

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

www.raleighnc.gov/planning

Fee	_____
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Rec'd By:	_____
Completion Date:	_____

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

**RALEIGH HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION**

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

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

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

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

Historic Name: Raleigh Furniture Building  
Current Name: Raleigh Furniture Building

2. Location:

Street 119 E Hargett Street  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
NC PIN No.: 1703785485  
(Can be obtained from <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>)

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

Name: Raleigh Furniture Landlord, LLC  
Address: 133 Fayetteville Street, 6th floor  
City: Raleigh State: NC Zip: 27601  
Telephone No: (919) (834)-(8350) Fax No. (919) (839)-(0382)  
E-Mail: greg@empire1792.com

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

Name: Matthew Konar  
Address: 133 Fayetteville Street, 6th floor  
City: Raleigh State: NC Zip: 27601  
Telephone No: (919) (834)-(8350) Fax No. (919) (839)-(382)  
E-Mail: matthew@empire1792.com

5. General Data/Site Information:

Date of Construction and major additions/alterations:

1914: originally construction

2006-2007: full building historic renovation

Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings:

N/A

Approximate lot size or acreage:

0.12 acres

Architect, builder, carpenter, and/or mason:

1914: unknown

2006-2007: Tise-Kiester, architect; Empire Hardhat Construction, general contractor

Original Use:

Mercantile: Raleigh Furniture Company (furniture retail store)

Present Use:

Assembly: Krav Maga (martial arts studio)

Business: Alter Ego (salon), Maurer Architecture (office)

6. Classification:

A. Category (check all that apply):

Building(s)       Structure       Object       Site

B. Ownership

Private

Public       Local       State       Federal

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

	Contributing	Noncontributing
Buildings	1	0
Structures	0	0
Objects	0	0

D. Previous field documentation (when and by whom):

N/A

E. National Register of Historic Places Status:

Check One:

Entered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Date: 8/3/1983, contributing to Moore Square Historic District	Nominated <input type="checkbox"/>
Determined Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:	Determined Not Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Nomination Not Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Removed <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Significant changes in integrity since listing should be noted in section 10.B. below.	

## 7. Reason for Request:

**Architectural and Cultural Significance of the Building to the history of E Hargett Street ('Black Main Street') and the Moore Square Historic District in downtown Raleigh**

8. Is the property income producing? Yes  No

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

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

## A. Photographs/Slides:

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

## B. Boundary Map:

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

## C. Architectural Significance:

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

## D. Historic Significance:

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

## E. Special Significance Summary:

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

## Local Landmark Designation for Raleigh Furniture Building

### 10. c. Architectural Significance

Built in 1914 by the Raleigh Furniture Company, the Raleigh Furniture Building is an exceptional example of the overall character of the Moore Square Historic District and is listed as a contributing structure<sup>1</sup> to the National Register and the local district.

The Raleigh Furniture Building is a three-story, three-bay brick late Romanesque Revival<sup>2</sup> commercial building erected just after the turn of the twentieth century and incorporating Italianate elements. The storefront, once heavily remodeled now features a new, historically-accurate wood storefront, including a fully glazed transom and a copper cornice. The upper stories are divided into three bays by brick pilasters and horizontal corbelled molding that frames both stories of each bay. Paired segmental-arched nine-over-one double-hung sash wood windows pierce each 3<sup>rd</sup> floor bay. The windows are framed by brick segmented arches with concrete keystones and concrete sills. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor features paired one-over-one double-hung sash wood windows under simple concrete window hoods with keystones flanking a pair of windows under a round concrete arch with keystone.

The Raleigh Furniture Building exhibits a high level of architectural detail and decoration on the façade compared to the prevalent utilitarian-designed buildings along E Hargett Street. Some of these architectural features include large lintel-type openings, with the central arched window being the most prominent; the expression of three vertical bands on the upper levels of the facade; the decorative reliefs of the lintels and brickwork on the exterior; the intricate detailing of the woodwork and trim around the windows on the interior; the decorative horizontal bands such as the storefront transom, the low cornice, and the top cornice; the brick profiles between the windows; the brick dentils at the top of each vertical bay; and the horizontal signband at the top of the building. Comparatively, many significant historic buildings along E Hargett Street, such as the Lightner Arcade Building (a.k.a. the Lightner Hotel) and the Royal Theater, have been razed. Others, such as the Hamilton Drug Company and the Mechanics and Farmers Bank Building, have been altered to the point that their historical presence has been compromised. Of the remaining buildings from the Moore Square Historic District's period of significance that have retained their historical character, the Raleigh Furniture Building has a high level of detail and decoration when compared to the typical utilitarian features found in these surviving buildings: rectangular windows, simple slab sills, and little-to-no decorative brick work.

In 1976, an inventory of prominent buildings was conducted by the City of Raleigh and the Raleigh Furniture Building, then named Kimbrell's, was assessed as a 'Rare' and 'Significant' building in the downtown area.

During the renovation of the building by Empire Properties in 2006-2007, original building elements were preserved, non-historic changes to the building were gently removed, and missing historical elements were re-constructed in order for the building's appearance to accurately reflect the architectural character during its period of significance. The existing masonry exterior was maintained and the detailed facade retained, preserving the hometown feel. Other significant features were preserved, including the brick corbelling, the central inscription block, and historical painted signage, in particular 'Raleigh Furniture Co., Floor Coverings, Stoves, Etc.' on the west side of the building. A new, historically-accurate wood storefront, including a fully glazed transom and a copper cornice, was constructed based on historical research and photo documentation. The

original window openings remain and consist of the large central rounded window on the second floor flanked by two rectangular windows and the three arched windows on the third floor. The previous window sashes were replaced with historically accurate wood sashes. Structurally, steel beams run down the center of the building in the basement, first and second floors and support the loads of the floors above. The third floor retains a wood truss ceiling and wood ceiling support columns.

The renovated Raleigh Furniture Building has been recognized by the Raleigh community as exemplary for its architectural appearance. The building received a Sir Walter Raleigh Award for Historic Renovation/Rehabilitation in 2010 by the City of Raleigh.

#### **10. d. Cultural Significance**

With its highly-articulated facade and height of three stories, the Raleigh Furniture Building stood proudly amongst the buildings on E Hargett Street that were frequented by the African-American community such as the Lightner Arcade Building (a.k.a. the Lightner Hotel), the Royal Theater, the Hamilton Drug Company and the Mechanics and Farmers Bank Building. Unfortunately, all of these other significant buildings have either been demolished or severely altered, making the Raleigh Furniture Building a rare and important surviving structure of this culturally significant time in Raleigh's history.

After the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, E Hargett Street experienced a significant change from a residential neighborhood to a commercial district. In the midst of this transformation, the Raleigh Furniture Company, comprised of J C Drewery (president), W J Andrews (vice-president), T E Green (secretary-treasurer) and J M Riggan (manager), bought lot No. 144 on Shaffer's 1881 map of Raleigh in 1913 and built the Raleigh Furniture Building the following year. The Raleigh Furniture Company then moved from 17 E Martin Street<sup>3</sup> to its newly constructed building at 119 E Hargett Street<sup>4</sup>.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Raleigh Furniture Company, along with many other businesses along E Hargett Street between Fayetteville Street and Blount Street, flourished as the area became the center of commerce serving the African-American community in Raleigh. Raleigh's 'Black Main Street', as E Hargett Street was known as, was in close proximity to Moore Square, City Market, and the predominantly African-American communities in southern Raleigh, such as South Park. 'Most [African-Americans] speak fondly of Hargett Street and City Market, the center of business and recreational activity for black citizens in Raleigh. However, just as clearly they remember a segregated system that labeled them as second-class citizens and robbed them of participation in the larger society. In this atmosphere, they learned strong self-reliance.'<sup>5</sup>

Numerous testimonials of African-Americans attest to the significance of this Black district which included the Raleigh Furniture Building:

'Everyone went to Hargett Street on Saturdays... I don't remember going to anything else down there.'<sup>6</sup>

'Hargett Street was the center of the hub to me. Going there was just like going to New York City when I was a child... You could meet anybody and everybody on Hargett Street on Saturdays.'<sup>7</sup>

'I remember so much about Raleigh, but I'm a youngster at 69 years old now, [compared] to some of the other people that could remember the business community in Raleigh along Hargett Street, when the Arcade, Lightner and Odd Fellows buildings existed there. These were black structures.'<sup>8</sup>

'During those times black citizens were not exactly welcomed in the stores up on Fayetteville and along the main street, Market Street... It was just necessary to have our own facilities.'<sup>9</sup>

'They called it East Raleigh but all of the black activities occurred on Hargett Street.'<sup>10</sup>

With its prominent location and height, the Raleigh Furniture Company continued to support the major growth of downtown Raleigh after World War I. The Raleigh Furniture Company occupied the building until 1963 when Kimbrell's Furniture Company leased the space until 1978. In the 1980s, the government took initiatives to revitalize the Moore Square area by making it a focal point for public events. Along with art galleries and restaurants, the Raleigh Furniture Building was occupied by a series of nightclubs which helped revitalize the Moore Square Historic District. Presently, the Raleigh Furniture is a part of the revitalization and reemergence of E Hargett Street as a destination for cultural events and restaurants in downtown Raleigh.

#### **10. e. Special Significance**

The Raleigh Furniture Building, a three-story, three-bay brick late Romanesque Revival building is a culturally and architecturally exceptional building along E Hargett Street, known as Raleigh's historical Black Main Street. Originally built in 1914 by the Raleigh Furniture Company, the rare and significant building served the commercial needs of the African-American community during the Moore Square Historic District's period of significance and still retains its historical character, in particular its detailed facade and hometown feel. Since its construction, the Raleigh Furniture Building continues to contribute to downtown Raleigh's history, spanning from the culturally prominent 1920s and 1930s to the present renaissance.

## Bibliography and References

- <sup>1</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form. Moore Square Historic District. Site no. 93 [Raleigh Furniture Building]. p. 17.
- <sup>2</sup> per comments made by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources State Historic Preservation Office. May 6, 2011.
- <sup>3</sup> Raleigh, N.C., Directory 1913-14. Hill Directory Company, Inc. Richmond, Virginia. 1913. p.354.
- <sup>4</sup> Raleigh, N.C., Directory 1915-16. Hill Directory Company, Inc. Richmond, Virginia. 1915. p.54.
- <sup>5</sup> Culture Town. Life in Raleigh's African-American Communities. Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, Inc. Raleigh, North Carolina. 1993. p.54.
- <sup>6</sup> Interview with Claudia Morgan Johnson. Simmons-Henry, Linda and Linda Harris Edmisten. Culture Town. Life in Raleigh's African-American Communities. Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, Inc. Raleigh, North Carolina. 1993. p.22.
- <sup>7</sup> Interview with Gertrude Pope. Simmons-Henry, Linda and Linda Harris Edmisten. Culture Town. Life in Raleigh's African-American Communities. Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, Inc. Raleigh, North Carolina. 1993. p.47.
- <sup>8</sup> Interview with John W. Winters. Simmons-Henry, Linda and Linda Harris Edmisten. Culture Town. Life in Raleigh's African-American Communities. Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, Inc. Raleigh, North Carolina. 1993. p.59.
- <sup>9</sup> Interview with Clarence E. Lightner. Simmons-Henry, Linda and Linda Harris Edmisten. Culture Town. Life in Raleigh's African-American Communities. Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, Inc. Raleigh, North Carolina. 1993. p.61-62.
- <sup>10</sup> Interview with Audrey V. Wall. Simmons-Henry, Linda and Linda Harris Edmisten. Culture Town. Life in Raleigh's African-American Communities. Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, Inc. Raleigh, North Carolina. 1993. p.82.