

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 an 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

historic name World War Memorial Stadium

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 510 Yanceyville Street N/A not for publication

city or town Greensboro N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Guilford code 081 zip code 27405

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffery Crow SHPO 2/20/01
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____

World War Memorial Stadium
Name of Property

Guilford County, North Carolina
County and State

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
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	4	buildings
		sites
	2	structures
		objects
1	6	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

-0-

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/World War I Memorial
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Sports facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/World War I Memorial
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Sports facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Modern Classicism

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

Stucco

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Iron

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.)

- 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.)

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture
- Entertainment/Recreation
- Politics/Government
- Social History

Period of Significance

1926-1950

Significant Dates

1926

1930

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

White, Leonard, Jr.--architect

Barton, Harry--architect

Carolina Contracting Company--builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 14 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 [1|7] [6|0|9|9|1|5] [3|9|9|3|5|5|0]
Zone Easting Northing
2 [1|7] [6|1|0|2|9|5] [3|9|9|3|5|2|5]

3 [1|7] [6|1|0|2|7|0] [3|9|9|3|0|4|5]
Zone Easting Northing
4 [1|7] [6|0|9|8|9|0] [3|9|9|3|0|6|0]

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.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Davyd Foard Hood

organization date 28 April 2000

street & number 6907 Old Shelby Road telephone 704/462-4331

city or town Vale N.C. state zip code 28168

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

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

Property Owner

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

name The City of Greensboro, The Honorable Carolyn Allen, Mayor

street & number Post Office Box 3136 telephone

city or town Greensboro state NC zip code 27402-3136

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 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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 7 Page 1

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The World War Memorial Stadium, designed by Leonard White, Jr., and Harry Barton and erected by the Carolina Contracting Company, is an imposing Modern Classical masonry athletic facility which was built in 1926 and dedicated on Armistice Day of that year. The building occupies a fourteen-acre site, donated by the Cone family, in the cityscape of Greensboro and stands about nine blocks northeast of the crossing of Elm and Market Streets, the city's principal north/south and east/west streets, respectively. The stadium stands in an area that in the 1920s was nearly entirely residential, with fashionable Summit Avenue to the northwest and somewhat lower-income housing, also developed by the Cone family's Summit Avenue Development Company, to the northeast and southeast. During the last-third of the twentieth century, Summit Avenue virtually ceased to be a residential street and is now a commercial artery; the area immediately surrounding the stadium has seen less decline in residential fabric but a general transition to mixed uses. The lot on which the stadium stands is a six-sided polygon. The southwest front of the lot is bound by Yanceyville Street which intersects with Lindsay Street at the extreme south corner of the lot; Lindsay Street forms the long southeast boundary of the property. The two-sided, angular northeast boundary of the stadium tract is defined by Boyd and Dewey Streets for nearly equal distances. The five aforementioned boundaries are all straight lines; however, the lot's northwest boundary is in the shape of a gentle arc carrying from Dewey Street and toward Yanceyville Street and along the rear lot lines of houses facing onto the parallel path of Park Avenue. (This curved boundary line alters course as it approaches Yanceyville Street to eliminate inclusion of some city-owned and other noncontributing service buildings that were erected over and inside the boundary of the Cone family's 1926 gift.) The Summit Avenue Historic District (NR, 1993) abuts the stadium property on the northwest side. Muddy Creek flows through the southeast edge of the stadium lot, in a path generally parallel with Lindsay Street, and underground in a culvert for most of its course except for a short stretch; the underground and visible portions are the reverse of their demarcation on the enclosed tax map.

Architectural Background and Physical Development

The stadium, its improvements, and its landscape all reflect the facility's long use as a municipal athletic field and minor league baseball park. The essential masonry fabric of the stadium, standing today largely as it did in 1926, follows a reverse "J" in plan and represents about one-third of the proposed original stadium, a U-shaped facility that would have seated 25,000. The

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 7 **Page** 2

northeast ends of the parallel sides of the “U” were never extended to their full length, despite the optimism of its sponsors at the time; features positioned along the back edges of some lower tiers of open seating and designed to receive structural steel for upper tiers remain visible and unused. The first changes in the appearance of the stadium came in 1930 when the minor league Greensboro Patriots occupied it as their home field; the elevated roof was added over the center tiers of seating, a press box, and dugouts were added for the 24 April 1930 opening game, and lights were installed that summer. The surprisingly intact fabric of the stadium indicates little physical change in its appearance and facilities from 1930 until the later 1970s; during these years the stadium was used by local high school, college, and community teams and as a minor-league ballpark for periods (1930-1934, 1941-1968).

The arrival of the Greensboro Hornets (now the Bats) in 1978 initiated a series of additions to the facility which made it more agreeable for players and more comfortable for spectators. Most of these were relatively low-cost and altogether utilitarian in appearance and materials except for the steel-frame light towers (#7). The two freestanding wood ticket kiosks (#2-3) at the front of the stadium were added in the 1970s as were food concession areas overlooking the field. The dugouts were rebuilt about 1978-1979. The 1930 press box (behind the entrance portal) was converted to a VIP suite in the late 1980s and a new press box built behind seating to the west where it remains today after some reworking in 1992. A one-story cement block dressing room for visiting teams was added onto the end of the southeast stands in the mid-1980s. (A freestanding kitchen was built about 1990; it stands on adjoining city-owned property which is not included in this nomination.) In 1993 a section of wood frame seating and a bar called the “Grand Stand” was added onto and over the end of the northwest stands, and a picnic area containing about two dozen tables was located to the north. A smaller wood bar called the “Baby Grand” was simply added in the upper corner of the southeast stands.

During the last two decades of the twentieth century some repositioning of offices and facilities occurred within the original spaces enclosed under the stands. The only significant visible alterations effected by these reallocated functions was the infill of windows centered in the symmetrical bays of the stadium walls flanking the entrance portal. Some of the openings were infilled with brick and stuccoed/painted over and at others the brick is visible. During the course of this infilling, in several instances brick was added on the outside of the opening only, leaving the original casement windows and transoms intact and visible inside. Metal ventilators and air conditioners are set in some of these former openings, and these, too, are of different dates. During its long life and active use, a period of nearly three-quarters of a century, the essential fabric of the stadium has survived intact, if slightly worn-looking at its edges. The

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: **7** **Page** 3

relative low-cost improvements for player and spectator comfort over the last three decades have been made over, around, and at the edges of the original 1926 fabric, and they could be removed and replaced in better materials should funding be secured for a restoration and rehabilitation of the stadium.

The landscape development of the stadium lot is simple and informal, and whatever Mr. Cridland, the original landscape architect, might have installed is long lost. Today a cement-paved parking lot carries fully across the Yanceyville Street front of the stadium. The effect of so much cement is partially mitigated by paired Bradford pear trees planted to either side of the portal and enclosed with barberry hedging. In the south corner of the lot the cement paving gives way to a larger gravel-covered, generally rectangular parking lot along the Lindsay Street boundary; it extends back to the grouped, fenced tennis courts standing along the rear Dewey Street boundary. The only other landscape feature outside the stadium is a cement walk, lined with Bradford pear trees which carries from the "Grand Stand" picnic area around and behind the backfield fencing to the tennis courts. The polygonal playing field has a smooth dense grass cover with a border of reddish gravel.

Note: The main grandstand, the southeast and northwest stands, their later twentieth century extensions, and the fencing are linked together and form a single entity which will be described herein as one contributing building. In the last quarter of the twentieth century a group of small unobtrusive buildings (#2-5) was added on the grounds and they will be described herein as noncontributing buildings. The stadium and the playing field are illuminated by a series of lights mounted on eight tall metal towers and two secondary poles. They (#7) constitute a single noncontributing resource as does the group of fenced tennis courts (#6) along the Dewey Street boundary of the stadium lot.

Description

1. World War Memorial Stadium
1926
Contributing building

The World War Memorial Stadium is an imposing sand-finished cement and brick masonry athletic facility consisting of a grandstand, being a reverse "J" in plan, which embraces a baseball playing field enclosed on the northeast and southeast sides with backfield billboard and security fencing of wood frame and plywood, cement block, and woven wire in an informal manner.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 7 **Page** 4

The stadium grandstand, forming the arc-shaped bowl of the reverse "J," is a symmetrical masonry building dominated by the classical portal facing southwest to Yanceyville Street. The portal is comprised of tall, square-in-plan pylons, with stepped tops supporting flag poles, which flank the entrance. The entrance has the form of a classical triumphal arch with paired five sided pilasters and two octagonal piers supporting the three arched openings which are shaded by canvas awnings. Terracotta eagles in the form of rectangular plaques are positioned above the piers and below a frieze which carries across the top of the bays and links the pylons. The three recessed panels in the frieze bear the name "WORLD WAR MEMORIAL STADIUM" in bronze letters; bronze laurel wreaths are mounted in the frieze in positions above the eagle plaques. The front southwest faces of the pylons have surface treatments at three levels. At the base of each pylon classical masonry tablets are mounted with rectangular bronze plaques on which are inscribed the names of eighty Guilford County men who died in the World War. These tables are flanked by bronze wreath and palm-leaf ornaments. Paired bronze baseball bats and balls are placed in the near center of the pylon faces. The upper faces of the pylons gradually recess inside self frames and hold trios of tall narrow window openings. The exposed outer sides of the pylons have window openings in positions corresponding with the façade tablets which hold paired eight-pane metal casement windows below four-pane transoms. The tops of these sides are finished in the same fashion as the upper front.

The portal is flanked by tall side walls, forming the back of the stadium grandstand, which extend for five-and-one-half bays to each side; the half bays abut the pylons on each side. These bays are simply finished with paired recessed panels per bay. The large, square lower panels were centered with window openings which have since been infilled with brick or masonry. Corresponding panels in the frieze above alternate with shield-shaped ornaments. The elevations of the stadium extending beyond the above-described symmetrical composition are asymmetrical in appearance and reflect the plan and form of the reverse "J." On the southeast side the additional stadium seating, built to only one-half the depth of the bays flanking the pylons, extends for three bays beyond a bay-width walkway which has been infilled. The faces of these three bays have recessed panels holding centered openings which have been infilled with masonry. Board and plywood walling carries across the top of this recessed section. A one-story hip-roof cement-block dressing room with blind walls stands at the northeast end of the seating, and its southeast elevation continues as a cement block security wall down the southeast side of the playing field to where it abuts the backfield wall.

The northwest stand of seating, also erected only one-half the depth of the main grandstand, forms the long stem of the reverse "J" and is about five times (twenty-plus bays) the length of the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 7 **Page** 5

southeast stands and includes three passageways providing access to the stands. These passages open off a fenced cement paved service area, behind the northwest stands (where the kitchen and a smaller frame concession stand are located). The area under the multiple bays nearest the main grandstand was originally enclosed and provided visiting team dressing room, restroom, and service areas. They house related functions today. The area under the remaining bays appears to have originally been open and sections of it were enclosed at varying times with masonry (brick or cement block) to provide office, restroom, storage, service, and related spaces. The "Grand Stand," forming the northeast end of the northwest stands, is an open, unpainted frame two-part angled span of informal boxes, deck seating, and an angle-shaped bar protected by a shed roof. A wood deck ramp extends north off the "Grand Stand" to a picnic area with some twenty-five tables partially enclosed by a wood picket fence. A cement walk, lined with Bradford pear trees loops broadly from the picnic area behind the backfield fencing to a restroom building (#4) and a series of fenced, paved tennis courts (#6) positioned at the northeast boundary of the stadium lot along Dewey Street.

At the front of the stadium the three arched openings give into a rectangular lobby with a stepped ceiling reflecting the tiered seating of the grandstand. A passage to the stands and field is on direct axis with the center arch while curving corridors lead off the sides to the southeast and northwest. The cement and exposed brick surfaces of the lobby, the passage, and corridors are painted. The Bats gift shop and their dressing rooms are located along the southeast corridor which terminates with a passage from the dressing room onto the field. On the northwest side of the lobby and along the northwest corridor are located the Bats team offices, a women's restroom, and food concession booths. The finishes of these spaces are mostly utilitarian and modern, dating to the last decades of the twentieth century, when some of the areas were put to different uses; however, a number of original doors, windows, and other significant features survive to indicate the original appearance which, when new in 1926, was very plain and simply fashioned.

The design and appearance of the main covered grandstand and the uncovered southeast and northwest stands is quite simple. Passageways, including the one on axis with the center entrance bay, provide access from the two corridors and the ground level exterior on the northwest (behind the stem of the reverse "J") to the stands. Simple inset masonry staircases link these passages with the tiered sections of seating which ascend from the front to the back. When the stadium was dedicated in 1926, the seating consisted of wood benches mounted on iron brackets; important sections of this original seating type survive in the rear third of the stadium; however, the wood slats have been replaced with metal on the original iron brackets. Most of the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 7 **Page** 6

seating in the front two-thirds of the stadium has been replaced during the last three decades of the twentieth century with modern seats reused here from other facilities including the Greensboro Coliseum, after it was reseated in the mid 1990s, and stadiums in New York and Philadelphia (via Spartanburg). Some individual seating, installed in the grandstand after 1926, was relocated to the "Grand Stand" when it was built. The seating in the main grandstand behind the portal and the fully-developed area to the northwest is covered by the 1930 metal frame roof supported by slender metal piers. This asymmetrical arrangement reflects the off-axis positioning of home plate and the playing field that was necessary to provide the appropriate/required distances from baselines to the backfield. Behind the portal the stadium's original press box was refashioned as a VIP suite. The new 1980s press box is located at the rear of the northwest stands. The area immediately in front of the stands, between them and the woven metal fence enclosing the playing field, is cement-paved and used by spectators for access between sections of seating and to reach concession areas including one, named "Joanne's Dugout," which is immediately behind one of two simple modern dugouts inset in the fence enclosing the field.

The grass-covered playing field of the World War Memorial Stadium is generally oval in shape, defined by the arc of the grandstand on the southwest, the straight line of the northwest stands on the northwest, a corresponding arc on the northeast, and an irregular boundary on the southeast caused by the necessary projection of the right field line. The field is enclosed on the northeast and southeast with wood frame advertising billboards. Because of the reverse "J" shape of the stands, originally conceived for football and track events and amateur/scholastic baseball, the home plate is not (and cannot be) on axis with the center of the stadium, but it is located slightly to the north. The left field line, from home plate through third base to the wall at the end of the northwest stands, is 327 feet. Center field is 401 feet. The right field line, from home plate through first base and to the angular projection in the southeast wall, is 327 feet. The playing field was laser-graded and replanted with grass for the opening home game of the Greensboro Bats' 2000 season on 6 April. Home plate, the base paths, the infield, and the perimeter of the playing field are covered with packed red clay.

Modern Support Facilities

These simple free standing buildings were erected in the last decades of the twentieth century for spectator convenience. While all of them are noncontributing, they are unobtrusive and do not affect the integrity of the stadium.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 7 Page 7

2. South Ticket Kiosk
ca. 1979
Noncontributing building

This small simple frame building is one of a pair standing on brick foundations on cement pads, sheathed with exterior wood paneling, and covered with shed roofs. This one, standing to the right (south) of the portal, has an opening protected by plexiglass on its southwest front and a door on the rear for worker access.

3. West Ticket Kiosk
ca. 1979
Noncontributing building

This ticket booth is located in a pendant position to the above booth and to the west side of the portal. It is identical in appearance except that the opening on its front is protected by a woven wire screen.

4. Restroom Pavilion
ca. 1975-1990
Noncontributing building

This rectangular frame and masonry building is covered with a side-gable asphalt shingle roof and was erected principally for the convenience of those using the adjoining tennis courts.

5. Maintenance Building
ca. 1975
Noncontributing building

This rectangular building, covered with a side-gable asphalt shingle roof, and the adjoining fenced yard, is used by the grounds crew as a rest and recreational area during the baseball season when they have to be on site for extended hours.

6. Tennis Courts
ca. 1975-1985
Noncontributing structures

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 7 Page 8

This small group of fenced and paved tennis courts was erected by the parks and recreation department of Greensboro at the extreme northeast edge of the stadium lot at its boundary along Dewey Street.

7. Light Towers
ca. 1978-1985
Noncontributing structure

The playing field is illuminated at night by a group of eight principal light towers and two secondary towers. The eight principal towers are metal frame and rise from poured cement bases. The light boards have four rows with seven lights in each row. The secondary light standards have two rows with eight lights each with two in a third row at their base.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 8 Page 9

SUMMARY

The Greensboro World War Memorial Stadium, an imposing Modern Classical building dedicated on Armistice Day 1926, holds unusual significance in the history of Greensboro, Guilford County, and the state of North Carolina. It satisfies National Register Criteria A and C and holds statewide significance in the areas of architecture, entertainment/recreation, politics/government, and social history, as a unique embodiment of civic sympathy and responsibility, respectively, for those citizens of Guilford County who gave their lives during World War I and for its sons (and daughters) who would participate in athletic contests in the stadium for a period now approaching three-quarters of a century. Criteria Consideration F is superseded by the historical significance of the stadium. It stands today as the largest and costliest such memorial erected by a community in North Carolina honoring those who died in the World War. While a memorial honoring the sons of Guilford County who died in the war had been espoused by civic leaders and members of the Harry K. Burtner Post #53 of the American Legion from the close of the war, it was not until fall 1921 that the American Legion post voted to support a memorial in the form of an athletic facility that could be used by local public schools, colleges, and amateur sports associations. However noble the proposal, the effort stalled until 1925: on 12 February the North Carolina Legislature authorized the creation of the Greensboro World War Memorial Commission; and nine months later a large and influential group of three hundred citizens staged a three-day drive which raised some \$105,000 by its close on Armistice Day (11 November). The stadium, originally ambitiously designed in the shape of a "U" by Greensboro architects Leonard White, Jr. and Harry Barton, would have seated 25,000. Even with the appropriation of \$50,000 by the city of Greensboro that project was beyond reach, and in 1926 the Carolina Contracting Company erected a portion of the design, essentially a reverse "J" in shape, which would seat approximately 8,500. That facility, with its handsome classical entrance flanked by pylons bearing bronze tablets inscribed with the names of eighty fallen heroes, was dedicated on Armistice Day 1926. The use of the stadium as an athletic facility, inaugurated that afternoon by a football game between Guilford and High Point Colleges, has continued to the present. Beginning in 1930 the stadium became the home field of the Greensboro Patriots, an affiliate of the St. Louis Cardinals, and it survives as the oldest minor-league ball park in North Carolina (and possibly the nation). Except for several years in the late 1930s, the stadium continued to be used for minor league baseball until 1968. The stadium's period of significance begins in 1926 and ends in 1950 because it has not been shown that the property has the exceptional significance required to extend the period to within the last fifty years.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 8 Page 10

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, ARCHITECTURE, ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION,
POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT, AND SOCIAL HISTORY CONTEXTS**

The tremendous loss of life experienced in the World War--subsequently and hereinafter called World War I--occasioned many forms of remembrance and commemoration. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, completed in 1931, is the best known of a series of monuments and memorials erected throughout the United States, which suffered casualties of 307,092 persons including 81,553 deaths. Built memorials were of two principal types: either a commemorative memorial, like the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which was monumental in form and setting and embellished with sculptural enrichments; or architectural, being a public building such as a library, auditorium, or stadium erected in memory of those who had died and for the use of the citizenry. Some 86,457 North Carolina men and women served in World War I; of that number 2,927 service people were from Guilford County, with about 1,400 of that total being citizens of Greensboro (Arnett, 320). Henry K. Burtner (death date unconfirmed) became the first of at least 138 persons from Guilford County who died in the war. In 1919 his death was memorialized in Greensboro through the organization of the Henry K. Burtner Post #53 of the American Legion, one of the first posts organized in North Carolina under the auspices of the national organization chartered by Congress in September 1919. Through the course of the early 1920s, members of the Henry K. Burtner Post championed the erection of a memorial; their efforts and those of others active in the fund raising campaign in the fall of 1925 saw success in the dedication of the World War Memorial Stadium on Armistice Day (November 11) in 1926.¹

A memorial to Guilford's fallen sons became a topic of conversations among private individuals and in the meetings of various civic organizations in Greensboro as soon as the war ended. However, it was not until 17 October 1921 that the members of the Henry K. Burtner Post met expressly for the purpose of discussing a memorial and what form it should take. J. F. Stevens and McDaniel Lewis advocated an athletic field, and Mr. Stevens made a motion to that effect which was passed by the post (Greensboro Record, 16 November 1940). For reasons that are not now clear, the proposal lagged until 1925. In retrospect this delay appears inexplicable given the tenor of the times and the fact that scions of at least two of Greensboro's most prominent families died during the war in 1918.²

Plans for the World War memorial advanced quickly in 1925. On 12 February 1925 "An Act to Authorize the City of Greensboro to Hold and Own Property for a Memorial Park, and to

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 8 Page 11

Provide for the Control and Management of Same” was passed in the North Carolina Legislature. The act also named members of the Greensboro World War Memorial Commission to hold office until their successors were elected: Herman Cone; Allen T. Preyer; Alfred Moore Scales; John N. Wilson; and Mrs. Harry R. Bush. The wording of the act suggests that the site of the memorial had been determined, although the property would not actually be conveyed to the city of Greensboro until May 1926. The design of this important new civic building was a commission with sure appeal to members of the Greensboro architectural profession, including Harry Barton, Wells L. Brewer, Charles C. Hartmann, Raleigh James Hughes, and Christopher Gadsen Sayre. The honor, however, went to members of the profession with an inside track. Leonard White, Jr., a veteran of the World War and member of the Henry K. Burtner Post, was an associate architect in the office of Harry Barton. Messrs. Barton and White received the commission for the building and appear to have resolved the general design scheme during the fall of 1925. Both their names appear on the presentation drawing which was sent to the editor of the American Legion Weekly on 5 December for publication. The extent to which the design reflected ideas earlier put forth by landscape architect Robert B. Cridland, who had been engaged by the American Legion in the early 1920s, is not known; Cridland continued his involvement with the project and prepared a landscape plan for the facility. Meanwhile, a highly organized fund-raising campaign opened in Greensboro on Monday, 9 November, with some 300 volunteers seeking donations from citizens, businesses, and the Guilford County schoolchildren. By the close of the drive, on Armistice Day (11 November), some \$105,000 had been pledged.

The final working drawings for the World War Memorial Stadium were probably completed in the winter of 1926 as the financial details of the building’s construction were being resolved. The city of Greensboro committed an additional \$50,000 to the project. On 17 May 1926 the Summit Avenue Building Company, through its president Herman Cone, conveyed the fourteen-acre site of the memorial stadium to the city of Greensboro (Guilford County Deeds, 517/580-581). The contract for the building was awarded to the Carolina Contracting Company of Greensboro, whose office was located in the city’s Jefferson Standard Building on the floor above that of the architects.

Construction on the stadium is said to have begun in April, before the property was formally conveyed to the city. The stadium design was in the form of a “U” with the entrance, offices, and guest and player facilities located in and adjoining a handsome arched portal, flanked by pylons, at the base of the “U.” The long sides of the “U” provided stepped banks of seating overlooking the elongated oval field which was well suited for football and tract events; however, its principal use came to be for baseball. The original design provided seating for

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 8 Page 12

25,000; the population of Greensboro in 1920 was 34,163 and that of Guilford County was 45,109. The stadium sponsors and city fathers quickly realized the plan was too ambitious. How the decision on how much of the building to erect was reached is now unknown; however, the costs and funds at hand were surely the principal factors affecting the decision. In the end, the decision was made to erect the entrance portal and to erect permanent seating for some 8,500 persons; the building readied for dedication on Armistice Day 1926 was in the form of a reverse "J." Provision was also made for portable bleacher seating for about 4,000 more. While there have been some improvements to the facility, principally the addition of a canopy, improvements to the dressing rooms, and the erection of a press box and dugouts in 1930 for the benefit of the Greensboro Patriots baseball team, the World War Memorial Stadium survives essentially as completed in the fall of 1926.

The dedication of the World War Memorial Stadium on Armistice Day (Thursday, 11 November) 1926 was much heralded in the Greensboro Daily News. Long articles published on 10-11 November celebrated the completion of the building and outlined the program of the dedicatory ceremonies. The front page article in the Friday edition of the Greensboro Daily News provided lavish coverage of the dedication. The ceremonies began at 10:30 a.m. at the entrance portal with the dedication and unveiling of the two bronze plaques, mounted on the faces of the pylons, which bore the names of eighty men who had died in the war. (Even before the building was dedicated, the total number of local deaths in the World War increased; however, the additional names were never added on plaques or visibly placed on the building.) The assembly then moved inside the stadium, took seats, and listened to speeches by Mayor Edwin B. Jeffress, president of the stadium commission, on the history of the stadium, and Alfred Lee Bulwinkle (1883-1950), Congressman for the state's Tenth District and a veteran of the world war. The athletic field was christened at 2:30 p.m. in a football game between teams from two of the county's colleges; High Point College defeated Guilford College by a score of 7 to 3.

When the World War Memorial Stadium was dedicated in 1926 it became the first major memorial in North Carolina dedicated to those "who made the supreme sacrifice in the World War" and it placed in service a building which has remained central in the civic and athletic life of the city to the present. As events came to prove, it survives as one of the two impressive memorials erected in the state to those who died in World War I. On 23 January 1919 the North Carolina Legislature had enacted a bill to "Appoint a North Carolina Memorial Building Commission and to Provide for the Erection of a Suitable Memorial Building in Honor and to the Memory of all North Carolina Citizens Who Gave Their Lives, Services, or Property to the End

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 8 Page 13

that the War with Germany and Her Allies Might Be Won.” That twelve-member commission, headed by the governor, did not succeed in raising the money for a memorial building; however, its adjunct responsibility to collect records relating to the war and the services of North Carolina was fulfilled in part by a “Collector of War Records” established by the North Carolina Historical Commission and the acquisition of artifacts by the Hall of History (now the Museum of History).

Four years after the dedication of the Greensboro memorial, Raleigh’s municipal building and auditorium was destroyed in a fire on 24 October 1930. When the decision was made to rebuild the auditorium, it was also to be erected as a memorial to the war dead of Raleigh, but with no specific reference to a particular war. The Raleigh Memorial Auditorium, a Classical Revival-style limestone-sheathed building, was dedicated on 19 January 1932. In 1919 a committee at North Carolina State College had been appointed also to arrange for a memorial honoring its thirty-three students who had died in the world war. That project also languished, largely because of inadequate funding, until the mid-1930s when Works Progress Administration funds were appropriated for the construction of Memorial Tower in a prominent location near the Hillsborough Street edge of the campus. Designed by William Henry Deacy, the Mt. Airy granite bell tower was completed in 1937. In the years following the close of World War II, in which more than 7,000 North Carolinians lost their lives, memorials were raised in counties throughout the state to those who had died in both wars. These mostly took the form of bronze tablets mounted on the walls of court houses or monuments on their grounds.

While the Memorial Tower on the campus of North Carolina State University continues to be a handsome landmark in the capital, the World War Memorial Stadium in Greensboro continues to serve the larger purpose for which it was erected. Standing inside the stadium on Armistice Day 1926, Mr. Jeffress, mayor of Greensboro, concluded his speech with a focus on the promise the stadium held for the citizens of Greensboro and Guilford County.

And so the stadium has been built by children’s and widows’ wives’ and rich men’s wealth. It is here for the use of the coming generations; the soldier boys said they wanted no hollow of granite, no useless monument to decorate our street corners, even no statuary or brass to remind us of those who have passed along after doing life’s full duty, but they wanted something that would be useful; that would help develop mind and body; that would in this way be a perpetual memorial to those who have passed . . . , that those of us who follow after should use our best efforts to make ourselves physically fit to

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 8 Page 14

answer any emergency; . . .; and when the call to duty comes, answer with a clear, strong voice, "We are ready to do our bit" (Greensboro Record, 16 November 1940)."

In 1926 good athletic facilities, particularly playing fields, for the city and county's high school students were much needed. In 1922-1923 when the city built four new graded schools, including the Charles B. Aycock School near the stadium site and off Summit Avenue, their modern plants included gymnasiums and dressing rooms; however, the provisions for outdoor sports were few and increasingly inadequate as the city's population increased. Those four graded school buildings were advanced for their time, and an early municipal expression of the statewide school consolidation movement; however, educational innovation moved rapidly in the 1920s. In 1929 when Greensboro erected new separate high schools for its white and black citizens, Greensboro (now Grimsley) and James B. Dudley High Schools, respectively, their physical plants provided larger offerings, particularly for the sciences and athletics (Brown, 76).

The football game played between High Point and Guilford Colleges as a part of the dedicatory ceremonies inaugurated the stadium as a site for collegiate athletics; from that day to the present the World War Memorial Stadium has fulfilled the role of an athletic facility envisioned by its supporters and articulated by Mr. Jeffress. In the fall of 1926 the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce circulated an attractive four-page brochure encouraging the use of the facility which it described as "North Carolina's Amateur Sports Center." For its first four years the stadium served as the site of local high school, collegiate, community, and American-Legion-associated amateur sports events; these were coordinated under the Stadium Games Committee first, long-chaired by J. D. Wilkins. In 1930 the Stadium Commission entered into an agreement with the St. Louis Cardinals whereby the stadium became the home field of its minor-league affiliate team, the Greensboro Patriots; from 1908 to 1930, the Patriots had played at the city's Cone Park under a series of league associations.

The decision to accommodate the Greensboro Patriots in the stadium, and the continued, although sometimes interrupted, use of the stadium as a minor-league baseball park, has earned it an important distinction and significance in the history of sports in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the nation. The World War Memorial Stadium is believed to be the oldest active minor-league stadium in the United States. This supposition, advanced locally and by the office of the Greensboro Bats, the current resident minor-league team, has not been researched for this nomination; however, the stadium is certainly the oldest intact minor-league stadium in North Carolina. The stadium is included in Fodor's Ballpark Vacations published in 1997. A stadium built in 1924 in Asheville was partially destroyed by fire in 1934 and rebuilt; the Kinston

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 8 Page 15

Stadium, built in 1949, is the next oldest stadium in North Carolina. The Greensboro Patriots played in World War Memorial Stadium into 1934; after a six-year break from 1935 to 1940, minor-league baseball returned to the stadium and teams played here under a succession of names and affiliations until 1968. A second, ten-year absence of minor-league baseball existed until 1978 when a team in Shelby was acquired, moved to Greensboro and renamed the Greensboro Hornets. In 1994 the Hornets were renamed the Greensboro Bats, and the Bats, an affiliate of the New York Yankees, continue to use World War Memorial Stadium as their home field. The larger community use of the stadium also continues to the present; the baseball team of North Carolina A & T State University plays its home games in World War Memorial Stadium.

While the stadium has remained in use to the present, investment in its maintenance and repairs have not kept apace of general upkeep or the extensive mechanical systems updating that it requires to continue in use as a viable facility. The future use of the building is also threatened by the possible, long-sought construction of a new state-of-the-art facility advocated by the management of the Greensboro Bats and some local sports enthusiasts. Other leaders in Greensboro, including the Charles B. Aycock Neighborhood Association which sponsored this nomination, are advocating a new life for the stadium through rehabilitation, restoring its fabric and improving its facilities so that it might again, in new circumstances, live up to its 1925 description as "North Carolina's Amateur Sports Center." In 1940 J. D. Wilkins, who had been a leader in the fall 1925 fund drive and who retained an active role in the operation of the stadium for many years, wrote a sketch of the stadium published in the Greensboro Record on 16 November. Couched in the narrative outlining the building's history and operation up to 1940, he expressed a poignant regret, "It is not with pride that we recall delay in getting the project under way." Perhaps a parallel feeling, experienced by many now, sixty years later, will galvanize Greensboro citizens to renew and restore the World War Memorial Stadium in honor of those who died near the beginning of the twentieth century and those who excelled here in the years afterward to the present.

Endnotes

1. Published sources, including books and newspaper articles, used in the preparation of this nomination are included in the bibliography and where appropriate noted internally in the text.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 8 Page 16

-
2. Edward Latham (1894-1918) was the son of James Edwin Latham (1866-1946), a prominent cotton broker and capitalist, and his wife Maude Moore Latham (1871-1951): Mrs. Latham would become the principal donor for the restoration of Tryon Palace in New Bern, and her philanthropy would be continued by her daughter, May Gordon Latham Kellenberger (1893-1978), who became her parents' heir after the death of her only sibling. Alfred Moore Scales IV (1898-1918) was the son of Alfred Moore Scales (1870-1940), a principal developer of Greensboro's Irving Park (NR, 1995), the city's premiere residential suburban park, (and Hamilton Lakes,) and Bessie Taylor Scales (1870-1912); he was the grandson of North Carolina Governor Alfred Moore Scales (1827-1892) and the great-grandson of John A. Taylor whose marble-fronted house remains one of the finest residences ever built in Wilmington.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 9 Page 17

Bibliography

Bruce Adams and Margaret Engel. Fodor's Ballpark Vacations. New York: Fodor's Travel Publications, Inc., 1997.

Arnett, Ethel Stephens. Greensboro, North Carolina: The County Seat of Guilford. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975.

Brown, Marvin. Greensboro: An Architectural Record. Greensboro: Preservation Greensboro, Inc., 1995.

Greensboro Daily News: 8 November 1925, 10-12, 18 November 1926; 10 February 1956; 18 March 1966.

Greensboro Historical Museum Files and Collections, Greensboro, North Carolina.

Greensboro News & Record: 21 January 1970; 18 December 1994; 25 January, 7 February 1999.

Greensboro Record: 16 November 1940; 13, 26 February 1941.

"The Greensboro World War Memorial Stadium." Greensboro: Greensboro Chamber of Commerce, 1926.

Guilford County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Guilford County Court House, Greensboro, North Carolina.

Public Laws of North Carolina, 1919, c. 3.

Public Laws of North Carolina, 1921, c. 31.

George Stevenson, letter to author, 14 April 2000.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

Section number: 10 Page 18

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: The property included in this nomination is delineated by the bold line on the accompanying copy of the northern portion of Guilford County Tax Map, sheet 46. The nominated property is described in the deed of conveyance, dated 17 May 1926, and recorded in Guilford County Deed Book 517, pages 580-581, except for the west corner of that parcel where a group of city-owned and noncontributing service buildings stand astride the boundary. The bold line on the accompanying map encompasses the vast majority of the parcel described in the deed (identified in the Guilford County tax mapping system as 00-00-0046-0-0001-00-016), but it excludes the strip of land containing the service buildings along the northwest edge of the 1926 boundary.

Boundary Justification: The property included in this nomination is the parcel conveyed as a gift by the Summit Avenue Building Company to the City of Greensboro on 17 May 1926, except for a small rectangular area at the parcel's west corner where a group of city-owned and noncontributing service buildings have been erected astride and without respect for the 1926 boundary. Otherwise, the boundary of the parcel has remained intact to the present, and the approximately fourteen-acre tract serves as the site and setting of the World War Memorial Stadium. The parcel is outlined in pencil on the enclosed Guilford County Tax Map, Sheet no. 46.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

World War Memorial Stadium, Guilford County, North Carolina

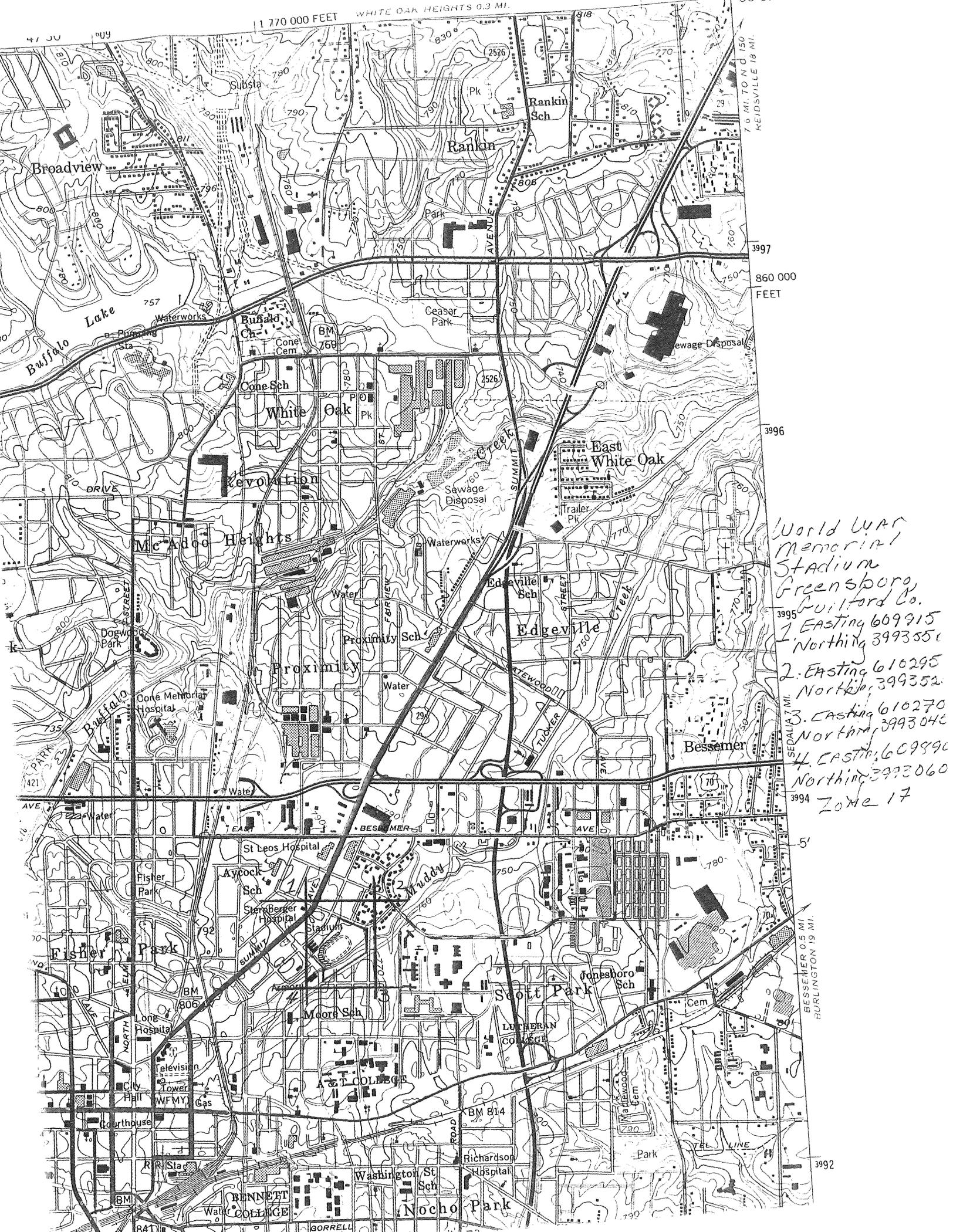
Section number: Photos Page 19

Photographic Schedule

1. Name of property: World War Memorial Stadium
2. Location: Guilford County, North Carolina
3. Name of photographer: Davyd Foard Hood
4. Date of photographs: 9 February 1999
5. Location of original negatives: Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.

Photographs

- A. Overall view looking east from a position on the southwest side of Yanceyville Street.
- B. Portal on the southwest façade, looking northeast.
- C. Playing field, looking east.
- D. Grandstand seating with VIP suite, looking west/northwest.
- E. Grandstand seating and roof, looking southwest.
- F. View of the northwest stands, looking north with press box on the left and "Grand Stand" on the near right.
- G. Lobby immediately inside the portal, looking north with opening on the northwest corridor in the center and main axial passage to the grandstand and field on right.
- H. Interior, looking northeast from lobby into northwest corridor.



World War
 Memorial
 Stadium
 Greensboro,
 Guilford Co.
 1. Easting 609915
 Northing 399355
 2. Easting 610295
 Northing 399352
 3. Easting 610270
 Northing 399304
 4. Easting 609890
 Northing 399306
 Zone 17

1 770 000 FEET WHITE OAK HEIGHTS 0.3 MI.

7.0 MI. TO N.D. 150
KEIDSVILLE 18 MI.

3997

860 000
FEET

3996

3995

3994

5'

BESSEMER 0.5 MI
BURLINGTON 19 MI.

3992

