

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

NAME

HISTORIC
S & W Cafeteria

AND/OR COMMON
Dale's Cafeteria

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Patton Avenue

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY/TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Asheville

--- VICINITY OF

11th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

North Carolina

37

Buncombe

021

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. Rufus Shevill

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 2757

CITY/TOWN

STATE

Charlotte

--- VICINITY OF

North Carolina

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURT HOUSE
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Buncombe County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY/TOWN

STATE

Asheville

North Carolina

PRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TRAIL

DATE

--- FEDERAL --- STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DATE OF YEAR

DATE OF RECORD

CITY/TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Dale's Cafeteria, formerly the S & W Cafeteria, is a three-story Art Deco building located in Asheville's central business district. The architectural significance of the exterior lies entirely in the treatment of the main (northwest) facade, for the exposed brick rear wall presents an unarticulated surface plane and the sides are completely hidden by adjacent structures. The main facade is faced with large thin blocks of smoothly cut, close-jointed grey ashlar resting on a heavy black base. Flat pilaster strips with molded edges define both ends. The thick outer molding of each pilaster is continued horizontally above the attic level range of windows, thus framing the facade. Within this frame a third flat pilaster strip marks the division of the facade into two parts, the western part occupying two-thirds of the facade.

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

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

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

The secondary eastern section of the facade contains similar trim, although differently organized. The two-story-tall rectangle, cut in at the upper corners by concave quarter circles, is divided by a lintel-frieze into an upper plate glass window and a lower, off-center entrance set back between splayed plate glass reveals. The whole is framed by the blue and grey chevron band. Wing-shaped spiral frets occur

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along the outer edge of the curve at upper corners of the frame. The lintel-frieze is of greater span, more slender, and less ornate than those of the round-arched windows of the main block. Here again, though, a chevron with smooth nail-head moldings runs horizontally along both top and bottom zones, while the middle of the frieze is bisected by a simple convex horizontal molding strip.

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

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

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

The first three bays of the first-floor main block were intended for scattered rather formal table settings. To the rear of this area is a stainless steel serving area, U-shaped in plan. The smaller, northern block, separated from the major dining area by a double-decked staircase (with a solid, translucent balustrade) to the second floor and a thin partition wall, is lined with wooden booths and contains a rectilinear U-shaped serving line. Over this line, in the southeast end of the room, is a small

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second-story dining balcony. Wall treatment in the smaller block is, in general, similar to that in the larger, although the northeastern wall of the smaller block is sheathed with translucent green vinyl circles.

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

The attic level contains asymmetrically organized private dining and club rooms as well as a small caretaker's apartment.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS, GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1929-1930 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Douglas D. Ellington

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Asheville's virtually unaltered S & W Cafeteria (now Dale's Cafeteria), erected in 1929, is one of the finest Art Deco structures in North Carolina and one of the state's earliest cafeterias. The facade (and to a lesser extent the interior) is an extremely rich and imaginative amalgam of polychrome ornament and exotic stylistic motifs evocative of Asheville's 1920s boom period. The building, described by its architect as "new architecturally," with a deliberate "note of gaiety," was the work of Douglas D. Ellington (1866-1960), a prominent and influential architect who was responsible for Asheville's collection of fine Art Deco architecture.

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

Asheville's S & W was originally opened for business on April 1, 1922, in a leased building on Patton Avenue which had once served as the old Asheville Opera House. It was the third cafeteria in a chain which then included others in Charlotte and Winston-Salem. The chain was begun by Frank O. Sherrill and Fred R. Webber, both natives of western North Carolina. The two served as mess sergeants in World War I and later operated a lunch counter together in Charlotte's Ivey's Department Store. Cafeterias are said to have originated on the west coast about 1910, but there were then none existing in North Carolina. Sherrill and Webber's first S & W, which opened July 14, 1920, on Charlotte's West Trade Street, was the pioneering cafeteria in the Carolinas.

Asheville's S & W was an immediate popular success. Years later, Frank Sherrill boasted that "business was very, very good from the beginning. Asheville has always made money, except for one year." Within eight months after its opening, the leased building was expanded by the addition of dining space in its basement and the installation of a mezzanine. By 1929 Frank Sherrill (who had acquired Webber's entire interest in the business about 1926) had authorized construction of a new building to be designed exclusively for use as a cafeteria. Designer of the structure was Douglas D. Ellington, an architect then living near Asheville.

Born in Clayton, North Carolina, on June 26, 1866, Ellington was educated at Randolph-Macon College, Drexel Institute, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. According to his obituary, while in Paris he became the first non-Frenchman to win the Prix de Rome and the only American at that time to be awarded the Prix de Rome. His measured drawing of the thirteenth century Church of St. Trophée at Arles, France, has been cited by experts as the finest such depiction of that structure

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in existence. He was also one of ten first prize winners in the worldwide Christopher Columbus Memorial Competition, in which more than a thousand architects competed. He served for a time as professor of architecture at Drexel Institute, Columbia University, and Carnegie Institute of Technology, and was also noted for his talents as a water-colorist.³ His first important work in the South was for old St. Paul's Church in Richmond, Virginia.

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

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

The new S. and W. Cafeteria building is the result of applying unhampered architecture to an individual commercial need: or, more nearly, the evolving of an original specific architecture for a specific business structure in a specific site within a specific community. Perhaps the simplest way of expressing this would be to say that the building has been "custom built" both in its utilitarian aspect and also from the point of view of the eye. It embraces many innovations in points of plan arrangement, efficiency, convenience and comfort, and it is new architecturally in its lines, shapes and uses of materials, uses and shades of color, and other matters of proportion and detail. In the matter of appearance the most important elements of the structure are scale, texture and color. Each proportion is related to all other proportions, each surface is related to all other surfaces, each bit of color is related to all other color motives, and in time all of these are related to each other. The note of gaiety which has been spread both in the facade and in the interior has been deliberate, this cheerful or exal-fectious quality being regarded as fitting to the purpose of the establishment and in keeping with the life of a community where recreation is an important activity.

His description related our first "The new building is said to be one of, if not the, finest in the region. Several air-conditioning appliances have been installed."

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Many years later Frank Sherrill remembered the threat posed to the new building by the great Wall Street Crash of October, 1929. "The building was about five-sixths finished," he related, "and we didn't know anything to do but go ahead. We made money here every year except one and the Asheville business is one of the most successful in the chain."⁶

The Asheville S & W remained in its 1929 building until May, 1974, when it moved to the new Asheville Mall. Reflecting on the cafeteria's long stay in its Patton Avenue home, one employee recalled that "back in the 40s, we'd serve over 5,000 people a day, six days a week. People staying at the Battery Park Hotel, and all the local people who wanted a good meal 1/2 would flock down here."⁷ One longtime customer, patronizing the S & W on its final night in the Patton Avenue building, remarked: "I guess we have all eaten a little slower tonight. . . . There are a lot of people who are really going to miss this place."⁸

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

¹"Sherrill and the S & W," The Asheville Times, November 20, 1973.

²"S. & W. CAFETERIA," The Asheville Times, December 15, 1922, sec. 3, p. 13.

³"Ellington, Architect and Artist, Dies Here," Asheville Citizen-Times, August 28, 1950, sec. 8, p. 8.

⁴"Architect Says New S & W Cafeteria Embraces Many Innovations In Plan, Arrangement; Cites Concessions," The Asheville Citizen, July 15, 1929, sec. B, p. 1.

⁵Ibid.

⁶"Sherrill and the S & W," The Asheville Times, November 20, 1973.

⁷"People Are A Bit Slower Friday At The S & W Cafeteria," The Asheville Citizen, May 11, 1974, sec. 2, p. 11.

⁸Ibid.

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Buncombe County Records, Buncombe County Courthouse, Asheville, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds).

Buncombe County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds).

Charlotte Observer. "F. R. Webber, S & W Cafeteria Co-Founder, Dies in Nashville At 79," October 24, 1967.

Towe, Elma, comp. and ed. DEDICATION OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, ASHEVILLE, N.C. Asheville.

