NPS Form 10-900
(7-81)

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only
received DEC 27 1982
date entered

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic J.L. Coker Company Building

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number ~~Fifth Street~~ 5th St. and Carolina Ave~~nue~~ N/A not for publication

city, town Hartsville N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state South Carolina code 045 county Darlington code 031

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	X occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	___ unoccupied	X commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	N/A in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	N/A being considered	X yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name J.L. Coker Co, Mr. Robert R. Coker, Chairman of the Board

street & number Post Office Box 1338

city, town Hartsville N/A vicinity of state South Carolina 29550

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Darlington County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Darlington state South Carolina 29532

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date 1972 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives and History

city, town Columbia state South Carolina 29211

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	_X_ original site
_X_ good	___ ruins	_X_ altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The J.L. Coker Company Building is located at the southeast corner of Carolina Avenue and Fifth Street in the central business district of Hartsville, Darlington County, South Carolina. The one-story brick building was begun in 1909 and completed in 1910 for the J.L. Coker Company. Charles Coker Wilson of Columbia was the architect. The building's interior has been renovated and the windows on its west elevation have been closed, but the building retains sufficient historic character and fabric to express its history as a significant early twentieth century commercial building.

Additional Information

The J.L. Coker Company Building is a one-story brick building with a brick warehouse addition on its south and southeast elevations. The building covers an area of approximately one acre. The brickwork is Flemish bond and the roof is a flat built-up type. The facade (north elevation) is defined by an eleven-bay arcade whose segmental arches enclose the display bays and entrances. There are four entrances on the facade; two in the left bays, one in the center, and one one the right. The central entrance has interior and exterior canopies with scroll brackets sheltering double doors. The display windows in the brick arches are filled with opaque glass block. The terminal bays on each end of the facade are wider than the interior bays. There are cloth awnings on all bays except the two left bays which have display windows recessed behind the arcade.

Above the arcade is a bronze entablature which spans the breadth of the building and unifies the facade. Terra-cotta panels, featuring bundled swags draped across paired fasces, are suspended from the entablature above the imposts of each arch. The entablature consists of an architrave with a bundled-reed torus; a frieze with alternating triglyphs and metopes, and circular paterae in the metopes; and a broad cornice with heavy dentils, a paneled soffit, and a corona with a running fret design. A brick parapet wall is above the entablature.

The west elevation, along Fifth Street, originally had a one-bay continuation of the storefront, with the entablature and arcade continued. The arch on this elevation has been filled in with brick, but the entablature is intact. There were originally thirteen mezzanine-level windows on this elevation; these windows have been filled in with brick matching the original brickwork. The single entrance on this elevation is recessed and surrounded by marble panels.

The south elevation of the building has irregular fenestration, with several warehouse doors opening onto the rail spur. A one-story warehouse addition on the southeast and east elevations has a gabled roof and regular warehouse doors. The east elevation of the main store building has a two-story brick addition which covers most of the original wall.

The interior of the J.L. Coker Company Building has been renovated several times. The original structure, with four rows of columns dividing the store and carrying the roof is intact and the open plan of the building is intact. The original mezzanine has been removed from the west end, although it is intact on the south end. The floors of the store are carpeted or tiled and the ceiling is suspended acoustical tile.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	X architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	
___ 1800–1899	X commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1909-1910 **Builder/Architect** C.C. Wilson

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The J.L. Coker Company Building, located on the corner of Fifth Street and Carolina Avenue in downtown Hartsville, South Carolina, is a large brick commercial building designed by architect Charles Coker Wilson and built for the J.L. Coker Company in 1909-1910.[1] The building is significant in the commercial history of Hartsville and the surrounding community. The building is also significant architecturally as an exceptional commercial building designed by the state's leading architect. Coker's is still in use as a department store, and is still the dominant commercial building in Hartsville.

Commerce: The J.L. Coker Company was founded ca. 1865 by Major J.L. Coker when Hartsville was little more than a crossroads.[2] The business prospered in its first store and a merchandise warehouse was built in Darlington. Around 1880 a telephone line was installed between the warehouse and the Hartsville store; this was the first telephone line in the county.[3] In 1889 the Coker Company built a railroad line between Hartsville and the nearest railroad station at Floyds to facilitate shipping of merchandise between Hartsville and Darlington. This line was later purchased by the Atlantic Coast Line.[4] A new Coker's Store building was built after completion of this railroad. This second Coker's Store was destroyed by fire on April 2, 1909.[5] Plans for a new building were prepared by Charles Coker Wilson of Columbia for D.R. Coker, President of the Company.[6] This third Coker's Store, the building currently in use, was completed by January 1910. At the time of its construction, the Coker's department store building was one of the largest of its type in the state with approximately one acre of floor space.[7] Coker's was reportedly the first commercial establishment in the county to departmentalize its merchandise or to have public restrooms.[8]

The growth of the J.L. Coker Company has been a key factor in the growth and development of the town of Hartsville.

Architecture: The J.L. Coker Company Building is a significant early twentieth century commercial building of outstanding design and execution. The rhythmic series of eleven arches that defines the facade and gives order and scale to the building is of particular note; such arcades were adapted and developed as a means of organizing an urban facade by the country's leading architects including George B. Post, Henry Hobson Richardson, and Louis Sullivan. The departmentalization of the facade parallels and facilitates the departmentalization of merchandise in the store. The bronze and terra-cotta entablature which unifies the composition is of high quality with bold details suitable for a large urban facade.

The architect of the Coker's store building, Charles Coker Wilson (1864-1933), was one of the leading architects of South Carolina in the early twentieth century. Wilson, a native of Hartsville, was the charter President of the South Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and was the first South Carolina architect elected a fellow of the A.I.A., which honor was reserved for those "who have notably contributed to the advancement of the profession in design, instruction, literature or education."[9] Wilson designed many public and private buildings in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama.[10] He specialized in the design of public buildings, including schools, and large commercial buildings, including hotels and textile mills. He had his office in Columbia from 1895 to 1933. In addition to Coker's Store,

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property ± .98

Quadrangle name Hartsville South

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	17	585260	3803840	B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property is shown bounded by the heavy red line on the accompanying Darlington County Tax Map #56-6, drawn at a scale of 1"=100'. This boundary includes only the store building, excluding adjacent properties.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Edwin P. Rogers, Jr., Historic Preservation Planner John Wells, South Carolina Department of Archives and History

organization Pee Dee Regional Council of Gov'ts date October 18, 1982

street & number Post Office Box 5719 telephone (803) 669-3138

city or town Florence state South Carolina 29502

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national X state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Charles E. Lee

title Charles E. Lee
State Historic Preservation Officer date 12/13/82

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register date 2/9/83

Attest: Patrick Andrus
for Chief of Registration date 2/9/83

(con't)

Wilson's designs included Thornwell and Woodrow dormitories, University of South Carolina, 1908-1912; the Darlington Graded School, ca. 1908; the Hotel Park in the Pines, Aiken, ca. 1905; the Hotel Jerome, Columbia, ca. 1902; the Camden Grammar School, 1922 and 1924; Logan School, Columbia, 1913 and 1915; Davidson Hall, Coker College, Hartsville, 1910; and the completion of the South Carolina State Capitol Building, Columbia, 1902-1907.[11]

Bibliography

American Art Annual. Vol. 21.

Fant, Christie Zimmerman. The State House of South Carolina: An Illustrated Historic Guide. Columbia: The R.L. Bryan Company, 1970.

Garlington, J.C. Men of The Time: Sketches of Living Notables. Spartanburg: Garlington Publishing Company, 1902.

Hartsville Messenger, Hartsville, South Carolina, May 11, 1911.

Kline, W.S. Illustrated Columbia 1904. Columbia: The R.L. Bryan Company, reprint, 1962.

Lawton, J.J. "Brief History of the Early Days of J.L. Coker & Co. Store Rebuilt." Darlington News and Press, Darlington, South Carolina, August 1928.

Rudisill, Horace. Interview. Darlington, South Carolina. 14 June 1982.

The State, Columbia, South Carolina, January 27, 1933.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, facsimile reprint, 1970.

Footnotes

[1]J.J. Lawton, "Brief History of the Early Days of J.L. Coker & Co. Store Rebuilt," Darlington News & Press, Darlington, South Carolina, August 1928, p. 10.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Hartsville Messenger, May 11, 1911, p. 1.

[6]Ibid.; Lawton.

[7]Hartsville Messenger.

[8]Interview with Horace Rudisell, Darlington, South Carolina, 14 June 1982.

[9]Obituary notice of Charles Coker Wilson, The State, Columbia, South Carolina, January 27, 1933, pp. 1, 11.

[10]Ibid.; Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, facsimile edition, 1970), pp. 662-663; J.C. Garlington, Men of The Time: Sketches of Living Notables (Spartanburg: Garlington Publishing Company, 1902), p. 456.

[11]Ibid.; Christie Zimmerman Fant, The State House of South Carolina: An Illustrated Historic Guide (Columbia: The R.L. Bryan Company, 1970), p. 32; W.S. Kline, Illustrated 1904 Columbia (Columbia; The R.L. Bryan Company, reprint 1962), p. 14; American Art Annual, Vol. 21, pp. 481-482.