

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name American Tobacco Company Manufacturing Plant

other names/site number W. T. Blackwell Company Tobacco Factory; Bull Durham Factory

2. Location

street & number block bounded by W. Pettigrew St., Blackwell St., Willard St. and Carr St.

N/A not for publication

city or town Durham

vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Durham code 63 zip code 27702

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Jerry J. Crow SHPO
Signature of certifying official

8/16/00
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register _____
_____ See continuation sheet. _____
_____ determined eligible for the _____
National Register _____
_____ See continuation sheet. _____
_____ determined not eligible for the _____
National Register _____
_____ removed from the National Register _____
_____ other (explain): _____
_____ _____
Signature of Keeper Date
of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>14</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<u>3</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<u>17</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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

Historic Resources of Durham

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6. Function or Use
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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: INDUSTRY/PROCESSING: manufacturing facility
energy facility
industrial storage

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Moderne, No Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

roof Other: tar and gravel

walls brick

other metal

stone

glass

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

8. Statement of Significance

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

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

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.

- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

industry
architecture

Period of Significance 1874-1954

Significant Dates 1874, 1899, 1911

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

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

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreege of Property 14.58 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	689120	3985410	3	17	688600	3985060
2	17	688860	3984940	4	17	688870	3985560

_____ See continuation sheet.

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

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

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Claudia R. Brown and M. Ruth Little, co-authors
organization North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office date Apr 14, 2000

street & number 4618 Mail Service Center telephone 919-733-6545
city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27699-4618

organization Longleaf Historic Resources
street & number 2709 Bedford Ave. telephone 919-836-9731
city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27607

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12. Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

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Property Owner

=====

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

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

=====

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

American Tobacco Company Manufacturing Plant
Durham Co., NC

Section 7: Description

The large American Tobacco Company Manufacturing Plant is compressed into a single very long block bounded by Willard, Carr, W. Pettigrew, and Blackwell Streets. Its skyline of tall towers, flat-roofed factories and chimney-potted warehouses dominates the view toward Durham's downtown from the Durham Expressway and the thoroughfares of S. Roxboro and S. Duke Streets. The most striking visual quality of the complex is its telescoped presentation of the development of industrial architecture from the 1870s to the 1950s. This effect is especially apparent along Blackwell Street, where the tall buildings crowding the sidewalk provide a three-dimensional "time line." Here, the Italianate 1874 W. T. Blackwell & Company Factory (National Historic Landmark) marks the north end of the block, turn-of-the-century warehouses and factories featuring ornamental brickwork stand in the middle and huge mid-twentieth century factories with curtain walls and expanses of windows stretch southward toward the Durham Expressway.

The block rises gently and steadily as it extends from its narrow southern end to the tall railroad embankment at W. Pettigrew Street that separates it from the Durham central business district. The concentration of eleven primary buildings, nine of which front the street, is dense, with the perimeter having only a few clear spaces and the open middle of the block being interrupted by railroad tracks, the Power Plant, a water tower and miscellaneous equipment. All of the buildings along W. Pettigrew and Blackwell streets abut the sidewalk. Four of the buildings on Blackwell Street are attached to each other end to end, creating a high wall more than 900 feet long. Elsewhere, strips of grass and narrow paved loading areas separate the buildings and public sidewalks. Typical of heavy industrial complexes, all of the open spaces are paved, and there is no foliage, except for the small grassy areas near the street. A tall chain-link fence topped with strings of barbed wire and coils of concertina wire delineates all open spaces at the perimeter of the block.

The oldest buildings in the complex are located at the north end and along Carr Street, while the more recent ones are at the south end and along Blackwell Street. The position of the large W. T. Blackwell & Company Factory on the most highly-elevated portion of the block draws attention to the handsome Italianate design of its unaltered south and west wings. Built from 1874-1880, with the south wing added ca. 1904, it was begun when the Italianate style was at the height of its popularity in Durham and the country for residential and commercial architecture. The well-planned utilitarian structure with a pretentious exterior consists of four wings, all originally four stories tall, arranged around an open courtyard. The east wing and half of the north wing were lowered to two stories about 1920 and remodeled in the Classical Revival style. During the 1950s the present fiberglass screen was erected around all of the two wings, but the facades appear to be largely intact behind the screens.

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Constructed at the turn of the century, Hill Warehouse (1900), Washington Warehouse (1902-07), the Lucky Strike Building (1901-02), and Reed Warehouse were part of American Tobacco Company's ten-year building campaign that yielded twelve similar storage warehouses and tobacco processing buildings in Durham. These buildings, and eight others that were added to the W. Duke Sons & Company complex a few blocks to the northwest, have the same slow-burn construction as the W. T. Blackwell & Company Factory, with its thick, brick exterior walls and heavy timber interior structure. However, the newer buildings feature the Romanesque Revival style expressed entirely by decorative brickwork. The bands of dogtooth brickwork, machicolation, corbelling, recessed panels and squat, highly-ornamented chimney stacks on stepped parapets are identifying stylistic features of their medievalizing style--variously termed Romanesque Revival or Norman Revival. All are executed in the same muted brownish-red brick covered with an orange-red wash. A grid of evenly spaced brick pilasters divides their elevations, the recessed panels between them having segmentally-arched openings. All of these buildings have very shallow gable roofs punctuated by stepped or gabled parapets above the fire and end walls and each is unique in the degree of its ornamentation.

Noell Building (ca. 1930) in the center of the complex represents a transition from the highly-ornamented revival style of the earlier buildings to the more streamlined decoration of the later ones, as does the Power Plant and Engine House (1929-39) with its restrained Classical Revival style in smooth red brick and limestone. The Power Plant's large chimney stack, however, is ornamented with white, red, and black brick that spell out "Lucky Strike" and the product logo.

At the south end of the complex, the three later buildings, Fowler (1939) Strickland (1946) and Crowe (1953) all reflect the contemporary Art Moderne style of the late 1930s and 1940s as well as a progressively more functional approach to factory design. Unlike the earlier buildings with their profusion of ornament that mediates the blockiness of their forms, these massive structures have almost completely flat elevations into which rectangular windows are cleanly-incised, and they use limestone belts only as lines to accentuate horizontal or vertical elements.

With the exception of the Garage (ca. 1935) and a small office building, the subsidiary structures in the middle of the block are metal-clad. The largest of these is the rectangular, steel-framed coal shed between Hill Warehouse and the Washington Building. Connecting Unit 3 of the Washington Building to the Crowe Building at its second story, a one-level lunchroom forms a bridge over the railroad spurs in the center of the complex. The roofs and inner sides of the buildings are connected by and festooned with cooling towers, passageways (including an extremely long one from the Crowe

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Building to the Lucky Strike Building), steam and water pipes, and conveyors. In the middle of the plant there is a tall water tower painted with the red and white Lucky Strike logo.

Inventory List Key

C = Contributing

N = Noncontributing S = Structure

C 1. W. T. Blackwell & Company Factory (Bull Durham Tobacco Factory) (NHL). 1874, 1880, ca. 1904, ca. 1920. Large brick building of slow-burn construction consisting of four wings with courtyard in center. The north wing (facing railroad) was built in 1874, the east and west wings were added ca. 1880. All were originally four stories on a raised basement, distinguished by alternating projecting four-bay pavilions with quoined corners, closely-spaced segmentally-arched windows with shouldered architraves, and sheet metal Italianate cornices. Drawings indicate that the main, north elevation had a tall stepped and curved parapet above the east projecting bays which contained life-sized paintings of the company's three partners, William T. Blackwell, John R. Day and Julian S. Carr. In the main elevation is a round-arched tunnel to the courtyard. The north block housed company offices, sales and shipping departments, a tobacco storage facility, and packing and labelling operations. The east wing was used for cutting, bolting and drying tobacco, and the west wing housed a cutting and stemming operation, another tobacco storage facility, and a sorting, packing and finishing operation. The red brick walls were painted white sometime in the twentieth century.

When the American Tobacco Company acquired the Blackwell firm, it added the south wing ca. 1904 to create the present form of the building. It has plain rows of segmentally-arched windows and lacks the ornamental cornice. About 1920 the east half of the north wing and all of the east wing were reduced to two stories and remodeled to Classical Revival-style appearance, including segmentally-arched windows with voussoirs and a classical cornice with projecting sheet metal corona and parapets. In the 1950s the two-story section and remainder of the north wing were covered with fiberglass panels attached to a steel framework superimposed over existing facades.

C 2. Hill Warehouse, 1900. One-story with basement, double gable-roofed brick tobacco warehouse. The ornate Romanesque Revival end walls have stepped parapets with machicolation, corbelled-capped chimneys with paneling, and dogtooth courses; walls are divided by paneled pilasters into two-bay panels with (on the west half of building) segmentally-arched windows and

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machicolation. Hill is the most distinctive of the plant's turn-of-the-century buildings because it consists of two attached gable units, each with unusually tall free-standing parapets at both gable ends, displaying a panelled chimney pot on each step and cornices of corbelled pendants and bands of mousetoothing. Hill, named for prominent company executive Percival S. Hill, was built as a storage warehouse after acquisition by American Tobacco Company. The interior is structurally deteriorated, but the exterior walls are sound.

C S-1. **Standpipe**, 1922. Cylindrical, 150,000 gallon steel standpipe with low conical roof; built by Chicago Bridge and Iron Works.

C S-2. **Coal Shed**, ca. 1950. Large, semi-open coal shed with steel frame structure partially covered by corrugated steel; concrete block foundation; attached steel car shed.

C 3. Washington Building, 1902-1907, ca. 1915. (Counted as two buildings) Long row of connected Romanesque Revival style tobacco warehouses; originally two blocks of seven and four units constructed between 1902 and 1907 by American Tobacco Company; Unit 5 (from south) built ca. 1915. Due to the terrain, each unit is one-story with a basement that is an additional full, ground-level story on the east elevation. Each unit steps down approximately two feet from its neighbor to the north. All have wall surfaces divided by pilasters into panels with machicolation across the top and continuous cornices of dogtoothing. The gable ends of each building originally had stepped, shouldered parapets with machicolation and ornately corbelled and paneled chimney caps. All of the parapets except one between Units 3 and 4 have been reduced to low gables; most of the segmentally-arched windows with iron shutters have been altered--either bricked in or enlarged to square, multi-pane windows, as have the segmentally-arched windows; and modern metal awnings have been added to the west elevation, a continuous metal awning and loading dock to the east elevation. These were built as hogshead storage warehouses of slow-burn construction, and were probably named after Washington Duke, founder of the American Tobacco Company. Despite changes, these warehouses retain their overall character.

C 4. Noell Building, ca. 1902, ca. 1930. Austere, one-story brick building with basement; side elevations divided by pilasters into panels with corbelling at top; parapetted end walls. Although a number of the windows have been bricked-up and brick-veneered and small metal-clad second story additions have been made, the building retains its overall form and finish. It first appears on the 1902 Sanborn Map as a re-ordering plant with a cooperage in the basement. On the 1937 Sanborn Map it is labelled Noell Building and is used for re-drying tobacco.

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C 5. Power Plant and Engine House, 1929-1939. Two-story, flat-roofed brick power plant and engine house with one-story north wing and semi-detached brick smokestack with Lucky Strike logo. The severe Classical Revival exterior features limestone belt courses and keystones and concrete water table and steel factory windows. The north end room and engine room are largely gutted, but boilers remain. There are modern metal additions to the east side, a large coal chute on the roof, and a cocoon of steam and water pipes. Building built 1929 with addition at northwest corner in 1939.

C S-3. Water Tower, ca. 1930. Cylindrical 100,000 gallon metal water tank with conical cap, raised 150 feet on steel legs; painted white with Lucky Strike logo.

C 6. Lucky Strike Building (Cigarette Factory), 1901-1902; betw. 1913 and 1937. Four story, five-bay deep brick building of slow burn construction, with basement and shallow gable roof in restrained Romanesque Revival style. Original eight bays constructed in 1901-02 as stemmery with cooperage on first floor; three bays added to south end sometime between 1913 and 1937 and converted to cigarette factory. One or two segmentally-arched windows occur in each of the bays, which are divided by brick pilasters with small panels at top. Corbelled brick courses define floors. Cornices are of corbelled brick. On north are blind end bays. Stepped end parapets have corbelling.

C 7. Reed Warehouse, 1901-1902. Two-story Romanesque Revival style brick warehouse with basement of slow-burn construction. Street elevation is divided into three sections of five bays each by pilasters with recessed panels and by corbelled pendants; the top of each bay is machicolated and there is a corbelled string course between floors, as well as a corbelled and dog-toothed cornice. The three segmentally-arched doorways and square window openings on the first floor and segmentally-arched windows on the second floor are bricked up. Built as a storage facility for the American Tobacco Company.

C 8. Strickland Redrying Plant, 1946. Long, rectangular, flat-roofed three-story building with basement in austere Moderne style; fireproof concrete construction with brick curtain walls. End pavilions project slightly and have vertical window strips outlined in limestone; horizontal window strips are also outlined in limestone belts, as is water table. Most original multi-pane steel windows have been bricked in or replaced by small windows or louvers. Built as redrying plant, later functioned as a cigarette factory.

C 9. Crowe Building, 1953-1954. Tall, blocky, six-story building with basement of fireproof concrete construction with brick curtain walls; constructed as annex to adjacent Strickland and Fowler Buildings. Street elevation has slightly-projecting central bay with vertical strip of metal-louvered vents, limestone-trimmed entrance; horizontal belts of limestone at water table and cornice level are

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only other elements on unornamented, brick facade. Large metal cooling tower on roof, metal-sheathed passageway exiting from north side.

C 10. Fowler Building, 1938-1939. Large, flat-roofed, five-story factory building with basement and penthouse level in restrained Moderne style, of fireproof concrete construction with brick curtain walls. Main street and rear elevation filled with horizontal rows of large windows (now with modern bronze glass), joined by common limestone sills. End pavilions are taller and project slightly, with vertical rows of single windows (with replacement bronze glass), and square limestone grills at top. Plain limestone belt courses define water table and slightly-recessed cornice level of end pavilions. One-story loading dock at rear with metal-clad shed roofs. Built as cigarette plant for American Tobacco Company.

C 11. Lunch Room, 1954. This metal-clad, one-story, steel frame structure connects first full story of Crowe Building with upper level of Unit 3 of Washington Building; forms bridge across rail line and open space between the buildings.

C 12. Garage, ca. 1935. One-story, rectangular brick building with flat roof and stepped gable ends; line of tall, metal rolling doors along north elevation. This building is present on the 1937 Sanborn Map, but not on the previous 1914 map.

C 13. Brick Office, ca. 1950. Small, one-story brick office with flat roof.

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Section 8: Statement of Significance

The American Tobacco Company Manufacturing Plant symbolizes the history of the tobacco industry in Durham through its evolution from W. T. Blackwell & Company, to The American Tobacco Company trust which absorbed the Blackwell firm in 1899, through the reorganized American Tobacco Company formed when the trust was dissolved in 1911. At the northeast corner of the complex, the distinctive Italianate W. T. Blackwell & Company Factory (NHL) was begun in 1874 by W. T. Blackwell & Company, which originated from the first successful tobacco manufacturing company in North Carolina. Four of the ten other primary structures in the plant were constructed by The American Tobacco Company trust, which controlled eighty-nine percent of the United States cigarette market when it was formed by James B. Duke in 1890, and which diversified to dominate virtually all other tobacco markets by 1910. These massive brick warehouses and factories, with their slow-burn mill construction and decoration evocative of medieval architecture, reflect the power and success of the trust. After 1911, the reorganized American Tobacco Company remained as the industry's powerhouse through the 1950s, its continued growth requiring construction of a new power plant and three starkly modern factories at the southeast end of the complex. Altogether, the American Tobacco Company Manufacturing Plant is an important landmark to Durham's original *raison d'etre*, the manufacture of tobacco products, and a major monument of North Carolina's primary industry of the twentieth century. The complex has local, state, and national significance as a shrine of tobacco history, containing both the oldest tobacco factory in Durham and successive phases of growth of the American Tobacco Company during the first half of the twentieth century.

The historic industrial context for the significance of the American Tobacco Company Manufacturing Plant may be found in "Historic Resources of Durham (Partial Inventory: Historic Architectural Properties)," (specifically in section B-1, "Historical Development," pages 8/5-10, 8/13-14, and 8/20-22.) The historic architectural context for the district appears in "Historic Resources of Durham," section C, "Durham's Architecture," under the heading "Industrial Buildings: Monuments of Tobacco and Textiles" (pages 7/4-7). The district's period of significance begins in 1874 with the construction of the Bull Durham Factory and extends to 1954, when the Lunch Room, the final building in the complex, was built by the American Tobacco Company. Additional industrial context appears in this nomination. Since the entire plant continued to operate into the 1980s, the district retains a remarkable level of integrity, with all of its resources contributing to the area's historical significance.

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Historical Background

According to Nannie May Tilley in *The Bright Tobacco Industry*, prior to 1856 tobacco manufacturing in Durham was limited to the shredding of small lots of leaves by farmers who then peddled it throughout North Carolina.¹ In that year, Robert F. Morris moved from Granville County to Durham, where he recognized the prospects for growth presented by the railroad. He bought land on the south side of the tracks close to the depot (today the north end of the American Tobacco Plant), built a small frame factory, and began manufacturing smoking tobacco under the brand name "Best Flavored Spanish Tobacco." For reasons unknown, four years later Morris sold his healthy business to John R. Green, a recent arrival from Person County.²

Green kept Morris's brand, but he also was the first to cater to the "fastidious tastes of University students" in nearby Chapel Hill.³ Green's factory operated through the Civil War, and though the factory was ransacked by Union and Confederate troops following the surrender of General Johnston at Bennett Place, that served only to spread the reputation of his products.⁴ Mr. Green was quick to see his advantage and immediately christened his tobacco "Durham" and selected the Durham bull as his trademark. This was the first tobacco manufactured in Durham branded with the words "Durham Smoking Tobacco" and the first to use the bull as a trademark.⁵ The emblem is said to have been inspired by the bull's head on the jars of Coleman's mustard, manufactured in Durham, England.⁶

Green's business boomed and in 1867 he found an able partner to help him manage it in William T. Blackwell, a Person County merchant, manufacturer, and peddler of smoking tobacco during the war years and most recently the proprietor of a tobacco shop in Kinston. Green died in 1869, and shortly thereafter Blackwell formed a business association with James R. Day. At Green's estate sale in 1870, Blackwell purchased the "Tobacco Factory lot, fixtures, machinery, trade mark, copy right and good will of the establishment at Durham used by John R. Green for the Manufacture of Smoking and Chewing Tobacco" for \$10,292.⁷ In 1871, Blackwell and Day acquired a third partner, Julian

¹Nannie May Tilley, *The Bright Tobacco Industry: 1860-1948* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 548.

²Wyatt T. Dixon, "Fight Still Goes On," *The Durham Sun*, 20 April 1984.

³Tilley, 548.

⁴Hiram V. Paul, *History of the Town of Durham, North Carolina* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1884), 20.

⁵Durham Tobacco Plant, 28 April 1874, Vol. IV, No. 12.

⁶Tilley, 548.

⁷Orange County Register of Deeds (DCRD), Deed Book 40, pp. 451-452.

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Shakespeare Carr, a member of a well-established Chapel Hill mercantile family. In 1873 the three men recorded a contract that formalized their equal partnership, W. T. Blackwell & Co.⁸

Blackwell, Day, and Carr went on to expand the firm into the first great tobacco empire in Durham as it grew from some dozen employees in 1869 to about 900 in 1884.⁹ The triumvirate had acted to prevent the use of either the bull or names like "Durham Smoking Tobacco" or "Original Durham Tobacco" on other brands. After fifteen years of litigation, the company was able to obtain exclusive rights to the bull trademark.¹⁰ Despite continuing expense and harrassment of suits and countersuits over the trademark, Blackwell & Company also moved to establish Durham as North Carolina's first tobacco market with their opening of a sales warehouse, located next to the Bull Durham factory, where it conducted its first sale in 1871.¹¹ An 1872 issue of the *Durham Tobacco Plant* called "Genuine Durham Smoking Tobacco" the "most popular brand of smoking tobacco in the United States."¹²

The growth of the company was dramatically expressed in 1874 by the construction of a large, four-story brick Italianate factory on the site of the original buildings. Over the next several years, the addition of two wings to the building attested to the company's continued success. In 1884 historian Hiram Paul called it "the most attractive smoking tobacco factory in the world" and "the shrine of all pilgrims to Durham."¹³ In his description of the plant, Paul wrote:

Within the grounds, there are all kinds of supplementary structures, such as storage houses for leaf tobacco and other things, printing establishments, box making factories, machine shop, fire apparatus, etc. In addition to the buildings in the enclosure, the company has several other large warehouses used for storing leaves. They constantly carry from three to five million pounds of leaf tobacco adapted to their requirements.¹⁴

Located atop the 55-foot tower on Blackwell Street, the distinctive whistle that imitated the bellow of a bull summoned workers to the plant from the dozens of tenement houses the company built nearby.¹⁵

⁸ Paul, 105; DCRD, Deed Book 42, p. 30.

⁹ *Durham Tobacco Plant*, 14 March 1877, Vol. VI, No. 6.

¹⁰ W. K. Boyd, *The Story of Durham* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1925), 61, 72.

¹¹ Tilley, 206-7; Boyd, 69.

¹² *Durham Tobacco Plant*, 14 February 1872, Vol. I, No. 6.

¹³ Paul, 73.

¹⁴ Paul, 74.

¹⁵ Paul, 73.

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Blackwell & Co., is the only tobacco manufacturing firm in Durham known to have built worker housing; these have all been removed.

After Blackwell sold his interest in the firm in 1882 in order to establish the Bank of Durham, Julian S. Carr became W. T. Blackwell & Company's president. In the course of building the company's tobacco empire, Carr helped direct a revolution in the technology of the industry, from manufacturing to packaging. He mechanized the manual flailing operation in the new Bull Durham factory by installing the Smith machine, a variation on a wheat thresher, used in Virginia. When the new equipment expelled the crushed tobacco too rapidly for hand packing, employee L. W. Lawrence developed the first "Smoking Tobacco packer."¹⁶ Financed by Julian S. Carr, inventor William H. Kerr developed a tobacco bag machine that could produce thousands of bags a day.¹⁷

A significant factor in the success of "Bull Durham" smoking tobacco was Carr's genius for advertising. In 1877, he began a national campaign to promote the Bull. The familiar symbol was displayed in various publications in several moods and poses. Between 1883 and 1887, a nationwide newspaper campaign was launched and accompanied by cash premiums for empty tobacco pouches, gifts to dealers, and testimonials by noted personages such as Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Thomas Carlyle. Four teams of painters working under the supervision of North Carolina artist J. Gilmer Koerner were kept busy supplying the country with signs and trademarks. The Bull even appeared in foreign countries and signs proclaiming "Bull Durham" the world's most popular smoking tobacco were seen decorating the pyramids of Egypt.¹⁸

Blackwell & Company's domination of the loose smoking tobacco market prompted competitor James B. Duke to turn to the manufacture of cigarettes. W. Duke Sons & Company became a leader in cigarette manufacturing. In 1890, James B. Duke created The American Tobacco Company, a conglomerate that dominated the country's cigarette industry. Soon, the trust diversified as it sought control of the other branches of tobacco manufacturing. At the end of an intense struggle that lasted from 1894 to 1898, the American Tobacco Company controlled the nation's plug manufacturing, as well as being the largest producer of smoking tobacco in the country.¹⁹

It was Duke's preoccupation with the plug trade that led to the trust's purchase of his old rival, W. T. Blackwell & Company. A group of New York financiers, incorporated as Union Tobacco Company, had acquired control of the Blackwell firm and National Cigarette and Tobacco Company of New

¹⁶ Boyd, 71; Tilley, 500-02.

¹⁷ Tilley, 549-550.

¹⁸ Paul, 62.

¹⁹ Tilley, 557.

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York. Aware of Duke's interest in plug, they also had obtained an option on an interest in the St. Louis plug maker, Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company. In purchasing Union Tobacco in 1899, Duke also got the Blackwell company's manager since 1892, Percival S. Hill, who eventually brought his son, George Washington Hill, into the business.²⁰ By 1900, The American Tobacco Company had become a giant trust with approximately three-fifths of the nation's smoking and chewing tobacco business.²¹

The American Tobacco Company retained both the Bull Durham and W. T. Blackwell & Company names. The striking Romanesque Revival style Hill Warehouse of 1900 and Reed Warehouse of 1901/02, evidence of the growth of Bull Durham Tobacco under the guidance of the trust, have the words "Blackwell's Durham Tobacco Company" inscribed on their cornerstones. Built about the same time, the Lucky Strike Building, originally a stemmery, and Washington Building, constructed as a series of warehouses, also attest to the company's continued health. The Washington Building was probably named for Washington Duke and Hill Warehouse certainly for Percival S. Hill.

The United States Government brought suit against The American Tobacco Company for combination in restraint of trade in July, 1907, but the case did not come to a climax until November 16, 1911, when the Supreme Court ruled that the trust had to be dissolved. One of the "Big Four" companies created from Duke's dissolution plan, the substantially reorganized American Tobacco Company, with Percival S. Hill as its president, was pared to \$98 million in assets that included the Durham plant and the trust's cigarette factories in Richmond and New York City. Naturally the new American Tobacco Company retained Bull Durham Tobacco, then considered the most popular smoking tobacco in the world. It remained so popular that during the last years of World War I its entire output was sent to Gen. Pershing's forces in France.²²

The new American Tobacco Company also retained a thirty-seven percent share of the nation's cigarette market, all of it in domestic tobacco, which was to grow tremendously over the next several years under the increasing influence of Hill's son. At Butler-Butler, one of the trust's subsidiaries merged to form the new company, George Washington Hill had concentrated on the production of cigarettes, and particularly one brand, Pall Mall, which the new American Tobacco's Durham plant began to produce in the 1910s. In 1913 American also shifted production of its major brand, Sovereign, from New York to Durham.²³

²⁰ "Sold American!"—*The First Fifty Years*, privately printed by the American Tobacco Company, Inc., 1954, 23-24. Copy located at the Durham Public Library.

²¹ "Sold American!"—*The First Fifty Years*, 26.

²² Tilley, 615.

²³ "Sold American!," 40, 42; Joseph C. Robert, *The Story of Tobacco in America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 125.

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The younger Hill took over the marketing and sales of American Tobacco's cigarettes and led the development of a new standard brand for American, introduced in 1916 under the name "Lucky Strike." Lucky Strikes were produced in the New York, Richmond, and Durham plants. George W. Hill succeeded his father as president of American Tobacco in 1925, pushing Lucky Strikes to the number one position by the beginning of 1928, ahead of R. J. Reynolds's Camels and Liggett & Myers's Chesterfields.²⁴

Nationally, the tobacco industry continued to be a battleground among a small number of large companies from the 1930s to the 1950s. Cigarette sales continued to soar during World War II and into the 1950s. Soaring cigarette sales during World War II have been attributed to "war nerves," high national income, and aggressive advertising campaigns. During the 1930s, the center of power in most cigarette manufacturing companies shifted from the production branches to financing and selling. During the war, per capita use of cigarettes rose and total cigarette production rose from nearly 218 billion to some 332 billion. By this time, about one-third of all women were smoking.²⁵ The boom continued after the war. In 1948, cigarette production was estimated at 387 billion, of which 350 billion went into the domestic market, exceeding all records. Powerful advertising campaigns fueled the steady climb in sales. In January 1949, The American Tobacco Company's Lucky Strike brand was the top seller, closely followed by Reynolds's Camels and Liggett and Myers's Chesterfields. The "big three" controlled approximately eighty-four percent of the American market, and to continue to meet the steadily increasing demand, all of them expanded their facilities during the late 1940s.²⁶

The American Tobacco Company remained the country's leading tobacco manufacturer through the 1950s. Although cigarette consumption declined during the Depression, this slump was countered by an increase in Bull Durham's sale of loose tobacco. In 1939, American Tobacco introduced its Pall Mall brand as the first king-sized cigarette. Later they introduced Tareyton, which, with Pall Mall, helped the firm capture ninety percent of the king-size market by the early 1950s. In a single year during World War II, more than one-half of Lucky Strike's volume of almost 200 billion was sent to American troops overseas. In 1946, domestic sales of Lucky Strikes increased by 32 billion, surpassing all other one-year increases in the history of tobacco.²⁷ These soaring figures reflected the need for larger facilities. In accordance with Hill's policy that each major location be a complete

²⁴ Susan Wagner, *Cigarette Country, Tobacco in American History and Politics* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 51; "Sold American!," 75.

²⁵ Robert, 260; 269-272.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 272-273.

²⁷ "Sold American!," 76, 84, 88, 96, 112.

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unit with leaf storage, stemming and manufacturing, the Durham plant underwent considerable expansion between 1930 and the early 1950s with the construction of a new power plant and the Strickland, Fowler, and Crowe buildings.²⁸ This final phase of construction at the Durham plant marks the peak of American Tobacco's tobacco operations. Since 1958, when R. J. Reynolds Company replaced American Tobacco as the largest seller of cigarettes, the company has been in a steady decline.²⁹

Concern about the health effects of smoking swept the country during the 1950s and 1960s, profoundly changing the legal and economic climate for the Big Six tobacco manufacturers. *Reader's Digest* published a series of articles about the health hazards of smoking in 1954. In 1964, the U.S. Surgeon General announced that cigarette smoking was a serious health hazard. Sales slowed and the market stagnated. Although American Tobacco Company remained one of the largest cigarette manufacturers in the country, during the 1960s it began to look for new areas of investment in response to the U. S. Surgeon General's stand against cigarette smoking. In the 1960s the firm reorganized with the creation of a new parent company, American Brands, Inc., of which the American Tobacco Company became one of many divisions. By the early 1980s, the Durham plant was producing Lucky Strike and Pall Mall cigarettes and small cigars, while the Richmond and Reidsville factories produced cigarettes as well as all of the company's smoking tobacco, including Bull Durham.³⁰ In August of 1987, production stopped at the Durham plant, and in December of 1988 the plant was sold to ABD Associates Limited Partnership, a North Carolina entity that includes local developer Adam Abram. In 1994 American Tobacco Brands sold American Tobacco Company to Brown & Williamson, itself owned by British American Tobacco PLC.³¹

A number of different adaptive-use proposals have been considered for the plant throughout the 1990s. The plant's central location between Durham's central business district and the Durham Expressway makes it prime real estate. Construction of a new baseball stadium for the Durham Bulls in the mid-1990s adjacent to the plant increased the plant's appeal. The plant is currently under option to Capitol Broadcasting Company, which is formulating a plan to convert the plant's fifteen acres of structures into a mixed-use office and retail development using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. If the plan is carried out, this will be the largest commercial development

²⁸Robert, 272-273; "Sold American!," 82.

²⁹William R. Finger, *The Tobacco Industry in Transition: Policies for the 1980s* (North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research, Inc.: 1981), 183.

³⁰Claudia Roberts Brown's telephone interview with Ben Roberts (27 April 1984) and Carl Allen (7 May 1984), executives with the American Tobacco Company, Durham.

³¹Ruth Little's telephone interview with Adam Abrams, Durham (26 April 2000).

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in central Durham in many years, with enormous visibility due to its site as a gateway to downtown Durham.

Criteria Consideration G

The two buildings in the American Tobacco Company Manufacturing Plant that are not yet fifty years old, the Crowe Building (1953) and Lunch Room (1954), contribute to the district because they fall within the period of significance when American Tobacco Company's cigarette production was still at peak capacity. The 1950s were the final decade of domestic expansion before the decades of decline that began in the 1960s with government anti-smoking campaigns that resulted in reduced demand for their products and a gradual corporate diversification. The majority of the district's buildings were completed by 1950. The Crowe Building, built to link the Strickland Redrying Plant and the Fowler cigarette factory building, filled in the last gap in the Blackwell Street streetscape. The following year the Lunch Room was built as an elevated annex between the Crowe Building and the Washington building. Neither building is of exceptional significance; rather they are integral elements of the final expansion phase of the plant, of Moderne design like the earlier buildings in the phase. Neither building has been significantly altered since construction.

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Section 10: Boundaries

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property encompass all of Parcel 1, Durham County Tax Map 40, comprising 14.58 acres.

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundaries encompass the tract associated with the American Tobacco Company Plant throughout its history.

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Section Photos Page 17

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Photographs:

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Photographer: M. Ruth Little

Date: January 2000

Location of negatives: North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh

- A. Blackwell Street overall view, looking north, Fowler and Crowe Buildings in foreground.
- B. Blackwell Street overall view, looking south, Reed Warehouse in foreground.
- C. Bull Durham Building, main elevation, view from northeast.
- D. Carr Street overall view, looking northeast, showing Hill Warehouse and Bull Durham Building.
- E. Crowe Building, from southeast.
- F. Interior plant view, looking north, with Lunch Room in center background.
- G. Interior plant view, looking north, with Water Tower and Power Plant in center background.
- H. Interior plant view, looking west, with Bull Durham Building, Standpipe, Small Office, Hill Warehouse, and Coal Shed visible.
- I. Coal Shed, looking northwest.
- J. Interior plant view, looking south between Power Plant and Washington Building.
- K. Fowler Building, interior of basement level.
- L. Strickland Building, interior of basement level.

PETTIGREW STREET

HILL WAREHOUSE

BULL DURHAM TOBACCO FACTORY

Coal Shed

Office

Noell Building

Cigarette Factory

Lucky Strike Smokestack

POWER PLANT

REED WAREHOUSE

WASHINGTON BUILDING

Water Tower

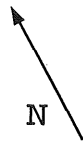
STRICKLAND PLANT

LUNCH ROOM

CROWE BUILDING

AMERICAN TOBACCO COMPANY MANUFACTURING PLANT

DURHAM, DURHAM COUNTY, NC



NO SCALE

BLACKWELL STREET

CARR STREET

GARAGE

FOWLER BUILDING

WILLARD STREET



NO
RIGHT
TURN

CCB

ONLY