

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Golden Belt Historic District Additional Documentation

Durham, Durham County, DH1804, Listed 9/24/2008
Nomination by Andrew Stewart
Photographs by Andrew Stewart, April 2008



Front and side view



Façade view

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 1, 3, 4 Page 1

Golden Belt Historic District
Additional Documentation
Durham County, North Carolina

[Note: Only amended items and the required NPS certification are included below.]

Section 1

NAME OF PROPERTY: Golden Belt Historic District —Additional Documentation

Section 3

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION: As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant locally.

Signature of certifying official/title

Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

Section 4

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

___ 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): _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 2

Golden Belt Historic District,
Additional Documentation
Durham County, North Carolina

This additional documentation nomination provides a separate inventory entry for the 1958/1968 Golden Belt Manufacturing Company Office Building within the Golden Belt Historic District. It is the only resource in the district dating from the expanded period of significance – 1936-1958.

Golden Belt Manufacturing Company Office Building

807 East Main Street, Durham

Contributing Building

Construction Dates: Built in 1958; west addition built in 1968.

The Golden Belt Manufacturing Company Office Building sits below East Main street grade at the southwest corner of the Golden Belt Historic District. The building faces north directly onto a parking lot and the Golden Belt hosiery mill buildings 2 and 6. The original 1958 one-story red brick building was sixty-seven feet deep and eighty feet wide. In 1968 a one-story addition the same depth as the original building, was built onto the building's west wall. This addition is also sixty-seven feet deep, and fifty-two feet wide. It is constructed of the same materials (brick and concrete) and architectural details as the original 1958 building.

The 1958 building is built of concrete block with a five-course American bond exterior brick veneer. A concrete water table chamfer caps a tall concrete plinth base. The brick wall is capped with a continuous concrete coping at the roofline. The window sets are encased within a slightly projecting concrete surround. Each set consists of four, three-lite, aluminum awning windows separated by veneer brick panels. The south elevation is a blank brick wall and features a stepped water table concrete base. The east elevation has one set of windows positioned near the north corner of the wall. The north elevation features the main entrance centered between two sets of windows. The main entrance is five steps above existing grade and is accentuated with a slightly projecting broad, flat concrete surround. The aluminum full glass door with a transom and flanking sidelights is recessed. The west elevation had a single, three-foot wide, hollow metal door near the north corner and a centered set of windows. The roof is a built-up, coal tar, flat roof set within the exterior wall parapets.

The 1968 addition is also built of concrete block with a five-course American Bond exterior brick veneer. The addition has the same chamfered concrete water table base, concrete coping and concrete window set surrounds as on the original 1958 building. The addition's south elevation is a blank brick wall. The addition abuts the 1958 building on the west, and the 1958 west wall was altered to become an interior wall. The door, window set and the center fifty

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 3

Golden Belt Historic District,
Additional Documentation
Durham County, North Carolina

percent of the original wall was removed. The 1968 west elevation has a single three foot wide door set fourteen feet south of the north corner. The north elevation is flush with the 1958 wall, and it has a three-foot-wide door and a window set on the west corner.

The architectural integrity of the exterior of the 1958 building has been somewhat compromised by the smaller 1968 addition, only on its west wall which is obscured by the new construction. However, the design of the 1968 building is a near duplicate of the original building – matching in materials, design, height, and fenestration, and it is nearly thirty feet narrower in width. The composite building's point of entry is still prominently recognizable as the original 1958 front door. The east elevation's presentation of the building to Morning Glory Street is unchanged since 1958.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 4

Golden Belt Historic District
Additional Documentation
Durham County, North Carolina

Section 8: Statement of Significance

The Golden Belt Historic District was listed in the National Register in 1985. Although the nomination form did not identify a period of significance, it is inferred that the period ended at the fifty-year date – 1935, as the company was financially successful and had a significant economic impact on the community into the Depression. This nomination provides additional information about the company’s history from 1936 to 1958, thus expanding the period of significance until 1958. During the late 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, the Golden Belt Manufacturing Company was an important textile and tobacco-related industry in Durham – employing hundreds of workers. It manufactured various textile products, including sheeting, loose-leaf tobacco bags, and hosiery, and the viability of the company is evident by the American Tobacco Company’s efforts to gain complete ownership of the business during the 1950s. In 1958, American Tobacco Company fully acquired the company, and built a new modernist office building. The district meets Criterion A for its importance in the history of industry in Durham, North Carolina, from 1936 to 1958.

Golden Belt Manufacturing Company, 1936-1958

The 1930s were an era of tumult and change for the textile industry nationally, and particularly in East Durham. The increasing importance of imported hosiery and a shift away from cotton to silk hosiery diminished the market for cotton products manufactured in Durham.¹ By 1937, the nearby Morven Cotton Mill had been abandoned.² Labor unrest accompanied the market constraint; in 1934, the United Textile Workers of America threatened a strike if working conditions were not improved – in Durham, a meeting of 3000 people was held at the Carolina Theater. Textile mills in Durham were shut down on September 1st, with the exception of the bag mill at Golden Belt, out of concern that shutting down the bag mill would shut down American Tobacco. By Sept. 6th, picket lines had shut down the bag mill and printing presses as well, but there was enough stored supply of bags to keep American Tobacco in operation. The strike ended with concessions on Sept. 25th, 1934.³ However, attrition continued in the local

¹ Anderson, Jean. *Durham County: A History of Durham County, North Carolina*. Durham. Duke University Press. 1990.

² Sanborn Map Company map of Durham, 1937.

³ Anderson, Jean. *Durham County: A History of Durham County, North Carolina*. Durham. Duke University Press. 1990.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Golden Belt Historic District
Additional Documentation
Durham County, North Carolina

Section Number 8 Page 5

industry- by 1934 the Durham Hosiery Mill Number One, immediately to the south of Golden Belt was out of business⁴, and by 1941, the nearby East Durham Cotton Manufacturing Company was shut down.⁵

Golden Belt, by virtue of its relationship with the American Tobacco Company – as supplier of the cotton bags for Bull Durham tobacco, remained somewhat insulated from the decline in the hosiery market, and was able to maintain its capitalization and output during the 1930s:

Golden Belt Capitalization and Output, 1935-1941⁶

	Capital	Spindles	Looms	Knitting Machines	Products
1935	\$2,000,000	26,496	568	104	Sheeting, Tobacco bags, “full-fashioned hosiery”
1937	\$2,000,000	26,496	568	109	Sheeting, Tobacco bags, “full-fashioned hosiery”
1939	\$2,000,000	26,496	568	109	Sheeting, Tobacco bags, “full-fashioned hosiery”
1941	\$2,000,000	26,496	568	109	Sheeting, Tobacco bags, “full-fashioned hosiery”

In 1938, the Golden Belt Manufacturing Company is described in the North Carolina Directory and Reference Book as employing 1000-1500 people.⁷ Despite the ability to maintain a healthy business during this era, the company recognized the market changes necessitated a shift in product output. In 1946 the company sold its hosiery operation to Hillcrest Hosiery Mills, which occupied a portion of the Golden Belt facility (within buildings 3 and 6) until the early 1950s.

⁴ Roberts, Claudia and Lea, Diane. Durham Architectural and Historic Inventory. Durham. City of Durham, 1980.

⁵ North Carolina Yearbook and Business Directory. Raleigh, The News and Observer, 1941.

⁶ North Carolina Yearbook and Business Directory. Raleigh, The News and Observer, 1935, 1937, 1939, 1941.

⁷ North Carolina Directory and Reference Book, 1938

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 6

Golden Belt Historic District
Additional Documentation
Durham County, North Carolina

The short-lived return to popularity of bagged loose-leaf tobacco during the Depression ended during the early 1940s⁸, and the need for manufactured bags diminished with it. Golden Belt shifted towards production of paper, packaging, and labeling during the 1940s, although it maintained textile output. In 1949, the company became the first to employ gravure printing for cigarette labels.⁹ However, in 1945, the company is still noted to be a strong force in the textile industry in Durham¹⁰ continuing to produce bags for loose-leaf tobacco into the 1950s. The American Tobacco company prospectus from 1952, and notes from a 1953 'special meeting' note that the Golden Belt Manufacturing Company

manufactures cotton bags, principally used for the packaging of tobacco, and supplies the Company's requirements of bags for its brand BULL DURHAM ; manufactures tobacco shade cloth used to cover the fields on which Connecticut Valley shade-grown cigar wrapper tobacco is grown ; supplies a substantial portion of the requirements for such cloth of The Hatheway-Steane Corporation and also manufactures labels for tobacco and cigarette packages.”¹¹

The first edition of Moody's Industrial Manual, from 1954, notes that the company was a 94.7% owned subsidiary of the American Tobacco Company at that time.¹² The strength of the company during the 1950s can be inferred from American Tobacco Company's ongoing efforts through the 1950s to acquire the outstanding 5.3% of Golden Belt Manufacturing Company stock that was publicly-held. This effort began in 1957, and by 1958, the American Tobacco Company owned 100% of Golden Belt stock.¹³ Co-incident with this acquisition and ongoing expansion of the company's products and operations, the company constructed a modern office

⁸ Roberts, BWC. *Bull Durham Business Bonanza 1886-1940: The Extraordinary Story of the Development of Bull Durham Smoking Tobacco and the Companies That Manufactured It*. Durham. Genuine Durham Press. 2002

⁹ Golden Belt Company History. Accessed at <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Golden-Belt-Manufacturing-Co-Company-History.html>. Last access 06/05/08.

¹⁰ Phillips, Coy. *Durham: A Geographic History*. 1945.

¹¹ Prospectus, American Tobacco Company, 1952. American Tobacco Company Collection, University of California-San Francisco Library and Notes from Special Meeting of American Tobacco Executives, 1953.

¹² Moody's Industrial Manual, New York; Moody's Investors Service, 1954.

¹³ American Tobacco Company Annual Report. American Tobacco Company Collection, University of California-San Francisco Library, 1957, 1958.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 8 Page 7

Golden Belt Historic District
Additional Documentation
Durham County, North Carolina

building to replace the earlier frame office building on site. This building served as the headquarters for the eventual expansion of Golden Belt's operations to 4 additional manufacturing facilities in the US and Canada (Reidsville, NC ; Randleman, NC; Burlington, NC; Missuaga, Ontario, Canada.)¹⁴ The 1958 American Tobacco Annual Report notes that Golden Belt manufactured labels, cartons, cloth, and cloth bags, with "much of the output used by [American Tobacco] and the balance sold to others."¹⁵

By the 1960s, Golden Belt again diversified - this time into plastics production. In 1965, the company installed injection plastic molding machinery. The 1967 American Tobacco Annual Report notes that Golden Belt "experienced a significant increase in operating profits on a strong sales gain." Plastics production was increased by 50% in 1967 to meet greater demand for plastic products.¹⁶ This growth necessitated a \$2-million, 34,000-square-foot addition to Golden Belt's Durham factory during 1966-68. This project, which included the installation of all-new equipment, enabled the company to diversify its textile production, adding single and plied yarn for sale to knitters and weavers.¹⁷ This operations expansion included the 1968 addition to the company's main office building. That same year, Golden Belt experimented with production of molded plastic filters for cigarettes and adding synthetic orange flavoring to tobacco bags.¹⁸ The financial success of the Golden Belt Manufacturing Company during the 1940s through the 1960s was highly significant to the surrounding historic district and Durham's overall economy.

¹⁴ Golden Belt Company History. Accessed at <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Golden-Belt-Manufacturing-Co-Company-History.html>. Last access 06/05/08.

¹⁵ American Tobacco Annual Report, 1959. American Tobacco Company Collection, University of California-San Francisco Library.

¹⁶ American Tobacco Annual Report, 1967. American Tobacco Company Collection, University of California-San Francisco Library.

¹⁷ Golden Belt Company History. Accessed at <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Golden-Belt-Manufacturing-Co-Company-History.html>. Last access 06/05/08.

¹⁸ Internal Correspondence, American Tobacco Company, December 6, 1968. American Tobacco Company Collection, University of California-San Francisco Library.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 9 Page 8

Golden Belt Historic District
Additional Documentation
Durham County, North Carolina

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Sanborn Map Company, Durham map, 1937.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number	Photos	Page 9	Golden Belt Historic District Additional Documentation Durham County, North Carolina
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Photographs

Golden Belt Historic District – additional documentation
Durham, Durham County, North Carolina

April 2008, Andrew Stewart, photographer

Digital photograph CD, North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, N.C.

Golden Belt Manufacturing Company Office Building

1. North elevation – looking southwest
2. North and west elevations – looking southeast
3. West elevation – looking southeast
4. South elevation -- looking west
5. West and south elevations – looking east
6. Cornerstone – north elevation
7. Entrance, north elevation – looking south
8. East elevation – looking west
9. View of east elevation and general view – looking west