



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Pat McCrory, Governor
Susan Kluttz, Secretary
Kevin Cherry, Deputy Secretary

Office of Archives and History
Division of Historical Resources

July 2, 2015

Karla Rosenberg
Planner
101 City Hall Plaza, Ground Floor
Durham, NC 27701

RE: Landmark Designation Report for the **Imperial Tobacco Building, 423 Morris Street, Durham, Durham County**

Dear Ms. Rosenberg:

Thank you for the report for the above-cited property which is being proposed for landmark designation. We have reviewed the information in the report and offer the following comments in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 160A-400.4.

Built in 1916, the Imperial Tobacco Company Building possesses local significance in the history of Durham for its role in the tobacco industry as a center of the company's leaf buying operations. It was owned by the Imperial Tobacco Company Ltd. of Great Britain & Ireland, which in the early twentieth century became the largest cigarette manufacturer in the United Kingdom and for many years bought more American leaf than any other export purchaser in the world. The building also is architecturally significant for its robust Romanesque Revival design featuring elaborate brickwork and dozens of segmental-arched windows.

With these comments in mind, we believe the local governing board now has sufficient information to determine whether or not the Imperial Tobacco Building qualifies for local landmark designation.

Landmark designation means the community recognizes a property as an important historic resource worthy of preservation. Any substantial exterior design changes to a designated landmark are subject to the design review procedures of the Durham Historic Preservation Commission. The owner may apply for an annual deferral of fifty percent of the property taxes for as long as the property is designated and retains significance and integrity.

If the local governing board wishes to extend the Commission's design review authority to significant features of the interior, the owner must give written consent. The designation ordinance must specify the features and describe the nature of the Commission's design review authority over them.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the report. Our comments are advisory only and are not binding. Once the governing board has received a recommendation from the Durham Historic

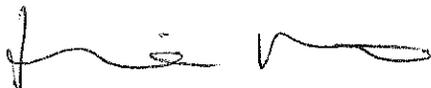
July 2, 2015

Page 2

Preservation Commission and has proceeded in the same manner as would otherwise be required for an amendment to the zoning ordinance, the governing board may proceed with the designation decision. Once the designation decision has been made, please return the completed designation confirmation form, enclosed.

This letter serves as our comments on the proposed landmark designation of the Imperial Tobacco Building. Please contact me at 919-807-6575 should you have any questions about our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laurie Mitchell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Laurie Mitchell
Local Preservation Commissions / CLG Coordinator

CC: Commission Chair

Enclosure