

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Watts and Yuille Warehouses

and/or common Brightleaf Square

## 2. Location

street & number West side of S. Gregson St., between W. Main St. and  
W. Peabody St. (905 W. Main St.)  not for publication

city, town Durham  vicinity of

state North Carolina code 037 county Durham code 063

## 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name SEHED Development Corporation

street & number 905 W. Main St.

city, town Durham  vicinity of state North Carolina 27701

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Durham County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Durham state North Carolina

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Durham Architectural Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980-81  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Survey and Planning Branch, Archaeology and History Preservation  
Section, N. C. Division of Archives and History

city, town Raleigh state North Carolina

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Watts and Yuille Warehouses are among Durham's foremost architectural landmarks due to their monumental form and elaborate decorative program. As part of a building campaign conducted from 1897 to 1906, the American Tobacco Company constructed Watts and Yuille as identical tobacco storage warehouses in 1904. Parallel to each other with a courtyard in between, these robust brick buildings play important roles in Durham's skyline and in determining the distinctive character of their mixed industrial and commercial area that contains several other very similar tobacco warehouses and factories, most of them built during the same turn-of-the-century building campaign. In addition to their striking stylistic features, the buildings are important to the streetscape because of their position on an approximate east-west axis between W. Main St. to the south and W. Peabody St. and Durham's main railroad line to the north, and their situation at or near the outer edges of their lot, which all emphasize the street grid. The east elevations of Watts and Yuille abut the sidewalk, while a shallow expanse of grass separates the sidewalks along W. Main and W. Peabody streets from the warehouses.

The exuberant design of Watts and Yuille Warehouses is reminiscent of medieval architecture and has been variously termed Romanesque Revival or Norman Revival in style. Although the buildings are elaborate, especially for industrial use, their rich decorative program is strictly controlled so that it very precisely articulates the subdivision of each building by projecting firewalls and the grid of pilasters, stringcourses and cornices that covers each facade. These ornamented grids, the careful positioning of decorative chimneys on the parapet steps of the firewalls and end walls, and the repetition of scores of regularly placed windows and doors render Watts and Yuille Warehouses rhythmical and unified compositions.

The two-story Watts and Yuille Warehouses are long, rectangular buildings with exteriors of locally fired variegated light red brick laid in four-to-one common bond. The buildings are seven bays wide and twenty bays long, the bays being of uniform width and divided by pilasters. In each building, a very shallow gable roof is concealed by the stepped parapets of the end walls and the 18-inch-thick firewalls that divide the buildings into four five-bay units. Due to the grade of the site, each succeeding unit moving from west to east is stepped down a few inches from the previous unit. Although in the long facades this step-down produces a slight shift from one unit to the next in the level of the horizontal elements, the corbelled projection of the firewalls at the cornice makes the transition between units fairly subtle.

In each five-bay unit the pilasters rise unbroken to the cornice except for a narrow rectangular recessed panel fourteen courses tall in each story. Each bay is slightly recessed from the pilasters, base, stringcourse and cornice, which are all in a single plane. As originally constructed, every bay contained a narrow segmental-arched opening in each story, except for the middle bay of each unit which contained a pair of openings identical to the others in the second story and in the first a single segmental-arched doorway the width of the pair above. All openings have sills and lintels of two courses of headers; in addition, there are two courses of corbelled bricks above the lintels of the doors. Originally, a single tin-clad shutter hinged at one side was attached to each of the narrow openings, which were filled with metal louvered vents; the wider openings contained a pair of solid, tin-clad doors. In the courtyard there was a loading dock at each of the doors and above, projecting downward from one of the vents, there was a metal shoot through which insecticide was sprayed into the second story. Originally, there were no openings in the end walls.

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Between the pilasters on all sides of the warehouses, a single row of mousetothing runs beneath the stringcourses. On the long facades, there are corbelled dentils at the bottom of the cornice between the pilasters and a course of mousetothing at the top, running unbroken within each unit across the pilasters. Marking the top of the second story on the end walls, there is a decorative band identical to the cornices except that it includes corbelling at the pilasters to resemble capitals. Above this decorative band on the end walls, the pilasters continue their rise into the stepped parapets. The decorative brickwork at the top of each of the seven steps in the end walls and firewalls is identical to the cornices. Coping on the steps is concrete. A short chimney crowns the outer edge of each step, in line with a pilaster. In addition to the eight chimneys on each of the five parapets, there are chimneys at the edge of the roof in line with the pilasters on the long facades, for a total of 72 identical chimneys on each warehouse. Each chimney has corbelling with a course of mousetothing at the top and very narrow recessed, pointed-arched panels on its outer faces. Very narrow pointed-arched openings pierce the side faces of 62 of the chimneys as exits for vents, originally located behind the pilasters, that contributed to circulation of air in the warehouses; the ten chimneys at the outer edges of the parapets are purely ornamental.

One other decorative feature on the exterior of the warehouses is a plaque near the bottom of the east facades bearing the name "Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co.," the name of the warehouse, and the year of construction. According to Elizabeth Mansell in her Master's thesis on the American Tobacco Company brick storage warehouses in Durham, the cornerstones were altered to carry the Liggett & Myers name after 1911.

Each unit of the warehouses is 75 feet by 118 feet, for a total of 35,400 square feet on each floor. On the first story the ceiling height is 14 feet and on the second it ranges from 14 feet to 17½ feet with the slope of the gabled roof. As originally constructed, the interior of each unit was a single open space on each floor, broken only by rows of wooden columns. The structural system of brick walls, which formerly were painted, and heavy timbers was completely exposed. The loblolly pine columns, most of which are octagonal (some on the first floor of Yuille Warehouse are cylindrical) and slightly tapered, support 16½-foot on center, 15-inch by 11-inch heart pine beams. A metal plate screwed to the ends of the beams is sandwiched between the beams and each column. The first floor is cement; the second floor is heart pine, with 3½ inches of decking and ¾-inch of finished flooring. A single wide opening in the 18-inch-thick firewalls provided interior access from one unit to the next.

After standing idle for a few years, in 1980 Watts and Yuille Warehouses were sold to SEHED Development Corporation which hired Boston architect Shun Kanda and the Charlotte architectural firm Ferebee, Walters and Associates to renovate the buildings as a complex of shops and offices named Brightleaf Square. In the course of the adaptive reuse, certified by North Carolina's State Historic Preservation Officer, the paint was removed from the interior walls and new wiring, plumbing, and heating and cooling systems were installed. Structural changes were kept to a minimum. A few new doorways identical to the original ones were cut into the courtyard facades, some first-story windows were enlarged to the

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width of the doors on the long facades and cut into the east end walls, passenger elevators were installed, several skylights were placed in each building, and portions of the second floor were removed to create 30-foot light wells of various sizes into which staircases were built. Space for tenants was partitioned to accommodate the wooden columns, none of which is concealed (see floor plan attached).

The store and office fronts vary in design, with most of them composed of natural-finish cypress, stuccoed wallboard, and glass; a few have anodized metal window and door frames. Every store front has a band of small ebony tiles at its base and a band of cypress-framed clerestory windows. The store fronts are placed back from the courtyard elevations, creating an arcade extending most of the length of each building, so that the original architectural character as perceived from the exterior is left undisturbed. The interior decor of the retail and office spaces varies; some have dropped ceilings while others have the original ceilings and new mechanical systems exposed. In all common areas, the structural and mechanical systems are exposed, and on the second floor the heart pine floors remain uncovered. For the main floor walkways, ebony brick with copper flecking was laid over the original concrete. Most of the louvered vents were replaced with single panes of glass in wooden frames, with a glass transom on the first story and an identical sash-vent at the bottom of the second-story windows. In the arcades, single panes of glass that appear to be set directly against the brick surrounds replaced the vents so that the openings seem to be empty. On the street facades, the tin-clad shutters were left in place, open, on the first story.

The courtyard was completely redesigned without destroying its original spacious character. At the entrance from S. Gregson St., a very small hip-roofed structure with a green raised seam tin roof was built to contain bank machines. The loading docks were enlarged with additional steps and ramps leading to the entrances. A couple of the docks also were expanded with stepped platforms extending into the courtyard. Near the rear, the largest of these expanded areas contains a substantial gazebo with a hip roof, again covered in green raised seam tin, that extends as gables to span the entire width of the courtyard. The expanded docks are surfaced with the same ebony bricks used in the arcades. The street level of the courtyard is covered with mauve-colored pavers and Belgian block to define sitting areas. Large wooden benches and tall chamfered wooden light posts from which metal brackets with old-fashioned lamps hang appear throughout. Against the building and extending into the courtyard at the main entrance, there are planting areas filled with flowers, blooming shrubs of various sizes, and crape myrtles. Along the street facades, the lawn is maintained and some low bushes and a few trees have been added. The loading docks which had been removed from the W. Main St. facade were replaced in the same materials as the reworked courtyard docks and in a format somewhat expanded from the original.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1904 **Builder/Architect** W. J. Hicks, Albert F. Hunt - initial plan and refinements; Samuel Linton Leary (?) - design of brickwork

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Noteworthy from a purely architectural viewpoint, Watts and Yuille Warehouses built in 1904 are also of great interest as reflections of cultural and economic developments on local, state and national levels. They stand as visually exciting symbols of the rapidly growing acceptance of cigarette smoking at the turn of the century and of the tremendous impact of the industrial revolution. Under the direction of industrialist and financier James B. Duke, the American Tobacco Company constructed Watts and Yuille and ten other very similar warehouses in Durham for the aging of all of its tobacco, a process feasible for the manufacturer now that all of the major tobacco manufacturing companies were consolidated. The overall size, proportions and interior design of these enormous brick buildings reflect the functional requirements of storing tobacco hogsheads of standardized size and weight. The most striking feature is the use of brick -- to create a style evocative of medieval architecture that presents a bold corporate image and, in combination with heavy timber-framed "slow burn construction," to render the warehouses fireproof.

Criteria Assessment

- A. Watts and Yuille Warehouses are dramatic symbols of the American Tobacco Company trust, an industrial empire which controlled approximately 95% of the cigarette trade in the United States before it was dissolved in 1911 because of monopolistic practices.
- B. Watts and Yuille Warehouses are associated with businessmen James B. Duke and his family, George W. Watts and Thomas B. Yuille. Duke and Watts in particular contributed to the growth and development of U. S. industry and the City of Durham.
- C. Watts and Yuille Warehouses are outstanding examples of the turn-of-the-century development of industrial architecture in the "slow burn" masonry and timber-framed construction and in their elaborate decorative program.

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The architectural and historical significances of Watts and Yuille Warehouses are intertwined. Although the structure and style of the buildings are noteworthy from a purely architectural viewpoint, they are perhaps of greater interest as reflections of cultural and economic developments on local, state and national levels. Their structural system was engineered to meet the needs of the rapidly growing tobacco industry, while their decorative programs of elaborate brickwork were designed in part to present a strong positive image for tobacco in general and the American Tobacco Company in particular. Their warehouses are visually exciting symbols of the American Tobacco Company, and as such they represent the industrial revolution in America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when self-made men used their entrepreneurial skills to create financial empires rooted in manufacturing. Founded in 1890 under the direction of James B. Duke, the American Tobacco Company was a trust that controlled ninety-five percent of America's cigarette business before it was dissolved because of monopolistic practices. As emblems of the American Tobacco Company, Watts and Yuille Warehouses recall the fame and influence of the Dukes and their associates whose personal and professional accomplishments directed both the growth and development of the tobacco industry and the city of Durham.

The story of the "Dukes of Durham" and the tobacco industry is legend. In 1865, when Washington Duke returned to his farm a few miles north of the railroad depot in Durham (then part of Orange County), he set out to create a new life for himself and his family. Aware of the growing popularity of the local bright leaf tobacco for chewing and smoking, Duke and his two sons, Benjamin Newton and James Buchanan, set up a tobacco factory on their farm. Washington Duke travelled all over North Carolina selling the family's Pro Bono Publico brand of tobacco from his wagon. The family expanded their manufacturing operation from 15,000 pounds of tobacco processed in a small barn in 1866 to 125,000 pounds produced in two frame tobacco factories at the Duke homestead in 1872. Washington Duke's eldest son, Brodie Leonidas, moved into Durham to manufacture tobacco in 1868. In 1874 Washington Duke and his two other sons followed Brodie into town where they built a large frame factory on W. Main St. near Brodie's operation. In 1878, the two factories were consolidated as W. Duke, Sons and Co. under the five-man partnership of Washington Duke, his three sons, and George W. Watts.<sup>1</sup>

As Washington Duke gradually diminished his role in the business, James B. Duke took greater control of the operation. W. Duke, Sons and Co. faced stiff local competition, primarily from Julian S. Carr's W. T. Blackwell and Co. which employed several hundred laborers in a four-story brick Italianate factory a few blocks to the east. In response to the rising popularity of the cigarette, in 1881 James B. Duke decided to enter the cigarette manufacturing business in an attempt to effectively compete with his rival. As Elizabeth Mansell notes, this move "was a daring and innovative venture that had the effect of changing the smoking habits of the world even to this day. The convenience of a pre-rolled cigarette appealed to the public and sales soared."<sup>2</sup> Duke brought from New York City more than one hundred cigarette-makers, most of them Eastern European Jewish immigrants.

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By 1884 W. Duke, Sons and Co. could no longer meet the rapidly rising demand for cigarettes. Once again, James B. Duke made a daring move when he installed the Bonsack cigarette-rolling machine which could out-produce fifty hand-rollers when it was functioning properly.<sup>3</sup> By 1886, the hand-rollers had been replaced by fifteen Bonsack machines turning out 1,500,000 cigarettes daily. The machines were installed in the company's new four-story brick factory begun shortly after the first machine was acquired. The Dukes' contract with the Bonsack Company that provided machines on demand at a twenty-five percent reduction in cost gave W. Duke, Sons and Co. a critical production edge over competitors.<sup>4</sup> The cost of manufacturing cigarettes was reduced from \$.80 per thousand to \$.30 through the use of the Bonsack machines in their Durham and New York factories. In addition, W. Duke, Sons and Co. passed the savings from an enormous cut in the government tax on cigarettes on to the consumer by halving the price of its cigarettes. Lowered manufacturing costs and reduced prices, coupled with James B. Duke's aggressive advertising campaigns, enabled the company "to make great strides in cornering the cigarette market."<sup>5</sup>

Beginning in 1895, James B. Duke strove to combine the nation's large cigarette manufacturing companies as a way to control competition within the cigarette industry, in part by restricting the availability of cigarette-rolling machines. A year of delicate negotiations guided by Duke yielded what has been termed "one of the first giant holding companies in America" when the five major rival tobacco manufacturers -- Allen and Ginter of Virginia; Kinney of New York City; Kimball Company of Rochester, New York; Goodwin Company of New York City; and W. Duke, Sons and Co. of Durham and New York City -- were sold to the newly formed American Tobacco Company in exchange for its stock.<sup>6</sup> James B. Duke was named president of the company, which effectively eliminated all small manufacturers in North Carolina.<sup>7</sup> As noted in The Durham Architectural and Historic Inventory,

Even Bull Durham, the Dukes' old competitor, fell under the giant firm's ownership. The consolidation of several of Durham's major tobacco manufacturers into the American Tobacco Company did nothing to harm the city's economy; in fact, the prosperity of the 1890s presaged the incredible growth which Durham would enjoy during the first two decades of the twentieth century.<sup>8</sup>

Until the formation of the American Tobacco Company trust, tobacco manufacturers had purchased most of their aged tobacco from independent storage warehouses, most of them in Danville, Virginia. Although they aged some of the tobacco themselves in their own storage warehouses, it had not been cost effective for the individual manufacturers to build and manage the warehouses for the aging of all of the tobacco they needed. Now, as Mansell points out, with the concentration of more than ninety percent of the smoking tobacco business in one company,

. . . it was no longer profitable to buy aged tobacco from a middleman. It was more efficient and cheaper to buy the loose leaf off the auction floor, dry and process the leaf, pack it in hogsheads [a large cylindrical wooden barrel] and store it for aging in their own warehouses. The storage warehouses built in Durham between the years 1897 and 1906 helped to guarantee the quality and continuous supply of aged tobacco for manufacturing by the American Tobacco Company.<sup>9</sup>

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The American Tobacco Company erected twelve enormous brick warehouses in Durham -- four at the W. T. Blackwell and Co. plant and eight, including Watts and Yuille Warehouses in 1904, near the W. Duke, Sons and Company Cigarette Factory. The most comprehensive account of this building campaign is the master's thesis written by Elizabeth Mansell in 1980. She explains that in every aspect of their design the warehouses were very similar except for variations in height and number of units. Most of their characteristic features reflect functional requirements. Their overall size, proportions and interior design -- floor space, ceiling height, and placement and strength of beams, supports and floors -- were determined by the size and storage arrangement of the hogsheads.<sup>10</sup> The system of vents, flues, chimneys and louvered windows reflects the need for the buildings to be cool, dry, well-ventilated and insect-free.<sup>11</sup> Another design requirement was that the storage warehouses be fireproof. In addition, the clever advertiser James B. Duke wanted his buildings to project a positive image. All of these requirements were satisfied by the use of heavy timber framing and brick. Together, they reduced the severity of damage while a fire was brought under control. In addition, brick was available locally, was prestigious, and was suitable for the ornamental articulation of structure and the creation of a bold style that would enhance the corporate image.<sup>12</sup>

The storage warehouses were meant to provide space for the hogsheads during the three to five years it took the tobacco to age. After redrying, the leaf is prized (pressed into a smaller size) by a hydraulic press into the hogsheads, which are then stacked in three levels in the warehouses. Before the forklift was invented, the hogsheads were placed using a freight elevator and a "low john" and a "high john," a "john" being a platform on wheels used to roll the hogsheads into place. The elevator lifted the hogsheads to the second and third levels of each stack as well as to the upper floor(s) of the warehouse. After the first level was in place, the elevator would raise the next hogshead to the level of the second row where it would be rolled off the elevator onto a low john the height of the second level; then the low john would be pushed to the proper bay where the hogshead would be rolled off and into place. For the third level, the high john was used in the same procedure. The dimensions of the hogsheads determined the placement of the warehouses' supporting posts and ceiling heights. It was essential that the warehouses have both large open spaces and floors strong enough to support the immense weight of the hogsheads.<sup>13</sup> Each unit of the warehouses could hold 3,000 hogsheads, each of which contained about 1,000 pounds of tobacco.<sup>14</sup>

The enormous timbers and very thick floors that support the weight of the hogsheads also meet the requirement that fire retardent materials be used in the construction of warehouses, which frequently were the target of arsonists. This consideration also encouraged the use of brick for all walls. Insurance laws required brick walls, tin-clad shutters, and firewalls. Instead of the standard iron frames, the heavy-timbered "slow burn construction" frames using very long support beams, thick wooden posts, and approximately four inches of flooring were incorporated in the Durham warehouses. This method of construction developed in Rhode Island by Zachariah Allen in 1822 burned slowly and allowed time for water to be brought to the scene of a fire before it caused serious damage. After Allen's insurance company denied him lower rates for this construction, in 1835 he formed the Manufacturer's Mutual Fire Insurance Co., which later was the original insurer of the American Tobacco Company warehouses.<sup>15</sup>

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Brick was not only the building material of Watts and Yuille and the other American Tobacco Company warehouses, but also the decorative material used to articulate the structural members. With the company's first tobacco storage warehouse, the one-story Walker Warehouse built in 1897, the architectural style characterized by bands of chevrons, prisms, dentils and mousetoothing at stringcourses, cornices, and chimneys was firmly established. Although all of the subsequent warehouses built by the trust were two stories, they all exhibit the same basic decorative pattern. Subtle differences may be seen in the ornament, including a slight overall simplification in the decoration of the later warehouses, as exemplified by Watts and Yuille.<sup>16</sup>

It is not possible to assign the design of the warehouses to a single architect. Mansell explains in her thesis that evidence points to the involvement of at least three individuals in various aspects of the design process. Samuel Linton Leary, who was brought from Philadelphia in 1890 by Washington Duke to design the Main Building of Trinity College, was active in Durham throughout the 1890s. The designs of both the Main Building and St. Joseph's A.M.E. Church, another Leary commission of 1891, are characterized by decorative brickwork, and local tradition supports Leary as the architect of the warehouses. Another contender is Col. William Jackson Hicks, warden of the North Carolina Penitentiary in Raleigh who designed that prison, again featuring elaborate brickwork as its sole decorative motif, and was involved in the construction of the ornate Governor's Mansion in Raleigh. In an 1897 letter to Benjamin N. Duke, he discussed in minute detail the practical requirements of Walker Warehouse, which was about to be built, but made no mention of its appearance or style. Finally, the October, 1900, edition of The Southern Tobacconist and Manufacturer's Record cites Albert F. Hunt of Richmond, Virginia, as the perfecter of all American Tobacco Company plans. Mansell concludes that Hicks was responsible for the initial planning of the warehouses and Hunt for their refinement in later years. Thus, Hunt may have participated directly in the construction of Watts and Yuille Warehouses. The matter of exterior appearance, specifically the ornamental brickwork, is less certain. It could be attributed to Leary or even to the talented local brickmasons familiar with popular motifs of the period. The masons are likely candidates due to the lack of any documentation concerning appearance and to the prior existence in Durham of decorative brick used for a fashionable style, as indicated by the pre-1895 Globe Warehouse.<sup>17</sup>

Emphasis on the importance of industrial appearance was a fairly new idea in North Carolina when the American Tobacco Company began its building campaign. Prior to the 1890s, tobacco buildings usually were strictly functional and utilitarian. Elizabeth Mansell contends that the trust's investment in the design and construction of attractive industrial buildings was a form of advertising meant to enhance its corporate image.<sup>18</sup> Brick was a "prestigious building material that added substance to the company's image, and the bold, visually exciting design attracted attention to the company."<sup>19</sup> James B. Duke and his associates took great interest in their city, as indicated by the generous support of local institutions, and were proud of Durham's reputation as the foremost city of the "New South." It is likely that the trust executives wanted to enhance the streetscapes of Durham, which already was known for its architecture.<sup>20</sup>

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The names of the warehouses also reflect the pride the American Tobacco Company took in its buildings. George Washington Watts (1851-1921) became a partner of Washington Duke and his two younger sons in 1878 after learning the tobacco business in his father's Baltimore company of tobacco commission merchants. He helped organize W. Duke, Sons and Company, of which he was secretary and treasurer and a principal stockholder. Later, he was one of the incorporators of the American Tobacco Company. He also was instrumental in establishing Erwin Cotton Mills, which he served as vice president. In addition, Watts was president of Pearl Cotton Mills and Home Savings Bank, both of Durham; vice president of Locke Cotton Mills at Concord, N.C.; a director of Seaboard Air Line, Virginia-Carolina Chemical Co., Fidelity Bank, and Durham Loan & Trust Co.; and president of the board of trustees of Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. Watts' involvement in the establishment of parks, clubs, and libraries for his employees was extensive. Perhaps his greatest philanthropic endeavor was the endowment of Durham's first hospital in 1895 and its replacement with much expanded facilities in 1908-09.<sup>21</sup>

Thomas Burks Yuille (1869-1934), a leaf tobacco buyer in Danville, entered the leaf tobacco department of the American Tobacco Company in 1890 just after it was formed. In 1901 he transferred to New York City to serve as manager of the company's leaf tobacco purchasing department. When the trust was dissolved, he became the reorganized American Tobacco Company's vice president in charge of leaf tobacco interests in 1912.<sup>22</sup> After he resigned from American Tobacco Company in 1916, Yuille gained control of J. P. Taylor Co., a firm of leaf dealers with branches in Virginia and North Carolina, and then went on to acquire eight additional firms to form Universal Leaf Tobacco Company, the largest leaf firm in the world by 1928. Closely allied with American Tobacco Company, Yuille's combination of dealers bought on order<sup>23</sup> for several large manufacturers and sold to the same customers from its inventory.

In 1911, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that the American Tobacco Company must be dissolved upon finding it in violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. James B. Duke's plan for dissolution, approved by the U. S. Attorney General,<sup>24</sup> provided that the closely allied subsidiaries be divided into three major companies. One of the new companies was the reorganized Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co., which occupied the former W. Duke, Sons and Company buildings and adjacent American Tobacco Company warehouses, including Watts and Yuille, and continued to expand its facilities at this western edge of downtown Durham for several decades. Liggett & Myers used Watts and Yuille Warehouses for tobacco storage until the late 1970s when the company curtailed its operations and placed the two warehouses on the real estate market.

In 1980, the local SEHED Development Corporation purchased the warehouses for their creative adaptive reuse as a complex of shops and offices named, appropriately, Brightleaf Square.<sup>25</sup> SEHED's project has been instrumental in revitalizing the corridor between downtown Durham and West Durham as a lively commercial district that maintains, indeed enhances, the established architectural character of the area. This redevelopment project is a fitting chapter in the history of Watts and Yuille Warehouses, reflecting the same sort of creative business acumen that led to their construction almost eighty years ago.

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Notes

<sup>1</sup>Claudia P. Roberts, Diane E. Lea and Robert M. Leary, The Durham Architectural and Historic Inventory (Durham: The City of Durham and The Historic Preservation Society of Durham, 1982), pp. 310 and 316-17.

<sup>2</sup>Elizabeth Lloyd Meihack Mansell, "The American Tobacco Company Brick Storage Warehouses in Durham, North Carolina 1897-1906" (M.A. Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1980), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Roberts, Lea and Leary, pp. 322-23.

<sup>5</sup>Mansell, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup>Roberts, Lea and Leary, p. 331.

<sup>7</sup>Mansell, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup>Roberts, Lea and Leary, p. 331.

<sup>9</sup>Mansell, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 62-63.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-21.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-29.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 39 and 43.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-33.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>19</sup>Elizabeth M. Mansell, "Bullington Warehouse," National Register Nomination prepared for the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, May 1982, item 8, page 2.

<sup>20</sup>Mansell, thesis, pp. 58-59.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 7

<sup>21</sup>The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Vol. XIX (New York: James T. White & Company, 1926), pp. 22-23.

<sup>22</sup>The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Vol. XXXIII (New York: James T. White & Company, 1947), p. 244.

<sup>23</sup>Nannie May Tilley, The Bright-Tobacco Industry 1860-1929 (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), p. 283.

<sup>24</sup>Roberts, Lea and Leary, pp. 332-33.

<sup>25</sup>Durham County Registry of Deeds, Book 1043, Page 686.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

- Mansell, Elizabeth Lloyd Meihack. "The American Tobacco Company Brick Storage Warehouses in Durham, North Carolina 1897-1906." M. A. Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1980.
- Roberts, Claudia P., Lea, Diane E., and Leary, Robert M. The Durham Architectural and Historic Inventory (Durham: The City of Durham and The Historic Preservation Society of Durham, 1982).

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.432 acres

Quadrangle name Northwest Durham, N.C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	7
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6	8	8	3	5	0
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3	9	8	5	8	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 4, lot 1, as shown on Map 35 of Durham County Tax Maps; Legal description of property is attached

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Claudia Roberts Brown, Consultant

organization

date December 1, 1983

street & number 301 E. Poplar Ave.

telephone 919/968-1181

city or town Carrboro

state North Carolina

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*William S. Fry, Jr.*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date January 12, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

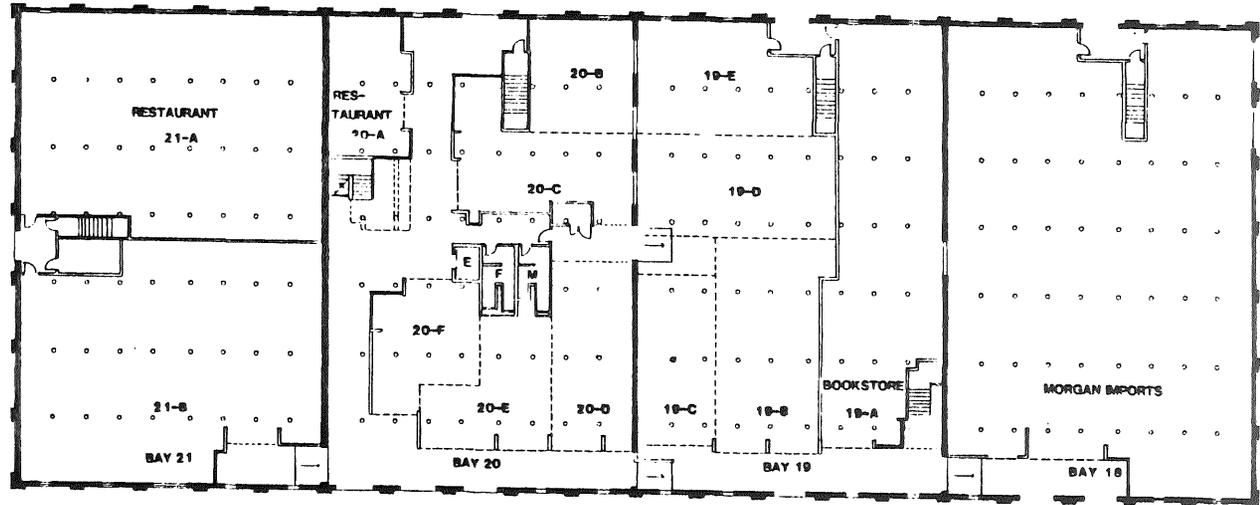
date

Keeper of the National Register

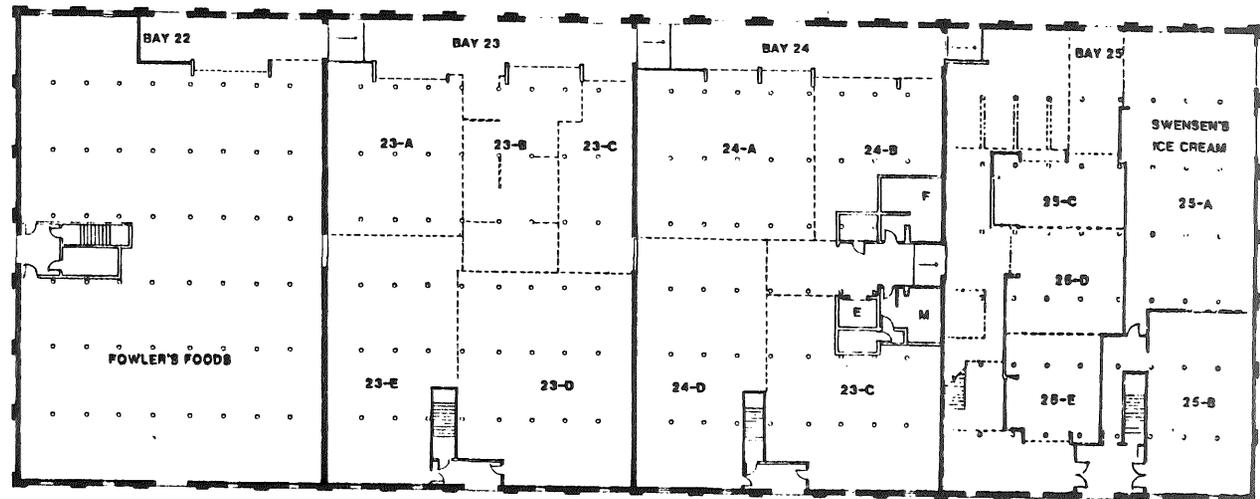
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

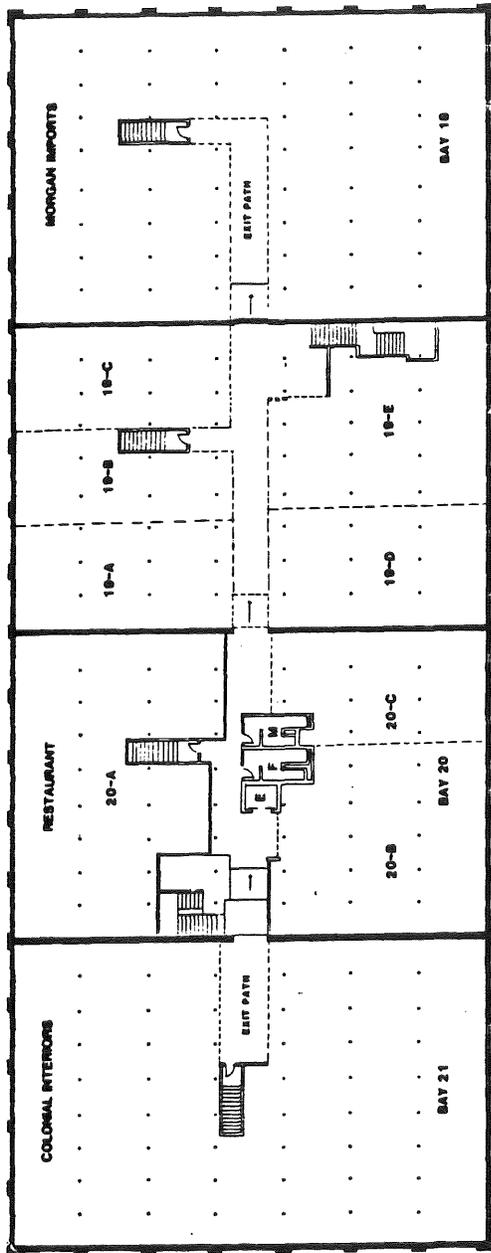


NORTH BUILDING

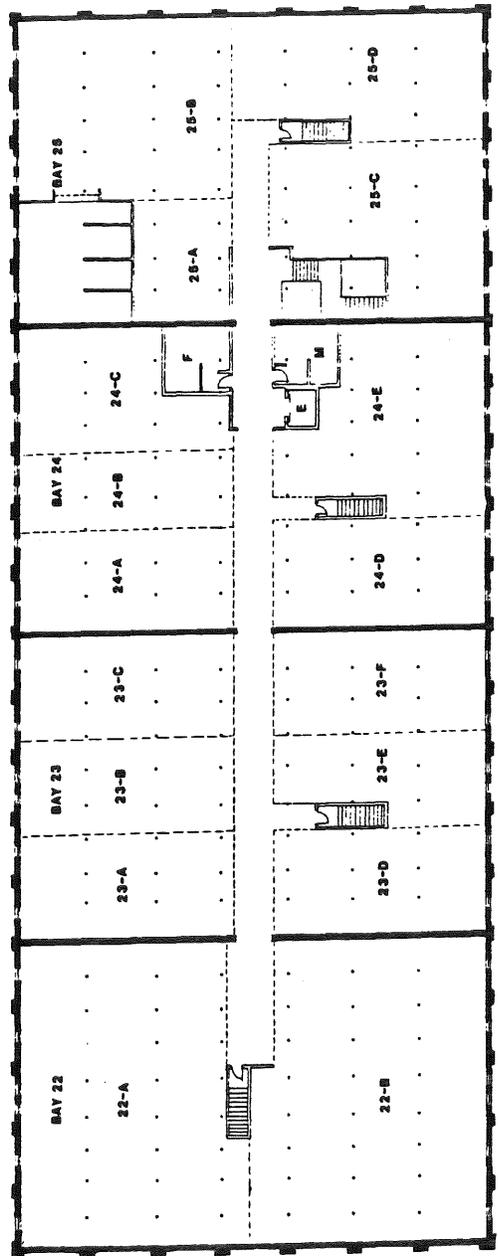


SOUTH BUILDING

LEASING PLANS - FIRST FLOOR



**NORTH BUILDING**

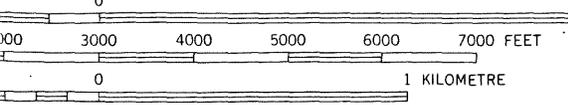


**SOUTH BUILDING**



Watts and Yuille Warehouses  
 Durham County  
 Northwest Durham Quadrangle  
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24000  
 17 688350/3985800

SCALE 1:24 000



VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

CITY HALL 0.5 MI. RALEIGH 23 MI.

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, REI 690

- ROAD CLASSIFICATION
- Primary highway, hard surface
  - Secondary highway, hard surface
  - Light-d improv
  - Unimp
  - Interstate Route
  - U. S. Route

