

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District**

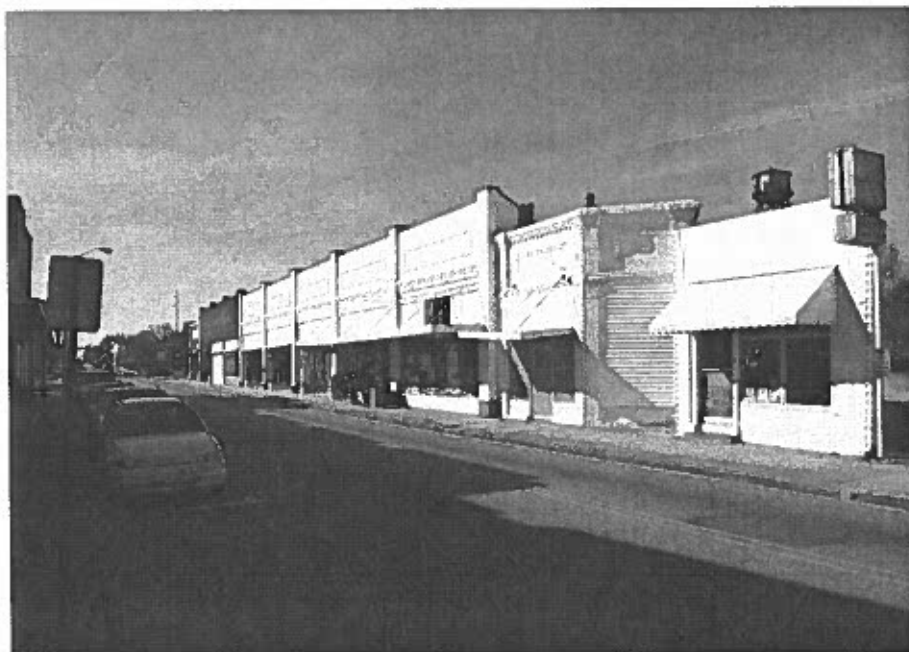
Greenville, Pitt County, PT2063, Listed 3/1/2007

Nomination by Beth Keane

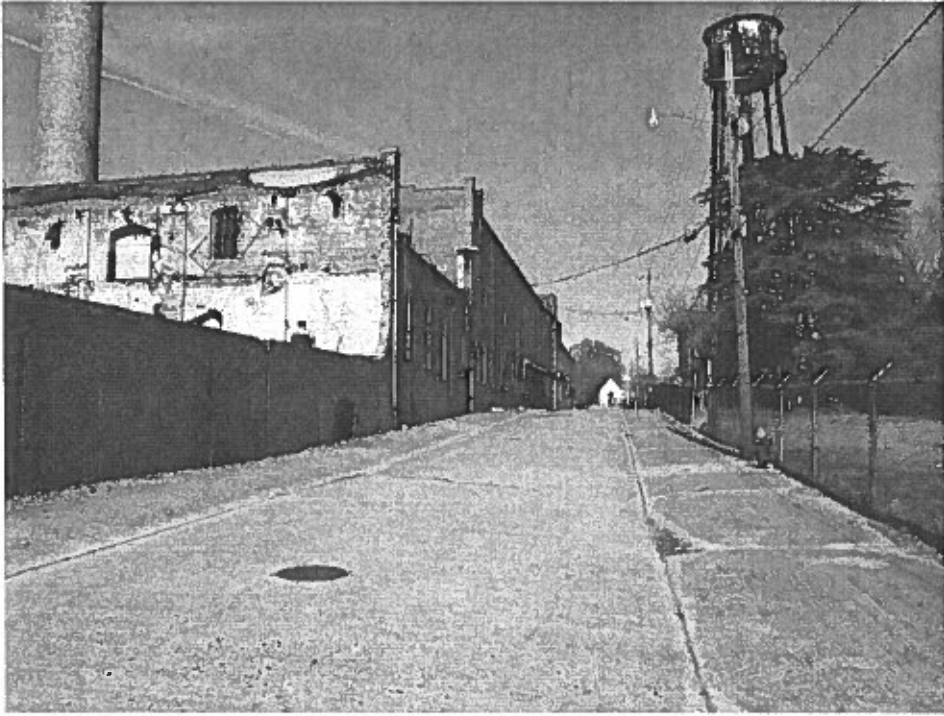
Photographs by Beth Keane, January 2006



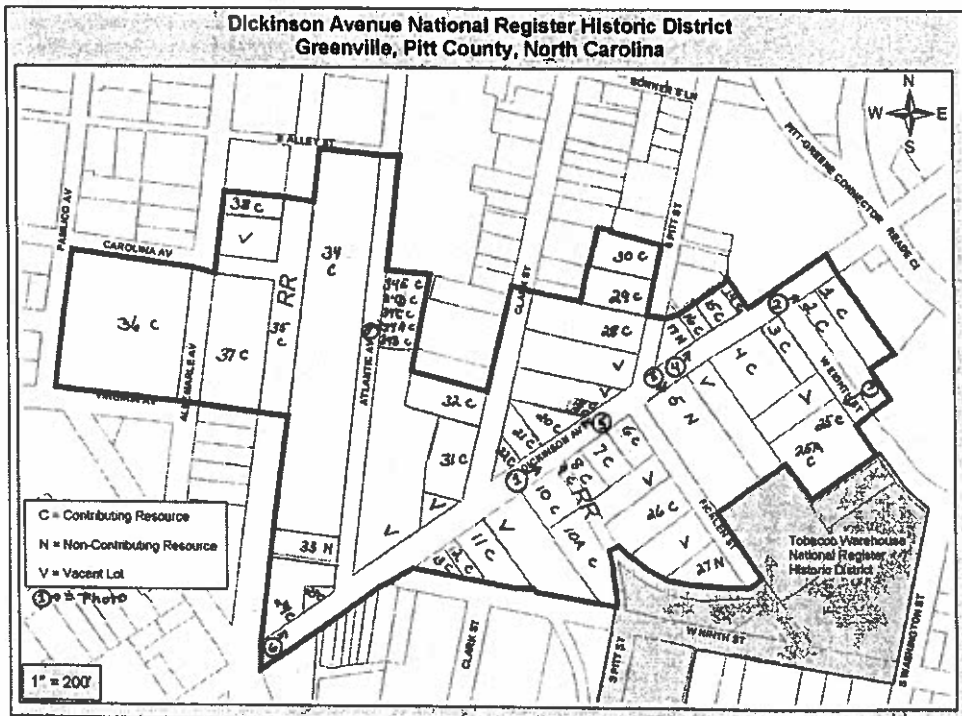
600 Block of Dickinson Avenue, east side, looking southeast



800 Block of Dickinson Avenue, west side, looking southwest



Atlantic Avenue, Imperial Tobacco Company



Historic District Map

**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 Dickinson Avenue Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

600-900 blocks of Dickinson Avenue and one block of adjacent side streets, including West Eighth, Ficklen, S. Pitt street & number and Clark Streets, Atlantic, and Albemarle Avenues, and CSX right-of-way not for publication N/A  
city or town Greenville vicinity N/A  
state North Carolina code NC county Pitt code 147 zip code 27835

**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): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Name of Property

Pitt County, NC  
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>35</u>	<u>7</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>38</u>	<u>7</u>	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**  
N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: specialty store  
COMMERCE/TRADE department store  
COMMERCE/TRADE restaurant  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING industrial storage  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING manufacturing facility  
RELIGION religious facility  
RECREATION AND CULTURE theater  
TRANSPORTATION rail-related

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: specialty store  
COMMERCE/TRADE professional  
RELIGION religious facility  
RELIGION mortuary  
VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style  
Classical Revival  
Art Deco  
Romanesque  
Other: Industrial Italianate

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick  
roof asphalt  
walls brick  
other concrete  
stucco

**Narrative Description**

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

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Name of Property

Pitt County, NC  
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)

Architecture

Commerce

Industry

**Period of Significance**

1902-1956

**Significant Dates**

1902

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Blauwelt, H.J., architect

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Name of Property

Pitt County, NC  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** approximately 12 acres

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

Zone Easting Northing  
1 18 284320 3943400  
2 18 284880 3943300

Zone Easting Northing  
3 18 284940 3943160  
4 18 284660 3943040

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 Beth Keane

organization Retrospective date July, 2006

street & number 2546 Sloop Landing telephone 910-392-6320

city or town Wilmington state NC zip code 28409

**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.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

**Section 7 Page 1**

---

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The City of Greenville, located on the banks of the Tar River in North Carolina's coastal plain, is the county seat of Pitt County. The topography of the city is relatively flat. The Dickinson Avenue Historic District is centered along Dickinson Avenue, a commercial artery that runs diagonally in a southwest-northeast direction from Reade's Circle (the former Five Points area), close to Greenville's core commercial district. The side streets on the south intersect Dickinson Avenue at a ninety-degree angle, while the northern side streets connect at a forty-five-degree angle. The streets south of Dickinson Avenue are West Eighth and Ficklen streets. The streets north of Dickinson Avenue are South Pitt Street, Clark Street, Atlantic Avenue, and Albemarle Avenue. The Tobacco Warehouse District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1997, abuts the district on the southeast side. The houses found north of the district are the remnants of an early twentieth-century African American neighborhood known as Perkins Town.

The Norfolk and Southern Railroad tracks, now CSX, (#34) bisect the district in a north-south direction between Atlantic and Albermarle avenues near the western boundary, while a remnant of a track spur (#9) remains in place on the south side of the 800 block of Dickinson Avenue. The Smith and Sugg tobacco warehouse (#36) and the Imperial Tobacco Company factory (#34) were clustered around the railroad tracks, facilitating the loading of tobacco hogsheads.

The commercial buildings along Dickinson Avenue were constructed during a period of business expansion in the 1910s and 1920s when the central business district began to edge out along Dickinson Avenue towards the railroad tracks, replacing the formerly residential area with brick commercial buildings. Although the district is comprised primarily of commercial buildings, it also includes a church, a movie theater, a tobacco warehouse, and the remains of the Imperial Tobacco Company's factory and office building.

Almost all of the district's commercial buildings fall into the architectural category of early-twentieth-century standard Commercial Style design. Standard Commercial Style buildings are constructed of red or blonde brick and feature large, first-story display windows, and decorative brick or metal cornices, or parapets, on the upper part of the building. Patterned masonry is also common. Second-story windows have arched or flat-arched openings. Surviving windows are wood double-hung, divided-light sash. Because most of the first stories and/or lower storefronts have been remodeled over the years, the style is most evident on the upper facades. A good example of standard Commercial Style is the ca. 1916 Brown Building (#2). The two-story, blonde brick building relies on rectangular raised-brick panels and double segmental arch windows and segmental arches over the two front entrances to enliven the five-

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Section 7 Page 2**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

---

bay façade. Two rows of corbelled brick divide the first and second stories of the building. Segmentally-arched windows continue along the building's west elevation. The Hooker & Anthony Building (#8), built between 1911 and 1916, is one of the better preserved commercial buildings in the district. The plain, two-story red brick façade with a central stepped parapet is distinguished by the use of five arched windows on the second story with raised brick arches. The pattern is repeated with an arched entrance dividing the two recessed storefronts on the first floor.

The majority of the buildings rendered in standard Commercial Style in the Dickinson Avenue Historic District are one-story, each distinguished by design details such as the shape of the parapet or the decorative brickwork on the façade. Many of the buildings were designed for occupation by multiple stores and include several entrances on the façade. The building at 703-705 Dickinson Avenue (#4) is a ca. 1923 one-story brick structure with three separate storefronts and an intricate crenellated parapet ornamented with stone rosettes. The south side of the 800 block of Dickinson Street includes two additional examples of the one-story standard Commercial Style. The building at 801-805 Dickinson Avenue (#6), built between 1916 and 1923, has a peaked parapet, tall transoms, and three storefronts, all typical of this time period. The adjacent building at 809-813 Dickinson Avenue (#7), constructed in the mid 1920s, has a stepped parapet over each storefront and brick edged panels with diamond designs in the upper façade.

Several additional architectural styles are represented in the district. The ca. 1916 Hines Building (#11) at 903 Dickinson Avenue is the district's only example of a commercial Richardsonian Romanesque Revival-style building. The Hines Building is one of the finest, intact, early-twentieth-century commercial buildings in Greenville. The massive two-story building is constructed of dark red brick with granite trim. The former 1916 First Christian Church (#25) retains a commanding presence on West Eighth Street. The monumental church was rendered in the Classical Revival style. The church, built of blonde brick, has a large octagonal cupola and a broad portico supported by Doric columns. The 1948 Roxy Theater (#38) at 620 Albemarle Avenue is one of two buildings in the district with Art Deco-style features. The vertical emphasis and smooth stuccoed facade of the Roxy Theater is typical of Art Deco architecture.

The Dickinson Avenue Historic District includes a tobacco storage warehouse along with the Imperial Tobacco Company factory (#34). Built in four sections between 1902 and 1964, the red brick factory consumes an entire block. The original section of the factory, built in 1902, features segmental and round-headed arches over the door and window openings. Built adjacent to the Norfolk and Southern Railroad tracks, the long loading platform sheltered by a shed roof runs nearly the whole length of the building. The Smith and Sugg Tobacco Warehouse (#36) is



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 7 Page 3

---

typical of early- to mid-twentieth-century tobacco processing and warehousing facilities. The brick walls are punctuated with plain brick pilasters, separating windows and doors. The single-story rambling brick structure encompasses the entire block.

The district contains forty-five resources. Thirty-five buildings plus three structures, or eighty-four percent, of these resources contribute to its historic significance. Many of the contributing buildings have undergone alterations to their storefronts; however, lower façade alterations are not uncommon in early-twentieth-century commercial areas as merchants attempted to modernize their aging storefronts. The loss of several buildings due to demolition has resulted in a number of vacant lots throughout the district. As a whole, however, the district retains the general streetscape and much of the architectural detail from the period of significance, ca. 1902-1956. The Dickinson Avenue Historic District maintains its overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**Inventory List**

The inventory is organized on a street-by-street basis. The streets were surveyed in the following order: Dickinson Avenue, West Eighth Street, Ficklen Street, South Pitt Street, Clark Street, Atlantic Avenue, and Albemarle Avenue. North-south oriented streets are listed west side first, then east side. East-west oriented streets are listed south side first, then north side. Buildings are listed either by their historic name or by the name of the original owner, when available. A combination of documentary sources was utilized to determine the original date and owner of the buildings, including Greenville City Directories (1916-1990), tax records, survey files, and Sanborn Maps (1896, 1898, 1900, 1905, 1911, 1916, 1923, and 1929). Much of the information in the inventory entries was derived from the 1982 survey of the area conducted by Kate M. Ohno. All buildings are categorized as C (contributing) or N (noncontributing). A resource is deemed contributing if it is at least fifty years old and retains its architectural integrity. A noncontributing status is based on the following criteria: 1) any resource built after the end of the period of significance; or 2) buildings built before 1957 that have lost their architectural integrity because of substantial non-historic additions and/or alterations since the period of significance.

C = Contributing resource  
N = Noncontributing resource  
B = Building  
S = Structure

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Section 7 Page 4**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

---

**600 block Dickinson Avenue, south side**

1. Commercial building                      C/B                      1926                      629 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building built as an automobile sales and service garage; raised parapet with a restrained corbelled cornice; large plate-glass windows define the storefront; double-pile glass doors; separate entrance and several windows on east elevation of building; large ca. 1980 metal garage with three car bays attached to the back of the building. Occupied by Brown-Wood Autos for many years, building remains an auto supply and service building.

2. Brown Building                              C/B                      ca. 1923                      631 Dickinson Ave.

Two-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building; five bays wide; raised parapet with rectangular raised-brick panels; double windows at second level feature segmental arches; several rows of corbelling separate the first and second levels; first level includes two recessed entrances separated by two paired windows all surmounted by segmental arches; double-leaf entrance on west side of façade is surmounted by a two-pane transom and is flanked on each side by single windows; west elevation has eight windows at second level and one window at the first level, all with segmental arches; north (rear) elevation has six windows with segmental arches at the second level and two pedestrian entrances at the first level; all windows have replacement glass. Originally occupied by Willard's Grocery and The Dry Goods Shop; occupied by Reid's Department Store during the 1940s and Williams Department Store from 1949 through 1980.

**700 block Dickinson Avenue, south side**

3. Higgs & Taft Building                      C/B                      ca. 1916                      701 Dickinson Ave.

Two-story brick early-twentieth-century Commercial Style building built as a furniture gallery for the firm of Higgs & Taft; five bays wide at the second-level of the façade; unusual arched corner entrance; paired window over entrance; modernized display windows extend along the façade and part way along the east elevation; recessed panel in upper façade; band of limestone trim surmounts and connects the upper level windows. Occupied by Home Furniture Store from 1936 through 1980 and then Tyson Furniture from the 1980s through the early 1990s.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 7 Page 5

- 
4. Commercial building                      C/B                      ca. 1923                      703/705 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building with three separate storefronts; building features a corbiestep parapet ornamented with stone rosettes; display windows flank recessed entrances; building originally divided into two stores. Occupied by a variety of businesses including J. B. Johnson and Company feed and seeds (1926), Barber Electric Co. and Harry's Café (1938-39), Greenville Salvage Company (1940-41), and Collins & Son Furniture Store (1944-62).

Vacant Lot

5. Goodyear's Tire Store                      N/B                      1970                      729 Dickinson Ave.

One-story metal building; flat roof; large plate-glass windows; three automobile service bays on west side. Site of Forbes & Morten tobacco sales warehouse; occupied by Goodyear's Tire Store through 1988; currently occupied by Pugh's Tire Service.

**800 block Dickinson Avenue, south side**

6. Independent Market/  
T. Goor Shoe Shop                      C/B                      ca. 1923                      801/805 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building with peaked parapet, roof with corner piers, two recessed entrances flanked by display windows are separated by a large central display window; east elevation also has a display window. Occupied in 1926 by Pender grocery store; Liberty Store, and a dry goods store; Independent Market occupied the eastern portion of the building (801) from 1926 through 1966; T. Goor Shoe Shop occupied the other commercial space (805) from 1936 through 1972.

7. Army & Navy Store/  
Great A & P Tea Company                      C/B                      ca. 1926                      809/811/813 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building with corbiestep parapet roof and soldier course panels; modernized plate-glass windows and doors on first-level facade; flat awning suspended over entrances. Occupied in 1926 by an Army & Navy Store and the Great A & P Tea Company (grocery); later occupants included the Kennedy Furniture Store in the 1950s and The Dollar Shop during the 1960s and 70s.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 6

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

- 
- |   |     |          |                        |
|---|-----|----------|------------------------|
| 8. Hooker & Anthony .<br>Company Building | C/B | ca. 1916 | 815/817 Dickinson Ave. |
|---|-----|----------|------------------------|

Two-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building with central stepped parapet; five round-arched windows at the second level with raised brick lintels; two recessed entrances flanked by plate-glass display windows separated by an arched central entrance; six segmental arched windows at the second level on the west elevation. Occupied by the Hooker & Anthony wholesale grocery through 1926; People's Bakery occupied the building from 1947 through 1960; Diener's Bakery was located there from 1960 through the 1990s.

- |  |     |      |                           |
|--|-----|------|---------------------------|
| 9. Norfolk and Southern<br>Railroad Track Spur | C/S | 1907 | south side Dickinson Ave. |
|--|-----|------|---------------------------|

A small section of railroad tracks from a spur of the Norfolk & Southern Railroad remains in place between 815/817 and 821 Dickinson Avenue. A passenger station (ca. 1907), no longer extant, was located adjacent to the tracks where 821 Dickinson Avenue currently stands.

- |                         |     |      |                    |
|-------------------------|-----|------|--------------------|
| 10. Commercial Building | C/B | 1956 | 821 Dickinson Ave. |
|-------------------------|-----|------|--------------------|

One-story brick commercial building; flat roof; central recessed entrance flanked by large plate-glass display windows; aluminum awning supported by metal poles attached to west side of building. Occupied by Gammon Supply Company (auto accessories) from 1960 through 1969; Stewart Sandwiches & Coffee Shop occupied the building for many years; currently occupied by a martial arts academy.

- |             |     |          |                    |
|-------------|-----|----------|--------------------|
| 10A. Garage | N/B | ca. 1970 | 821 Dickinson Ave. |
|-------------|-----|----------|--------------------|

A three-bay, side-gable, concrete block garage sits near the rear of the lot.

**900 block Dickinson Avenue, south side**

Vacant Lot

- |                    |     |          |                    |
|--------------------|-----|----------|--------------------|
| 11. Hines Building | C/B | ca. 1916 | 905 Dickinson Ave. |
|--------------------|-----|----------|--------------------|

Two-story brick Richardsonian Romanesque Revival-style commercial building; massive building constructed of dark red brick with granite trim; peaked central parapet; tall arched center door located between two recessed entrances; the entrance pavilion projects slightly from

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 7 Page 7

---

the main facade and boasts wide granite bands and an arched brick door surround with granite keystones; rusticated granite bands flank the central door; multi-pane arched transom sits above the double beveled-glass doors; two original storefronts with purple and green multi-pane transoms; second-level triple windows united under a broad segmental arch, set over each storefront; a single tall arched window with an arched brick surround set above the central entrance; exaggerated granite keystones in each arch; polygonal brick-edged panels set below the parapet; brick and granite pilasters flank the end bays; paired and single arched windows extend along the east and south elevations. Built for James M. Hines, proprietor of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Greenville; occupied by Ken's Furniture Company through the 1960s and 1970s.

12. Busy Bee Cafe C/B 1926 903 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building with corbelled cornice, raised parapet, and an upper panel outlined in brick; recessed central entrance flanked by plate-glass display windows. Occupied by the Busy Bee Café through 1930s and 1940s.

13. Carolina Grill C/B ca. 1911 903 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick early twentieth-century commercial building with three commercial spaces, raised parapet with rowlock coursing; triangular-shaped building fronts both Dickinson Avenue and West Ninth Street with an entrance from each street in addition to a corner entrance; large plate-glass display windows on both the north and south elevations; Occupied by Perkins & Son Grocery and M. G. Duke Grocery and the J. B. Weatherington & Brothers Restaurant in 1916-1917; Friendly Furniture occupied two spaces during the 1940s and 50s; Carolina Grill occupied corner unit from 1938 until 2004; currently vacant.

**700 block Dickinson Avenue, north side**

14. Commercial Building C/B ca. 1951 710 Dickinson Ave.

One-story concrete block commercial building; metal siding covers facade; central double-leaf glass doors flanked by plate-glass windows; metal awning suspended over entrance. Occupied by John D. Aman, plumber, from 1951-1955 and the New Greenville Fruit Market from 1957 through 1967; a variety of shops occupied the building through the 1970s and 80s.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 8

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

---

15. Chero-Cola Bottling Company C/B ca. 1918 714 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building; three storefronts with recessed entrances flanked by plate-glass display windows; tall glass transoms; curved parapet over each storefront; raised brick panels. Occupied by Chero-Cola Bottling Company through 1926; building then divided into five units; Renfrew Printing Company occupied the end unit from 1936 until 2005; other businesses have included Basart's Drug Store, Julia's Dress Shop, the B & B Dress Shop, a sandwich shop, and an insurance office.

16. Pitt Hardware Company C/B 1938 718 Dickinson Ave.

Two-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building; recessed first level with a central double-leaf glass door flanked by large plate-glass windows; original six second-level windows bricked over replaced by two new six-over-six segmentally-arched windows at second level; brick pilasters at corners and center of façade. Occupied by the Pitt Hardware Company from 1938 through 1963 and the Home Auto Supply Company from 1964 through the 1990s.

17. Wachovia Bank Drive Thru N/B 1962 720 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick drive-thru building; V-shaped roof with wide overhanging eaves; central glass door; building sits back from the street with car access on all sides of the building to accommodate a drive-up window on the west elevation. Historically, the ca. 1920 Farmers Bank sat on the corner, later occupied by the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company; original bank building torn down in 1962; the drive thru built for the Wachovia Bank in 1962 and served as a branch until 1971; occupied by insurance companies from 1977 through 2002; currently vacant.

**800 block Dickinson Avenue, north side**

18. Paige's Barber Shop C/B ca. 1923 802 Dickinson Ave.

One-story early-twentieth-century commercial building; triangular-shaped building with a high parapet of concrete block (original brick veneer gone); glass door on west side of façade flanked on the east by paired one-over-one windows; single one-over-one window on west elevation; angled brick work at corners of building; clock mounted on metal pole at corner of building. Building housed a tailoring and dressmaking shop for many years; home of Paige's Barber Shop since 1940.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 7 Page 2

---

19. Commercial Building                      C/B                      ca. 1911                      804 Dickinson Ave.

Brick commercial building; high parapet with recessed panels; modern entrance consisting of a central glass door flanked by replacement one-over-one sash windows; angled brick at the corners; metal awning suspended over the entrance. Originally housed a grocery; occupied by New Deal Cleaners from 1944 through 1960 and Maness Credit Clothing from 1967 through 1990.

20. Commercial Building                      C/B                      ca. 1916                      808 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building, originally with five storefronts; high parapet with brick panels; storefronts separated by brick pilasters; recessed entrances flanked by plate-glass display windows; high transoms; aluminum awning suspended over the two eastern storefronts. Originally housed the Pepsi-Cola bottling plant and the Busy Bee Café; People's Bakery occupied the northern end unit throughout 1930s and 1940s; a portion of the building occupied by the Williams Shoe Shop since 1950.

21. Cozarts Auto Supply                      C/B                      ca. 1929                      814 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building; raised parapet with three brick panels; original three commercial spaces separated by brick pilasters; altered storefronts; single entrance on west side of façade; large plate-glass windows across remaining of façade; original transoms are covered. Occupied by Cozarts Auto Supply from 1940 through the 1990s; building is currently vacant.

22. Cayton's Grocery                      C/B                      ca. 1929                      822 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building; raised parapet with brick panel; corner pilasters; recessed entrance flanked by plate-glass display windows; covered original transom; metal awning suspended over entrance; occupied by Cayton's Grocery during the 1940s and 50s.

**900 block Dickinson Avenue, north side**

Two vacant lots – the site of three ca. 1929 stores and the 1903 Centre Brick Tobacco Sales and Warehouse

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 10

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

---

23. Higgs Building #1                      C/B                      1909                      918/920 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building; raised parapet with panels edged in a raised brick course; building originally divided into three commercial spaces; altered lower level; eastern two-thirds of building has a recessed entrance flanked by plate-glass display windows and a shingled awning; western one-third of building has a single door; windows have been covered over. Original businesses included a drug store and a grocery store; occupied by Hollowell's Drug Store throughout the 1940s and 50s.

24. Higgs Building #2                      C/B                      1909                      922/924 Dickinson Ave.

One-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building; raised parapet with panels edged in a raised brick course; originally two commercial spaces; pilasters mark upper corners; altered lower level with modern glass doors and plate-glass display windows; recessed entrance on eastern side of façade; corner entrance on western end. Originally occupied by Quinn-Miller & Co. Furniture Store; occupied by Ormand Wholesale Grocery Company throughout 1940s.

**200 block West Eighth St., west side**

Vacant lot – site of (former) 1916 Immanuel Baptist Church

25. First Christian Church                      C/B                      1916                      226 West Eighth St.

Monumental Classical Revival-style church built of blonde brick with a large octagonal cupola with multiple windows, cupola surmounted by a fleur-de-lis finial; broad recessed portico supported by Doric columns; in antis porch; sturdy brick pilasters divide the facade into three bays with dramatic elongated windows; dual entrances to the vestibule open from the sides of the recessed porch; a stepped parapet and pediment over the portico have been removed; stained-glass windows have been removed and the windows are boarded over; rear addition added soon after sanctuary was built; church is currently vacant and the interior was not accessible. Originally home to the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); became home to the Sycamore Hill Missionary Baptist Church in 1968.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 7 Page 11

---

25A. Classroom building                      C/B                      ca. 1950

Elongated one-story, blonde brick classroom building located behind the First Christian Church; flat roof, stepped parapet, multiple entrances, and casement windows; flat wood awning extends along the façade.

**100 block Ficklen Street, west side**

Vacant lot

26. L. M. Ernest Son & Company    C/B                      1946                      106 Ficklen St.

One-story brick commercial building with Art Deco elements; raised parapet, stepped parapet on side elevations; slightly projecting entrance pavilion with a single door and a parapet with an attached fin-like pier; painted double stripe extends across façade over the fenestration and near top of pavilion; a second entrance on the façade, south of the pavilion, is flanked by two large plate-glass windows; two single windows north of the pavilion, a third pedestrian entrance on the south elevation; brick is five to one bond. Originally occupied by L. M. Ernest Son & Company (contractors) and Ernest Glass Company; occupied by the U. S. Army Reserve in 1950s; occupied by International Tobacco Company and Pitt Tobacco Company throughout 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

Vacant lot

27. Greenville Automotive Center    N/B                      1976                      120 Ficklen St.

One-story brick automotive garage; flat roof; five automobile bays. Originally occupied by Rent-A-Wreck; currently occupied by Greenville Auto Center.

**600 block South Pitt Street, west side**

Two vacant lots

28. Coca-Cola Bottling Company    C/B                      ca. 1926/ca. 1935                      630 South Pitt St.

Brick commercial building built in two sections, the northern one-story brick section with an arched-and-stepped parapet with limestone coping is the oldest; former central door has been replaced with a window to create one large central window; pedestrian door with transom flanked by two additional windows on south side of façade; garage door on north side of façade;

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 7 Page 12

---

the attached two-story ca. 1935 building has a metal cornice with dentils and diamond-shaped limestone insets below the cornice; the storefront with transom and windows above have been removed and the façade predominantly consists of twenty large panes of glass; a broad molded limestone band surrounds the windows. Occupied by Coca-Cola Bottling Company from 1926 through 1982; occupied by Greenville Restaurant Equipment from 1985 to present.

29. Peerless Mattress Company      C/B                      1951                      628 South Pitt St.

One-story brick commercial building with raised parapet; central recessed double-leaf door with transom is flanked by large plate-glass display windows; yellow brick on the façade; red brick on the remaining elevations. Occupied by Peerless Mattress Company from 1951 through 1978.

30. John's Hardware Store              C/B                      1949                      622 South Pitt St.

One-story brick commercial building; gable-front roof with weatherboard siding in front gable; recessed central door flanked by plate-glass display windows. Occupied by John's Hardware Store from 1949 through the 1990s.

**800 block Clark Street, west side**

31. Commercial Building              N/B                      ca. 1911/ca. 1960      818 Clark St.

Two-story brick commercial building with modern concrete-block north-side addition set back from the street; second-level façade altered with vinyl cladding; lower level altered with central glass door and large plate-glass display windows; pedestrian entrance on south side with double-leaf door, transom, and segmental brick arch over door; addition incorporates large glass windows, a glass door, and an automobile entrance; currently vacant; building noncontributing due to extensive alterations and a modern side addition. Older section was originally a feed and seed store; the new section was occupied by Ernest and Knott Glass Company from 1962 through 1980 and then C & K Enterprises from 1982 through the 1990s.

32. Greenville Machine Works      C/B                      ca. 1940                      806/804 Clark St.

One-story brick early-twentieth-century commercial building divided into two commercial spaces; raised parapet with corbelling; south-side unit features a central door flanked on the south by two multi-paned windows shaded by a shingled awning; north-side unit has a central glass door flanked by single-pane display windows, shaded by a shingled awning. Occupied by Greenville Machine Works for many years.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 7 Page 13

---

700 block Atlantic Avenue, west side

33. Barber Shop                      N/B                      ca. 1923                      720 Atlantic Ave.

One-story brick commercial building with corner entrance; transom over door; raised parapet; recessed brick panel on façade and over entrance; noncontributing due to application of stucco and alteration of façade window with wood paneling with four small upper lights. Occupied by a barber shop since its construction.

34. Imperial Tobacco Company      C/B                      1902/1929/1964              710 Atlantic Ave.

Largest early-twentieth-century tobacco processing facility still extant in Greenville; first section completed in 1902 – two stories high and 200 feet by 65 feet; incorporated a drying room 27 feet by 209 feet and a boiler house 40 feet by 50 feet; main building consists of red brick sections from one to three stories, all built between 1902 and 1929, also a one-story brick rear wing addition with a flat roof constructed in 1964; building includes a massive blonde tile smokestack built by Alphon Custodis Chimney Construction Company of New York; segmental and round-headed arches surmount most of the door and window openings in the historic sections; fanlight transoms over the round-headed arched-window openings; diagonal beaded board loading doors; loading platform runs along the entire length of the building on the west side, adjacent to railroad tracks; building takes up almost an entire block; many of the second and third level windows on the east elevation along Atlantic Avenue have been bricked over; architect for 1902 section was H. J. Blauwelt of Richmond, Virginia; contractor was Charles H. East of Danville; the factory employed between sixty and seventy-five people and was equipped with the most modern equipment, the shipping and prizing operations were conducted on the railroad track side of the building, while the receiving operation was located on the Atlantic Avenue elevation; the Imperial Tobacco Company remained in building until 1978; large 1929 one-story south warehouse section of building burned in the late 1980s; building is currently vacant.

700 block Atlantic Avenue, east side

34A. Imperial Tobacco Company      C/B                      ca. 1923                      715 Atlantic Ave.  
Office Building

Two-story, square brick office building; three bays wide; central door with elaborate arched hood supported by scrolled brackets is flanked by paired nine-over-nine sash windows with limestone sills; single six-over-six sash window with a fanlight transom with keystones centered over first-level door; two additional paired six-over-six sash windows with limestone

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

**Section 7 Page 14**

---

sills at second level; flat roof with ornate brick corbelling at cornice; central hall plan on interior; massive brick fireplace located in the right front office; building is currently vacant.

34B. Water Tower                                      C/S                                      ca. 1923                                      715 Atlantic Ave.

A tall metal water tower with cylindrical water tank is situated adjacent and south of the Imperial Tobacco Company Office Building.

34C. Imperial Tobacco Company      C/B                                      ca. 1923                                      711 Atlantic Ave.  
Garage

One-story brick garage with central automobile entrance with beaded board doors; raised, peaked parapet and raised and patterned brick ornament on façade; side elevation windows have segmental arches.

34D. Shed    C/B                                      ca. 1923                                      711 Atlantic Ave.

Small square brick shed with a shed roof sits immediately in front of the Imperial Tobacco Company Garage; shed held the gas tank for the tobacco company complex.

34E. Imperial Tobacco Company      N/B                                      ca. 1960                                      711 Atlantic Ave.  
Metal Garage

Large frame gable-front garage with metal siding and three large sliding doors on facade.

35. Norfolk & Southern Railroad      C/S                                      ca. 1907  
Right-of-Way (now CSX)

Constructed in 1907 along the eastern periphery of a small group of tobacco industry buildings; tracks travel through the northern edge of the district in a north-south direction; a section of railroad track runs along the west side of the Imperial Tobacco Company warehouse adjacent to the loading dock; the tracks once provided a vital transportation link between Greenville's tobacco warehouses and processing factories to numerous destinations around the country; the tracks now infrequently used.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 7 Page 15

---

**700 block Albemarle Avenue, west side**

36. Smith & Sugg Tobacco Warehouse                      C/B                      ca. 1940                      714 Albemarle Ave.

Large one-story brick tobacco warehouse; raised stepped parapet; metal gabled roof behind parapet; numerous window and door openings separated by brick pilasters; brick banding at water-table level; brick corbelling at eaves on south elevation; garage bays on each end of building; majority of former metal sash and metal casement windows are bricked over; building occupies an entire block; warehouse is currently vacant; built on the site of the ca. 1914 Munford's Tobacco Warehouse.

**700 block Albemarle Avenue, east side**

37. National Biscuit Company                      C/B                      1926/1963                      715 Albemarle Ave.

Large one-story brick warehouse built in two sections; the older section has a stepped and curved parapet; a single pedestrian door and four columns dividing the façade into sections; occupied by the National Biscuit Company from 1926 through 1952; a large one-story brick warehouse was added to the north side of the building in 1963; building is currently vacant.

**600 block Albemarle Avenue, east side**

Vacant Lot

38. Roxy Theater                      C/B                      1948                      620 Albemarle Ave.

One-story brick Art Deco movie theater; raised stepped parapet with vertical metal trim; original metal marquee; two sets of paired doors with diamond-shaped insets; ticket office has been removed. Theater built for the African American population; building currently utilized as a church.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8 Page 16**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

---

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Dickinson Avenue Historic District is locally important as a distinguishable and intact collection of commercial, industrial, and ecclesiastical buildings dating from the period ca. 1902 to 1956. Dickinson Avenue, located southwest of Greenville's commercial core, was primarily residential in nature during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The arrival of the railroad in 1907 and the resulting proliferation of tobacco warehouses and factories adjacent to the Dickinson Avenue corridor caused a gradual metamorphosis of the district from residential to commercial.

The overwhelming majority of buildings in the district are post-1900 one- and two-story brick commercial structures rendered in the early-twentieth-century Commercial Style. This common building design, typified by recessed entrances flanked by large display windows, raised parapet roofs, and decorative brickwork at the cornice, proliferated nationally in the first half of the twentieth century. The Richardsonian Romanesque Revival style is also represented by the Hines Building, built in 1916 for the proprietor of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company. The massive two-story building constructed of dark red brick is noted for its granite trim around the central arched entrance and brick and granite pilasters flanking the end bays.

The former First Christian Church, completed in 1917, is the district's sole extant ecclesiastical building. The monumental Classical Revival-style church with its distinctive multi-paned cupola and dominant recessed portico supported by Doric columns typifies the renewed emphasis on classicism in church architecture during the first decades of the twentieth century. The church served two of Greenville's oldest congregations, the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) from its construction until 1968 and the Sycamore Hill Missionary Baptist Church (established as the Colored Religious Society in 1865) from 1969 until 2003.

The tobacco industry is represented in the Dickinson Avenue Historic District by the inclusion of the Imperial Tobacco Company factory and office building and the Smith and Sugg Tobacco Warehouse. Built in stages between 1902 and 1964, the Imperial Tobacco Company factory is the largest early-twentieth-century tobacco processing facility still extant in Greenville. The ca. 1940 one-story brick Smith and Sugg Tobacco Warehouse, which consumes an entire block on the west side of Albemarle Avenue, replaced the ca. 1914 Munford's Tobacco Warehouse.

The Dickinson Avenue Historic District is locally significant and contains forty-five resources. Thirty-eight, or eighty-four percent, of these resources contribute to its historic significance. The district meets Criterion A for commerce because it is significant for its association with the Greenville's commercial growth and prosperity during the first half of the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 8 Page 17

---

twentieth century and also for industry for its intact twentieth-century tobacco processing factory and warehouse. The district is also eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for architectural significance because it contains an intact collection of commercial, industrial, and ecclesiastical buildings rendered in nationally popular styles such as Classical Revival, Commercial Style, Richardsonian Romanesque Revival, Art Deco, and industrial Italianate. The period of significance for the Dickinson Avenue Historic District begins in 1902, the date of construction of the earliest building in the district, the Imperial Tobacco Company factory, and extends to 1956, after which little development occurred within the district.

*Historical Background and Commerce Context*

The following history of Greenville, marked with quotation marks, was derived from the Greenville Commercial Historic District National Register Nomination prepared by Ellen Turco and April Montgomery and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

“In 1761, Pitt County was created from the northwestern part of Beaufort County. The act establishing the new county called for the construction of a courthouse, prison, and stocks on the land of John Hardee, east of the present city limits of Greenville. Hardee’s dwelling served as the first courthouse. A short time later in 1774, a new county seat called Martinborough, named in honor of royal governor Josiah Martin was established on the banks of the Tar River. The act incorporating the town specified the construction of a street grid, with each two-acre block divided into half-acre building lots. An original town plat shows numbered streets running east-west, beginning with First Street just south of the Tar River. Pitt, Green, Washington, Evans, Cotanche and Reade Streets run north-south. A frame courthouse was constructed at the northwest corner of Evans and Third Streets. Martinsborough was renamed “Greenville” by act of the legislature in 1787 to honor Revolutionary War General Nathanael Greene.”

“In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Pitt County’s economy consisted primarily of small scale farmers growing subsistence crops such as corn, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, rice, peaches, apples, and grapes. A few large landowners used slave labor to produce tobacco and naval stores. Settlers were dependent on rivers and streams for small-scale trade and transportation. However, by 1860, Pitt County’s economy had transformed from subsistence agriculture to a cash-crop system, becoming one of the leading cotton-producing counties in the state. The cotton economy was made possible by slave labor as well as new modes of transportation that enabled shipment of the crop.”

“Prior to the 1830s, human-powered pole boats and primitive roads were the sole means of transportation across eastern North Carolina. In the legislature of 1850-51, the state chartered sixteen plank roads, one of which was to be constructed in Pitt County. The road connected

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8 Page 18**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

---

Raleigh to Greenville entering town along Dickinson Avenue. The arrival of steam-powered boats in the mid-nineteenth century also provided more efficient means to transport agricultural products. Tar River steamships transported Pitt County's crops to markets in Greenville and beyond. Greenville's location on the Tar River, coupled with its status as a courthouse town, made the town an inland regional center for trade and commerce."

"By 1860, the town had grown to a population of 1,800 with seven doctors, three lawyers, a dozen merchants, six carpenters, and two brick masons. By the 1860s, railroads were beginning to replace steamships and plank roads for commercial transport. Railroad service, however, came relatively late to Greenville compared to other parts of eastern North Carolina. By 1858, the ninety-six mile Atlantic and North Carolina railroad from Goldsboro through New Bern to Beaufort was completed. The line later became part of the larger Norfolk and Southern network. In 1885, Pitt County citizens, fearing a hefty tax to fund the project, voted down a proposed rail link that would have connected Greenville with Goldsboro and from there to the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad (later known as the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad). A few years later, the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad proposed the construction of a line from Halifax to Kinston, via Greenville. Greenville's citizens and the business community did not let this opportunity pass and finally embraced the rail line. In 1890, the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad line was run through Greenville providing both rail and passenger service. A passenger depot (no longer extant) was built on the corner of Tenth Street and Dickinson Avenue, at the southern edge of the Dickinson Avenue Historic District. Four passenger trains arrived in Greenville daily. In 1907, the Norfolk and Southern Railroad also extended a line through the town."

Greenville's population increased from 2,200 in 1885 to 5,000 in 1911. Residential growth during the last two decades of the nineteenth century spread out south and west from the commercial core of the city. Skinnerville, located west of downtown and named for principal developer Harry Skinner, developed into the city's first residential neighborhood. Prominent businessmen built imposing homes in the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles along West Fifth Street, while other property owners constructed modest one-story cottages. Skinnerville, also referred to as West Greenville, continued to develop as a fashionable neighborhood during the 1910s and 1920s (Cotter, p. 40).

Residential development also spread out along Dickinson Avenue from the core business district. Dickinson Avenue (known as "Dickerson" Avenue at the turn of the twentieth century) began at "Five Points," a bustling corner where West Fifth Street and Evans Street intersected at right angles and Dickinson Avenue connected from the southwest at an approximate forty-five degree angle. Commercial buildings lined both sides of Evans and Fifth streets, while residential dwellings flanked both sides of Dickinson. The Dickinson Avenue residential development was



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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

**Section 8 Page 19**

---

initiated by the Higgs brothers at the turn of the twentieth century. Victorian cottages, I-houses and other late-nineteenth-century styles were popular in the Higgs neighborhood (Cotter, pp. 27-28).

The arrival of the railroad in 1890 spurred the growth of the local tobacco market, resulting in the construction of a number of large, frame tobacco warehouses. Many of the warehouses were clustered in the vicinity of Dickinson Avenue and Ninth, Tenth, and Washington streets. Ten years later, the tobacco warehousing and processing area along Dickinson Avenue and Ninth Street was continuing to expand and the Greenville Lumber Mill, established near the Wilmington and Weldon (later known as the Atlantic Coast Line) right-of-way by 1896, was supplying the lumber for more and more residences. The expansion of the town's commercial and industrial activities required more housing for workers. Investors began to build mill housing about 1900 near the tobacco warehousing and processing section and new African American neighborhoods were also established during this period. Several of these were located along Bonner's Lane and Clark Street, just north of Dickinson Avenue (Cotter, 28).

Churches were an important part of the townscape in the Dickinson Avenue neighborhood. The Presbyterians, who had been meeting in other churches and in the opera house, organized the First Presbyterian Church in 1891. In 1897, they constructed a Gothic Revival-style church (no longer extant), on the corner of Dickinson and Greene streets. The First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) built a frame Gothic Revival-style church (no longer extant) at the corner of Dickinson Avenue and South Pitt Street in 1901, although the church had been established several years earlier. In 1916, they moved to a newly constructed monumental Classical Revival-style brick church on West Eighth Street (#25). In 1905, construction began on a new building for St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church (no longer extant) on the west side of Washington Street, just off Dickinson Avenue. The completed building was dedicated in 1907. By 1916, the name was changed to Jarvis Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in honor of Governor Thomas J. Jarvis, who had worked to secure funds for the construction of the church (Cotter, p. 32).

The Immanuel Baptist Church was formed on March 15, 1915, by members of Greenville's oldest established congregation, the Memorial Baptist Church. In July, 1916, the church purchased a lot on West Eighth Street, adjacent to the First Christian Church, for a new building, and in September the building contract was awarded. The first service was held in the blonde-brick Neo-Classical Revival-style church on September 30, 1917. The church continued to grow and prosper for fifty years and in 1967, they moved to a new building. Although other congregations occupied the church, it has recently been demolished (Cotter, p. 114).

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8 Page 20**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

---

In 1902, the Imperial Tobacco Company (#34) constructed a large brick tobacco factory between Atlantic Avenue and the railroad line. The factory, which eventually consumed almost an entire city block, initially employed between sixty and seventy-five people. The shipping and prizing operations were conducted on the railroad track side of the building and the receiving operation was located on the Atlantic Avenue elevation. The building continued to expand until the Depression, the most notable addition being the construction of a handsome two-story brick office (#34A) in ca. 1920 on the east side of Atlantic Avenue, opposite the factory. The Imperial Tobacco Company remained in business in Greenville until 1978, offering employment to the town's citizens and the surrounding neighborhood (Cotter, p. 123).

Early-twentieth-century businesses in the district included a carriage repair shop and the two-story frame James Hotel, both located on the south side of Dickinson Avenue near the intersection with South Pitt Street (currently Ficklen Street). By 1911, the hotel was known as the Taylor Hotel. A spur of the Norfolk and Southern Railroad terminated at Dickinson Avenue south of the hotel and their passenger and freight depots were constructed on the adjacent block. A brick tobacco warehouse fronted the north side of Dickinson Avenue on the corner of Atlantic Avenue (Sanborn Maps).

Due to the proximity to the railroad tracks, the southwestern end of the Dickinson Avenue Historic District (the 900 block) was the first section to evolve from a primarily residential block to a commercial block. The one-story brick stores in the triangular block on the north side of Dickinson Avenue were built by the Higgs Brothers in 1909. The July 9, 1909 issue of the *Daily Reflector* reported that the "Higgs Brothers are breaking ground to build a set of six brick stores on their Dickinson Avenue property near the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad." The row of one-story brick shops housed a variety of businesses including a grocery store, a dry goods store, a drug store, a furniture store, and a garage (#23 and #24). On the opposite side of the street, another group of one-story brick commercial buildings was being constructed. The buildings were occupied by a grocery store, a millinery shop, a tailor, and a barber (not in the historic district) (Greenville City Directories and Sanborn Maps).

By 1916, the south side of the 900 block of Dickinson Avenue had been fully developed with commercial buildings. The Hines Building (# 11) at 905 Dickinson Avenue was constructed for James M. Hines, the proprietor of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Greenville, and for some years he occupied an apartment on the second floor of the building. In 1923, a movie theater was housed in the adjacent building at 911 Dickinson (now a vacant lot). The triangular shaped building on the corner of Ninth Street, at 903 Dickinson Avenue, the Carolina Grill (#12), originally housed a restaurant and a grocery store (Greenville City Directories and Sanborn Maps).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 8 Page 21

---

As commercial development spread up Dickinson Avenue toward the original core business district, one- and two-story brick commercial buildings gradually replaced the earlier dwellings that lined the street. The first commercial building to appear on the south side of Dickinson Avenue east of West Ninth Street was built sometime between 1905 and 1911 and was occupied by a grocery store (#11). By 1916, the north side of the 800 block had been partially filled in with attached one-story brick buildings housing a variety of businesses including the Pepsi-Cola bottling plant, the Busy Bee Café, and the Greenville Bakery (#19 and #20). A two-story dwelling on the corner of Dickinson Avenue and Clark Street was replaced by 1929 with a one-story brick building that for many years housed a grocery store (#22). By 1926, the former Pepsi bottling business had been replaced by Chapin-Sacks Corporation, an ice cream manufacturer (Sanborn Maps and Greenville City Directories).

Several buildings also appeared on the north side of the 700 block of Dickinson Avenue by 1916. They were flanked by a two-story dwelling to the west and the Presbyterian Church to the east. By 1918, the dwelling had been replaced by the Chero-Cola Bottling Works, a one-story brick building with triple storefronts (#15). The opposite side of the street included two houses and one commercial building. The two-story brick building on the corner of Dickinson Avenue and West Eighth Street housed the furniture gallery of Higgs & Taft (#3). By 1923, a one-story brick store with three separate storefronts shared the south wall of the furniture gallery (#4). The houses had been replaced by this time with the Forbes and Morten tobacco sales warehouse, demolished, replaced in 1970 by the Goodyear's Tire Store (#5) (Sanborn Maps).

During the same time period, the houses on the south side of the 600 block of Dickinson Avenue were also being replaced by commercial buildings. By 1916, the Brown Building, on the corner of Dickinson and West Eighth Street (#2), had been constructed. The building originally had two storefronts on the street level and housed the newly formed Immanuel Baptist Church congregation on the second floor until the construction of their sanctuary on Eighth Street was completed in 1917. The adjacent building was constructed sometime between 1923 and 1929 as an automobile sales and service garage (#1) (Sanborn Maps).

The northeastern end of Dickinson Avenue, close to Five Points, had also developed into primarily a commercial district by 1929, although there were a few houses remaining. The Princeton Hotel occupied the corner of Dickinson Avenue and Green Street, replacing several residences by 1929. In addition, the ca. 1929 Joyners Tobacco Sales Warehouse, located on Green Street just off Dickinson Avenue, had also replaced several former houses. This area of Dickinson Avenue is not included in the district, as the entire northeastern section of the street was completely reworked during the urban renewal movement of the 1960s and early 1970s. Most of the buildings in this area were demolished to provide for the construction of Reade Circle, now considered the northeastern terminus of Dickinson Avenue (Sanborn Maps).

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8 Page 22**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

---

Greenville expanded its municipal services during the time period that Dickinson Avenue was transformed from a residential to a commercial district. Bonds were approved for establishing a system of electric lights, waterworks, and sewerage, in addition to street improvements and the construction of public buildings. Utilities were in operation by 1907 and the town paved parts of Evans Street and Dickinson Avenue with bricks. The selection of Greenville by the General Assembly in 1907 as the location for East Carolina Teachers Training School also had a profound effect on the town's growth and economy. The construction of the Masonic Temple in 1904, a new courthouse in 1911, the first movie house, White's Theater, in 1914, and the Pitt Community Hospital in 1924, contributed to an enhanced quality of life for the citizens of Greenville (Barnes, p. 13).

Greenville experienced an economic slowdown in the 1920s with a drop in agricultural prices. The Great Depression of the early 1930s resulted in unemployment for many of the town's citizens and although the larger businesses along Dickinson Avenue managed to stay open, many of the smaller stores closed. Conditions began to improve during the latter half of the 1930s with the organization of the North Carolina Farm Bureau in Greenville in 1936. The bureau assisted in easing the problem of low agricultural prices (Barnes, p. 15).

Several businesses along Dickinson Avenue that began operations in the late 1930s and continued to thrive for decades included the Home Furniture Store, the Independent Market, T. Goor's Shoe Shop, the Carolina Grill, People's Bakery (later Diener's Bakery), Renfrew Printing Company, Paige's Barber Shop, Williams Shoe Shop, Cozart's Auto Supply, Hollowell's Drug Store, Coca Cola Bottling Works, and the National Biscuit Company (Greenville City Directories). The Guaranty Bank and Trust Company maintained a handsome building on the corner of South Pitt Street and Dickinson Avenue until 1962 when it was demolished to be replaced with a small drive-thru branch of Wachovia Bank (#17) (Kammerer, p. 86). The Presbyterian Church at the corner of Dickinson and Greene streets also strongly contributed to the Dickinson Avenue landscape until it was dismantled in the 1960s (Barnes, p. 8).

The Dickinson Avenue corridor continued to thrive through the 1950s with numerous successful businesses and the activity associated with the tobacco industry. In the years following World War II, the local tobacco market became one of the largest in the state. Although passenger service to Greenville was discontinued in 1941, trains continued to serve the Imperial Tobacco Company and the Smith and Sugg tobacco warehouses (#34 and # 36) situated near the western boundary of the Dickinson Avenue Historic District. The Imperial Tobacco Company (#34), located along Atlantic Avenue, continued to expand its facilities until the 1960s (Cotter, p. 124).

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

**Section 8 Page 23**

---

The urban renewal movement of the 1960s and 70s resulted in dramatic changes in Greenville's commercial center including the Dickinson Avenue corridor. The Redevelopment Commission of Greenville instituted the construction of a pedestrian mall on a portion of Evans Street and rerouted streets in the Five Points area, demolishing several substantial early-twentieth-century buildings in the process. Large parking lots now dominate the landscape where previous architectural landmarks stood. The lure of customers to suburban shopping malls resulted in the closure of many long-established businesses along Dickinson Avenue. In addition, the decline of the tobacco industry factored in the closing of the Imperial Tobacco Company's plant on Atlantic Avenue in the late 1970s.

Several additional local landmarks have been lost in and around the Dickinson Avenue district in the first years of the twenty-first century. The recent demolition of Immanuel Baptist Church on West Eighth Street has left another vacant lot in its place as has the loss of the Seaboard Coast Line Freight Station at the junction of Grand Avenue and Tenth streets and the Pattie Elizabeth Kearney House at 614 Clark Street. The majority of the early-twentieth-century architectural fabric of the district remains intact, however, and the city is seeking to revitalize this once thriving Dickinson Avenue corridor.

**Architecture Context**

The architecture contained within the Dickinson Avenue Historic District spans a time period beginning in the early twentieth century and extending up to the middle of the twentieth century. The buildings provide an understanding of the rich history of the district and the city of Greenville as a bustling railroad town and tobacco industrial and processing center. The district is comprised primarily of commercial buildings, but also includes an early-twentieth-century church, a tobacco warehouse, and a former tobacco manufacturing facility.

At the close of the nineteenth century, the Dickinson Avenue corridor was primarily a residential district, lined with one- and two-story Victorian cottages, I-houses, and Queen Anne-style houses. Located just southwest of the city's commercial core, the area was home to many of the city's prominent professionals, politicians, and successful businessmen. The expansion of the town's commercial and industrial activities in the early years of the twentieth century required more housing for workers, resulting in the construction of mill housing near the tobacco warehousing and processing section just north of the Dickinson Avenue Historic District (Cotter, p. 28).

By the 1920s, the expansion of the commercial and industrial areas and increased railroad traffic resulted in residents of Dickinson Avenue moving to more distant suburban

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

**Section 8 Page 24**

---

neighborhoods. Commercial buildings extended along Dickinson Avenue replacing the former rambling frame Victorian homes.

The construction of the Imperial Tobacco Company manufacturing facility (#34) on Atlantic Avenue in 1902 and the arrival of the Norfolk and Southern Railroad (#35) in 1907 instigated the transformation of Dickinson Avenue from a residential to a commercial district. Many of Greenville's tobacco facilities built in the late 1800s were of frame construction. As a result of numerous fires damaging or destroying the vulnerable structures, brick became the preferred construction material. At the same time, the incorporation of concrete floors and steel truss supports provided additional fire protection. Other aspects of tobacco-related building design took into account the functional requirements of selling, processing, or storing tobacco.

Destined to become nearly the size of a city block, the first section of Greenville's Imperial Tobacco Company factory (#34), designed by H. J. Blauwelt of Richmond, consisted of a two-story building measuring 65 by 200 feet. Typical of tobacco factories, the Imperial Tobacco Company building included a dryer room and a boiler house and was equipped with the "latest improved machinery." The Export Leaf and E. B. Ficklen factories, also located in Greenville, and the Imperial Tobacco Company factories in Wilson (NR) and Durham (NR) were also enormous buildings, divided inside to accommodate the activities of tobacco processing. In addition, the exteriors of the factories were embellished with decorative brickwork of the industrial Italianate style. They all include rows of segmental-arched windows, creating rhythmic arcades on long walls and are further adorned in whole or in part by pilasters that serve to break massive facades with vertical panels (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 7, pp. 7-8). Greenville's Imperial Tobacco Company building also includes a massive blonde tile smokestack that continues to dominate the skyline. It was built by Alphon Custodis Chimney Construction Company of New York (Cotter, p. 124)

On the opposite side of the street, a two-story brick office building (#34A) constructed in ca. 1923 for the Imperial Tobacco Company, complements the industrial Italianate style of the factory. The handsome building features ornate brick corbelling at the cornice, limestone trim, and an elaborate hooded stoop supported by scrolled brackets surmounted at the second level by a central window with a fanlight transom and keystones.

Impressive brick churches were built by many of Greenville's congregations in the early years of the twentieth century. The (former) First Christian Church (#25) is an excellent example of the renewed emphasis on classicism for ecclesiastical architecture in the early twentieth century. Designs were promoted that would express the elevated deportment and mission of Christianity and provide an expansive auditorium suitable to preaching. Prominent porticoes and domed sanctuaries were important characteristics of many of the churches

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 8 Page 25

---

designed during this time period (Bishir, p. 390). A principal feature of the First Christian Church is a large octagonal cupola with multiple windows. A stepped parapet and a central pediment, common to early twentieth-century church architecture, have recently been removed. A wide architrave cornice supported by Doric columns and sheltering a recessed porch continues to dominate the façade.

Although no longer extant, the neighboring Immanuel Baptist Church also featured a dominant portico, in this case four massive columns supporting a pediment with modillions. A shallow cupola set with stained-glass windows illuminated the vaulted ceiling of the auditorium. Similar to the First Christian Church, the expansive sanctuary was lit by elongated stained glass windows on the side elevations and those in the cupola (Cotter, p. 114).

The majority of the buildings lining Dickinson Avenue are one- and two-story brick of early-twentieth-century commercial design, typical of the commercial fabric of many of North Carolina's small and medium-size towns. The Commercial Style developed around the turn of the twentieth century as a reaction to the ornate styles of the late nineteenth century. It proved popular because of its adaptability to a variety of building types, especially the one-story, flat-roof commercial building. Recessed entrances flanked by plate-glass display windows characterize the one- and two-story buildings with modestly decorated facades. Tall transoms over the doors are also common features. Often a sizeable wall area exists between the windows and cornice providing a place for advertising as well as making the façade appear larger and more urban than would otherwise be the case. In some instances, the buildings, with three or more retail spaces, are grouped together presenting a larger façade to the street. Decorative embellishments are generally limited to raised parapets, segmentally-arched windows, outlined upper panels, and in a few cases, decorative brickwork at the cornice. Buildings of the late 1930s and 1940s tend to be more simply detailed with ornamentation restricted to simple, flat, rectilinear courses of brick at openings and cornices.

Many examples of the Commercial Style can be found along Dickinson Avenue. Although the two-story ca. 1923 Brown Building (#2) at the southeast corner of Dickinson Avenue and Eighth Street incorporates several elements of the Commercial Style, including the outlined brick panels and horizontal rows of brick corbelling, the segmentally-arched windows and doors were a common feature in late-nineteenth-century commercial buildings. The recessed entrance retains its original double-leaf wood doors and two-light transom.

The two-story ca. 1916 Higgs and Taft Building (#3) also occupies a prominent corner location across Eighth Street from the Brown Building. Although the two-story brick building has minimal architectural detail, it does retain an unusual arched corner entrance. The five-bay

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8 Page 26**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

---

building also features rectangular brick panels near the cornice and a stepped parapet on the side elevation.

One-story buildings are more prevalent along Dickinson Avenue and the side streets. Adjacent to the Higgs and Taft Building is a ca. 1923 one-story commercial building (#4) with three separate storefronts, all recessed with flanking plate-glass display windows and tall transoms over the entrances. The building also features an unusual crenellated cornice ornamented with stone rosettes.

The ca. 1916 Chero-Cola Bottling Works Building (#15) at 714 Dickinson Avenue is one of the oldest and most outstanding buildings along Dickinson Avenue. The triple storefronts each boast a curved parapet with patterned and raised brick façade and rectangular panels outlined in brick. Original multi-paned transoms surmount the entrances. In addition, one of the three storefronts retains its original recessed storefront with double-leaf doors flanked by long, single-paned windows and original display windows.

The two-story ca. 1916 Hooker and Anthony Company Building (#8) at 815/817 Dickinson Avenue is distinguished by a central stepped parapet and five arched windows at the second level. In addition, an arched entrance divides the two storefronts on the first floor.

The Hines Building (#11) at 903 Dickinson Avenue is the only Richardsonian Romanesque Revival-style building in the Dickinson Avenue Historic District. Built ca. 1916, the massive two-story building is constructed of dark red brick with granite trim. The focal point of the building is the tall arched door located in the central bay between two storefronts and below the peaked parapet. The entrance pavilion projects slightly from the main façade and boasts wide granite bands and an arched brick door surround with granite keystones. A multi-paned arched transom is set above double bevelled-glass doors. On the second level, triple windows, united under a broad segmental arch, flank a single, tall arched window with a flamboyant arched brick surround set over the central entrance. Granite keystones are used in each arch and polygonal brick-edged panels are set below the parapet. Brick and granite pilasters flank the end bays.

The 1948 Roxy Theater (#38) is one of only two buildings in the district with slight allusions to the Art Deco style. Art Deco is characterized by smooth wall planes often articulated with vertically banded windows, fin-like piers that extend through the parapets, and the concentration of flat rectilinear or high stylized ornament around the entrance and at the roofline. Typical ornamental features include smooth, polished marble in rich colors, patterned terra cotta or carved limestone panels, and intricate metal grilles. Additional design motifs include zigzag lines, chevron patterns, stylized foliage, and stepped arches. The vertical



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 8 Page 27

---

emphasis of the tall one-story Roxy Theater is typical of Art Deco architecture which was popular from the mid 1920s until just after World War II. The former theater features a smooth stuccoed façade with a raised stepped parapet with vertical metal trim and the original three-sided metal marquee.

The 1946 commercial building (#26) at 106 Ficklen Street also has a subtle suggestion of the Art Deco style with its stuccoed facade and the vertical emphasis of the entrance pavilion which rises above the roof line and incorporates a fin-like pier.

Several one-story buildings located within the Dickinson Avenue Historic District date to the mid-twentieth century. Typical of buildings constructed after World War II, the buildings exhibit stark simplicity. Characteristically, the one-story, rather plain brick buildings have a flat roof and large glassy storefronts. The one-story commercial building at 821 Dickinson Avenue (#10), built in 1956, is typical of the era with its flat roof, slightly raised parapet, and large expanses of windows across the façade. Another example is the 1951 commercial building at 628 South Pitt Street (#29), also a one-story building with a flat roof and a plain façade featuring a recessed central entrance flanked by large glass windows.

The buildings in the Dickinson Avenue Historic District tend to be less flamboyant than the earlier buildings in Greenville's core commercial district. The Dickinson Avenue commercial corridor developed as a direct result of the extension of the railroad through this part of town and the expansion of the tobacco warehousing and processing area in the surrounding area around the turn of the twentieth century. The resulting noise, pollution, and traffic encouraged residents of this once quiet area to find refuge in newly developing suburbs. Consequently, the early- to mid-twentieth-century buildings are similar to the majority of commercial buildings found in small and medium-sized towns throughout North Carolina whose commercial centers expanded in the early years of the twentieth century.

**Industrial Context:**

Much of the industrial context is derived from the Greenville, North Carolina Tobacco Warehouse Historic District National Register Nomination prepared by Betsy Gohdes-Baten and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1997.

Pitt County's first commercial tobacco crop was planted in 1886 after a group of five men grew a successful experimental crop the previous year. The crop exceeded expectations, thereby encouraging Pitt County farmers to switch from growing cotton, a crop that had been declining in price, to planting tobacco (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, p. 2).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 28

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

---

The first warehouses in the state were located in Wilson, Henderson, and Oxford, a long, laborious trip for horse-drawn carts filled with tobacco hogsheads. When a branch of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad (incorporated into the Atlantic Coast Line in 1898) connected Greenville and Kinston in 1890, R. J. Cobb constructed Greenville's first tobacco sales warehouse. The Greenville Tobacco Warehouse opened on Ninth Street in 1891 to fifty-seven buyers who purchased 225,000 pounds of tobacco in three days. As a result, the editor of the *Greenville Reflector* (later the *Daily Reflector*), headlined an article in that newspaper calling for "two more warehouses with a corresponding number of prizeeries" while proclaiming that "there is no reason why this town could not be made one of the best tobacco markets in the State" (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, p. 3).

By 1892, tobacco sales in Greenville increased one-million pounds from the previous year. The Eastern Warehouse, a three-story prizeery, and a large stable for patrons were constructed to handle the growing industry. The following year, sales increases of approximately one million pounds stimulated the construction of yet more tobacco handling facilities in the town. In 1895 and 1896, two entrepreneurs, subsequently influential in the growth and development of Greenville's tobacco industry, moved to town: J. N. Gorman to purchase the R. W. Royster Steam Prizeery and Edward Bancroft Ficklen to join T. E. Roberts in forming the Roberts and Ficklen Tobacco Company (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, p. 3).

"The Sanborn Map Company's 1896 map series of Greenville was the first to include tobacco industry buildings. By this time, four sales warehouses, nine prizehouses, and a hogshead factory were depicted along Ninth Street and Dickinson Avenue. All were of frame construction and fire inevitably broke out. A small blaze in 1901 destroyed several modest tobacco buildings. In 1903, a large fire on both sides of Ninth Street at the intersections of Clark and Pitt streets destroyed almost two blocks of prizehouses, stemmeries, and small dwellings. Two years later, in 1905, a more disastrous fire in the same locality destroyed four prizehouses, two sales warehouses, several small buildings, and 500,000 pounds of tobacco" (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, p. 4).

The Imperial Tobacco Company of Great Britain and Ireland constructed a tobacco processing facility (#36) on Atlantic Avenue in 1902. The company was created the previous year as a direct result of James Buchanan Duke's attempt to buy up British tobacco companies one by one at the start of the twentieth century. As head of the American Tobacco Company, Duke's aggressive methods had created a virtual monopoly for the company in the United States. To prevent his takeover of the industry in Great Britain, thirteen family-run businesses led by W. D. and H. O. Wills, John Player, and Lambert and Butler, met and formed the Imperial Tobacco Company of Great Britain and Ireland in December, 1901 ([www.imperial-tobacco.com](http://www.imperial-tobacco.com)).

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8 Page 29**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

---

The Imperial Tobacco Company soon realized that eastern North Carolina had the capacity to produce much of the state's bright leaf crop, and in the early twentieth century, major tobacco processing plants were established in a number of eastern North Carolina towns, including Rocky Mount, Wilson, Kinston, and Greenville. By May, 1902, the company's Greenville plant was under construction. When opened, the factory employed seventy-five people and was equipped with the latest improved machinery. The shipping and prizing operations were conducted on the railroad track side of the building and the receiving operation was located on the Atlantic Avenue elevations. The vast drying machines were located between the shipping and receiving operations. The facility continued to grow until the Depression, with the most notable addition being the construction of a handsome two-story brick office in ca. 1920 on the east side of Atlantic Avenue opposite the factory (Cotter, p. 123).

Numerous economic benefits were derived from the rise of Greenville's tobacco industry. A newly created tobacco board of trade, established to oversee operations of sales warehouses, pushed for improved roads and rail connections, thereby helping to support more economic growth. The Norfolk and Southern Railroad constructed a line through Greenville in 1907, the same year that East Carolina Teachers' Training School (now East Carolina University) was established. The town's central business district was thriving (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, p. 5).

The arrival of the Norfolk and Southern Railroad furthered the expansion of Greenville's tobacco warehouses, particularly in the area just west of the Dickinson Avenue Historic District, centered on South Pitt Street and West Ninth Street. Now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Tobacco Warehouse District, is comprised of the Prichard-Hughes Warehouse (ca. 1905 and ca. 1923), the Dail-Ficklen Warehouse (ca. 1909, ca. 1923, 1947, and 1963), the Export Leaf Factory (1914, 1928, 1932, and 1938), the E. B. Ficklen Tobacco Factory (ca. 1916, ca. 1923, ca. 1925, ca. 1945, and ca. 1950), the Gorman Warehouse (ca. 1926), and the Star Warehouse (1930).

An anti-trust ruling in 1911 resulted in the American Tobacco Company Trust, a conglomerate of the nation's largest cigarette manufacturers, splitting into four main companies. The breakup of the Trust resulted in increased competition and higher tobacco prices, triggering the phenomenal growth of Greenville's tobacco industry. Many dealers, manufacturers, and exporters quickly established processing factories and large storage warehouses in market towns with good transportation facilities (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, p. 6).

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 also encouraged a spike in American tobacco prices. The government supplied cigarettes to the troops made primarily from a blend of purely domestic tobaccos, rather than a blend of domestic tobacco and Turkish tobacco from the Middle East, which was no longer obtainable. In addition, an increasing number of women smokers

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8 Page 30**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

---

caused tobacco prices in North Carolina to rise from thirteen cents to thirty-five cents per pound in a very short time period (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, p. 6).

The Liggett and Myers, American, and R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Companies emerged as the dominant domestic cigarette manufacturers, all opening facilities in Greenville. Only ten percent of the tobacco grown in North Carolina was purchased by these three high profile companies however. Sixty percent of the crop was purchased by exporters and of this, approximately one-half went to the United Kingdom and one-fourth to China. The Imperial Tobacco Company of Great Britain and Ireland bought high-priced, high-quality leaf for the British market, and the Export Leaf Company, a subsidiary of the British-American Tobacco Company bought common or scrap tobacco primarily for the China Trade. Both operated large factories in Greenville by 1916 when a Sanborn map depicts that the Export Leaf Company had constructed a large brick prizery that occupied half a city block between Tenth and Eleventh streets. The remaining ten to twenty percent of the tobacco crop was purchased by independent leaf buyers, redried, processed, and sold again (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, pp. 6-7).

During this period, sales warehouses in Greenville also increased floor space and services. Previous frame facilities were replaced with more fire-resistant brick warehouses and factories. Many of the town's tobacco-related buildings underwent substantial expansions, as production and prices of cigarettes increased. In 1919, with the tobacco industry booming all over North Carolina, the Secretary of State's office granted more charters for tobacco sales warehouses than ever before. Greenville joined Danville, Virginia, and Rocky Mount, Wilson, and Winston-Salem, North Carolina, as one of the leading tobacco marketing centers in the South. The 1919 tobacco crop sold in Greenville and other Eastern Belt markets for a record fifty-three cents per pound (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, pp 7-8).

During the following year, however, overproduction coupled with the end of World War I, caused the rapid reversal of escalating tobacco prices. The huge tobacco crop of 1920 sold at a reduction of more than fifty percent in price, causing widespread panic in Greenville. Accusations of conspiracy between warehousemen and buyers to steal tobacco and rumors of farmers arming themselves resulted in an order for buyers to stop bidding. Although an attempt was made for tobacco growers to organize and devise plans for marketing the crop profitably, efforts failed and the auction system prevailed, averaging only 20.92 cents per pound for the 1920 crop (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, p. 8).

Oversupplies and marketing problems continued through 1927, with tobacco prices never rising over twenty cents per pound. Although the Federal government proposed buying tobacco surpluses, legislation to accomplish this was defeated by Congress four times. The aftermath of the 1929 stock market crash caused leaf prices to drop to twelve cents per pound in 1930 as sales

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 8 Page 31

---

of all tobacco faltered. A failed attempt to increase the wholesale prices of brand-name cigarettes by the "big three" tobacco companies resulted in an all-time low of eight and one-quarter cents per pound in 1931 (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, p. 8).

Despite price uncertainties, the marketing and processing sectors of the tobacco industry flourished in Greenville. Sanborn maps of 1929 show eleven large blocks around Dickinson Avenue and Ninth Street filled with six gigantic sales warehouses and nine processing factories, each of which often occupied an entire block with associated prizehouses, storage warehouses, cooperages, and offices (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, p. 8).

The Agricultural Act of 1933 brought about acreage restrictions, guaranteed loans, and marketing quotas within the tobacco industry. Farmers determined by vote how much tobacco acreage could be planted on a yearly basis, and the Federal government discouraged anyone who had not previously raised tobacco with stringent penalties. Purchasing pools supported by government loans guaranteed prices for tobacco raised on acreage allotments at ninety percent of a calculated fair market value. Surplus tobacco purchased under this plan was stored for later sales or dispersal. These measures resulted in the recovery and stabilization of tobacco prices. By 1934, tobacco sales reached an all-time high in Greenville and the town rivaled Rocky Mount and Wilson for the title of "largest tobacco market in the world." The tobacco facilities employed approximately 6000 people during the 1937 tobacco season (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, p. 9).

About 1940, a new tobacco warehouse replaced the 1914 Munford's Warehouse on Albemarle Avenue. The owners, Guy V. Smith and Bruce B Sugg, had been involved with the tobacco industry in Greenville since the early 1920s when they took over operation of the E. B. Ficklen Tobacco warehouse (established in 1897), later known as the Star Tobacco Sales Warehouse. The ca. 1940 Smith and Sugg tobacco warehouse on Albemarle Avenue (#40) occupied an entire city block and was built during a time period when many of Greenville's tobacco companies were expanding their facilities.

Consumption of cigarettes made another huge percentage gain from 1940-1946 during World War II and its accompanying time of rapid urbanization. President Franklin Roosevelt classified tobacco as an essential crop and tobacco farmers were granted deferment to ensure continued output. Cigarette smoking was at an all-time high in 1945 when 267 billion cigarettes were sold on the domestic market. By this time, Greenville had over two million square feet of floor space devoted to the handling and processing of tobacco (Gohdes-Baten, Sec. 8, p. 10).

In the years following World War II, the tobacco market in Greenville continued as one of the largest in the state. However, the next several decades brought many changes to the

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Continuation Sheet**

**Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina**

**Section 8 Page 32**

---

tobacco industry throughout North Carolina. Following the 1964 Surgeon General's report about the health hazards of smoking, most tobacco companies diversified eventually becoming large holding companies for a variety of unrelated businesses. Operations were streamlined during the late 1960s and 70s and older processing factories and storage facilities shut down in Greenville and other market towns as new facilities were constructed in manufacturing centers. Tobacco marketing continued strong in Greenville, but sales warehouses were built at the edge of town where land costs were less and newly constructed highways were accessible. The Imperial Tobacco Company carried on their operations in their Greenville factory until 1978. It later was utilized by the Greenville Storage Company, but currently stands vacant. Greenville's remaining tobacco warehouses in the surrounding vicinity had also been sold by the mid 1970s, some becoming storage warehouses and others converted to various types of manufacturing (Gohdes-Baten, p. 10).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 9 Page 33

---

**Bibliography**

- Barnes, Mary Hollis. "A Brief History of Greenville." *The Architectural Heritage of Greenville, North Carolina*. ed. Michael Cotter. Greenville: Greenville Area Preservation Association, 1988.
- Bishir, Catherine W. *North Carolina Architecture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- City Directories for Greenville, North Carolina, 1916 through 1990*. Local History Collection Sheppard Memorial Library, Greenville, NC.
- Cotter, Michael, ed. *The Architectural Heritage of Greenville, North Carolina*. Greenville: Greenville Area Preservation Association, 1988.
- Gohdes-Baten, Betsy. *National Register Nomination for Greenville, North Carolina, Tobacco Warehouse Historic District* (1997). Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, State Historic Preservation Office.
- Illustrated City of Greenville, Pitt County, North Carolina*. The C. E. Weaver Series. Richmond, VA: Central Publishing Company, Inc., 1914
- Imperial Tobacco Company Web Site: *About Us: History: formation*.  
<<http://www.imperial-tobacco.com>>
- Longstreth, Richard. *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*. New York: Alta Mira Press, 1987.
- Pitt County Tax Maps. On file at the Greenville Planning Department, Greenville, NC.
- Sanborn Map Company. Sanborn Insurance Maps for Greenville, North Carolina, 1896, 1898, 1900, 1905, 1911, 1916, 1923, and 1929.
- Turco, Ellen and April Montgomery. *National Register Nomination for the Greenville, North Carolina, Commercial Historic District* (2003). Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, State Historic Preservation Office.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Continuation Sheet

Dickinson Avenue Historic District  
Pitt County, North Carolina

Section 10 Page 34

---

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**UTMs continued**

5. 18 E 284480 N 3943060
6. 18 E 284300 N 3943180

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the Dickinson Avenue Historic District is shown in the heavy black line on the accompanying 1 inch = 200 feet tax map.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the Dickinson Avenue Historic District has been drawn to include the substantially intact commercial, industrial, and ecclesiastical buildings clustered along Dickinson Avenue erected during the district's period of significance from 1902 through 1956. These buildings contribute to the district's historic and architectural character. The boundary has been drawn to exclude buildings constructed after the district's period of significance and buildings that have been substantially altered.