

**WAKE COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION**

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Raleigh Nehi Bottling Company, The Starbuck Building
Current Name: Parker's Engraving

2. Location

Street Address: 3210 Hillsborough Street
City/Town/Jurisdiction: Raleigh
NC PIN Number: 0794.14-43-9068

3. Owner Information (If more than one, list primary contact)

Name: Bruce E. Parker and Lois H. Parker
Address/Phone: 3831 Quail Hollow Drive, Raleigh, NC 27609-6744
919/781-9685

4. Applicant/Contact Person

Name: Report prepared by: Langdon E. Oppermann
Address/Phone: 1500 Overbrook Ave., Winston-Salem, NC 17104
910/721-1949

RALEIGH HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION, INC.
P.O. BOX 829, CENTURY STATION
RALEIGH, NC 27602
832-7238

5. General Data/Site Information

A. Date of Construction and major additions/alterations: 1937
B. Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings: none
C. Approximate lot size or acreage: _____
D. Architect, builder, carpenter, and/or mason: William H. Deitrick, Architect
W.B. Barrow & Sons, Contractors
E. Original Use: Bottling plant
F. Present Use: Engraving plant

6. Classification

Building

A. Category (building(s), structure, object, site): _____

Private

B. Ownership (private or public): _____

C. Number of Contributing and non-contributing resources on the property:

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Non-contributing</u>
Buildings	1 _____	_____
Structures	_____	_____
Objects	_____	_____
Sites	_____	_____

D. Previous field documentation (when and by whom): Helen Ross, 1990

E. National Register Status and date (listed, eligible, study list): Study List 10/10/1991

7. Signature of Applicant _____

8. Supporting Documentation (Attach to application on separate sheets. Please type or print.)

- . A. Photographs. Application must include current black and white photos of all facades of the main building and at least one photo of all other contributing and non-contributing resources. Photos must be identified in pencil with the name of the property, its address or location, and the date. Additional photographs of exterior views or details or of the interior of the property are helpful. Black and white or color photographs or color slides are acceptable for additional views.
- B. Maps. Include a map showing the location of the property. Tax maps with the boundaries of the property are preferred, but sketch maps are acceptable. Please show street names and numbers and all structures on the property.
- C. Boundary Description and Justification. Describe the property's designation boundary and justify the boundary chosen.
- D. Architectural description and significance. Describe the property, including exterior architectural features, additions, remodelings, and alterations. Also describe significant outbuildings and landscape features. If any interior features are to be designated, describe them in detail and note their locations. Include a statement regarding the architectural significance of the property.
- E. Historical Significance: Note any significant events, people, and/or families associated with the property. Include all major owners. Please include a bibliography of sources consulted.

**WAKE COUNTY HPC
LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION**

Item 8.A. Photographs. See attached **black** and white 5 x 7 photographs and color slides.

Item 8.B. Maps. See attached **Tax** Map and city Street Map.

Item 8.C. Boundary Description and Justification

The area to be designated is outlined in bold on the attached Wake County **tax** map (0794.14-43-9068). This area consists of the entire acreage (0.44 acre) which is historically and physically associated with the Raleigh Nehi Bottling Company building and which today remains associated with the building.

**WAKE COUNTY HPC
LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION**

Item 8.D. Architectural Description and Significance

A distinctive building was designed for Raleigh's Nehi Bottling plant. Located on the north side of Hillsborough Street just east from the corner of Henderson Street, it is a two-story brick building in the International style. The building was designed by William **Henley** Deitrick and completed by 1938. On the front facade, white-glazed terra **cotta** bricks laid in a stretcher bond create the smooth, unadorned wall surface favored by architects of the style, which is discussed in Section E below. Facing east at a slight angle to the busy street, the building's landscaping is minimal. This is consistent with the International style which saw its pristine buildings set upon the landscape as a piece of sculpture.¹

Nehi's bottling enterprise was well-suited to the International style; the building's industrial use is reflected in the large expanses of blank wall on both sides with few window openings. The front half of the building is two-story; the back of the building, behind a fire wall, is one-story. The focus of the front, asymmetrical facade is its black glass entrance. Surrounding the front entrance are large panels of black **Carrara** glass which are in great contrast to the creamy white of the stretchers. The entrance is dramatic, but spare, with no detailing at the junction of glass with wall. Flanking the door are horizontal-paned double-hung windows with no ornamentation at sides, lintels, or sills. Jutting dramatically over the entrance is an irregular elliptical porch roof, unornamented, covered in metal, and supported by plain round metal poles. Beneath the roof is a corresponding cement step.

The building's original windows remain on the second floor of the front elevation. Two ribbons of metal casement windows are flanked at each end bay by a single, three-part metal casement. These windows are only slightly recessed from the outer walls; small sills of brick headers are their only ornamentation. Above is a flat roof with a small cast stone coping at the roof line. The exterior walls on the sides and rear of the building are brick.

At the eastern front corner of the building a driveway cuts across the sidewalk and leads, today, to a second doorway. This is a modification; the glass door and plate-glass surround now fill the space originally built as a drive-through truck entrance. This truck bay traversed the building to an opening at the rear. **Nehi's** bottle trucks drove into the entrance, were loaded within the building, and continued to the rear exit. The rear opening has been bricked up, as have the large rear windows.

In the 1950s the building was altered: the first-floor windows of the front facade were replaced with plate glass; however, the distinctive entrance with its dramatic porch remains unaltered.

¹ McAlester, p. 482.

Inside, the western portion of the building has few partitions and continues to serve its original purpose of light industry. Where Nehi Sodas once were bottled, stationery is now manufactured and engraved. Parker's Engraving is one of only two hundred companies in the country which still perform hand engraving.¹ The rest of the interior has been remodeled to create reception and retail space, though few partitions have been added. The masonry walls of the truck bay, which ran from north to south at the easternmost end of the building, remain visible although most of this area has been partitioned into office space. The interior stair remains. The second floor served as office space for Nehi Company; today it is used for storage.

The building retains its integrity; despite the 1950s alterations it remains an excellent and somewhat unusual example of the commercial International Style and the work of William H. Deitrick.

¹ Interview, Lois Parker.

**WAKE COUNTY HPC
LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION**

Item 8.E. Historical Significance

The International Style

In the period after World War I, much American architecture reflected past traditions. American architects used the new brick-veneering technology to design an ever-wider range of period revival styles. In Europe at the same time, however, architects were emphasizing radically new designs, using new materials and technology to create designs without historic precedent. These ideas were introduced to the United States by emigrating European architects who sought to escape the political and social turmoil of 1930s Europe. The style they brought with them, later named the International style by architectural critic/architect Philip Johnson, was not only a dramatic visual change, but reflected a revolutionary approach to a building's structure. Generally, these buildings were constructed of a structural skeleton, often steel, and covered with a non-structural skin. The architectural elements of the facades were arranged to be asymmetrical, further breaking with design tradition, yet their placement was dictated by the regularity of the interior structural system. Even buildings without a structural skeleton observed this exterior organization of elements.

Of prime importance to the International style was functionalism, which emphasized how a building was used. All superfluous ornamentation was stripped away; no longer employed were elements that were merely decorative. In contrast, other period styles continued to use purely decorative elements, though their design expression was jarringly different, too, from traditional usage; the Art **Moderne** style emphasized the horizontal, streamlined possibilities of building construction and Art Deco employed bold, stylized geometric patterns. In the International style, as can be seen in the Nehi building, decorative detailing was reduced to the barest minimum, with little or no ornamentation at windows, at roof line, or on wall surfaces. Often, where interior functions did not require windows, more traditional use of windows was replaced by large, blank expanses of exterior wall. Cantilevered projections were much favored, as well as dramatic projections such as the porch cover of the Nehi building.

Most examples of this avant-garde and primarily architect-designed style date from the **1930s**, as does the Nehi building. The style is relatively rare. Following World War II, certain elements of the style became softened into a more vernacular style which has been called the Contemporary style, or even American **International**.³

Historical Background

Raleigh architect William **Henley** Deitrick, a native of Danville, Virginia, designed this building late in 1937, ten years after beginning his prolific architecture career. Deitrick moved to

³ McAlester, p. 469-473.

Raleigh in 1924 to work for the state architect, and two years later opened his own practice. Deitrick (1895-1976) is perhaps best known today for completing Matthew Nowicki's design for the Dorton Arena at the N.C. State Fairgrounds in 1950. Nowicki had consulted with Deitrick on the design but died in an airplane crash before he had finished his plans.⁴ Deitrick was by then well-known architect in his own right with an extensive practice. What stands out in Deitrick's numerous buildings is the tremendous variety of his designs. From Broughton High School's Lombard Italianate style, to Georgian and other revival styles, to the adaptation of the abandoned Raleigh Water Tower for his architectural office in 1937, the same year he designed the Nehi building in the International style. Deitrick's office was very busy, one of the more significant firms in the southeast. At the time he was working on the Nehi building, he also renovated the Water Tower and added five draftsmen.⁵ By 1946 the staff numbered about 35 people. His firm designed 24 public buildings and over a hundred schools, in addition to his numerous residential and commercial commissions. Deitrick served as president of the state chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1947, and in 1963 he donated his office building to the chapter for its headquarters.⁶

The Nehi property was bought in June, 1937, by Dale Starbuck who owned the Nehi Company. This adventurous client commissioned Deitrick that same year. City Directories suggest that the building was completed by 1938 when it is first listed.⁷ At the time of Starbuck's purchase, the property was "lying just beyond the western boundary of the City of Raleigh," an appropriate location for this industrial operation. Starbuck assembled part of four lots of Wilmont when he bought the property from Willie R. Allen and her husband D. H. Allen.⁸ General contractor was the local firm of W. B. Barrow & Sons. Deitrick's six pages of blueprints are today in the care of the current owners.

The building housed Nehi's bottling operation in the first floor; the business offices were upstairs. Visitors could watch the bottling process through a viewing window separating reception area and bottling floor. Those windows remain today between Parker Engraving Company's reception and display areas. The building also handled distribution of the bottled drinks. Nehi's drivers drove their trucks into the truck bay from Hillsborough Street. Employees would take their orders near the entrance; the trucks would then proceed through the building where other employees would load the order onto the truck. The driver then continued out the back door, turned left towards Henderson Street and was on his way.⁹

⁴ Architects and Builders, p. 350.

⁵ Waugh, p. 13.

⁶ Hams, pp. 111, 214; Vickers, p. 74; Architects & Builders, pp. 350, 423; Bishir, p. 395; Waugh, 11-27.

⁷ Wake County Deed Book 7511109; City Directories; Waugh. p. 13.

⁸ Wake County Map Book 1924110; Deed 7511109.

⁹ Interview, Lois Parker. Years later, the plant was the first in Wake County to have canned drinks.

Bibliography

Bishir, Catherine W. North Carolina Architecture. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1990.

Bishir, Catherine W., and Brown, Lounsbury, Wood. Architects and Builders in North Carolina. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1990.

Harris, Linda. Raleigh Historical Inventory. Raleigh: Department of Cultural Resources, 1978.

McAlester, Virginia, and Lee McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.

Vickers, James. Raleigh. City of Oaks. an Illustrated History, Woodland hills, CA: Windsor Publications, 1982.

Waugh, Elizabeth **Culbertson**. "Firm in an Ivied Tower," in special issue of North Carolina Architect devoted to **Deitrick's** practice, January-February 1971.

Interviews:

C. Frank **Branan**, former employee of Deitrick and one of the selected associates when Deitrick retired in 1959.

Lois Parker, owner of the building since 1985.

Steve Parker, owner of Parker Engraving and son of building's owners.

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