

ORDINANCE NO. (2017) - 752

AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THE **H. J. BROWN COFFIN HOUSE BUILDING** IN THE PLANNING JURISDICTION OF THE CITY OF RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, A HISTORIC LANDMARK

WHEREAS, the property located at 200 South Salisbury Street/105 West Hargett Street, Raleigh, NC, is owned by Paper Clip Properties, LLC; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina authorized the creation of the Raleigh Historic Development Commission for the City of Raleigh and otherwise provided for the preservation of certain historic sites and buildings by the passage of Part 3C, Chapter 160A, Article 19 of the North Carolina General Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the Raleigh Historic Development Commission has made an investigation and recommended the following property be designated a historic landmark; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources has made an analysis and recommendation that the following property be designated a historic landmark; and

WHEREAS, on the 5th day of September, 2017, a joint public hearing was held in the Council Chamber of the Avery C. Upchurch Municipal Complex, Raleigh, before the City Council of the City of Raleigh and the Raleigh Historic Development Commission to determine whether the hereinafter described property should be designated a historic landmark; and

WHEREAS, all requirements of Part 3C, Chapter 160A, Article 19 of the North Carolina General Statutes, preceding the adoption of this ordinance, have been complied with.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA THAT:

Section 1. The property designated as H. J. Brown Coffin House Building, in the planning jurisdiction of the City of Raleigh, North Carolina, be and is declared a Raleigh Historic Landmark. Said property being more particularly described as follows:

The property located at 200 South Salisbury Street/105 West Hargett Street, Raleigh, NC, owned by Paper Clip Properties, LLC, that property described in deed book 014846, Page 1590 recorded in Wake County Registry, comprising approximately 0.06 acres.

Section 2. Those elements of the property that are integral to its historical, prehistorical, architectural, archaeological and/or cultural significance or any combination thereof are as follows:

The two three-story buildings and the approximately 0.06 acre upon which they sit. The H.J. Brown Coffin House Building was constructed by a Raleigh business founded in 1836. The concern started as a cabinet shop becoming the city's most prominent undertaking and funeral business and evolving alongside technological advances in embalming and undertaking. The establishment eventually became Brown-Wynne Funeral Home, now Raleigh's oldest continuously-operating business. The impeccably-restored Classical Revival-style building

embodies the type and form of architecture built in downtown Raleigh in the early twentieth century, a period of prosperity and optimism in the capital city. The Ideal Cleaning Company occupied the ca. 1920 building at 105 West Hargett Street. The cream-colored brick building features an original cast iron cornice, and was functionally joined to the Coffin House building in the 1950s when the buildings were in use as a bank.

The important architectural features of the 200 S. Salisbury St. building include: its three part vertical composition with the base containing the street-level storefronts on South Salisbury and West Hargett Streets, the shaft composed of two levels of windows, and the capital where a prominent cornice with scroll modillions and dentils sits just above a simple molded frieze; cream-colored iron-spot brick; rusticated brownstone belt courses, lintels, cartouche, sills, and quoins; S. Salisbury Street centered recessed entrance with a decorative wood transom flanked by urns in relief; urn motif on both sides of the paneled wood jamb flanking the entrance; the replacement doors – double-leaf, half-glazed with lower wood panels separated by a wood panel – that are of nearly identical design to the originals; pair of curved-head windows with segmental brownstone lintels and sills located on each side of the Salisbury Street entrance; Hargett Street central entrance and flanking tripartite storefront windows with arched lintels; three courses of gradually-stepped bricks and brick dentils topping the street level on both façades; second story windows, sills and segmental brownstone lintels; third-floor sash with round heads topped by radiating brick voussoirs just below brownstone round arches.

Important features of the 105 W. Hargett St. building include: cream-colored brick; original cast iron cornice; new storefront typical in layout and form for the early twentieth century with a full-width transom and recessed entrance; one-over-one wood windows with transoms and cast concrete lintels and sills on each of the upper levels.

A detailed architectural description and history is found in the 2017 Raleigh Historic Designation application and report and is hereby referenced.

Section 3. No portion of the exterior features of any building, site, structure, or object (including windows, doors, walls, fences, light fixtures, signs, steps, pavement, paths, or any other appurtenant features), trees, nor above ground utility structure located on the hereinbefore described property that is designated in this ordinance may be altered, restored, moved, remodeled, or reconstructed so that a change in design, material or outer appearance occurs unless and until a certificate of appropriateness is obtained from the Raleigh Historic Development Commission or its successors; provided however that the Raleigh Planning Director or designee may approve certificates of appropriateness for minor works as listed in the Bylaws and Rules of Procedure of the Raleigh Historic Development Commission.

Section 4. No building, site, structure, or object (including windows, doors, walls, fences, light fixtures, steps, pavement, paths, signs, or any other appurtenant features), trees, nor above ground utility structure located on the hereinbefore described property that is designated in this ordinance may be demolished unless and until either approval of demolition is obtained from the Raleigh Historic Development Commission or a period of three hundred sixty-five (365) days has elapsed following final review by the Commission of a request for demolition (or any longer period of time required by N.C.G.S. 160A-400.14 as it maybe amended hereafter); provided however, that demolition may be denied by the Raleigh Historic Development Commission in the event that the State Historic

Preservation Officer determines that the building, site, or structure has statewide significance as provided by N.C.G.S. 160A-400.14.

Section 5. The Raleigh Historic Development Commission shall have no jurisdiction over the interior features of the property.

Section 6. All owners and occupants of the property hereinabove described, whose identity and addresses can be ascertained by the exercise of due diligence shall be sent by certified mail a copy of this ordinance.

Section 7. This ordinance shall be indexed after the property owner's name in the grantor and grantee indexes in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Wake County.

Section 8. City administration and the Raleigh Historic Development Commission are hereby authorized and directed to have erected an appropriate sign on the site hereinabove described setting forth the fact that said site has been designated a historic landmark by action of the Raleigh Historic Development Commission and the City Council of the City of Raleigh provided, should the owners of the hereinabove described property not consent to the erection of said sign on the described premises, City administration and the Raleigh Historic Development Commission are hereby authorized and directed to have said sign located on the public right-of-way adjacent to said property.

Section 9. In the event any building, site, structure, or object designated by this ordinance is demolished in accordance with the ordinances of the City of Raleigh, this ordinance shall automatically be null and void.

Section 10. Any violation of this ordinance shall be unlawful as by law provided.

Adopted: October 3, 2017

Effective: October 3, 2017

Distribution: Department of City Planning
Development Services Department
Raleigh Historic Development Commission
Wake County Tax Assessor
Property Owner and Occupant (if not the owner)
Registrar of Deeds

Raleigh Department of City Planning
 One Exchange Plaza
 3rd floor
 Raleigh, NC 27602
 919-516-2626

www.raleighnc.gov/planning

Fee	\$ 294
Amt Paid	\$ 294
Check #	10134
Rec'd Date:	4/10/17
Rec'd By:	TOT
Completion Date:	

(Processing Fee: \$266.00 - valid until June 30, 2011 - Checks payable to the City of Raleigh.)

RALEIGH HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION

This application initiates consideration of a property for designation as a Raleigh Historic Landmark by the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission (RHDC) and the Raleigh City Council. It enables evaluation of the resource to determine if it qualifies for designation. The evaluation is made by the Research Committee of the RHDC, which makes its recommendation to the full commission which in turn makes its recommendation to the City Council. Procedures for administration by the RHDC are outlined in the Raleigh City Code, Section 10-1053.

Please type if possible. Use 8-1/2" x 11" paper for supporting documentation and if additional space is needed. All materials submitted become the property of the RHDC and cannot be returned. Return completed application to the RHDC office at One Exchange Plaza, Suite 300, Raleigh or mail to:

Raleigh Historic Districts Commission
 PO Box 829 Century Station
 Raleigh, NC 27602

1. Name of Property (if historic name is unknown, give current name or street address):

Historic Name: H. J. Brown Coffin House
 Current Name: Death and Taxes

2. Location:

Street 200 South Salisbury Street/105 West Hargett Street, Raleigh NC 27601-1313
 Address:
 NC PIN No.: 1703686344
 (Can be obtained from <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>)

3. Legal Owner of Property (If more than one, list primary contact):

Name: Paper Clip Properties, LLC
 Address: 1900 Cameron Street
 City: Raleigh State: NC Zip: 27605
 Telephone No: () () () Fax No. () () ()
 E-Mail: _____

4. Applicant/Contact Person (If other than owner):

Name: Jennifer F. Martin, MdM Historical Consultants
 Address: P.O. Box 1399
 City: Durham State: NC Zip: 27702
 Telephone No: (919) (368) (1602) Fax No. () () ()
 E-Mail: jennifer@mdmhc.com

5. General Data/Site Information:

Date of Construction and major additions/alterations: 1907, ca. 1920, ca. 1971, 2012-2013

Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings: n/a

Approximate lot size or acreage: .06 acres

Architect, builder, carpenter, and/or mason:

Original Use: Commercial

Present Use: Commercial

6. Classification:

A. Category (check all that apply):

Building(s) Structure Object Site

B. Ownership

Private Public Local State Federal

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

	Contributing	Noncontributing
Buildings	1	
Structures		
Objects		

D. Previous field documentation (when and by whom): Cynthia de Miranda, 2008 (for Fayetteville Street Historic District National Register nomination)

E. National Register of Historic Places Status:

Check One:

Entered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Date: 2008	Nominated <input type="checkbox"/>
Determined Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:	Determined Not Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Nomination Not Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Removed <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Significant changes in integrity since listing should be noted in section 10.B. below.	

7. Reason for Request: To ensure preservation of architectural fabric and to recognize the building's significance.

8. Is the property income producing? Yes No

9. Are any interior spaces being included for designation? Yes No

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

A. Photographs/Slides:

At least *two sets of current exterior archival-grade photographic prints* (minimum print size 5"x7") of all facades of the building and at least one photo of all other contributing and non-contributing resources. If interior spaces of the property are being considered for designation, please include two sets of photos for these features. Prints may be created by using archival-grade black and white film photography and processing or digital photography. The minimum standard for a digital print is 5x7 at a resolution of 300 pixels per inch (ppi). This translates into a pixel dimension of 1950 x 1350. Digital images must be printed with an acceptable ink and paper combination as determined by the National Park Service Go to: <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/photopolicy/index.htm>. All photographs must be labeled with the name of the structure, address and date the photograph was taken with pencil or archival-approved photo pen. In addition to prints, all digital images should be submitted on a CD-R in TIF format. Any additional exterior or interior views and views of other structures on the property (color, black and white, or slides) will be helpful.

B. Boundary Map:

Please include a map showing the location of the property. A sketch map is acceptable, but please note street names and number. Any other structures on the property should also be shown. Please include a "North" arrow. Map should be no larger than 11" x 17". A tax map with boundaries marked is preferred, which can be found at: <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>.

C. Architectural Significance:

Describe the property, including exterior architectural features, additions, remodelings, and alterations. Also describe significant outbuildings and landscape features. If the owner is including interior features in the nomination for the purpose of design review protection; describe them in detail and note their locations. Include a statement regarding the architectural significance of the property.

D. Historic Significance:

Note any significant events, people, and/or families associated with the property. Include all major owners. Note if the property has ever been recorded during a historic building survey by the City of Raleigh or by the NC State Historic Preservation Office. If so, who and when? (See application item 6.D.) Please include a bibliography of sources. Information regarding prior designations can be found by contacting the Survey and Planning Branch of the NC State Historic Preservation Office (NCSHPO) at 919-807-6570, 919-807-6573 or at: <http://www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us/spbranch.htm>.

E. Special Significance Summary:

Include a one to two paragraph summary of those elements of the property that are integral to its historical, prehistorical, architectural, archaeological, and/or cultural importance.

A. Photographs/Slides:



H. J. Brown Coffin Company, north elevation, view S



H. J. Brown Coffin Company, north elevation, view southeast



H. J. Brown Coffin Company, east elevation, view WSW



H. J. Brown Coffin House, east elevation, view W



H. J. Brown Coffin House, south elevation, view NW



H. J. Brown Coffin House, view of intersection of South Salisbury and West Hargett Streets, view NW

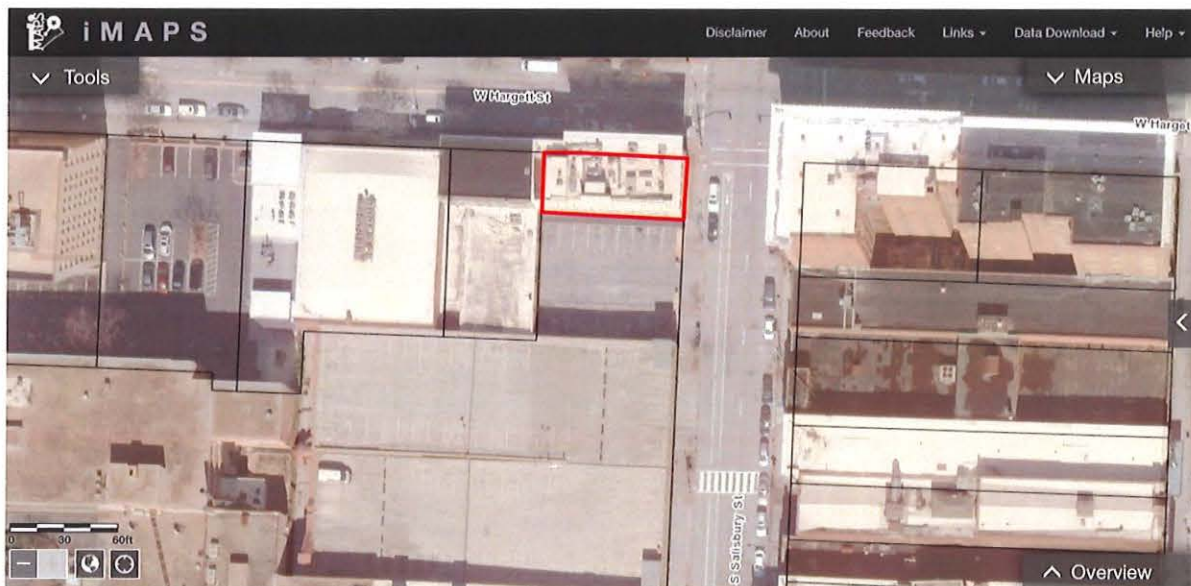


Interior of street level looking toward the entrance, view W

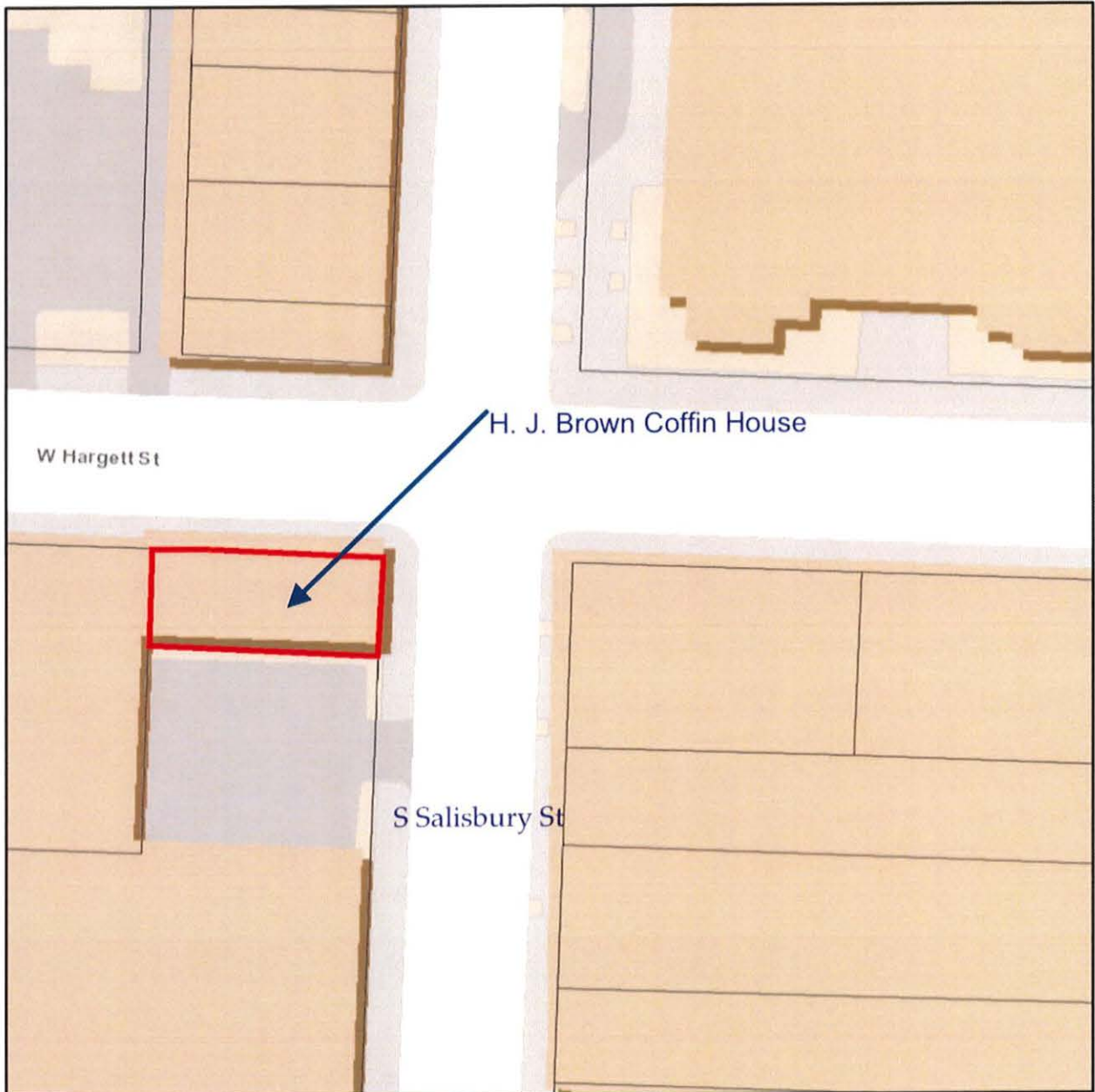
B. Location and Boundary Maps



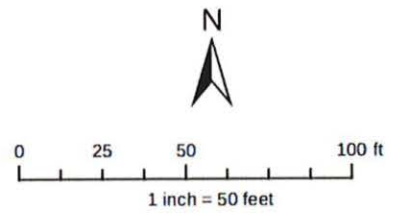
Location of H. J. Brown Coffin House



H. J. Brown Coffin House Boundary Map, 200 South Salisbury Street/105 West Hargett Street, Raleigh PIN 1703686344



H. J. Brown Coffin House: Map of Parcel



C. Architectural Significance

Description

The 1907 H. J. Brown Coffin House building at 200 S. Salisbury Street is a flat-roofed, cream-colored brick with iron spots, three-story, Classical Revival-style commercial building situated at the southwest corner of West Hargett and South Salisbury Streets. The ca. 1920 Ideal Cleaning Company building at 105 West Hargett Street is included in this landmark application because it was joined with the 1907 building in the 1950s and the two share a single parcel at the southwest corner of West Hargett Street and South Salisbury Streets.

Typical of commercial architecture of the period, the H. J. Brown Coffin House building consists of three parts: the base containing the street-level storefronts on South Salisbury and West Hargett Streets, the shaft composed of two levels of windows, and the capital where a prominent cornice with scroll modillions and dentils sits just above a simple molded frieze. Rusticated brownstone belt courses, lintels, sills, and quoins enhance the cream-colored brick exterior. During the restoration of the building in 2012-2013, some of the brownstone elements that were beyond repair or missing were re-created using cementitious material that replicates the original brownstone. That replacement material is indistinguishable from the original.

The three-bay South Salisbury Street elevation features a centered recessed entrance with a decorative wood transom flanked by urns in relief; the same urn motif appears on both sides of the paneled wood jamb flanking the entrance. The original doors—double-leaf, half-glazed with lower wood panels—have been replaced with doors of nearly identical design separated by a wood panel. The entrance is crowned by a splayed brownstone lintel topped by a cartouche, an element that was replicated to mirror one on the building originally. A pair of curved-head windows with segmental brownstone lintels and sills is located on each side of the entrance. Brick quoins with bands of rusticated brownstone frame the storefront, while a course of brownstone above three courses of gradually-stepped bricks and brick dentils tops the street level on this elevation. The windows on the second story mirror those on the first, while the third-floor sash have round heads and are topped by radiating brick voussoirs just below brownstone round arches.

The West Hargett Street elevation presents a symmetrical street-level storefront with a centered entrance containing a pair of half-glazed, double-leaf doors with lower panels flanked by wood side and upper panels and topped by a glazed curved-head transom. Like the east entrance, it features paneled wood jambs. A segmental brownstone arch tops the entrance that is framed by a pair of cast stone Tuscan columns and banded brick and brownstone pilasters. The columns and pilasters rest on brick plinths and support a brownstone entablature above the entrance. On each side of the entrance a large window with a curved head is divided into six lights framed in wood. The windows are crowned by segmental brownstone arches and rest on flat rusticated brownstone sills. The course of rusticated brownstone above the stepped bricks and dentils continues from the South Salisbury Street side to this elevation. The upper two

floors of the West Hargett Street elevation have identical windows as those found on the South Salisbury Street elevation, but are grouped in twos between brick pilasters that terminate at the bases of the rusticated brownstone arches above the third level windows.

The south elevation, which now faces an empty lot, displays a mural painted by Raleigh artist Luke Buchanan and lacks fenestration.

The three-story, commercial-style building immediately west of H. J. Brown Coffin House at 105 West Hargett Street is connected to and shares a wall with the larger building. The two buildings were joined in the 1950s when the H. J. Brown Coffin House became a bank. In 2011, the parcels containing the two buildings were combined into a single parcel. The plat for this recombination notes that the two buildings were historically and currently “used as one building with one interior stairway, one HVAC and plumbing system, one fire projection system, and one set of restrooms.”¹ The smaller building now contains the main entrance to the former H. J. Brown Coffin House (now Death and Taxes restaurant).

In its early history, the Ideal Cleaning Company occupied the building at 105 West Hargett Street. Built ca. 1920, the cream-colored brick building features an original cast iron cornice. During the 2012-2013 restoration, a new storefront typical in layout and form for the early twentieth century was installed. It features a full-width transom and recessed entrance. The upper two floors contain one-over-one wood windows with transoms. Cast concrete lintels and sills frame the four windows on each of the upper levels.

Architectural Context

In the decades following the Civil War, brick buildings replaced frame commercial structures in Raleigh’s business district that was centered around the state capitol and Fayetteville Street. Masonry buildings served a practical purpose by helping prevent destruction by fires, while symbolizing the prosperity and spirit of renewal Raleigh businesspeople embraced as the new century approached. By the early twentieth century, brick became an inexpensive and popular material for commercial buildings and could be shipped by the railroads that steamed into Raleigh.

Stylistically, in the early twentieth century national trends influenced commercial architecture in Raleigh as seen in the emergence of the eclectic revival styles combined with classical forms. Prominent brick buildings with elaborate detail promoted a stable image for the businesses therein. Among the most popular styles in downtown Raleigh was the Classical Revival, an idiom that showcased columns, pilasters, quoins, and bracketed cornices. The H. J. Brown Coffin House typifies commercial architecture of the period. Looking to promote its business in the city where it was founded in 1836, the Browns chose a prominent corner lot to build an elegant cream-colored brick edifice enhanced with bold brownstone elements and a prominent cornice.

¹ Book of Maps 2013, page 209, December 14, 2011, Wake County Register of Deeds.

D. Historic Significance

(Note: The H. J. Brown Coffin House building was noncontributing in the Fayetteville Street Historic District when that nomination was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. During the restoration in 2012-2013, the building was certified historic for the purposes of completing the Historic Preservation tax credit project.)

The building at 200 South Salisbury Street in downtown Raleigh dates to 1907 and was built as the headquarters for the H.J. Brown Coffin House, a business begun in 1836 by Henry Jerome Brown (1811-1879).

H. J. Brown was born in Petersburg, Virginia in 1811, but his family moved to Raleigh in 1816 where his father started Windsor Chair Manufactory on Hillsborough Street. Young H. J. Brown learned woodworking from his father, Joel Brown, who made chairs, settees, cribs, and cradles. Notably, Joel Brown crafted settees for the state senate in 1831 and chairs for the Wake County court room in 1835. H. J. Brown continued his father's woodworking business producing furniture and handcrafted coffins. In 1836, he established H. J. Brown Coffin House, at the corner of Dawson and Morgan Streets.²

H. J. Brown married Raleigh native Lydia Lane (1814-1898), daughter of Nathaniel M. Lane, who was the son of James Lane, brother of Joel Lane, who facilitated the location of Raleigh on his land in 1792.³ Lydia and H. J. Brown had two sons, John Wesley Brown (1849-1914) and Joseph Gill Brown (1853-1927).⁴

H. J. Brown is listed in the 1850, 1860, and 1870 Raleigh population censuses as a cabinet maker, not a mortician, undertaker, or some other profession commonly associated with the funeral industry. Before the Civil War when a person died, the family would tend to the body—washing it, wrapping it in cloth, and then calling upon cabinetmakers like H. J. Brown to construct a box to accommodate the deceased's body. Not until the Civil War did embalming, the principal method for preserving a dead body, gain widespread acceptance. During the war, embalming allowed for the preservation of soldiers' bodies as they were transported back to their families. The death and funeral of Abraham Lincoln, whose corpse made the long journey

² Raleigh Hall of Fame website, <http://www.raleighhalloffame.org/inductees/2012-2>, accessed January 13, 2017; K. Todd Johnson and Elizabeth Reid Murray, *Wake, Capital County of North Carolina, Volume II* (Raleigh: Wake County, 2008), 186. "A Good Man Has Fallen," *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, May 21, 1879, Newspapers.com, accessed January 13, 2017.

³ Joel Lane House Museum website, http://www.joellane.org/joellane/history/category/collection/labeled_armchair, accessed January 13, 2017; "Funeral of Mrs. Brown," *The Raleigh Times*, November 15, 1898, Newspapers.com, accessed January 13, 2017.

⁴ Raleigh Hall of Fame website, accessed January 17, 2017.

from Washington, D.C. to Springfield Illinois, led to more Americans embracing embalming as an acceptable practice.⁵

The H. J. Brown Coffin Shop survived the Civil War and played an integral role in the recovery of post-war Raleigh. In 1868, federal troops demanded the bodies of Confederate soldiers be removed from Rock Quarry Cemetery, which was a national cemetery. Brown and others moved 494 bodies to land belonging to Henry Mordecai, which later became Oakwood Cemetery.⁶

At H. J. Brown's death in 1879, his son John Wesley Brown (1849-1914) was manager of H. J. Brown Coffin House. Prior to joining his father's company, J. W. Brown had worked in the grocery business.⁷ H. J. Brown's other son, Joseph Gill Brown, worked in banking and not the family business. The 1880 census lists J. W. Brown as an undertaker living with his family and his brother's family at the coffin house, which remained at its original location at the corner of Dawson and Morgan Streets.⁸

In 1895, H. J. Brown Coffin House moved to Salisbury Street near the corner with Hargett Street.⁹ At its new location, the H.J. Brown Coffin House was in a one-story frame building fronting Salisbury Street just south of the corner of Hargett Street. J. W. Brown, who was listed in the 1896-1897 city directory as a funeral director and embalmer and his wife Elizabeth lived in a two-story frame house at 101 West Hargett Street, the current location of the H.J. Brown Coffin House building.¹⁰ The Sanborn map for 1896 indicate the house and "coffin shop," as it is labeled on the map, were connected by a one-story frame wing.¹¹

In 1900, J. W. Brown moved the H. J. Brown Coffin House again. This time to "a handsome two story brick building...located just across the street from his old place." The business, noted as "one of the best arranged and equipped establishments of its kind in the state," occupied three storefronts along South Salisbury Street—207, 209, and 211.¹² An advertisement from that

⁵ Gary Laderman, *Rest in Peace: A Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 6.

⁶ Raleigh Hall of Fame website, accessed January 17, 2017.

⁷ "Funeral of Mr. John W. Brown," *News and Observer*, December 10, 1914, Newspapers.com, accessed January 11, 2017.

⁸ 1880 Federal Census of Population, www.ancestry.com, accessed January 13, 2017; *Chas. Emerson & Co.'s Raleigh Directory [1880-1881]* (Raleigh: Edwards, Broughton & Co., 1881), 53.

⁹ "H. J. Brown Coffin House," *The Raleigh Times*, April 22, 1907, newspapers.com, accessed February 1, 2017.

¹⁰ Charles A. Separk, comp., *Directory of the City of Raleigh, NC, 1896-1897* (Raleigh: Raleigh Stationery Company, 1896), 89.

¹¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Raleigh, 1896. Sanborn Map Company.

¹² "In New Building: Mr. John Brown Moves His Undertaking Establishment," *The Raleigh Times*, September 1, 1900, newspapers.com, accessed February 2, 2017.

period promoted the business's "particular attention given the embalming of bodies for transportation."¹³

In April 1906, *The Raleigh Times* reported that the H. J. Brown Coffin House Company planned to construct a new building at the corner of Hargett and Salisbury Streets. According to the newspaper, the building would be thirty-four by sixty feet and three stories in height. The main façade of what was then planned to be a grey pressed brick building with granite trim would have its main entrance on Hargett Street. The newspaper reported that the "substantial and complete" edifice would be heated with hot water and lighted with gas and electricity.¹⁴

The new headquarters of H. J. Brown Coffin House at the southwest corner of West Hargett and South Salisbury Streets was finished in 1907. Upon its completion, *The Raleigh Times* reported "this building represents one of the handsomest business homes of any house of its kind in the entire southern states." The article went on to describe each level: the first floor contained a reception room, parlor, and offices. The second level served as the showroom or sample room, and the upper level was used as stock rooms and the engraving department.¹⁵ The December 12, 1907 edition of the *Raleigh Enterprise* described the H. J. Brown Coffin House's new building as "three stories, with dry basement...of pressed brick, handsomely finished."¹⁶

In December 1914, John Wesley Brown passed away at the age of sixty-five leaving four children and his wife, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Williams. One of his children, Fabius "Fab" Brown, had previously worked in the insurance industry, but later worked in the family business. Upon his father's death, Fab took over the H. J. Brown Coffin House Company.¹⁷ Under Fab Brown, the business grew and evolved. In 1915, Fab Brown began using motorized hearses for funerals. The company also provided ambulance services.¹⁸

¹³ Moses N. Amis, *Historic Raleigh from Its Foundation in 1792* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1902), inside front cover.

¹⁴ In 1904, the H. J. Brown Coffin House Company was incorporated by John W. Brown, his son Fabius P. Brown, and Lucy L. Brown, John W. Brown's daughter; "Handsome New Building: A New Home for the H. J. Brown Coffin House Here," *The Raleigh Times*, April 5, 1906, newspapers.com, accessed February 7, 2017.

¹⁵ "H. J. Brown Coffin House," *The Raleigh Times*, April 22, 1907.

¹⁶ "An Elegant Building: The New Home of the H. J. Brown Coffin House—Finest in the South," *The Raleigh Enterprise*, December 12, 1907, newspapers.com, accessed February 12, 2017.

¹⁷ *News and Observer*, August 16, 1902, "Fab P. Brown to Run Business," *News and Observer*, December 18, 1914, newspapers.com., accessed February 11, 2107.

¹⁸ "History of Brown-Wynne Funeral Home," Brown-Wynne Funeral Home website, accessed January 17, 2017.

In 1928, the H. J. Brown Company moved to Hillsborough Street.¹⁹ The building at the corner of West Hargett and South Salisbury Streets stood vacant until Mechanics Savings Bank moved into the street level in 1929.²⁰ In November 1936, Fab Brown and his wife Flo sold the building to Ed V. Denton, who worked in real estate thereby ending the Brown family's association with the building.²¹

In 1940, Raleigh Industrial Bank occupied the former H. J. Brown Coffin House building followed by the Bank of Raleigh in the mid-1950s. In 1960, American Commercial Bank became the occupant and remained there until around 1970. The Fidelity Bank occupied the building from 1973 until 2000. In the early 1970s, stucco and black glass panels were added to the exterior of the former H. J. Brown Coffin House and the former Ideal Cleaning Company buildings. The covering of the exterior damaged some of the original exterior fabric and obscured the buildings' historic character under a Brutalist façade. The North Carolina Community Foundation occupied the building in the 2000s.²²

In 2012, James Goodnight purchased the former H. J. Brown Coffin House building. Under his ownership, the early 1970s exterior cladding was removed and the building was restored to an appearance exceedingly close to the original. Missing elements such as the cornice and some of the stonework were meticulously recreated using documentary photographs and physical evidence. The building now houses Death and Taxes, a fine dining restaurant.

E. Special Significance Summary

The H.J. Brown Coffin House building was constructed by a Raleigh business founded in 1836. The concern started as a cabinet shop becoming the city's most prominent undertaking and funeral business and evolving alongside technological advances in embalming and undertaking.

¹⁹ After the Brown Company vacated the building, the company expanded. Fab Brown died suddenly in August 1940 leaving no one to carry on the Brown surname. That year, his nephew, Robert W. Wynne Jr., purchased the business from his uncle's estate. He built modern facilities at 300 St. Mary's Street in 1954, and renamed the company Brown-Wynne Funeral Home. Brown-Wynne Funeral Home is now North Carolina's oldest funeral home and the oldest continuously operated business in Raleigh.

²⁰ *Hill's Raleigh City Directory, 1928* (Richmond, Virginia: Hill Directory Company, 1928), 148, 760.

²¹ Wake County Deed Book 734, page 9, November 4, 1936, Wake County Register of Deeds, Raleigh, North Carolina.

²² *Hill's Raleigh City Directory, 1940* (Richmond, Virginia: Hill Directory Company, 1940), 610, 657; *Hill's Raleigh City Directory, 1954* (Richmond, Virginia: Hill Directory Company, 1954), 97, 185; *Hill's Raleigh City Directory, 1960* (Richmond, Virginia: Hill Directory Company, 1960), 91, 174; *Hill's Raleigh City Directory, 1973* (Richmond, Virginia: Hill Directory Company, 1973), 220; *Hill's Raleigh City Directory, 2000* (Richmond, Virginia: Hill Directory Company, 2000), 358; *Hill's Raleigh City Directory, 2003* (Richmond, Virginia: Hill Directory Company, 2003), 451.

After vacating its South Salisbury Street location, the establishment eventually became Brown-Wynne Funeral Home, now Raleigh's oldest continuously-operating business. The H. J. Brown Coffin House building represents the successful business started and operated by several generations of the Brown family and the company's contribution to the history of the growth of the city of Raleigh from 1836 to the present. The impeccably-restored Classical Revival-style building embodies the type and form of architecture built in downtown Raleigh in the early twentieth century, a period of prosperity and optimism in the capital city.

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