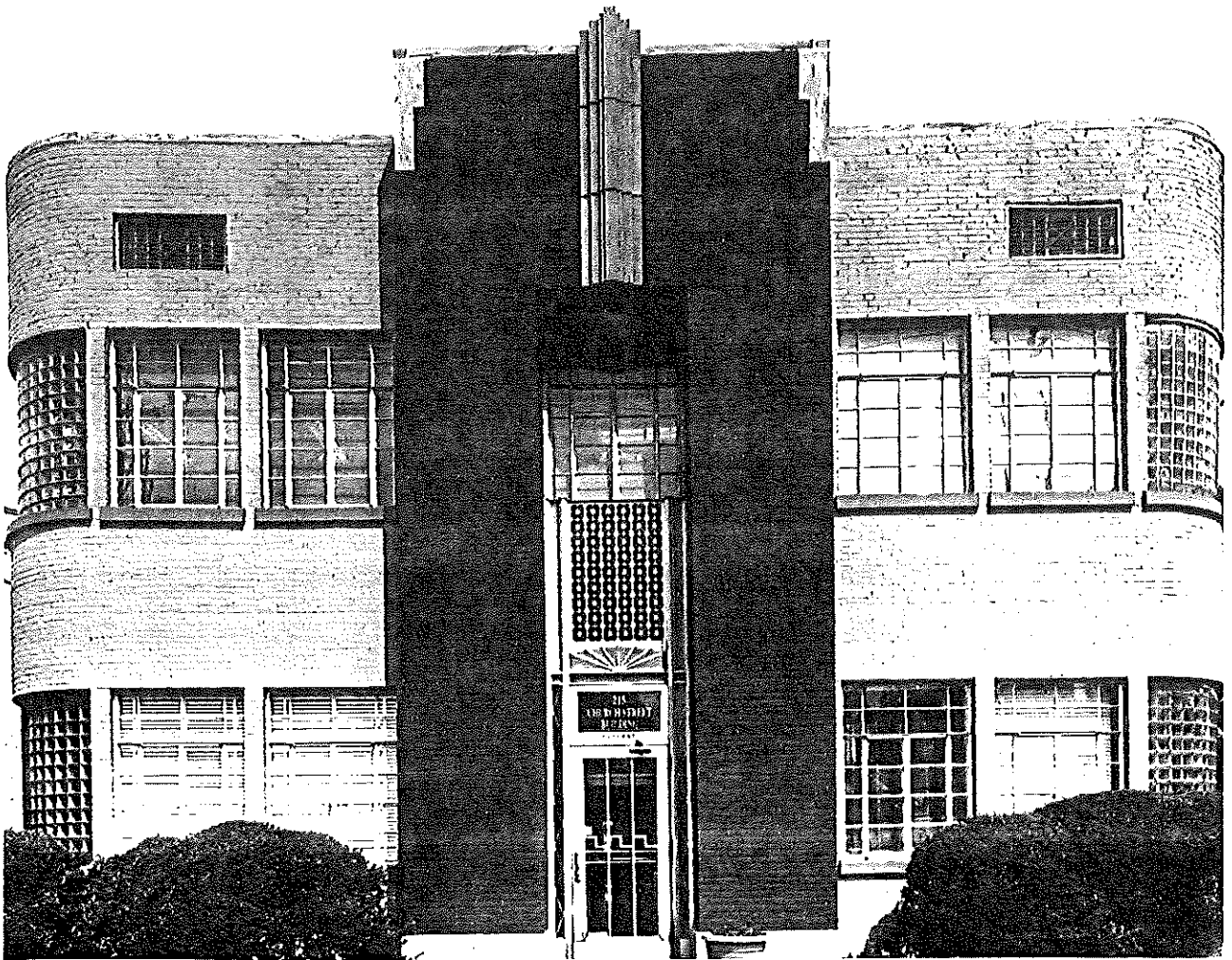
← North

Blair-Rutland Building
Decatur, DeKalb County, Georgia
First-Floor Plan

No Scale

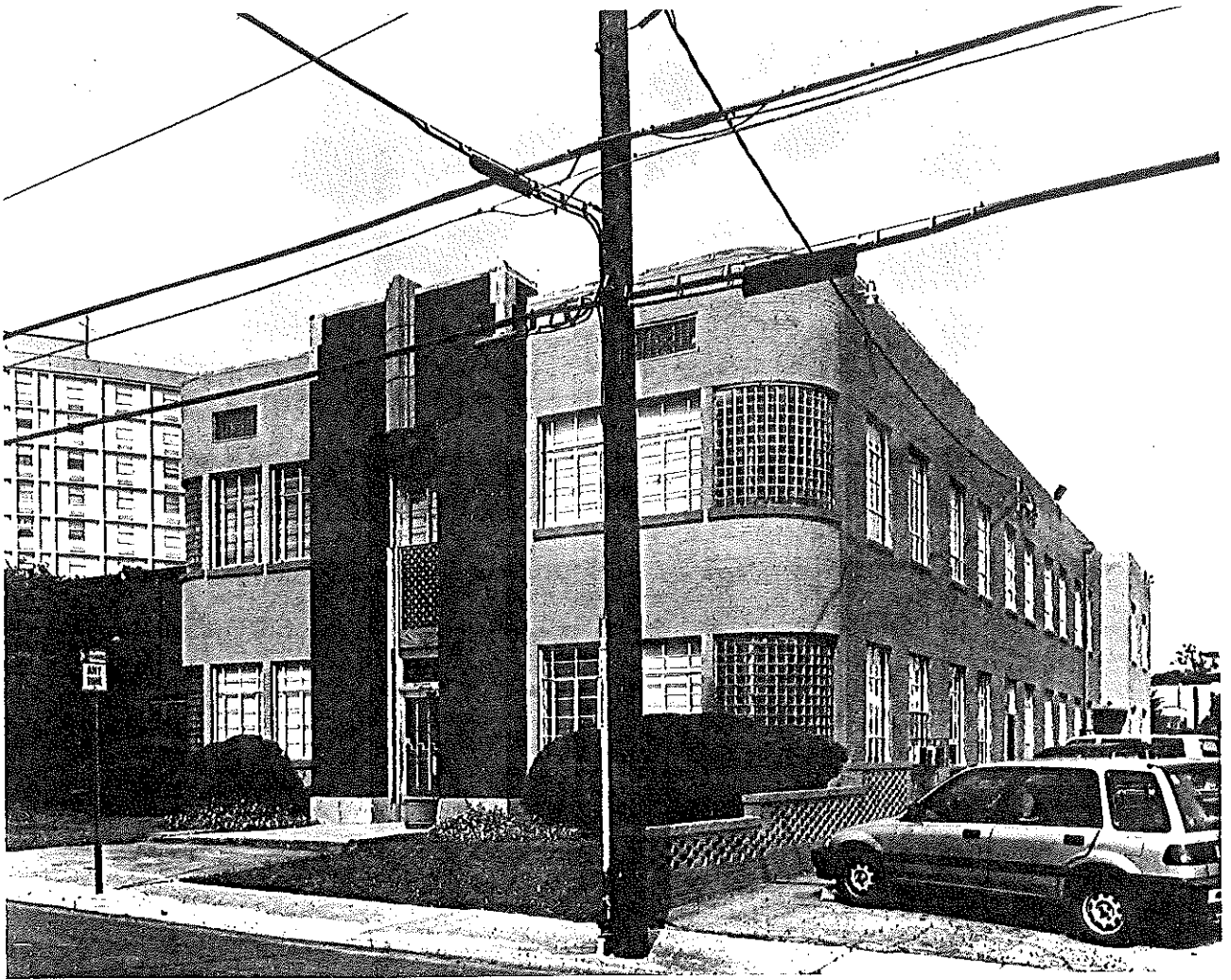




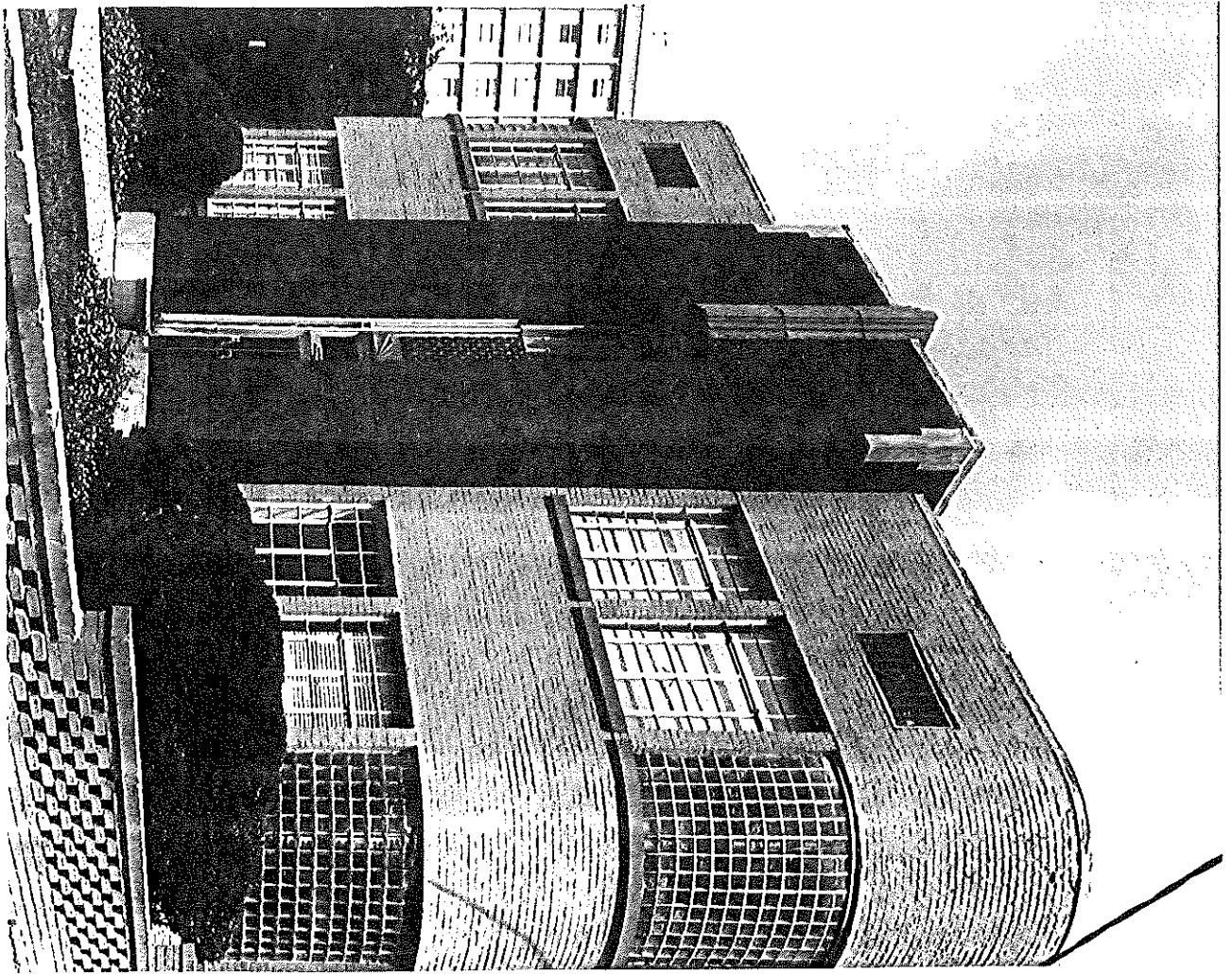


Blair-Rutland Building
DeKalb Co., GA

1/17



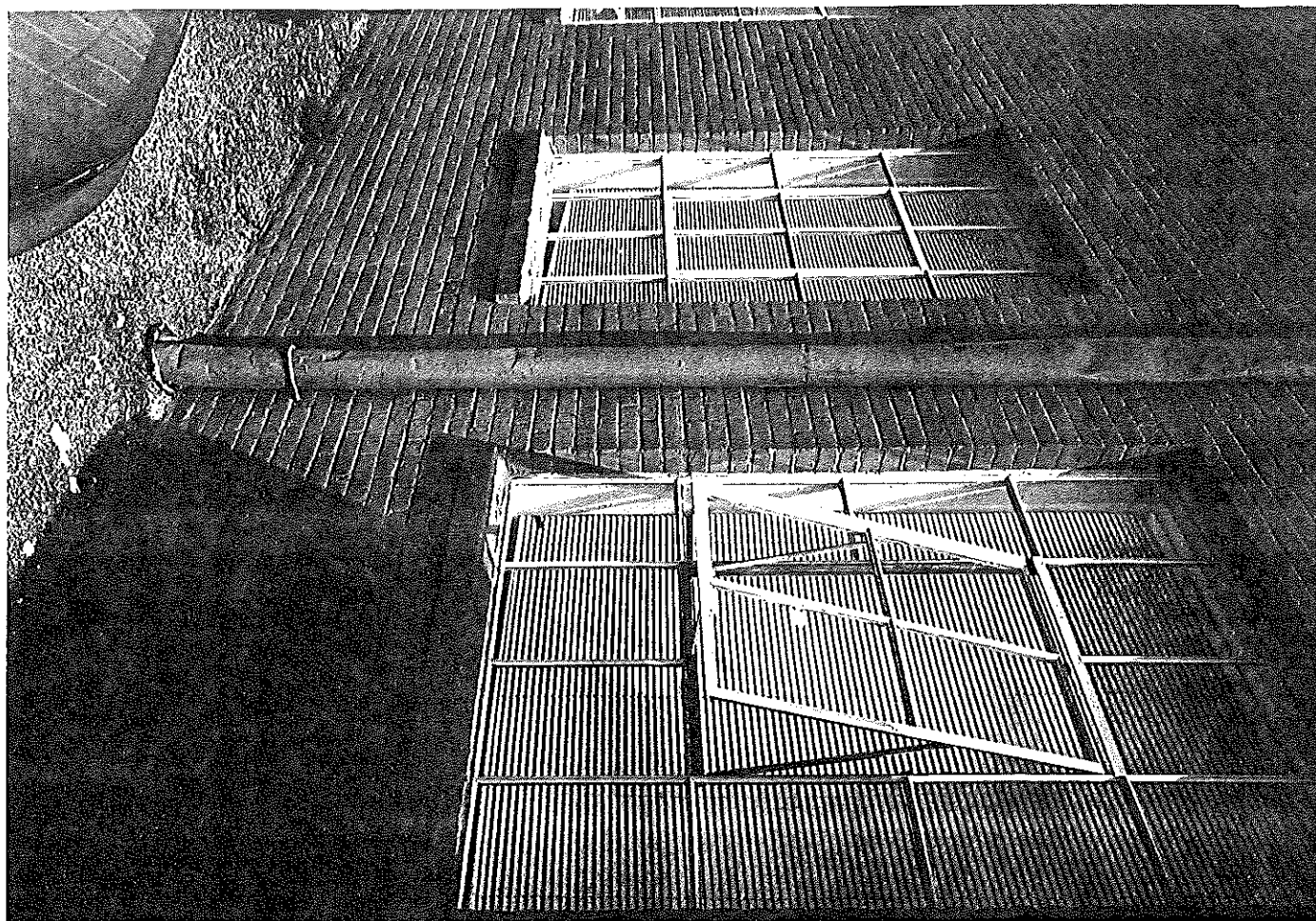
Blair-Rutland Building
DeKalb Co., GA
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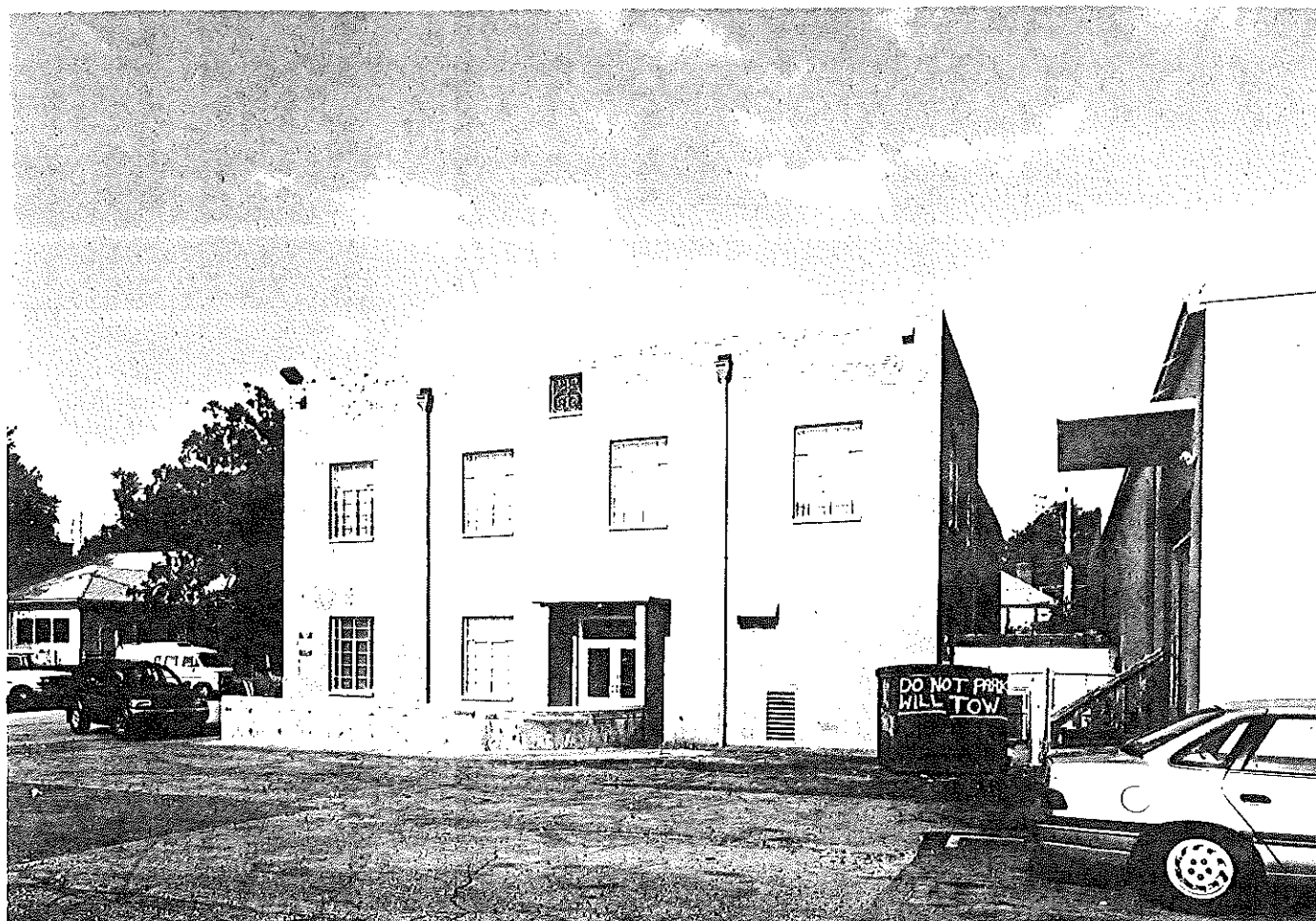
Blair-Rutland Building
DeKalb Co., GA
3/17



Blair-Rutland Building
DeKalb Co., GA
4/17



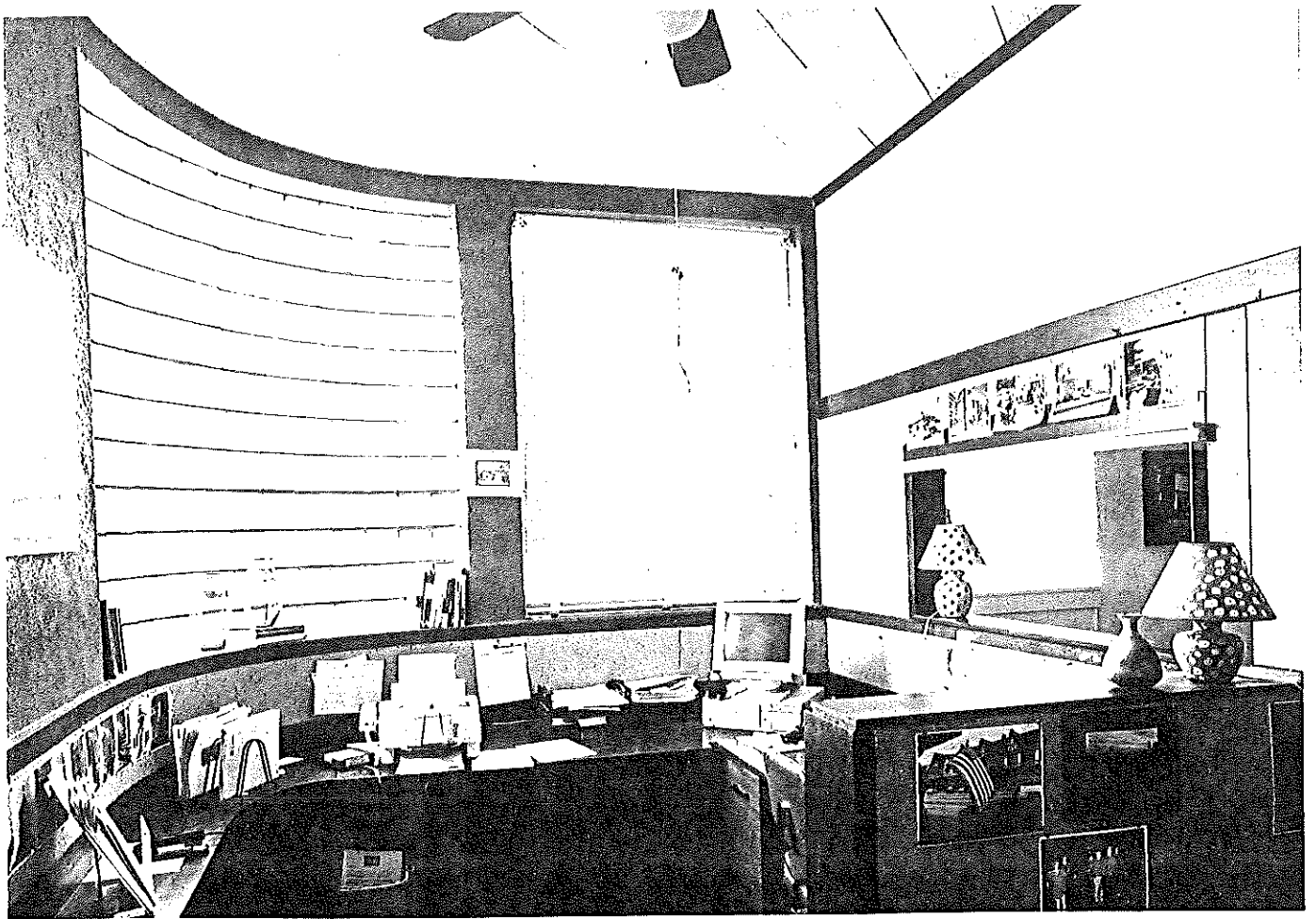
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DeKalb Co., GA
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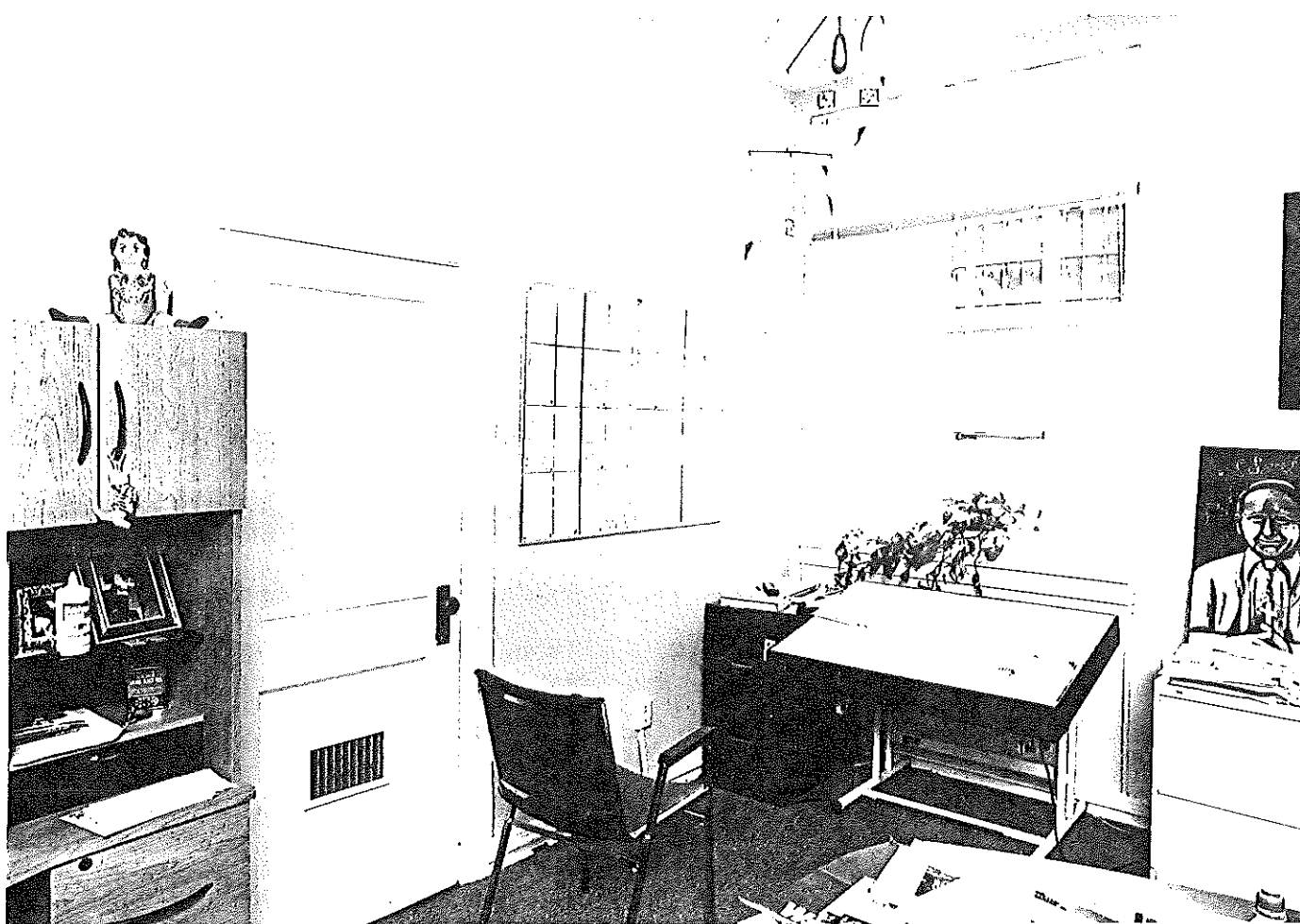
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DeKalb Co., GA
6/17



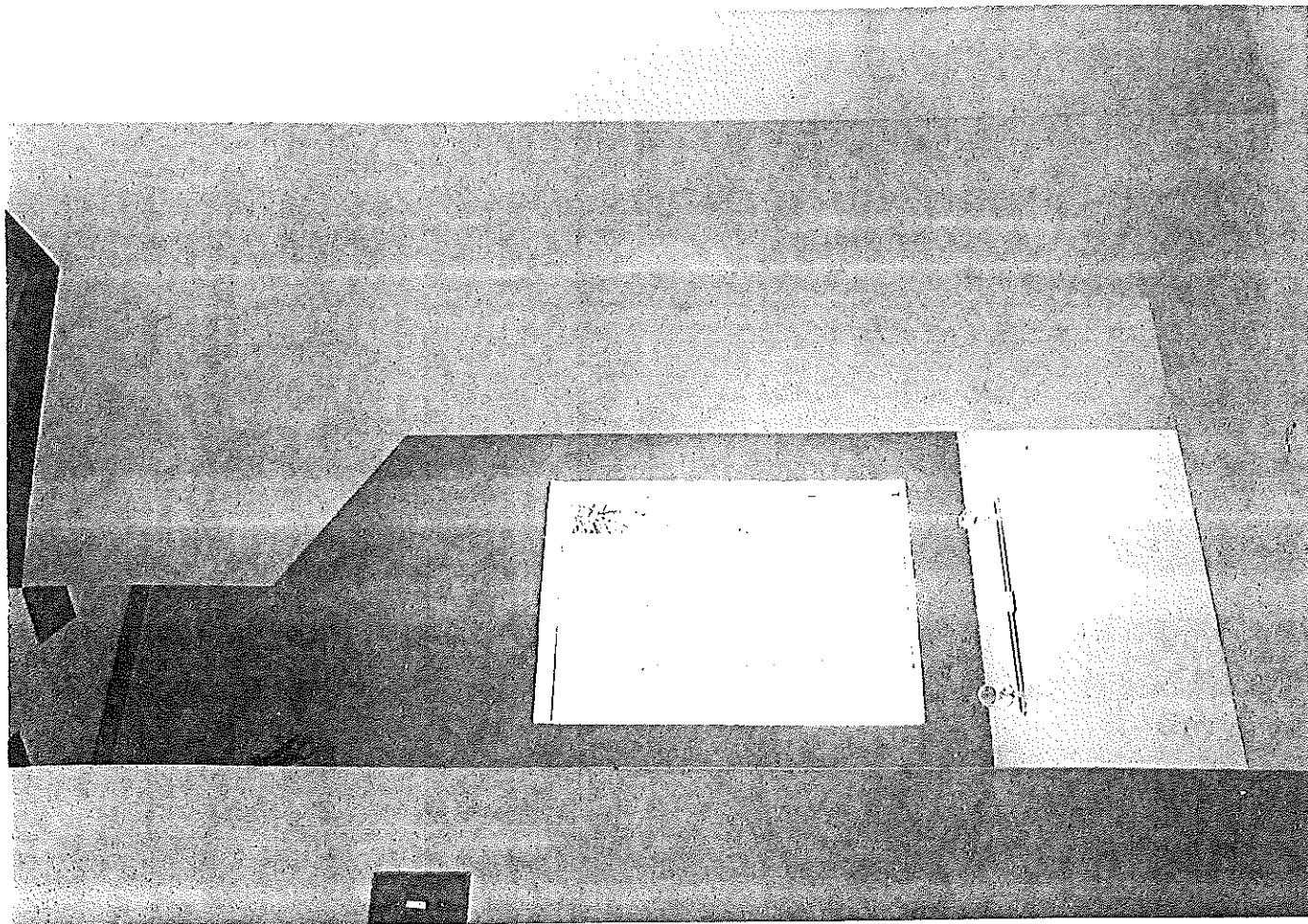
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DeKalb Co., GA
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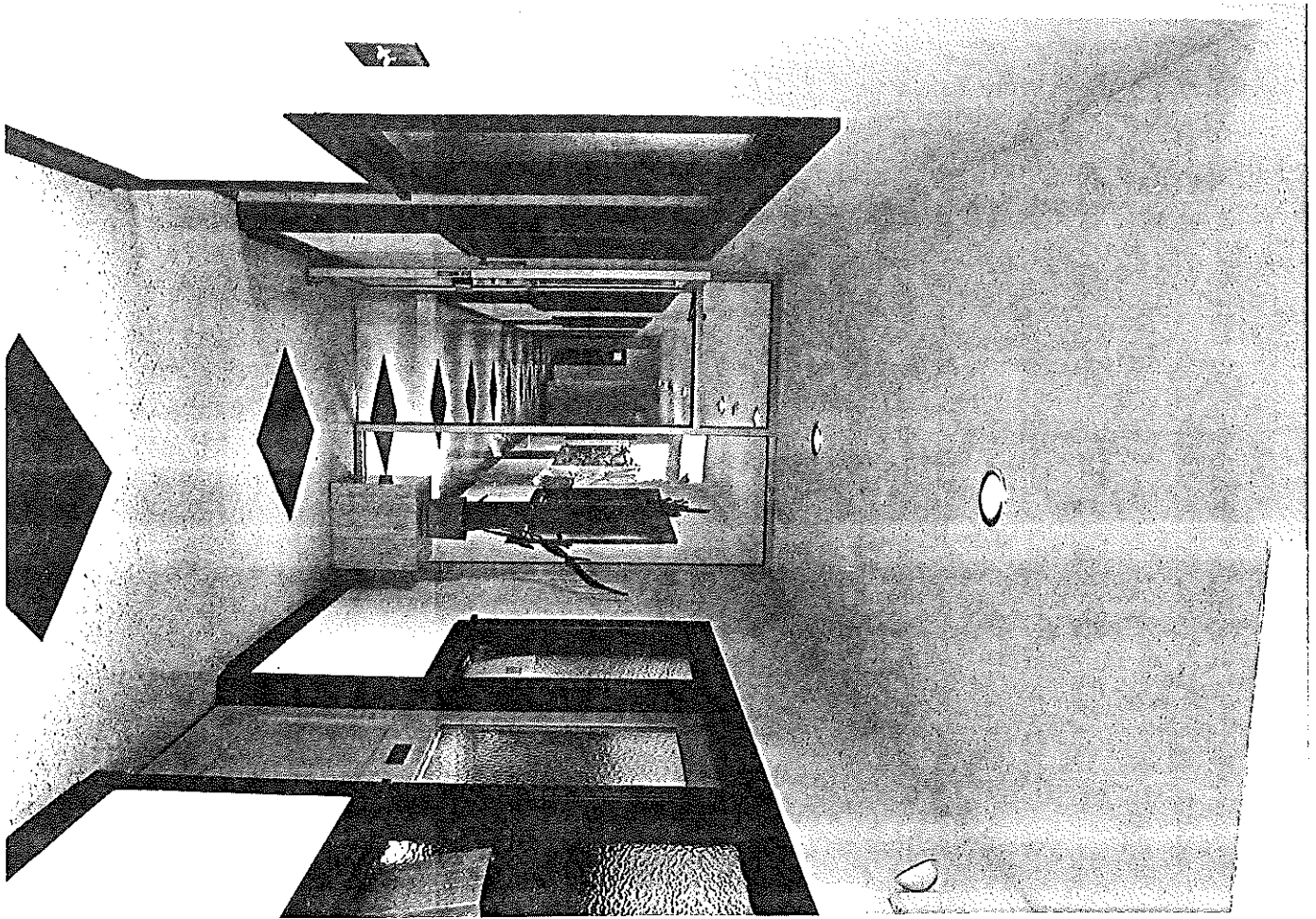
Blair-Rutland Building
DeKalb Co., GA
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DeKalb Co., GA
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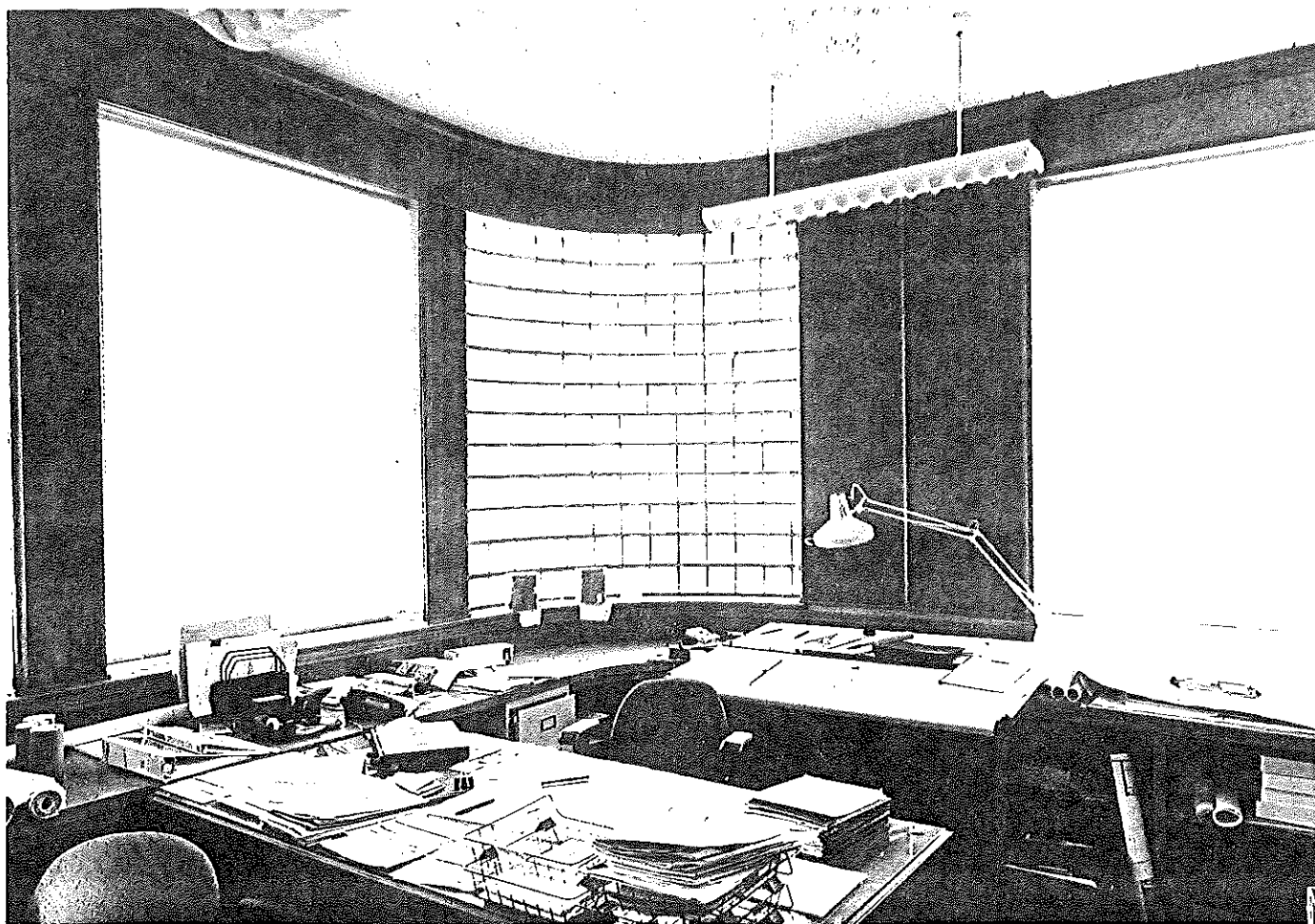


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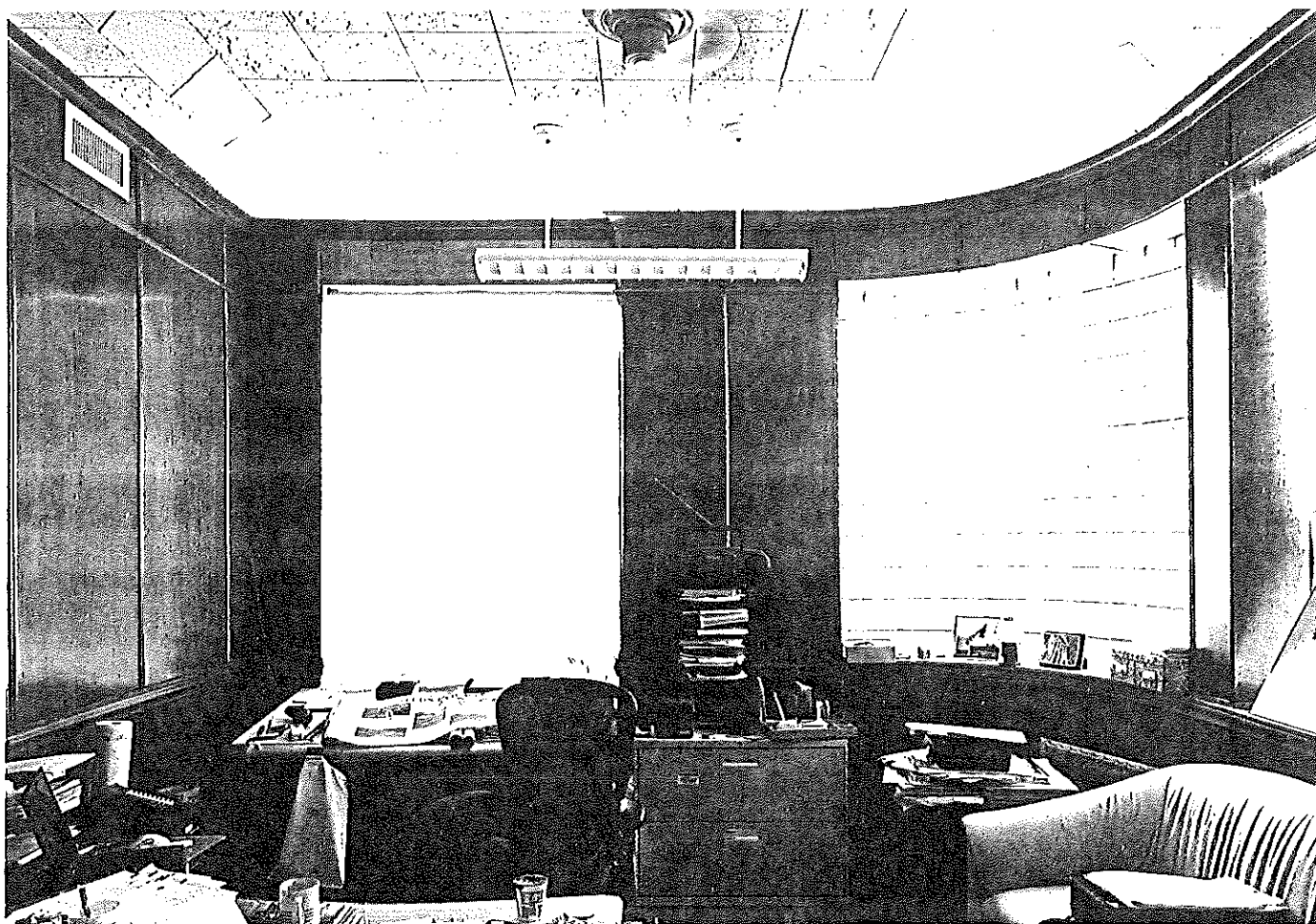


Blair-Rutland Building
DeKalb Co, GA

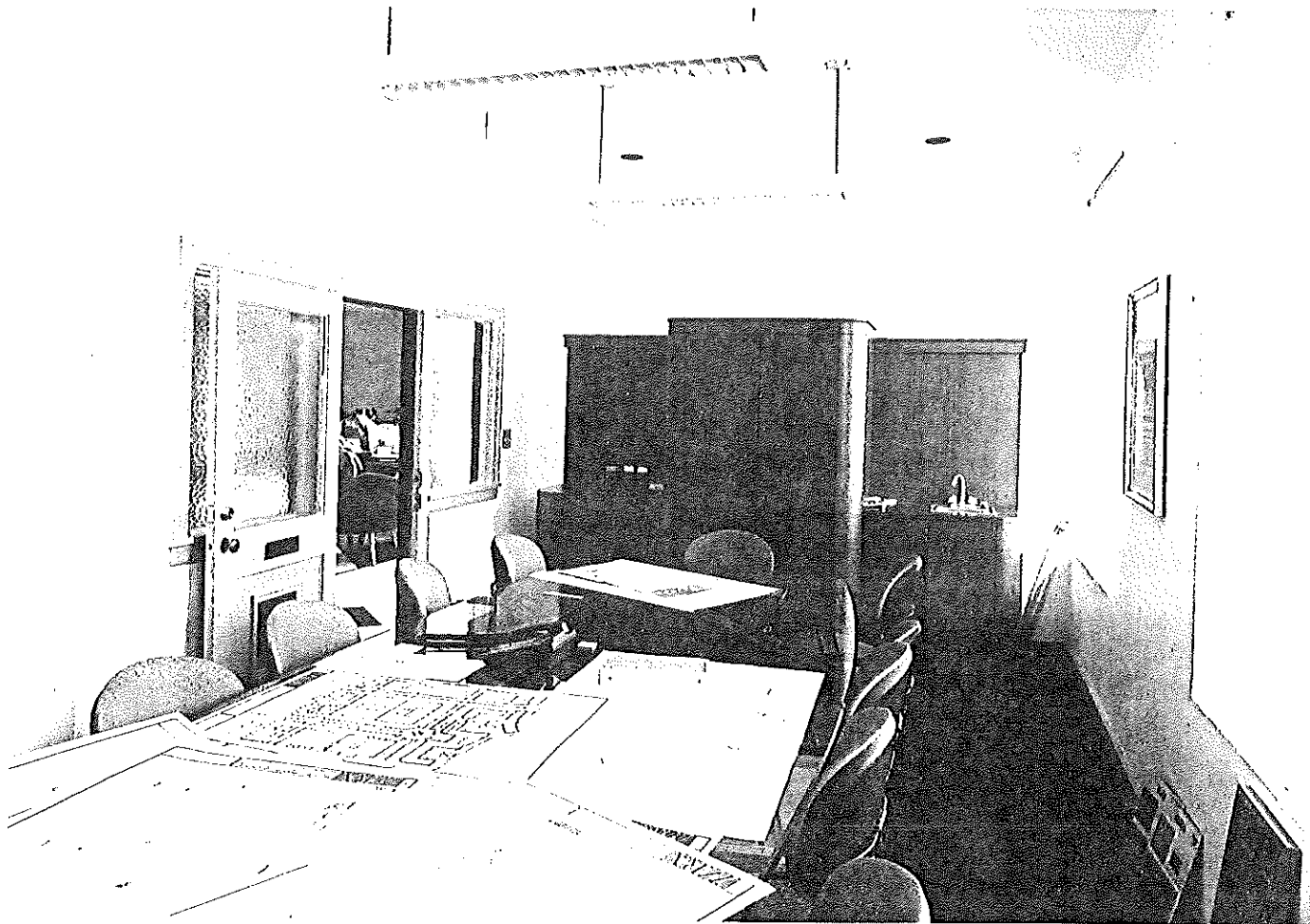
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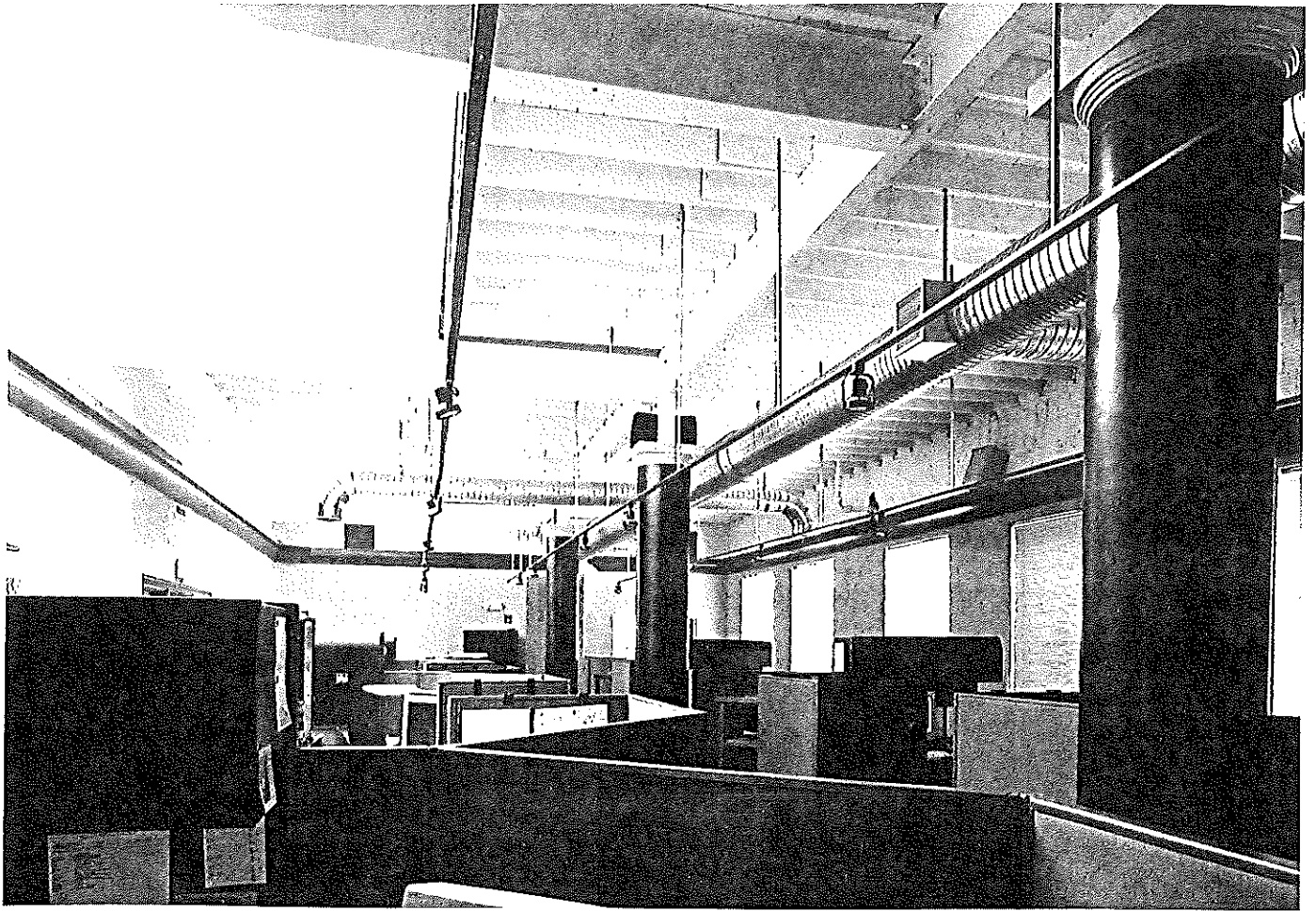
Blair-Rutland Building
Dekalb Co, GA
12/17



Blair - Rutland Building
DeKalb Co., GA
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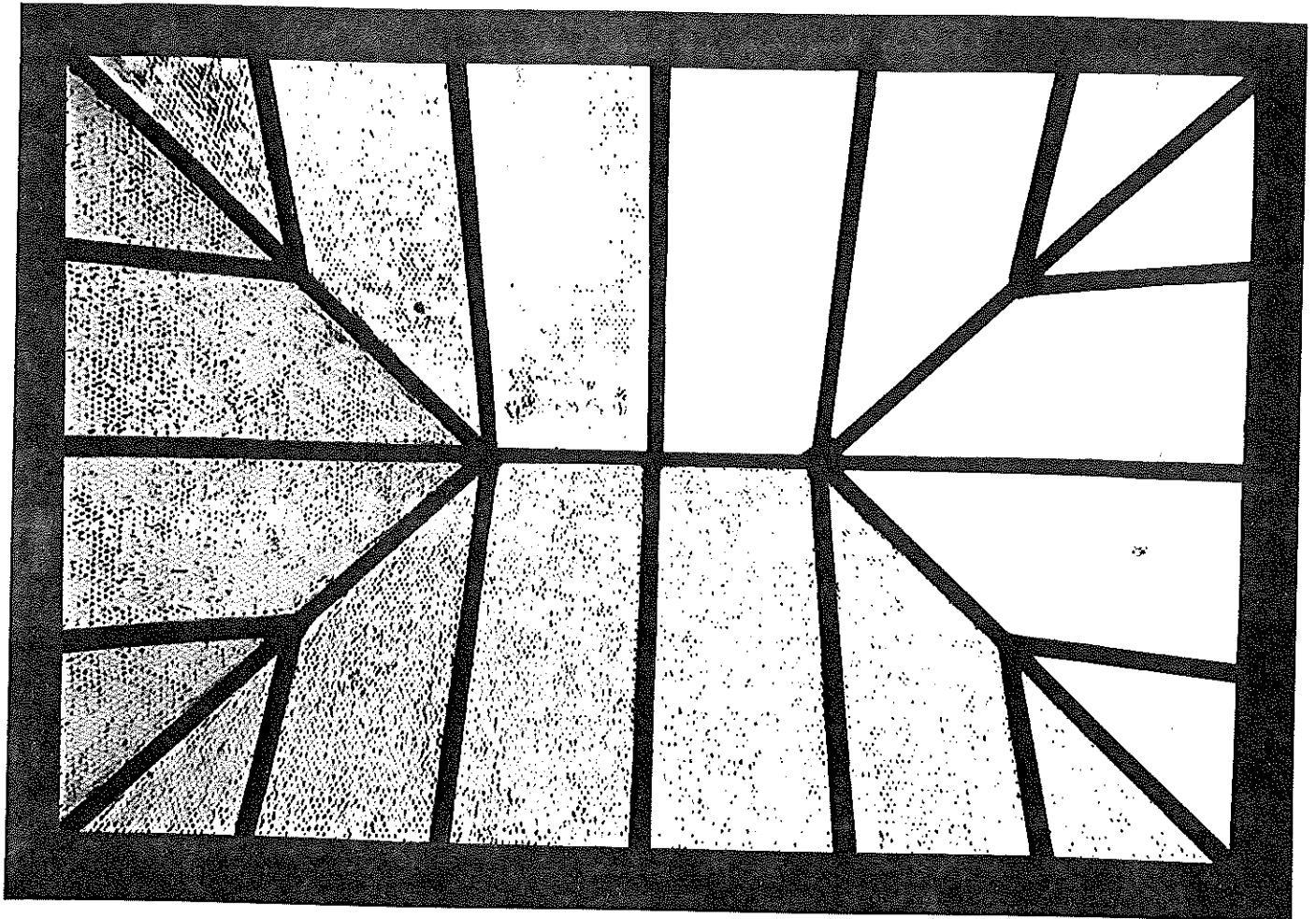
Blair-Rutland Building
DeKalb Co, GA
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Blair-Rutland Building
DeKalb Co, GA
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Blair-Rutland Building
DeKalb Co., GA
16/17



Blair-Rutland Building
DeKalb Co, GA
17/17