

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**S. J. Nissen Building**

Winston-Salem, Forsyth County, FY0753, Listed 8/28/2007  
Nomination by Laura A. W. Phillips  
Photographs by Laura A. W. Phillips, April 2006



Façade view



Rear view

**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 any 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 Nissen, S. J., Building

other names/site number S. J. Nissen Carriage Repository and Repair Shop;  
S. J. Nissen Company Wagonworks

**2. Location**

street & number 310 East Third Street not for publication N/A

city or town Winston-Salem vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Forsyth code 067 zip code 27101

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide  locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official 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 commenting or other official Date

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

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
___ entered in the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
___ determined eligible for the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
___ determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
___ removed from the National Register	_____	_____
___ other (explain): _____	_____	_____

Nissen, S. J., Building  
Name of Property

Forsyth Co., NC  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: INDUSTRY Sub: manufacturing facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE Sub: professional

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

roof Other: Built-up

walls Brick  
Concrete

other Brick  
Granite

**Narrative Description**

Nissen, S. J., Building  
Name of Property

Forsyth Co., 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.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a 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.

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1895-1929

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Areas of Significance**

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**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)**

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Nissen, S. J., Building  
Name of Property

Forsyth Co., NC  
County and State

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** Approx. 1/2 acre

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing  
1 17 568370 3994870  
2     

Zone Easting Northing  
3       
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.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Laura A. W. Phillips, Architectural Historian

organization N/A date October 1, 2006

street & number 637 North Spring Street telephone 336/727-1968

city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27101

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**12. Additional Documentation**

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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)

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**Property Owner**

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

name Black Horse LLC c/o Lee Runion

street & number 310 East Third Street telephone 336/748-1001

city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27101

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**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 listings. 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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Nissen, S. J., Building  
Forsyth County, North Carolina

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Summary and Setting

The S. J. Nissen Building is a brick industrial building composed of an original 1894-1895 primary structure with a 1953 south-side addition. The Romanesque Revival original building consists of three stories above two (upper and lower) basements and is distinguished by two crenellated front towers and a strongly rhythmic use of round-arched windows. The addition has two stories and one basement and is simpler in design, with, on the façade, rectangular windows set between plain pilasters. The south sides of both sections of the building and the rear (east side) of the 1953 section are completely utilitarian in appearance. The total building area is 29,463 square feet.

Located at 310 East Third Street, the S. J. Nissen Building stands on a trapezoidal tract of approximately one-half acre bordered on the north by East Third Street, on the east by the Norfolk and Western Railroad right-of-way, on the south by a steep embankment at the top of which is Fogle Street, and on the west by North Patterson Avenue. Previous addresses assigned this location include 200 North Patterson Avenue (still used in tax records), 251 Roanoke Street (pre-Patterson Avenue), and Fogle Street. Although heavily-traveled East Third Street is paved with asphalt, North Patterson Avenue in front of the building and Fogle Street along the south side of the property retain their Belgium block paving. Brick sidewalks with granite curbs border East Third Street and North Patterson Avenue. Four trees, planted since 1983, rise from the East Third Street sidewalk, while three small trees border the west sidewalk. Facing west, the building is set at the west end of its tract. Asphalt-paved parking makes up the remainder of the tract, which slopes downward from west to east. Lining the east half of the property beyond the entrance to the parking area is a fence with a brick base, brick posts, and iron railing connecting the posts.

Originally the tract was in the middle of Winston-Salem's large tobacco manufacturing district just east of the city's commercial center. Now, with many of the tobacco buildings gone, the setting of the S. J. Nissen Building consists of vacant land, parking lots, and several older commercial structures. To the north, two buildings of approximately the same date of construction as the Nissen Building and originally associated with the tobacco industry (W. F. Smith and Sons Leaf House and Brown Brothers Tobacco Company, listed together in the National Register in 1978 as Piedmont Leaf Tobacco Company) are located on either side of East Fourth Street.

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### Exterior: 1894-1895 Building

The original building forms a rectangle measuring approximately forty-four feet wide (north-south) and 120 feet deep (east-west). At the northwest corner of the building, an octagonal tower projects ten feet beyond the façade and is fourteen feet wide. The building has a brick foundation and six-to-one common-bond brick walls that become less thick as the height of the building increases. This can be seen clearly in the window insets, which become shallower with each ascending floor. It can also be seen at the rear southeast corner of the building, where a brick buttress projects progressively outward toward the base the thickness of one row of bricks per floor. The building is roofed by a very shallow gable that is hidden by parapets on all but the rear elevation.

The most dramatic view of the building is from the northwest, from which the building's dominant feature, the four-story, octagonal corner tower, looms large. Forming the northern bay of the three-bay façade, the tower rises four stories and is crowned by a crenellated parapet with a corbelled base and corbelled caps. On the first three stories, the tower windows are one-over-one sash and graduated in size with the tallest on the first floor. All have multi-layer flat-arched brick lintels and rusticated granite sills. Vertical brick ribs at the corners of the tower separate the columns of windows and culminate on the fourth floor in round arches that frame small round windows and decorative brick panels. From the bottom of the third-floor windows to the ground, the walls of the tower splay outward, increasing its fortress-like appearance. Originally the corner tower housed a set of winding wooden stairs, but these were removed during a mid-1980s renovation of the building. Wrapping around the base of the tower is a low brick retaining wall that creates a space for the planting of seasonal flowers.

To the south end of the façade is a square secondary tower, which rises three stories and projects slightly from the façade plane. Originally it housed the building's large freight elevator, which was removed in the 1980s. The first story of the square tower contains a broad, inset, double-leaf, glass-and-wood door with a segmental-arched transom framed by a matching brick arch. Two brick steps and a brick ramp sloping upward from the north provide access to the entrance from the sidewalk. Large granite blocks are inserted into the flanking walls near the base of the entrance, suggesting that this was originally the entrance by which wagons entered the elevator and were lifted to the upper floors. The granite blocks may have served as protectors against projecting wheel hubs. The second floor of the tower features a pair of one-over-one sash windows with flat-arched brick lintels and a continuous granite sill. The third floor has a pair of one-over-one sash windows that together fit within a round-arched brick surround. The window sill is granite. Above the third floor window, the front of the tower has a series of vertical brickwork grooves whose lengths are determined by the curve of the round-

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arched window and its brick surround. The square tower is crowned with a crenellated parapet with corbelled caps and a two-step corbelled base.

Connecting the two towers, the flat center bay of the façade is three stories tall. The first story contains a large, nearly square window divided by heavy wood muntins into six large panes. It is headed by a narrow, slightly projecting metal hood. Originally, this was likely another wagon entrance. The second and third floors repeat the corresponding windows of the south bay. Across the top of the center bay, and set beneath a simple corbelled cornice, are raised bricks, now painted cream, that spell "S. J. Nissen."

Rows of arched windows define the north elevation along East Main Street. The ground slopes downward from west to east, exposing more of the two basement levels toward the rear of the building. Both basement levels have segmental-arched openings. Those in the lower basement that remain exposed have been infilled with brick. A single-leaf door stands at the center of the elevation at the upper basement level. West of this side entrance, the segmental-arched fenestration has been enclosed with brick, while east of it, the three segmental-arched, twelve-over-twelve sash windows remain open. Metal security bars are attached to the outsides of the windows. The first and second floors both have six pairs of windows (separated by brick dividers) in addition to one single window at the west end. These windows are four-over-four sash with round-arched plain glass transoms. The third floor has single windows that are wider than those of the first and second floors. Each has a twelve-light single sash (replacing six-over-six sash after 1983) headed by a round-arched, three-part, glass fanlight transom. A simple corbelled parapet tops the north elevation. Stretching horizontally along the north elevation just below the parapet and between the second and third floors are iron tie bolts with spoked caps. These reappear on the south elevation.

The three-bay-wide rear (east) elevation repeats the window types of the north elevation in its upper basement and first, second, and third floors, except that on the first and second floors the windows are not paired. The fenestration of the lower basement, here fully exposed, has been altered from the original, perhaps more than once. The broad segmental arch of one opening, now bricked in, remains visible. Current openings on the rear elevation at this level consist of a single-paned rectangular window with metal security bars at the southeast corner and a pair of modern metal fire doors near the center. The south door opens to the lower basement and the north door opens to the fire stair at the northeast corner of the building. A fabric canopy shelters the two doorways. Extending eastward from the rear of the building is a brick patio bordered by a brick retaining wall. On the east and south sides, the wall is about four feet high; on the north side, along East Third Street, it is considerably higher. Decorative ironwork gates open onto the patio from the east end of the north side and near the south end of the east side. The retaining wall on the north side continues a short distance down East Third Street to the parking entrance.



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On the south elevation of the 1894-1895 building, no windows pierce the first floor. The second and third floors have only one window each, one on top of the other, matching the window types for those floors on the north and east elevations. The upper basement has three evenly spaced segmental-arched windows, again matching those on the north and east elevations. The three segmental-arched openings at the lower-basement level have all been enclosed with brick. However, a metal fire door has been installed in the location of the westernmost of the three original openings. Exterior steps with a metal guard rail lead from the ground level down (east to west) to this entrance.

### **Exterior: 1953 Addition**

A two-story-with-single-basement brick addition was built to the south side of the 1894-1895 building in 1953. It has a brick foundation, stretcher-bond walls on the west and south elevations, and a flat roof with plain parapets on the west and south sides. The addition's eight-bay west facade parallels Patterson Avenue, angling southeastward from the original façade. That and its more modern styling distinguish the addition from the 1894-1895 façade while at the same time lessening its impact on the earlier building. The windows on the three elevations of the addition are a single pane and are rectangular or square in shape. On the façade, the rhythmic windows are separated by a series of plain brick pilasters that stretch upward to simple stepped corbelling above the second story windows. A glass, hip-roofed enclosure rises above the northernmost three bays of the addition façade; it covers the building's primary stair atrium and elevator. The enclosed mechanical room for the elevator rises above the hip-roofed enclosure. The south end of the facade meets the south elevation at an oblique angle; the two sides are joined by interlocking bricks. On the south elevation, the first story and basement windows are rectangular and have metal security bars. The windows on the second story are square. The rear (east) wall of the addition is built of concrete blocks, painted to coordinate with the other brick walls, with brick edging around the windows. The second story has three evenly spaced rectangular windows. The first story has a single rectangular window near the north end. The basement level has two square windows, and at the north end, a double-leaf entrance. Concrete steps with a metal guard rail rise from south to north to the entrance. A fabric canopy shelters it.

### **Interior: 1894-1895 Building**

The interior of the original building exhibits typical mill construction of the late nineteenth century. Its structural features include exposed, solid brick perimeter walls, wood floors with the upper layer laid diagonally for extra strength, and wood ceilings laid on heavy, exposed, wood joists that rise slightly toward the center from the north and south sides. The

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joists meet at the center and are supported by heavy octagonal wood posts with iron collars that form an east-west row running down the center of the building. This structural system provided wide open spaces that allowed for great versatility in the arrangement of manufacturing processes. A freight elevator originally was located at the southwest corner of the building. Although the elevator has been removed, its brick walls and broad, segmental-arched interior doorways remain intact on all three floors and upper basement level. At the northeast corner of the building, an enclosed, modern, fire stair rises from the lower basement to the third floor. Non-load-bearing interior walls vary from floor to floor, having been modified through the years to accommodate a variety of uses since the building ceased its initial role as an industrial facility.

The lower basement does not extend the full length of the building, but ends at a west wall approximately one bay short of the full length of the building. It is accessed from a rear (east) door and a door on the south side about two thirds of the distance from the east end. Most of the south half of the lower basement is an open space with hanging light fixtures and exposed duct work and piping. Dry-walled rooms of varying configurations have been partitioned off along the north side, at the southeast corner, and at the west end. The lower basement is currently used as a workshop and storage area.

The upper basement has been converted to residential use. It has a fire exit in the middle of the north side that opens to East Third Street. On the south side, approximately three quarters of the way to the front (west end) of the building, is a double-leaf, double-layer, segmental-arched wood door with iron strap hinges and a three-layer brick arched lintel. Originally opening to the exterior of the building, it now opens to the 1953 addition. The upper basement is also accessed from the enclosed fire stair located in the northeast corner of the building. At the southwest corner of the upper basement, the brick walls, heavy double-leaf arched doors, and pedestrian arched door in the northwest corner of the elevator shaft remain intact. The space currently serves as a wine cellar. Partitions have been removed from the front (west) half of the upper basement so that it is one loft-like living space. Dry-wall partitions have been built throughout the rear (east) half of the upper basement, creating a hallway, bedrooms, office and file rooms, a laundry room, and a bathroom.

From Patterson Avenue on the west, the first floor is entered through what was originally the elevator shaft, now the vestibule. Its heavy arched west and east doorways remain intact, although modern wood-paneled doors have been installed in both. The first floor of the 1894-1895 building can also be accessed from the stair and elevator lobby of the 1953 addition through an arched opening (probably dating from ca. 1983) in the south brick wall of the former elevator shaft. Additionally, the first floor can be entered from an enlarged doorway (ca. 2003) near the east end of the 1953 addition, and from the enclosed fire stair at the northeast corner of the building. Most of this floor is open, providing spaces for seating, entertainment areas, and a dining area toward the west front, work space for photo shoots on the north side of the mid

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section, and a gourmet kitchen on the south side of the mid section. The base of the former stair tower serves as one of the seating areas. Partitions have been added to the rear (east) third of the first floor, providing for a camera storage room and a conference room on the north side, restrooms at the rear, and a pantry and closet on the south side.

The primary entrance to the second floor of the original building is through a metal fire door cut into the south brick wall from the stair and elevator landing near the west end of the 1953 addition. The original freight elevator shaft on this floor does not retain its heavy wood doors, but the pedestrian entrance near the west end of the north side does retain its single door. The south side (third) of the floor is partitioned into a series of small offices with drywall walls and modern six-panel doors. Restrooms are located in the southeast corner. The north two-thirds of the second floor remains open space. The west (front) end is currently used for sitting areas and a work station. The open space from there to the rear (east end) of the building is used for portable sets for photographic shoots. A door near the center of the east end opens to the fire stair in the northeast corner of the building.

The third floor, currently not in use, retains less open space than do the other floors. Like the second floor, it is entered through a metal fire door cut through the south brick wall from the stair and elevator landing in the 1953 addition. The floor at this level is carpeted, and the structural ceiling is more pitched than on the other floors, reflecting the low gable of the roof. At the southwest corner of the floor, the brick walls of the former freight elevator create a room. At the east end of the room is the large, segmental-arched, freight opening with its massive double-leaf, two-layer wood doors with long iron strap hinges. The pedestrian opening at the west end of the north brick wall retains its small, single-leaf, segmental-arched door that is similar to the freight doors. A low, round-arched window on the west wall lights the space. The rest of the space at the front (west) end of the third floor is largely open (with one partitioned-off space), playing up the round-arched windows and the corner tower space. The thick, brick, internal buttressing of the tower is most apparent on this floor, as are the flat-arched brick lintels above the tower windows. An added steel I-beam at the top of the opening to the tower lends additional support. The rear (east) five bays of the third floor are partitioned into three east-west rows of offices separated by two east-west hallways. The largest offices run along the north wall. The center row of offices runs in line with the central support posts of the floor. The walls of these center offices do not continue to the ceiling. At the rear (east end) of the third floor are two restrooms and the northeast corner fire stair.

### **Interior: 1953 Addition**

The current interior design of the trapezoidal-shaped addition to the S. J. Nissen Building dates largely from the 1980s and serves two purposes. The northern third provides a service core

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that includes, at the west end, an open stair atrium and the building's elevator; at the center, a pair of restrooms; and at the rear, an enclosure for the electrical system. The south two-thirds of the addition provides additional work space. The 1953 addition includes only a single basement, corresponding with the upper basement of the original building, and two floors. However, the stair and elevator atrium rises to the third floor of the original building and is covered by a hip-roofed glass enclosure that also opens to the roof deck of the 1953 addition.

The north third of the basement features an open area with a door at the west end to building's primary stair, segmental-arched double doors on the north brick wall into the original section of the building, a restroom and an electrical room at the northeast corner of the open area, and a sloped floor leading downward to the rear (east) exterior loading door. From the open area of the addition, a door on the south wall near the east end provides entrance to two guest rooms along the east wall. West of the guest rooms door, a second door on the south wall opens to a large exercise room. Adjacent to the exercise room on the west is a storage room.

The first floor contains the atrium stair and elevator lobby that is open to the third floor. It is entered through an arched opening (probably dating from ca. 1983) in the south brick wall of the main entrance vestibule (former freight elevator shaft) of the original building. The open steel stair with its polished brass handrail starts with the angle of the front (west) wall and from there winds its way to the upper floors or to the basement. The elevator is located on the east wall of the lobby, and recessed south of it is a paneled wood door leading to the rest of the addition. East of this door are two restrooms, an opening from the original building on the north wall, and an electrical closet. The entire south two-thirds of the first-floor addition is one large open space with regularly spaced square wood posts supporting ceiling beams. This space is currently used for photography shoots.

The second floor of the 1953 addition has a carpeted floor, a dropped acoustic ceiling, mostly drywall walls (one section has plywood paneling), and stained doors and woodwork. A pair of restrooms is on the north side of the addition. Immediately east of the restrooms, a door leads to an office that opens to a narrow room along its north side. South of the restrooms, a door opens to a central, L-shaped room, which opens to a suite of offices lining the perimeter of the addition on the west, south, and east sides. The second floor is currently used for storage.

### Alterations and Integrity

The primary changes to the S. J. Nissen Building over its 111-year history took place in 1953 and in the mid 1980s. In 1953, then-owner Kester Machinery Company built the two-story-plus-basement addition to the south side of the building. Lower in height than the original building, attached to only the west half of its south elevation, using similar materials, and angled back from the original façade line, the addition has had little adverse effect on the 1894-1895

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building. When the building was sold in 1983, its new owner converted it to offices. At this time the exterior paint and Kester signage was removed by sandblasting. At the same time, the crenellation at the top of the square elevator tower, which Kester had infilled, was restored. The wood stair that rose within the corner tower, deemed unsafe for continued use, was removed, and a secondary wood stair at the northeast (rear) corner of the building was replaced with a steel fire stair. It was probably also at this time that the freight elevator was removed and the patio was added to the rear of the building. Most of the drywall partitions within the building also date from this time. Since 2003, many of these partitions have been removed by the current owner to achieve the wide-open flexibility of the original industrial spaces. Other lesser changes have been mentioned previously in the description.

Despite these changes, and even with the detrimental sandblasting of the 1980s, the S. J. Nissen Building retains to a remarkable degree the original features of both its exterior and interior that have defined its significant architectural character. Thus, as a whole, it retains historic integrity in terms of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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### SIGNIFICANCE

#### Summary

Industrial development in Winston-Salem, North Carolina exploded during the 1880s and continued at an especially fast pace through the 1920s. After multiple entrepreneurs began to take advantage of the region's rich cultivation of tobacco and the arrival of rail lines to the city, tobacco manufacturing quickly became the predominant industry, and R. J. Reynolds soon became its master. Other industries also boomed, including textile, furniture, and wagon manufacturing. The production of wagons had been an important early industry in Forsyth County, with three wagon works beginning in the 1830s in the Waughtown community. Perhaps the most prominent of these, and certainly the most prolific, were the various wagon works operated by the Nissen family. Patriarch John Phillip Nissen began the production of wagons in 1834, and five of his sons followed him into the business, branching out into companies of their own. His youngest son, Samuel Jacob Nissen (1859-1943), followed suit, but cast his lot with the rapidly growing tobacco manufacturing district in Winston. Wagons had always been essential to agricultural pursuits, but the tobacco industry was completely dependent on them until trucks began to replace wagons in the 1910s.

On October 23, 1890, S. J. Nissen purchased a strategically located lot on the corner of East Third Street and Depot Street (now Patterson Avenue) that was sandwiched between the converging lines of the North Western North Carolina Railroad and the Roanoke and Southern Railroad near the freight depots of both. In 1895 he completed a three-story-with-two-basement, load-bearing brick building with open interior spaces supported on each floor by a center row of heavy wood posts. He used the building as a wagon making and repair shop and a carriage repository, and for more than two decades Nissen's business was closely tied to the needs of the surrounding tobacco industry while also serving others. By the end of the 1920s, the truck had overtaken the wagon as the primary mode of transportation for all manufactured goods, and in 1929 Nissen sold the property.

Since 1929, the building has changed hands many times, but the longest subsequent ownership and use was by Kester Machinery Company, from 1941 through 1970. Kester Machinery was a wholesale distributor of industrial equipment and mill supplies, and in response to the growth of the company, it built a two-story-with-basement brick addition to the south side of the original building in 1953. The addition does not significantly detract from the integrity of Nissen's 1895 building.

Today the 112-year-old S. J. Nissen Building is one of only two surviving buildings, and the only one dating from the nineteenth century, associated with the important wagon building and repairing industry that was a significant part of Winston-Salem's economy during the

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nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is also a rare nineteenth-century reminder of the large and bustling center of tobacco manufacturing and related industries that once filled the blocks just east of Winston-Salem's commercial and governmental center. Because of its local industrial significance, the S. J. Nissen Building meets Criterion A for listing in the National Register.

The S. J. Nissen Building also meets National Register Criterion C for its local architectural significance. The building exhibits the standard mill construction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and is architecturally distinctive in Winston-Salem. Its noteworthy crenellated towers and strong use of rhythmic round-arched windows give it the appearance of a medieval Romanesque fortress that make it stand out from all other industrial buildings in the city.

The period of significance for the S. J. Nissen Building spans the years from its construction in 1895 to 1929. At that point, with his business greatly diminished due to the growth of the trucking industry, Nissen sold the building and it ceased its association with the wagon industry.

### Historical Background and Industry Context

**Note: Winston and Salem were not officially joined until 1913. However, for several decades prior to that time, the names of the towns were frequently linked in conversation and in writing. For ease of discussion in this nomination, the name "Winston-Salem" may be used when the time under consideration pre-dates 1913.**

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the expansion of rail lines in North Carolina had a tremendous effect on the growth of many towns across the state. This was certainly true for the towns of Winston and Salem and the surrounding communities in Forsyth County. The July 28, 1873, completion of the Salem Branch line of the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad between Greensboro and Winston-Salem changed the pair of towns forever. Although only twenty-eight miles long, the branch connected in Greensboro with the Richmond and Danville system, thereby establishing a significantly wider market for the variety of goods produced in Forsyth County. According to the editor of a Winston-Salem newspaper writing in 1885, its completion "ushered in a period of prosperity to Winston that nothing else could have produced, and the facilities that this railway have [*sic*] given our manufacturers and tobacco dealers have proved the very life-blood of the Twin-City" (Tilley, 31).

In burgeoning Winston-Salem, the tobacco industry began its rise to ascendancy in the city's economy during the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries. The railroad also facilitated prosperity in numerous other industries. One of these was the wagon making industry

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which, by the end of the nineteenth century, could boast more than ten firms that manufactured wagons, carts, buggies, coaches, and/or carriages. The Nissen family, based in the Waughtown community and with members operating several firms, was the leader of this industry in Forsyth County. Among others who manufactured wagons were S. W. Farrabee, Spagh Brothers, J. A. White and Son, F. C. Meinung, W. A. Stoltz, Pendry and Phillips, B. Y. Clark, W. B. Longworth, and J. C. Spach (City Directory, 1894-1895; State Board of Agriculture).

John Phillip Nissen established the Nissen Wagon Works in Waughtown in 1834. Nissen's factory was enlarged in the mid-nineteenth and continued to grow thereafter. It became known nationally for its superior wagons. By the mid 1870s the wagon works was spread over a 600-acre tract and employed about one hundred men. When John Phillip Nissen died in 1874, his sons, George Elias and William M., inherited the business. William Nissen bought George's interest in 1909 and changed the name of the business to Nissen Wagon Company. However, in 1917, the plant was listed as George E. Nissen and Company. In 1919 the industrial complex was struck by fire, and only the ca. 1880 brick smokestack survived. A large, new brick building was erected immediately thereafter and still stands, although with three large metal additions dating from ca. 1955-ca. 1980. Other sons of John Phillip Nissen were also involved in wagon making. John Israel Nissen opened the J. I. Nissen Wagon Works just east of the Nissen Wagon Company during the late nineteenth century. In 1910 he sold his company to his younger brother, Christian Francis Nissen, who manufactured wagons under his own name until consolidating later in the same year with the Nissen Wagon Company, owned by his brother, William. A successful relationship developed between the wagon makers and tobacco manufacturers in the area. In fact, according to Nannie M. Tilley in *The Bright-Tobacco Industry, 1860-1929*, "so essential were the Nissen wagons in marketing tobacco that they have been deemed a decisive factor in the development of the tobacco industry through the entire Piedmont area" (Fries et al., 194; Wyatt, Waughtown-Belview Historic District, Section 7, pp. 9, 184 and Section 8, pp. 4-5, 10).

Thus, it is not surprising that Samuel Jacob Nissen (1859-1943), the youngest son of John Phillip and Mary Vawter Nissen, developed direct ties to the tobacco industry. In 1884 he was listed as an employee of George E. Nissen and Company, but in 1889-1890, he was listed as a tobacco manufacturer in Waughtown. Apparently, this was a short-lived venture (*Journal and Sentinel*, December 26, 1943; 1884 *City Directory of Greensboro, Winston and Salem*; *Winston-Salem City Directory*, 1889-1890). However, when S. J. Nissen decided to open his own branch of the wagon business, he located his business in the rapidly growing tobacco manufacturing district in Winston, where more than thirty tobacco factories were in operation at the close of the 1880s. Another significant draw to Winston was the arrival, in 1889, of the Roanoke and Southern Railway. By 1891 crucial connections on this rail line had been completed to the



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tobacco cities of Danville and Richmond, Virginia, allowing Winston-Salem manufacturers to remain key players in the growing tobacco industry (Phillips and Taylor, Section 8, pp. 7-8).

On October 3, 1890, S. J. Nissen purchased a strategically located tract in Winston from Ansalom and Rebecca Reed. Measuring 100 feet along the east side of Depot Street (Patterson Avenue) and 261  $\frac{3}{4}$  feet along the south side of East Third Street, it was sandwiched between the converging lines of the North Western North Carolina (later Southern) Railroad on the west and the Roanoke and Southern (later Norfolk and Western) Railroad on the east and near the freight depots of both rail lines (Deed Book 35, p. 65; Sanborn Maps, 1890, 1895, 1912).

Apparently Nissen waited several years before beginning construction on his building. In the yearly memorabilia entry written by Moravian Bishop Edward Rondthaler at the end of 1894, he mentions “the large wagon depository erected by the Nissen firm.” However, the building’s completion did not come until the summer of 1895. The Sanborn Insurance Company map for April, 1895, illustrates the building but indicates that it had not been completed at that time, and that it was to be occupied by S. J. Nissen Wagons, Carriages, and Repair Shop. Then, in the June 6, 1895, issue and continuing through the July issues of *The Union Republican*, Nissen advertised his new business on the front page. It proclaimed, “The best buggies and phaetons you will find at S. J. Nissen’s New Repository. He has also the best repair shop for all kinds of repairing in the state. Call and see him near Depot, Winston, N. C.” That summer was a busy time for Nissen, for in addition to completing construction of his building and opening a new business, he married Dora E. Clodfelter on July 3, 1895 (Rondthaler, 131; Sanborn Map, 1895; *Union Republican*, June 6, 1895 and following through July; *Journal and Sentinel*, December 26, 1943).

The advertisement in *The Union Republican* and the recording on the 1895 Sanborn map illustrate one of the questions surrounding Nissen’s building, i.e., how it was used. Through its years of operation, from 1895 to 1929, it was called many similar, but different, names. In addition to S. J. Nissen Wagons, Carriages, and Repair Shop, and S. J. Nissen’s New Repository (which conducted repairs and sold buggies and phaetons), the business was also called S. J. Nissen Carriage Repository and Repair Shop, S. J. Nissen Wagon Works, and S. J. Nissen Wagon Works, Carriage Repository, and Repair Shop. Deeds subsequent to Nissen’s ownership refer to the property as both the S. J. Nissen Factory Lot and the Old S. J. Nissen Plant. (Interestingly, the northeast corner of the property, later referred to as Lot A, was described as the James Timlic Wash-Pit Property. What the wash pit was is not clear.) It would seem from this that multiple related functions took place in the building, but that repair, storage, and sales were among the top uses. Sanborn maps are helpful in gaining a better understanding of how the building functioned. On the maps of 1900, 1907, and 1912, the five levels of the building were listed as four floors and a basement. In those years, the “basement” (current lower basement) housed a blacksmith shop, the “first floor” (current upper basement) was reserved for wood

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working activities, the “second” and “fourth” floors (current first and third floors) were used as a repository, and the “third floor” (current second floor) was used for painting. On the 1917 map, the five building levels were listed as three floors, a basement, and a sub-basement. In that year the usage of the different floors remained largely the same, except that the first floor (then and now) was used as a show room, and only the third floor (then and now) was used to house stock (the repository) (*Union Republican*, June 6-July 1895; Sanborn Maps, 1900, 1907, 1912, 1917; Deed Book 447, p. 222 et al.).

When Nissen’s building was constructed, its immediate environment included not only the railroad tracks and depots, but also several tobacco factories and leaf houses, and to the south and east, rows of small, one-story frame houses that were labeled on Sanborn maps as “Negro Tenements.” The tenements just south of Nissen’s building remained at least until 1912; by 1917, however, they had been replaced by a frame shed and a long, open lumber shed (Sanborn Maps, 1895, 1900, 1907, 1912, 1917).

Henry Roan, an early partner of R. J. Reynolds in his tobacco business, was also a partner in S. J. Nissen’s venture during the early years of the twentieth century. While neither deeds nor Sanborn maps connect Henry Roan’s name with Nissen’s business, city directories for 1902-1903, 1904-1905, and 1906 list S. J. Nissen and Henry Roan (Nissen and Roan) as partners in the wagon manufacturing and repairing business. According to Frank V. Tursi’s *Winston-Salem: A History*, the S. J. Nissen Company maintained a steady business repairing wagons for R. J. Reynolds and other tobacco manufacturers. Nissen’s association with Henry Roan likely helped him gain Reynolds as a client. Tobacco manufacturers relied on wagons to transport leaf tobacco from the auction sales houses to the manufacturing plants, and keeping the wagons in good repair was essential. Nissen’s shop was not only in the right location to provide these services, but he also had built an improved dray that permitted a load of three hogsheads of tobacco instead of the two hogsheads that ordinary drays could carry. (Tilley, 142, 574, 577; City Directory, 1902-1903, 1904-1905, 1906, 1908; Tursi, 169).

During the late nineteenth century and first two decades of the twentieth century, business was booming for both tobacco manufacturing and wagon sales and repair. As the twentieth century moved forward, the tobacco industry continued to prosper, but the wagon business declined as automobiles and trucks became more popular and practical. Until 1911, there had been a total reliance by the R. J. Reynolds Company on horse-drawn vehicles. In 1913, however, the company purchased its first motor truck. By the end of the 1920s, the truck had overtaken the wagon as the primary mode of transportation for all manufactured goods. On May 10, 1929, S. J. and Dora E. Nissen sold the S. J. Nissen Building and its associated tract to Linville K. Martin. When Samuel Jacob Nissen died at the age of eighty-four on Christmas day, 1943, his obituary identified him as the “last surviving member of the family who founded

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Nissen Wagon Works” (Tilley, 142; Wyatt, Waughtown-Belview Historic District, Section 8, p. 24; Deed Book 314, p. 55; *Journal and Sentinel*, December 26, 1943.)

Between 1929 and 1941, the building changed hands several times. During these years various businesses occupied all or part of the building, including Frank A. Crews, Blacksmith, and B & B Transfer Company. It was also used for warehouse storage (City Directory, 1936, 1940, 1941; Deed Book 342, p. 91; Deed Book 359, p. 70; Deed Book 411, pp. 152-153; Deed Book 447, p. 222; *Winston-Salem Journal*, May 6, 1962).

In 1941, Kester Realty Company purchased the property, and for the next quarter century the building was home to Kester Machinery Company. A Winston-Salem firm that long predated the occupancy of the S. J. Nissen Building, Kester Machinery Company was a wholesale distributorship of large and small industrial equipment and mill supplies. In 1953, Kester built a two-story-with-basement addition to the original building. The company remained at this location until 1968, when it moved to a new facility nearby (Deed Book 479, p. 313; *Winston-Salem Journal*, May 6, 1962; *Twin City Sentinel*, January 28, 1980).

In 1970, Kester Realty Company sold the property to the Winston-Salem Goodwill Industries Rehabilitation Center, which occupied the building for several years before selling it to the Snow family who, in turn, sold it in 1983 to W. David Shannon (Deed Book 1006, p. 727; Deed Book 1179, p. 630; Deed Book 1328, p. 629).

David Shannon converted the building to office use, and in doing so, made the most alterations to the building since its original construction. He removed signage that Kester Machinery Company had painted on the exterior. He restored the south tower crenellation, previously filled in by Kester. He converted the freight entrance on the facade to the primary pedestrian entrance and the former pedestrian entrance to a window. Among other changes were the removal of the wood stair in the northwest corner tower, the addition of a fire-rated stair in the northeast corner, and the addition of sheetrock partitioned offices to several floors (Shannon Interview).

The present owners, Black Horse, LLC purchased the property from Wagonworks, LLC (David Shannon) on February 28, 2003. They removed many of the office cubicles and have used the building as their photography studio and residence (Deed Book 2327, p. 3671).

Today the 112-year-old S. J. Nissen Building is one of only two surviving buildings, and the only one dating from the nineteenth century, associated with the important wagon building and repairing industry that was a significant part of Winston-Salem’s economy during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The 1919 rebuilding of the Nissen Wagon Works in Waughtown and the 1895 S. J. Nissen Building were both part of the Nissen family wagon empire that began in 1834. The S. J. Nissen Building is also a rare nineteenth-century reminder, along with the nearby ca. 1890 W. F Smith and Sons Leaf House and the ca. 1895 Brown Brothers Tobacco Company building, of the large and bustling center of tobacco manufacturing

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and related industries that once filled the blocks just east of Winston-Salem's commercial and governmental downtown. Although no longer associated with either the wagon or the tobacco industries, the building remains well-preserved and in active use.

### Architecture Context

The 1880s through the 1920s, in particular, were years of heavy industrial development in Winston-Salem. Tobacco quickly became the predominant industry, but textiles, an important early industry in Salem, also played a continued major role in the local economy. Furniture, wagon, and other industries made significant contributions to the industrial character of the city as well. By the 1890s, there were over thirty tobacco companies in Winston. The success of the tobacco industry led to the construction of many new buildings, and as older buildings became outmoded, they were replaced by more modern factories. To illustrate the extent of this industrial development, the factory buildings of the leader of the tobacco industry, R. J. Reynolds, soon occupied a ten-block area east of Main Street in downtown Winston-Salem. A massive increase in production after the turn of the twentieth century resulted in an extensive building campaign; between 1900 and 1930, Reynolds erected or built significant additions to twenty-nine buildings. Along with the tobacco factories came various support buildings, such as tobacco leaf houses and the S. J. Nissen wagon building and repair shop. Meanwhile, on the northwest side of Salem, the Fries family built the Arista Cotton Mills in 1880 as an addition to the 1836 Salem Cotton Manufacturing Company building. Nearby, another textile factory, Maline Mills (later Indera Mills), was built around 1900. Elsewhere in town, various branches of the Hanes family built other textile mills (Wyatt, Downtown Winston-Salem Tobacco District Study List Application; Taylor, 55, 218-219).

Many of Winston-Salem's industrial buildings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been destroyed. However, period photographs along with those buildings that do survive reveal the physical appearance of these load-bearing masonry structures. Typically they were rectangular in form, from two to five stories tall, and had sash windows with segmental-arched heads. Most of the buildings, regardless of the type of industry, utilized one of three types of roof designs--low gabled or flat, stepped-parapet gable ends, and mansard--that distinguished their exteriors.

Most of the surviving buildings of the period have a low-gable or flat roof with heavy, shaped rafter ends. Examples of these include the 1880 Arista Cotton Mills (NR 1977) on Brookstown Avenue, the ca. 1898 Fries Power Company Transformer Building bounded by Brookstown, Wachovia, and South Marshall streets, the ca. 1900 Maline/Indera Mills (NR 1999) at the corner of South Marshall and Wachovia streets, the 1919 Nissen Wagon Works on Waughtown Street (NR 2005 as part of the Waughtown-Belview Historic District), and the ca.

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1906 Chatham Manufacturing Company mill on Chatham Road. It should be noted that the Arista Cotton Mills was an addition to the 1836 Salem Cotton Manufacturing Company building which, in the tradition of the early New England cotton mills and the earliest cotton mills in North Carolina, has a monitor roof (although now only half of it can be seen).

The early tobacco leaf houses, in particular, had gable roofs with stepped-parapet gable ends. None of these survive. As the oldest surviving tobacco manufacturing building in Winston-Salem, the 1890 W. F. Smith and Sons Tobacco Factory (NR 1978) on Fourth Street exhibits a prominent stepped-parapet gable end. Among other examples that no longer survive were the 1883 Phohl and Stockton Tobacco Warehouse, the late-nineteenth-century George E. Nissen Company Wagonworks, and the ca. 1900 Brown and Williamson Tobacco Factory (Brownlee, 69, 70, 104, 107).

Winston-Salem had a surprising number of industrial buildings of the period with mansard roofs. The only surviving example, however, is the ca. 1895 Brown Brothers Tobacco Company building (NR 1978) at the corner of Fourth and Chestnut streets. Among other examples that do not survive were the ca. 1900 Forsyth Chair Company building, the late-nineteenth-century Jenkins Brothers Shoe Factory, the late-nineteenth-century Spach Brothers Wagon Works, and the ca. 1900 P. H. Hanes Knitting Company building (Brownlee, 40, 83, 113, 126).

One industrial building from the period that stands apart from those in the above three design categories is the Hanes Hosiery Mill #1/Shamrock Mills (NR 1978), built in 1911 at the northwest corner of Marshall and Second streets. It is now commonly known as the Sawtooth Building, because its roof exhibits a distinctive sawtooth shape. The vertical north side of each "tooth" is fronted with windows, allowing significantly more natural light to the interior work spaces.

As the twentieth century progressed, a new form of industrial building began to supersede the earlier brick buildings. The R. J. Reynolds Company, in particular, made heavy use of reinforced concrete and glass blocks in its new buildings. At least four factories demonstrating this construction method were erected between 1916 and 1926. In 1937 Reynolds went a step farther: its Building #91 uses a concrete structure, but the exterior walls are sheathed entirely in glass (Wyatt, Downtown Winston-Salem Tobacco District Study List Application).

The S. J. Nissen Building is one of the few industrial buildings in Winston-Salem that survives from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and is one of only five known to pre-date 1900. Completed in 1895, the S. J. Nissen Building reflects Winston-Salem's industrial buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in many ways. It possesses the typical mill construction of the period with load-bearing masonry walls and open interior spaces with a central row of heavy wood support posts. It is rectangular in form, several stories in height (three with two basements), has sash windows with segmental-arched heads, and a low

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gable roof hidden by parapets on three sides. While it is typical of its period in these ways, the S. J. Nissen Building is architecturally noteworthy among Winston-Salem's industrial buildings. Its distinctive crenellated towers and strong use of rhythmic round-arched windows (along with segmental-arched and rectangular windows) give the Nissen building the appearance of a medieval Romanesque fortress and make it stand out from all other industrial buildings in the city.

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### **GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

#### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the nominated property is defined as Lots 103 and A of Tax Block 498, Winston Township, Forsyth County, North Carolina.

#### **Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the nominated property encompasses a tract of approximately one-half acre that constitutes the historic and current property associated with the S. J. Nissen Building.

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### PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information for #1-5 applies to all nomination photographs:

- 1) S. J. Nissen Building
- 2) Winston-Salem, Forsyth County, North Carolina
- 3) Laura A. W. Phillips
- 4) April 2006
- 5) North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh
- 6-7) A: Overall, view to SE  
B: Façade of 1895 building, view to E  
C: 1953 addition, view to NE  
D: Overall rear and setting relative to downtown commercial buildings, view to W  
E: North elevation and rear of 1895 building, view to SW  
F: SE corner of 1895 building and setting relative to 19<sup>th</sup> century tobacco buildings, view to N  
G: Upper basement, 1895 building, showing structural system, wide-arched doors, and former elevator shaft, view to SW  
H: First floor, 1895 building, showing structural system and flooring, view to NE  
I: Third floor, 1895 building, showing interior treatment of former stair tower and buttressing, view to NW  
J: Third floor, 1895 building, showing original structure and 1980s insertion of office spaces, view to W