

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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Raleigh Bonded Warehouse

Raleigh, Wake County, WA2675, Listed 8/24/2006
Nomination by M. Ruth Little
Photographs by M. Ruth Little, May 2006



Overall view – weigh station on left



Rear view from railroad right-of-way

**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

historic name Raleigh Bonded Warehouse

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1505 Capital Boulevard not for publication N/A

city or town Raleigh vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Wake code 183 zip code 27603

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

 Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
 State or Federal agency and bureau

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

 Signature of commenting or other official Date

 State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	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): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Raleigh Bonded Warehouse
Name of Property

Wake County, N.C.
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	
<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
-0-

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: warehouse
Commerce/Trade office
Commerce/Trade specialty store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: warehouse
Vacant/Not in Use
Commerce/Trade specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)
No Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
foundation concrete
roof Other: tar and gravel
walls concrete
brick
other plywood
metal

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

Raleigh Bonded Warehouse
Name of Property

Wake County, N.C.
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Architecture/Engineering

Period of Significance

ca. 1923-1956

Significant Dates

ca. 1923

ca. 1949

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

Raleigh Bonded Warehouse
Name of Property

Wake County, N.C.
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 15.67 acres

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

Zone Easting Northing
1 17 713940 3964605
2 17 714410 3963840

Zone Easting Northing
3 17 714500 3964690
4 17 714000 3964475
___ 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 M. Ruth Little

organization Longleaf Historic Resources date August 2005

street & number 2709 Bedford Ave. telephone 919-836-1885

city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27607

12. 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

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**Section 7 Page 1
Raleigh Bonded Warehouse
Wake County, North Carolina**

Section 7: Description

The Raleigh Bonded Warehouse complex occupies a narrow, rectangular 15.67-acre parcel at 1505 Capital Boulevard, bounded on the south by Capital Boulevard and on the north by the Norfolk Southern Railway tracks. The parcel is oriented northwest to southeast, but north and south compass points will be used for the sake of simplicity. The parcel slopes south to Pigeon House branch, a creek that flows along a rocky bed. (The branch parallels Capital Boulevard, flowing along its south side until a culvert channels it under the road to flow along the north side at the east end of the parcel.) A dirt driveway and parking area extends between Capital Boulevard and the warehouses. The complex is located in the Georgetown section of Raleigh, approximately one mile from downtown Raleigh. To the north, on a plateau above the railroad tracks, is the residential neighborhood of Georgetown. Across the boulevard to the south are more Norfolk Southern Railway tracks and the Mordecai neighborhood. The warehouse complex is the oldest of a row of light industrial buildings that front Capital Boulevard and back up to the tracks of the Seaboard Air Line and Norfolk Southern railroads.

The complex contains six buildings: (1) the original ca. 1923 Raleigh Bonded Warehouse; (2) ca. 1923 Office, expanded ca. 1949; (3) Packing Building, ca. 1949; (4) Weigh Station, ca. 1949; (5) Warehouse 14-19, ca. 1949; and (6) Warehouse 20-21, ca. 1953. The ca. 1923 warehouse is parallel to and approximately 400 feet south of the edge of the Norfolk Southern Railway tracks. This warehouse, which faces south to Capital Boulevard, contains twelve compartments, each 66 feet wide and 140 deep. These are stacked in two stories, with the odd-numbered units accessed from the south side and the upper, even-numbered units accessed from the north side, where the grade is higher, so that the building essentially is banked. At the west end is compartment 13, a 1930s addition. The office is located in front of the warehouse. The packing building and weigh station building are located east of the warehouse. These four buildings retain integrity from the period of historical significance, which extends to 1955. Two additional warehouse buildings are aligned on axis with the original warehouse on its west side. Warehouse 14-19 is spaced about 50 feet to the west. Warehouse 20-21 is located west of it. The spaces between the warehouses were designed to be infilled with additional warehouse compartments, but they remain open. These later warehouses are noncontributing because they were extensively altered after 1955 to serve a variety of wholesale businesses.

A concrete loading dock extends the length of the three warehouses along the south front. In the 100-foot opening between the second and third warehouse, a concrete ramp leads up to the parking area between the buildings. The loading dock has a metal canopy sheltering most of the façade of the 1923 warehouse. The rest of the dock is uncovered with the exception of an identical canopy sheltering Compartment No. 18. A railroad spur that extended from east to west along the front of the warehouses as far as Unit No. 17 has been removed. A concrete loading dock extends along the rear of the 1923 warehouse, covered by a canopy identical to the front one. A series of fire hydrants spaced along the warehouse row, located at the front and rear of the 1923 warehouse and along the front of the later two warehouses, provides water to the sprinkler systems inside the warehouses.

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C 1. Raleigh Bonded Warehouse. Ca. 1923.

The two-story rectangular warehouse, measuring 400 feet in length and 140 feet in depth, is constructed of reinforced concrete walls with a heavy timber interior framework supporting a low gabled roof. The impressions of the horizontal boards that formed the wall molds are visible on the concrete walls, imprinting the texture of wood boards into the otherwise smooth surfaces. The lower story, accessible from the south front, is divided into six compartments, numbered 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. Each compartment is 66 feet wide and 140 feet deep. The upper story, accessible from the rear (north) loading dock, contains six compartments, numbered 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12, of exactly the same size. The warehouse is painted white.

The entrance façade of each compartment contains two wide metal sliding doors, one centered in each half. The corrugated metal doors are stamped "Almetl Fire Door, Merchant & Evans Co., Philadelphia, Pa." Above the doors are four metal and wire glass windows, each with ten panes of glass. The center six panes of glass open like an awning window for ventilation. On the taller south façade, an identical row of windows above, which illuminated the upstairs compartments, have been infilled with masonry. The compartments in the upper level have the identical configuration as those of the lower level. The rear wall of the lower level compartments, set beneath the rear loading dock, contains identical doors and windows. The rear wall gives the illusion of being banked, but is actually fully exposed below the rear loading dock. Concrete piers, abutting a retaining wall, support the outer edge of the dock. Beneath the dock is a passage entered from the west end of the dock, allowing access to the doors in the lower level. Between each compartment is a concrete wall that extends into a parapet wall above the roofline. In the center of the east end wall is a thick projecting buttress. On the exterior, a pair of recessed gutter downspouts separates each compartment. The metal canopy sheltering the front and rear elevations was added, apparently in the early 1950s. The front canopy is attached to the warehouse in the middle of the upper level windows, which probably prompted their infilling with masonry at the time it was added.

The interior of each compartment contains a heavy timber framing system of wooden support posts, wooden ceiling joists, and wood plank flooring. The joists rest on concrete pilasters that project out from the side concrete walls. Sixteen wooden posts, set on four-foot centers, span the depth of each compartment. The posts are square, with chamfered corners and iron caps. The square wood ceiling joists have chamfered corners as well. The lower level compartments have concrete floors. The upper level compartments have original thick pine flooring. Some of the interior compartment walls are painted white, while others are exposed concrete.

Each pair of compartments on the lower level has a riser room constructed of brick set against the concrete separation wall. Accessed from the front by a metal door on strap hinges, the riser room contains pumping equipment to operate the sprinkler system. The sprinkler pipes extend through each of the sixteen bays of each compartment.

A concrete loading dock, ramped on the east side, encircles the front, rear and east side of the warehouse. On the front and rear, it is sheltered by a metal canopy of open metal trusses supported by round metal posts set on rounded concrete bases. A corrugated metal roof covers the canopy.

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Compartment 13, shown on the 1949 Sanborn map, is believed to have been added in the 1930s, but may date to the 1940s. Its construction has a temporary, lightweight character unlike the original reinforced concrete warehouse. The wood frame one-story compartment has a flat roof that is lower than the original warehouse roof. The walls are covered with 5-V barn tin. In the rear elevation are four multi-pane wooden windows. Square wooden posts with wood impost blocks and diagonal braces support the wooden ceiling joists.

C 2. Office. Ca. 1923, 1940s.

The one-story, rectangular masonry building, five bays wide and two bays deep, faces east. It was constructed in two phases. The west half, of brick construction covered with concrete stucco, is apparently contemporary with the 1923 warehouse. In the 1940s the addition of the east half doubled the size of the office. This section is constructed of concrete block, with a brick veneer. The main entrance is a batten door with sidelights, accessed by a flight of several steps, in the east elevation. Flanking the door are pairs of metal casement windows. On the south elevation is a large fixed-glass picture window. Architectural evidence indicates that the exterior of the original office was almost completely remodeled when the east addition was made. The rear west elevation contains a door (also accessed by a flight of steps), two twelve-pane metal casement windows to the south side, and a stone chimney to the north. All but one of the windows have a metal shed awning; metal gabled awnings shelter the doors. The building rests on a full basement that is partially raised on the west side, allowing two basement entrances. A documentary photograph, ca. 1949, as well as the 1949 Sanborn map update, shows the building in its current appearance.

The interior floor plan reflects the construction of the building in two stages. The west half of the office, which is the original ca. 1923 building, contains a large open north side room with a stone fireplace, vertical beadboard wainscot, and a molded chair rail. Behind a beadboard partition, a wooden stair descends to the basement. On the main floor, the south end of this section has two offices, with a concrete vault with a decorative iron door opening into the middle office. The east half of the office, which is the 1940s addition, contains an entrance foyer flanked by offices with wooden partitions with glazing in the upper half. The large private office in the south corner has its own bathroom. Behind this office is a second wooden stair to the basement. The basement, identified by signs as the "driver's lounge," is divided into a dining room, a vending machine room, and a number of bathrooms and shower rooms.

C 3. Packing Building. Ca. 1949. The rectangular, concrete block packing building, nine bays wide, is covered by a flat roof. Its principal, west elevation faces the original warehouse. Each bay contains a corrugated metal door that is similar to those on the warehouse. Flanking each door is a six-pane metal awning window. A concrete loading dock extends the length of the west elevation, facing the warehouse. The sides of the building have no openings. At the rear is a shed-roofed frame addition, covered with metal siding.

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This was the crating building. The space is divided into three compartments by interior concrete block walls. Here employees packed furniture into wooden crates that were then moved to long-term storage in the warehouse. The building is in place on the 1949 Sanborn map update of Raleigh.

C 4. Weigh Station. Early 1950s. Small (approximately 8 x 10 foot) rectangular concrete block, flat-roofed building of similar construction and character to the Packing Building. The walls have tile coping. The front (west) elevation contains a door with a metal awning. The north elevation contains two six-pane metal casement windows with brick sills. The corners have a decorative quoin treatment created by recessing alternating blocks at an angle to the wall surface. The building does not appear on the 1949 Sanborn map update of Raleigh. According to owner Alton B. Smith Jr. it was constructed prior to 1954, when the complex in its present condition was completed. It is in fair condition with some wall settling.

Photographs of this building taken during the 1990 historic site survey by Helen Ross show that large "Truck Weighing" signs were painted on two sides of the tiny building. The signs have been painted over in white. An employee manned the building to weigh the trucks bringing goods to the warehouses for storage.

4a. Weight Platform. Early 1950s. (object) To the north is a buried weight platform on which the trucks would park to be weighed. The platform is of concrete, with a metal border.

NC-alt. 5. Warehouse 14-19. Ca. 1949.

Set approximately fifty feet beyond the west wall of the addition to the original warehouse is a second warehouse, of exactly the same 140 foot depth as the original. It contains six compartments of varying width totaling 660 feet. The four center compartments have brick firewalls that wrap approximately eight feet around the front corners and extend up as brick parapet walls above the flat roof. Terra cotta coping tiles cover the parapets. The east compartment, No. 14, and the west compartment, No. 19, do not have outer brick fire walls. According to owner Alton Smith Jr., these compartments were constructed gradually during the 1940s. They were apparently complete by 1949.¹ The front and rear walls are of concrete block, with brick firewalls between compartments. Each end wall is of frame construction, covered with metal siding, presumably to allow for the possibility of future expansion at each end.

The front elevation and interior space of each compartment has been individualized over the years to suit the needs of each business that has occupied them. Each compartment generally follows a similar interior division between a small front office and warehouse space to the rear, but two compartments (14 and 16) have been subdivided into numerous smaller sections for individual businesses. In compartments 18 and 19, the east front corner is partitioned as an office and a showroom.

¹ The pasted update of the Sanborn map of that year shows units 14-16 in place, and the section of the warehouse beyond No. 16 extends off the map book page and was folded over, however it has been torn off.

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Although built within the period of significance, the warehouse is noncontributing due to extensive alterations after 1955. A few sections of the front elevation retain exposed concrete block, but most sections have been covered with plywood siding. A continuous prominent boxed plywood cornice surmounts units 14-17. All units have replacement plate glass doors and display windows. The reconfiguration of the facades of the compartments occurred in the 1960s and 1970s as the spaces were rented to business tenants. The warehouse sections of each unit have freight doors with replacement metal or plastic garage doors on rolling ceiling tracks.

The rear elevation of Warehouse 14-19 is basically unaltered, with wide brick firewalls, concrete block walls, and some sections covered with metal siding. Twelve-pane metal windows with central awning sections that open for ventilation illuminate the upper wall area. In the center of the lower wall area of each compartment is a door.

NC-alt. 6. Warehouse 20-21. Early 1950s The third and last warehouse constructed in the row contains two compartments, numbers 20 and 21. The same 140-foot depth as the other warehouses, the building is 190 feet wide. Compartment 20 is divided into 20a and 20b. Compartment 21 is undivided. This warehouse is of identical construction to Warehouse 14-19, and was apparently constructed gradually like the second warehouse. An identical brick firewall with angled corners and terra cotta coping is set between the two compartments. The front and rear walls are of concrete block. The unaltered rear elevation contains corrugated metal doors in the lower wall and eight-pane metal windows with central awning sections that open for ventilation. Like the second warehouse, the front of this warehouse has been modernized by the addition of a frame boxed cornice and the addition of various metal and plate glass windows and doors. Compartment 20 has a timber frame, while No. 21 has a steel frame. Although built within the period of significance, the warehouse is noncontributing due to extensive alteration of the façade and interior spaces after 1955.

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Section 8: Statement of Significance

The Raleigh Bonded Warehouse, a complex of three warehouses, an office, a packing building and a weigh station and scale, developed from ca. 1923 to the early 1950s at 1505 Capital Boulevard, a light industrial area along the Norfolk Southern Railway tracks about one mile north of downtown Raleigh. The first warehouse, built about 1923 by N. E. Edgerton as a cotton warehouse, is a massive, 140 x 400 foot two-story reinforced concrete building with six storage compartments facing to the south and six in an upper story facing to the north. Its utilitarian architecture admits no decorative features, but the sturdy concrete walls, textured by the imprint of the planked forms, and the heavy timber interior support posts and ceiling joists have inspired generations of customers to entrust their goods to the warehouse. A prominent system of sprinkler pipes and the original metal doors attest to the building's fireproof nature. The original stuccoed office building, doubled in size in the 1940s, stands in front of the warehouse. The concrete block packing building, ca. 1949, and tiny weigh station with adjacent scale, early 1950s, are next to the warehouse. Soon after construction Edgerton expanded into the moving and storage business of general household and business goods. In the late 1940s and early 1950s he added two additional concrete block warehouses.

The Raleigh Bonded Warehouse complex meets National Register Criteria A for commerce and C for architecture and engineering. The two-story building, over 112,000 square foot in size, with reinforced concrete walls and heavy timber framing, is one of the earliest, largest, and best-preserved commercial warehouses in Raleigh. In its use of reinforced concrete construction, the warehouse exemplifies the innovations in structural engineering in factory and warehouse design that transformed industrial construction during the early twentieth century. The warehouse, with annexes constructed in the 1940s and early 1950s, served as one of the primary repositories of durable goods in Raleigh throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. Because its commercial significance is not exceptional within the past fifty years, the period of significance for the complex ends in 1956.

Historical Background and Commerce Context

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Raleigh (at the eastern edge of the piedmont, the heart of North Carolina's textile manufacturing) was not a major textile mill center like cities to the west such as Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and Charlotte, despite the capital city's location. There were about a half-dozen textile mills in Raleigh, including the Raleigh Cotton Mill, 614 Capital Boulevard, owned by R. S. Pullen, and Pilot Mill, both located north of the city along the railroad tracks. Since Raleigh was situated between the textile manufacturing area and eastern counties where much of the cotton was grown, it attempted to develop itself as a cotton market. The city cotton buying platform, where farmers sold their baled cotton to industrial buyers, stood in the 1920s on East Cabarrus Street. Cotton was shipped to Raleigh from the cotton belt in eastern North Carolina, stored in the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse, then transferred to various textile mills in the region.

In 1920, the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce proposed the construction of a large cotton storage warehouse to

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offer a market for the cotton of Eastern Carolina farmers and the textile mills of the North Carolina piedmont section.² That same year N. E. Edgerton of Raleigh purchased an approximately forty-acre tract along the tracks of the Norfolk Southern Railway and the Seaboard Air Line Railway a short distance from the Raleigh Cotton Mill and Pilot Mill (Wake DB 358, 30). The long rectangular tract was described as being the same tract conveyed to State Packing Company in 1917 (Wake DB 316, page 591). On a map of "Georgetown" (Wake County Book of Maps 1911, page 126), Edgerton's new acreage was tracts No. 9 and No. 12. Georgetown, a residential subdivision located off Whitaker Mill Road, consists of the streets of Georgetown, Pershing, Carson, and others.

Edgerton built exactly what the Chamber of Commerce envisioned—a big cotton warehouse (*Figure 1*). The Raleigh Bonded Warehouse opened for business in 1923. Norman Edward Edgerton (1898-1995), known as "N. E." Edgerton, was the son of Noah Edgerton. N. E. grew up in Selma, N.C., where his father owned a cotton mill. He remained president of the business until his death at the age of ninety-six in 1995. Records of the construction and early operation of the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse have not been located. A fire at the office in the 1960s apparently destroyed most of the business records.³

N. E. Edgerton, a 1921 graduate of Duke University, was a prominent member of Raleigh's business, civic, and social scene. His mother was a niece of R. S. Pullen, one of Raleigh's most prominent late nineteenth-century industrialists and philanthropists. Edgerton served as president of the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club, Shrine Club, and the YMCA. He and his mother donated the site for the New Life Camp of the YMCA and YWCA, in northern Wake County. He was a life-long member of the Carolina Country Club and of the Edenton Street United Methodist Church. In 1935 he and his wife Mishew constructed a mansion on Oberlin Road in Raleigh, designed by Virginia architect Lawrence Bottomly. Tatton Hall, as the Georgian-style residence was known, was the scene of many elegant gatherings.⁴

Historically, a bonded warehouse was a building in which goods liable for duty taxes were stored until the duty had been paid. Such warehouses were established by the government or by private enterprise, often at ports adjacent to customs houses. The warehouse owner gave security by bond to the tax officials, and thus was said to be "bonded."⁵ Commercial warehouses functioned for temporary storage of goods along rail lines, highways, and ports and waterways, usually at transfer points where goods were being transferred from one mode of transport to another. In North Carolina, the two cities of Charlotte and Greensboro were important distribution centers in the early twentieth century and contained large numbers of warehouses. Raleigh, further east, handled fewer goods. In 1920 there were three commercial warehouses in Raleigh.⁶

² "Chamber Wants To Promote Big Cotton Warehouse," *The Raleigh Times*, Oct. 28, 1920.

³ Alton B. Smith Jr. interview with the author, June 21, 2005.

⁴ "Raleigh 'gentleman' dies at 96," *The News & Observer*, Raleigh, March 8, 1995.

⁵ "Bonded Warehouse." *LoveToKnow 1911 Online Encyclopedia*. 2003.

⁶ "Raleigh Has Licensed 907 Enterprises," *The Raleigh Times*, Oct. 28, 1920.

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In Charlotte, North Carolina, a major distribution center since the early twentieth century, there were eight storage warehouses and eleven transfer and moving companies by the late 1920s. Some storage companies offered only warehousing, while some transfer companies offered only shipping services. A few offered both services, such as the Union Storage and Warehouse Company, which offered storage and moving services for residential customers, merchandise storage for businesses, and general warehousing for manufacturers in the building they constructed in 1927 at 1000 West Morehead Street. It was one of the earliest warehouses built along Charlotte's emerging industrial corridors. The building is constructed entirely of reinforced concrete, with concrete flooring and piers and brick curtain walls. From the beginning the company was an agent for the Aero-Mayflower Transit Company. Portions of the building were also leased out to manufacturers' agents for products such as chemicals, electrical appliances, and dry goods.⁷

In Raleigh, in the early 1920s, Edgerton's selection of reinforced concrete for the walls of his 112,000-square-foot warehouse reflected his desire for a sturdy, fireproof, and economical building. The main railroad lines are to the rear, with a spur line that extended along the front (east) side of the warehouse until recent years. The primary commodity stored for many years was cotton. In 1928 Edgerton incorporated the Edgerton Cotton Company to buy cotton directly. Jesse Davis, who later served as general manager of the bonded warehouse, was secretary, and experienced cotton man F. T. Johnson was the buyer.⁸ It is not known how long this company lasted. The cotton market suffered in the late 1920s as the boll weevil and then the Depression weakened the textile industry. Raleigh Bonded Warehouse may have been a diversified storage facility from its construction. A pictorial advertisement for the business in the 1926 city directory illustrates a truck, its side labeled "Raleigh Bonded Warehouse Inc., Moving, Storage, Crating"⁹ (Fig. 2). Edgerton's fleet of trucks moved and stored household and business goods and other commodities. Present owner Alton Smith Jr. notes that the company always handled commodities storage, such as furniture and appliances. One important source of business was the temporary storage of goods in private estates, prior to disposition to the heirs. The first-story compartments were used for cotton, and furniture and other goods in the upper story. As late as 1982, however, a small amount of cotton was still stored in the warehouse complex, but moving and storage of durable goods constituted the primary activity of the company from the 1930s to the 1990s.

By 1940 the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse had become the exclusive local agent of Aero Mayflower Transit Company for long-distance moving. This relationship lasted until about 1960. In the 1960s Raleigh Bonded Warehouse was the agent of Allied Van Lines, and later of Bekins Van Lines.¹⁰ One important segment of Raleigh Bonded Warehouse's business was moving and storage for military families at North Carolina military bases such as Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune. Families were often shipped overseas for extended military duty, and their household goods were crated and stored at the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse for the duration of their

⁷ Mattson and Alexander, (Former) Union Storage and Warehouse Company Building National Register Nomination, 2001.

⁸ "New Cotton Firm Chartered Here," *The News & Observer*, Raleigh, Oct. 7, 1928.

⁹ Raleigh City Directory, 1926. Advertisement on front inside cover.

¹⁰ Alton B. Smith, Jr., interview with the author, June 21, 2005; Raleigh city directories.

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absence. Perhaps the most unusual items ever stored in the warehouse were pieces of the Berlin Wall after it came down in 1990.¹¹

The Sanborn Map of 1949, documentary photos that predate 1953, and city directories provide a general chronology of the expansion of the complex into the six buildings that stand today. An additional source for building dates is the recollection of present owner Alton Smith Jr., who says that the complex reached its present size by 1954. The 1949 update of the Raleigh Sanborn map shows the complex in its present form, except for the Weigh Station and the two warehouse annexes that had not yet been built. A portion of Units 14-19 are included, but the rest of the complex, depicted on a fold-over, has been torn out. An aerial photograph and an overall view of the complex from the ground, taken by Raleigh photographer Albert Barden, who died in 1953, show all six buildings (*Fig. 1 and 3*). Thus the complex existed as it stands today by 1953.

A sampling of the directory listings for the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse from 1930 to the present gives general dates for the construction of the two additional warehouses. City directory listings document the expansion of the complex to three warehouses between 1948 and 1953.¹² Until 1948 the listings in the street section of the directories indicate that only the original warehouse and the office existed. In 1949 the number of businesses at the site expand to include five additional businesses: Pure Oil Company, Central Sash & Door Company, Inc., Pearce Sales Company (manufacturers agents); Highway and Industrial Equipment Company; and Thomas A. Lynn Company, Inc. (refractories). These five businesses correspond roughly to the five units in Building No. 5, indicating construction of this building about 1949. However, the outer units, no. 14 and no. 19, may have been added somewhat later. In 1950 Pearce Sales Company and Highway & Industrial Equipment Company were no longer listed. The Central Sash & Door Company remained in the complex until 1957, Thomas A. Lynn Company remained until 1961.

By 1953 two new businesses, Minneapolis-Moline Company (agricultural implements) and Dillard Paper Company, were listed. Dillard Paper remained a tenant until 1961; Minneapolis-Moline Company until 1957. In 1955 the U. S. Plywood Corporation (wholesale) appeared as a tenant. Beginning in 1959 the directory distinguished between 1505 and 1537 Downtown Boulevard. At 1505 (presumably Building No. 1) were the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse, Dillard Paper Company, and Aero-Mayflower Transit Company. At 1537 (presumably Buildings No. 5 and 6) were the Thomas A. Lynn Company, Raleigh Roofing Company, Household Distributors (wholesale floor coverings), Glenwood Hardware & Supply Company, Southern Roofing & Metals Company Inc., and the U. S. Plywood Corporation. Currently the entire complex is listed as 1505 Capital

¹¹ Alton Smith Jr. interview.

¹² In order to track the company in the directories, it is necessary to understand the changes in name of the adjacent road. Originally known as Louisburg Road, it became Wake Forest Road by 1941. In 1959 the name of the road changed to Downtown Boulevard, and two numbers are listed at the site—1505 and 1537. In the 1990s it was renamed Capital Boulevard, but retained the 1505 number. Until the mid-1960s, the occupants are listed from east to west. By the mid-1960s the listings switch to a west-to-east order, with the businesses in Building 6 listed first, then Building 5, then Building 1, the original warehouse. The ascending order from west to east is logical because street addresses increase from the center of town going toward the outskirts.

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Boulevard.

During the 1960s Raleigh Bonded Warehouse switched to Allied Van Lines as their trucking fleet. The businesses occupying the two newer warehouses continued to be wholesale building supply and light industrial companies. In the late 1960s the tenants in Buildings 5 and 6 changed from light industrial and wholesale building supply companies to retail stores selling building products, furniture, and plants. In 1969 Plastics and Fiber Glass Products Company moved into Building No. 5. They occupy Unit no. 19 at present, presumably the same unit that they have occupied since 1969. Also in 1969, the Giant Decorator Store, which sold carpet, wallpaper, electrical fixtures and other interior building products, moved into Building No. 6 and remained there until at least 1980. Businesses such as Metrolease Furniture Sales Outlet, Flower Mart Inc., Hampton Kitchens of Raleigh Inc., and Shepherd Electric Supply Company occupied the complex in 1980.

Raleigh Bonded president Alton Smith Jr. describes the heyday of the company from the 1940s to 1979 as the "Golden Days." During these years the site bustled with teams of traveling truckers who moved back and forth across the country transporting domestic households as well as business goods. There were numerous husband and wife teams. The complex functioned as an early version of the truck stops now located on the nation's interstate highways. The basement of the office was outfitted as a truckers' lounge, including a dining room with televisions, a snack bar, showers and bathrooms. Every few years during the 1940s and early 1950s another compartment was constructed. Building 5, containing compartments 14 to 19, was constructed gradually in the late 1940s; Building 6, containing compartments 20-21, was built in the early 1950s. No further construction took place after 1953.¹³ The erection of the metal canopy over the loading docks along the front and rear of the 1923 warehouse, as well as in front of Unit no. 18 in Building 5, probably was in response to the need to protect furniture and other perishable goods from the rain. The dock covers appear in the earliest known photographs of the complex, from the late 1940s or early 1950s.

Systemic and regulatory changes in the shipping industry in the 1960s and 1970s altered the economic climate for moving and storage companies such as the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse. Storage of bulk commodities in bonded warehouses became obsolete by the mid-1960s due to the introduction of Malcolm McLean's integrated transportation system, known as containerization. Cargo is loaded into a large metal container that is sealed, then loaded onto a truck or train for distribution to the shipping terminal. The cargo is handled only at the source and at the destination, with no need for temporary storage in between.¹⁴ In 1979 government deregulation of the trucking industry resulted in a major change in the culture of the moving and storage industry. Companies consolidated, small trucking teams were forced out, costs increased, and the business became super-competitive.¹⁵

¹³ Aerial Photo of the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse complex, Barden Collection, N. C. State Archives. Albert Barden died in 1953, thus the undated photograph predates his death; Alton B. Smith, Jr., interview with the author, June 21, 2005.

¹⁴ Port of Los Angeles Virtual History Tour: Warehouse No. 1, page 2. [www.laporthistory.org]

¹⁵ Alton Smith Jr. interview.

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N. E. Edgerton presided over the changes to his industry throughout his lifetime, remaining the president and treasurer of the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse until 1995, the year of his death. His wife Mishew was secretary of the company until she died in 1985. Their grandson Alton B. Smith Jr. began working with his grandparents at the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse about 1982. By 1990 he had become the secretary of the company. Following Mr. Edgerton's death, he became the president, and has managed the business since that time.¹⁶

In 1990 the complex was still fully occupied by wholesale and retail businesses, including a tile distributorship, Hampton Kitchens sales office, Shepherd Electric Supply Company, Parrish Tire Company, Mel Davis & Associates, Inc. (office supplies), and Storr Office Environment Inc. warehouse of office equipment. By 2005 only a few tenants remained in the buildings. Raleigh Bonded Warehouse continues to utilize Building No. 1 and operates a Data Storage Company in Unit 15. However the company has shifted into logistics and data management, and has moved its main operations to a new facility in the nearby town of Morrisville. The only other active business is Plastics & Fiberglass, which still occupies Unit 19. The complex has recently been sold to a company that plans to re-utilize the complex as a mixed use development

Architecture/Engineering Context for Commercial Warehouses:

The Raleigh Bonded Warehouse in Raleigh is eligible under Criterion C for architecture and engineering. The two-story reinforced concrete building with a heavy timber frame reflects a transitional period in industrial construction in early-twentieth century Raleigh from load-bearing brick to reinforced concrete. The oldest known warehouse in Raleigh is the Southern Railway Freight Depot at 327 W. Davie Street, built about 1912. [Depot Historic District, National Register, 2002]. The one-story freight depot is constructed of a heavy timber frame and load-bearing brick walls. It contains a front office area with segmental-arched windows with granite trim, brick pilasters, and arched entrance with fanlight and sidelights. The rear of the building is a warehouse area containing fifteen bays, each with arched double wooden doors. A shallow gable roof covers the entire building. A row of small wood casement windows on all four elevations illuminates the upper area of the building. A shed roof on wooden brackets shelters a platform along the west elevation, with a loading platform with flat-roofed canopy along the south side. A rail spur extends along the east elevation. It was built and occupied by Southern Railway and is now owned by Norfolk Southern Railway. A 1920s documentary photo shows carts with bales of cotton being unloaded into the warehouse for shipment on the railroad. In plan the warehouse section of the freight depot is quite similar to the ca. 1923 Raleigh Bonded Warehouse, but its construction continues nineteenth-century industrial tradition. The fanlighted entrance and arched windows with granite trim of the front office area makes a dignified architectural statement for the Southern Railway.

Another early-twentieth century Raleigh warehouse is the Cotton Oil & Fertilizer Company Warehouse at 310-314 S. Harrington Street [Depot Historic District]. Built about 1914, the one-story gabled building has the same

¹⁶ Alton Smith Jr. interview.

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load-bearing brick walls and heavy timber frame as the Southern Railway Freight Depot. Unlike the depot, this warehouse has been heavily altered by the infilling of its original arched windows and the addition of later windows and garage doors.

The ca. 1923 Raleigh Cotton Warehouse is the third oldest warehouse known in Raleigh and the earliest known example of reinforced concrete construction in the city. Reinforced concrete construction began to be used in construction in the early twentieth century, generally in industrial applications such as highway bridges. The first unadorned concrete and steel building that was acknowledged to be good architecture was the A.E.G. Turbine Factory in Berlin, by architect Peter Behrens, in 1909-1910.¹⁷ Reinforced concrete architecture became important in the development of modern American architecture in the 1920s.

The 1927 Union Storage and Warehouse Company in Charlotte [NR 2001] is the same type of moving and storage company as the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse company, however their two buildings have very different architecture and engineering. The Union building has a framework of reinforced concrete flooring and piers that exemplifies the most up-to-date innovations in concrete engineering. The upper floor is supported by a series of mushroom columns, with flared capitals that press against the concrete slab floor. The mushroom column eliminated the need for ceiling joists. The concrete floor was held in place by its steel reinforcing. C. A. P. Turner, a Minneapolis engineer, developed this innovative framing technique in 1907 and 1908. It transformed industrial construction in the early twentieth century, and was disseminated nationwide by the 1920s.¹⁸ The Union building had not only more sophisticated engineering, but aspired to be architecture as well. The brick veneer that covers the exterior of the Union warehouse, as well as its decorative concrete entrance with classical pediment, make an architectural statement on behalf of the corporate owners.

In comparison to the Union warehouse in Charlotte, the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse, built some five years earlier, represents a transitional stage of warehouse construction from the old heavy timber construction into reinforced concrete construction. The unknown contractor who built the Raleigh warehouse may not have been familiar with the mushroom columns, concrete girders, and concrete slab flooring system. Charlotte was a larger, more industrial city than Raleigh, and probably had architects and engineers who specialized in industrial construction. The Raleigh Bonded Warehouse, as the oldest known reinforced concrete building in Raleigh, yet with a timber frame, exemplifies the transitional period in industrial engineering in Raleigh.

¹⁷ Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 459.

¹⁸ Mattson and Alexander, Union Storage Building National Register nomination, 8.6.

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Section 10: Boundaries

Boundary Description:

The 15.67 acre parcel containing the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse complex is shown on the attached GIS map: Parcel No. 1704976210.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated parcel is the entire tract currently associated with the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse. Although Buildings No. 5 and 6 are warehouses that are noncontributing due to alterations, they are included in the boundary because they have been important historic components of the Raleigh Bonded Warehouse complex. They were constructed ca. 1949 and in the early 1950s to expand the complex's storage and wholesale distributorship functions. Further, they are linked to the original 1923 building by a continuous loading dock and have the potential to become contributing through reversal of the unsympathetic changes.

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Photographs:

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Photographer: M. Ruth Little

Date: June 2005

Location of Negatives: State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina.

- A. Overview of complex from southeast.
- B. Building No. 1, ca. 1923, view from southeast.
- C. View of loading dock of Building No. 1, from east.
- D. Rear view of Building No. 1 from east.
- E. Rear view of Building No. 1 from west.
- F. View of Buildings Nos. 5 and 6 from southeast.
- G. Packing Building from west.
- H. Interior of Unit 4 in Building No. 1.