

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

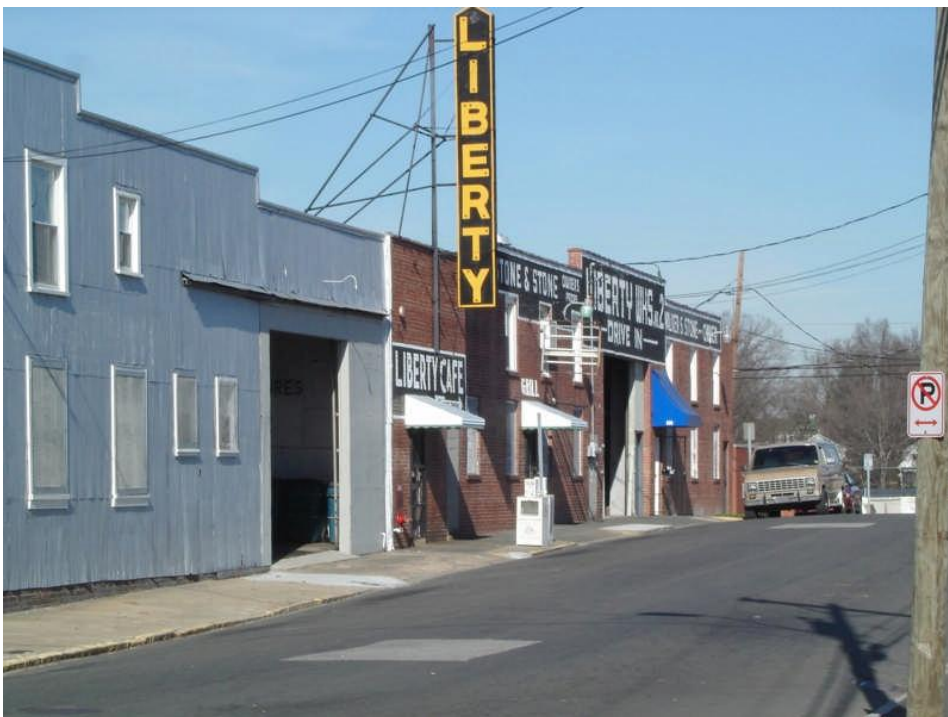
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2

Durham, Durham County, DH2727, Listed 8/16/2008
Nomination by Cynthia de Miranda
Photographs by Cynthia de Miranda, December 2006



South end of facade



North end of façade

**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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2
other names/site number Liberty Warehouse No. 3, Liberty Warehouse

2. Location

street & number 611-613 Rigsbee Avenue n/a not for publication
city or town Durham n/a vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Durham code 063 zip code 27701

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____	_____

Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2
Name of Property

Durham County, NC
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

"Historic Resources of Durham," 1984

n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Warehouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Warehouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls BRICK
WOOD
roof ASPHALT
METAL
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2
Name of Property

Durham County, NC
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is: n/a

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1938-1958

Significant Dates

1938, 1948

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)
n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Harris, I. G., builder

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): n/a

- 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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: n/a

Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2
Name of Property

Durham County, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 2.6 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 689200 3968140
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cynthia de Miranda
organization Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. date January 10, 2008
street & number Post Office Box 1171 telephone 919/682-2211
city or town Durham state NC zip code 27702

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Liberty LLC
street & number Post Office Box 3658 telephone 919.667.9770 ext. 106
city or town Durham state NC zip code 27702

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2
Durham County, N.C.

DESCRIPTION

Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2 is a mid-twentieth-century tobacco auction warehouse on the north side of downtown Durham in Durham County. The building occupies about one third of the city block bounded by Rigsbee, Corporation, Foster, and Hunt Streets. Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2 was once part of a district of loose-leaf tobacco auction houses that stood along both sides of Rigsbee Avenue between Corporation and Morgan Streets; today, it is the only surviving historic tobacco auction warehouse in downtown Durham. Vacant parcels and low-slung, mid-twentieth-century commercial buildings, including automobile service stations and storage warehouses, now surround the building. The vacant parcels south and southwest of Liberty Warehouse are being redeveloped as Durham's Central Park. El Toro Park, the baseball stadium now known as Durham Athletic Park, occupies most of a city block northwest of the warehouse.

Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2 is an expansive frame structure on a brick foundation with low-pitched front-gabled roofs supported by massive timber columns. Skylights illuminate the main floor. The warehouse is built into a sloping lot that drops thirty feet from east to west, between Rigsbee Avenue and Foster Street. As a result, the main floor of the building is at street-level on Rigsbee Avenue while it is the third floor at Foster Street.

The warehouse consists of two sections built a decade apart: Liberty Warehouse No. 1, the south half, dates to 1938 and Liberty Warehouse No. 2 dates to 1948. Differing facade treatments delineate each section. Liberty Warehouse No. 1 features original corrugated tin siding and replacement one-over-one vinyl windows in original openings; original windows were six-over-six wood sash. Liberty Warehouse No. 2 has original brick veneer with replacement vinyl windows in original openings. Personnel doors and garage doors provide access into the building from both sections; all openings are original, but the garage entry at the south end of the Liberty Warehouse No. 1 facade has been slightly enlarged. Liberty Warehouse No. 2 has two drive-in entrances, including one in a canted wall at the corner of Rigsbee and Corporation Streets. Stepped parapet walls hide the low-pitched front-gabled roofs of the two sections.

Signage remains on the facade of Liberty Warehouse No. 2, including signs painted directly on the brick as well as a vertical marquee hung from supports installed on the roof. The existing painted signage is consistent in appearance with signage from the period of significance, as documented in advertisements from the local newspaper. The only change is in the words painted on the building; a name has been changed to reflect a 1970 change in ownership, and the designation "Liberty Whs. No. 2" has been changed to read simply "Liberty" at the corner drive-in entry. The marquee sign apparently post-dates the period of significance.

The building's north elevation, which faces Corporation Street, features three loading dock doors at the east end, a large drive-in garage door towards the middle of the elevation with ramp access to the main floor, and personnel doors and additional loading-dock doors towards the west end. Corrugated galvanized aluminum siding covers the entire elevation.

The Foster Street elevation has the same galvanized metal siding seen on the Corporation Street elevation. As on the Rigsbee Avenue side, Liberty Warehouse No. 1 is discernable from Liberty Warehouse No. 2; here, the difference is seen through the two low-pitched front-gabled roofs and in the slightly longer length of Liberty 1, which projects closer to Foster Street than does Liberty Warehouse No. 2. This elevation also features six small

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storefronts, each with a single personnel door and display window. The storefronts have all been altered. Two single-leaf personnel doors in Liberty Warehouse No. 1 provide access into two separate offices. Five sets of original double-leaf loading doors, all with their original corrugated tin siding, remain on the Foster Street elevation of Liberty Warehouse No. 1. An original drive-in garage entry with replacement door pierces the north end of the Foster Street elevation of Liberty Warehouse No. 1.

The entire south elevation is a two-foot-thick brick wall that had been a party wall between Liberty Warehouse No. 1 and the Mangum Warehouse that once stood next door. The Mangum Warehouse predated Liberty Warehouse No. 1 but was demolished in the 1980s.

In 2004, a cargo door opening was cut into the exposed brick party wall at its west end. The lower level space at the southwest corner of Liberty Warehouse No. 1 now holds a bronze-casting studio; Sanborn maps show it was once a sheet metal works. A pavilion to house casting equipment was added on the Mangum Warehouse parcel, which is now part of Durham's Central Park. The pavilion is attached only at its roofline to the warehouse. The walls of the pavilion are perforated sheets of metal; some are fixed while others swing on hinges. A logo for Central Park consisting of a magnolia flower and the words "Durham Central Park" was painted on the brick wall above the pavilion around 2004.

Inside the warehouse, there is no interior wall between Liberty Warehouse No. 1 and Liberty Warehouse No. 2. Since the 1948 addition, the two halves have always functioned as a single warehouse. The owner's office, bank branch offices, and a gutted café space line the east wall of Liberty Warehouse No. 1 at the main level. Viewing galleries are above, accessible from staircases on the main floor of the warehouse and inside the office. These spaces generally retain their simple original finishes: most office spaces feature beadboard walls while the galleries are unfinished. Windows on the interior wall of the bank branch office allowed transactions with farmers on the selling floor. Windows on the interior wall of the upstairs galleries provided a bird's-eye view of the auction. The owner's office has been remodeled but the original wall surfaces likely survive under the later paneling.

The offices and viewing galleries give the facade a two-story appearance despite the single level that occupies the building's footprint. Massive timber columns support the roof. The space has been subdivided into temporary storage carrels constructed of chicken wire; this was done after the building stopped hosting tobacco auctions in the 1980s. A ramp passes through roughly the center of the warehouse from Rigsbee Avenue down to Foster Street, allowing a vehicle to drive through the warehouse and access its three levels. Other drive-in entrances are at each end of the facade and at the center of the Corporation Street elevation.

Due to the slope in the land, the lowest level occupies only a portion of the footprint and is therefore only accessible from Foster Street. This level has been divided into several offices and storefronts, each with their own entrance. A partial mezzanine, slightly smaller in area than the main level, provides additional warehouse spaces in the west half of the building. Nearly half of the mezzanine has a dirt floor; other sections are floored with tongue-and-groove wood or concrete. The mezzanine can be reached from the ramp that passes through the center of the warehouse and from doors on the west end of the north elevation; the east end of the ramp has a tongue-and-groove wood floor and the west end is concrete.

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Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2
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Original Appearance

Liberty Warehouse No. 1 was erected in 1938. The Rigsbee Avenue facade and the Foster Street elevation featured corrugated tin siding and six-over-six double-hung wood windows. Exterior doors were single-leaf, partially glazed, paneled, wood personnel doors; overhead-lifting wood garage doors; and swinging wood cargo doors covered with corrugated tin siding. The north wall of the building likely matched the finish of the east and west walls, while the south wall was a two-foot-thick brick party wall shared with the Mangum Warehouse that stood on the parcel immediately south.¹

Liberty Warehouse No. 2 was built ten years later in 1948. The north wall of Liberty Warehouse No. 1 was removed at that time and the interior space was open on the main floor from the south wall of Liberty Warehouse No. 1 to the north wall of Liberty Warehouse No. 2. Fenestration types at the brick-veneered facade of Liberty Warehouse No. 2 matched that of Liberty Warehouse No. 1. The north elevation of Liberty Warehouse No. 2 featured sliding wood doors at the loading docks, a wood garage door at the larger drive-in bay, and single-leaf personnel doors. Brick-stamped asphalt sheets covered the diagonally placed tongue-and-groove wood walls. The west elevation of Liberty Warehouse No. 2 and Liberty Warehouse No. 1 originally had corrugated tin siding over the wood walls; six-over-six double-hung sash wood windows; and wood garage and cargo bay doors covered in corrugated tin siding. The window openings—and some of the windows—remain on the upper stories of the east elevation, hidden by the galvanized metal siding. The south wall, the brick party wall, was not exposed until the demolition of the Mangum Warehouse in the 1980s. The roof was built up from paper and tar and scores of glass skylights brought daylight to the main floor.

Advertisements covered the interior walls of the warehouse, both painted directly on the bare wood walls and in the form of hanging tin signs. Nearly all the hanging signs have been removed, but painted advertisements remain. Products and businesses advertised included soft drinks and banks.

Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2 remained virtually unchanged from 1948 through the 1970s or early 1980s. At that time, the owner replaced the original wood windows with vinyl double-hung sash, retaining the original wood window trim but covering it with aluminum siding. The owner also installed a metal roof over the existing roof, covering about half the skylights in the process. In 1985, to strengthen the floor on the main level, an additional layer of tongue-and-groove wood flooring was put down over the original floor on the main level. Around the same time, corrugated galvanized aluminum siding was installed on both the Corporation Street and Foster Street elevations. On the Foster Street side, the siding covers all the original window openings. Most of the windows have been removed, but all the framing remains in place and is visible at the interior. In the 1990s, interior changes were made to the office and retail spaces at the lower level of the building on the Foster Street side, and the changes made to the south wall to accommodate the casting studio were made in 2004.

¹ Descriptions of the original and early appearance are based on the author's interview with previous owner Walker S. Stone, December 20, 2006, and on photographs published during the period of significance in the *Durham Morning Herald*.

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Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2
Durham County, N.C.

Summary of Significance

Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2, located at the southwest corner of Rigsbee and Corporation Streets in downtown Durham, is the city's only surviving downtown loose-leaf tobacco auction house. After the Civil War and particularly in the twentieth century, the loose-leaf auctions became the transitional step between growing the leaf and processing it into its commercial forms. Durham, where the manufacture of tobacco products was an iconic industry for a century, was a major loose-leaf market in the bright belt of the state's Piedmont region. The auction warehouses were a distinctive building type that featured massive open auction floors lit by scores of skylights and accessed through drive-in garage doorways and ramps. Subsidiary spaces housed shops, cafes, and branch banks patronized by the farmers in town to sell tobacco. The last loose-leaf tobacco auctions were held in downtown Durham in the 1980s; over the next two decades all but the Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2 at Rigsbee and Corporation Streets have been demolished. Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2 is locally significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of Commerce and Architecture; the warehouse retains good integrity at the interior and exterior, exhibiting many of the distinctive traits of this property type. The period of significance begins in 1938, when the south half of the warehouse was built, and terminates in 1958. Even though the warehouse continued to host auctions beyond 1958, the activity was not exceptionally significant and therefore does not meet National Register Criteria Consideration G.

A few sections of the 1984 "Historic Resources of Durham (Partial Inventory: Historic Architectural Properties)" provide architectural and historical context for the property. The historic architectural context is in Part C, "Durham's Architecture," under the headings "The Machine Age Aesthetic of the 1930s" on page 7.20 and "Post-1940 Developments" on pages 7.20-7.21. Some historic context for the property's significance is found in "The Development of Modern Durham: the 1920s and 1930s" on pages 8.30-8.35. Additional context for the tobacco auction warehouse as a building type is provided herein. Although registration requirements are not discussed in the 1984 multiple property form, Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2 has very good historic integrity and an important direct association with the tobacco industry in Durham, North Carolina.

History

Business partners Frank Satterfield and S. Walker Stone built their first Durham tobacco auction warehouse (not extant) at the corner of Rigsbee and Seminary Streets in 1925 on land leased from the Rigsbee family. The partners made a substantial addition to it in 1935. City directories variously called the structure Satterfield & Stone Warehouse, Liberty Warehouse, and Liberty Nos. 1 and 2; the huge one-story building and addition occupied about a third of the oddly shaped block defined by Rigsbee Avenue, Seminary, N. Mangum, and Hunt Streets.¹

In 1935, Satterfield and Stone began another expansion. The two men, along with Satterfield's son J. S. Satterfield and a fourth partner, G. T. Cunningham, purchased the north half of the block bounded by Rigsbee

¹ Walker S. Stone, interview with the author, December 20, 2006; *Hill's Durham City Directories, 1927-1958* (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, 1927-1958); Sanborn Map Company, Durham 1937 and 1937 updated through 1950, viewed online at www.nclive.org on December 22, 2006; *Durham Morning Herald*, February 12, 1947.

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Avenue and Corporation, Hunt, and Foster Streets from Sallie A. Rigsbee, who had inherited the land from her father. The partners built a new auction warehouse on the south half of the parcel, fronting Rigsbee Avenue. The building shared a brick party wall on its south side with the recently built Mangum Warehouse. The 1939 city directory calls Satterfield and Stone's new building Liberty Warehouse No. 3, in deference to the 1925 warehouse and addition at Rigsbee and Seminary Streets.²

Together, the Mangum Warehouse and Liberty Warehouse No. 3 covered the midsection of the block, both stretching from Rigsbee Avenue through the block to Foster Street. The block had been sparsely populated through the 1930s: the 1937 Sanborn map shows six small houses fronting Rigsbee Avenue and a couple of businesses fronting Hunt and Foster Streets. The Mangum Warehouse required demolition of three houses on Rigsbee Avenue, but Liberty Warehouse No. 3 occupied previously vacant land.³

Satterfield and Stone lost the original Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2 in 1947, following a property dispute that was resolved in favor of the Rigsbee family, owners of the land the warehouse occupied. Ten days later, Satterfield and Stone filed a building permit to expand Liberty Warehouse No. 3, intending to double the selling floor of the 1938 warehouse with a frame addition filling the north end of the block. They estimated the value of the construction at \$58,000. The new section featured a brick-veneer facade with drive-in entrances on Rigsbee and Corporation Streets and in a canted wall at the corner of the two streets. Additional loading docks lined Corporation Street. The 1938 warehouse then became known as Liberty Warehouse No. 1 and the addition, completed in 1948, as Liberty Warehouse No. 2. The use of brick rather than corrugated tin at the facade gave the warehouse the appearance of being two buildings. Inside, however, there was no dividing wall and a single auction floor spread from the brick party wall at the south side of Liberty Warehouse No. 1 to the north wall of Liberty Warehouse No. 2 at Corporation Street. Other spaces in the building were rented for storage or to small businesses. The 1950 city directory lists a plumber, painting and electrical contractors, and a sheet-metal fabricator, apparently in four separate Foster Street storefronts.⁴

Satterfield sold his interest in the property to Stone shortly after filing the building permit for the 1948 addition. In 1970, Stone sold the property to his son Walker S. Stone. Since the 1980s, when the last auction was held at the warehouse, Walker S. Stone maintained the storage and retail functions of the building and converted the main auction floor into additional storage space. Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2 eventually became known simply as Liberty Warehouse. Stone sold the warehouse to Durham Liberty, LLC, in 2006. It is still used primarily as a warehouse with businesses housed in the Foster Street storefronts.⁵

² Sallie A. Rigsbee to F. G. Satterfield and others, May 25, 1935, Durham County Deed Book 111, p. 528, Durham County Courthouse, Durham; Stone interview; *Hill's Durham City Directory, 1939*.

³ Sanborn Maps.

⁴ Stone interview; *Hill's Durham City Directories*; Sanborn Maps; *Durham Morning Herald*, February, March, and August 1947.

⁵ Stone interview; *Hill's Durham City Directories*; S. Walker Stone and Sara Taylor Stone to Walker Strickland Stone, December 3, 1970, Durham County Deed Book 371, p. 138-139, Durham County Courthouse, Durham.

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Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2
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Commerce Context: Loose-Leaf Tobacco Auctions in Durham

In the colonial period, before the development and popularization of the loose-leaf method of selling tobacco, the relatively few and far-flung tobacco market centers required that the crop be packed in hogshead barrels for transport over long distances. Independent inspectors checked the tobacco packed at the top of each barrel and priced it based on perceived quality. Buyers, however, often ended up with sub-par tobacco: the barrels and the long journey damaged the leaf and farmers sometimes “nested” the tobacco in the barrel, putting lower-quality leaves in the bottom and packing the top with a higher grade. The farmers had little control in the system as well: Given the effort and expense of getting the tobacco to a distant market, they had no alternative but to sell at the price set by the inspector.⁶

The loose-leaf auction came into wide use for flue-cured tobaccos after the Civil War, favored because it was a more convenient and competitive system for buyers and sellers. The system put markets within a day’s journey of tobacco farmers, required them to bring unpacked leaf to buyers, and set up a bid system to set prices. As early as 1889 the hogshead tobacco trade began to suffer from the growth of loose-leaf markets, and by the 1930s most tobacco grown in the United States came to market through loose-leaf auctions.⁷

In the twentieth century, the loose-leaf system required massive, well-lit warehouses to accommodate the volume of tobacco brought for auctions. Tobacco was not stored for any length of time in the auction warehouses; it was sold within a few days of its arrival. Farmers brought harvested and conditioned tobacco to their chosen warehouse and stacked it in shallow baskets there. Warehouse employees weighed the loaded baskets and delivered them to the warehouse floor for sale. At the start of an auction day, piles of tobacco arranged in orderly rows and bordered by narrow aisles covered the floor. An auctioneer, the buyers, a ticket man, and a bookman—the latter two employed by the warehouse—moved in a tight group from pile to pile to conduct the auction. A warehouse representative made an opening bid over a given pile of tobacco; the auctioneer called out and repeated the prevailing price as buyers made competing bids until the pile was sold. The ticket man recorded the buyer and the final price on the pile, and the book man computed and recorded the gross value of the pile based on the price. Such auctions were quick and the group could go through as many as four piles per minute. A large market city like Durham would see the sale of tens of millions of pounds of tobacco in a season. In the old bright belt region of North Carolina’s Piedmont, the season ran from September through January or February.⁸

The auction season created its own economy and culture. Farmers camped in the buildings’ basements until their tobacco sold and then cashed their checks at branch banks, ate in cafes, and shopped at stores all housed in the warehouse buildings. Shops scheduled sales for the auction season to appeal to farmers while they were in town.

⁶ Wilbur Wright Yeargin, “The History of the Tobacco Auction System and the Tobacco Auctioneer,” (Master’s Thesis, Duke University, 1989), 1-25; *Tobacco Dictionary*, s.v. “Loose-leaf Auction;” Wightman W. Garner, *The Production of Tobacco* (Philadelphia: The Blakiston Company, 1946), 196-197; Ben Flemert, *The Tobacco Manufacturing Industry in North Carolina* ([Raleigh]: n.p., 1939), 9-10.

⁷ *Tobacco Dictionary*, s.v. “Loose-leaf Auction;” Garner, 199-202; Flemert, 9-10 .

⁸ Flemert, 9-10; Garner, 205, 207.

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The market season crowds drew blues musicians who played for farmers staying overnight. The singsong chant of the auctioneer at work became a distinctive and celebrated element of the tobacco industry.⁹

Durham's first loose-leaf auction was held in 1871 by W. T. Blackwell, who employed an existing two-story building as a makeshift auction house. Blackwell's auctioneer, Edward J. Parrish, brokered sales for over fifty thousand pounds of tobacco during the sale. The tobacco filled both floors of the building and spilled out onto the street once the building was full. Blackwell, who produced Bull Durham smoking tobacco, won the first pile auctioned that day and went on to buy much of the rest of the tobacco at the sale. Parrish opened his own auction warehouse in 1887 at the corner of Parrish and Mangum Streets (not extant) and became one of Durham's most successful and prominent warehousemen.¹⁰

By the twentieth century, tobacco auction warehouses in Durham clustered north of downtown's central business district on Rigsbee Avenue and Foster, Morgan, and E. Chapel Hill Streets. During the 1938-1939 season, Durham had twelve loose-leaf tobacco auction houses, according to one historian; the 1939 city directory lists at least ten. Rigsbee Avenue was the spine of the district with warehouses scattered as far south as E. Chapel Hill Street and as far north as Corporation Street.¹¹

A fire in the 1930s destroyed several early brick loose-leaf tobacco warehouses in the Rigsbee Avenue area. The Star Brick Warehouse at 302 Rigsbee Avenue (not extant), likely erected in the last years of the nineteenth century, was the only brick warehouse to survive the fire. It remained into the 1980s; by then it was used as a parking garage. Around 1950, the auction house district had concentrated along Rigsbee Avenue between Morgan and Corporation Streets. Only one of the city's six warehouses stood beyond this stretch: the Planters Warehouse remained at its original location south of E. Chapel Hill Street near N. Mangum Street.¹²

Durham has not hosted a loose-leaf auction downtown since November 1987, when the Planters Warehouse had its last sale. The next decades saw the demolition of all Durham's downtown warehouses but one. Only the Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2 at Rigsbee Avenue and Corporation Streets remains.¹³

Architectural Context: Loose-leaf Tobacco Auction Houses in Durham

The loose-leaf auction system and the volume of sales conducted in a given market town required each auction warehouse to provide a massive, open, and well-lit interior space. Descriptions from the second quarter of the twentieth century are consistent, if varied in the level of detail.

⁹ Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA-OWI Collection, viewed online at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/> on December 22, 2006; Stone interview; "Bull City Blues: Durham's Gift to the World," *Herald-Sun* (Durham), April 28, 2007.

¹⁰ Yeargin, 37-39.

¹¹ Flemert, 10; *Hill's Durham City Directory, 1939*.

¹² *Hill's Durham City Directory, 1950*; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1937 updated through 1950; Claudia P. Roberts [Brown], Diane E. Lea, and Robert M. Leary, *The Durham Architectural and Historic Inventory* (Durham: City of Durham, 1982), 58.

¹³ Stone, interview with the author; Jim Wise, *Durham: A Bull City Story* (Charleston: Arcadia Press, 2002), 151-152.

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The warehouses are large frame or brick structures covering thousands of square feet. The buildings are of the one-story type, the roof pierced by many skylights to permit plenty of light for those who examine and buy the tobacco.¹⁴

Some of the sales warehouses are very large, providing as much as 100,000 sq. ft. or more of floor space and they embody some novel features of architecture. They necessarily have only a single floor, with comparatively low roof which is studded with skylights to obtain maximum illumination. Adequate, uniformly distributed illumination is a highly important requirement. These structures are designed to provide maximum open floor space with a minimum of posts or other obstructions. One warehouse in the flue-cured area furnishes 90,000 sq. ft. of floor space and the roof carries approximately 300 skylights of a special type of ribbed glass. One or more driveways at a level some 3 ft. below the main floor are provided for unloading incoming tobacco and special provision also is made for loading under shelter the outgoing tobacco after it has been sold. Office quarters occupy a portion of the floor and facilities and conveniences for the farmers and the buyers usually receive careful attention.¹⁵

The loose-leaf auction warehouses differed substantially from the earlier warehouses that stored and sold tobacco hogsheads in Durham. Defining features of the former are the roofs littered with skylights to illuminate the auction floor and allow easy inspection of the piles of loose tobacco; two-story office blocks with space for bank windows and upper-floor viewing rooms; and ramps and interior loading docks that enabled farmers to drive into the warehouse to unload their leaf. In addition, the unadorned loose-leaf auction buildings were stylistically a departure from the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century hogshead warehouses, like the twelve huge warehouses built between 1897 and 1906 by the American Tobacco Company that are included in the American Tobacco Company Manufacturing Plant (NR 2000) and the Bright Leaf Historic District (NR 1999). These generally two-story timber-framed brick buildings have interiors divided by several brick firewalls and feature parapets, corbelled chimneys and cornices, and elaborate brick moldings with chevrons and prisms, all expressing the Romanesque Revival style at the exterior. Later versions, like the 1927 Bullington Warehouse at 500 N. Duke Street (NR 1982), were similar in structure but featured a streamlined version of the Romanesque Revival style already established for the building type in Durham. At Bullington, the elaborate brickwork of earlier buildings was reduced to corbelled bricks outlining shallow recessed panels in each bay and a simple accent of brick laid in a chevron pattern at the corner.¹⁶

¹⁴ Flemert, 9.

¹⁵ Garner, 203.

¹⁶ Yeargin, 34-35; Claudia Roberts Brown, "Historic Resources of Durham (Partial Inventory Historic Architectural Properties)," National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, 1984, Section 7, pages 4-5; [Brown], Lea, and Leary, 49, 56.

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Despite the loss of all of downtown Durham's loose-leaf tobacco auction warehouses other than Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2, the building can easily be compared to others of its type in Durham, thanks to a plentiful supply of historic views dating from the period of significance. Historic views are available at both the Library of Congress and the Durham County Library websites. In photographs from both collections, the concentration of warehouses is easily identifiable by the skylight-dotted roofs in aerial views from the 1930s through the 1980s. Additionally, photographs from the Library of Congress collection show detailed views of several unnamed Durham warehouses during auctions in the late 1930s. Only the 1925 Liberty Warehouse, at Rigsbee Avenue and Seminary Street, and the Mangum Warehouse can be positively identified in these photographs, thanks to exterior signage; neither building survives today. Still, these images indicate that the painted exterior signage and interior product advertisement wall murals at the newer Liberty Warehouse were typical details for Durham's tobacco auction houses. The Library of Congress photographs also show farmers cashing out at the warehouse bank branch windows as well as sleeping on mattresses arranged around wood stoves in the segregated warehouse sleeping rooms. The selling floors visible in the photographs are open and unadorned, except for the advertising signs and murals on the walls. Again, the spaces depicted in these photographs from the late 1930s match those of the new Liberty Warehouses in terms of materials, finish, and organization.¹⁷

The markets were very competitive and the warehouses advertised heavily in the local newspaper, providing additional historic views of the buildings. A 1957 photograph of Liberty Warehouse shows that today's fenestration pattern at Rigsbee Avenue is unchanged from that date, although original wood windows have been replaced and the trim has been wrapped in aluminum siding. The characteristic identifying signage painted on the warehouse facade does not survive on Liberty Warehouse No. 1; the identifying signage on Liberty Warehouse No. 2 does survive, although names have been updated to reflect the change in ownership in 1970. The marquee sign apparently post-dates 1957. Still, the facade has substantially the same appearance today as it did in this 1957 image and it is easily identifiable as a tobacco auction warehouse.¹⁸

Similarly, at the interior, the main level retains the bank branch counters, office and viewing room spaces, interior painted advertising, and open selling floor. The space remains remarkably similar to the Durham warehouses documented by 1930s-era photographs at the Library of Congress. The five original drive-in entrances at the facade and on Corporation and Foster Streets also remain, preserving the organization of space within the building.

Changes are more apparent at the Corporation and Foster Street elevations, where galvanized aluminum siding has been installed since the close of the period of significance. The fenestration pattern is generally intact along Corporation Street and at the ground level along Foster Street. Most original windows and doors have been replaced in their original apertures, but several original cargo doors remain at the Foster Street elevation of Liberty Warehouse No. 1. Additionally, original cladding and upper story fenestration patterns are intact

¹⁷ LOC photographs; Changes in the Landscape of Downtown Durham Collection, Durham County Library, viewed online at <http://www.dclibrary.net/prod1/ncc/rslides/> on December 22, 2006.

¹⁸ *Durham Morning Herald*, August 26, 1957.

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beneath the siding, according to long-time owner Walker S. Stone, who added the siding to the building.¹⁹ Despite the installation of the siding, the building still reads as a warehouse at these two elevations and the cargo entrances at Corporation Street and the small-scale retail spaces along the Foster Street elevation remain.

¹⁹ Original window openings were observed at the interior on the Foster Street elevation during a survey of the building. No historic views of the Foster Street elevation were found during preparation of this nomination.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries coincide with the legal bounds of the adjacent parcels identified by the following PINs: 0821-08-99-3379 and 0821-08-99-3574.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcels historically associated with the property.

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Photograph Labels

Liberty Warehouse Nos. 1 and 2
Durham, Durham County
Cynthia de Miranda, photographer
December 2006
Negative on file at North Carolina Historic Preservation Office.

The above information applies to all photographs included in this nomination.

1. South end of facade (east elevation), looking northwest.
2. North end of facade (east elevation), looking northwest.
3. North end of facade showing corner entry at right, looking west.
4. North elevation, looking southwest.
5. West elevation (rear), looking northeast.
6. West end of south elevation showing brick party wall, looking north.
7. South elevation showing brick party wall, looking northeast.
8. Interior, showing owners office and bank advertising, looking northeast.
9. Interior showing office space and stair to viewing gallery, looking south.
10. Interior showing brick party wall and auction floor, looking west.
11. Interior showing ramp from Foster Street up to auction floor, looking east.