

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina
COUNTY: Durham
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Bull Durham Tobacco Factory (American Tobacco Company)

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
W. T. Blackwell and Company

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
South side of Pettigrew Street between Carr and Blackwell streets

CITY OR TOWN:  
Durham

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
Fourth

STATE:  
North Carolina

CODE:  
37

COUNTY:  
Durham

CODE:  
063

The Hon. Ike F. Andrews

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Mr. Harwood T. Smith, Branch Manager, American Tobacco Co.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
P. O. Box 1091

CITY OR TOWN:  
Durham

STATE:  
North Carolina

CODE:  
37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Durham County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Durham

STATE:  
North Carolina

CODE:  
37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal  
 State  
 County  
 Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: North Carolina

COUNTY: Durham

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

## 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

The W. T. Blackwell and Company Bull Durham Factory is a four-story, rectangular-shaped brick structure of Italianate design with an interior courtyard and is located at the corner of Blackwell and West Pettigrew Streets in a commercial-industrial section of downtown Durham, N.C. At one time, says Heimann, "the world's largest tobacco plant," the facility was constructed in stages between 1874 and 1903. It measures approximately 90 by 115 feet and contains 94,000 square feet of floor space.<sup>11</sup>

In 1874 William T. Blackwell and his partners constructed the north-facing main block on West Pettigrew Street and the attached east wing fronting Blackwell Street, and in 1880 they added the western wing to form a U-shaped structure. In 1903, 4 years after the American Tobacco Company assumed control, the southern wing was constructed, giving the building its present configuration.

According to the 1884 and 1893 Sanborn Insurance Maps of the factory, the main block housed company offices, the sales and shipping department, a tobacco storage facility, and packing and labeling operations. Near the center of this section was an entrance to the employee parking lot located in the inner courtyard. The east wing was used for cutting, bolting, and drying tobacco while the west wing housed a cutting and stemming operation, a tobacco storage facility, and a sorting, packing, and finishing operation. By 1893 this latter wing's operations had been confined largely to bag and box manufacturing. Behind the east and west wings were a box factory of frame construction, a 55 foot bell tower, a large stable, a paint shop, blacksmith and carpenter shops, a tobacco warehouse, machine shops, a building housing a wide variety of firefighting equipment, and numerous other structures. Over the years, these structures were all torn down as the American Tobacco Company expanded the scope of its operations on the site.

Sometime after American Tobacco took over the plant, the third and fourth stories were removed from the east wing and the eastern half of the main block. Relatively recently, this portion of the building including the entire north facade has been covered with gold-painted aluminum sheathing. The uncovered portions are white-painted brick which is set in American bond. The structure sits on 6-foot-thick brick foundations and has a partially raised full basement which is set apart from the four

(continued)

---

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 162.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET W.T. Blackwell ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

upper stories by a string course. The building is capped by a flat roof covered with gravel and tar and has an overhanging metal cornice ornamented with raised panels and a modillion course punctuated by curvilinear brackets which interrupt the paneled frieze.

The building's original exterior is best conveyed by the 12-bay-wide west wing. It is divided into four sections, each three bays wide with the first and third sections projecting slightly. Divisions are emphasized by stuccoed quoins. Windows in this section are set in crosseted stucco surrounds while windows in other sections are set in plain rounded arches. Windows throughout are of the four-over-four sash variety and have metal frames and wooden sills. Doorways generally have rounded arches, and the only remaining wooden doors have raised panels.

Inside, the structure has undergone little alteration with the exception of the first-floor section of the east wing and the eastern portion of the main block, which have been modernized to serve as office space for the American Tobacco Company. Although all original machinery has been removed, the character of the unaltered sections is conveyed by their original pine flooring, plastered walls, enclosed wooden stairways, six-panel wood doors, and exposed wooden ceiling joists resting on wooden support posts. Support posts in the 1874 section are square shaped while those in the more recent sections are rounded.

Although the factory is no longer used for tobacco manufacture, it remains in good condition. In addition to providing space for the Durham offices of the American Tobacco Company, it also houses a returned goods department and storage facility for obsolete machinery.

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education           | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering         | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention           | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape           | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | Architecture                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-  | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature          | itarian                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military            | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bull Durham Tobacco Factory was completed by 1875 by W. T. Blackwell and Company, the first successful tobacco manufacturing company in North Carolina. It is Durham's most important landmark to the city's raison d'etre, the manufacture of tobacco, and one of the most important monuments of the state's primary industry. Built at the height of the success of their "Bull Durham" smoking tobacco, the factory was a well-planned functional structure with a pretentiously stylish exterior, with crosssetted window surrounds, quoined corners, and ornate bracketed eaves.

Bull Durham Smoking Tobacco was originally manufactured by John Ruffin Green in the little settlement of Durham's Station, a stop on the North Carolina Railroad. The reputation of Green's quality granulated smoking tobacco was spread throughout the northern states by Union soldiers who had sampled it while in Durham when General Joseph E. Johnston surrendered to General William T. Sherman. The plundering of Green's factory was a blessing in disguise, and Green's tobacco, which he named the "Original Genuine Durham Smoking Tobacco" and illustrated with a side view of a "Durham Bull" (inspired, it is said, by the bull's head on the jars of Colman's Mustard, manufactured in Durham, England) became extremely popular. In 1869, just before his death in 1870, Green took into partnership William T. Blackwell, a tobacco peddler. In 1871 Blackwell purchased Green's tobacco factory, including the "Tobacco Factory lot . . . containing five acres and all the buildings thereunto with the fixtures, machinery" and the "trade mark" for \$10,292, and continued the business. The Tobacco Plant on February 14, 1872, stated that ". . . we have no hesitation in saying that at present, its /sic/ the most popular brand of smoking tobacco in the United States." In 1873 Blackwell took into partnership Julian S. Carr and James R. Day, and the firm became known as W. T. Blackwell and Company. The new factory was probably begun soon after, and must have just been finished in April, 1875, when it was reported that it was ". . . without doubt the finest building of the kind in the United States" and that "Double sized portraits of all the partners are to be placed out on the walls."

Julian S. Carr conducted the first great tobacco advertising campaign, and built the Durham Bull into a world-famous symbol. The bull ornamented not only the facade of the W. T. Blackwell and Company factory, but was painted by teams of sign painters throughout the United States, and once even appeared on the pyramids of Egypt. Jules Korner, from Kernersville,

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	North Carolina	
COUNTY	Durham	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE

(Number all entries)

8.

North Carolina, who called himself "Reuben Rink," designed these bulls and supervised the campaign. Carr did not stop simply with the image of the bull. In the Greensboro Patriot in 1876 is an account of the factory's famous steam bull whistle:

Blackwell, the Durham tobacco manufacturer, has had constructed for his factory an instrument after the style of the Calliope which imitates the bellowing of the bull with all its variations to a dot. It can be heard for miles, and as it sometimes exercises quite early in the morning, the effect on strangers who are not aware of the existence of an artificial bellower is remarkable. They think Durham has the longest winded and strongest lunged bovines in America and Blackwell enjoys it.

The factory became "the shrine of all pilgrims to Durham," and Bull Durham became a definite part of the American scene. It is said that a standard part of a cowboy's costume was the tag from a sack of Bull Durham hanging from his shirt pocket.

The growth of W. T. Blackwell and Company from some dozen employees in 1869 to about 900 in 1884 paralleled the dramatic growth of the city of Durham, and together with the rise of James B. Duke's cigarette factory made Durham one of the foremost tobacco manufacturing centers in the United States. In 1882 Blackwell sold his interest, but the firm continued to prosper. Bull Durham's strongest rival was James B. Duke, who formed the American Tobacco Company in 1890. In 1899 in the process of forming his tobacco empire, Duke bought Blackwell's Durham Tobacco Company. This trust was dissolved by the famous United States Supreme Court decision of 1911. In 1913 the American Tobacco Company, greatly reduced in size but still strong, shifted production of its major brand, Sovereign, from New York to its Durham plant--the old W. T. Blackwell and Company factory. Here their most popular brand, "Lucky Strike," has been manufactured since its introduction in 1916. The company also continued to produce Bull Durham Smoking Tobacco, which was still so popular during World War I that it was withdrawn from the home market so that the entire output could be sent to United States soldiers in France. The factory complex has grown, but the offices of the American Tobacco Company are located in the original factory building, and Bull Durham Smoking Tobacco, packaged in the characteristic drawstring bag, is still marketed by the company.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research and architectural description by Ruth Little Stokes, survey specialist.  
 Durham County Records, Durham County Courthouse, Durham, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).  
 Durham County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).  
 Durham Tobacco Plant (newspaper published weekly in 1870s and 1880s); on microfilm in Division of Archives and History.  
Greensboro Patriot, on microfilm in Division of Archives and History.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "		35° 59 ' 38"	78° 54 ' 15 "	
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 5 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Survey and Planning Unit

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History      DATE: 9 April 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh      STATE: North Carolina      CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name Thornton W. Mitchell  
 Thornton W. Mitchell

Title Acting Director, Division of Archives and History

Date 9 April 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE North Carolina	
COUNTY Durham	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

9.

North Carolina and Tobacco. Published by The Tobacco Institute, Washington, D. C., 1971.

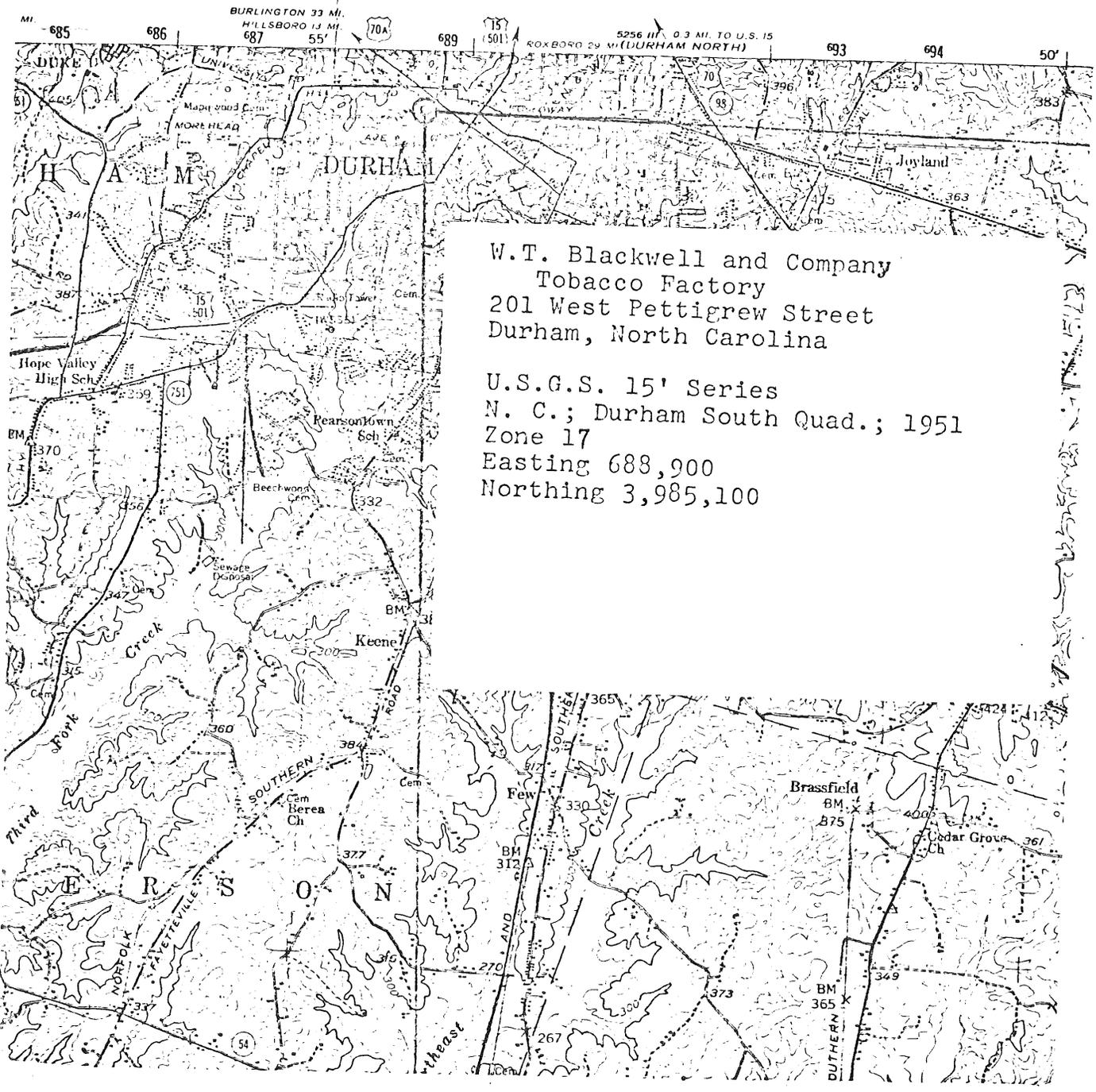
Orange County Records, Orange County Courthouse, Hillsborough, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

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

Robert, Joseph C. The Story of Tobacco in America. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949.

Sanborn Insurance Map of Durham 1884. Copy in the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C.

Tilley, Nannie May. The Bright-Tobacco Industry, 1860-1929. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948.

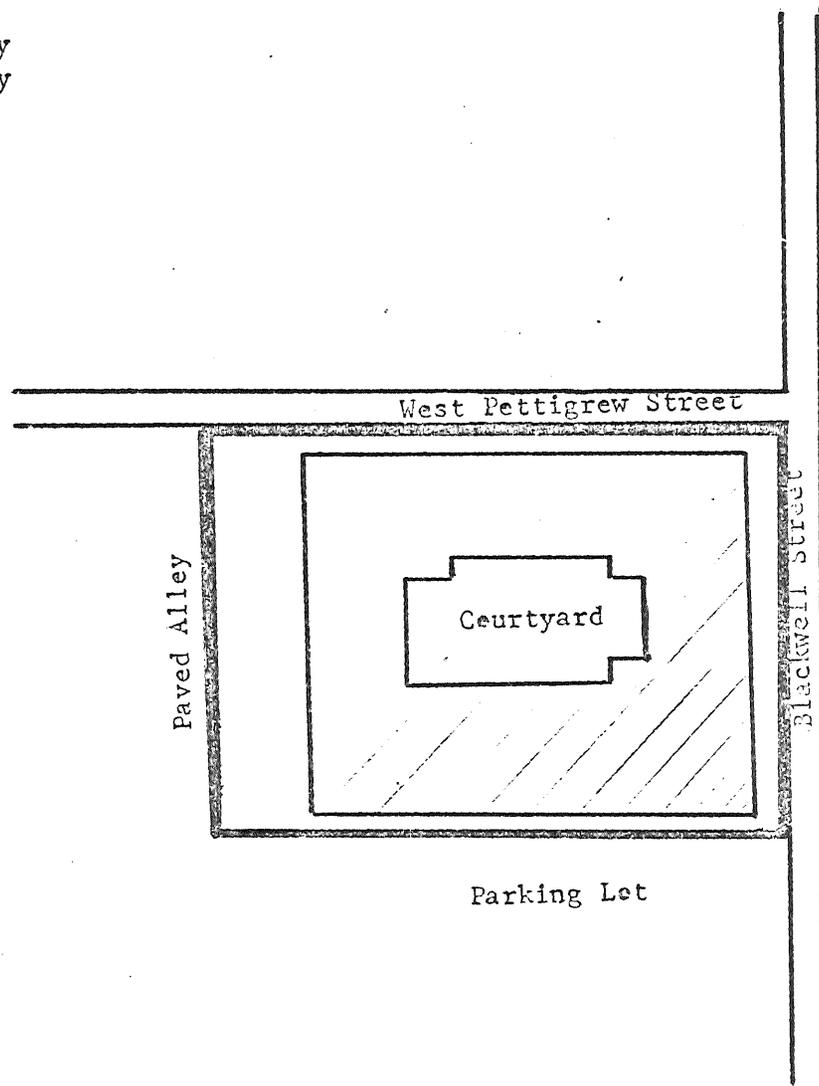


W.T. Blackwell and Company  
Tobacco Factory  
201 West Pettigrew Street  
Durham, North Carolina

U.S.G.S. 15' Series  
N. C.; Durham South Quad.; 1951  
Zone 17  
Easting 688,900  
Northing 3,985,100

W. T. Blackwell and Company  
Bull Durham Tobacco Factory  
201 West Pettigrew Street  
Durham, North Carolina

N



Prepared by:  
Ralph J. Christian  
AASLH  
December, 1976

NOT TO SCALE

