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## Greensboro Central Business District

### Architectural Survey Update

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Prepared by hmwPreservation, 2018

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## PROJECT HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

In 2018, the City of Greensboro received a Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant from the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (NC-HPO) and contracted with hmwPreservation to undertake an architectural survey update of historic resources in the central business district (Figure 1).

Greensboro's Central Business District extends roughly from Smith Street on the north, where it is bounded by residential development, to Whittington Street on the south, including a number of significant industrial buildings near the railroad tracks. It extends west to Spring Street, where it is bounded in part by the campus of Greensboro College, and east to Murrow Boulevard, a six-lane divided road with commercial and residential development to its east. The survey was focused within these rough boundaries.

Many historic properties in and around the survey area were first surveyed by Ruth Little-Stokes in 1975. This survey included all surviving pre-1879 buildings, as well as representative examples from 1880 through the 1930s, and was published by the City of Greensboro in *An Inventory of Historic Architecture: Greensboro, N.C.*, in 1976. The Downtown Greensboro Historic District was surveyed 1979-1980 by Ray Manieri of the Old Greensborough Preservation Society in preparation for listing to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Marvin Brown conducted a survey update in the early 1980s and included residential, commercial, and industrial buildings constructed prior to 1945. This survey was published by Preservation Greensboro, Inc., in *Greensboro: An Architectural Record* in 1995. In 2004, the Downtown Greensboro Historic District was updated to extend the period of significance from 1930 to 1950.

The primary objective for this project was to update the existing survey data for the Downtown Greensboro Historic District, to document significant resources adjacent to the historic district for consideration for a future historic district expansion, and to document additional significant or representative commercial properties within the Central Business District constructed between 1937 and 1975.



Figure 1: Map of Greensboro Central Business District with National Register Historic Districts outlined in yellow.

## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

The Greensboro Central Business District Architectural Survey Update focused on the documentation of historic resources within the Downtown Greensboro National Register Historic District as well as the documentation of additional resources within the Central Business District, but outside the historic district. Heather Slane served as the principal investigator, and field and research assistance was provided by Cheri Szcodronski.

A planning phase took place in December 2017, during which surveyors identified approximately 100 resources outside the National Register historic district that warranted documentation. Using field maps and a list compiled by the City of Greensboro prioritizing approximately 260 properties for recordation, the surveyors conducted a windshield survey that established the 100 properties to be intensively surveyed. Surveyors prioritized buildings with high material integrity and interesting or unique design elements, in proximity to the Elm Street commercial corridor, and historically used for commercial, industrial, or institutional purposes. Several properties had been previously surveyed, either individually or with Multiple Property Documentation Forms, and some were already on the North Carolina Study List. Properties already listed in the National Register (outside the Downtown Greensboro National Register Historic District) or those recently placed on the state Study List were not surveyed.

Fieldwork took place from January 2018 through April 2018, during which time surveyors verified the existence of approximately 115 previously surveyed resources within the boundary of the Downtown Greensboro National Register Historic District and comprehensively resurveyed those properties with updated field survey forms, written descriptions, and digital photographs. Additionally, approximately 100 properties identified during the planning phase were documented with field survey forms, brief written descriptions, and photos.

Basic archival research, including the examination of plats, historic newspapers, Sanborn maps, city directories, and additional property records, was carried out as appropriate to provide additional data for newly surveyed properties. Interviews were conducted as feasible, and special notation was made of properties that appeared potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, including potential expansion of the Downtown Greensboro National Register Historic District.

Material gathered during fieldwork and research was used to update and fully populate database records and paper survey files. Written summaries were prepared for all surveyed properties, and changes to previously surveyed properties were noted as appropriate in the summaries, which incorporated the two previous National Register inventories.

### **Database**

Existing paper survey files and National Register documentation were used to code all previously surveyed buildings as No Change, Materially Altered, Significantly Altered, Rehabilitated, Deteriorated, or Demolished. Written entries from the 1982 National Register nomination and the 2004 Additional Documentation were scanned, and the content was pasted into the written summary field of each database record. The HPO database was fully populated for each property, summaries of previously recorded properties were updated, and report forms were generated from the database for inclusion in the paper survey files. A digital

copy of the database was presented to both the NC-HPO and staff of the Greensboro Historic Preservation Commission.

### **Photographs**

Digital survey photos were taken from the public right-of-way using a digital SLR camera. Photos of both primary and secondary resources were labeled according to the NC-HPO guidelines, and contact sheets were printed for inclusion in the paper survey files. A DVD of all labeled survey photos was prepared for the NC-HPO and staff of the Greensboro Historic Preservation Commission.

### **Paper Files**

Paper files for each surveyed property included the field survey notes, printed contact sheets, and printed database records, as well as any related notes or documentation compiled during the project.

### **Maps**

Digital maps were used during the planning phase and field survey to identify the boundaries of the Downtown Greensboro National Register Historic District and to locate new properties to be surveyed. These maps, provided by the City of Greensboro, included the boundaries of the existing historic district, street names, address points, and building footprints.

### **Survey Report**

Upon completion of the field survey and database records, this written report was prepared. It outlines the project methodology, summarizes changes to the Downtown Greensboro National Register Historic District, and includes recommendations for further study. The methodology summarizes the sources used, properties surveyed, and criteria considered for selecting buildings for new survey. The report also outlines changes to the Downtown Greensboro National Register Historic District since 2004, including demolition, deterioration, and new construction, using maps to illustrate trends in these activities. It includes additional historic and architectural context for commercial development in Greensboro, specifically for the 1937-1975 period. The consultant presented the findings of the survey to the Greensboro Historic Preservation Commission at their August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 meeting in Greensboro.

### **Study List Recommendations**

Included within this survey report is a list of properties considered by the consultant to be eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places, specifically those properties that appear to have exceptional historic and/or architectural significance and a high level of material integrity. The report explains why each property was selected. The consultant will present these properties to the North Carolina National Register Advisory Committee for consideration for placement on the NC-HPO National Register Study List.

# HISTORIC CONTEXT

## Early Greensboro, 1751-1945

Guilford County attracted its first settlers in the mid-eighteenth century and was carved out of Orange and Rowan counties in 1771. Greensboro, the county seat, was established in 1808 and named for General Nathaniel Greene.<sup>1</sup> Initially, the city encompassed approximately forty-two acres and was laid out in a grid with its center at the intersection of Elm and Market streets. While the first railroad arrived in 1858, industrial growth was temporarily impeded soon after by the Civil War.<sup>2</sup> After the close of the war and subsequent economic recovery, the expansion of the railroads in the 1880s, and the establishment of a major railway hub in Greensboro in 1895, the city became a center of manufacturing, commerce, and education in which commercial and industrial development was focused along South Elm Street.<sup>3</sup> By the late nineteenth century, as much as seventy percent of freight moving by rail in North Carolina was taken through Greensboro.<sup>4</sup>

Known as “the Gate City to the Piedmont,” Greensboro’s population grew quickly in the early twentieth century, and it has been among North Carolina’s largest cities since the 1930s.<sup>5</sup> During the early decades of the twentieth century, the downtown expanded north along Elm Street, away from the railroad tracks, with the construction of larger and grander buildings. Unfortunately, this rapid growth resulted in the loss of many of the earliest residential, commercial, and industrial buildings in the downtown core.<sup>6</sup>



Figure 2: Blue Bell Manufacturing Company (GF8969) 620 South Elm Street, Greensboro

The textile industry has been important to North Carolina through much of the state’s history, but aided by an influx of northern capital in the late-nineteenth century, North Carolina’s textiles became an important part of the national economy.<sup>7</sup> From 1900-1925, North Carolina ranked first in the nation for cotton goods and first in the South for all knit goods, producing primarily denim, damask, towels, underclothes, hosiery, yarns, blankets, and men’s work clothes.<sup>8</sup> Through much of the twentieth century, Greensboro served as a prominent textile manufacturing center, and many residents came

<sup>1</sup> Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina*

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Little-Stokes, *An Inventory of Historic Architecture: Greensboro, NC* (Greensboro, NC: City of Greensboro and Division of Archives and History, NC Department of Cultural Resources, 1976), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Bishir and Southern, 322-326; Marvin Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record* (Greensboro, NC: Preservation Greensboro, Inc., 1995), 118.

<sup>4</sup> Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *The History of a Southern State: North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 516-517.

<sup>5</sup> Bishir and Southern, 322-326.

<sup>6</sup> Brown, 117.

<sup>7</sup> Lefler and Newsome, 508-509.

<sup>8</sup> Lefler and Newsome, 581-582, 632.

to the city to work in the textile mills. The Cone Mills Corporation cotton mill opened in 1896, followed by subsidiaries Revolution Mill in 1900 and White Oak Mill in 1902.<sup>9</sup> In 1904, Hudson Overall Company formed and operated from the loft above Coe Brothers Grocery at 513 South Elm Street (GF0082). The company was renamed Blue Bell Overall Company in 1919 and relocated its plant to 620 South Elm Street (GF8969). Blue Bell merged with Big Ben Manufacturing in 1926 and opened a second plant in the former Ebroclo Shirt Company Building at 1001 South Elm Street by 1938 (GF9017). The company acquired Casey Jones Company, and with it the Wrangler brand name, in 1943.<sup>10</sup> Burlington Industries moved its headquarters to Greensboro in 1935, becoming one of the city's largest employers.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 3: Ebroclo Shirt Company (GF9017)  
1001 South Elm Street, Greensboro

### Modern Greensboro, 1945-1975

Greensboro continued to grow substantially after the Second World War as its businesses, industries, and educational facilities flourished. The textile industry remained strong in Greensboro through mid-century. In 1946, Blue Bell Overall Company (which merged with VF Company in 1986) started producing Wrangler Jeans, which were designed specifically for rodeo cowboys. The company added a pattern department at 611 South Elm Street (GF9009) in 1950 and moved its main office to 335 Church Court (GF9087) in 1958.<sup>12</sup> In 1963, Texfi Industries established a plant in Greensboro specializing in textured-filament yarn.<sup>13</sup> Other industries included Western Electric, which opened a coiled wire plant in the old Pamona cotton mill on the west side of the city in 1951. While tobacco was never as prominent an industry in Greensboro as it was in nearby Winston-Salem and Durham, Lorillard Tobacco opened a facility on East Market Street in 1955 and grew to one the city's largest employers by the mid-1970s.<sup>14</sup>



Figure 4: Blue Bell Inc. Company (GF9087)  
335 Church Court, Greensboro

The company added a pattern department at 611 South Elm Street (GF9009) in 1950 and moved its main office to 335 Church Court (GF9087) in 1958.<sup>12</sup> In 1963, Texfi Industries established a plant in Greensboro specializing in textured-filament yarn.<sup>13</sup> Other industries included Western Electric, which opened a coiled wire plant in the old Pamona cotton mill on the west side of the city in 1951. While tobacco was never as prominent an industry in Greensboro as it was in nearby Winston-Salem and Durham, Lorillard Tobacco opened a facility on East Market Street in 1955 and grew to one the city's largest employers by the mid-1970s.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Helen Snow and Tim Cole, "Greensboro," *NCpedia*, [www.ncpedia.org/geography/greensboro](http://www.ncpedia.org/geography/greensboro) (accessed March 2018); Chris Gigley, "Gate City Turns 200," Guilford File, Vertical File, Greensboro Public Library, Greensboro, NC.

<sup>10</sup> "Our History," *Wrangler*, <https://www.wrangler.com/about/history.html> (accessed June 2018).

<sup>11</sup> Gayle Hicks Fripp, *Greensboro: A Chosen Center* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1982), 135; George W. Troxler, "Burlington Industries," *NCpedia*, [www.ncpedia.org/burlington-industries](http://www.ncpedia.org/burlington-industries) (accessed April 2018).

<sup>12</sup> The Blue Bell building at 335 Church Court was expanded after the merger with VF Corporation. The addition is 400 North Elm Street and was built between 1993 and 1998.

<sup>13</sup> Fripp, 135; Troxler, "Burlington Industries,"; Gigley, "Gate City Turns 200."

<sup>14</sup> Snow and Cole, "Greensboro,"; Fripp, 135-136.

By midcentury, businesses in downtown Greensboro included drugstores, department stores, hardware stores, restaurants, and other specialty stores. A number of office buildings were also erected in downtown Greensboro in the early twentieth century. Insurance companies were major employers and occupied some of the largest buildings. Jefferson Standard Insurance Company formed in 1912 when Security Life Insurance Company, Jefferson Life Insurance Company, and Greensboro Life Insurance Company merged. The company erected its landmark building in the 100 block of North Elm Street in 1922-1923. In 1968, Jefferson Standard Insurance Company merged with Pilot Life Insurance Company and Jefferson Standard Broadcasting Company to become the Jefferson-Pilot Corporation.<sup>15</sup> The company expanded their physical presence in downtown Greensboro through significant additions to their building in 1974 and 1991.

Hospitals and medical facilities expanded in the twentieth century and became significant employers in the city. Four hospitals were built in Greensboro between 1945 and 1980, including Wesley Long Hospital in West Greensboro, Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital north of downtown, Central Carolina Convalescent Hospital east of town, and L. Richardson Memorial Hospital southeast of downtown. Wesley Long Hospital was established in 1917 in a house in the 300 block of North Elm Street and was expanded several times in the 1930s and 1940s. By the 1950s, the hospital had outgrown its downtown location and constructed a new modern facility west of downtown that opened in 1960. By 1973, nearly 600 people were employed at the hospital.<sup>16</sup> Cone Hospital was constructed in 1953 and named for textile magnate Moses H. Cone. The hospital employed 231 people upon its opening and grew to employ over 12,000 people by the twenty-first century.<sup>17</sup> While the hospitals were removed from downtown by mid-century, a medical office building was constructed on North Church Street in 1953 that housed dental and prosthetic companies. Central Carolina Convalescent Hospital, a polio hospital, was built near the intersection of East Bessemer Avenue and Huffine Mill Road in 1948. Although segregation was in full practice during this time, the desperate need to contain the polio epidemic trumped racial concerns, and the hospital operated as an integrated facility. After participating in the 1954 trials of the experimental Salk vaccine, which ended the polio epidemic, the hospital was no longer necessary. In 1958, it was renamed the Central Carolina Rehabilitation Hospital, providing physical, occupational, and speech therapy services, as well as psychological testing. The hospital closed in 1961, and in 1965 was reopened temporarily as Evergreens Nursing Home.<sup>18</sup> The L. Richardson Memorial Hospital



Figure 5: Medical Office Building (GF9088)  
307 North Church Street, Greensboro

By 1973, nearly 600 people were employed at the hospital.<sup>16</sup> Cone Hospital was constructed in 1953 and named for textile magnate Moses H. Cone. The hospital employed 231 people upon its opening and grew to employ over 12,000 people by the twenty-first century.<sup>17</sup> While the hospitals were removed from downtown by mid-century, a medical office building was constructed on North Church Street in 1953 that housed dental and prosthetic companies. Central Carolina Convalescent Hospital, a polio hospital, was built near the intersection of East Bessemer Avenue and Huffine Mill Road in 1948. Although segregation was in full practice during this time, the desperate need to contain the polio epidemic trumped racial concerns, and the hospital operated as an integrated facility. After participating in the 1954 trials of the experimental Salk vaccine, which ended the polio epidemic, the hospital was no longer necessary. In 1958, it was renamed the Central Carolina Rehabilitation Hospital, providing physical, occupational, and speech therapy services, as well as psychological testing. The hospital closed in 1961, and in 1965 was reopened temporarily as Evergreens Nursing Home.<sup>18</sup> The L. Richardson Memorial Hospital

<sup>15</sup> Lefler and Newsome, 585-586; Alexander R. Stoesen, "Jefferson-Pilot Corporation," *NCpedia*, [www.ncpedia.org/jefferson-pilot-corporation](http://www.ncpedia.org/jefferson-pilot-corporation) (accessed April 2018).

<sup>16</sup> "Celebrating 100 Years of Caring: Cone Health, Wesley Long Hospital," *Cone Health*, <https://www.conehealth.com/app/files/public/8067/Wesley-Long-100-Book.pdf> (accessed June 2018).

<sup>17</sup> "History of Cone Health," *Cone Health*, <https://www.conehealth.com/about-us/history> (accessed June 2018).

<sup>18</sup> Robert L. Phillips, *History of the Hospitals in Greensboro, North Carolina* (Greensboro, NC: The Printworks, 1966), 62-70; Jordan Green, "1948 Polio Epidemic," *Yes! Weekly*, April 1, 2008, <http://yesweekly.com/1948-Polio-Epidemic-a9124> (accessed June 2018).

served African American patients and was opened at its first location near the intersection of Benbrow Drive and East Washington Street in 1927. After struggling financially for decades, a new building was constructed at 2401 Southside Boulevard in 1966. The hospital remained segregated through the 1980s. The hospital's financial problems continued, and it was purchased by Vencor Corporation in 1990 and reopened as Kindred Hospital, serving patients with long-term respiratory illnesses.<sup>19</sup>

Public and private colleges and universities have played a role in Greensboro's growth through much of its history, their student and faculty populations fueling the continued growth and development of downtown Greensboro. Located just west of the Central Business District, Greensboro College was established in 1838 as a women's college with ties to the Methodist Church. Although the school remained small, the student population still only about 1300 students, the campus formed a natural boundary to the westward expansion of downtown Greensboro.<sup>20</sup> In 1873, Bennett College was established to provide high school- and college-level courses to African Americans. The campus, which lies less than a mile east of downtown Greensboro, was constructed beginning in 1878 and still educates about 650 students a year.<sup>21</sup>

The two state-funded schools in Greensboro grew significantly in the mid-twentieth century. Established as the State Normal and Industrial School, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro opened in 1892 with 223 students. Renamed The Women's College of the University of North Carolina by mid-century, the school was the largest women's college in the country by 1959. In 1963, it became coeducational and was renamed the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.<sup>22</sup> The first university for African Americans in the state, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University was established in 1891 and opened its campus in Greensboro in 1892. The school grew significantly in the 1940s and 1950s, playing a critical role in the Civil Rights movement in downtown Greensboro in the 1960s. In 1967, the North Carolina General Assembly designated the Agricultural & Technical College for African American students a regional university, and it was renamed the North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University. In 1972, it became a part of the University of North Carolina system.<sup>23</sup>

The growth and expansion of industry, business, and educational facilities in the mid-twentieth century caused the population of Greensboro to nearly double from 1950 to 1970, and as a result, annexation had a profound impact on the city. The population was 74,389 in 1950, making Greensboro the third largest city in the state. The city limits were expanded in all directions in 1957, increasing the city's size from about eighteen square miles to over fifty square miles. The population grew to 131,711 by 1960, and in 1962, the town of Guilford College, west of Greensboro, was annexed, followed by the area south of Guilford College in 1969. By 1970, the population had reached 144,076, and Greensboro was the second largest city in the state behind only Charlotte. The northern section of city, known as Brightwood, was

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<sup>19</sup> Phillips, *History of the Hospitals*, 46-53.

<sup>20</sup> "History, Tradition, and Mission," *Greensboro College*, <https://www.greensboro.edu/history> (accessed June 2018).

<sup>21</sup> "About Us: History," *Bennett College*, <http://www2.bennett.edu/about/history.html> (accessed June 2018).

<sup>22</sup> Fripp, 136-137; Allen W. Trelease, "University of North Carolina at Greensboro," *NCpedia*, [www.ncpedia.org/university-north-carolina-greensbor](http://www.ncpedia.org/university-north-carolina-greensbor) (accessed April 2018).

<sup>23</sup> Fripp, 136-137; Charles W. Wadlington, "North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University," *NCpedia*, [www.ncpedia.org/north-carolina-agricultural-and-tec](http://www.ncpedia.org/north-carolina-agricultural-and-tec) (accessed April 2018).

annexed in 1970. By 1980, the city had grown to over sixty square miles and a population of 154,383 people.<sup>24</sup> With the annexation of new suburbs and construction of new shopping centers, people began to leave the downtown core.<sup>25</sup>

Greensboro's physical landscape changed in the 1950s and 1960s, specifically because of changes to the city's infrastructure. By the 1950s, Greensboro had become a significant regional transportation center, with a large road system, a railway system that earned it the nickname "Gate City," and an airport terminal. In 1954, the city council adopted a plan to provide a more efficient road system through and around the city. Forbis Street was aligned with Church Street, and the Forbis Street name was no longer used. Since the Carnegie Public Library had been demolished in 1950, Library Place was renamed Commerce Street and has since been renamed again John Wesley Way. In 1966, the six-mile street that changed names from Friendly to Gaston to Madison avenues as it passed through Greensboro was renamed Friendly Avenue to reflect the spirit of the city and the early Friends' settlement in the Guilford College area.<sup>26</sup> The Interstate Highway system connected Greensboro to Winston-Salem, Charlotte, and Durham via Interstates 40 and 85. Interstate 40 opened in 1958, extending along the south side of Greensboro and connecting Durham to Winston-Salem. It was followed in 1962 by Interstate 85, which was located south of I-40 and extended southwest to High Point and Charlotte.<sup>27</sup> A revised street plan was adopted in the 1960s, making Wendover Avenue, completed in 1966, a major thoroughfare that wrapped around the north side of the city, following parts of US-70 and US-220 and connecting the east and west ends of I-40.<sup>28</sup>

In 1963, the firm of Rogers, Taliaferro, Kostritsky, and Lamb developed a plan for downtown known as the Rogers Plan, which recommended simplifying traffic patterns, constructing a city-county government center, clearing sites for new office buildings, preserving "uptown" as a retail hub, making streetscape improvements, and expanding parks and plantings. Based on this master plan, a street improvement plan was adopted in 1965, municipal parking garages were opened in 1967 and 1972, and the Greensboro-Guilford County Governmental Center was opened in 1973. In addition, signage rules were put in place and electrical lines were buried to improve the appearance of the downtown streetscape.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Fripp, 131-132; Lefler and Newsome, 639; City of Greensboro, "A Look at Greensboro's City Government," Vertical File, Greensboro Historical Museum, Greensboro, NC.

<sup>25</sup> Snow and Cole, "Greensboro".

<sup>26</sup> Fripp, 133, 136.

<sup>27</sup> Unknown Author, "Greensboro Timeline," Vertical File, Greensboro Historical Museum, Greensboro, North Carolina.

<sup>28</sup> Fripp, 133, 136; "Greensboro Timeline."

<sup>29</sup> Fripp, 133-134.

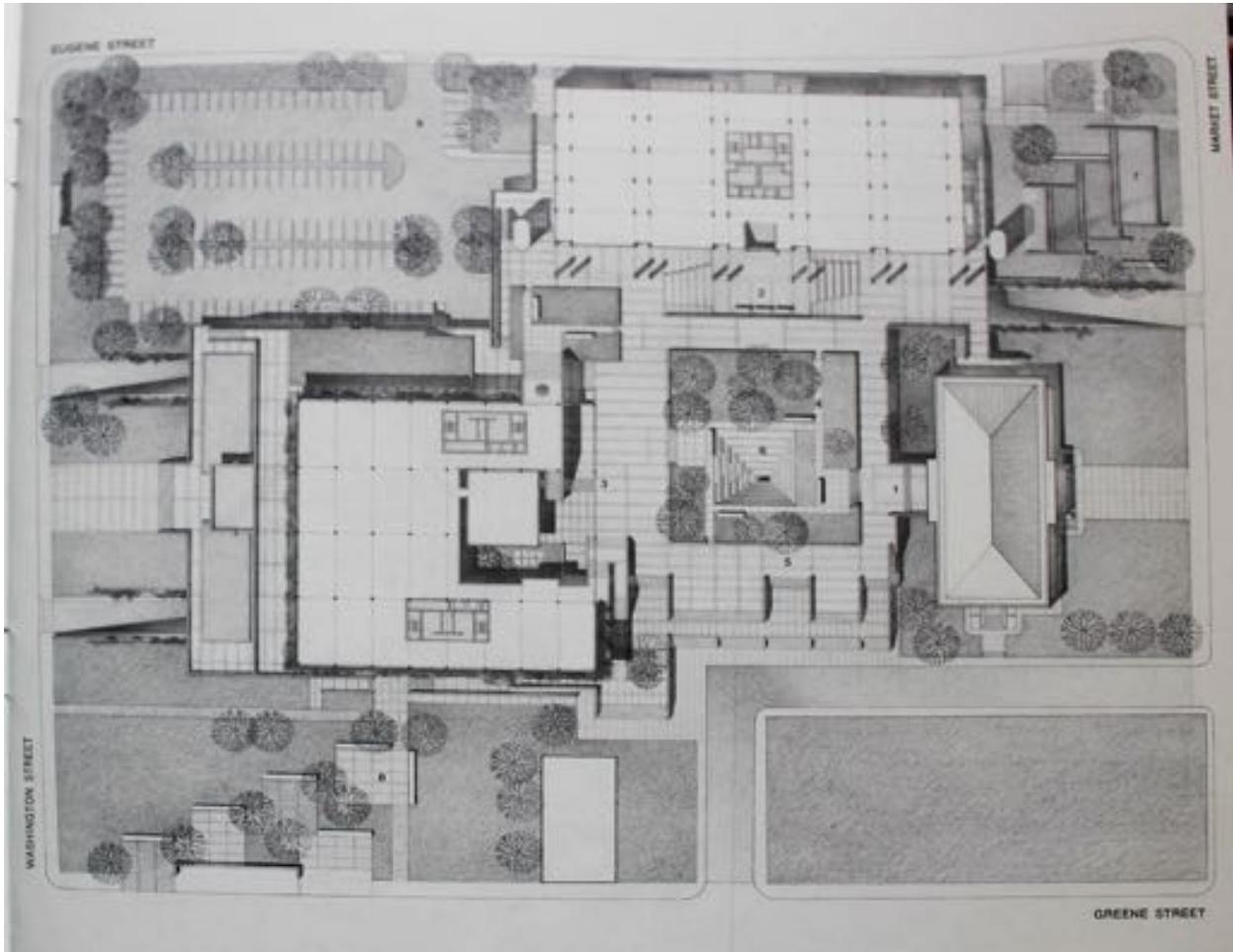


Figure 6: Plan for Guilford County Governmental Complex (GF0601 and GF9077)

The post-World War II era brought residential and commercial suburban development to Greensboro, as it did to cities throughout the country. As residents constructed new homes in suburban areas, businesses, specifically retail businesses, followed. While small corridors of shops already existed in several neighborhoods, including College Heights and McAdoo Heights, large-scale suburban developments began to be constructed in the 1950s, most anchored by a chain grocery store. They included: Summit Shopping Center (1950), Lawndale Shopping Center (1950), Plaza/Irving Park Plaza (1951), Florida Street Shopping Center (1957), Friendly Center (1957), Southside Shopping Center (1958), and Northeast Shopping Center (1959). Suburban development continued to pull businesses away from downtown in the 1960s. At least eleven more shopping centers were constructed within the decade, and plans were made for the Four Seasons Mall, a 400,000 square foot center that was ultimately completed in 1974.<sup>30</sup>

While Greensboro’s downtown department stores remained viable through the 1960s, many survived by opening branch stores in satellite shopping centers, as the construction of suburban shopping centers and enclosed malls outside the downtown core soon caused

<sup>30</sup> David Gwynn, “Greensboro History,” *Groceteria.com*, <http://www.groceteria.com/place/north-carolina/triad/greensboro/greensboro-in-the-1930s/3> (accessed June 2018).



Figure 7: Belk Department Store, 1951 (GF0049) 101 South Elm Street, Greensboro  
Image Courtesy of: Carol W. Martin / Greensboro History Museum Collection



Figure 8: Thalhimers Department Store, (GF0136) 203 South Elm Street, Greensboro

shoppers to take their business elsewhere. The impact on downtown commerce was significant, and by the 1970s, large downtown department stores closed, including Belk in 1975, Thalhimers in 1976, Meyer's in 1978, and S&H Kress Company in 1981.<sup>31</sup> Small businesses soon followed, unable to draw enough customers to sustain the downtown without their larger counterparts. Hotels also suffered from the loss of commerce downtown. King Cotton Hotel closed in 1965, followed by The O. Henry Hotel, which moved nearer to the new interstates where many new hotels were under construction. In 1972, there were 215 retail business in downtown Greensboro, but that number had dropped to 139 businesses just five years later.<sup>32</sup>

The built environment was not the only aspect of the city that changed dramatically through the mid-twentieth century. Greensboro's political climate during this time focused on race and gender equality and how to improve the city's acceptance of diversity. As a result, a number of women and African Americans held local and state offices for the first time. In 1947, Elreta Melton Alexander-Ralston opened a law office in Greensboro. She was the first African American woman to earn a J.D. from Columbia Law School, the first African American woman to practice law in North Carolina, and, in 1968, the first African American woman in the state to be elected as a district court judge.<sup>33</sup> The city elected Julia

Dwiggins, its first city councilwoman, in 1949. She was followed by Mary Seymour in 1967, who was reelected three times and ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 1975. The first African American councilman, Dr. William Hampton, was elected in 1951, followed by Waldo Falkener in 1959, and Jimmie Barber and Vance Chavis in 1969.<sup>34</sup> In 1968, minister Cecil Bishop was appointed chairman of the Greensboro Housing Authority. Lawyer Henry Frye was elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives that same year, becoming the first African American to serve in the General Assembly since 1899. He was reelected five times and then was elected to the North Carolina Senate in 1980.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Laura A.W. Phillips, "Downtown Greensboro Historic District (Amended)," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 2003; Fripp, 137; "Greensboro Timeline."

<sup>32</sup> Fripp, 137.

<sup>33</sup> H.A. Sieber, *Holy Ground* (Greensboro, NC: Tudor Publishers, Inc., 1995), 77; Virginia L. Summey, "Ralston, Elreta Melton Alexander," *NCpedia*, [www.ncpedia.org/ralston-elreta-melton-alexander](http://www.ncpedia.org/ralston-elreta-melton-alexander) (accessed April 2018).

<sup>34</sup> Snow and Cole, "Greensboro"; Fripp, 138.

<sup>35</sup> Fripp, 142.

The city is perhaps best known for its prominence in the Civil Rights Movement. By the 1950s, approximately thirty percent of Greensboro's population was African American, and African Americans had obtained representation on the city council and school board, yet school and business segregation was still standard practice. A small number of African American students integrated into white schools in 1957 and 1958 in accordance with the Pearsall Plan, which permitted parents to request integrated school assignments before the local school board. However, these small steps were viewed by many to be inadequate, token compliance with the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. As a result, a number of lawsuits were brought against the city for obstructing school integration through the freedom of choice program between 1958 and 1972, the year the schools were finally desegregated.<sup>36</sup>

The fight for equality in schools was paralleled by the fight for equality in business, which brought Greensboro into the national spotlight during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. On February 1, 1960, four students from the Agricultural & Technical College of North Carolina (now North Carolina A&T University) attempted to place an order at the lunch counter at Woolworth's on South Elm Street and refused to leave even when the staff denied them service. The "Greensboro Four," as they came to be known, were joined by more students from both the Agricultural & Technical College of North Carolina and Bennett College, and the sit-in expanded to the nearby Kress store on April 21, 1960.<sup>37</sup> Both stores were closed for a short period, "in the interest of public safety," as members of the Ku Klux Klan were present at the protests.<sup>38</sup> The peaceful protest was ended on July 25, 1960, when both lunch counters were desegregated.<sup>39</sup> Its example carried throughout the South, inspiring dozens more sit-ins. Martin Luther King, Jr., who visited Greensboro in 1963, believed the sit-in movement was "the turning point of the civil rights movement."<sup>40</sup>

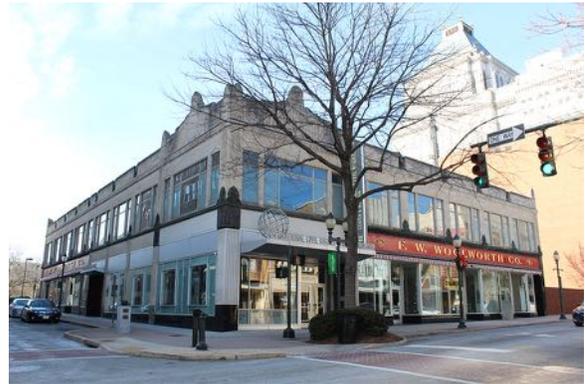


Figure 9: Woolworth's Building (GF0142)  
132 South Elm Street, Greensboro

The Civil Rights Movement led to further change in Greensboro through the 1960s, such as the desegregation of numerous restaurants, motels, theaters, housing developments, and Greensboro's hospitals.<sup>41</sup> The first African American joined the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce in 1948, unbeknownst to the Chamber. Clarence McAden, who owned a dry-cleaning business, was asked to resign his membership when chamber leaders discovered he was black. Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, however, the organization desegregated, and over 350 African Americans joined the Chamber between 1966 and 1973.<sup>42</sup> In 1967, John

<sup>36</sup> Fripp, 139-140; Lefler and Newsome, 695.

<sup>37</sup> Snow and Cole, "Greensboro"; Lefler and Newsome, 695; "Greensboro Timeline."

<sup>38</sup> Fripp, 141; Lefler and Newsome, 695.

<sup>39</sup> Snow and Cole, "Greensboro"; Lefler and Newsome, 695.

<sup>40</sup> Sieber, 59; "Greensboro Timeline."

<sup>41</sup> Snow and Cole, "Greensboro."

<sup>42</sup> Sieber, 55, 75.

Marshall Stevenson, who changed his surname to Kilimanjaro to honor his African heritage, founded the *Carolina Peacemaker*, a newspaper dedicated to uniting Greensboro's African American population and representing their political views.<sup>43</sup> That same year, Joe Louis Dudley opened Dudley's Beauty Center and Salon. Dudley Products Company eventually grew into one of the largest black-owned businesses in the country, specializing in hair products for African Americans.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the relative success of the lunch counter sit-ins and other aspects of the civil rights movement that inspired changes in the city, many of Greensboro's institutions clung to segregation policies. As a result, protests continued through the 1960s, and the Agricultural & Technical College of North Carolina continued to take a leading role in these protests. In 1963, Jesse Jackson, then a student at the college, led a number of civil rights protests on campus, resulting in hundreds of students being detained at the Greensboro Coliseum and the former Central Carolina Convalescent Hospital. Tensions between whites and blacks continued to increase, and by 1969, became violent. Students at A&T supported students at the nearby Dudley High School, who staged walkouts in response to racial discrimination during school elections. Over a period of weeks, the protests grew to the point that school officials called for the police to intervene. Unable to quell the protests, the local police called on the National Guard for assistance, and a citywide curfew was put in place. This escalated the protests to riots, during which Willie Grimes, a college student who was apparently uninvolved in the activities, was killed.<sup>45</sup>

### **A Changing City, 1975-2018**

Greensboro continued to struggle toward racial equality in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1979, the Communist Workers Party (CWP) held a "Death to the Klan" march in Greensboro, hoping to gain African American support for their broader aims to overthrow the nation's democratic form of government. The city permitted the march to occur but assigned minimal police support in an attempt to keep a low profile for the event. Members of the Ku Klux Klan arrived in advance of the march and killed five CWP members. Although the Klan members were brought to trial, they were acquitted by an all-white local jury, sparking large-scale criticism from residents. Despite a number of appeals and investigations, the Klan members were never convicted. The victims' families brought a civil suit against the Klan members, the police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, but won only a small settlement. However, the event led the city to commission a number of human rights and race relations studies over the next two decades, aiming to improve quality of life and public safety, and culminating in the formation of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Sieber, 72; Alexander R. Stoesen, "Carolina Peacemaker," *NCpedia*, [www.ncpedia.org/carolina-peacemaker](http://www.ncpedia.org/carolina-peacemaker) (accessed April 2018).

<sup>44</sup> Sieber, 73; Adrienne Dunn, "Joe Louis Dudley (1937-)," *North Carolina History Project*, <http://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/joe-louis-dudley-1937> (accessed April 2018).

<sup>45</sup> Sieber, 77; "Greensboro Timeline"; "Willie Grimes," Bluford Library, North Carolina A&T University, [www.library.ncat.edu/resources/archives/grimes.html](http://www.library.ncat.edu/resources/archives/grimes.html) (accessed April 2018); "Historical Map and Timeline," *Civil Rights Greensboro*, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Digital Collections, <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/timeline/collection/CivilRights> (accessed June 2018).

<sup>46</sup> "Greensboro Timeline"; J. Christopher Schutz and Alexander R. Stoesen, "'Death to the Klan' March," *NCpedia*, [www.ncpedia.org/death-klan-march](http://www.ncpedia.org/death-klan-march) (accessed April 2018).

In 1973, the city established the Commission on the Status of Women, which continues its efforts to improve the quality of life for women in Greensboro today. The demographics of Greensboro changed significantly with the arrival of large numbers of refugees and immigrants from southeast Asia in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and from West Africa and Latin America in the late 1980s and 1990s.<sup>47</sup> In 1991, Time Magazine praised Greensboro as a “bellwether of race relations” in recognition of the city’s leadership in the national effort to achieve racial equality.<sup>48</sup> This effort remains evident today in the renaming of Aycock Auditorium at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 2016 and Aycock Middle School in 2017, both of which were named for Charles B. Aycock, a governor of North Carolina known for his education advocacy, but also for his staunch support of white supremacy.

Industry too changed in the mid- to late-twentieth century. Since the late nineteenth century, textiles had been the top industry in Greensboro, and in 1980, Cone Mills was still the city’s largest employer.<sup>49</sup> In the early 1980s, however, textile production in the state began to decline. Cone Mills’ subsidiary, Revolution Mill, closed in 1982. (Cone Mills filed for bankruptcy in 2003.) The textile mills were replaced as the city’s top employers in the 1990s and early 2000s by the VF Corporation, a clothing manufacturer; Qorvo (formerly RF Micro Devices), which manufactures radio frequency systems; and Honda Aircraft Company, which manufactures the HondaJet. Financial institutions including United Guaranty Corporation and Jefferson-Pilot Corporation (later purchased by Lincoln Financial Group), both major employers since the 1960s remained in this category through the late-twentieth century.<sup>50</sup>

In contrast to the apparent struggles of downtown businesses, Greensboro’s population continued to grow during the second half of the twentieth century. In 1972, there were 154,553 people living in the 60 square miles within the city limits, and the city’s 1972-1973 Annual Report noted the addition of two fire stations, two community centers, two parks, and a children’s zoo.<sup>51</sup> By 1988, there were 193,860 people living in the city.<sup>52</sup> To combat the drastic decline in downtown commerce due to suburban development, city officials began seeking new opportunities to bring dollars back to downtown. Although efforts to establish a new convention center failed, a redevelopment project on North Elm Street razed a number of early buildings to make way for the Southern Life Center, built by the Southern Life Insurance Company in 1980.<sup>53</sup> A new airport terminal was completed west of town in 1983 and renamed Piedmont Triad International Airport in 1987.<sup>54</sup> Recent development downtown includes the construction of a new public library and children’s park, and plans for a performing arts center, all immediately north of the commercial core.

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<sup>47</sup> Snow and Cole, “Greensboro.”

<sup>48</sup> Sieber, 81.

<sup>49</sup> Fripp, 135.

<sup>50</sup> Snow and Cole, “Greensboro.”

<sup>51</sup> City of Greensboro, “Annual Report, City of Greensboro, North Carolina, 1972-1973,” Guilford File, Vertical File, Greensboro Public Library, Greensboro, North Carolina.

<sup>52</sup> Unknown Author, “Greensboro, North Carolina, 1988-1989,” Vertical File, Greensboro Historical Museum, Greensboro, North Carolina.

<sup>53</sup> Fripp, 137-138; “Original O. Henry Hotel,” *O. Henry Hotel*, [www.ohenryhotel.com/original](http://www.ohenryhotel.com/original) (accessed April 2018).

<sup>54</sup> “Greensboro Timeline.”

The new growth, and with it the demolition of older buildings, caused concern among many of Greensboro's citizens who feared the city would become detached from its history. Preservation efforts in the 1970s resulted in the incorporation of the 1918 courthouse into the 1973 Governmental Center, the revitalization of business in the 300-600 block of South Elm Street in 1975, the preservation of the Carolina Theater in 1977, and the donation to the city of the Southern Railroad Depot in 1980.<sup>55</sup> The first local historic districts soon followed, as College Hill was established in 1980, Fisher Park in 1982, and Aycock in 1984. The Downtown Greensboro Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.<sup>56</sup> Preservation efforts continue with the rehabilitation of the Southern Railway Passenger Station #2 (GF0128) as a bus station, the rehabilitation of Cascade Saloon (GF0055) as offices, and countless other projects by commercial building owners utilizing the state and federal rehabilitation tax credits to update the buildings for new occupants.



Figure 10: Cascade Saloon (GF0055)  
408-410 South Elm Street, Greensboro

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<sup>55</sup> Fripp, 134-135.

<sup>56</sup> "Greensboro Timeline."

## Architectural Context

Commercial, industrial, and residential buildings were built together in downtown Greensboro until the late nineteenth century. Although now largely absent from the downtown landscape, residential buildings fronted Elm Street as late as 1879 and were often located on the same block as commercial or industrial buildings. By the late nineteenth century, residential construction had been relegated to the outer edges of downtown, and as the city grew in the early twentieth century, new residential areas were developed outside downtown and accessed by streets and streetcar lines. Further, as zoning became common practice, residential uses were separated from commercial and industrial areas. During later periods of significant growth, many of the remaining downtown residential buildings were lost or repurposed for commercial uses.<sup>57</sup> While small pockets of residential buildings remain in the central business district, no residential properties were surveyed during this project.

Industrial development, even in the nineteenth century, occurred primarily on the edges of the downtown commercial district near the railroads, where products could be easily shipped to both nearby and remote factories and wholesale and retail businesses.<sup>58</sup> Tobacco factories and warehouses were built on Davie and Green streets in the 1870s and 1880s but were outperformed by Durham's tobacco market by the early 1900s. Tobacco was replaced with textiles as Greensboro's main industry, and mills were constructed on South Elm, South McGee, and West Lee (now West Gate City Boulevard) streets. With the decline of the railroad as the primary means of transportation, however, by 1950, most industries had relocated out of downtown, leaving their original buildings repurposed or vacant.<sup>59</sup>

Industrial buildings remaining in the central business district date from 1890 to 1940 and illustrate the evolution of industrial styles from the ornate corbelling of the Italianate style to the streamlined Art Deco style. The Oak Hill Hosiery Mill (GF0101) was built c. 1890 at 110-112 West Lewis Street, between commercial buildings fronting on South Elm Street and a railroad line that extends south from downtown Greensboro to Pleasant Garden and Climax in the southern part of Guilford County. Typical of industrial buildings near the commercial core, this two-story, Italianate-style building has commercial storefronts at the first floor, arched windows with segmental soldier-course lintels at the second floor, and brick corbelling along the top and bottom of the tall stepped parapet. Farther south along the same railroad line is a collection of industrial buildings that straddle the 900-1100 blocks of South Elm Street. Among these is the Ebroclo Shirt Company, an elaborate brick building at 1001 South Elm Street constructed in 1928 (GF9017). This two-story building features elaborate brickwork surrounding fanlights above a central entrance with paired doors and large flanking windows on the first floor. Each



Figure 11: Oak Hill Hosiery Mill (GF0101)  
110-112 West Lewis Street, Greensboro

<sup>57</sup> Little-Stokes, *An Inventory of Historic Architecture*, 3-5.

<sup>58</sup> Little-Stokes, *An Inventory of Historic Architecture*, 4; Brown, 33.

<sup>59</sup> Little-Stokes, *An Inventory of Historic Architecture*, 4; Brown, 30-33.



Figure 12: Lane's Laundry (GF1449)  
814 West Market Street, Greensboro

opening is framed by stretcher brick and cast-concrete pilasters that rise to a half-round arch made up of alternating soldier-course brick and cast-concrete wedges. The second floor contains twenty-light metal-sash windows, common for twentieth-century industrial buildings, surrounded by square cast-concrete blocks outlined with header- and rowlock-course brick creating an enlarged grid. The parapet above has alternating stuccoed panels and cast-concrete consoles. The same railroad line extends northwest of downtown, passing through the campus of Greensboro College. Along this part of the railroad line is the c. 1938

Lane's Laundry (GF1449) at 814 West Market Street. This one-story brick building has Art Deco ornamentation on the façade, including fluted concrete pilasters flanking the entrance and cast-concrete coping at the parapet in a decorative crenellated pattern. The building is irregularly shaped and follows the angle of the adjacent railroad tracks. A square brick smokestack is decorated with the word "Lanes" in concrete lettering.

Most of Greensboro's downtown commercial architecture reflects the period of substantial growth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>60</sup> It includes modest one-, two-, and three-story commercial buildings centered on South Elm Street, nearest to the railroad and within or immediately surrounding the Downtown Greensboro National Register Historic District. Most house local small businesses and retain their turn-of-the-twentieth-century architectural detailing. Meanwhile, those buildings in and near the north end of the historic district, near the intersection of Elm and Market streets, are larger in scale, historically housing offices, banks, hotels, and stores, and are more decorative in their detailing, many updated in the 1920s and 1930s to reflect changing architectural trends.<sup>61</sup> By the mid- to late-twentieth century, Modernist architecture rose in popularity and was often applied to governmental, financial, and other types of office buildings.

### Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Commercial Architecture

The majority of buildings in the study area can be classified as standard commercial architecture. These one- or two-story brick buildings with parapet roofs have minimal detailing and are characterized by a flat appearance broken up by patterned masonry or tile, concrete, or terra cotta. They typically have large, rectangular display windows arranged in storefronts that flank a centered, inset entrance; upper level double-hung windows; and a projecting cornice at the parapet.<sup>62</sup> The Mutual Store Building at 610-612 South Elm Street (GF0095) and the neighboring building to the north at 606-608 South Elm Street (GF0160), both c. 1923, have storefronts that retain portions of their original prism-glass transoms and metal cornices that span the storefronts. The second and third floor windows of both buildings have brick sills and soldier-course brick lintels topped by bands of projecting stretcher-course brick. The parapet

<sup>60</sup> Little-Stokes, *An Inventory of Historic Architecture*, 7.

<sup>61</sup> Little-Stokes, *An Inventory of Historic Architecture*, 4.

<sup>62</sup> "Historic Commercial Architectural Styles," *Good for Business, A Guide to Rehabilitating the Exteriors of Older Commercial Buildings* (Milwaukee, WI: City of Milwaukee, 1995), 18.

features eight original metal vents, bands of header-course brick above and below the vents, and brick corbelling at the top of the parapet. The c. 1924 building at 631 South Elm Street (GF9012), which is similar in detailing to its c. 1925 neighbor at 629 South Elm Street (GF9011), features a reconstructed storefront topped by a cornice, two pairs of wood-sash windows with shared concrete sills and soldier-course lintels at the second floor, and four decorative metal vents in the parapet. The c. 1936 B.W. Terrell Building at 529 South Elm Street (GF0135) is representative of one-story commercial buildings throughout the study area. It features a metal-framed storefront with a prism glass transom and metal cornice, and the parapet has an inset sign panel, brick corbelling, and terra cotta coping.

Many of the oldest surviving commercial buildings in downtown Greensboro are Italianate in style, characterized by highly ornamented windows and cornices and typically featuring arched windows with heavy hood molding, widely overhanging cornices with heavy brackets, and decorative brickwork including pilasters, quoins, pediments, or belt courses.<sup>63</sup> Popular nationally from around 1850 to the 1880s, surviving examples in Greensboro date from the 1880s to as late as the 1920s. Although most examples have altered storefronts or replacement windows on the upper floors, most retain their distinctive decorative brickwork. There are two fine examples of the style on West Washington Street. The c. 1902 Biltmore Greensboro Hotel at 111 West Washington Street (GF0060), formerly the Cone Export Building, is among the most elaborately detailed Italianate-style commercial buildings in the study area. This three-story building features a red brick façade with granite detailing, and the storefront retains its original configuration, containing an inset entrance at the center flanked by angled display windows. The second and third floors feature projecting brick pilasters dividing the façade into thirds, and the third floor windows are set in arched brick surrounds with granite keystones and are topped by brick corbelling. A decorative metal cornice at the top of the façade rests just below the brick parapet. The adjacent building



Figure 13: Commercial Building (GF0160)  
606-608 South Elm Street, Greensboro



Figure 14: Commercial Buildings  
(GF9011 and GF9012)  
629 and 631 South Elm Street, Greensboro



Figure 15: Biltmore Greensboro Hotel (GF0060)  
111 West Washington Street, Greensboro and  
Scott Building (GF0119)  
301 South Greene Street, Greensboro

<sup>63</sup> “Historic Commercial Architectural Styles,” 14.

to the west, the Scott Building at 301 South Greene Street (GF0119), also c. 1902, is similarly styled, featuring two storefronts at the first floor, arched windows set in arched brick surrounds at the third floor, a wide corbelled cornice, and a reconstructed triangular pediment over the narrow central bay. The c.1903 Fordham's Drug Store at 514 South Elm Street (GF0067), another example of the style, is one of the most decorative and intact buildings on South Elm Street. It features a distinctive copper-framed storefront with a prism-glass transom below a metal cornice, rectangular windows with pedimented Italianate-style cornices at the second floor, and a bracketed cornice at the roofline surmounted by a mortar and pestle and apothecary urns.

Romanesque Revival-style architecture became popular nationally in the mid-nineteenth century as architectural ideas from Europe, drawn from the buildings of ancient Rome, were imported by American architects educated abroad. This long-lasting style was used in new construction though the turn of the twentieth century. It is characterized by arched openings and heavy, often rough-hewn, masonry construction. More academic examples of Romanesque Revival-style buildings also feature turrets, asymmetrical facades, and dentil or corbelled details creating additional texture, though these high-style characteristics are not found on the commercial buildings in downtown Greensboro.<sup>64</sup> Surviving examples in Greensboro date to the turn of the twentieth century and include the 1899 Grissom Building at 310 South Elm Street (GF0071). The three-story, blonde brick building has cast-stone and terra cotta detailing at the third-floor level, including cast-stone Corinthian pilasters separating paired, arched windows and supporting brick arches within a larger terra cotta arch with egg-and-dart molding. The 1904 Dixie Fire Insurance Building at 125 South Elm Street (GF0509) provides another example of the Romanesque Revival style. The building features a rough-hewn granite base with two-story arched openings of cast stone. A four-story brick tower rests atop the base and has a terra cotta cornice above the fourth floor, paired windows with brick arches in the fifth floor, and cast-stone cornices above the fifth and sixth floors.



Figure 16: Fordham's Drug Store (GF0067)  
514 South Elm Street,  
Greensboro



Figure 17: Dixie Fire Insurance Building (GF0509)  
125 South Elm Street,  
Greensboro

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<sup>64</sup> John C. Poppeliers and S. Allen Chambers Jr., *What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003), 54-56; Cyril M. Harris, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 276-279.



Figure 18: Southern Railway Passenger Station #2 (GF0128)  
236 East Washington Street, Greensboro

The Neoclassical style, popular in the first half of the twentieth century, is characterized by a symmetrical façade; full-height porticos supported by classical columns or pilasters, or flush pediments supported by similar pilasters; and other classical detailing such as dentil molding, modillions, or wide entablatures.<sup>65</sup> Greensboro has several high-style Neoclassical commercial buildings, constructed from the late 1910s through the 1920s. The c. 1927 Southern Railway Passenger Station #2 at 236 East Washington Street (GF0128) represents the style on a grand scale. The entrance of this monumental building features a full-height portico supported by massive limestone Ionic



Figure 19: South Greensboro National Bank (GF0124) 124 South Elm Street, Greensboro

columns. The portico has a wide cornice with dentil molding and is topped by a limestone balustrade with a central sign panel that reads “Southern Railway.” The building features a red brick exterior with limestone detailing, including quoins at the corners of the building, door and window surrounds with limestone aprons, and a cornice that wraps around the entire building. The c. 1918 South Greensboro National Bank at 524 South Elm Street (GF0124) is another fine example of the style, featuring a central entrance flanked by two-story, fluted Ionic columns and pilasters on granite bases, which support a wide entablature below a limestone pediment with dentil molding. Limestone panels topped by a limestone dentil cornice separate the first and second floors. The c. 1927 Carolina Theatre at 308-310 South Greene Street (GF0054) features a temple-front limestone façade with polychromatic terra cotta detailing. A full-width marquee extends over the sidewalk, and the façade is dominated by large windows with metal starburst ornamentation flanked by fluted Ionic pilasters that support a limestone pediment ornamented with terra cotta detailing, dentil molding, and a metal crest.

Classical Revival-style architecture was popular nationwide in the early decades of the twentieth century. This style is highly proportional and symmetrical, typically includes multi-story columns or pilasters, and is often decorated with heavy modillions, dentils, triglyphs, or other classically-derived detailing.<sup>66</sup> The c. 1900 Bain Building at 302-304 South Elm Street (GF0047) is typical of the style as applied to a three- or four-story commercial building. A denticulated cornice spans the storefront above which two-story pilasters separate the three bays of the upper floors and support a cornice at the parapet. Cast-stone spandrels with floral motifs are located between the second- and third-floor windows, and third-floor windows are arched and have cast-stone keystones. The 1920 American Exchange National Bank Building

<sup>65</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses (Second Edition)* (New York: Knopf, 2014), 434-446.

<sup>66</sup> Poppeliers and Chambers, 98-99; Harris, 63-64, 224.

at 100-102 North Elm Street (GF0045) is a fine example of the Classical Revival style applied to a mid-sized office building. It has heavy, two-story, fluted Doric columns flanking the entrance, which is decorated with a classical post-and-lintel surround with consoles. The bank building's three sections mimic the three parts of a classical column. Triglyphs and a heavy cornice separate the base of the building from its tower, which features Greek key and dentil detailing. The top floor of the building is highly ornamental, featuring dentils, egg and dart molding, and heavy modillions below a wide cornice.



Figure 20: American Exchange National Bank Building (GF0045) 100-102 North Elm Street, Greensboro

Buildings constructed in the Renaissance Revival style, which was popular in the early twentieth century, are typically built of masonry and feature symmetrical, flat facades, belt courses between floors, heavy cornices, and decorative detailing including dentils, quoins, and pilasters.<sup>67</sup> Representative of the style is the c. 1928 Younts-Deboe Building at 106 North Elm Street (GF0143), a two-story building constructed of limestone, granite, and terra cotta. Cast-concrete panels above the first-floor display windows feature vertical floral motifs on either side of round seals with the letters “Y,” “D,” and “Co” overlaid on top of one another. The second-floor windows have terra cotta aprons below and are separated by decorative terra cotta pilasters on shallow consoles. Terra cotta molding with an acanthus leaf motif forms a continuous frame around the storefront and second-floor windows. At the parapet level is a terra cotta cornice with a narrow projecting terra cotta band below and dentil course at the top of the parapet. Porter Drug Store at 121 South Elm Street (GF0081) was renovated c. 1930 with a Renaissance Revival-style facade. The two-story, brick building features terra cotta tiles with Mediterranean motifs framing the replacement storefront, and this frame is topped by a shallow terra cotta cornice. The upper floor features three sets of paired four-over-four sash windows. Each pair has a shallow iron balconette and is topped by a terra cotta half-round panel with floral and scroll motifs. The building has limestone quoins and is topped by a decorative terra cotta cornice with iron vents and projecting modillions below a green terra cotta-tile pent roof.



Figure 21: Younts-Deboe Building (GF0143) 106 North Elm Street, Greensboro

Some of Greensboro's most impressive buildings are in the Art Deco style, a style popular in the 1920s and 1930s that features monolithic, geometric forms and applied artistic motifs that provided a distinctly modern aesthetic during its era. The Kress Company in particular gravitated toward the sleek, streamlined feel of the style and constructed Art Deco commercial buildings across the country, including one at 212 South Elm Street (GF0091) in 1929. The four-story building has a granite façade with decorative terra cotta detailing. A shallow decorative cornice with metal cresting tops the storefront. The

<sup>67</sup> Harris, 186-187.

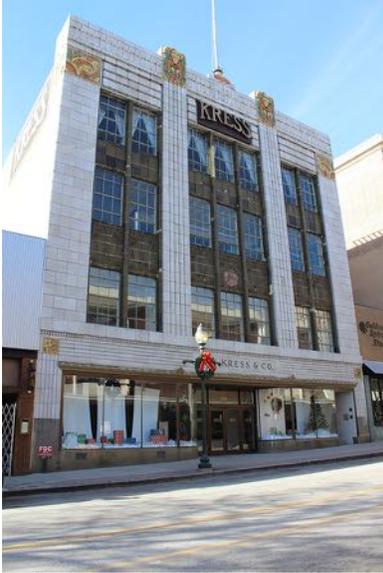


Figure 22: S. H. Kress & Company Building (GF0091) 212 South Elm Street, Greensboro

granite cornice is embellished with horizontal bands of granite, the name “S.H. Kress & Co.” engraved in the center, and dentil molding. The upper floors feature full height, fluted granite pilasters with terra cotta tile capitals, dark-colored terra cotta spandrels, and scalloped terra cotta tile. Rams’ heads, including curling horns reminiscent of Ionic volutes, act as capitals for the pilasters. The remainder of the applied ornament is foliate in theme. Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph company utilized the Art Deco style in their 1929 building at 124 South Eugene Street (GF2020), perhaps playing on the modernity of the telephone. The six-story building is constructed of tan brick and features an ornate surround of cast concrete scrolls and floral motifs at the former main entrance, geometric cast concrete panels above the first floor windows, and elaborately carved stone spandrels between the upper floor windows.<sup>68</sup>



Figure 23: Guilford Building (GF0091) 301 South Elm Street, Greensboro

Modern skyscraper construction technology, popularized in Chicago at the end of the nineteenth century, made its way to Greensboro by the early twentieth century. Load-bearing masonry construction had previously limited commercial buildings to about six stories in height, but the advent of iron- and steel-framed buildings, together with the invention of the elevator in the late nineteenth century, made the construction of much taller buildings possible. The steel skeleton frame permitted the application of large fields of terra cotta, glass, or other ornamentation. Many early skyscrapers, including several in Greensboro, were designed to mimic a classical column by employing three visually distinctive parts: a multi-story base, a shaft with piers or pilasters separating the bays to emphasize verticality, and a capital that often encompassed multiple floors and was usually topped with an elaborate cornice.<sup>69</sup> The c. 1927 Guilford Building at 301 South Elm Street (GF0074) is a fine example of skyscraper construction. The three-story base is finished with granite and contains metal-framed storefronts at the first floor, grouped metal-framed windows with spandrel panels between the second and third floors, granite pilasters separating the bays, and a granite cornice with the words “Greensboro Bank and Trust Company.” The shaft is a stark ten-story brick tower with cast concrete window sills and soldier-course brick headers. The building’s capital is a highly decorative granite-colored terra cotta cornice with vertical and

horizontal rope detailing, ornamental roof vents aligning with the window bays below, and terra cotta cresting at the roofline.

<sup>68</sup> Bishir and Southern, 323, 327, 531; Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 481-482.

<sup>69</sup> Poppeliers and Chambers, 100-105.

The most significant skyscraper in Greensboro is the 1923 Jefferson Standard Building at 101 North Elm Street (GF0011) and its 1990 addition, the Jefferson-Pilot Building, at 100 North Greene Street (GF9040). Like the Guilford Building, the Jefferson Standard Building was designed by New York architect Charles C. Hartmann. According to the 1975 individual nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, the building's "rich decorative scheme . . . is an exotic combination of Classical, Romanesque, Gothic, and Art Deco elements" intended to "reinforce the verticality and sheer size of the structure."<sup>70</sup> The steel-framed building is seventeen stories high and built in a U-shape that provides adequate lighting to all the offices. The base of the building contains an arched, slightly recessed entrance and large windows with arched transoms and has a heavy, ornamented entablature. The U-shaped tower contains the third through thirteenth floors, which form the shaft. Piers dividing the bays emphasize the verticality of the tower, and decorative foliate spandrels separate the floors. The fourteenth to seventeenth floors form the capital and feature arched windows with heavy surrounds and a heavy entablature. The 1990 Jefferson-Pilot Building was designed by Smallwood, Reynolds, Stewart, & Stewart to complement the earlier building, to which it is connected. This building is eighteen stories tall, and is also divided into sections representing a classical column, including a two-story base, an eleven-story shaft, and a two-story capital, all of which are topped by a three-story tower that is set back from the façade. The building features similar details to its counterpart, having massive arched entrances and window surrounds, and a heavy entablature on the base, slender piers and geometric spandrels on the tower, and arched windows with heavy surrounds and entablature at the highest floors.<sup>71</sup>



Figure 24: Jefferson Standard Building (GF0011)  
101 North Elm Street,  
Greensboro

### Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Commercial Architecture

American Modernism has its roots in the International Exhibition of Modern Architecture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1932. The exhibition coined the term "International Style" and defined the principles of Modernism at that time: volume rather than mass, regularity rather than symmetry, and the absence of ornament.<sup>72</sup> Early International Style buildings featured horizontal and vertical elements repeated with regularity to create a grid-like, caged appearance, and many expressed weightlessness and volume with forms that balanced cantilevered boxes on columns or podiums.<sup>73</sup> These ideals dominated Modernist architecture into the mid-twentieth century, and following World War II, the term International Style was broadened to include skeletons of steel and glass that emphasized functionality and

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<sup>70</sup> Ruth Little-Stokes, "Jefferson Standard Building," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1975.

<sup>71</sup> Bishir and Southern, 327-328.

<sup>72</sup> John Grindrod, *How to Love Brutalism* (London: Batsford, 2018), 27-28; Benedikt Taschen, *Functional Architecture: The International Style* (Köln, Germany: Benedikt Taschen, 1990), 14-30; Hasan-Uddin Khan, *International Style: Modernist Architecture from 1925-1965* (Köln, Germany: Benedikt Taschen, 1998), 65-70; Colin Davies, *A New History of Modern Architecture* (London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd, 2017), 108, 192.

<sup>73</sup> Grindrod, 37; Taschen, 14-30.



Figure 25: Farmers Mutual Building (GF9047) 119 East Lewis Street, Greensboro



Figure 26: Edgeworth Building (GF9000) 232 North Edgeworth Street, Greensboro

weightlessness and reflected modern advancements in engineering.<sup>74</sup> By the 1960s, academic examples of the International Style were falling out of favor. These buildings were seen as too utilitarian and repetitive, too detached from social and physical context, and, according to Modernist architect Paul Rudolph, were “merely diagrams of buildings.”<sup>75</sup> Still, numerous characteristics of the International Style, such as grids of horizontal and vertical elements, ribbon windows, box-on-podium forms, and lack of applied ornamentation, carried over into mid-to-late twentieth-century Modernist buildings.<sup>76</sup> The 1964 Farmers Mutual Building at 119 E. Lewis Street (GV9047) features elements of the International Style including an exposed concrete structure with inset basement supporting a cantilevered main floor. The main entrance is accessed by a floating concrete stair, adding to the sense of weightlessness of the main level, though the brick exterior diverges from the glass-walled Modernism of the post-World War II era.

Mid-century Modernist buildings constructed of concrete, steel, and glass were popular in Greensboro from the 1950s through the early 1970s. These buildings favor balance without

symmetry, often have either ribbon windows creating a horizontal aesthetic or strong vertical elements, and lack applied ornamentation.<sup>77</sup> An early example featuring strong horizontal elements is the c. 1954 Beard Building at 603 North Elm Street (GF9006). The three-story, flat-roofed building is clad in concrete panels at the first floor and contains a continuous band of fixed clerestory windows forming a ribbon around the top of the first floor. Steel and glass curtain walls span almost the entirety of three elevations at the upper floors. Projecting bands of concrete frame the curtain walls. In contrast, the 1963 Edgeworth Building at 232 North Edgeworth Street (GF9000) features vertical columns separating four-story bays on a one-story base. There are vertical metal mullions and rails supporting curtain walls that include solid spandrels, further emphasizing the verticality of the building.

Due to its combination of strong horizontal and vertical elements and the integration of natural materials in a variety of earth tones, Edward Lowenstein’s 1964 Greensboro Public Library at

<sup>74</sup> Grindrod, 37, 40-41; Chris van Uffelen, *Massive, Expressive, Sculptural: Brutalism Now and Then* (Switzerland: Braun Publishing AG, 2018), 14; Khan, 144-145.

<sup>75</sup> Timothy M. Rohan, *The Architecture of Paul Rudolph* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 33; Khan, 162.

<sup>76</sup> Grindrod, 37.

<sup>77</sup> Poppeliers and Chambers, 127-131.

201 North Green Street, now the Elon Law School, (GF9033) is among Greensboro's most distinctive mid-century Modernist buildings. The brick building has a deep, flat-roofed canopy that overhangs the street elevations. Two-story windows at the southeast corner of the building are divided by full-height vertical metal mullions, and the sides of the inset entrance bay are faced with light-colored stone. Polished red granite pilasters separate the bays, while large panels of aggregate concrete separate the floors. Inset bays are clad in two-story aggregate concrete panels and feature unique stone mosaics. The bays contain concrete planters and are screened by an open metal frame that mimics the curtain-wall mullions and rails in the adjacent bays. A late example of Modernism, the 1973 Odd Fellows Building at 311 Battleground Avenue (GF9081) is a two-story, flat-roofed building distinguished by blocky massing and large expanses of red brick in a cast-concrete framework. Bands of five aluminum-framed clerestory windows are separated by projecting vertical aluminum fins that extend below the windows and function as a sort of brise soleil. An entrance on the left end of the building is sheltered by a flat-roofed concrete canopy.



Figure 27: Greensboro Public Library (GF9033)  
201 North Greene Street, Greensboro



Figure 28: Odd Fellows Building (GF9081)  
311 Battleground Avenue, Greensboro

Constructed worldwide from the 1950s to the 1970s, Brutalist buildings characterized much of Greensboro's new construction in the early 1970s. The word derives from the French term *beton brut*, or raw concrete. Brutalism emphasizes undisguised functional features over applied ornament, relying heavily on the use of exposed concrete as structure and/or surface material, although brick, glass, steel, and other materials were also employed in construction. Like the International Style, Brutalism emerged in dramatic contrast to highly ornamental nineteenth-century styles such as the Beaux-Arts and was embraced after the world wars as a rejection of the bourgeois, yet in contrast to the International Style, Brutalism relies on the use of concrete rather than steel and glass for its aesthetic. Often relatively inexpensive to execute, Brutalism was an ideal style for meeting the housing and commercial demands of the post-World War II period, especially for rebuilding war-torn cities in Europe, where the style originated. In the United States, however, the style was most often commissioned for governmental or institutional buildings, rather than residences, and never experienced the widespread popularity of many other Modernist styles. Many architects respected Brutalism's honest presentation of materials. By the 1960s, the International Style had become the architectural language of the corporate world; in contrast, many progressive American architects relied on Brutalism to express their vision of a strong and benevolent public sector. The general public tended to find the buildings unattractive, however, and in fact, especially in the United States, the style is often shorthand for big, unappealing concrete buildings from the 1960s and 1970s. As a result of this lack of public interest, many Brutalist buildings were



Figure 29: Guilford County Courthouse (GF9077) 201 South Eugene Street, Greensboro



Figure 30: Greensboro Municipal Building (GF0601) 23201 South Eugene Street, Greensboro

eventually demolished, renovated beyond recognition, or “cheered up” with paint or sculpture in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>78</sup>

The most prominent example of Brutalism in Greensboro, and one of the best examples in the southeastern United States, is the Greensboro-Guilford County Government Complex. The complex, designed by Eduardo Catalano, was completed in 1973 and includes the Guilford County Courthouse (GF9077) at 201 South Eugene Street and the Greensboro Municipal Building (GF0601) at 300 West Washington Street, both of which were constructed adjacent to the 1920 courthouse (GF0005), which now houses the Board of Elections.<sup>79</sup> The 1973 Guilford County Courthouse façade is a complex composition of stark concrete panels, recessed horizontal bands of windows, and recessed vertical bays. The main entrance, facing South Eugene Street, is above street level, deeply recessed, and accessed by wide steps. The top level projects outward from the rest of the building, emphasizing the building’s appearance of weight and massiveness. Similarly, the 1973 Greensboro Municipal Building has an inverted stepped form in which the upper floors project outward; here, precast concrete forms are combined with wide bands of large windows. The building has the mass and monumentality of

Brutalism, while the window bands reference the International Style still in active use in corporate architecture. The upper floor features concrete panels arranged in an overscaled dentil cornice, a reference to the adjacent 1920 Neoclassical-style courthouse.

Brutalism presented an alternative to the International Style, although several Greensboro buildings demonstrate elements of both styles. The 1971 First Union National Bank Building at 122 North Elm Street (GF9003) illustrates Brutalism as applied to a multi-story, downtown office building. It reflects its roots in the International Style with bands of fixed, metal-framed windows and a grid-like appearance created by a combination of horizontal and vertical elements. The building achieves the mass and sculpture of Brutalism using horizontal bands of concrete to separate floors, and the conspicuous absence of vertical supports from the corners of the building, giving the appearance of floating, cantilevered corners, are taken from the International Style. While the International Style outright rejected the three-part form of

<sup>78</sup> Christopher Beanland, *Concrete Concept: Brutalist buildings around the world* (London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 2016), 6-10, 18, 34, 170, 178; Peter Chadwick, *This Brutal World* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2016), 1-11; Davies, *A New History of Modern Architecture*, 276-290; Grindrod, 111; Poppeliers and Chambers, 127-132.

<sup>79</sup> Benjamin Briggs, “Greensboro and the Concrete Jungle,” *Preservation Greensboro*, <https://preservationgreensboro.org/greensboro-and-the-concrete-jungle> (accessed July 2018).

modern skyscrapers, the two-story base, grid-like tower, and smaller, vertical divisions at the top floor, resembling a cornice, combine to form a base-column-capital aesthetic.<sup>80</sup> The 1970 Federal Home Loan Bank of Greensboro at 444 N. Elm Street (GF9005) is a two-story bank building with a futuristic appearance. This building demonstrates the development of Brutalism as an alternative to the box-on-podium form of the International Style, while the monumental mass of the concrete is in stark contrast to the streamlined weightlessness of the International Style.<sup>81</sup> The first story is a canted podium faced in stone. It supports a cantilevered, monolithic upper floor with elevations lined by large square windows recessed in a projecting framework sheathed in concrete.



Figure 31: First Union National Bank Building (GF9003) 122 North Elm Street, Greensboro

A number of parking decks in downtown Greensboro were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s in the Brutalist style, its use of exposed concrete surface and concrete-frame construction a natural complement to the structure and functionality of parking decks. The 1967 Municipal Parking Garage No. 1 (GF9053), located at the northwest corner of East Market and Davie streets, has low horizontal bands of concrete at each floor, vertical concrete piers, and flat concrete awnings sheltering the pedestrian and vehicular entrances. The Greensboro-Guilford County Government Complex is served by the Brutalist-style 1972 Greene Street Parking Deck (GF9044) at 215 South Greene Street. It features a combination of precast aggregate panels and vertical projecting fins, and is adorned with vertically ribbed ornament above the first level and large square recessed panels at the roofline. Elevator towers containing glass walls are located at the southeast and northwest corners. As was common with Brutalist-style buildings and structures, the deck was “brightened” in 2009 when a series of painted panels and sculptural reliefs depicting transportation throughout history were added to the structure.



Figure 32: Federal Home Loan Bank of Greensboro (GF9005) 444 North Elm Street, Greensboro



Figure 33: Greene Street Parking Deck (GF9053) 215 South Greene Street, Greensboro

<sup>80</sup> Briggs, “Greensboro and the Concrete Jungle.”

<sup>81</sup> Grindrod, 40-41; Briggs, “Greensboro and the Concrete Jungle.”

## FINDINGS

Since the 2004 update of the Downtown Greensboro Historic District, changes to the central business district have been minimal. The architecture and commercial density of this area still reflect Greensboro’s self-image of a modern, commercial city. In order to get a complete overview of the changes to historic resources in the study area, each of the 128 properties located within the National Register Historic District boundary was coded as No Change, Materially Altered, Significantly Altered, Rehabilitated, Deteriorated, Demolished, or Moved (see Appendix A). The classifications were made based on the photos present in the 2004 survey files. Nearly all resources surveyed fall into the No Change or Materially Altered categories, and there are very few Significantly Altered properties, and no Moved or Deteriorated properties. Thus, these findings are focused on the Significantly Altered and Demolished properties, as these changes have had the most significant impact on both the individual resources and the historic context of the historic district.

Seven properties within the historic district boundary have been significantly altered to the extent that they may become non-contributing if the historic district were to be updated. Although many properties have material alterations, including replacement storefronts or upper windows, these seven properties have experienced more extensive alterations and greater loss of original material. These types of alterations include changing the size of window or door openings, filling in windows or doors, reconfiguring storefronts, altering rooflines, and applying stucco or other non-historic covering on the exterior. These properties, which represent less than 5% of the total resources included in the historic district, are not concentrated in any specific area of the district, but rather scattered throughout.

Table 1. Significantly Altered Properties

<b>Survey Site #</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Property Name/Type</b>	<b>Date</b>
GF0084	341 S. Davie Street	Interstate Chemical Building	1903
GF0148	113 S. Elm Street	Commercial Building	c. 1905, c. 1950
GF0155	227 S. Elm Street	Commercial Building	c. 1896
GF0087	346-348 S. Elm Street	Former Jim's Lunch Building	c. 1927
GF0046	352-356 S. Elm Street	American Wienie Building	c. 1920
GF0131	523-525 S. Elm Street	Southside Hardware Building	c. 1902, c. 1936
GF8994	117-121 W. McGee Street	General Greene Hotel	c. 1925



Figure 34: Distribution of Significantly Altered Properties

Two properties within the Downtown Greensboro Historic District have been demolished since the 2004 historic district update, both formerly located in the southern portion of the district. The c. 1886 McClamrock Building at 324 S. Elm Street (GF8987) was demolished after 2003, and a new building was constructed on the site in 2011. A commercial building located at 122 Smothers Place (GF7095) was demolished and replaced with a new building in 2005. More significant demolition occurred between 1982 and 2004, when at least ten buildings on South Davie Street were demolished near the intersection of East Washington Street. Those changes were noted in the 2004 survey update.

Table 2. Demolished Properties

Survey Site #	Address	Property Name/Type	Date
GF8987	324 S. Elm Street	McClamrock Building	c. 1886
GF7095	122 Smothers Place	Commercial Building	1948



Figure 35: Distribution of Demolished Properties

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Additional Research**

A number of properties have histories that are complicated or unclear, possess unusual architectural forms or details, retain unusually high levels of material integrity, or are likely to produce archaeological information, and thus require further study to make a determination of eligibility for placement in the National Register of Historic Places. These properties include:

### **GF9080 – Cumberland Professional Building**

#### **107 N. Murrow Blvd.**

The Cumberland Professional Building was built c. 1965 as part of the city's Cumberland Project, a large redevelopment effort to address blight in this section of northeast Greensboro between downtown and North Carolina A & T University. The building may be eligible under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development; however, more information is needed about the building's role in the project and about the project's short- and long-term impact on the neighborhood and the city. According to oral history, the building has housed offices specifically for African-American professionals since its construction. Therefore, the building may be eligible under Criterion A for commerce and African American heritage; however, the specific business names, owners' names, and nature of these businesses is unknown.

## **Modern Commercial Architecture**

Greensboro has a large number of architecturally significant buildings of high integrity representing Modernist, Brutalist, and other mid-twentieth-century styles. A number of these buildings are located within the central business district and were surveyed as part of this survey update. However, there are additional examples located in other areas of the city. Some of these buildings are likely individually eligible for the National Register, but a historic and architectural context for these buildings has not been developed. A survey focused on commercial and industrial buildings constructed throughout the city from 1945 to 1975, including historic and architectural context, is needed.

## **National Register Study List**

The following resource is proposed for placement on the North Carolina National Register Study List as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

### **Downtown Greensboro Historic District**

#### **Additional Documentation, Boundary Increase, and Boundary Decrease**

The Downtown Greensboro Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 and updated with additional documentation in 2004, included 128 buildings and structures, most dating from 1885 to 1950. Many of the oldest commercial buildings in downtown Greensboro are within the historic district. Among the most prominent are the one-, two-, and three-story commercial buildings along South Elm Street, the main thoroughfare through downtown Greensboro. Many of the taller office buildings are located closer to the intersection of Elm and Market streets. The current district also extends along portions of the 100 block of West Washington Street, the 100-200 blocks of East Washington Street, the 300 block of South Davie Street, and the 300 block of South Greene Street.

The proposed boundary increase includes early-twentieth century commercial and industrial buildings, specifically at the south end of the current district, mid-century commercial buildings on West Market, West Friendly, and North Greene streets, and early twentieth century religious and institutional buildings on West Market Street. The collection of commercial buildings within the proposed boundary expansion has their topography, setbacks, and building size and scale in common with the existing Downtown Greensboro Historic District. Buildings throughout the district and expansion area directly abut the sidewalk, forming a continuous façade and are primarily one to three stories, having storefronts at the main level that open to the sidewalk and upper-level windows above. Most commercial buildings have medium material integrity due to replacement storefronts and upper-level windows, yet they collectively retain sufficient integrity to tell the story of Greensboro's commercial development through the mid-twentieth century.

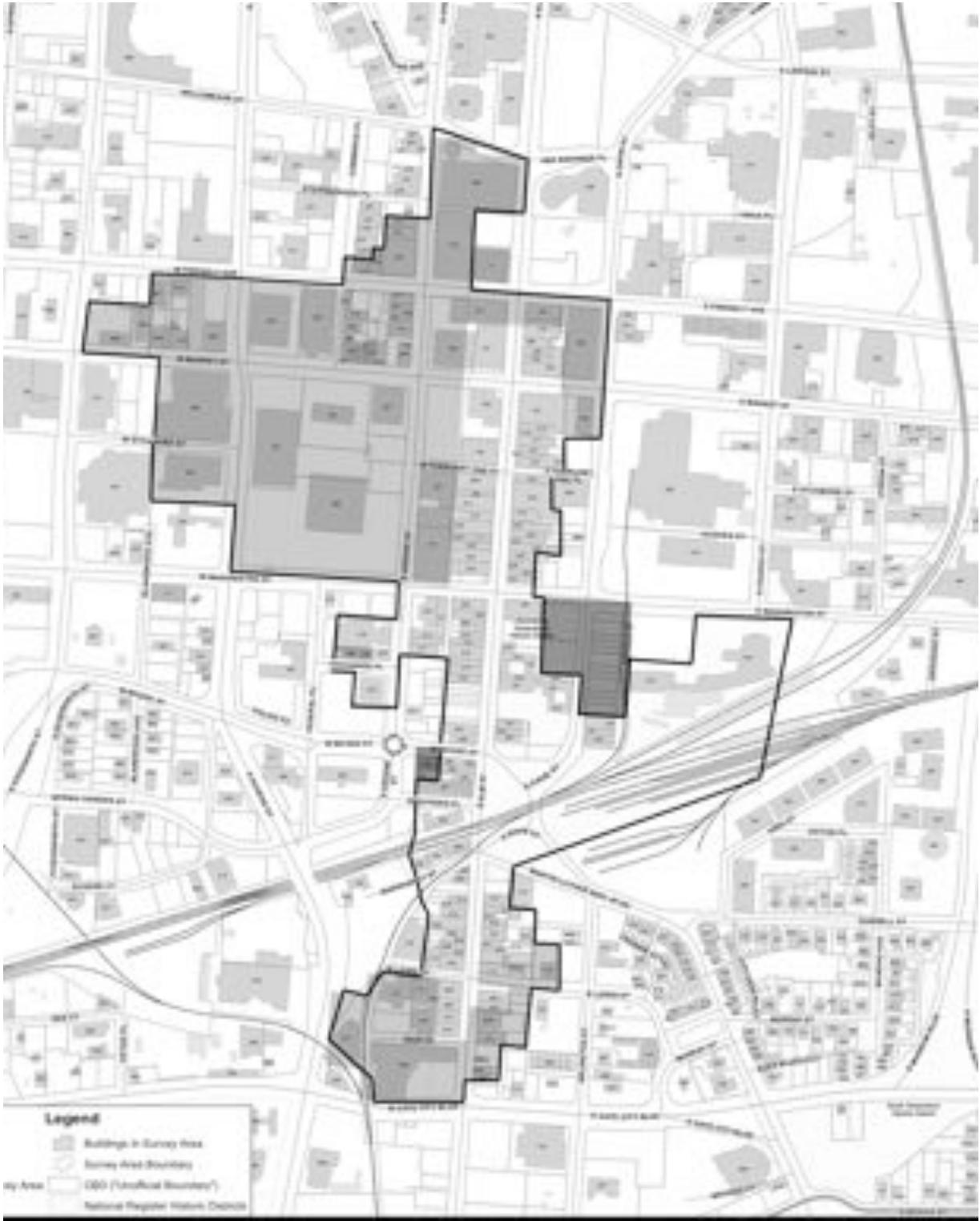
The proposed boundary increase includes prominent Modernist and Brutalist-style buildings from the 1960s and early 1970s that were constructed immediately adjacent to the earlier downtown commercial buildings, and generally on the site of earlier buildings. These include the 1969-1970 Gate City Savings and Loan Bank, the 1971 First Union National Bank, the 1972 AT&T Building, and a number of late 1960s and early 1970s office buildings and parking decks constructed in the Modernist or Brutalist styles.

The most prominent of these is the 1973 Guilford County Courthouse and Greensboro Municipal Building (placed on the Study List in 1977). The two buildings as well as the surrounding landscape were designed by noted architect Eduardo Catalano and were viewed as both innovative and futuristic, especially in the context of other early 1970s architecture. The buildings are constructed of poured-in-place concrete, carefully battered after curing to reveal the aggregate beneath. They're arranged around a courtyard of hanging gardens, terraces, balconies, and gracious stairs, promoting the mid-century approach to urban design that separated pedestrian and automobile traffic. In addition to the Governmental Center, the boundary includes six additional resources previously listed in the National Register or on the North Carolina Study List.

The period of significance for the existing district extends only to about 1950, though downtown Greensboro continued to develop through the early 1970s. During these latter decades, the commercial landscape was changing with the relocation of retail businesses to

shopping centers at the suburban fringes, and the downtown was developing as a regional business and governmental center. Buildings constructed in the 1960s and 1970s were predominantly large-scale office buildings or governmental buildings, prominent reminders of this shift from retail to business. The period of significance for the updated and expanded district should extend to 1973, illustrating the commercial and governmental significance of downtown Greensboro through the mid-twentieth century. The end of the period of significance includes the construction of architecturally significant buildings, including the Governmental Complex, constructed in the early 1970s. Although less than fifty years old, these buildings are outstanding examples of Modernist- and Brutalist-style architecture and illustrate the continued architectural evolution of styles in downtown Greensboro. Therefore, the Downtown Greensboro Historic District Boundary Increase appears to meet National Register Criterion G for properties less than fifty years old that have achieved significance within the past fifty years.

The proposed boundary includes a high concentration of buildings constructed prior to 1973, excluding vacant lots and non-contributing resources at the periphery. Further, a boundary reduction should be considered for South Davie Street, near the intersection of East Washington Street, where a significant number of buildings have been demolished since 1982, and the land remains vacant. A significantly altered building on McGee Street should also be considered for removal from the National Register boundary.



Map showing the proposed boundary for the Downtown Greensboro Historic District Boundary increase and Boundary Decrease

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# **APPENDIX A:**

## **CLASSIFICATIONS OF SURVEYED PROPERTIES**

**No Change:** Buildings with changes to signage, paint color, or use, when it does not affect the exterior design or materials of the building, are classified as No Change.

**Materially Altered:** Many properties experienced minor alterations including changes to the storefronts or upper-level windows. These changes, while they frequently involved the removal of historic material, did not significantly change the historic form or interpretation of the historic structure, so were not considered significant alterations for the purpose of this survey.

**Significantly Altered:** Changes that significantly altered the historic structure include the addition of stucco or other exterior cladding material, loss of or extensive alteration to window or storefront openings, or changes to the roofline.

**Rehabilitated:** Buildings with rehabilitated exteriors include those that have had later coverings or incompatible storefronts removed or have had windows re-installed in original upper-level openings that had previously been infilled.

**Deteriorated:** This classification is specifically meant to note buildings that are likely to be lost in the coming years if action is not taken to stabilize them.

**Demolished:** These buildings have been demolished, and, in most cases, replaced with new buildings.

**Moved:** This classification is specifically meant to document the relocation of buildings from their original site to a new site, often to ensure preservation of the buildings.