

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Harriet Tubman YWCA**

Durham, Durham County, DH2861, Listed 12/06/2024  
Nomination by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc.  
Photographs by Heather Fearnbach, August, 2023



North Elevation



South Elevation

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Harriet Tubman YWCA

other names/site number N/A

## 2. Location

street & number 312 East Umstead Street

N/A not for publication

city or town Durham

N/A vicinity

stat North Carolina

code NC

county Durham

code 063

zip code 27707

e

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Daniel J. Water  
Signature of certifying official/Title

10/30/24  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

North Carolina Department of Natural and 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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	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)

SOCIAL: clubhouse  
DOMESTIC: institutional housing

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

**7. Description**

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

MODERN MOVEMENT

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
walls BRICK  
roof OTHER  
other

**Narrative Description**

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

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage: Black  
Social History  
Civil Rights  
Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1953-1978

**Significant Dates**

1953  
1969

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

African American

**Architect/Builder**

Weeks, Howard Raymond, architect and engineer  
T. W. Poe and Sons, Inc., general contractor

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**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: Rubenstein Library, Duke University  
Durham Public Library, North Carolina Collection

Harriet Tubman YWCA  
Name of Property

Durham County, NC  
County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** 0.54 acres

See Latitude/Longitude coordinates continuation sheet

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1                                   
Zone Easting Northing  
2                                 

3                                   
Zone Easting Northing  
4                                 

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.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Heather Fearnbach  
organization Fearnbach History Services, Inc. date 11/14/2023  
street & number 3334 Nottingham Road telephone 336-765-2661  
city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27104

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## Additional Documentation

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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.)

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## Property Owner

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

name Harriet's Place LLC, c/o Peter Skillern  
street & number 110 East Geer St, PO Box 1929 telephone 919-667-1000  
city or town Durham state NC zip code 27702

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**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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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## Section 7. Narrative Description

### Site

The Harriet Tubman YWCA at 312 East Umstead Street occupies the north third of a 0.543-acre lot in a historically African American neighborhood approximately one mile south of Durham's central business district. The austere Modernist building encompasses a three-story, flat-roofed, four-bay-wide by three-bay-deep main block constructed in 1953 and a one-story, flat-roofed, one-bay west wing added in 1969. A straight wide concrete sidewalk spans the lawn between the primary (north) entrance and the concrete municipal sidewalk bordering East Umstead Street. Narrow strips of grass flank the east and west elevations. The open rear yard is bordered by dense vegetation including evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs, vines, and invasive bamboo. The tall chain-link security fence that encloses the yard was erected between May 2018 and September 2022.<sup>1</sup> South of the fence, the remainder of the parcel is wooded. There is no on-site parking.

### Setting

The surrounding area known as Hayti and Southside contains a mix of residences, businesses, churches, schools, recreational venues, and institutional buildings historically associated with the African American community. The former Hillside Park High School (1922, 1955; NR 2013), the city's first public secondary school for Black students, fills the block to the west at the intersection of East Umstead and South Roxboro streets.<sup>2</sup> The locally designated Fayetteville Street Historic District (2000), a linear collection of resources fronting the road between East Umstead and Nelson Streets, includes early- to mid-twentieth century houses as well as the W. D. Hill Recreation Center, which occupies the site of the Algonquin Tennis Club's two-story frame clubhouse and three red-clay tennis courts. The club established in 1922 met in private homes until acquiring the clubhouse in 1934. The African American fraternal organization hosted social gatherings and provided accommodations for Black travelers during the mid-twentieth century.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Google Street View, <https://www.google.com/maps> (accessed October 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Hillside Park High School was renamed Hillside High School in 1941, James A. Whitted Elementary School in 1950, and James A. Whitted Junior High School in the 1950s. The campus consists of a T-shaped, two-story-on-basement, redbrick, Classical Revival building erected in 1922 and expanded in 1955 with a redbrick Modernist addition encompassing a three-story T-shaped classroom block and one-story-on-basement gymnasium. Jennifer F. Martin, "Hillside Park High School," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2013. The complex was renovated in 2016 to house Whitted School, a preschool, and Veranda at Whitted, affordable senior apartments. The City of Durham incorporated the school's athletic fields to the south into Hillside Park, which encompasses a baseball/softball field, basketball court, swimming pool, playground, sprayground, shelter, grill, and picnic tables.

<sup>3</sup> The Algonquin Tennis Club dissolved in 1964 and the clubhouse burned in on July 16, 1968. Fay Mitchell, "N.C. Highway Historical Marker Honors Groundbreaking Tennis Club," North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural

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The primarily residential Stokesdale Historic District (NR 2010) spans Fayetteville Street and encompasses much of the locally designated Fayetteville Street Historic District. Most of the 203 resources within the Stokesdale district were constructed between 1912 and 1960. Just to the south, North Carolina Central University (NCCU, NR 1986) also flanks Fayetteville Street. The historically Black institution began operating as a private school in 1910, was reconstituted as a teacher training school in 1915, received state financial support in 1923, and in 1925 became North Carolina's first publicly funded four-year liberal arts college for African American students, then named North Carolina College for Negroes. The residential College Heights Historic District (NR 2019), west of the university campus and Fayetteville Street, contains 159 primary resources erected from around 1925 to 1966.<sup>4</sup>

Ten blocks north, Fayetteville Street is lined with commercial development near the Durham Freeway (North Carolina Highway 147). Highway construction commenced in 1967 and the first section was completed in late 1970. The traffic corridor's creation in conjunction with the city's urban renewal program decimated the vibrant African American neighborhood, displacing hundreds of businesses and families. Surviving landmarks include St. Joseph AME Church (NR 1976) on Fayetteville Street's east side one block south of the highway.<sup>5</sup>

## Harriet Tubman YWCA, 1953, 1969, contributing building

### 1953 Exterior

The three-story, flat-roofed, four-bay-wide by three-bay-deep building's red brick walls are laid in Flemish bond. The exterior walls are solid brick, while interior walls are hollow terra-cotta block. Cast-stone coping caps the tall flat east and west parapets as well as the slightly taller square brick flue that pierces the roof next to the east parapet's center. Aluminum coping tops the north and south walls. The reinforced-concrete roof deck is topped with gravel ballast. A tubular steel ladder mounted on the wall of the third-floor corridor adjacent to the stair hall rises to a square metal roof hatch near the flue.

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Resources press release, July 31, 2019. W. D. Hill Recreation Center includes a fitness center, gymnasium, playground, and tennis courts.

<sup>4</sup> Heather Wagner, "Stokesdale Historic District," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2010; Charles W. Wadlington, "North Carolina Central University," in William Powell, ed., *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 808; Heather Slane and Cheri Szcondronski, "College Heights Historic District," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Designed by Philadelphia architect Samuel L. Leary and built in 1891 with brick supplied by prominent Black Durham businessman Richard Burton Fitzgerald, the church served the congregation organized in August 1869 until the 1976 completion of a Modernist sanctuary at 2521 Fayetteville Street. Church trustees subsequently conveyed the 1891 building to the Durham Redevelopment Commission. The 1891 church and 1952 and 1991 additions serve as Hayti Heritage Center, operated by St. Joseph's Historic Foundation. Mary Alice Hinson and John B. Flowers III, "St. Joseph's African Methodist Episcopal Church," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1976.

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Cast-stone surrounds frame the windows on the primary (north) elevation. The original plans called for two additional west three-story bays that were not constructed due to financial constraints (Exhibit A). Thus, the upper-story window sills and lintels extend to the north elevation's west end in anticipation of the building's eventual completion. Within most surrounds, corrugated aluminum covers brick between wide steel-frame windows comprising three three-horizontal pane sash with tall center hoppers. The aluminum sheathing between the center and east third-story windows has been removed. Plywood covers the lower panes of the first-story windows. An aluminum-frame transom and sidelights remain at the primary entrance in the west first-story bay. The double-leaf glazed door has been replaced with a single-leaf six-panel door and the assembly is covered with particle board. Four corrugated-metal half-round light wells extend from basement window openings east of the door.

The windows on the east and south elevations have slightly projecting concrete sills and flat steel lintels. The east elevation is punctuated by ten steel-frame windows (four on the first story and three on each upper story), all with three equally sized rectangular panes including a central hopper. The upper stories of the south elevation's east bay are blind due to the interior stair tower in the building's southeast corner. The single-leaf six panel replacement door near the east end of the first story is sheltered by an aluminum shed awning. An exterior stair with two concrete steps, a concrete landing, brick sidewalls, and tubular steel handrails rises from the rear yard to the entrance. To the west, single and paired three-pane sash with tall center hoppers light each floor. On the first story, a paired window abuts the 1969 addition's flat-roofed one-story entrance vestibule. A slender round steel corner post supports the flat-roofed steel canopy that shelters the single-leaf steel door with a glazed upper section. The entrance porch has a concrete floor and brick foundation. West of the porch, the 1969 addition's kitchen and community room extend further south.

The 1969 addition covers the west wall's first story. Single-leaf second- and third-story steel doors with glazed upper sections provide egress to the wing roof. A steel fire escape with a straight run of stairs and landing and tubular-steel handrails rises from the roof to the third-floor entrance. Large step cracks and brick displacement on the upper stories of the 1953 building's southwest corner indicate structural settling.

## *1953 Interior*

The 1953 building has a double-loaded corridor plan. On the first floor, the primary entrance vestibule in the northwest corner opens into a lobby that extends to an east-west corridor flanked by offices. A wide opening in the west wall provides access to the dining/community room in the 1969 addition. The second and third floors contain bedrooms and a shared bathroom on each level. The southeast corner stair connects all four levels. The steel and concrete stair has steel railings with square newel posts, slender balusters, and molded handrails. The narrow northwest stair, originally an exterior stair encapsulated by



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the 1969 addition, provides basement egress via a straight run of concrete steps with a wall-mounted tubular-steel handrail.

The shallow entrance vestibule retains aluminum-frame curtain walls and a double-leaf glazed door. At the lobby's southeast corner, a wood-veneered reception desk with a laminate top and the soffit above it curve around to the corridor. The reception area is accessible from the corridor as well as the administrative suite, which comprises a small office north of the reception area and a larger office to the east. The main block's first floor encompasses four more offices and two storage rooms flanking the corridor.

Simple finishes were specified to maximize durability. Interior hollow terra-cotta block and exterior brick walls are plastered. The terrazzo floors in the lobby and first-story corridor are in good condition, while the vinyl composition tile that covered office floors as well as those in second- and third-floor corridors and bedrooms has been removed in conjunction with asbestos abatement, exposing concrete floors. All flat-board door and window surrounds and baseboards and corridor chair rails initially had a dark lacquered finish, but some have been painted.

On the second and third floors, four equal-sized bedrooms on the corridor's north side have closets on the corridor wall. A small storage room, two-room suite, bathroom, and utility closet (from east to west) are south of the corridor. All bedroom and closet doors have been removed. Fire damage on the third floor includes smoke-blackened upper walls and ceilings as well as wood trim charring. Plaster on many walls and ceilings is cracked and spalling.

Original two-panel single-leaf wood doors remain at upper-floor bathroom entrances. One is painted, the other is not. Porcelain toilets and wall-mounted sinks have been removed, but enameled-steel stall dividers with steel doors remain. At each bathroom's southwest corner, a white porcelain tub is recessed in an area with plastered walls. The shower enclosure to the north has full-height square-yellow-glazed ceramic tile wall sheathing and a small-blue-tile floor. Elsewhere in the bathrooms, the basket-weave-patterned yellow- and blue-glazed ceramic tile floors are in good condition.

The northwest stair leads from the lobby entrance vestibule to the basement, two-thirds of which originally served as a recreation room. The corridor at the room's east end extends to the southeast stairwell and the boiler room in the northeast corner. Structural elements are exposed throughout the basement. The brick walls, reinforced-concrete posts and beams, and concrete and terra-cotta-block ceilings are painted in the recreation room. Walls and ceilings are unpainted in the corridor and boiler room. The recreation room and corridor originally had vinyl composition tile sheathing the concrete floor. Mechanical systems are exposed and surface-mounted conduit and linear fluorescent lighting has been installed.

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## *1969 Addition Exterior*

The concrete block walls of the one-story, flat-roofed, one-bay west wing are sheathed with common bond veneer comprising five courses of stretchers followed by a course of alternating stretchers and headers. The aluminum-frame four-section window that spans most of the north wall has three-pane sash with tall center hoppers framed by a cast-stone surround. Two windows, each with three matching sash, pierce the west elevation. The paired sash in the south elevation's west bay has the same configuration. Three concrete steps rise to the single-leaf steel door east of the window. The paired sash in the east bay have three equally sized rectangular panes including a central hopper. Slightly projecting concrete sills and flat steel lintels span the windows on both secondary elevations. The roof system comprises steel bar joists, corrugated-metal decking, concrete topping, and gravel ballast.

## *1969 Addition Interior*

The addition, accessed via a wide opening on the lobby's west wall, encompasses a large community/dining room with a kitchenette on the northeast wall, two small restrooms that project from the east wall's center, a kitchen, and a storage room and a restroom at the kitchen's east end. The walls are painted concrete block. The metal frame of the dropped acoustical tile ceiling remains, but the tiles were removed following damage from roof leaks. The community room originally had a vinyl-composition-tile floor. High shelves span the wall north of the kitchenette. The cabinet beneath has been removed. Short concrete-block walls flank the kitchenette, which is housed within a cased opening. High enameled-metal cabinets remain. The base cabinet and sink have been removed. A pass-through window and door south of the restrooms provide kitchen access. The door on the south wall leads to the rear yard. The dark red quarry-tile floor and cove base in the kitchen are in good condition.

## **Integrity Statement**

The Harriet Tubman YWCA possesses the seven qualities of historic integrity—location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship—required for National Register designation. The building maintains integrity of location as it stands on its original site, a half-acre lot that provides appropriate surroundings in keeping with the dwelling's size and function. The neighborhood retains its mid-twentieth-century character, thus allowing for integrity of setting, feeling, and association. The Harriet Tubman YWCA also displays integrity of design, materials, and workmanship from the 1953-1978 period of significance. Although the building's condition has deteriorated since it became vacant, the form, structure, plan, circulation pattern, and finishes are substantially intact. The flat-roofed building's brick, reinforced concrete, and concrete- and terra-cotta-block structure is in good condition. The floor plan is unaltered. Removal of cracked and spalling plaster, damaged wood trim, vinyl composition floor tile with asbestos-containing mastic, and deteriorated acoustical ceiling tiles was a necessary first step in rehabilitation. Original interior finishes that remain despite suffering fire and water

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damage can be repaired or emulated during rehabilitation. These include plastered or painted brick, terracotta, and concrete-block walls; plaster ceilings; terrazzo and quarry- and ceramic-tile floors; and flat-board door and window surrounds and baseboards and corridor chair rails with a dark lacquered finish—. Likewise, steel- and aluminum-frame multi-pane sash with hoppers that are corroded, damaged, and missing components can be replicated.

## **Statement of Archaeological Potential**

The State Historic Preservation Office requested a statement of archaeological potential from the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology (OSA) for the former YWCA property. Following their review of the nomination and supporting documentation, OSA believes that the property is unlikely to contain intact and significant archaeological resources below the surface that either predate or contribute to the period of significance of the building due to the site's location and more modern occupation. As a result, OSA does not recommend a statement of archaeological potential for this National Register eligible property.

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## Section 8. Statement of Significance

The locally significant Harriet Tubman YWCA in Durham, North Carolina, meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A in the areas of Black ethnic heritage, social history, and civil rights and Criterion C for architecture. Located within the vibrant African American neighborhood known as Hayti, the building was a vital community center during the third quarter of the twentieth century. Programs and services provided by the Harriet Tubman branch facilitated development of academic, leadership, and teamwork skills and fostered personal growth, thus empowering girls and women to pursue higher education and realize community uplift. Staff were respected leaders with deep community connections. Many employees, volunteers, and program participants engaged in social and political advocacy in Durham and beyond, employing coordinated civil disobedience and legal action in myriad campaigns against racial, political, economic, and social injustice. As civil rights and feminist activism increased, the YWCA served as a gathering place for those planning demonstrations and other initiatives. Organizations promoting women's health, wage equity, and equal rights operated offices and regularly held meetings in the building. The Harriet Tubman YWCA also epitomizes the functional Modernism often manifested in mid-twentieth-century buildings. The three-story, flat-roofed, redbrick, 1953 main block designed by Durham architect and engineer Howard Raymond Weeks's firm and one-story, flat-roofed, redbrick 1969 addition were conceived in an economical manner that allowed for rapid construction, flexible use, ease of maintenance, and future expansion. The building is characterized by angular form, horizontal massing, and large metal-frame windows. Resilient interior finishes are substantially intact: plastered or painted brick, terra-cotta, and concrete-block walls; plaster ceilings; terrazzo and quarry- and ceramic-tile floors; and woodwork with a dark lacquered finish. The period of significance begins in 1953 with the main block's completion and ends in 1978, when the Harriet Tubman YWCA closed. Criterion Consideration G is not claimed since the Harriet Tubman YWCA's operation at 312 East Umstead Street until 1978 perpetuated the significance of its historical use.

## Criterion A Context and Historical Background

### *Young Women's Christian Association*

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) was established in London in 1855 to facilitate female mental, physical, and social well-being through sustenance, advocacy, education, training, and recreation. The association's initial United States branch was organized in 1858 in New York City. The first YWCA branch established specifically to serve African American women and girls opened in Dayton, Ohio in 1889, followed in 1890 by a Native American YWCA branch at Haworth Institute in Chilocco, Oklahoma. The earliest North Carolina branches for white women formed during the early 1900s in Asheville, Charlotte, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem, where many people moved from rural areas to seek industrial employment. YWCAs named in memory of notable Black women including poet Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784) were founded throughout the country during the 1910s. African American

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women chartered Phyllis Wheatley YWCAs in Asheville (1913) and Charlotte (1916) as well as an unnamed Winston-Salem branch (1918). Students organized YWCA associations at colleges including the National Religious Training School in Durham, a private African American institution that became North Carolina Central University. Youth outreach became more prevalent with the 1918 creation of the Girl Reserves program for twelve- to eighteen-year-olds. Many branches also provided programs for younger children. YWCA chapter formation and membership increased dramatically after World War I, during which the association supported military efforts in the United States and abroad.<sup>6</sup>

## *Young Women's Christian Association in Durham, North Carolina*

The movement to establish a Durham branch of the YWCA accelerated at World War I's conclusion. In September 1919, using funds remaining in the Women's Defense Committee coffer, a coalition of white women headed by Catherine Fuller Hill and Annie Sills Brooks opened two rooms in the First National Bank building where working women could find respite. The Women's Division of the Chamber of Commerce, Business and Professional Women's Club, and other civic groups joined the effort supported by staff of the YWCA's southern branch headquarters in Richmond, Virginia. The Durham association received its YWCA charter and elected a twenty-one-member board of directors on May 13, 1920. In June the branch opened offices, a living room, and a cafeteria on the second floor of the Sparger Building at 301 West Main Street downtown, providing a place for women to rest, socialize, attend classes, and receive two meals daily. During its inaugural year, the association facilitated formation of YWCA clubs for women working in industrial plants; presented lectures by local professors, ministers, and others; and engaged public school home economics teachers to lead classes in dressmaking, millinery, and interior decoration. Approximately five hundred women and girls attended sessions of a six-week camp on the Eno River in summer 1920. As membership grew, the organization leased the Sparger Building's first floor to house the cafeteria, which was open to the public. However, a larger permanent location was soon necessary to meet programming needs. Kate Hill, Mary Washington Stagg, and Lida Duke Angier headed the fundraising campaign launched in February 1926 to subsidize construction of a three-story redbrick Classical Revival-style building at 513 West Chapel Hill Street. Annie Watts Hill's gift of \$25,000 and land upon which to erect the YWCA precipitated community-wide support. Industrialists including tobacco product manufacturer Benjamin N. Duke also made sizable contributions. Construction began in September and the facility with offices, gathering rooms, a kitchen, and accommodations for single women was completed in May 1927 at a cost of approximately \$80,000. Although the YWCA was

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<sup>6</sup> Ruth Irving-Carroll, "A History of the YWCA Mission," YWCA USA, Washington, D.C., 2013; Max P. Rogers, "YMCA and YWCA," in the *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, edited by William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1241; Leslie Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class, and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 263-264.

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an interracial organization, Southern facilities were segregated during the Jim Crow era. The Durham association initially served only the white community.<sup>7</sup>

## *Harriet Tubman YWCA*

Following national YWCA secretary of city work Addie Hunton's 1912 visit to Durham to survey industrial working conditions, young women at the National Religious Training School (now North Carolina Central University) organized a student chapter of the YWCA. During the late 1910s, prominent African American women including Julia Warren, Minnie Pearson, and Janie Spaulding began advocating for a YWCA in Hayti, a thriving Durham neighborhood south and west of the railroad that bordered the central business district.<sup>8</sup> Julia Warren, an educator and beautician, was the wife of obstetrician Stanford Lee Warren, who co-founded with physician Aaron McDuffie Moore and businessman John Henry Merrick North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company in 1898 and Mechanics and Farmers Bank in 1907. The men encouraged tobacco magnate Washington Duke to subsidize construction of Lincoln Hospital, churches, and schools for African Americans. Janie Spaulding was North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company executive Alonzo Gaston Spaulding's wife. Minnie Pearson was married to Hillside Park High School principal and businessman William G. Pearson. All were known for their philanthropy. Young women boarded in the Warrens' Pine Street home while searching for more permanent housing.<sup>9</sup>

White support was critical as Black YWCA's could only exist as subsidiaries of white branches. The Durham YWCA board of directors debated the matter in early 1922, but discussion was unproductive until Adele Ruffin, a coordinator for Black community outreach at the YWCA's national headquarters, visited town in July at Warren, Pearson, and Spaulding's request to champion the cause. After meeting

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<sup>7</sup> Annie Watts Hill was married to lawyer John Sprunt Hill, who successfully invested in banking, insurance, and real estate. The Sparger Building was demolished in 1961. The 513 West Chapel Hill Street YWCA was enlarged in 1953 and 1968, vacated in November 1976, and demolished in summer 1977. "Wanted: YWCA," *Durham Morning Herald* (hereafter abbreviated *DMH*), March 18, 1920, p. 4; "Women Launch the Local Association," *DMH*, May 14, 1920, p. 6; "YWCA," *DMH*, October 19, 1921, p. 12; "Campaign for New YWCA," *DMH*, February 22, 1926, p. 7; "YWCA Drive," *DMH*, February 27, 1927, p. 7; "Dedication Exercises," *DMH*, May 30, 1927, p. 7; "YWCA Established 1920," *DMH*, April 26, 1953, p. 1; Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of Durham, NC, Board of Director's meeting minutes, Executive Office Files, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham (collection hereafter cited as YWCA Papers); Preservation Durham, "Sparger Building," Open Durham, <https://www.opendurham.org/> (accessed July 2024); "YMCA Motto," *Durham Sun* (hereafter abbreviated *DS*), November 1, 1976, p. 19; "YWCA Demolition Begins," *DS*, July 29, 1977, p. C1.

<sup>8</sup> Black Wall Street, anchored by businesses operated by African American entrepreneurs, flanked the 100 block of West Parrish Street at the heart of the central business district two blocks northeast of the railroad. Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*, 262-264.

<sup>9</sup> A. B. Caldwell, ed., *History of the American Negro*, Vol. IV (Atlanta: A. B. Caldwell Publishing Company, 1921) 14-26, 312-314, 423-426; Julia Pinnix and Lucy Watson, "The History of the Durham YWCA," May 21, 1948, manuscript, YWCA vertical file, North Carolina Collection, Durham County Library, Durham; Jim Wise, "State marker," *Durham Herald-Sun* (hereafter abbreviated *DHS*), June 14, 2004, pp. B1 and B3.

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with Ruffin, the board approved the initiative and engaged Mercedes Poindexter to head the new branch. The Durham YWCA paid her salary, while Black citizens assumed operating costs. The Harriet Tubman branch opened in November 1922 and three months later had two hundred members and offered a full slate of educational programs.<sup>10</sup> The branch was initially based at Royal Knights of King David Hall, a three-story brick commercial building at 702-704 Fayetteville Street. Trustees leased in 1924 and soon purchased the former home of educator and businessman James E. Shepard and his wife Annie at 508 Fayetteville Street: a one-story, side-gable-roofed, weatherboarded, nine-room, circa 1890s dwelling.<sup>11</sup>

Armand Jones managed the Tubman branch from 1932 until September 1934. That year the YWCA's national headquarters encouraged members to decry lynching and mob violence and promote interracial cooperation and African American civil rights. In Durham, the Central branch's all-white Committee on Colored Work oversaw the Tubman branch's finances and programs until the 1934 formation of an interracial committee. Its members regularly met at the Tubman branch to plan classes, events, health clinics, membership drives, and toy campaigns. Although African American and white leaders had little interaction otherwise and most programs remained segregated, the YWCA's attempt to foster racial inclusivity was an anomaly in the Jim Crow South.<sup>12</sup>

The Tubman branch was finally able to invest in larger quarters when the residence of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company executive John Moses Avery and his wife Lula at 312 East Umstead Street became available in 1936. The location one block east of Hillside Park High School was optimal for youth engagement. The two-story, hip-roofed, weatherboarded building was renovated the following year to create administrative and gathering areas and dormitory rooms for twelve single women. The branch increased outreach and programming after the facility's June 1937 opening, providing myriad enrichment opportunities for women and girls. The association trained community members to lead two African American Girl Scout troops in early 1938. During the same period, the North Carolina State Employment Service and the Works Progress Administration sponsored a six-week domestic skills course for young women that met daily. Graduates received job placement assistance. The Durham Red Cross

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.; Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*, 264-267; YWCA Board of Director's meeting minutes, and Harriet Tubman Branch by-laws, Executive Office Files, YWCA Papers; "Colored Branch," *DMH*, February 27, 1927, p. 7; "Harriet Tubman Branch of the YWCA," *Carolina Times* (Durham, hereafter abbreviated *CT*), February 17, 1950, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> James E. Shepard was among North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company's seven incorporators and assisted with Mechanics and Farmers Bank's establishment. In 1910, he founded the National Religious Training School and Chautauqua, a private institution that became North Carolina Central University. The Shepard House was the first of ten dwellings razed in July 1963 to launch the Durham Redevelopment Commission's urban renewal program. The commission acquired and demolished Royal Knights of King David Hall in late 1967. "First Contract," *DS*, July 12, 1963, p. B1; "First Razing," *DMH*, July 18, 1963, p. C1; "Notice," *DMH*, July 14, 1967, p. 5D.

<sup>12</sup> "Activities for Fall Season," *DMH*, September 23, 1934, p. B1; "Groups Will Meet," *DMH*, December 13, 1936, p. C1; Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*, 265-268; YWCA USA, "History," <https://www.ywca.org/who-are-we/history> (accessed July 2024).

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organized first aid classes taught by local physicians. In the summer, the branch hosted community nights with games and refreshments for neighborhood residents.<sup>13</sup>

The Durham YWCA executive committee selected Johnnie Morris Blunt of Mobile, Alabama, educated at Talladega College and Columbia and Fisk universities, to direct the Tubman branch in September 1938. Her staff included sixty-year-old widow Lillian Dodson, who lived in the house and supervised lodgers. In 1940, ten women ranging in age from nineteen to thirty-three from North and South Carolina rented rooms while working as a tobacco factory machinist and stemmer, servants in private homes, a maid in a senior housing facility, and a hospital nurse, switchboard operator, and maid. Louise R. McKinney of Oberlin, Ohio, replaced Blunt in September 1941. McKinney, an educator, held A. B. and M. A. degrees from Oberlin College and had studied at Western Reserve and Columbia universities. She was the former head of the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA in Knoxville, Tennessee.<sup>14</sup>

Along with hosting a full slate of programs, the Tubman YWCA provided a venue for community members to express solidarity and support for the military during World War II. African American women organized a Durham chapter of the American Women's Voluntary Services in November 1941 as the war intensified. The group engaged experts to teach classes in subjects such as first aid, nutrition, home nursing, motor transport, and physical fitness at the Tubman branch. In April 1942, the Student-Worker Council, an interracial group of youth that met twice monthly at the Central branch, petitioned the Fair Employment Practices Commission in Washington D. C. to investigate discrimination against Black machinists at the Wright Aeronautical Corporation in Durham. During summer 1944, the Tubman YWCA hosted a three-week "stay-at-home Victory camp" where participants recreated; collected paper, tin, and waste fat for salvage drives; and received training for work as hospital and child care aides. The branch provided temporary housing for military spouses with small children and helped them find long-term accommodations. Programs for servicemen were held at the YWCA, the African American United Services Organization (USO) club on Fayetteville Street, and the Black USO club at Camp Butner.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> James M. Avery, born in 1876, died in 1931. "Negro YWCA," *DS*, October 9, 1936, p. 2; John M. Malloy, "YWCA Holds Open House," *CT*, June 26, 1937; "Negro YWCA Plans Open House," *DS*, June 21, 1937, p. B1; "Durham's Girl Scouts," *DS*, January 28, 1938, p. 6; "Negroes Receiving Domestic Training," *DMH*, February 19, 1938, p. 12; "Negro YWCA," *DHS*, April 24, 1938, p. B5; "First Aid Classes," *DS*, October 21, 1938, p. B1; Durham County Deed Book 120, p. 351.

<sup>14</sup> Mrs. F. G. Burnett, "YWCA Notes," *CT*, August 27, 1938, p. 8; "Important Meeting," *DMH*, September 22, 1938, p. 6; "New 'Y' Secretary," *CT*, October 1, 1938, p. 1; U. S. Census, population schedule, 1940; "Executive for Negro YWCA," *DMH*, September 4, 1941, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> "Negro Women Plan Defense Training," *DS*, November 5, 1941, p.13, "FEPC Answers Miss Marian Burch's Query on Practices," *CT*, May 16, 1942, p. 4; "Influence of Negro YWCA," *DS*, October 19, 1944, p. 7; USO Council Meeting Minutes, May 18 and October 19, 1944; Executive Office Files, YWCA Papers; Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 12. Six organizations formed the United Services Organization (USO) established in 1941: the Salvation Army, YMCA, YWCA, National Catholic Community Services, National Jewish Welfare Board, and Traveler's Aid Association.



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The Tubman branch retained ownership of the Fayetteville Street property, which was leased in 1943 to the John Avery Boys' Club, an organization founded in May 1939 to address juvenile delinquency by providing boys with a recreational venue, character-building activities, and mentorship. Following its June 1940 incorporation, the club installed a boxing ring, basketball and shuffleboard courts, and game tables in the former Wonderland Theater at 418 East Pettigrew Street. On Fayetteville Street, athletics took place outdoors, while the house contained an office, library/lounge, health clinic, classroom, industrial arts shop, locker room, and game and craft rooms.<sup>16</sup> The John Avery Boys' Club and Tubman branch had similar missions: to facilitate development of academic, leadership, and teamwork skills and foster personal growth, thus empowering members to pursue higher education and realize community uplift.

Interracial tension escalated in Durham following the acquittal of white city bus driver Herman Lee Council for the July 8, 1944, murder of uniformed African American U. S. Army private Booker T. Spicely. The soldier questioned Council's direction to move from the second-to-last to the last seat in the bus, but complied. Regardless, Council shot Spicely twice as he disembarked. An all-white jury acquitted Council in September. The case reinvigorated the Durham chapter of the NAACP, which elected new officers that fall including R. Arline Young, head of the biology department at Shaw University in Raleigh. As branch secretary, she requested support from national NAACP branch director Ella Baker and youth director Ruby Hurley as the chapter attempted to attract a more diverse constituency. Young resigned her position to become a full-time employee of the Tobacco Workers International Union, recruiting Black membership and encouraging voter registration from 1945 until spring 1947. However, she continued to facilitate NAACP engagement with youth and was actively involved in myriad civil rights initiatives. After the YWCA adopted an interracial charter at its seventeenth national convention in 1946, the Durham YWCA board, pressured by Tubman branch leaders for Black representation, appointed Young its first African American director. Her role carried little responsibility. Despite persistent efforts of Black YWCA members to promote interracial collaboration, progress was incremental.<sup>17</sup>

Tubman branch enrollment grew from less than one hundred to 584 women and teenage girls between 1943 and 1950. That year, more than one thousand people participated in social clubs and educational and recreational programs and received employment counseling and short-term accommodation. Residence director Mannie Bedell oversaw nine lodgers employed as maids, beauticians, a hospital nurse, and an insurance company secretary. A canteen with games and snack bar, summer camps, and field trips attracted teenagers. Due to the dearth of space, some of the six women's clubs (one for professional and

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<sup>16</sup> "Club for Boys is Organized," *DS*, July 31, 1940, p. 11; H. C Cranford, "Club is Providing Physical and Moral Training," *DS*, January 3, 1941, p. 7; "John Avery Boys Club," *DHS*, October 24, 1943, p. C8; "Lease," March 1, 1943, Executive Office Files, YWCA Papers; "John Avery Boys Club," *CT*, February 14, 1981, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 18-24, 47.

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business women and five for industrial workers) and four of six Y-Teen clubs met elsewhere. Men and boys attended events and classes and assisted with building maintenance. Hillside High School shop students, their teachers, and other volunteers built a darkroom for the camera club and enclosed the back porch in 1948. Most of the YWCA's operating cost was funded by the Community Chest, a local philanthropic organization, with membership dues and resident and activity fees subsidizing the remaining expenses. The branch began raising money for a new building in February 1950.<sup>18</sup>

In January 1951, the Durham YWCA launched a drive to enlarge the Central branch with an east wing and construct a building for the Tubman branch on East Umstead Street east of the Avery House. The campaign's African American division chaired by R. N. Harris raised \$7,000 by the end of the month. Durham architect and engineer Howard Raymond Weeks's firm designed both buildings. Durham general contractor T. W. Poe and Sons, Inc. erected the Harriet Tubman YWCA. Funding constraints resulted in removal of the west third of the three-story, flat-roofed, redbrick Modernist building from the scope of work. Construction commenced in July 1952 and was substantially complete in May 1953 at a cost of approximately \$90,000. Dorothy Height, a prominent African American member of the national YWCA board leadership service staff, gave the keynote address at the September 27, 1953, dedication. In lectures throughout the country, she emphasized the necessity of overcoming personal bias and organizational discrimination to achieve racial parity. Tubman branch staff reported that she inspired the community to embrace the YWCA mission.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the funding shortfall that reduced the building's size, the larger facility allowed the branch to considerably increase services. The Avery House remained in use since the kitchen and meeting and dormitory rooms were still needed. The administrative staff in 1955 comprised Rupert Blanchard, executive director since 1943; three program directors; and an office manager. At that time, the branch had 1,054 members, 1,889 people participated in organized activities, and many others attended public programs. Although the Central and Tubman branches were ostensibly integrated, each continued to primarily serve white and Black residents, respectively. At the interracial Durham YWCA annual meeting in January 1954, the board affirmed the YWCA's mandate to afford all members equal status.

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<sup>18</sup> The Girl Reserves program became Y-Teens in 1946. "Report Filed By YWCA," *DS*, April 15, 1942, p. 7; "Enrollment," *DMH*, May 2, 1943, p. D3; "Influence of Negro YWCA," *DS*, October 19, 1944, p. 7; "YWCA Established 1920," *DMH*, April 26, 1953, p. 1; "Growth Shown By Tubman 'Y' Here," *DS*, September 29, 1948, p. 5; "Harriet Tubman YWCA Influencing Big Segment of Negro Population Here," *DMH*, October 1, 1950, p. 6; "Harriet Tubman Branch of the YWCA," *CT*, February 17, 1950, p. 6; U. S. Census, population schedule, 1950.

<sup>19</sup> The Harriet Tubman YWCA and the Avery House occupied the same parcel and thus shared the 312 East Umstead Street address. "YWCA Building Completion Drive," *DMH*, January 7, 1951, p. 6; "Early Negro Gifts," *DMH*, January 27, 1951, p. 3; "YWCA Officials Open Bids," *DMH*, June 20, 1952, Section 3, p. 1; "Harriet Tubman Branch YWCA," *DMH*, April 26, 1953, p. 2; "YWCA Facilities to Be Inspected," *DS*, May 19, 1953, p. 1; "YWCA Building To Be Dedicated Tomorrow Afternoon," *DMH*, September 26, 1953, Section 2, p. 8; "New Building at Durham YWCA To Be Dedicated," *CT*, September 26, 1953, pp. 1 and 8; 1954 Annual Meeting report, Executive Office Files, YWCA Papers; Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 47.

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Administrative amalgamation was ongoing. Tubman branch trustees transferred title of 312 East Umstead Street and 508 Fayetteville Street to the Durham YWCA in October 1954. Josephine Clement and North Carolina College dean of women Louise Latham became the first elected African American members of the Durham YWCA board in 1955 but were given nominal responsibilities.<sup>20</sup>

The new Tubman branch building accommodated expanded programming. Youth attended after-school academic, social, and cultural enrichment programs often led by North Carolina College students. Dance classes, sock-hops, and a drama club that presented plays for the public were particularly popular. Along with YWCA programming, the basement recreation room was regularly used for meetings and events by civic groups such as the Durham United Fund, Volkamenia Literary Society, Lincoln Hospital Women's Auxiliary Club, DeShazor Beauty School alumnae, Year Round Garden Club, Daughters of Dorcas, and chapters of the National Council of Negro Women and National Housewives League. YWCA staff and volunteers worked from offices on the first floor, which included the reception desk and a large lobby where members and residents often gathered. Rooms on the second and third floors and in the Avery House were filled to capacity with young working women and college students who paid nominal rent for furnished double-occupancy rooms. Breakfast and dinner prepared and served in the house were available at minimal cost to residents. YWCA staff also provided meals for regularly held lunch meetings and other gatherings. Virginia L. Williams, who lived at the Tubman branch for twenty-two years, remembers a skilled cook from Savannah, Georgia, whose exceptional rolls were ordered by neighbors for Sunday meals. On Thursday "family" nights, Black professionals and civic leaders dined with residents. The \$2.40 meal was considered a bargain. Since laundry facilities were minimal, most young women used a local laundromat. Myriad businesses, churches, schools, and recreational venues were within walking distance.<sup>21</sup>

As civil rights activism intensified in the late 1950s, Tubman YWCA members were among those who employed coordinated civil disobedience and legal action in myriad campaigns against racial, political, economic, and social injustice. Organizational meetings and rallies were typically held at Black churches. At marches and sit-ins, protestors demanded desegregation of the City's departments, programs, and venues including hospitals, schools, libraries, recreational facilities, and privately-owned concerns such as

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<sup>20</sup> The John Avery Boys' Club operated from the house at 508 Fayetteville Street house until the October 1959 completion of a larger facility at 506 Branch Street. Charles A. Ray, "YW Harriet Tubman Unit's Work Affects Many," *DMH*, July 24, 1955, p. 8; "Title to Negro YWCA," *DS*, January 24, 1956, p. B1; "New Boys Club To Be Opened," *DMH*, October 23, 1959, p. C3; Resolution regarding property conveyance, October 8, 1954, Executive Office Files, YWCA Papers; "John Avery Boys Club," *CT*, February 14, 1981, p. 2; Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 48.

<sup>21</sup> Finishing and furnishing the Tubman branch continued during the late 1950s. Community members subsidized the 1956 installation of a black-and-white checkerboard-patterned linoleum floor in the basement recreation room. Harriet Tubman Branch YWCA, "Explanation of 1954 Budget," YWCA vertical file, North Carolina Collection, Durham County Library, Durham; "Harriet Tubman YWCA," *DS*, October 1, 1958, p. C8; Ed McDonald, "'Mr., Mrs. Durham Tour Harriet Tubman 'Y. W.'," *DS*, September 9, 1959, p. C6; Bob Aldridge, "United Fund Supports Harriet Tubman 'Y'," *DMH*, September 22, 1961, p. C12; Virginia Williams, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, January 5, 2024.

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stores, restaurants, and hotels/motels. Local government agencies, business owners, and service providers were pressed to integrate facilities and hire African American workers. Youth played an important role in demonstrations since adults feared economic and social retaliation. Six young people including YWCA residents Virginia L. Williams and Mary E. Clyburn and their friend Vivian E. Jones were arrested during a June 23, 1957, sit-in at the Royal Ice Cream Company parlor.<sup>22</sup>

Virginia Williams's move to Durham in 1956 from the rural Northampton County community Seaboard was inspired by a visit organized by her high school to learn about opportunities at North Carolina College, Lincoln Hospital, and Black-owned businesses. Monroe, North Carolina, native Mary Clyburn, a fellow Duke Hospital food services employee, told her about accommodations at the YWCA. Although residency was typically restricted to short-term stays for young women aged nineteen and older, Clyburn had lived there since she was thirteen, initially working in the kitchen before and after school to earn room and board. Vivian Jones, a Durham native, who resided with her family nearby on Price Street, was a frequent visitor. The three women were heading to Fayetteville Street on a Sunday afternoon in May 1957 when they encountered a contingent of Black male activists known as "ACT" arriving at the YWCA for a meeting. The group led by Southeastern Business College president David W. Stith and Asbury Temple Methodist Church pastor Douglas E. Moore (a Boston University School of Theology classmate of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) regularly gathered at the church and YWCA to plan nonviolent challenges to Jim Crow laws. Clyburn, Jones, and Williams were invited to join the discussion of possible protest sites including Royal Ice Cream, selected because Black patrons were forced to enter through the back door and place only take-out orders despite its location at the corner of Dowd and Roxboro streets in proximity to a predominantly African American neighborhood.<sup>23</sup>

On June 23, 1957, Reverend Moore, Clyburn, Jones, Williams, Claude Glenn, Jesse Gray, and Melvin Willis occupied white-only booths at Royal Ice Cream and attempted to order desserts. They were arrested, charged with trespassing, and each fined ten dollars. The NAACP engaged Black Durham attorney William A. Marsh Jr. to represent them. After an all-white jury found the defendants guilty, the judge increased the fines to twenty-five dollars each and court costs. A legal defense team including Marsh, NAACP lawyers Conrad O. Pearson and M. Hugh Thompson, and Black Durham lawyer and civil

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<sup>22</sup> Michael Biesecker, "1957 sit-in began a life of activism," *News and Observer* (Raleigh), February 21, 2010, pp. B1 and B5.

<sup>23</sup> Southeastern Business College, established by David W. Stith in 1956, held classes in the Scarborough Building on Pettigrew Street until purchasing and renovating a two-story building at 603 South Alston Avenue and erecting an adjacent classroom building in 1963. Ibid.; "Durham Group Fined on Trespass Charge," *The Carolinian* (Raleigh), June 29, 1957, pp. 1-2; Jon Phelps, "SBC-Watchword is Growth," DMH, October 27, 1963, p10D; Virginia Williams, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, January 5, 2024; Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 65-68; City of Durham Neighborhood Improvement Services Department, Community Engagement Division, "Our Community Stories: Harriet Tubman YWCA," recording of March 25, 2022, interview with twenty-year-old Harriet Tubman YWCA resident Virginia Williams; North Carolina Museum of History, "Durham Royal Ice Cream Sit-In," recording of June 23, 2022, interview with Virginia Williams and Mary Clyburn Hooks; Matthew E. Milliken, "Civil Rights History Marked," *DHS*, June 23, 2008, pp. 1 and 5.

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rights activist Floyd B. McKissick unsuccessfully appealed the verdict at the Durham County Superior Court and North Carolina Supreme Court. The case precipitated protests throughout the state. In Durham, immediate reaction from both Black and white citizens was negative. Many African Americans felt Reverend Moore should have consulted with community leaders before the sit-in and the young people were troublemakers. However, the demonstration was a model for subsequent nonviolent racial discrimination challenges including the February 1, 1960, lunch-counter sit-in at the F. W. Woolworth Company store at 132 South Elm Street in Greensboro that launched six months of such protests in the city. Although regularly held pickets and boycotts of Royal Ice Cream resulted in its ostensible desegregation in March 1963, true integration was not achieved since Black and white patrons were not permitted to eat together. Rather, dining room service was discontinued and all customers ordered food to-go at the counter. Thus, demonstrations continued.<sup>24</sup>

Virginia Williams participated in local activism as well as pivotal events including the August 28, 1963, March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, during which Dr. King, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee chairman John Lewis, and others addressed approximately two-hundred-fifty-thousand supporters from the Lincoln Memorial in the nation's capital. She was deeply moved by Dr. King's inspirational "I Have a Dream" speech.<sup>25</sup> Reverend Moore and Floyd McKissick promoted Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Congress of Racial Equality's (CORE), and NAACP initiatives to attain equal rights through peaceful demonstrations, voter registration, and legislative change. Such nonviolent direct action led to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act and hastened implementation of the legislation. Activism subsequently focused on empowering Black citizens and electing representatives to local, state, and national offices who would advocate for civil rights. McKissick became the CORE's national director on January 3, 1966.<sup>26</sup>

Tubman branch membership burgeoned during the 1960s as the YWCA continued to provide support services and serve as a community gathering place. To ameliorate spatial constraints, the Tubman branch leased the residence at 310 Umstead Street (west of the Avery House) from Traugott H. and Nannie J. Lash of Salisbury and refurbished it to provide additional living quarters for young women, a kitchen, and

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.; George Lougee, "Royal Ice Cream," *DMH*, March 15, 1968, p. C-12. After being denied admission to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's law school, Floyd B. McKissick, represented by NAACP lawyer Thurgood Marshall, won a lawsuit in 1951 that permitted his enrollment. Although McKissick earned a law degree from North Carolina Central College that spring, he and two other Black students took law courses at UNC-CH during summer 1951. "Floyd Bixler McKissick," The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford University, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/mckissick-floyd-bixler> (accessed January 2024).

<sup>25</sup> Biesecker, "1957 sit-in began a life of activism," *News and Observer*, February 21, 2010, p. B5; National Park Service, "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom," <https://www.nps.gov/articles/march-on-washington.htm> (accessed in December 2023).

<sup>26</sup> "Floyd Bixler McKissick," The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford University, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/mckissick-floyd-bixler> (accessed January 2024).

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dining and living rooms. The Avery House, which had served the same purpose, was in such poor condition that it was demolished in late 1961.<sup>27</sup>

Residence director Bertha Edwards and teenage program director Barbara M. Buirl joined the Tubman branch staff in 1962. Adult program director Nezzie C. Carter oversaw events, classes, meetings, and camps, approximately half of which occurred at locations throughout the city rather than at the branch. Administrative staff included office manager Mary B. Hudson, cook Bertha Jones, and janitor Henderson Lee. Bridgeport, Connecticut, native Marie Clarke Torian, who resided in Hillsborough, replaced executive director Rupert Blanchard in 1966. Torian was a graduate of the University of Bridgeport (B. A.) and Hartford Seminary Foundation (M. A.) and studied social work at the University of Connecticut in Hartford. She had been student union program director and job placement officer at Bennett College in Greensboro since 1963. Her previous employment included serving as teenage and young adult program director at Philadelphia and Wilmington, Delaware YWCAs.<sup>28</sup>

Marie Torian reported that 2,451 individuals (1,596 of whom were members) registered at the Tubman branch during the 1965-1966 fiscal year. Although most nonmember registrants were women and girls, 294 men and boys also joined activities. Total attendance was far greater, with 8,390 participants in forty-three programs and 1,385 people at seventeen special events held both at the YWCA and in schools, recreation centers, private homes, and other venues. Adults took classes in practical skills, public affairs, and creative arts and gathered for international council, bible study group, and matrons, homemakers, and young adult club meetings. Children and Y-Teens received dance, music, art, and foreign language instruction after school and during summer breaks. Summer camp at Reedy Creek State Park (now Umstead State Park) in neighboring Wake County included a two-week overnight session for girls and day programs for both genders. Forty-three women between the ages of eighteen and fifty-nine resided in rooms at the YWCA or in the adjacent leased house. Seven full-time and six part-time female staff recruited 377 volunteers to assist with the facility's operation and outreach. Although annual membership

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<sup>27</sup> The dwelling at 310 Umstead Street was known as the James House since it was previously occupied by pharmacist Sidney Taylor James (1875-1956), his wife Julia E. Miles (1877-1939), and their children including daughter Nannie, who married grocer Traugott H. Lash in 1935. The couple resided in Salisbury. Dr. James was the proprietor of Bull City Drug Store. The business established by John Merrick and five other investors in 1908 was initially located in the North Carolina Mutual block of Parrish Street. The satellite store was at 610 Fayetteville Street. After Dr. James died, his children inherited the property. Contractor J. D. Porter executed the 1961 repair work. The house at 310 Umstead Street was replaced with a two-story, front-gable-roofed, vinyl-sided house in 2004. U. S. Census, population schedules, 1940 and 1950; "Dr. Sidney T. James," *DMH*, March 11, 1956, p. 4; "Little by Little," *DMH*, July 23, 1956, p. B1; "James House Lease" folder and Board of Director's meeting minutes, February 2, March 23, April 27, November 30, 1961, Executive Office Files, YWCA Papers; YWCA Brochure, 1964, YWCA vertical file, North Carolina Collection, Durham County Library, Durham.

<sup>28</sup> Harriet Tubman Branch, "39<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting program," January 14, 1962, Executive Office Files, YWCA Papers; "New YWCA Staffers," *CT*, October 27, 1962, p. 4B; "Annual Report Made," *CT*, January 19, 1963, p. 7; "YWCA Branch Names New Executive Director," *DMH*, September 27, 1966, p. 6; *Hill's Durham City Directories* (Richmond, V. A.: Hill Directory Company, Inc., 1960s).

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fees—\$3.00 for adults and \$1.00 for youth up to age seventeen—and resident room and board payments generated some income, the United Fund of Durham continued to subsidize the majority of the branch's operating cost.<sup>29</sup>

The institution's significant role in community life is evidenced by the successful drive to raise \$75,000 to construct a one-story addition with a kitchen and dining room and improvements to the 1953 building. The campaign, chaired by African American educator Dr. Rose Butler Browne and white philanthropist Mary Duke Biddle Trent Semans, both civil rights activists, began in February 1967.<sup>30</sup> The groundbreaking ceremony was held in October 1968. Former executive director Rupert Blanchard gave the keynote address at the May 18, 1969, dedication of the renovated and enlarged facility. The wing greatly facilitated YWCA programming. Due to diminished demand for residential space, operation of the branch residence was gradually phased out and the second-floor tenant rooms were converted to offices beginning in July 1971. Third-floor rooms remained occupied by five women including the catering supervisor. Tenant meals were discontinued but food service remained available for groups.<sup>31</sup>

The Tubman YWCA was regularly used by a wide variety of organizations promoting health, wage equity, and civil rights. The Durham chapter of Jack and Jill of America, a non-profit corporation established in 1938 to provide social, cultural, and educational opportunities for African American youth, held monthly meetings. Low-cost hot meals were offered to senior citizens during the mid-1970s. As the lesbian population grew in size and visibility, groups including the Triangle Area Lesbian Feminists (TALF) met at the branch. The Duke Workers Organizing Committee, which attempted to unionize Duke University employees, gathered for meetings. Women in Community Service, sponsored by Church

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<sup>29</sup> "Harriet Tubman Branch, Durham YWCA," 1965-1966 Annual Report, 1967 Camp Whispering Pines application, and 1968 membership brochure, Executive Office Files, YWCA Papers.

<sup>30</sup> Dr. Rose Butler Browne chaired the North Carolina College Department of Education from 1948 until moving to Boston in 1963. She was the first black female graduate of Rhode Island College (now the University of Rhode Island) and in 1939 became the first black woman awarded a doctorate in education by Harvard University. Her husband Reverend Emmett T. Browne Sr. was the pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Durham. Mary Duke Biddle Trent Semans, Benjamin N. Duke's granddaughter, was the first female Durham City Council member (1951), mayor pro-tem (1953-1955) and trustee of myriad institutions and foundations including the Duke Endowment. After the death of her first husband Josiah Trent, Duke Hospital's chief of thoracic surgery, she married Duke University surgeon and urologist James H. Semans. Both women advocated for equitable education, employment, health care, housing, and cultural enrichment opportunities. Michael Hill, Research Branch, NC Office of Archives and History, "Rose Butler Browne," *NCpedia*, 2013, <https://www.ncpedia.org/browne-rose-butler> (accessed December 2023); "Mary Duke Biddle Trent Semans," *Charlotte Observer*, January 27, 2012, p. B7.

<sup>31</sup> The architect and builder of the 1969 addition have not been identified. The branch vacated the leased house at 310 Umstead Street upon completion of the 1969 addition. Durham County Deed Book 349, p. 567; "Tubman YWCA Unit Begins \$75,000 Drive," *DS*, February 17, 1967, p. 14; "Tubman Branch of YWCA Launches \$75,000 Drive," *DMH*, February 17, 1967, p. C1; "Drive for Funds," *DMH*, June 1, 1967, p. C14; "Calendar of the Week," *DS*, October 8, 1968, p. 7; "Theater Party Set by Chapter," *DS*, March 7, 1969, p.6A; "YWCA Unit Schedules Dedication," *DS*, May 17, 1969, p. 3; "James House Lease" and "Harriet Tubman YWCA folders," Executive Office Files, YWCA Papers.

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Women United of Durham, opened an office in 1975 to assist with applications to the U. S. Department of Labor's Job Corps program, which trained sixteen- to twenty-year-old girls in fields ranging from electronics to health services and cosmetology. Women received counseling, pregnancy screening, and doctor referrals at the Durham Women's Health Cooperative and Durham Rape Crisis Center offices. The YWCA Coalition for Battered Women hosted community forums.<sup>32</sup>

Budget deficits and the inability to make necessary building repairs hindered the function of both Durham YWCA branches. In August 1976, the organization announced plans to sell the Central branch's West Chapel Hill Street building and consolidate operations at the Harriet Tubman branch until a suitable joint facility location was identified. The Central branch closed on November 1, 1976. The Tubman branch functioned as the Durham YWCA until December 7, 1978, when the organization moved into the two-story, hip-roofed, brick 1913 residence at 809 Proctor Street built for Judge Howard Alexander Foushee and his wife Annie Leak Wall that had been occupied since 1961 by the Durham Arts Council.<sup>33</sup>

## *Post YWCA Ownership*

The Durham YWCA conveyed the vacant Umstead Street property to the United Holy Church of America in December 1979. During the 1980s, the building served as the Western District of the United Holy Church of America's headquarters and groups such as the Durham section of the National Council of Negro Women held regular meetings, seminars, and events there. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference's 1983 membership drive to reconstitute the Durham chapter of the civil rights organization and subsequent meetings also occurred there. Trustees of Fisher Memorial Tabernacle of the United Holy Church of America sold the building to Haskell Properties, Inc., in December 1989. Tenants remained in upper-floor apartments until the early 1990s. Lanette's Child Care Center owned by Lillian Lanette Carrington occupied the first floor from 1990 until circa 2010. The building has been vacant since Marvenia Page purchased it from Haskell Properties in October 2010. She sold it to Vimakima, Inc. in July 2018. Reinvestment Partners, the high bidder during foreclosure proceedings, took possession in September 2019 and retains ownership today.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> "Elderly Persons To Get Meals," *DS*, December 20, 1973, p. 3A; "Durham Area Girls Accepted in Job Corps," *CT*, November 29, 1975, p. 5; "Duke Workers Plan Meeting," *DS*, March 14, 1978, p. 8; YWCA Board of Director's meeting minutes, October 25, 1973, Executive Office Files, YWCA Papers.

<sup>33</sup> The Durham Arts Council moved to the 1906 Central High School and City Hall building at 120 Morris Street in downtown Durham. "Community Planning Services Special Study Report," July 8, 1976, Executive Office Files, YWCA Papers; "Durham YWCA," *DMH*, January 25, 1977, p. 6; Barry Jacobs, "The Y's Woman," *The Anvil*, February 10, 1977; Ven Carver, "Central YWCA Blamed for Financial Woes," *DMH*, August 23, 1976, p. B1; "YWCA to Move," *DS*, December 4, 1978, p. 7; "Sun Dial," *DS*, December 7, 1978, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> "Area Churches," *DS*, December 3, 1983, p. 6; Deed Book 1021, p. 41; Deed Book 1426, p. 866; Deed Book 1564, p. 618; Deed Book 6583, p. 986; Deed Book 6584, p. 902; Deed Book 8462, p. 849; Deed Book 8753, p. 153; *Hill's Durham City Directories* (Richmond, V. A.: Hill Directory Company, Inc., 1980s).



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## Criterion C Architecture Context

### *Modern Architecture*

Modern architecture, in addition to being a predominant mid-twentieth-century design aesthetic, proved to be an affordable option in many contexts. Modernist principles such as simplicity, efficiency, affordability, and intrinsic material expression were inherently applicable to buildings that display a functionalist approach in their form, horizontal massing, articulated structures, spare detailing, and fenestration dictated by spatial use rather than symmetry. The availability of new building materials and technology allowed for structures that employ concrete, steel, and glass in innovative ways. Curtain walls containing large steel- or aluminum-frame windows replaced traditional load-bearing walls and facilitated visual connectivity between interior and exterior spaces. Such design provides large, well-ventilated, and amply lit rooms. Steel and precast-, formed-, and slab-concrete structural systems, often exposed on the exterior and interior, allow for expansive, open spaces. Concrete, terrazzo, and ceramic-tile floor and wall surfaces in a wide variety of colors, textures, patterns, and finishes are durable and easily maintained. Concrete block was often a less expensive alternative for structural walls than brick. Decorative concrete block serves myriad functions including indoor and outdoor screens and open walls.

Modernist architectural styles convey a sense of prosperity and innovation. Architects were inspired by the early-twentieth-century Italian Futurist movement, which completely rejected historical precedents and celebrated the era's progress, utilizing stucco, structural glass, glass block, porcelain-enameled steel, and anodized aluminum to embody a machine aesthetic. The resulting architectural style, known as Art Moderne, reflects the speed, energy, and power of automobiles, trains, steamships, and factories in buildings with horizontal massing, asymmetrical facades, curved corners, banding, and flat roofs.<sup>35</sup>

Such elements were well-represented in the contemporary architecture exhibit in 1932 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which exposed the American public to Modernist architectural tenets. The exhibit catalog, authored by art historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr. and architect Philip Johnson, identified principles of modern architecture that were henceforth used to describe buildings constructed in what was called the International Style given its European genesis and subsequent diffusion throughout the world. They profiled the movement's leading architects Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe of Germany, Le Corbusier of France, and J. J. P. Oud of Holland, and explored the characteristics of their work.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2001), 227-228; Peter Gossel and Gabriele Leuthauser, *Architecture in the Twentieth Century* (Köln, Slovenia: Taschen, 2001), 319.

<sup>36</sup> Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr. and Philip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture since 1922* (New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 1932), 20.

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Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe were among the European architects and designers who emigrated to the United States beginning in the late 1930s and espoused Modernist principles to a new audience. Gropius, the highly influential founder of the German design school known as the Bauhaus, began teaching at Harvard's Graduate School of Design and used his personal residence in Lincoln, Massachusetts, erected in 1937, to promote the central tenets of Bauhaus philosophy—maximum efficiency and simplicity of design. The house was revolutionary at the time, as it combined traditional building materials including wood, brick, and fieldstone with streamlined modern elements rarely employed in residential construction such as glass block, acoustical plaster, and chrome banisters. Gropius employed long rectangular forms, horizontal massing, flat roofs, and sleek surfaces to create a streamlined modern aesthetic in commissions such as his 1949 design for the Harvard Graduate Center, undertaken with The Architects' Collaborative. The eight multi-story, flat-roofed, concrete and steel residential buildings exhibit modern materials such as concrete sheathing panels, taupe brick veneer, aluminum-frame curtain walls, and bands of aluminum-frame windows as central design components. Inset entrances and cantilevered upper stories add visual interest and shelter entrances.<sup>37</sup> Despite the efforts of Gropius and others to “soften” the International Style through the use of natural materials, it proved more popular in commercial, institutional, and educational rather than residential applications in the United States, as flat roofs, sleek surfaces, and angular lines were often perceived as being impersonal and harsh.

Near Asheville, North Carolina, Bauhaus painter Josef Albers's experimental Black Mountain College also promoted Modernist concepts during the 1930s and 1940s. Walter Gropius, R. Buckminster Fuller, and other influential architects and artists provided instruction at the secluded institution. Gropius and Marcel Breuer's 1939 design for the campus encompassed a series of white concrete International Style buildings arranged on the banks of Lake Eden. Although the master plan proved to be too expensive to execute, architect A. Lawrence Kocher incorporated elements of the concept into the 1941 Studies Building, which featured a central lobby and four radiating wings of various sizes. However, only one two-story, flat-roofed, rectangular wing was executed.<sup>38</sup>

It was not until 1948 that a public North Carolina institution of higher learning fully embraced Modernist teachings. That year, North Carolina State College (NCSC) in Raleigh hired University of Oklahoma architecture professor Henry Kamphoefner, who recruited George Matsumoto, James Walter Fitzgibbon, Edward W. Waugh, and other University of Oklahoma faculty to help him establish the NCSC School of

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<sup>37</sup> Gropius's streamlined designs for the 1911 Fagus Factory and 1926 Bauhaus School in Germany, which feature steel-frame curtain walls, were internationally influential. He designed his Massachusetts house in collaboration with Marcel Breuer, his former student and Harvard School of Design colleague. Hitchcock Jr. and Johnson, *The International Style*, 20; Historic New England, “Gropius House,” <https://www.historicnewengland.org/property/gropius-house/> (accessed in October 2023).

<sup>38</sup> Page Pless, “Black Mountain College Historic District,” National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1982; Paul Venable Turner, *Campus: An American Planning Tradition* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), 257.

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Design. The men, all strong proponents of Modernism, employed the style in commercial, educational, industrial, religious, and residential commissions throughout the state. The design school's collaboration included a partnership with North Carolina's Office of School Construction that involved developing design standards and advocating contemporary architecture at workshops for local officials and architects in 1949 and 1950. School of Design professors and visiting lecturers such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, and Mies van der Rohe had a significant impact on North Carolina's mid-century built environment, both through the buildings they designed and the students they trained. Many of the program's graduates established firms that perpetuated the Modernist aesthetic for decades.<sup>39</sup>

## *Mid-twentieth-century Modern Architecture in Durham's Hayti Community*

From the late 1940s through the 1970s, commercial, educational, and institutional buildings tended to incorporate elements of the Modernist style, reflecting the era's progressive thinking and optimism in the use of new materials, construction techniques, and spatial arrangements. These structures display sleek lines, smooth facades, and the aluminum-framed windows, doors, and curtain walls that characterize the modern design aesthetic. Materials including structural and spandrel glass, glass block, porcelain-enameled steel, anodized aluminum, natural and cast stone, wood, cast concrete, and long, thin Roman brick were used to embellish buildings throughout the nation during this period.

The two-story-on-basement, flat-roofed, yellow-brick, 1948 medical office building at 1111 Fayetteville Street (Stokesdale NR Historic District 2010) embodies the African American community's mid-twentieth-century embrace of Modern architecture. The building was erected to house the practices of Black physicians Leroy R. Swift and Robert P. Randolph.<sup>40</sup> The distinctive Art Moderne-style structure at the northeast corner of Fayetteville and Umstead streets, two blocks east of the Harriet Tubman YWCA, features a canted corner entrance and two auxiliary entrances topped with flat metal canopies. Original opaque-glass-block windows, a three-section plate-glass window installed around 2010, and one-over-one vinyl replacement sash light the interior. Slightly projecting header belt courses provide horizontal emphasis. Above the façade's first story, a terrace with a brick railing wraps around a flat-roofed sunroom with deep eaves that initially sheltered a full-width band of windows. The openings have been filled with wood panels and one-over-one vinyl sash at the corners.

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<sup>39</sup> Edward Waugh and Elizabeth Waugh, *The South Builds: New Architecture in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1960), preface, 8; David R. Black, "Early Modern Architecture in Raleigh Associated with the Faculty of the North Carolina State University School of Design, Raleigh, North Carolina," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1994, E15-16.

<sup>40</sup> Dr. Swift, a New York native, organized and directed the Student Health Center at North Carolina College (now North Carolina Central University) and was assistant chief of surgery and gynecology at Lincoln Hospital. In May 1951, the Howard-educated physician became the first Black doctor practicing in the South to be certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology. *Hill's Durham City Directory* (Richmond, V. A.: Hill Directory Company, Inc., 1948); "Dr. Leroy Swift," *DMH*, June 3, 1951, p. 7; "Lincoln Surgeon Named President of Medical Group," *DMH*, October 9, 1955, p. 7.

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The Harriet Tubman YWCA designed by Durham architect and engineer Howard Raymond Weeks is more austere, reflecting budgetary constraints. The building characterized by angular form and horizontal massing epitomizes the functional Modernism prevalent during the mid-twentieth century. The three-story, flat-roofed, redbrick, 1953 main block and one-story, flat-roofed, redbrick 1969 addition were designed in an economical manner that allowed for rapid construction, flexible use, ease of maintenance, and future expansion. Large metal-frame windows enhance visual connectivity between interior and exterior spaces and provide ample ventilation and light. The original finishes—plastered or painted brick, terra-cotta and concrete-block walls; plaster and acoustical-tile ceilings; terrazzo and quarry, ceramic, and vinyl-composition tile floors; and flat-board door and window surrounds and baseboards and corridor chair rails with a dark lacquered finish—withstood heavy use.

The Durham architecture firm Hackney and Knott employed a similar approach in their design for the flat-roofed, redbrick, Modernist, 1955 addition to the Classical Revival-style two-story-on-basement, redbrick, 1922 Hillside Park High School (then James A. Whitted Elementary School) located one block west of the YWCA. The addition encompasses a three-story T-shaped classroom block and one-story-on-basement gymnasium. As at the YWCA, the austere structure is enlivened by cast-stone coping and cast-stone surrounds framing bands of large steel-frame multi-pane windows with hoppers. The wing manifested the Durham City Board of Education's efforts to "equalize" rather than integrate its Black and white campuses.<sup>41</sup> The complex was listed in the National Register in 2013 and renovated and expanded in 2016 to house Whitted School, a preschool, and Veranda at Whitted, seventy-nine affordable senior apartments.

Other comparable Modernist buildings in the neighborhood are no longer extant. The two-hundred-unit Fayetteville Street public housing complex designed by the Durham architecture firm John D. Latimer and Associates for the Durham Housing Authority was demolished in 2009. The two-story, redbrick, low-gable-roofed buildings erected in 1966 and 1967 were distinguished by paired one-over-one sash windows with colorful spandrels framed by cast-stone surrounds. A projecting cast-stone belt course topped the first-story windows and inset entrance porches supported by cast-stone columns. The complex, which spanned nineteen acres bounded by Fayetteville Street to the west, Umstead Street to the south, and the Durham Freeway to the east and north, replaced blocks of residences and businesses.<sup>42</sup> The 1948 medical office building at 1111 Fayetteville Street is at the site's southwest corner.

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<sup>41</sup> "Whitted School Addition," *DS*, March 26, 1955, p. 3; Jennifer F. Martin, "Hillside Park High School," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2013; Clarence E. Whitefield, "Durham's Schools," *DMH*, July 31, 1949, Sec. 4, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> "First Families Ready," *DMH*, December 17, 1966, p. B1. The complex was renamed Fayette Place in the early 2000s when the Durham Housing Authority commenced planning for the property's renovation.

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## **Additional Context: Howard Raymond Weeks (1901-1956)**

Architect and engineer Howard Raymond Weeks, a Palmyra, Missouri, native, attended Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, for one year prior to undertaking architecture studies at the Georgia School of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia. After completing his degree in 1923, he briefly worked as a draftsman for architects Robert and Company in Atlanta before accepting a similar position at Atwood and Nash, Inc., in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. When he became a partner in 1930, the firm incorporated as Atwood and Weeks. His early commissions included assisting with the designs of the United States Post Office in Durham and Raleigh Memorial Auditorium. In December 1937, Winston-Salem architects Leet A. O'Brien and Willard C. Northup sponsored Weeks's successful application for membership in the American Institute of Architects. Weeks operated a Durham firm from 1942 until his death in 1956. His oeuvre included educational, residential, commercial, and institutional buildings across North Carolina, executed in architectural styles ranging from classical to Modernist.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> "Howard Raymond Weeks," AIA membership file and correspondence, 1937-1938, AIA Archives, Washington, D. C.; "Howard Raymond Weeks," death certificate; "Weeks Rites Slated Today in Durham," *Greensboro News*, October 29, 1956.

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## Section 10. Geographical Data

Latitude: 35.982644 Longitude: -78.900536

## Verbal Boundary Description

The 0.54-acre National Register boundary encompasses the 0.54-acre Durham County tax parcel 0821-92-4522 as indicated by the heavy line on the enclosed map. Scale: one inch equals approximately forty feet

## Boundary Justification

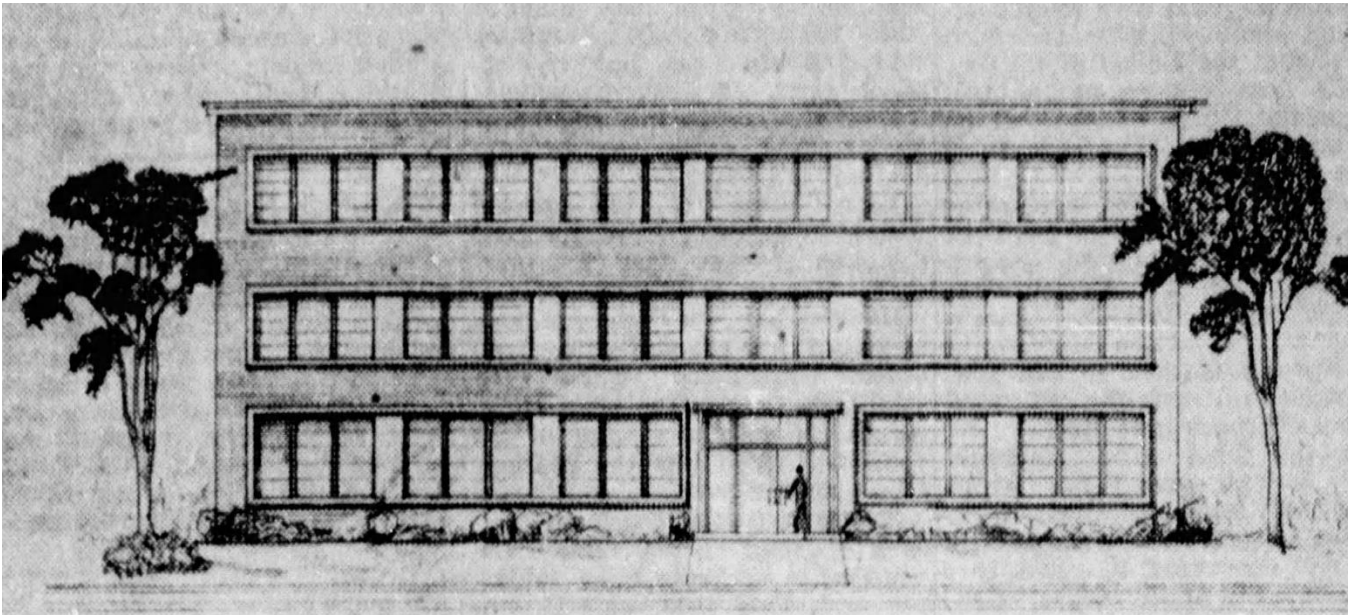
The nominated tract encompassed the acreage historically associated with the Harriet Tubman YWCA. The surrounding area contains a mix of residences, businesses, churches, schools, recreational venues, and institutional buildings.

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## Additional Documentation: Historic Images



**Exhibit A. Harriet Tubman YWCA, rendering of north elevation by architect and engineer Howard Raymond Weeks's firm**  
"YWCA Building Completion Drive," *Durham Morning Herald*, January 7, 1951, p. 6

## Current Photographs

All photographs by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc., 3334 Nottingham Road, Winston-Salem, NC, on August 29, 2023. Digital images located at the North Carolina SHPO.

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1. North elevation (above) and 2. South elevation (below)



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3. Northeast oblique

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4. Basement recreation room, looking east (above) and 5. Lobby, looking north (below)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Durham County, NC



**6. First floor, looking east from lobby (above) and  
7. Community/dining room in 1969 addition looking south (below)**



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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8. Kitchen in 1969 addition, looking east

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**9. Second floor corridor, looking west**



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Durham County, NC



10. Second floor, northeast room, south wall (above) and 11. North wall (below)

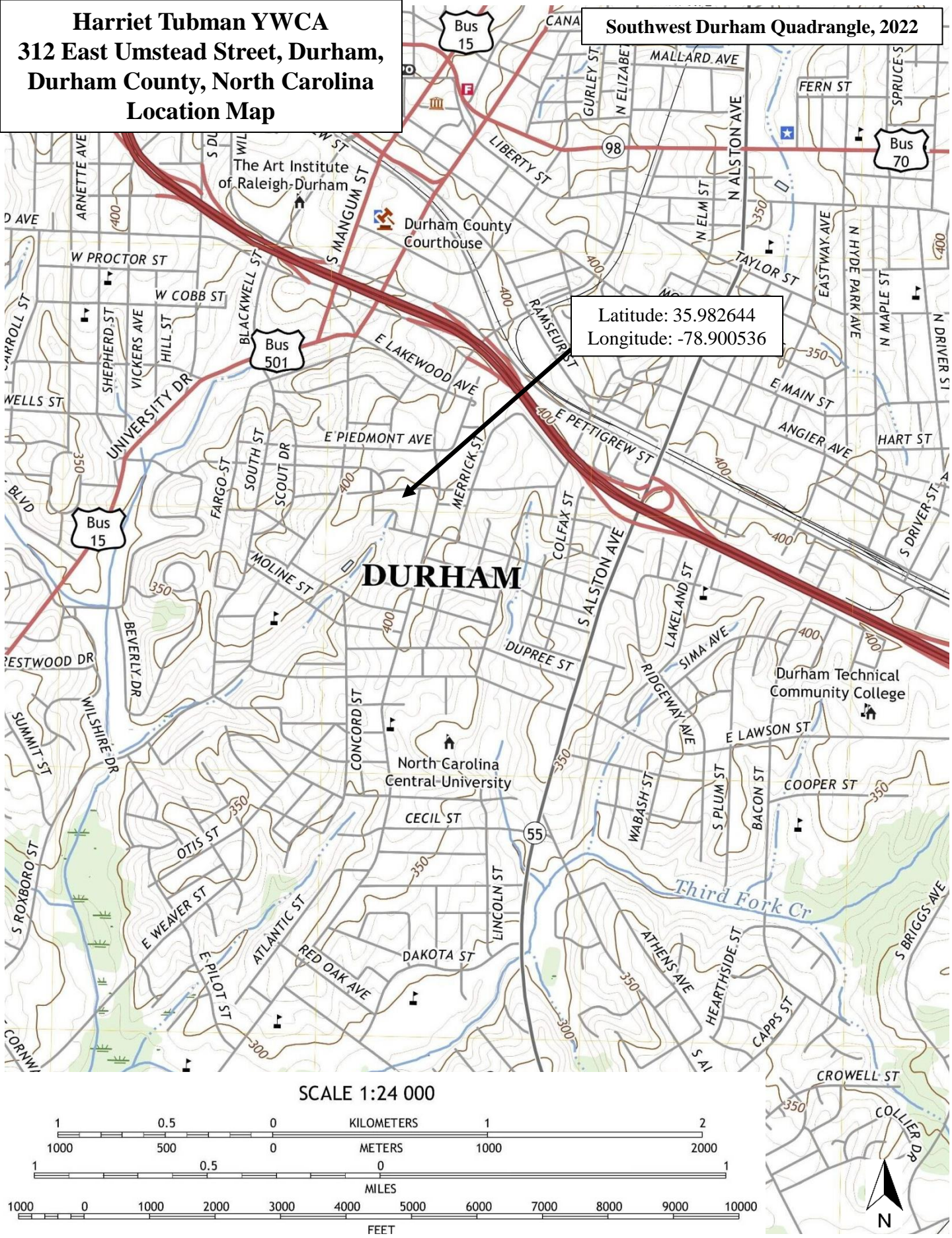


# Harriet Tubman YWCA

312 East Umstead Street, Durham,  
Durham County, North Carolina

## Location Map

Southwest Durham Quadrangle, 2022



**Harriet Tubman YWCA**  
**312 East Umstead Street, Durham**  
**Durham County, North Carolina**  
**National Register Boundary Map**



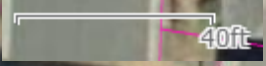
East Umstead Street

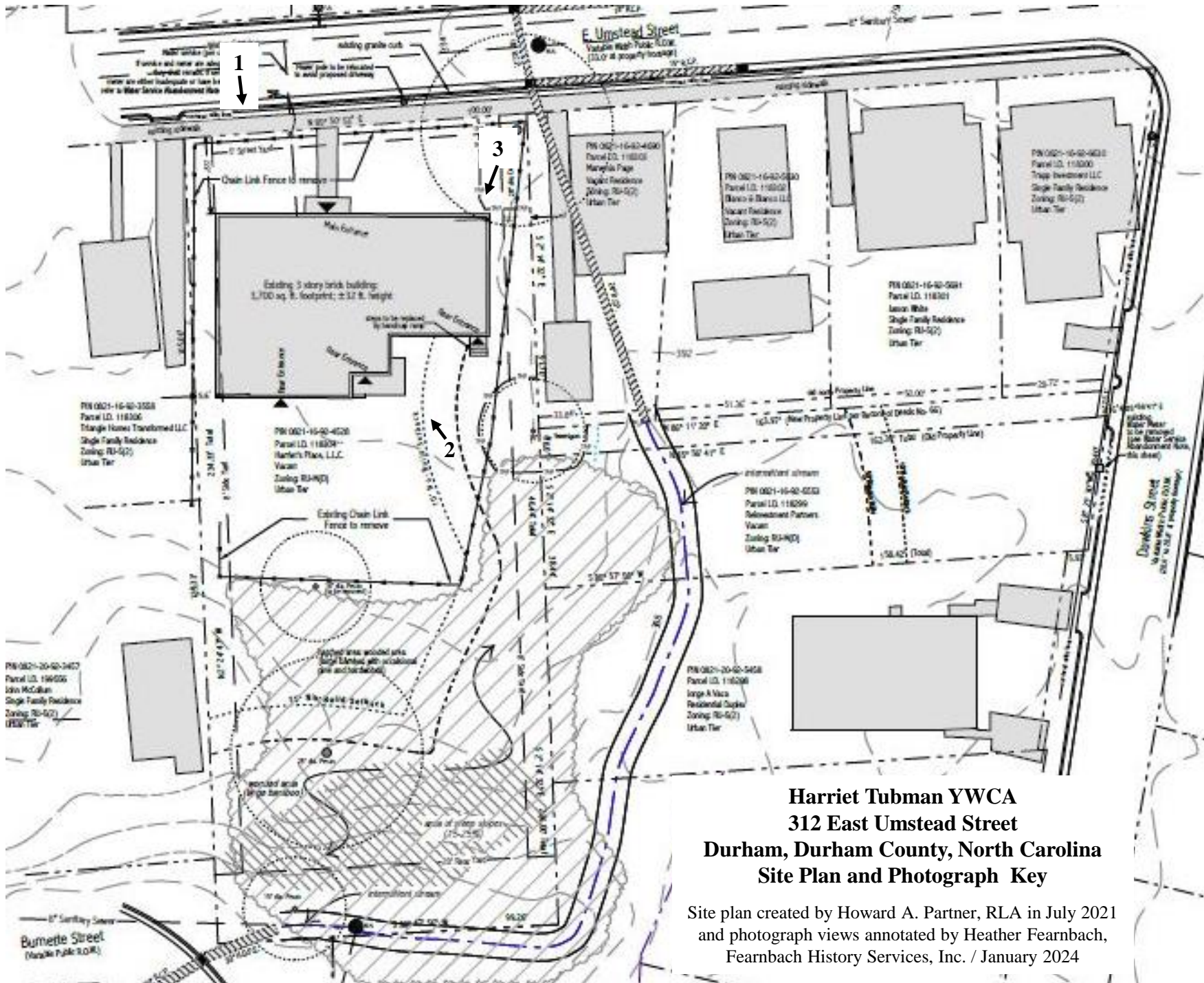
Latitude: 35.982644  
Longitude: -78.900536

National Register Boundary  
Durham County tax parcel  
0821-92-4522  
0.54 acres

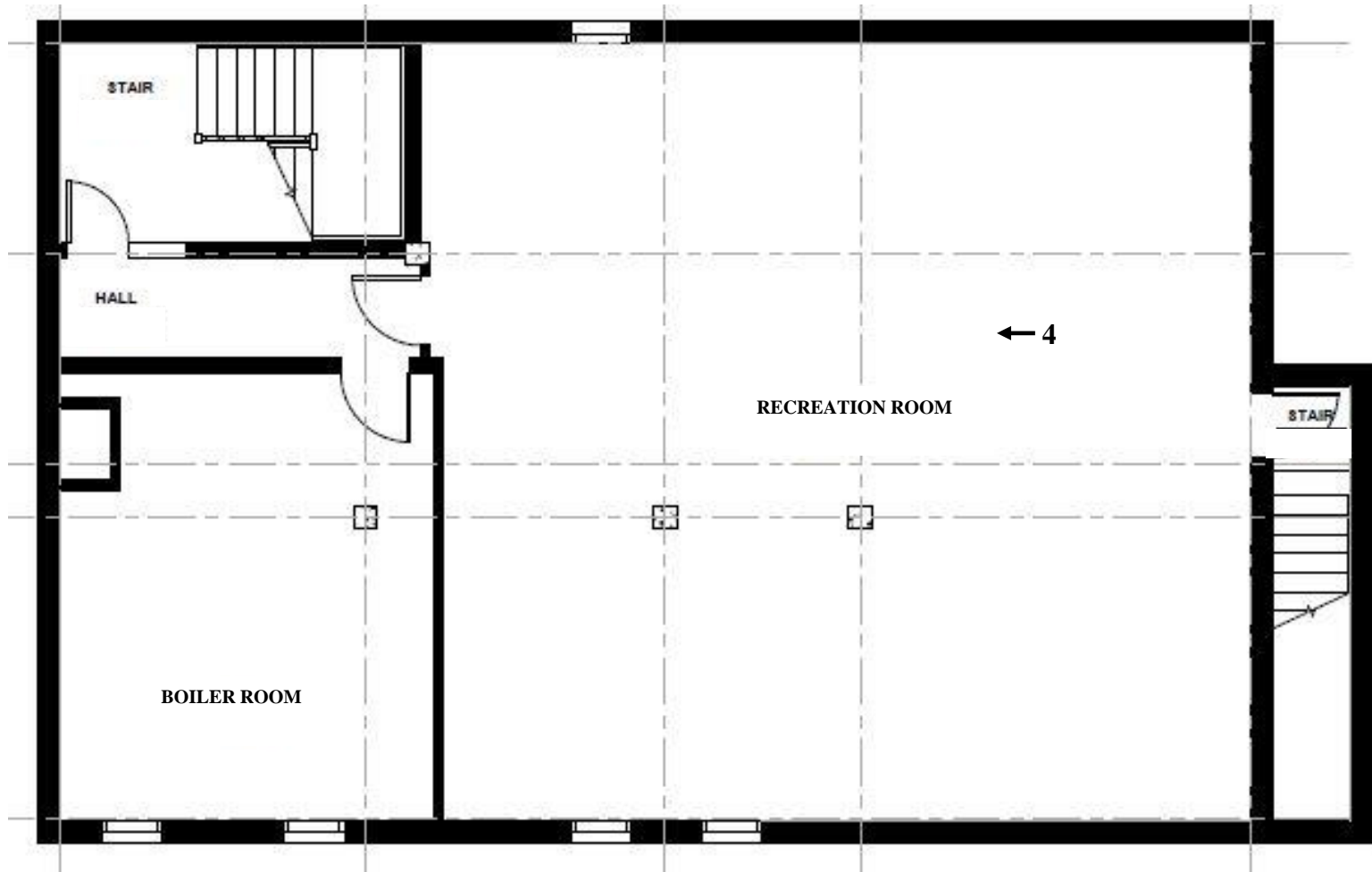
Avery Street

Dawkins Street

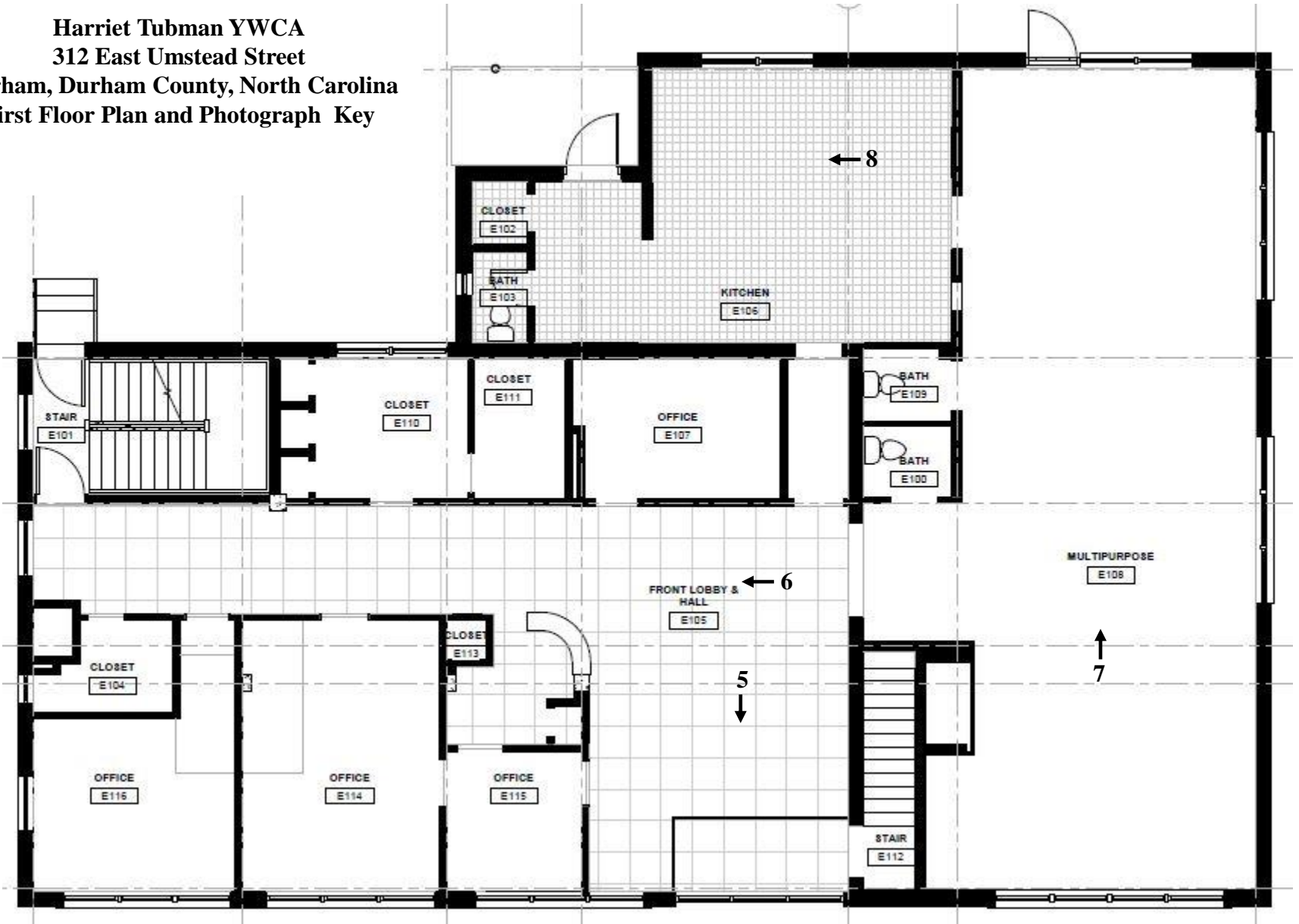




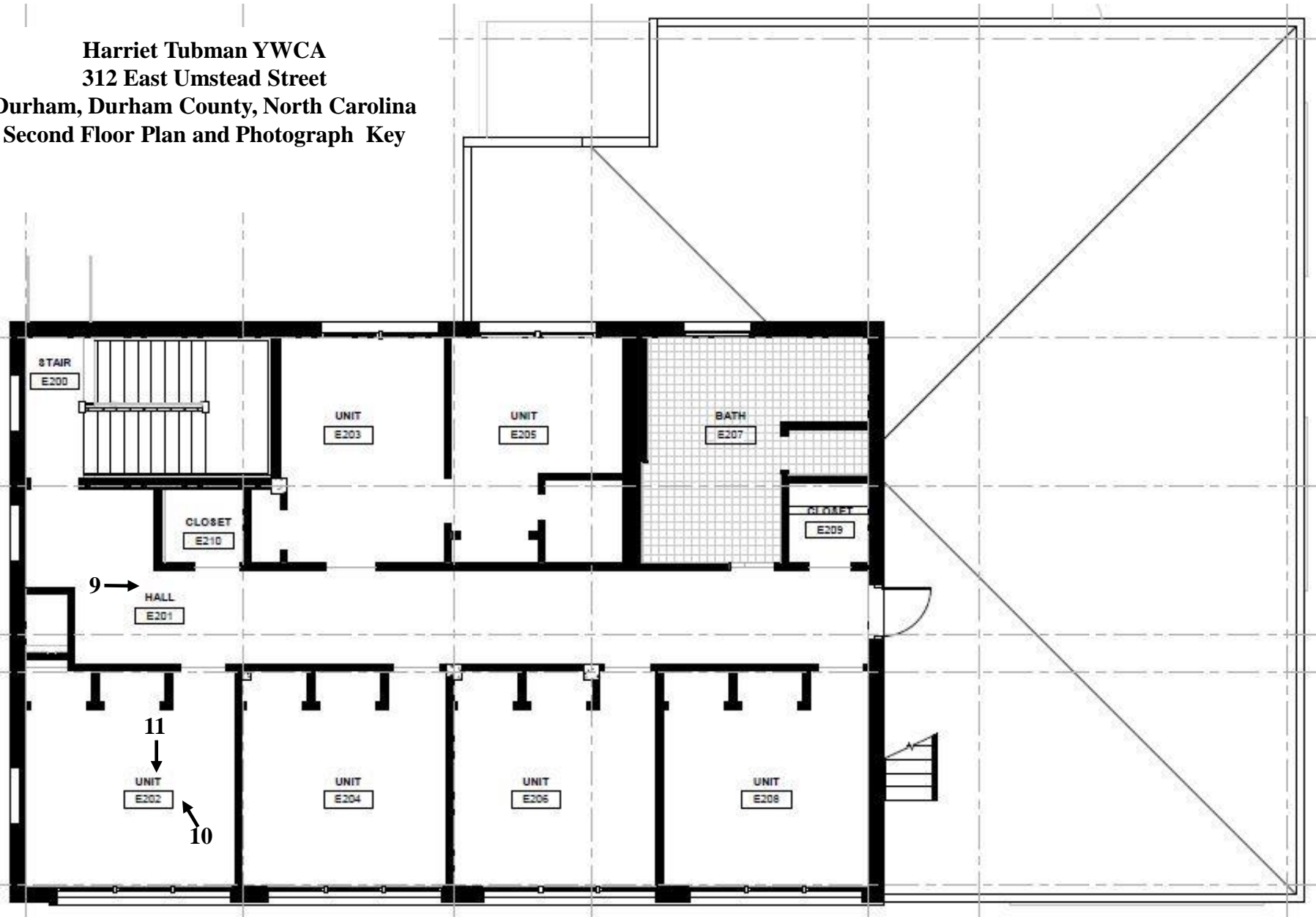
**Harriet Tubman YWCA**  
**312 East Umstead Street, Durham, Durham County, North Carolina**  
**Basement Floor Plan and Photograph Key**



**Harriet Tubman YWCA**  
**312 East Umstead Street**  
**Durham, Durham County, North Carolina**  
**First Floor Plan and Photograph Key**



**Harriet Tubman YWCA  
312 East Umstead Street  
Durham, Durham County, North Carolina  
Second Floor Plan and Photograph Key**



**Harriet Tubman YWCA**  
**312 East Umstead Street, Durham, Durham County, North Carolina**  
**Third Floor Plan**

