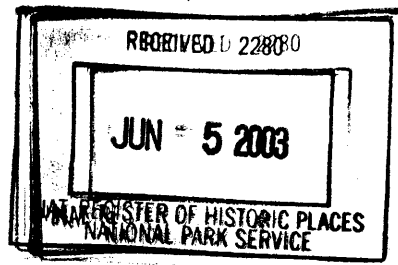


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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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 any 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 Burdette Building
other names/site number Burdette Hardware Building, B. W. Burdette Building

2. Location

street & number 104 E. Curtis Street not for publication
city or town Simpsonville vicinity _____
state South Carolina code SC county Greenville code 045 zip code 29681

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 forth 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.)

Mary W. Edmonds 6/3/03
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, S.C. Dept. of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.
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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that this 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):

Edson H. Beall 7.17.03
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Burdette Building
Name of Property

Greenville County, South Carolina
County and State

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)

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

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

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

0

1

0

buildings
sites
structures
objects
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
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Commerce/Trade

Subcategory: specialty store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Commerce/Trade

Subcategory: specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Early 20th Century
American Movements -
Commercial Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick/concrete
walls brick

roof metal
other tar

Narrative Description

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

Burdette Building
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8. Statement of Significance

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.)

- a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- b removed from its original location.
- c a birthplace or a 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)

Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance

1921-1952

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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:
S.C. Dept. of Archives & History

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Burdette Building
Name of Property
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The Burdette Building is located at the corner of Main Street and East Curtis Street in Simpsonville, South Carolina. It is a nearly rectangular two story structure 98' X 110' X 101' X 91', with the Curtis Street (north) elevation following the angle of the street itself. It is laid with smooth-faced yellow brick in running bond interrupted by pilasters over concrete footings at certain intervals demarcating each of three separate interior spaces from the north and four spaces on the west.

There is a one-story structure adjacent to the building on Curtis Street that is the surviving portion of a two-story brick building that predates the Burdette building. Its northern elevation has been renovated. The upper story and one half of the lower story of the older structure were destroyed in a 1969 fire.

Other than a corner covered walkway added in the 1920s and removed in the late 1960s, there have been no changes to the original structure. On the north elevation there are three double framed doorways, and two single frame doorways on the Main Street (west) elevation. In addition, on the west façade is an entrance, now paneled over, that opens from the street to a staircase leading to the second floor. On the second floor of the north façade there are four bays of five windows each, with three regular 36" one-over-one double hung sash windows in the middle of two narrow, 18- inch wide one-over-one double hung sash windows. The three window bays on the west façade all contain five regular-sized, one-over-one double hung sash windows. Between the second and third bays along the west elevation there is also above the door to the stairs another narrow 18-inch window. Below this window is a cast stone tablet with the inscription:

1899
Burdette Building
1921

On this west façade, the street door, the keystone, and the diminutive window, all form a vertical continuity that is completed by a large inverted semicircle cut and fashioned within the brick of the roof parapet.

The roofline is accented on the north and west by an embellished terra cotta cornice supported by an egg-and-dart molding and denticulated course. Above the cornice is a parapet surmounted by a cast stone coping. Above the roofline, running north to south, are the extensions of the three brick firewalls that segment the interior of the building. Above the slightly sloped roof rise three original, rectangular skylights, their surfaces sloping at approximately twenty degrees to the rear (south) of the building.

The south elevation's red brick face is laid in American bond. A one-story addition was added in the 1940s that opens to a west elevation. The second floor contains a series of eleven double-hung sash windows. One of the window spaces was modified in the 1940s for an exit door that once led to a fire escape. Across nearly the entire southern façade can be seen the painted lettering identifying B.W. Burdette & Bros. Grocery & Hardware.

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Burdette Building
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The interior of the building is intact and only slightly altered in some first floor retail spaces. There are three brick firewalls running completely through the building north and south. The first floor contains six large rooms and three bathrooms. Two of the smaller rooms are entered from a door on the west elevation and have no access to the other first floor rooms. The second floor has four rooms and three bathroom areas, one of which is a series of six toilets provided for the employees of a manufacturing firm that at one time occupied the space. The three largest rooms upstairs are each connected by a large arched doorway with two courses of brick forming the arch. The doorways are secured and opened by way of releasing a sliding door. Beyond the westernmost interior wall, a long hallway introduces the westernmost room facing Main Street. This hallway is also accessed directly from the stairs leading from a Main Street door, now boarded up. The hall opens into the westernmost upstairs room through a series of six doors at different intervals. The two stairways are original and intact, as well as an 8' X 8' wooden and iron elevator in the southeastern portion of the building that still operates smoothly. Other features include pressed tin ceilings throughout the first floor reflecting two different patterns, and plaster walls throughout. The first floor rooms have had only minor cosmetic alterations as a result of allocating varied configurations for sales space over the years.

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Section number 8 Page 7 Burdette Building
Name of Property
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The Burdette Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its important role in the history of commercial development in Simpsonville during the early to mid-twentieth century, and also under Criterion C as a uniquely fashioned example of the vernacular commercial style. It is also only one of two examples of this style existing in Simpsonville and fully retains its historic appearance. The building is unaltered in appearance from its original construction, but did at one time include a one-story, open-sided, roofed extension, supported by five brick columns on its northern and western corner. The extension was built to accommodate parking for the gas station then located in that corner of the first floor, and was removed in the 1960s (see photo #2).

The significance of the Burdette building is found primarily in its role in the commercial development of Simpsonville and also is inextricably tied to its creator and Simpsonville's most successful entrepreneur of the first half of the twentieth century, B.W. Burdette. Simpsonville is located in southeastern Greenville County in the middle of a string of municipalities along SC Highways 417 and 14, known collectively as "the Golden Strip." Chartered in 1901, the town of Simpsonville arose around the crossing of the Georgia Road and the Old Stage Roads where the Plain post office was located as early as 1838. With the building of the Greenville & Laurens Railroad in 1885, streets were laid out and lots were sold to accommodate merchants and residents and the post office was officially changed to Simpsonville. The town soon became a rural hub for the selling and transporting of cotton and other agriculture crops and by 1900 included a cottonseed oil mill along with general mercantile interests and a population of approximately 250. It was into this energetic climate, with the town just on the verge of a charter for the city, that B.W. Burdette and his brother entered when they set up shop on the current site in 1898.

Benjamin William Burdette was born in 1878 on a farm about two miles east of Simpsonville where he attended area schools and eventually entered the high school at Simpsonville shortly after 1890. According to tradition, B.W. and his brother, David Wilcott Burdette, ran a bicycle repair shop in the late 1890's on Southeast Main St. next to the current location, but there is no substantial evidence of that venture. However, in 1898, with help from their father, the Burdette brothers purchased the lot on Main St. and East Curtis St. on the site of the present building and erected a wooden store roughly 25' by 40'. They added at two different times two-story sections along Main Street until by 1912 the entire building was about 60' X 60' and was split into departments for millinery, dry goods, clothes, and hardware. By that time with the arrival of the Simpsonville Mill along with the additions of commercial buildings downtown there came an increasing demand for their services especially in the area of hardware and implements. In the latter part of 1912, the brothers answered this demand by erecting a two-story brick structure with two-bay architecture facing East Curtis Street next to the end of the wooden structure. Early in 1913, in an effort to extend the more modern commercial presence, the brothers extended the two story brick façade of the hardware structure along the entire north side which incorporated three recessed doorways and display windows along the street level that provided entrance into the wooden structure.

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Section number 8 Page 8 Burdette Building
Name of Property
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The second floor of the façade held four window bays with three windows each centered above an entrance. This façade also demonstrated the Commercial Style but with greater simplification of lines. A fire in February of 1921 destroyed the entire wooden structure leaving the 1912 hardware building intact. The entire façade extension was pulled down as a result.

B.W. Burdette erected this building in 1921 at the corner of Main Street and East Curtis Street to reclaim the loss of a devastating fire that earlier that year destroyed his frame and brick structure that had occupied the same spot and was of nearly the same dimensions. Refusing to submit, Burdette, acting as his own contractor, set about personally overseeing the construction and the selection of building materials, sparing no expense to construct the kind of building that would speak for commercial success. While adhering to many general features of the Commercial Style, such as the multiple bay composition, Burdette also added personal touches as well, including a tablet set between floors on the west side in which is inscribed "1899 Burdette Building 1921."

Distinctive exterior treatments include a crenellated roofline with a series of alternate indents along the north side, a lone unmatched semi-circular indent on the west roofline, molded terra cotta cornice, engraved tablet, decorative brick pilasters, and under-sized windows flanking standard windows in each second story bay on the north. The interior features include the original wooden and steel elevator, original staircases, and pressed tin ceilings.

Prior to the completion of the building other Simpsonville businesses steadily lost customers to other towns within a six-to-ten mile radius of town, and it was generally perceived that without the new construction of the Burdette building and the return of mercantile occupants the downtown of Simpsonville would have languished. As it was, the structure marked such a great improvement in space, serviceability, and style over the former structure it effectively stimulated Simpsonville's downtown business to the point that three more two-story brick structures were added in the next two years.

The Burdette building has long held the distinction of containing the largest floor area of any building in Simpsonville, and many combinations of tenants have taken advantage of its accommodations. Between 1921 and 1965 the dominant occupant of the building was B.W. Burdette & Bros. Hardware, which was the most widely known hardware and supply store outside of Greenville. Burdette's had customers in North Carolina and Georgia as well as their own local clientele. The diversity of businesses occupying the building over the years reflects Simpsonville's commercial and trade culture over the entire life of the town since its charter in 1901. The first floor of the building has housed a dry goods store, millinery shop, drug store, gas station, car dealership, barber shop, several grocery stores, several restaurants at different times, and a doctor's office, as well as Simpsonville's first department store. The Simpsonville post office was located in one of the ground floor suites on Main Street from 1923 to 1948, its longest tenure in any location. Upstairs provided apartments for residents, the office of a cotton broker, doctor's office, and a shirt-making company, which at the time was the largest employer in town other than the mill.

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Burdette Building
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At most anytime in its history the number of businesses within the Burdette building would collectively hold that distinction. In turn the building served as the major destination point for the citizens of Simpsonville and the outlying communities for many of their day-to-day and seasonal needs, both personal and professional.

The Burdette Building is to most people's viewing not only the signature building for Simpsonville, but an example of that architecture combining monument and function that successfully embodies the commercial and civic spirit of early twentieth century America. With its varied occupants the building has served as anchor for the core downtown of Simpsonville for over 75 years. Even to this day when one approaches town from the north on S.C. Highway 14, the Burdette building outline, light brick and series of windows are seen down the long straight away as far as a half mile, signaling the presence of a real downtown, rather than the glaring promise of clustered commercial strips. The current tenants of the Burdette Building are a large consignment shop and a software consultant on the first floor. The second floor is vacant.

After B.W. Burdette died in 1965, Burdette Hardware was operated by his daughter, "Sis" Adams, his son C. M. Burdette, and son-in-law A.L. Bozeman until they sold the business to Art and Alan McCraw in 1986. During that time the ground floor of the building was completely rented with varied tenants including a grocery store, and a restaurant. Burdette Hardware subsequently moved to a modern metal building north of Simpsonville.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 9, 10 Page 10

Burdette Building
Name of Property
Greenville County, South Carolina
County and State

Bibliographical References

Primary Sources

City of Simpsonville Minutes, 1912-1913.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Greenville County (SC), 1898, 1913, 1930.

Secondary Sources

Greenville (SC) News, 30 August 1921, p.1.

Richardson, L.R. and R.L. "Simpsonville: A Community Study." M.A.Thesis, Furman University, 1938.

Longstreth, Richard. The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture. National Trust for Historic Preservation. 1987.

Poppeliers, John C., S. Allen Chambers, and Nancy B. Schwartz. What Style Is It?: A Guide to American Architecture. New York: Preservation Press, 1996.

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the black line marked "Burdette Building" on the accompanying copies of Greenville County Tax Map 311.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is restricted to the historic building and the city lot on which it is located.

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Section number Photographs Page 11

Burdette Building
Name of Property
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The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Burdette Building
Location of Property: 104 E. Curtis Street, Simpsonville
Greenville County, South Carolina

Name of Photographer: H.E. Kirven, Jr.
Date of Photographs: October 2002
Location of Original Negatives: S.C. Department of Archives and History, Columbia

1. Corner of South East Main and South Curtis Streets, Simpsonville
2. Detail of center section fronting South East Main Street
3. Detail of vertical center section from ground level
4. First floor storefront and second floor office/manufacturing space with original windows
5. Details of original freight elevator lift mechanism
6. Original freight elevator motor and cable wench
7. Original freight elevator pulleys and cable
8. Second floor firewall and doorway with masonry arch
9. Skylight (one of three)
10. Detail of original metal roof support beam with wood joists above
11. Original raised hardwood flooring on second floor, with tracks used to roll cloth carts to shirt manufacturing area
12. Original rolling ladders in downstairs retail space
13. Second floor interior space at corner of South East Main and East Curtis Streets
14. Steam radiator (one of several original radiators)
15. Exterior rear elevation, with original windows
16. Detail of rear elevation, second floor
17. Detail of rear elevation, showing firewall, masonry, and cornice