

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations 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 Downtown Burlington Historic District  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number All or part of 7 blocks bounded approximately by  not for publication  
city, town Burlington Morehead, S. Main, Davis, S. Worth, E. Webb &  vicinity  
Spring Streets  
state North Carolina code NC county Alamance code 001 zip code 27215

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>45</u>	<u>27</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>45</u>	<u>27</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 5

### 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  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official William S. Pate, Jr.

Date 7-23-90

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

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 and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

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

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

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution

~~COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store~~

~~DOMESTIC/hotel~~

~~TRANSPORTATION/rail-related~~

~~INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility~~

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/financial institution

~~COMMERCE/specialty store~~

~~DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling~~

~~INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility~~

~~RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum~~

VACANT- NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Commercial style

Neo-Classical Revival

Art Deco

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

~~METAL/Aluminum~~

roof ASPHALT

other TERRA COTTA

~~STUCCO~~

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Please see continuation sheets.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

### 7. Description

The Downtown Burlington Historic District is a commercial area of 72 buildings, arranged in four full city blocks and all or part of the blockfaces of three additional blocks in Burlington, North Carolina, a town of approximately 40,000 in the heart of the North Carolina Piedmont. It encompasses what has historically been the nucleus of Burlington's central business district since its founding as a railroad repair site that grew into an industrial community in the second half of the 19th century. The district contains 45 contributing and 27 non-contributing buildings. Five of the district's resources have been individually listed in the National Register.

Although urban renewal and other vicissitudes have removed major portions of the building fabric from what was a larger, 13 block commercial area embracing this core, the district itself remains densely developed, predominantly with resources which date from 1885-1930. It is oriented NE/SW immediately south of the tracks of what was originally the North Carolina Railroad Company, and of the rail yard north of the tracks that served as the railroad's repair and maintenance shops. The district includes three small parking lots; a grassy park in the NE corner; a plaza at the head of S. Main Street with a railroad sculpture and public amphitheatre; and all buildings in the 300-500 blocks of S. Main and S. Spring Streets and the 100 blocks of E. and W. Front and E. and W. Davis Streets, plus one blockface each of E. Morehead and S. Worth Streets, and two blockfaces on E. Maple Street. With the exception of the Southern Railway Passenger Station, the Federal Building, and the former Post Office (now the May Memorial Library), all of these buildings abut the sidewalk.

The district is anchored on the north by the 1892 Southern Railway Passenger Station (NR, Entry 1) a one-story brick and stucco building with a hipped roof and deep overhangs, brackets, a polygonal turret, finials, and a quaint railroad weathervane, which sits perpendicular to S. Main and commands this prospect from several hundred feet south of its original site along the tracks. The block in which this building stands was once the first segment of the historic commercial area of Burlington, a two-block section where the North Carolina Railroad Company Office and the first commercial support structures were constructed, including a fine hotel. Until the mid-20th century, this area was bisected by S. Main Street, but the commercial material that once was here has been demolished and the two blocks united ca. 1972 when the station was moved here from its earlier site.

On the south, the district is anchored by the former May Hosiery Mill (now the Kayser-Roth Hosiery Mill, ca. 1920), a descendent of a cluster of textile mills in Burlington under various ownerships and producing a variety of woven and finished cotton goods

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

from the 1890's. This five-story brick industrial building with Art Deco motifs on the office portion and multi-lighted fenestration reflects the industrial character of this end of the district, as opposed to the retail, office, and rail-related structures on its northernmost end. Thus, the site is bracketed by buildings representing the historic origins of Burlington's industrial base, railroading and textiles.

The majority of the resources in the district are flat roofed, one to three-story brick commercial buildings with simple sawtooth brick cornices, remodeled storefronts, and two to three upper bays. The major portion of the district's styles could be characterized as "village commercial," typical of small to medium sized North Carolina towns in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in their stylistic detailing. Several of the buildings constructed in the 1920's and '30's feature granite veneer facades with Art Deco or Art Moderne motifs, at least one building features Neo-Gothic Revival influences, and occasional Colonial Revival themes have been used to update earlier material.

In the 1960's and '70's many building facades in the district were sided with metal, wood, or tile veneers, some of which covered the second-story fenestration completely, some of which allowed light through small latticed openings. Circa 1972, the 300 and 400 blocks of S. Main Street were blocked off and redwood street canopies were installed in the construction of a densely landscaped pedestrian mall, an attempt to attract customers that had bypassed the downtown for outlying shopping centers. The type of facade alteration that accompanied this effort held sway over much of the downtown, enough so that Burlington's central business district had until very recently a ghostly appearance matched, unfortunately, by a ghostly lack of customer activity and commerce.

In 1984, things began to change. Several key properties and a residential district were listed in the National Register in the first of a series of concerted preservation efforts by the Burlington Historic Resources Commission and the City that has continued to this day. In 1988, Burlington was accepted into the National Trust's Main Street Program, which has inaugurated a facade renovation and renewal plan, the opening and removal of the Main Street pedestrian mall, landscaping and infrastructure improvements, and other programmatic efforts to return downtown Burlington to its earlier historic commercial character. To date, the owners of ten buildings have removed their veneers and restored the underlying brick work. Although 24 buildings in the district remain non-contributing due to such alterations, it is anticipated that this number will be reduced by additional restorations. Thus the discussion and inventory that follow reveal a city in the process of transformation.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

No buildings from Burlington's 1850's period remain, but four Reconstruction and Post-Reconstruction era buildings (ca. 1866-1890) are still to be found in the district: the commercial building at 302 S. Main (ca. 1870, Entry 13) the C. F. Neese Jewelers Building (1887, Entry 44), 312 S. Main (ca. 1885, Entry 45), and the core of the Rauhut Building (ca. 1870, Entry 16). The first building features segmental arched windows, star-shaped anchor bolts, and a sawtooth cornice with an undulating brick band above the second-story fenestration. It also features the only cast iron column in town. Unfortunately, recent updating has produced a faux common bond skin, created of stucco scored to resemble brick, thus rendering the building non-contributing. The Neese Building features arched windows, a corbelled brick cornice, and an undulated bell course at 302 S. Main; the building at 312 S. Main has been painted, its rectangular windows infilled with louvering ca. 1960. The Rauhut Building features irregular ranks of late horizontal-paned windows, added in the early 20th century following a fire so that it resembles the 1930's structure to its immediate north, the Walters Building (Entry 15).

Forty-one buildings in the district represent the area's second major building period, 1890-1915. Built in a variety of styles, one is the eclectic National Register-listed Southern Railway Passenger Station (see above). Others include the Strader Building (1913-18, Entry 3), with its stepped parapet and sawtooth brick cornice, and the building at 400 S. Main (1910, Entry 50), a two-story brick building with shoulder arched fenestration. Also representing this period are the McClellan Stores Building (ca. 1895, Entry 36), Foster Shoe Company Building (ca. 1890, Entry 37), Mebane Shoe (ca. 1890, Entry 41), and Holt and May (ca. 1890, Entry 42). All of these latter buildings were remodelled in the '20's following a fire in 1918 that damaged the west side of the entire 300 block of S. Main, and their front facades were refaced in the 1930's or '40's.

The most distinctive buildings from this middle (and major growth) period in Burlington's history are two. The first is the Troxler-Cammack Building (1908, Entry 30), a three-story building with arcaded second-story windows and decorative brickwork including quoins, bell course, and spandrels. The second is the Eford Building (NR, ca. 1908, Entry 29). Situated among other buildings in a row of brick structures, this building is unique in its Neo-Gothic Revival front facade of enamelled terra cotta surrounding large, Tudor arched windows, now infilled with glass brick. The expanse of glass and fancifulness of decorative elements, including a tracery band above the first story and quatrefoil piercing in the parapet, suggest an early effort to lighten the heaviness of street brick and bring a certain "curtain wall" flavor to Burlington for the first time.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

The largest proportion of buildings from the third period, 1915-40 (19 resources), are two-story/two-to-three bay brick masonry bearing wall structures. Most of these common forms have remodeled storefronts, flat roofs, modest corbelled brick cornice detailing, and narrow brick front-corner pilasters, features which frame the street facades in what is a common building type bordering the streets of numerous North Carolina towns and villages. Modest as are the majority of the buildings from this period, several buildings reflect national commercial styles, the Morris Plan Bank Building (ca. 1930, Entry 69) which reveals period Revival themes with some particularity, the commercial building at 426 S. Spring (Entry 71) which features Art Deco motifs with ribbed granite veneer and decorative spandrels, and Mann's Drug (1925, Entry 55), an unusual building for the district which features tile roof and spandrels, finials, and a picturesque charm that has not been diminished by remodeling.

Finally, three pivotal buildings were constructed before and during the Depression that have given a persistent urban quality to the town and signaled its maturity. The first is the Alamance Hotel (1925, NR, Entry 31), an L-shaped "base-shaft-capital" structure of rough-faced red-brown brick with 8/8 and 4/4 double hung fenestration and a deeply coved and molded terra cotta cornice surmounted by a brick parapet with tile coping. The base of the cornice is even with the top of a grillwork course that covers the top-floor fenestration so that the semi-elliptical insets project into the coved cornice to create a pointed frame similar to the web of a groin vault. Built according to a design by North Carolina architect, Charles Hartmann, the building is the last in a series of hotels to operate in Burlington from the mid-19th century.<sup>1</sup>

The second, also designed by Hartmann, is the (former) Atlantic Bank and Trust Company Building (NR, Entry 49), the tallest building in Burlington (at nine-stories), which was constructed in 1928-9. The building is a steel-frame and brick structure with uniform double-hung fenestration, a tripartite organization (like the Alamance Hotel) with granite sheathing on the lower stories and Art Deco and Classical motifs throughout, topped by an ornate parapet with simple fret bands and an alternating series of carved cattle skulls and Aztec-derived masks. Connecting this ornamentation are decorative metal spandrels and fluted pilasters rising to foliated capitals that enliven the top of the building.<sup>2</sup>

The third pivotal property in the Downtown Burlington Historic District dating from 1915-40 is the Federal Building (NR, Entry 72). Erected in 1936, this symmetrical one-story Classical Revival and Moderne building is constructed of common-bond red brick with granite facia. Its eight-bay front facade features 6/6/6 triple-hung recessed fenestration and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

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double leaved oak doors with wide bronze surrounds. The recently renovated interior features two significant wall murals, designed by Arthur L. Bairnsfather in the Regionalist style, which have also been restored. They depict workers in the slasher room of a textile mill and a railroad scene near the Burlington railroad station on the eve of the Civil War.<sup>3</sup>

Only three buildings date from the 1940's onward. These are simple single story structures distinguished from earlier buildings by their no-nonsense lack of embellishment. In all, the Downtown Burlington Historic District is an example of the complex of buildings for conducting commerce in moderately sized North Carolina industrial communities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a period during which cities like Burlington across the South pulled themselves into the industrial age through determination, energy, and grit.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

## INVENTORY

The sources for this inventory are: Sanborn Maps, from random years 1893-1927; Burlington Survey Files, 1982; Burlington City Directories; A. H. Black. *Architectural History of Burlington*, 1987; and National Register Nomination forms. Unless otherwise indicated, the building has a brick exterior and the name refers to the original occupant. The list is keyed to the enclosed map.

Contributing: C; Non-Contributing: N.

<u>Rating,</u> <u>Historic Name,</u> <u>Address</u>	<u>Approximate</u> <u>Construction</u> <u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
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### E. Front Street, north side, west to east

1. C Southern Railway

Passenger Station, NR 200 S. Main.	1892	One-story stucco and brick with slate hipped roof and turret, oriented NE/SW south of the tracks of the North Carolina Railroad and yard. It contains overhangs, brackets, finials, and a quaint railroad weather vane. It was moved to this site ca. 1972.
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2. C United Dollar Store 1906-  
102 E. Front St. 09

Plain 2-story commercial with some decorative cornice work; 8 bay main facade, 2nd story. Stepped parapet on the S. Main facade (the original front; this site formerly was on the corner of S. Main and E. Front). United Dollar Stores was at this location from the 1920's (and probably earlier) to the 1960's. Original pressed tin ceilings.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 7 Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

3. C Strader Bldg. 1913- Two-story with sawtooth brick cornice; stepped parapet  
120 E. Front. 18 separated by pilasters; three entries now united for one  
business; nine bays wide at second story. Built for F. J.  
Strader Co. whose wholesale fruit and produce business  
occupied at least one unit of the building.
4. N Grand Theatre 1928, Two-story with elaborate neoclassical brick work  
128 E Front. ca. 1950 now mostly concealed by metal front. Faux pediment,  
with some remaining polychrome; Art Deco interior;  
later (1948) marquee. Opened by a Clara Bow movie, the  
theatre is now called the Paramount and is the home of a  
resident theatre company.
5. N Commercial Building ca. 1930 Plain, one-story commercial with  
134 E. Front. flat roof, aluminum veneer
6. N Commercial Building ca. 1950 Plain, one-story commercial with  
138 E. Front. flat roof, stucco/cement block.

W. Front Street, south side, west to east

7. C Commercial Building ca. 1930 Two-story: arched windows above elliptical infilled  
138 W. Front. transoms. Brick quoins and sawtooth features; corbelled  
cornice. Light colored brick.
8. N Commercial Bldg. ca. 1920, Thoroughly remodelled 2-story, brick facade  
128 W. Front. 1980 veneer.
9. C Kemp Building ca. 1900, Two-stories. Pressed tin ceiling, shallow parapet,  
120 W. Front. ca. 1925 legend, and modillions at cornice. Facade dates from '20's  
or '30's, perhaps from the Kemp's Clothing era of the  
building. Two triple windows with transoms.
10. C Bank of Commerce ca. 1900, Classical/Tuscan Revival pilasters and Ionic capitals,  
Building, 114 W. Front. 1920 modillion cornice with dentils. Two-story. Stone facade  
veneer; Tuscan arched entry. Possibly remodelled  
when the Bank of Commerce occupied the building from  
at least the '20's.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

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|---|-------------------|--|
| 11. C Commercial Bldg.<br>110 W. Front. | ca. 1930          | Unadorned two-story tapestry brick; cararra glass veneer at storefront.  |
| 12. N Commercial Bldg.<br>301 S. Main.  | ca. 1890,         | Two-story. Aluminum moldings; thoroughly remodeled with brick veneer, large plate glass windows, and plain coping on parapet.  |
| 13. N Commercial Bldg.<br>302 S. Main.  | ca. 1870,<br>1980 | Two-story. 1980's remodeling to resemble original, but in unsympathetic ways--by stuccoing the entire facade and scoring and painting it to resemble brick. Undulating belt course above arched fenestration; new windows. Sawtooth cornice, star anchor bolts.  |
| 14. N Commercial Bldg.<br>107 E. Front. | ca. 1890          | Two-story with modern stucco veneer. Radically altered storefront.   |
| 15. C Walters Bldg.<br>113-5 E. Front.  | ca. 1930          | Four-bay, two-story. Double storefront; molded 2nd story pilasters terminate as finials on parapet; modern 2nd story windows. Physician Charles Walters had his practice on the second floor in the '30's. Burlington Drug was in 115 from 1930's to the present.  |
| 16. C Rauhut Bldg.<br>127-133 E. Front. | 1887,<br>1930's   | Simple two-story building with irregular ranks of horizontal paned windows on the 2nd story. Three storefronts in the severe main facade dating from the early '30's feature simple decorative bands of brick. Parapet on front and sides. Erected by Charles H. Rauhut in 1887 to replace a building destroyed by fire in 1884. |

### W. Davis Street, north side, west to east

- |   |                     |   |
|---|---------------------|---|
| 17. C Commercial Bldg.<br>135 W. Davis. | ca. 1890,<br>1940's | Two-story. Plain 4-bay brick main facade (1940s) with original, Worth St. elevation featuring segmental arched windows and decorative brick cornice. New fenestration on main elevation, aluminum awning. |
|---|---------------------|---|

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 9Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

18. C Commercial Bldg. ca. 1890 Plain two-story brick facade with soldier course below modest corbelled, three-bay, second-story facade; 1/1 double hung windows; full-height pilasters. Brick front probably an early 20th century replacement.  
131 W. Davis.
19. N Commercial Bldg. ca. 1915 Two-story. Facade covered in tin or aluminum. Original facade may be intact beneath.  
127 W. Davis.
20. N Commercial Bldg. ca. 1890 Two-story. Tin or aluminum facade. Original facade may be intact beneath.  
121 W. Davis.
21. N Commercial Bldg. ca. 1890 Two-story. Tin or aluminum facade. Original facade may be intact beneath.  
117 W. Davis.
22. N Commercial Bldg. ca. 1895 Two-story. Tin or aluminum facade. Original facade may be intact beneath.  
111 W. Davis.

E. Davis Street, north side, west to east

23. C Commercial Bldg. ca. 1895, Two-story. Four multi-light upper story windows. Brick facade veneer, 1930's.  
118 E. Davis. 1930's
24. C Commercial Bldg. ca. 1895 Two-story. Irregular ranks of double hung second story windows, corbelled cornice. Facade veneer, 1930's.  
126 E. Davis. 1930's
25. C Commercial Bldg. ca. 1895, Two-story. Glass brick replacement second story windows. Facade veneer, 1930's.  
132 E. Davis. 1930's
26. C Commercial Bldg. ca. 1895, Irregular ranks of double-hung windows with transoms. Two story. Facade veneer, 1930's.  
136 E. Davis. 1930's
27. N Acme Drug Co. ca. 1900 Two-story. Wood slat or aluminum veneer covers facade, both elevations. Once site of the Burlington Post Office.  
140 E. Davis.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 10

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

### E. Davis Street, south side, west to east

28. C Commercial Bldg. 1928  
139 E. Davis. Three-story building with pierced parapet with corbelling and "turrets." Curved corner, pressed tin ceiling featuring garland and urn motifs. It has housed a series of furniture establishments, of which a long running one was Neese Shoffner Furniture.
29. C Efirid Bldg., NR ca. 1908  
122 E. Davis. Three-story Gothic Revival with tinwork ceilings. Pierced quatrefoil parapet with finials, modillions. Tudor-arched 3rd story windows, tracery spandrels, and glass brick infill. Terra cotta veneer. This building was built for a branch of a Charlotte department store chain that was sold to the Belk company in the 1950's.
30. C Troxler-Cammack Bldg. 1908  
123 E. Davis. Three-story building with arcaded windows, 2nd floor; paneled cornice with decorative brick work, brick bell course and quoins. Windows infilled with metal louvering. Shingled awning, storefront level. Checkerboard spandrel below cornice. The building was named for the original owner, George H. Troxler, and for its present occupant, Cammack Office Supply. It was once used as a lodge hall and a National Guard Armory on the upper stories.

### E. Maple Avenue, south side

31. C Alamance Hotel, NR 1925  
An 8-story tapestry brick, base-shaft-capital building with 8/8 and 4/4 double hung fenestration and a deeply coved and molded terra cotta cornice surmounted by a brick parapet with tile coping and other stone details. It was designed by architect Charles Hartmann. This was the latest and last Burlington hotel.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 11

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

### E. Maple Avenue, north side, west to east

32. C Commercial Bldg. ca. 1935 Two-story, three bay bldg. Aluminum storefronts  
126-128 E. Maple. but upper story appears as originally, with panels and  
flush decorative brickwork and white stone or concrete  
accents.
33. C Commercial Bldg. ca. 1935 Plain two story. Two storefronts;  
130 E. Maple. multi-paned fenestration. Panels of decorative flush  
brickwork.
34. C Alamance Andrews Drug 1937 Two-story with projecting brick pilasters with stepped  
138 E. Maple. Art Deco cement capitals. Decorative brickwork.  
Irregular marks of original configured fenestration.  
Original soda fountain.

### S. Worth Street, east side, north to south

35. N Commercial Bldg. ca. 1920 Three-bay, two-story with plain pilasters. Once  
326 S. Worth. added on to 327 and 331 S. Main to enlarge their  
commercial space.

### S. Main Street, west side, north to south

36. C McLellan Stores ca. 1895, Two-story with paneled and belt coursed top story.  
317 S. Main. ca. 1940 Facade veneer added ca. 1930's or '40's. This was the  
home of one of the three "five and dime" variety stores in  
Burlington, signaling its "downtown" heyday.
37. C Foster Shoe Co. ca. 1890, Plain two-story commercial with simple cornice  
321 S. Main. ca. 1920 and coping dating from ca. 1920. Foster Shoe  
was an old time Burlington establishment that continues  
to do business on E. Davis Street. The building was part  
of McLellan Stores in the 1920's and '30's.
38. N Commercial Bldg. ca. 1890 Two-story building covered with black tile veneer  
327 S. Main

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 12Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

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39. N Smith Furniture ca. 1920, New brick facade covers a two-story, '20's facade of a  
331 S. Main. 1980's building that replaced one that once had a cast iron front,  
destroyed in a 1918 fire that took out much of this entire  
block on S. Main.
40. N Commercial Bldg. ca. 1905, Simple two-story, two-bay brick with altered  
335 S. Main. post 1980 street facades. Wider Main Street facade with two  
storefronts features early corbelled cornice above  
recent brick veneer and replacement metal-framed  
windows; upper Worth St. facade veneered in composition  
panels. Early occupants include restaurants, ready-to  
wear shops, and hardware.
41. C Mebane Shoe ca. 1890 Two-story with corbelled cornice. Two triple 2nd story  
341 S. Main. windows with early or infilled frames and stone lintels  
and sills. 1918 fire may have caused some structural  
alterations. The building was home to the Mebane Shoe  
Company for nearly 45 years.
42. C Holt and May. ca. 1890 Narrow two-story building connected to the building at  
347 S. Main. the rear of the block. Main St. facade heavily altered with  
post-WW II brick veneer and replacement steel windows;  
Worth St. front (346 Worth) displays early or original  
upper elevation with decorative brick cornice and pairs  
of windows with multi-paned transoms set with  
segmented arches. This rear building also  
features tongue-in-groove ceilings. The two buildings  
have housed hardware from the earliest days, and, during  
the time the establishment was called "Holt and May," it  
was touted as "one of [the] oldest firms,  
having grown up with the city." At one time, it even sold  
buggies and carriages as well as hardware and building  
supplies.
43. C Trollinger Florist ca. 1890, Replacement early 20th century two-story brick facade  
351 S. Main. early 20th has simple pairs of windows with transoms. Occupied by  
century Trollinger Florist from the 1920's to the 1960's.
44. C C. F. Neese Jewelers 1887 Two-story. One of the most intact of the area's early  
359 S. Main. buildings currently undergoing restoration. Features  
elaborate sawtoothed corbelled and pendant cornice with

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 13

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

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segmental arched windows and belt course a la' the building at Entry 13. Early painted advertising sign on south facade. Original 1/1 and 2/2 sashes found in place when later brick infill removed from windows. Neese Jewelers have been in the building from its construction.

## S. Main Street, east side, north to south

- |  |          |  |
|--|----------|--|
| 45. C Commercial Bldg.<br>312 S. Main. | 1885     | Three-story brick building; virtually intact upper elevation with corbelled pendant cornice, somewhat deteriorated; each window with bracketed flat hood set in recessed plane, corbelled at the top; front windows covered with louvered panels; rear rectangular windows set in segmental arches. Odd Fellows met to name Burlington on 3rd floor.   |
| 46. N Sellars Bldg.<br>322 S. Main.    | ca. 1905 | The original stone veneer facade of this two-story building was probably removed when the building was sided with tin or aluminum veneer. The building runs through to Spring Street where the plain brick facade has been revealed to contain regular window ranks but defaced masonry underneath, rendering this portion non-contributing as well. Sellars department store has been a Burlington fixture from the day the building was built. |
| 47. C Roses Bldg.<br>340 S. Main       | ca. 1930 | Two-story. Paneled and corbelled cornice. Three upper windows with prominent flat stone lintels and sills now covered with louvered shutters. Tile coping. Composition storefront veneer. The store was one of three original variety stores in downtown Burlington from the '30's.  |

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 14Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

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| 48. C Commercial Bldg.<br>348 S. Main.            | ca. 1900,<br>ca. 1940 | Plain yellow two-story brick facade with corbelled cornice probably dates from the 1930's or 40's. Egg carton veneer from the 1970's was removed to reveal this facade in the recent Main Street renovations.  |
| 49. C Atlantic Bank and Trust, NR<br>358 S. Main. | 1928                  | Art Deco steel frame and brick structure with uniform double-hung fenestration and tripartite, base-shaft-capital, organization with granite veneer on the lower stories, and topped with an ornate parapet with simple fret bands and an alternating series of carved cattle skulls and Aztec-derived masks. Nine stories, making it the only skyscraper in Burlington. |
| 50. C Commercial Bldg<br>400 S. Main.             | ca. 1910              | Two-story building with round arched fenestration, brick hood molds at second story windows and paneled brick cornice corbelling. Arched half-windows, north facade. This building exhibits some of the early 20th century features that give a flavor of old Burlington. F. W. Woolworth's was in this building at one time in the early 20th century.                  |
| 51. N Grotto Theatre<br>412 S. Main.              | 1905                  | Remnants of paneled cornice. Metal veneer above store front of this two-story. Site of the oldest movie theatre in Burlington.   |
| 52. N A & P Store<br>416 S. Main.                 | ca. 1910              | Two-story; facade completely covered with aluminum veneer; pseudo-country roof symbol above the storefront at second story level. Dates from pre-mall-development Burlington when grocery stores were found downtown.  |
| 53. C Commercial Bldg.<br>430 S. Main.            | ca. 1920              | Two-story, four bay; double-hung windows; metal veneer recently removed to reveal paneled brick cornice; Redwood veneer storefront. Canvas awnings. The building has been used as a grocery and women's ready-to-wear through the years.   |

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 15

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

54. C Commercial Bldg. ca. 1915 Two-story with mezzanine. Unrestored brick exposed after removal of veneer. Eight bays with "boom-town" parapet; canvas awnings. This building is one that has been in the forefront of facade renovation efforts in the Main Street program.  
442 S. Main.
55. C Mann's Drugs 1925 Pent tile roof. Two-story with two storefronts. Brick piers with finials. Elaborate corbelled modillion cornice above four bays of multipaned windows. Tile spandrels, cloth awnings. A significant building for its having retained its original facade. Mann's Drugs occupied one storefront from the 1930's to the 1960's.  
442 S. Main.
56. N Rhodes Furniture ca. 1940 Tile veneer covers entire building. Two-story.  
448 S. Main.
57. N J. C. Penney's ca. 1950 Three story. Brick and tile-panelled exterior. Some panels are being replaced with new panels and windows.  
454-60 S. Main.
58. C May Hosiery Mill ca. 1920 Four and five story industrial building with multi-light fenestration. Art Deco granite motifs on office portion being restored. One-tenth covered in aluminum veneer. Was built on the site of the old opera house and skating rink that was the focus of downtown activities in the early 20th century.

### S. Spring Street, west side, north to south

59. N Commercial Bldg. ca. 1905 Two-story. Plain brick replacement of original facade exposed when metal veneer was removed after suffering wind damage in 1989's Hurricane Hugo. Much altered brickwork. Now contains part of Sellar's Department Store.  
331 S. Spring.
60. C Commercial Bldg. ca. 1900, Two-story. Second story with arched windows and elaborate cornice intact except most windows have brick infill; second story, now painted. 1980's brick veneer storefront facade.  
341 S. Spring. ca. 1930

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 16

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

61. N Danford Florist ca. 1950 Aluminum veneer w. aluminum awning. One-story.  
431 S. Spring.
62. N Commercial Bldg. ca. 1930, Two story, three bay with modern brick veneer facade  
437 S. Spring. 1980s and replacement windows.
63. C Commercial Bldg. ca. 1930 Two-story. Art Moderne touches with brick belt course,  
439 S. Spring. horizontal paned windows. Yellow brick with curvilinear  
metal strip at storefront level.
64. C Commercial Bldg. ca. 1930 Two-story. Granite facade veneer. Simple molded  
445 S. Spring. surrounds, paneled cornice. Eagle legend; single rank  
plate and horizontal fenestration. With the Morris  
Plan Bank building across the street, this building is one  
of the more interesting structures from the later  
history of the district.

### S. Spring Street, east side, north to south

65. C (former) Post Office 1916 Colonial Revival building with pedimented entry,  
(May Memorial Library) Palladian windows and Classical Revival cornice.  
342 S. Spring. One-story. The building is now used as a public library.
66. N Commercial Bldg. ca. 1930 Colonial Revival facade remodeling of simple, 3-bay  
404 S. Spring. brick; copper awning. Two-story.
67. N Commercial Bldg. ca. 1930 Two two-story buildings, now united with modern stone  
68. 408-10 S. Spring veneer and party wall removed for a single building.  
Aluminum awnings.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 17 Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

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| 69. C Morris Plan Bank<br>418 S. Spring.          | ca. 1930 | Brick w. multi-paned fenestration, classical entry surround. Corbelled cornice and granite facade veneer. Two-story. Home of the Morris Plan Bank, an independent bank, since it was built. The interior reflects its origin in the '30's |
| 70. C Insurance Bldg.<br>422 S. Spring            | ca. 1930 | Brick with framed facade, plain cornice; granite lintels/sills unify. Two-bay, two-story.   |
| 71. C Commercial Bldg.<br>426 S. Spring.          | ca. 1930 | Art Deco two-story with cut granite facade. Four ranks of windows are flanked by fluting and have glazed header spandrels. Original storefront. Once the home of H & S Motor Company.   |
| 72. C Federal Building, NR 1936<br>430 S. Spring. |          | Classical Revival with Moderne elements. Brick with granite facia, eight-bays with 6/6/6 recessed fenestration, oak double-leaved doors. Interior WPA murals by Arthur Bairnsfather. One-story.   |

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Claudia P. Roberts (Claudia R. Brown), Alamance Hotel National Register Nomination, unpublished, 1983.

<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ (former) Atlantic Bank and Trust Company Building National Register Nomination, unpublished, 1983.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Mattson, Federal Building National Register Nomination, unpublished, 1988.

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)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE  
INDUSTRY  
TRANSPORTATION  
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1885-1940

Significant Dates

1892, 1925,  
1928, 1936

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Charles Hartmann, architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Please see continuation sheets.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County, NC

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### Summary

The Downtown Burlington Historic District is locally significant under Criteria A and C for the period 1885, the date of the area's oldest contributing building, to 1940. It represents railroading and textile producing, both of which were of critical importance to the founding of Burlington as well as to the development of the North Carolina Piedmont and the state as a whole in the last half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. The facts that Burlington was a railroad repair and maintenance site from its founding and that it became one of the preeminent textile producing communities in the country make an understanding of its industrial and transportation-related past important to the history of these movements generally. An equally important area of significance is commerce, as represented by the great majority of the district's buildings which reflect Burlington's economic generated by railroading and textiles. The district also is significant architecturally as representing the varieties of vernacular commercial building styles articulated in the central business districts of industrial communities like Burlington across the Piedmont. Some of the buildings are more stylish, including distinctive examples of the Neo-Gothic Revival, Classical Revival, Art Deco and Art Moderne styles. Together, the district's history and architecture portray the enterprise and resolve of Burlingtonians from the last quarter of the 19th century to the eve of World War II.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

### Transportation and Industry Contexts; Historical Background

The propensity of American cities to trace their history to a particular set of events in time is more true of Burlington than of most. The town did not exist at all--it had no pre-existing crossroads community, no church, no water-powered mill (no river!), nothing that suggested communal life--until the North Carolina Railroad Company, chartered in 1848, decided to establish a repair and maintenance facility in the middle of Alamance County. Prior to 1849 when Alamance County was formed by a division of Orange County to the east, the area consisted of small, mostly subsistence farms of fewer than ten slaves apiece.<sup>1</sup> The region had a history of civil disobedience (a dissident group called the Regulators had conducted a series of pre-Revolutionary skirmishes against British rule in the late 18th century), much of which had been diluted by the turn of the 19th century due to the influx of a large group of peaceable Quakers who arrived from Pennsylvania through "The Great Valley of Virginia". With German and Scotch-Irish immigrants, these groups were well established in Alamance County by Burlington's founding.

To this point in the mid-19th century, North Carolina's economy was determined by topography; the state was divided into three distinct regions, their boundaries determined by terrain. The coastal plain had developed agriculturally and its rail system was in place far in advance of the piedmont and mountain regions, whose development thus tended to lag. With the opening of textile mills beginning in the 1830's, the population of these out-regions began to increase, with the result that, toward the middle of the century, pressure mounted for the construction of a railroad to the interior from the coast. The chartering of the North Carolina Railroad was intended to improve transport by running through the central piedmont between Charlotte and Goldsboro, where it met with the Wilmington-Weldon line.<sup>2</sup>

To determine the route and advise on operations, the company's directors hired Colonel Walter Gwynn, a West Point graduate and chief engineer for a number of rail projects in Virginia and North Carolina, who surveyed the route in 1850. When the Alamance County seat of Graham turned down the rail company's offer to place its shops in their town, the company's Board of Directors under Charles F. Fisher was forced to choose another place. With the encouragement of the line's president, John Motley Morehead, and one of its directors, Benjamin Trollinger, the road's maintenance and repair shops and its central headquarters were established two miles west of Graham. They selected a rolling rural site in close proximity to the rail line's geographical center. The 631.75 acres were assembled from various local families, with the enticement of rail stock, and in 1856 the railroad commenced construction of a complex of industrial structures built "on a scale commensurate with the importance of the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

road." <sup>3</sup>

Charles Fisher's supervision of the rail complex at the site, by then known as "Company Shops," produced a group of industrial style buildings including two machine shops, a carpenter shop, blacksmith shop, boiler house, foundry, engine or round house, storage house, freight station, and passenger depot.<sup>4</sup> In addition, a number of houses were built for shop workers including eight frame and eight brick row houses, and, southeast of the shops, railroad office buildings and far fancier housing for the line's president, vice president and other officials. Last, a grand (and costly) hotel was built near the depot.<sup>5</sup>

In the early years, Company Shops was definitely a company town; virtually all of its land was owned by the railroad. The single exception was the property of John G. Moore, a local merchant and rail agent who was allowed by Fisher to "build a house on the land of the Company and enclose about three or four acres in rear of Superintendents [sic] house all at his own costs and charges" because "his duties as Store Keeper require his present [sic] at all times."<sup>6</sup> Moore was later appointed one of five commissioners when Company Shops was incorporated in 1866.

In spite of this rail hegemony, a community grew up around the shop site as it became a market center for the surrounding agricultural area. Since these new arrivals needed shelter for their enterprises and the railroad needed capital, the sale of land on the south side of the tracks, the core of which became the commercial center of the town, was begun around 1863, in the middle of the Civil War. (The war was taking its toll on development and construction although the line did continue to operate and serve as a important link in the Confederate effort, especially in the final months of the conflict.<sup>7</sup>) With this land development, Company Shops became a passenger stop as well as a repair site, and the first depot was built across the tracks south of the maintenance area, a building that was replaced in 1892 by the present Southern Railway Passenger Depot.

During Reconstruction, economic conditions in North Carolina forced state-wide industrial changes. In 1871, the directors of the North Carolina Railroad Company leased its track to the Richmond and Danville Railroad for a period of 30 years, a move resulting principally from the state's desire to get out of the railroad business due to increasing maintenance and operating costs.<sup>8</sup> This move was part of a plan by rail promoters to use North Carolina track in the construction of a Richmond-Atlanta rail link. Although the North Carolina Railroad retained ownership of other real property in the area and its president, William A. Smith, continued to live there, the lease included the maintenance shops and land immediately adjacent to them in Company Shops, and orders and instructions governing rail operations came,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

thereafter, from Richmond.<sup>9</sup>

In 1875, the company moved its offices to Greenboro, some 20 miles away. This generated real fears among workers in Company Shops, and the little community struggled for the next several years with a fluctuating population and rate of growth. At the same time, it was beginning to diversify. New industries began arriving to supplant the town's one-industry character. Branson's *North Carolina Business Directory* for 1872 lists several shoe factories, a chair factory, a wheelwright, and a gunsmith.<sup>10</sup> When, in 1886, the Richmond and Danville Railroad moved its repair shops to Manchester, Virginia, railroading ceased to be a chief employer of area residents and rendered the name "Company Shops" obsolete. And so, for no apparent reason other than it was euphonious, a group of town fathers met the following year and changed its name to Burlington.<sup>11</sup>

The change in name reflected a change in fortune. In 1880, Peter F. Holt had obtained a charter to operate the first cotton mill in Company Shops. Holt was a distant cousin of Edwin M. Holt who had established a small cotton producing facility on Little Alamance Creek in 1837 when water power was necessary to run such mills. By the 1880's, steam-generated power was the rule, enabling cotton mills to move to land transportation centers for shipping, and the Holt family, who eventually built mills in virtually every town in Alamance County, had built five mills in the Company Shops vicinity by 1893.<sup>12</sup>

Peter Holt had several partners, among them his son, Lafayette Holt, who had studied textile mill construction and machine operations in Lowell, Massachusetts, the textile capital of the nation, and designed some of the mills in Company Shops.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, in spite of this preparation, the Holts' first mill failed in 1884, and though an interregnum period occurred during which R. J. Reynolds of tobacco fame purchased the mill at auction, the property was reacquired in 1885 and reopened by Lawrence S. Holt, youngest son of Edwin Holt, as Aurora Cotton Mill.<sup>14</sup> This mill, and two others, Elmira Cotton Mill founded by two other Holts, Edwin's grandsons, and the E. M. Holt Plaid Mill, along with the Carolina Coffin Company, founded in 1884 by another Holt relative, J. Locke Erwin, bridged Company Shops' transition to the industrial age.

The North Carolina cotton industry was largely a local affair using local labor until the last decade of the 19th century. When, by 1890, northern interests, attracted by "cheaper raw materials and fuel and labor, longer working hours, mild climate, and friendly legislation,"<sup>15</sup> had begun to invest in the state's industry and to move their mills from the north, the only mill in Burlington to be acquired by northern interests was Windsor Cotton Mills, another Holt family enterprise. The remaining mills continued to be locally run. With

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

the founding of the first hosiery mill, Daisy Mill, in 1896, mill establishments began to produce knitwear as well as sheet goods and yarn, and to be referred to as the "Burlington mills." Thereafter, the destiny of Burlington began to improve in earnest.

Between 1890 and 1900, the town's population increased 110% (from 1,176 to 3,692).<sup>16</sup> Doctors, lawyers, carpenters, contractors, merchants, tradesmen, druggists, and clergymen flocked to Burlington in this decade, an immigration that produced a commercial building boom and the development of a sizable middle class, all of which required housing. Its civic administrations were progressive for this part of the south. With the motto "Bigger, Better Burlington," they brought the town into the 20th century for a half century of sustained growth, making Burlington the major contributor to North Carolina's preeminence in cotton and hosiery production nation-wide. Other mills were founded, some of them specialized: Glen Raven Mills (1904), Sellars Hosiery Mill (1908), Whitehead Hosiery Mills, (1909), Keystone Finishing Mills (1911), and others. By the 1920's, there were 18 hosiery and finishing mills and seven cotton mills in Burlington, and their structures and associated mill villages dotted the landscape.<sup>17</sup> Not surprisingly, their organizers and officials were the town's leading citizens in the first four decades of the 20th century.

The biggest venture of all was inaugurated in 1924, the founding of Burlington Mills (now Burlington Industries). The purpose of the enterprise, involving at least one fourth generation Holt, Eugene, was to take advantage of the development of synthetic fiber. As one source describes it:

The rise of Burlington Mills. . . was little less than spectacular. Founded in 1924 and employing only 200 workers that year, by 1934 this company was the largest weaver of rayon fabrics in the United States. By 1942, it was the largest single producer of rayon yarn in the nation and had 44 plants and 16,000 employees. During World War II it produced more than fifty different products for the government; it entered the foreign field in 1944, with plants in Cuba and Australia; and in 1971, it had 132 plants in 92 countries and Puerto Rico, with about 87,000 employees and an annual product of approximately \$1,832,539,000.<sup>18</sup>

This company put Burlington on the world map, and, although the Burlington Mills' company headquarters moved to Greensboro before its international reputation reached its zenith, it continued to employ Burlington residents and influence its economy throughout the century.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

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While the development of Burlington's Central Business District reflects local prosperity generated by the textile industry, the only mill building in the district, the May Hosiery Mill (Entry 58) directly represents this facet of Burlington's development and history. Built in the 1920's and reflecting the state of the art of mill construction for that period, it stands on the site of the "Old Brick Warehouse," a late nineteenth century tobacco warehouse that doubled as an opera house and skating rink in the heyday of the town's urbanization. The existing building was part of a complex descended from the Daisy Hosiery Mill of the 19th century's last decade. It was later named for the May family after two of its members purchased a controlling interest in it in 1907.

Today, the May Hosiery Mill (Entry 58) and Southern Passenger Railway Station (Entry 1) the second of Burlington's two depots and, since 1972, on a new site closer to the commercial center of Burlington with which it is linked, bracket the Downtown Burlington Historic District and signify its history. Together, railroading and textiles form the opening and closing acts of this town's first century. They continue to be nascent in its sense of both its past and its future.

### Commerce and Architectural Contexts: Historical Background:

The architecture of the Downtown Burlington Historic District is representative of towns of its size and location. Beginning in the 1870's, the frame, single-story, residential scale general merchandise stores that provided the staples for the railroad workers and their managers in the early years of the town's history were gradually replaced by one-, two-, and three-story brick structures, many with segmental brick arched fenestration, bracketed cornices, and "boom town" pediments on the street facades. Three of the four buildings that remain from the period 1870-90, 302 S. Main (ca. 1870, Entry 13), the C. F. Neese Jewelry Store building (1887, Entry 44), and 312 S. Main (ca. 1885, Entry 45), all give a flavor of this early period, especially in scale and mass, though each has endured changes to its embellishment and detailing over the years.

The rise of textiles and their influence on the town's economy brought construction work and workers to Burlington in some numbers. In 1883, F. C. Zechery began to advertise himself as a "Builder and Contractor" offering "lumber, laths, doors, blinds, and sash... at lowest prices."<sup>19</sup> George W. Anthony and his partner, who began to offer contracting

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

services in the 1870's, founded a lumber company and eventually bought land from the railroad, sold lots, and developed inexpensive housing for new residents in the 1890's while at the same time building other buildings in the downtown.<sup>20</sup> And carpenter/builder, James Wesley Cates, who later became mayor of Burlington, produced building supplies as well.<sup>21</sup>

Although one-story frame dwellings stood within the town's main commercial district as late as 1898, and more substantial residences were located only a short distance away, the core area was almost completely commercial/industrial in nature by the turn of the century and the blocks bounded by Davis, Spring, Front, and Worth Streets and bisected by Main Street were approximately two-thirds developed in flat-roofed, two-story brick commercial buildings, with storefronts of plate glass framed with wood or iron posts and shaded by retractable canvas awnings, the upper floors often serving as living quarters for the store owners.<sup>22</sup> On the periphery were the livery stables, carriage factories, blacksmith shops, and warehouses that supported its commerce.

The final decade of the century was the period of the multi-use building like the Troxler-Carmack Building on Davis Street (Entry 30) that housed a funeral home, an armory, a lodge hall and a department store. At the same time, the period of the specialized building was coming into vogue. A transitional structure built in the last decade of the 19th century was the Sellars Building (Entry 46), originally a handsome building with fine brickwork, later sided with granite facing. It was sided with aluminum veneer in the latter part of the 20th century which has unfortunately rendered its detail unreadable.

As the town moved into the 20th century, new buildings were built for more specialized activities: eventually, the downtown featured three movie theatres, several florist shops, a number of restaurants, and three five and ten-cent stores. National chains arrived: J. C. Penny's (in 1902), F. W. Woolworth's, and the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, who produced the town's the first "supermarket," if such it could be called, in the century's first decade.

As the city grew, it acquired some very stylish major additions. Among these were the Bank of Commerce Building (ca. 1900, 1920's, Entry 10) which features Classical or Tuscan pilasters and an entry arch suggesting the augustness of banking. Others were the Colonial Revival post office building (1916, now the May Memorial Library, Entry 65) and the fanciful Neo-Gothic Ebird Building (NR, 1908, Entry 29), built for the first regional department store chain in town, a firm owned by the Ebird family of Charlotte, NC with numerous branches in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Virginia.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

At the same time, there were disasters. In 1918, a fire almost completely destroyed the buildings along the west side of the street of the 300 block of S. Main, forcing the owners to rebuild them in less fanciful ways. In fact, the renovation of the Main Street buildings sparked a general tendency to remodel, and building facades were updated throughout the district, a process that continued from 1920 to 1945 and changed its streetscapes from late-19th to early- to mid-20th century in character.

The town's increasing disposable income in the 1920's meant that buildings of the first class were considered, as demonstrated by the hiring of architect ~~George C.~~ *Charles* Hartmann to design the Alamance Hotel (NR, 1924, Entry 31), by a group of 29 civic-minded citizens. They felt that such a structure (the last of four successive hotels in Burlington dating from its earliest years) would enable the town to capitalize on its location and opportunities in the midst of the economic boom that was sweeping the nation and the South.<sup>23</sup>

Hartmann was hired just as one of his other projects, the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company Building in Greensboro, was being completed. Trained in the Beaux Arts tradition, he had come to Greensboro in 1919 to supervise the construction of another hotel (the O'Henry) for the New York architectural firm of William L. Stoddard. Having moved permanently to Greensboro in the '20's to set up a practice that was to last into the 1960's, he was responsible for a number of commercial and residential structures there and throughout the region.<sup>24</sup> While it was not the most elaborate of his buildings, the modest Alamance Hotel was appropriate to 1920's Burlington. Its two-story dining room became the site of numerous civic functions and its ballroom the location of enumerable teas and proms through the years.

Before long, Hartmann was involved in building Burlington's first and only skyscraper, the Art Deco Atlantic Bank and Trust Building (NR, 1929, Entry 49). The bank itself, assembled from local textile interests, was a branch whose corporate offices were in Greensboro, and when the building was begun in 1928, it was expected to exceed construction costs of \$300,000. It became the town's structural highwater mark; it was completed one month before the Stock Market crash that ushered in the Great Depression and ended Burlington's boom.<sup>25</sup>

In the 1930's, the Federal government got into the act as it did in so many communities and, through the agency of the Public Buildings Administration, built the red-brick, single-story Classical Revival and Moderne post office building, now known as the Federal Building (NR, Entry 72). It was designed by staff architect R. Stanley Brown of the Treasury Department's Division of Public Buildings, and its construction between 1933 and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

1936 was supervised by Louis Simon. A representative building of its type, its Regionalist murals are its most significant feature. These were painted in 1940 by Kentucky artist Arthur Bairnsfather at the invitation of the North Carolina Section of Fine Arts, Federal Works Agency.<sup>26</sup>



Thereafter, the preference was for building downtown buildings on a simpler scale, a process that continued into the '30's and beyond. The Morris Plan Bank Building (ca. 1930, Entry 69) from this period, with its entry-surround of windows, and the buildings at 445 and 439 S. Spring (Entries 63 and 64) with their Art Deco or Moderne touches gave Burlington the substance and glamor of the major regional center it had become.

After the 1940's, new construction in the downtown became rare. Although a bit of infill here and there maintained the core, and an occasional demolition became necessary, the town entered a stable period lasting until 1960's mall-building on its outskirts began to take business away from the downtown and its buildings began to be neglected and, eventually, to deteriorate. Urban renewal's "rescue" resulted in the destruction of much of the town's urban fabric, and, in the early 1970's, an unfortunate effort to reorient commerce resulted in the re-siding of building facades and the construction of a pedestrian mall with street canopies and overgrown foliage that obscured the downtown's facades and character.

A wholesale strategy to reverse this has now begun. One facet has been to educate building owners to the virtues inherent in their buildings' history and to encourage them to evoke it in sensitive renovation. Another has been to make available as many documentary photographs as possible to give townspeople a flavor of their heritage. Other elements of this effort include the establishment of a locally designated residential historic district, the publication in 1987 of a comprehensive study, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, based on a survey of Burlington's resources done in 1982, and the successful placement of Burlington in the Department of the Interior's Certified Local Government program. Like their progenitors, the people of Burlington have demonstrated their commitment to their town and an admirable faith in its future.

### NOTES

1. *An Architectural History of Burlington, North Carolina*, compiled by Allison Harris Black (Burlington: Helen Walton and P. N. Thompson Printing Company, Inc., 1987) p. 13.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

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2. Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *The History of a Southern State: North Carolina*, 3rd edition (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973) p. 365.

3. Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the North Carolina Railroad Company (Raleigh: North Carolina Railroad Company, 1856) p. 9.

4. Durward T. Stokes, *Company Shops: The Town Built by a Railroad* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1981) pp. 13, 17, 27-8.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 24,27.

6. Records of the North Carolina Railroad Company, NC State Archives. Contracts, Leases, Agreements, 1852-1894, Box 19.

7. Stokes, *Company Shops, op. cit.*, p. 120.

8. Walter Whitaker, with Staley A. Cook and A. Howard White, *Centennial History of Alamance County* (Burlington: Burlington Chamber of Commerce, n. d.) pp. 116-7.

9. Stokes, *op. cit.* pp. 120.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-5.

11. Julian Hughes, *Development of the Textile Industry in Alamance County* (Burlington: Burlington Letter Shop, 1965) p. 26, 37-9, 57, 105, 142.

12. *Ibid.* p: 57.

13. Lefler and Newsome, *op. cit.*, p. 509.

14. Charlotte *Observer*, 3 January, 1919, p. 37.

15. Lefler and Newsome, *op. cit.* 509, 581.

16. Allison Harris Black, *Hiatoric Architecture of Burlington, NC*, Revised Version, Unpublished Ms, 1987, p. 29.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

Downtown Burlington Historic District  
Alamance County

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17. W. T. Lasley Photograph Collection.
18. Hughes, *op. cit.* p. 632.
19. Branson's *Business Directory*, 1896. p. 65-71.
20. Hunter, "Early Years" in *Alamance Gleaner*, 31 March 1887, p. 3.
21. "Representative Men of North Carolina," *Charlotte Observer*, 27 April 1914,  
p. 10.
22. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1908, 1912.
23. "New Hotel Started with Good Organization by Best Leaders," *The Burlington Journal*, 13 June 1923, p. 1.
24. Claudia P. Roberts, National Register Nomination of the Alamance Hotel,  
Unpublished, 1983.
25. \_\_\_\_\_ National Register Nomination of the (former) Atlantic Bank and  
Trust Company Building, Unpublished, 1983.
26. Richard Mattson, National Register Nomination of the Federal Building,  
Unpublished, 1988.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- An Architectural History of Burlington, NC. Compiled by Allison Harris Black (Burlington: Helen Walton and P. N. Thompson Printing Co., Inc., 1937).
- Branson's Business Directory, Burlington, 1896.
- Charlotte Observer, 1919.
- Hughes, Julian. Development of the Textile Industry in Alamance County. (Burlington: Burlington Letter Shop, 1956).
- Lasley Photograph Collection
- Leffler, H. T. and Newsome, A. R. History of a Southern State: North Carolina, 3rd Edition (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973).
- Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the North Carolina Railroad Company. (Raleigh: North Carolina Railroad Company, 1856).
- Records of the North Carolina Railroad Company. NC State Archives, 1852-1894.

- Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
  - previously listed in the National Register
  - previously determined eligible by the National Register
  - designated a National Historic Landmark
  - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # N/A
  - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # N/A

- See continuation sheet
- Primary location of additional data:
- State historic preservation office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Specify repository: N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approximately 11 acres

UTM References		
A	<u>17</u>	<u>640660</u>   <u>3995340</u>
	Zone	Easting Northing
C	<u>17</u>	<u>640500</u>   <u>3994980</u>
	Zone	Easting Northing
B	<u>17</u>	<u>640740</u>   <u>3995140</u>
	Zone	Easting Northing
D	<u>17</u>	<u>640440</u>   <u>3995060</u>
	Zone	Easting Northing
E	<u>17</u>	<u>640580</u>   <u>3995260</u>
	Zone	Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the district coincide with the boundaries on the enclosed map (scale: 1" = 200').

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The district encompasses what has historically been the nucleus of Burlington's central business district since its founding and includes what has been the most dense collection of buildings from ca. 1890 to 1940.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary L. Reeb, Ph.D. Preservation Consultant

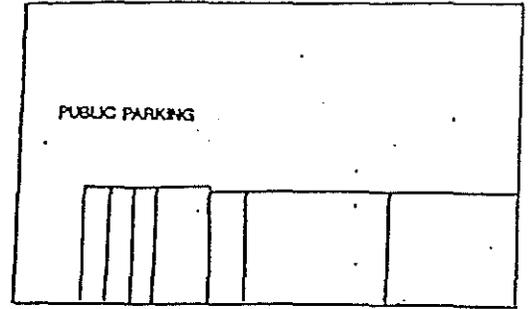
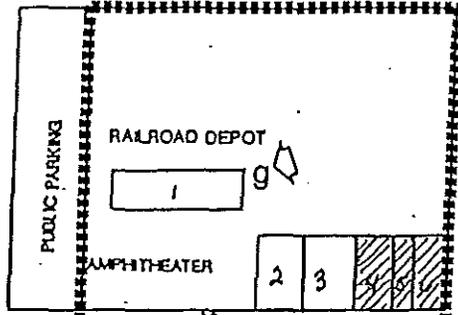
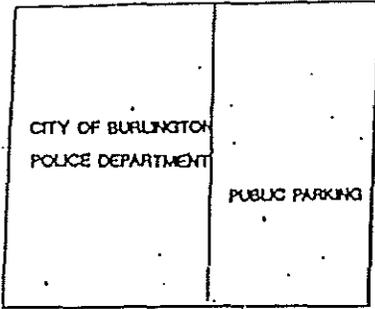
organization Historic Preservation Services date April, 1990

street & number 508 Laurel Hill Road telephone (919) 967-2333

city or town Chapel Hill state NC zip code 27514

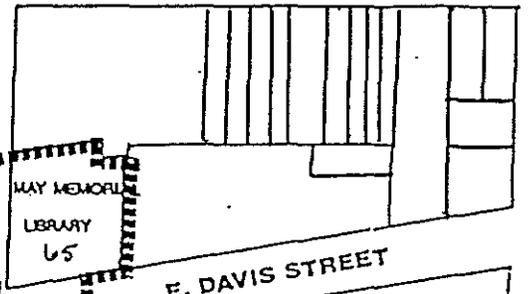
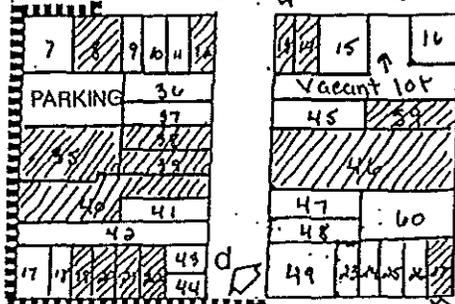
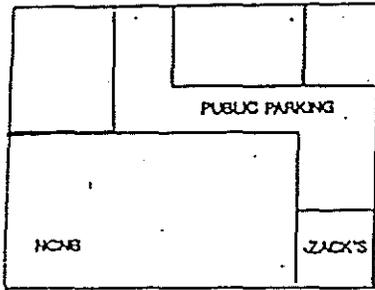
W. WEBB AVE

E. WEBB AVE



W. FRONT STREET

E. FRONT STREET



W. DAVIS STREET

E. DAVIS STREET

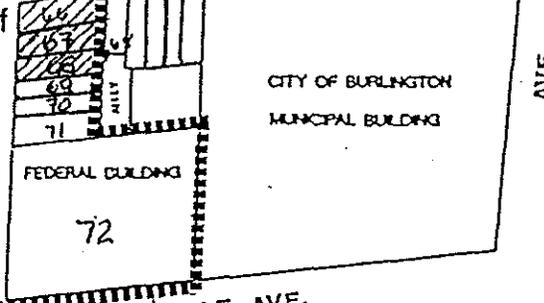
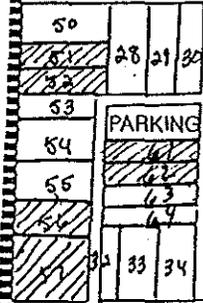
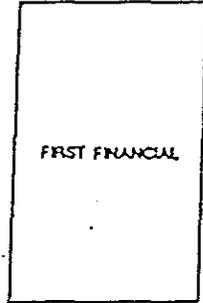
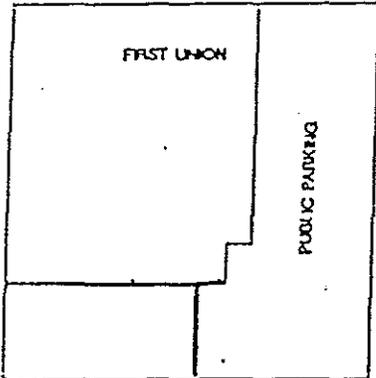
S. CHURCH STREET

S. WORTH STREET

S. MAIN STREET

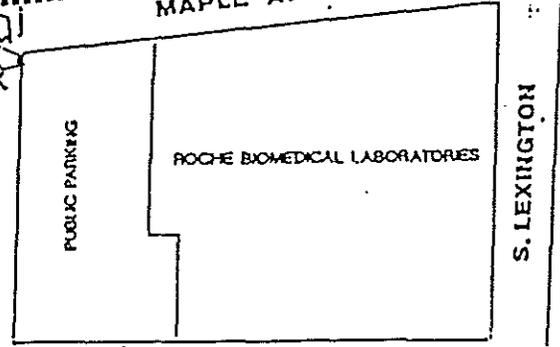
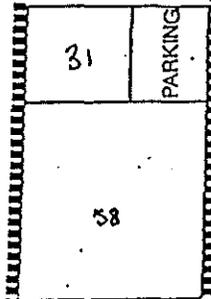
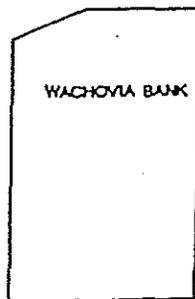
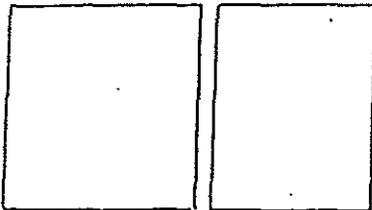
S. SPRING STREET

AVE.



MAPLE AVE

MAPLE AVE.



E. MOREHEAD STREET

### Downtown Burlington Historic District

- Key:  
 Contributing Buildings:   
 Non-Contributing Buildings:   
 Photo Angle: 

