NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

NAME

HISTORIC

S & S Cafeteria

AVE OF COMMON

Lulu's Cafeteria

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Patton Avenue

CITY-TOWN

Asheville

STATE

North Carolina

VICTORY OF

11th

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

11th

COUNTY

Buncombe

CODE

021

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

COMMERCIAL

PARK

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

 MILITARY

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. Rufus Sherrill

ADDRESS NUMBER

P. O. Box 2737

CITY-TOWN

Charlotte

STATE

North Carolina

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COUNTY

Buncombe

CITY-TOWN

Asheville

STATE

North Carolina

PREPARATION AND EXECUTIVE SURVEYS

TITLE

SCALE

FORM NO. 10-200 (Rev. 10-74)
Dale’s Cafeteria, formerly the S & W Cafeteria, is a three-story Art Deco building located in Asheville’s central business district. The architectural significance of the exterior lies entirely in the treatment of the main (northwest) facade, for the exposed brick rear wall presents an unarticulated surface plane and the sides are completely hidden by adjacent structures. The main facade is faced with large thin blocks of smoothly cut, close-jointed grey ashlar resting on a heavy black base. Flat pilaster strips with molded edges define both ends. The thick outer molding of each pilaster is continued horizontally above the attic level range of windows, thus framing the facade. Within this frame a third flat pilaster strip marks the division of the facade into two parts, the western part occupying two-thirds of the facade.

The facade is asymmetrical, but each part is symmetrical within the strip frames. The larger and more important western block features a two-leaf rectangular central entrance flanked by monumental round-arched windows which rise from the base of the building through the second floor. Both the two window arches and the entrance architrave are trimmed by plain chevron strips in modulated tones of blue and grey. At the base of each end of the chevron moldings is a fret reminiscent of a popular pre-Columbian Mazo-American motif—typical of the architect Douglas D. Ellington’s use of Indian motifs. Broad lintel-frises bisect the arch of each opening. Above is a glass tympanum which serves as a second story hopper window. The archivolts consists of grey vousoir-shaped flat panels (framed with pale green strips) alternating with chamfered narrow molding projections terminating at each end in smooth canted circles (a recurrent Ellington motif). Below the lintel-frise is a three-part plate glass window defined by the molding strip of the inner arch and the chevron strips. The areas of glass, which are handsomely framed in molded bronze, form an exaggerated Palladian window, the kind of creative caricature of a historical form which appears over and over in Ellington’s work.

Each lintel-frise is subdivided into sharp, crisply cut horizontal zones of abstract decoration. An elongated thick chevron interspersed with smooth nail-head moldings runs along both top and bottom zones. Between, in the middle register, tightly spiraled, leaf-like motifs flank a decorative rectangular vent. The vent, in turn, horizontally bisects a highly stylized, deeply fluted vase. The foot of the vase is tied with a bulbous knob and to either side of the foot fall geometrized floral ornaments.

At the level of these two lintel-frises the main entrance is sheltered by a rectangular, round-cornered chrome canopy supported by stylized cast-iron brackets. Immediately above the center of the cantilevered canopy the facade is inset with an octagonal octagonal window. Ten paired curvilinear elements, like the sprays of a fountain jet or the stylized feathers of an exotic bird, are symmetrically arranged around a central vertical stem. Another variation of the spiral-frise appears on either side of the top of this window.

The secondary western section of the facade contains similar trim, although differently organized. The two-story-tall rectangle, cut into at the upper corners by circular quarter circles, is divided by a lintel-frise into an upper plate glass window and a lower, off-centered entrance set back between applied plate glass panels. The whole is framed by the blue and grey chevron band. Wing-shaped spiral frises occur
along the outer edge of the curve at upper corners of the frame. The lintel-frieze is of greater span, more slender, and less ornate than those of the round-arched windows of the main block. Here again, though, a chevron with smooth nail-head moldings runs horizontally along both top and bottom zones, while the middle of the frieze is bisected by a simple convex horizontal molding strip.

The attic level windows, as well as the cornice and roof treatment, tie together the competing blocks of the main facade. The windows contain one-over-one sash with simple sills and flared lintels, the latter decorated with chevron molding and stylized triglyphs; both lintels and sills are continuous within each section of the facade. In the smaller (eastern) section, pairs of windows flank a central, segmental-arched ornamental gilded panel, suggestive of the Palladian window caricature. The panel has a gilded stylized urn/fountain motif on a black field, and the lintel above the range of windows and panels arches to accommodate the arch of the panel. Below each panel are small square black panels in molded girt frames resting on three "nailheads." In the larger block the same arrangement occurs over each of the arched openings. Over the entrance bay a single double hung window is flanked by the gilded and black panels, a variation which establishes a lively rhythm and emphasizes the entrance to the building.

The cornice of the facade consists of two unbroken lines of gold-colored chevron molding on a blue field with green nailheads, between which is a raised-paneled gold-colored frieze. The roofline of the main facade is formed by sharp, canted strips of projecting, elongated triangular aqua tiles—three to each strip. These blue elements are evenly spaced along the front face of the shallow hipped roof to form a harsh angular silhouette with a crenellated effect.

The interior is, like the exterior, organized into two blocks, each rectangular in plan. The major, western block contains the principal cafeteria on the ground floor with a mezzanine along the perimeter of the second floor. The mezzanine is supported by six rectilinear compound piers of four arums each. That not all parts of the piers rise to the ceiling is another witty architectural caricature. The northeast and southwest corners of the piers have vertical panels of diamond-shaped checkered squares with two mirrored green quatrefoil outlines by gilded filigrees. The walls are similarly treated, with checkered panels of marble in pastel shades of pink, green, white, and grey. The plaster ceiling of the main block is covered with angular geometric moldings forming diamond patterns with plain bosses, in which are alternating patterns of superimposed triangles and semicircles epitomizing the flat, nervous linearism of each Art Deco ornament.

The first three bays of the first-floor main block were intended for scattered rather formal table settings. To the rear of this area is a stainless steel serving area, designed in plan. The smaller northern block, separated from the major dining area by a double-glazed staircase (with a solid, transparent balustrade) to the second floor, and a thin partition wall, is lined with storage boxes and contains a rectangular fireplace serving line. Over this line, in the southeast end of the room, is a small
second-story dining balcony. Wall treatment in the smaller block is, in general, similar to that in the larger, although the northeastern wall of the smaller block is sheathed with translucent green vinyl circles.

The interior is functionally planned. Both cafeteria serving lines open onto the well-appointed L-shaped kitchen in the rear of the first floor. There is also immediate access from the kitchen to the basement which houses the building's large heating and cooling utilities.

The attic level contains asymmetrically organized private dining and club rooms as well as a small caretaker's apartment.
### SPECIFIC DATES
1929-1930

### BUILDER/ARCHITECT
Douglas D. Ellington

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Asheville's virtually unaltered S & W Cafeteria (now Dale's Cafeteria), erected in 1929, is one of the finest Art Deco structures in North Carolina and one of the state's earliest cafeterias. The facade (and to a lesser extent the interior) is an extremely rich and imaginative amalgam of polychrome ornament and exotic stylistic motifs evocative of Asheville's 1920s boom period. The building, described by its architect as "new architecturally," with a deliberate "note of gaiety," was the work of Douglas D. Ellington (1886-1960), a prominent and influential architect who was responsible for Asheville's collection of fine Art Deco architecture.

The S & W Cafeteria building was erected on Patton Avenue, Asheville, in 1929. It was built specifically for use as a cafeteria and it housed the S & W facility for nearly forty-five years.

Asheville's S & W was originally opened for business on April 1, 1922, in a leased building on Patton Avenue which had once served as the old Asheville Opera House. It was the third cafeteria in a chain which then included others in Charlotte and Winston-Salem. The chain was begun by Frank O. Sherrill and Fred R. Webber, both natives of western North Carolina. The two served as mess sergeants in World War I and later operated a lunch counter together in Charlotte's Ivey's Department Store. Cafeterias are said to have originated on the west coast about 1910, but there were then none existing in North Carolina. Sherrill and Webber's first S & W, which opened July 16, 1920, on Charlotte's West Trade Street, was the pioneering cafeteria in the Carolinas.

Asheville's S & W was an immediate popular success. Years later, Frank Sherrill boasted that "business was very, very good from the beginning. Asheville has always made money, except for one year." Within eight months after its opening, the leased building was expanded by the addition of dining space in its basement and the installation of a mezzanine. By 1928 Frank Sherrill (who had acquired Webber's entire interest in the business about 1925) had authorized construction of a new building to be designed exclusively for use as a cafeteria. Designed of the structure was Douglas D. Ellington, an architect then living near Asheville.

Ellington was educated at Randolph-Macon College, Drexel Institute, The University of Pennsylvania, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. According to his obituary, while in Paris he became the first American to win the Prix de Rome and the only American at that time to be awarded the Grand Diploma. He returned dining of the fifteenth century Church of St. Trophime in Arles, France, has been cited in keeping with the late Gothic evolution of that structure.
in existence. He was also one of ten first prize winners in the worldwide Christopher Columbus Memorial Competition, in which more than a thousand architects competed. He served for a time as professor of architecture at Drexel Institute, Columbia University, and Carnegie Institute of Technology, and was also noted for his talents as a watercolorist. His first important work in the South was for old St. Paul's Church in Richmond, Virginia.

According to his obituary in the Asheville Citizen-Times, Ellington first came to the Asheville area in the 1920s. In 1926 he purchased a three-acre tract of land in Choa's Cove upon which he built his home. (This house was later selected by House Beautiful Magazine as one of the fifty most artistic and interesting residences in North America.) Among the buildings he designed for Asheville were the Lee Edwards High School, the First Baptist Church, Biltmore Hospital (which he later redesigned as the home office of the Imperial Life Insurance Company), the Asheville City Building, and the Patton Avenue Fire Station (all of which are still standing), and a large number of residences. In addition, he designed the model town of Greenbelt, Maryland, and restored the Dock Street Theater in Charleston, South Carolina. Beginning in 1937, he is said to have spent a good deal of his time in Charleston, where he was involved in construction and restoration projects. He was active in a number of professional organizations and his practice extended throughout the eastern seaboard. Ellington died at his home near Asheville on August 27, 1960.

Shortly before the S & U building was opened, Ellington wrote the following description of its design:

The new S. and U. Cafeteria building is the result of applying unhampered architecture to an individual commercial need: or, more nearly, the evolving of an original specific architecture for a specific business structure in a specific site within a specific community. Perhaps the simplest way of expressing this would be to say that the building has been "custom built" both in its utilitarian aspect and also from the point of view of the eye. It embraces many innovations in points of plan arrangement, efficiency, convenience and comfort, and it is new architecturally in its lines, shapes and use of materials, uses and shades of color, and other matters of proportion and detail. In the matter of appearance the most important elements of the structure are scale, texture and color. Each proportion is related to all other proportions, each surface is related to all other surfaces, each bit of color is related to all other color motives, and in turn all of these are related to each other. The sense of quiet which has been sought both in the facade and in the interior has been different, this cheerful or aesthetic quality being regarded as fitting to the purpose of the establishment and in keeping with the life of a community whose recreation is an important activity.
Many years later Frank Sherrill remembered the threat posed to the new building by the great Wall Street Crash of October, 1929. "The building was about five-sixths finished," he related, "and we didn't know anything to do but go ahead. We made money here every year except one and the Asheville business is one of the most successful in the chain."7

The Asheville S & W remained in its 1929 building until May, 1974, when it moved to the new Asheville Mall. Reflecting on the cafeteria's long stay in its Patton Avenue home, one employee recalled that "back in the 40s, we'd serve over 5,000 people a day, six days a week. People staying at the Battery Park Hotel, and all the local people who wanted a good meal would flock down here."7 One longtime customer, patronizing the S & W on its final night in the Patton Avenue building, remarked: "I guess we have all eaten a little slower tonight...There are a lot of people who are really going to miss this place."7

The building is presently occupied by Dale's Cafeteria, a locally-owned facility having no connection with the S & W chain. It is, however, still owned by the S & W Company of Charlotte.

5. Ibid.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACRES OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/2 acre

UTM REFERENCES

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ZONE EASTING

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERAPPROX STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
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PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Research by Robert Tolls, survey specialist; architectural description by Mary Alice Morgan, consultant.

DATE: 5 April 1976

DIVISION OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

STREET ADDRESS: 192 East Jones Street

CITY: Raleigh

STATE: North Carolina

EVALUATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL: X

STATE: X

LOCAL: X

As designated by the State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Pub.L. 89-665, 80 Stat. 937), I hereby designate this property for inclusion in the State Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth in the National Park Service.

EVALUATION OFFICER DATE: 5 April 1976

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER DATE: 5 April 1976

[Signature]
Buncombe County Records, Buncombe County Courthouse, Asheville, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds).
Buncombe County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds).
Towe, Linda, comp. and ed. DEDICATION OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, ASHEVILLE, N.C. Asheville.