United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

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historic name  CITY GARAGE YARD AND FIRE DRILL TOWER

other names/site number  CITY PLACE

2. Location

---

street & number  501 WASHINGTON STREET

city or town  DURHAM

county  DURHAM

code  063

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official  SHPO  3/10/00

4. National Park Service Certification

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I hereby certify that this property is: ___ entered in the National Register ___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ other (explain):  

Signature of the Keeper  Date of Action
5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>__public-State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__public-Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td>__object</td>
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Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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<td>1 structures</td>
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<td>3 objects</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4 Total</td>
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Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

HISTORIC RESOURCES OF DURHAM

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

<table>
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Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

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<th>Cat:</th>
<th>Sub:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BUSINESS/Office Building</td>
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7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

| ROMANESQUE REVIVAL |
| COLONIAL REVIVAL |
| MISSION REVIVAL |

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

| foundation BRICK |
| STONE |
| CONCRETE |
| Walls BRICK |
| STONE |
| CONCRETE BLOCK |
| FRAME |
| roof ASPHALT |
| other |

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET
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)

_X_ 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.

_X_ 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.)

Property is:

_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)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1927 - 1950

Significant Dates

1927

1928

CA. 1948

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

ATWOOD AND NASH (FIRE DRILL TOWER)

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Primary Location of Additional Data

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office

__ Other State Agency

__ Federal agency

__ Local government

__ University

__ Other

Name of repository:
CITY GARAGE YARD AND FIRE DRILL TOWER

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  2.8

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)  X  See continuation sheet.

Zone  Easting  Northing  Zone  Easting  Northing

1

2

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.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title  BETSY GOHDES-BATEN

organization

date  AUGUST 1, 1999

street & number  2737 CIRCLE DRIVE  telephone  919-489-6368

city or town  DURHAM  state  NC  zip code  27705

Additional Documentation

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

(Choose with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

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

name  ZAPOLSKI/RUDD, LLC.

street & number  501 WASHINGTON STREET  telephone  919-956-2772

city or town  DURHAM  state  NC  zip code  27701

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

General Description:

The City Garage Yard and Fire Drill Tower is the historic name given to an eclectic municipal services complex constructed during the early- to mid-twentieth century when the City of Durham expanded and improved the public works and fire departments as part of its community planning and development programs. The complex of four contributing buildings, two non-contributing buildings, and one non-contributing structure is located on a polygonal parcel of approximately 2.8 acres at the intersection of Morris and Corporation Streets near the Norfolk and Western Railroad tracks within Durham’s central business district frame. Sanborn Maps show that the parcel took its present size and configuration between 1956 and 1965 when a section of Lamond Avenue on its eastern boundary was realigned and named Corporation Street and a short segment of Washington Street that separated the Fire Drill Tower from the City Garage Yard was closed. The parcel is bounded by Morris Street on the east, Corporation Street on the south, and a line in close proximity to a chain link fence on the west and on the north until it reaches an industrial warehouse. The boundary then continues along the south facade of that building to close the polygon at Morris Street. Surrounding properties have different uses; large tobacco warehouses on the west, industrial buildings on the north and south, and Durham Athletic Park on the east clearly distinguish the municipal services complex from its neighbors.

Fronting on Morris Street, architectural focal points of the complex are the City Garage (CB#1) [Contributing Building], constructed in 1927, with 1935, 1940s, ca. 1955, and ca. 1965 additions, and the Fire Drill Tower (CB#2) constructed in 1928; both are utilitarian early-twentieth-century buildings with distinctive Romanesque and Period Revival ornament. To the west and north, five additional buildings are smaller simpler structures reflecting the growth of the complex as facilities for the Sanitary, Street Maintenance, and Property Care Divisions of Durham City Government were added and enlarged by employees. Of these, the Signs and Markings Shop (CB#3) constructed ca. 1948 with a ca. 1965 addition, and the Employees’ Restroom (CB#4) constructed ca. 1948 are in near-original condition and contribute to the historic character of the complex. Elsewhere, the Signal Shop (NCB#1) [Non-contributing Building], constructed ca. 1948 has extensive 1960s-1970s modifications and 1999 renovations, and the Metal Storage Shed (NCB#2) and the Pole Shed (NCS#1) [Non-contributing Structure], constructed ca. 1965 and in 1988 respectively, are not yet fifty years of age.

Contributing buildings in the complex are rectangular or polygonal in form and one story in height except that the Fire Drill Tower has six stories and the ca. 1955 block-and-frame wing of the City Garage has recently been enlarged and divided into two stories. Construction materials include brick, stone, concrete block, and frame. Brick dominates the complex; it is found on the long main block of the City Garage and on the lofty Fire Drill Tower. Stone, too, plays a significant visual role; the majority of the 1930s and 1940s additions to the City Garage, the Employees’ Restroom, and the 1940s portion of the Sign and Markings Shop are constructed from ashlar granite pavers salvaged when Durham Streets were macadamized. Concrete block is present in the 1950s and 1960s additions to the City Garage and the Signs and Markings Shop, and frame is also found in the 1950s addition to the City Garage.
The design of the contributing buildings suits the purposes for which they were intended. The City Garage is an expansive, largely one-story, polygonal structure with multiple equipment-size access bays while the Fire Drill Tower is a narrow six-story building with openings on each floor that allowed fires set for training activities to rise and burn freely. Both buildings are decorative as well as practical; the City Garage is distinguished by arcaded bays and stepped and rounded parapets, and the Drill Tower by pilasters, blind arches, and round-arched belfry openings. Other contributing buildings, the Signs and Markings Shop, and the Employees’ Restroom, are smaller, unornamented, one-story structures with dimensions largely determined by space needs and building materials available to the city employees who constructed them.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, sanitary operations, fleet maintenance and drill-tower training activities were relocated in modern facilities on the outskirts of Durham. After 1983, the City Garage Yard and Fire Drill Tower complex served the Property Care Division of the Parks and Recreation Department. In the spring of 1999, the Historic Preservation Society of Durham optioned the property and deeded it to Zapolski/Rudd, LLC., with preservation covenants. According to plans prepared by The New Synergy, Inc., of Durham, the complex is undergoing rehabilitation. The City Garage, the Fire Drill Tower, the Signs and Markings Shop, and the Signal Shop will become offices while the Employees’ Restroom will retain its original function.

**Inventory List.** (CB = Contributing Building, NCB = Non-contributing Building, NCS = Non-contributing Structure).

The following inventory list is keyed to Exhibit A, a 1” to 200’ map titled City Place.

1. **CB#1. City Garage.** Constructed in 1927, with 1935, 1940s, ca. 1955, and ca. 1965 additions. (Floor plans of the City Garage showing the construction dates of components and floor plans ca. 1975 and prior to 1999 renovations are included as Exhibit B.)

Among the most distinctive early-twentieth-century municipal buildings in Durham, the large polygonal City Garage was begun during the late 1920s and enlarged periodically over the next four decades. Dominating the building is its long main block, built in 1927 of brick laid in 5/1 common bond and enlivened with Romanesque and Mission Revival details. One oversized story tall, it faces east toward Morris Street, and forms an extended “C” oriented north-south as a rectangle with small rear ells that project toward the west at each end. The east, north, and south facades are faced with dark red tapestry brick and topped by firewalls that conceal a low gable roof.

The mass of the east or front facade is relieved at both ends and in the middle by stepped and rounded parapets, each with a large diamond-shaped inset made of concrete. Beneath the parapets and now opening onto a handicap walkway elevated above a parking lot, seventeen rectangular equipment-sized bays of varying sizes are organized in a rhythmic row. Each bay is fitted with metal bumper guards that protect the sides of the openings. Two bays at either end are sheltered beneath hip-roofed canopies supported by heavy wooden brackets while the
remaining thirteen bays are divided by pilasters and crowned by broad lunette windows framed with arched header courses of brick that create the effect of a Romanesque arcade.

Secondary facades of the main block are plainer. On the south end, a stepped and rounded parapet surmounts four regular bays of twenty-pane windows organized in pairs. A small contiguous ell, delineated by a rooftop firewall, has a flat parapet, and projects to the west, fitted with a pair of twenty-pane windows in the center and a small six-pane window offset to the east.

The north end of the main block, now largely an interior wall, mirrors the south end except that one of the easternmost pair of windows has been removed to create an entry to a small wing added ca. 1965. The north ell is larger than its southern counterpart, and its north-facing fenestration includes a pedestrian door, a pair of twenty-pane windows, and a single twenty-pane window that seem off-center because of the positioning of the wing.

Recessed between the two ells and parallel to the front façade, the west or rear elevation of the main block is entirely an interior wall. Fenestration here is irregular, and a twenty-pane window, a pedestrian door, four window openings enlarged as pedestrian passages, three twenty-pane windows, a pedestrian door, and a small six-pane window are set in a row from north to south. On the ells, short west facades are part of what is now the rear elevation of the City Garage, and two twenty-pane windows on the north and a pedestrian door on the south open outside.

Around 1935, city employees recycled ashlar granite pavers salvaged when Durham streets were macadamized, and enclosed a long space between the ells on the west facade to create a shed-roofed wing at the rear of the main block. Fenestration was placed according to interior requirements, but windows and doors are irregularly spaced in a regular arrangement. At the north end, an equipment-sized opening, a twenty-pane window, a pedestrian doorway, and another twenty-pane window extend from north to south in a pattern repeated on the south end except that the equipment-sized opening has partially been filled with concrete block to create a pedestrian door.

During the 1940s, a smaller shed-roofed wing of granite pavers with a wall of large stone blocks at the north end was added to the west facade in two phases, enclosing much of the earlier wing. Its west wall forms an exterior elevation at the rear of the City Garage, and fenestration is irregular with three nine-pane windows, two pedestrian doors, and a six-pane window placed from north to south.

Additions made to the City Garage after the period of significance are less extensive. Adjoining the stone sheds on the southwest, a polygonal concrete block-and-frame wing, built ca. 1955 to contain a grease pit, is the tallest component of the building. Badly deteriorated prior to rehabilitation, it required comprehensive repair and renovation to suit it for office use: the grease pit was filled; damaged frame components were replaced and covered on the exterior with artificial siding; new windows and doors were installed in concrete block walls without access or illumination; and the roof was raised over one-half of the interior to allow two stories. Last to be
constructed, a small rectangular brick wing with an adjoining concrete block shed was added to the north facade of the main block ca. 1965.

Exterior walls have been cleaned, the roof has been replaced, and key architectural features are being preserved or restored as rehabilitation proceeds at the City Garage. On the front facade, bumper guards have been painted, several pilasters removed in the mid-twentieth century have been rebuilt, and lunette windows have been repaired or re-created where frame infill with casement windows was later installed. The canopy at the north end, removed during the 1960s, has been reconstructed and now awaits a metal tile roof that will match its original counterpart at the south end. Contemporary glass storefronts have been installed on the front facade and elsewhere around the building where frame garage and pedestrian doors were too badly deteriorated to save. On rear and end facades and structural walls now on the interior, original window frames have been retained and many refitted with clear lights.

During the early twentieth century, service areas on the interior of the City Garage are thought to have been defined by lines painted on concrete floors. By the 1970s, frame dividing walls had been installed as specialized mechanical and administrative functions of the Fleet Maintenance Division required protected spaces (see Exhibit B). In the 1980s, these were largely removed and new divisions created to suit the Property Care Division (see Exhibit B). Contamination with petroleum by-products required that all concrete floors be replaced in 1999, and interior frame dividers were removed at that time. Original brick and stone walls, frame decking, steel truss roof supports, and the framework of a large hoist mechanism in the south end of the main block now have more visual importance, and as interior space is customized to tenants' requirements, will form an important part of the decor.

2. CB #2. Fire Department Drill Tower, Constructed 1928.

Inspired by towers at nearby cotton mills in Durham, the Chapel Hill architectural firm of Atwood and Nash prepared plans for the six-story flat-roofed Fire Drill Tower in 1927. Completed in 1928, it has massive brick walls laid in 5/1 common bond, and features two tall and narrow blind arches that rise to the top of the building on each facade. An entry door on the east facade, a metal fire escape on the west facade, and a metal hose connector on the south facade are notable details on elevations that are identical otherwise. On all facades, symmetrical fenestration is divided into two bays on each floor; rectangular window-sized openings on the first floor are surmounted by round openings on the second, and these by rectangular openings on the third, fourth, and fifth floors. Round-arch openings similar to belfries at the mills enhance the tower on the sixth floor.

The interior of the Fire Drill Tower is open and simple. Concrete floors on the ground, second, and third floors are connected by a narrow staircase on the north wall that also serves wooden platforms recently installed on each floor above.

For over forty years, Durham firefighters doused the Fire Drill Tower with gasoline, set it ablaze, and practiced using equipment and hoses as the flames spread from floor to floor. When
training operations were moved to a new location in the mid 1970s, the Fire Drill Tower stood vacant or was used for storage. Renovations planned for the Fire Drill Tower will include the installation of plumbing, electricity, and windows and a door in existing openings. Tentative plans call for open space above the third floor.

3. CB#3. Signs and Markings Shop, Constructed ca. 1948 with ca. 1965 concrete block addition.

Sanborn Maps depict a frame building at the location of the Signs and Markings Shop in a 1935 paste-over to the 1932 series and again in 1937 when a new set of maps was prepared. Between the latter date and 1949 when Charles Horton (now retired) came to work for the Street Maintenance Division, city employees had replaced the frame structure with a substantial shed of ashlar granite pavers and added a wing of concrete block on the southwest facade. Horton recalled that in 1949, the granite building served as the Street Sign Shop and the wing contained what was likely the City of Durham's first mechanized car wash. On paste-overs to 1956, Sanborn Maps confirm Horton's recollections about the shape and composition of the building, and on paste-overs to 1965, show a second shed of concrete block at the rear that completed the building in its present form.

With shed components oriented face to face, the Signs and Markings Shop appears as a long low rectangular building with a shallow gable roof and a small wing that projects southwest of the main block. The building's phased construction is clearly evidenced on the front and northeast end facades where granite pavers abut concrete block. The interior also reflects the building's construction for a central room divider was once an exterior wall. Fenestration is irregular; a single pedestrian door and window remain on the front facade where three equipment bays and another pedestrian door have been filled with concrete block. Elsewhere, a pedestrian door and an equipment bay on the northeast facade, three windows on the northwest facade, and a double-leaf pedestrian door on the southwest facade are all serviceable. Renovations at the Signs and Markings Shop are underway, and at the time of this writing, a new roof has been completed. On the front facade, fenestration sealed with concrete block is shortly to be reopened and fitted with new windows and doors.

4. CB#4. Employees' Restroom, Constructed ca. 1948.

Durham city employees also constructed a small flat-roofed building of ashlar granite pavers lined with brick on the interior that served as a restroom in 1949 according to Charles Horton. Now freestanding, the building appears in 1950-1956 Sanborn Map paste-overs joined to the City Garage by a frame breezeway that has since been demolished. The little restroom is symmetrical, divided on the interior into two approximately equal sections that offered separate toilet facilities for black and white personnel until the mid 1960s. Two pedestrian doors open on the east facade toward the City Garage, single windows mirror each other in the center of the north and south facades, and two windows, one on either side of the west facade, correspond to the location of the doorways. Renovations to the Employees' Restroom are nearing completion; the original floor plan remains, and the little building has been updated with glass block windows, new doors, a tile floor, and modern bathroom fixtures.
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City Garage Yard and Fire Drill Tower  
Durham County, NC

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5. NCB#1. Signal Shop, Constructed ca. 1948 with ca. 1950-1956, ca. 1965, and ca. 1970 enclosures and 1988 addition. An elongated shed behind the City Garage now called the Signal Shop was begun before 1948 to serve the Street Maintenance and Sanitation Divisions as an office with adjacent storage for trucks and equipment. The building is depicted in 1950-1956 paste-overs to the 1937 Sanborn Maps series as a concrete block building extended to the north by an open-sided frame shed. The office later became the traffic signal repair shop, and city employees progressively enclosed the frame shed with concrete block during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1988, the Property Care Division added a large three-sided frame shed for mowing equipment on the north facade. With an exterior covering of artificial stucco, new windows and doors throughout, and its mower shed enlarged and enclosed, renovations at the Signal Shop have overwhelmed original construction and the building is non-contributing.

6. NCB#2. Metal Storage Shed, Constructed ca. 1965. An oversize metal-covered shed with two equipment bays and a pedestrian door on the east facade is non-contributing because it does not yet meet the 50-year age requirement for the National Register.

7. NCS#1. Pole Shed, Constructed 1988. A long open shed with pole supports and a metal roof is non-contributing because it does not yet meet the 50-year age requirement for the National Register.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Section number 8 Page 1

City Garage Yard and Fire Drill Tower
Durham County, NC

Statement of Significance:

The City Garage Yard and Fire Drill Tower in Durham, North Carolina is an eclectic municipal services complex constructed during the early- and mid-twentieth century. Important as the only early municipal services complex in Durham, it is nominated to the National Register with local significance under the multiple resource nomination, Historic Resources of Durham (NR 1984). Within the complex are four contributing buildings, two non-contributing buildings, and one non-contributing structure. The City Garage (CB#1), constructed in 1927, and enlarged in phases from 1935-1965, the Fire Drill Tower (CB#2), constructed in 1928, the Signs and Markings Shop (CB#3), constructed ca. 1948 and enlarged ca. 1965, and the Employees’ Restroom (CB#4), constructed ca. 1948 contribute to the historic character of the complex. The Signal Shop (NCB#1), begun ca. 1948, modified during the 1960s and 1970s, and extensively altered in 1999, is non-contributing, and the Metal Storage Shed (NCB#2) and the Pole Shed (NCS#1), constructed ca. 1965 and in 1988 respectively, are not yet fifty years of age.

The City Garage Yard and Fire Drill Tower complex meets the requirements of National Register Criterion A for its contributions to the community planning and development of Durham, a context provided in the multiple resource nomination and expanded here. Serving the Fleet Maintenance, Sanitation, Street Maintenance, and Property Care Divisions, and the Fire Department, the complex played a crucial role in implementing safety and upkeep in the city.

The complex also meets the requirements of National Register Criterion C for the architecture of its contributing buildings. The City Garage and the Fire Drill Tower are utilitarian buildings with distinctive Romanesque and Period Revival detailing that exemplify stylistic preferences in Durham during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Employees’ Restroom and the Signs and Markings Shop are smaller simpler structures that reflect the growth of the complex and the ingenuity of the city employees who constructed them with granite pavers salvaged when Durham streets were covered with macadam.

The period of significance begins in 1927 when the City Garage was completed, and continues through 1950, a twenty-three year period during which Durham grew and prospered, stimulated by its world-renown tobacco and cotton industries. Although 1950 is the last year for which the complex is eligible for the National Register, it continued to function as a municipal services center for many years afterward.

Narrative History and Community Planning and Development Context:

During the early years of the twentieth century, the City of Durham began a period of tremendous growth. World War I increased the already thriving markets for the city’s tobacco and textile industries, which continued to prosper over the next several decades fueled by foreign demand. Between 1923 and 1926, building permits issued by the City of Durham more than doubled and tax revenues during the same approximate period increased by almost one million dollars. At a time when an interest in urban design and planning was growing around the nation, Durham confronted the unprecedented rapid expansion by engaging Herbert S. Swan, a New York
In 1926 as the handsome Beaux Arts style Durham Auditorium was completed (now restored as the Carolina Theater), the issue of a city garage was timely. An elegant Durham Chamber of Commerce booklet also published that year had proved embarrassing to the city government. An aerial photograph featuring the new City Hall, a renovated and now neoclassical building that had been the 1904 Durham High School (now the Durham Arts Council building), had also displayed an unsightly adjoining lot strewn with miscellaneous city-owned trucks and equipment.

An item on the city council's April 9, 1926 agenda proposed that a city-owned parcel of 2.1 acres on the west side of Washington Street be leveled and graded for use as a storage yard. The city also held an option on a triangular lot east of Washington Street which "would furnish a proper location for a much-needed city garage provided the property is filled." It was recommended that the Public Works Committee act for the council to proceed with these projects "as economically and quickly as possible...."

No record exists that formal plans were commissioned for the City Garage. However, decorative Romanesque and Mission Revival features suggest that persons familiar with late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century architectural styles played an influential part in its design. Construction was underway when the city council increased an appropriation for the garage to $8,000 on December 20, 1926. But that amount proved far too low, for during its fiscal year, June 1, 1926 to May 31, 1927, the city exceeded its budget by $15,675.64 for the "Division of City Garage" and by $2,767 for "garage equipment." With such large expenditures on record, the building was undoubtedly completed during this period, however it was constructed on the west side of Washington Street across from the triangular lot for which it was originally proposed. On November 7, 1927 when the council approved $1,900 to extend a side track of the Norfolk and Western Railroad to the City Garage, the building must have been in service.

Within two weeks, the triangular lot on the east side of Washington Street was again selected as a suitable site for a city project when the city manager recommended that a drill tower be erected for the fire department. During the 1920s, buildings of six stories or more were increasingly constructed in Durham's central business district, and firemen required to scale high walls quickly encumbered by hoses and tools needed practice to develop confidence and skills. The matter of a fire drill tower was referred to the Public Safety Committee who submitted a report to the council on December 19, 1927, recommending that the city manager seek bids for its construction immediately. But more than a year elapsed before funding was finally approved. In the interim, the Chapel Hill firm of Atwood and Nash prepared plans for a stylish six-story tower modeled after the towers at nearby cotton mills. On February 6, 1928 building contracts were awarded to the low bidders, Consolidated Construction Company, at $7,590 and Paschall Brothers Plumbing, at $295.

Advantageously located on the triangular lot across Washington Street from the City Garage, the Fire Drill Tower could offer access to fire trucks from roads on three sides. With innovations that
included a standpipe, a smoke room, a safety net, and platforms on each floor, it was considered to be “the most modern training structure in the state,” and attracted meetings of the North Carolina Fire Association to Durham for several years following its construction. A ca. 1930 publicity photograph featured city firefighters smiling proudly from a truck beside the new Fire Drill Tower.

The stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression that followed curtailed or delayed municipal improvements and construction projects, and only one recorded action was taken on behalf of the City Garage and Fire Drill Tower through 1935. On September 2 of that year, the city council imposed a $5 fine for parking on Washington Street between the two buildings or beside the garage.

If municipal finances were constrained, employees at the City Garage in the 1930s appear to have been a self-sufficient group capable of resolving what must have been an pressing need for more space. The Sanborn Map Company’s 1932 series, first to include the City Garage, shows a 1935 paste-over with a large addition at the rear of the building which almost doubled its size. No bids for this project appear in council records, and garage employees are said to have constructed the addition themselves, using ashlar granite pavers salvaged when Durham streets were macadamized. Also on the map, the employees had constructed a frame shed west of the garage at the site of the Signs and Markings Shop, and a Norfolk and Western spur line extended in front of this structure to an area labeled “Building Materials Storage Yard.” Additional space at the City Garage was soon put to use for Hill’s Durham City Directory, negligent in listing the garage until 1939, reveals that the “Garage Division” and the “Sanitary Division” both occupied the building that year.

During the early 1940s, World War II brought economic recovery and J. Melville Broughton, Governor of North Carolina, encouraged municipalities around the state to form planning departments to deal with rapid urban growth. On June 26, 1944, special committees appointed by the mayor and the chamber of commerce unanimously recommended to the city council that a planning department be established in Durham. Within six months, the governing body approved the appointment of Frank L. Deiter as planning director at an annual salary of $6,000.

Under Deiter’s guidance, the garage and sanitary divisions and the fire department expanded over the next four years, and on September 7, 1948, a preliminary plan for “garage storage facilities” was submitted to the city council, who approved it, and returned it for completion. But no official action was later taken and no expenditure approved, and employees at the City Garage apparently constructed the desired “facilities” just as they had done before. A large wing of ashlar blocks and granite pavers attached to the rear of the City Garage on the northwest is thought to have been constructed in two phases during the 1940s.

In 1949, Charles Horton, now retired from the Public Works Department, took a summer job with the Street Maintenance Division, then also in the City Garage Yard and housed in what is now the Signal Shop. At that time, according to Horton, all contributing buildings were on the ground. The Employees’ Restroom was a small flat-roofed building of recycled granite pavers lined with
brick on the interior and divided into two separate bathroom facilities for black and white personnel. The restroom was joined to the City Garage by a frame breezeway that has since been demolished. Horton reports that the Signs and Markings Shop comprised a one-story shed of granite pavers to which a one-story concrete block shed had been added on the south, and the Signal Shop, a one-story concrete block structure with a long open frame shed on the north. The Sanborn Map Company's 1938 series with paste-overs through 1956 confirms the accuracy of Horton's recollections, and includes a square block and frame wing at the rear of the City Garage that was probably among the "necessary improvements to the City Garage" approved and funded by the council on November 2, 1953.

Sanborn Maps with paste-overs from 1956 to 1965, depict several alterations and additions to the City Garage Yard during this period: the City Garage acquired a brick wing and concrete block shed on the north, the Signs and Markings Shop, a concrete block wing on the rear, the Signal Shop, concrete block infill within the frame shed, and the metal storage shed was erected. Also affecting the complex, Lamond Avenue was realigned and named Corporation Street, and a segment of Washington Street that separated the Fire Drill Tower from the rest of the buildings was closed off.

Although concerns about lack of space at the City Garage and the need for a new fire drill tower were expressed at city council meetings during the 1950s, new facilities were not constructed until the mid 1970s and early 80s. After 1983, sanitary operations, drill-tower training, and fleet maintenance services were moved into modern buildings at the outskirts of town. The Property Care Division of the Parks and Recreation Department was assigned to the complex, and in 1988, rearranged interior divisions at the City Garage, added the Pole Shed north of the City Garage, and constructed a three-sided frame shed for mower storage on the north facade of the Signal Shop.

In the spring of 1999, the Historic Preservation Society of Durham optioned the City Garage Yard and Fire Drill Tower and deeded the property to Zapolski/Rudd, LLC., with preservation covenants. According to plans prepared by The New Synergy, Inc., of Durham, the complex is undergoing rehabilitation. The City Garage, the Fire Drill Tower, the Signs and Markings Shop, and the Signal Shop will become offices while the Employees' Restroom will retain its original function.

Architectural Context:

Among the most important early municipal buildings in Durham, the City Garage and the Fire Drill Tower are distinctive utilitarian structures with massive brick walls and decorative arches that have roots in an industrial architecture begun in New England when, in 1822, Zachariah Allen developed slow-burn construction. Unable to afford the high cost of fire insurance, Allen employed expansive walls of brick, large structural timbers, thick plank floors, and shutters and doors clad in metal to slow the spread of fires and support burning buildings rather than allowing them to collapse inward. When insurance companies would not reduce premiums despite these improvements, Allen formed the Manufacturer's Mutual Fire Insurance Company in 1835 to offer lower rates to industries utilizing his construction methods. The new factories and
mills were often decorated with ornate brickwork of the Italianate and Romanesque styles that broke the mass of long facades and dramatized doorways and windows with arcades. The use of brick ornament peaked around the turn of the twentieth century and afterward was generally modified to emphasize a more forthright expression of structure. With improvements in technology, planks and beams of wood were increasingly replaced by concrete floors and steel truss supports.

At the height of Victorian architectural excess, the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876 presented Period Revival styling at the nation’s centennial celebration. Plainer buildings with colonial styles were said to offer an architectural link to the basic democratic values on which America had been founded. And by the end of the nineteenth century, the Chicago Colombian Exposition inspired the City Beautiful Movement that introduced the concept of formal urban design and fashionable municipal buildings to American cities and towns.

Thus in the late 1920s, civic leaders and architects working in Durham had a tradition of sturdy brick buildings and a sizable menu of architectural details from which to choose. With pride in a thriving economy, these men may have looked to their city’s cotton mills, tobacco factories, and selected downtown buildings to inspire the Romanesque arcade and simple Mission Revival ornament at the City Garage. Lunettes over vehicular entries at the garage form an arcade, a common motif of industrial architecture that is also employed at the former Erwin and Golden Belt Cotton Mills (NR 1984 and 1985), and at the former Duke Tobacco Factory (NR listing pending) in arched windows and doorways that are placed in rows across long facades. Metal-tiled canopies and stepped rounded parapets with diamond-shaped insets at the garage are more unusual in Durham where the Mission Revival style was used infrequently from about 1910 until 1930. A commercial row of buildings from 341 to 345 1/2 West Main Street (NR 1977) and the former Imperial Tobacco Factory, (NR listing pending) both just several blocks south of the garage, are among the very few buildings in Durham that have Mission Revival details as well.

Also emulating architectural features at the cotton mills, the stylish six-story Fire Drill Tower, designed by the Chapel Hill firm of Atwood and Nash, has tall narrow dimensions and regular fenestration. Its symmetrical blind arches, and arched belfry openings also appear on towers at the former Golden Belt Mill (NR 1985), at the former Durham Hosiery Mill No. 1 (NR 1978), and at the former Durham Cotton Mill (NR 1985, towers demolished).

In contrast to the City Garage and the Fire Drill Tower, the Signs and Markings Shop, and the Employee’s Restroom are small simple structures with no stylish features. They reflect the ingenuity of the city employees who constructed them to economize on building costs, and like the Durham City Stables (built 1925), incorporate ashlar granite pavers salvaged when streets in Durham were macadamized.
Endnotes:

1 The Sanborn Map Company’s 1937-1956 series shows the Washington Street segment in place and Lamond Avenue intersecting Washington Street southeast of the City Garage. Paste-overs made to the 1938-1965 Sanborn series indicate that the segment of Washington Street was closed and Lamond Avenue realigned and named Corporation Street between 1956 and 1965. The street closure was not recorded until 1999 when the property was conveyed to the Historic Preservation Society of Durham and then to Zapolski/Rudd, LLC.
3 Information from City Council minutes, Sanborn Maps, and Author’s Interview with Charles Horton, Retired Employee of the Street Maintenance Division, July 22, 1999.
4 Author’s Interview with R. L. Harris, Supervisor of the City of Durham’s Fleet Maintenance Division, July 17, 1999.
5 Information from City Council minutes.
6 Author’s Interview with William Bibby, Fire Chief, City of Durham, July 17, 1999.
7 Horton Interview and Sanborn Maps 1938-65 series.
8 Horton Interview.
9 Horton Interview.
10 Horton Interview.
11 Harris Interview.
12 Horton Interview, and Sanborn Maps 1937-56 and 1937-65 series.
13 Author’s Interview with Steve Dean of the City of Durham’s Asset Management Division, July 27, 1999.
14 Information from Sanborn Maps 1937-65 series.
15 Dean Interview.
18 Minutes of the Durham City Council, Book Q, p. 221.
20 Minutes of the Durham City Council Book Q, p. 250.
21 Minutes of the Durham City Council Book Q, pp. 263-64.
22 Minutes of the Durham City Council Book Q, p. 250.
26 Horton Interview.
27 Minutes of the Durham City Council Book Y, p. 3.
30 Robert Schweitzer and Michael W. R. Davis, America’s Favorite Homes, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1990, p. 44.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

City Garage Yard and Fire Drill Tower
Durham County, NC

Section number 9   Page 1

Books:


Maps and Documents:


Swan, Herbert, Plan for Durham, 1926, City of Durham.


Minutes of the Durham City Council Book Y, p. 3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

City Garage Yard and Fire Drill Tower
Durham County, NC

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Interviews:

Author’s Interview with William Bibby, Fire Chief of the City of Durham’s Fire Department, July 17, 1999.

Author’s Interview with R. L. Harris of the City of Durham’s Fleet Maintenance Division, July 17, 1999.

Author’s Interview with Charles Horton, retired employee of the City of Durham’s Street Maintenance Division, July 22, 1999.

Author’s Interview with Steve Dean, employee of the City of Durham’s Asset Management Division, July 27, 1999.

Geographical Data:

The City Garage Yard and Fire Drill Tower complex is located according to the following UTM reference point:

<table>
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<th>Zone</th>
<th>Easting</th>
<th>Northing</th>
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<tr>
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Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries are shown on the enclosed map titled City Place drawn at a scale of 1” = 50’. The district includes 1 parcel described and recorded in Volume 2612, page 877 of the Durham County Land Records filed in the Register of Deeds Office in Durham, North Carolina.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary is drawn to include all of the municipal services complex within an area in Durham that retains integrity and is associated with the planning and community development of the City from 1927 to 1950.
All photographs are of:

City Garage Yard and Fire Drill Tower
Durham County, North Carolina
Betsy Gohdes-Baten, photographer

Photographs and negatives are on file with the Survey and Planning Branch of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office in Raleigh. (Letters correspond to locations on Exhibit C: Guide To Photographs).

A. DATE: August 1, 1999
VIEW OF: City Garage Yard and Fire Drill Tower complex looking northwest

B. DATE: August 1, 1999
VIEW OF: City Garage, front facade looking northwest

C. DATE: August 1, 1999
VIEW OF: City Garage, parapet and canopy on south end of front facade looking west

D. DATE: August 1, 1999
VIEW OF: City Garage, interior of main block-south section looking southwest

E. DATE: August 1, 1999
VIEW OF: City Garage, interior, main block-central section looking southeast

F. DATE: August 1, 1999
VIEW OF: City Garage, interior, ca. 1935 addition looking southwest

G. DATE: August 1, 1999
VIEW OF: City Garage, interior, 1940s additions looking southwest

H. DATE: August 1, 1999
VIEW OF: Fire Drill Tower, looking northeast.

I. DATE: November 5, 1999
VIEW OF: Fire Drill Tower, fire escape on west facade looking east

J. DATE: November 5, 1999
VIEW OF: Fire Drill Tower, interior looking northwest
K. DATE: November 5, 1999
VIEW OF: City Garage, rear facade with grease pit looking north

L. DATE: November 5, 1999
VIEW OF: Employees' Restroom looking northwest

M. DATE: November 5, 1999
VIEW OF: Signal Shop, looking northwest

N. DATE: August 1, 1999
VIEW OF: Signs and Markings Shop, looking northwest
EXHIBIT B: CITY GARAGE
CONSTRUCTION DATES OF COMPONENTS
AND CA. 1975 FLOOR PLAN
(SOURCE OF PLAN: R. L. HARRIS,
FLEET MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR,
CITY OF DURHAM)

KEY:
- DENOTES MAJOR COMPONENTS
- DENOTES MASONRY SUBDIVISIONS REMAINING INTACT
- DENOTES WALLS THAT HAVE BEEN DEMOLISHED

GReASE Pit

Concrete Block
and Frame Addition,
Ca. 1955

Tire Storage

Tire Shop

Stone Shed Addition,
1940s

Parts, Two Levels

Machine Shop

Furnace

Paint Shop

Stone Shed Addition,
Ca. 1935

Reception Area

Brick Main Block,
1927

Heavy Equipment Work Area

Body Shop

Work Areas

Superintendent's Office

Secretary's Office

Radiator Shop

Brick and Concrete
Block Addition,
Ca. 1965

Radio Shop

Radiator Room

Floor Plan Prior to 1999 Renovation
(Source of Plan: The New Synergy, Inc.)