

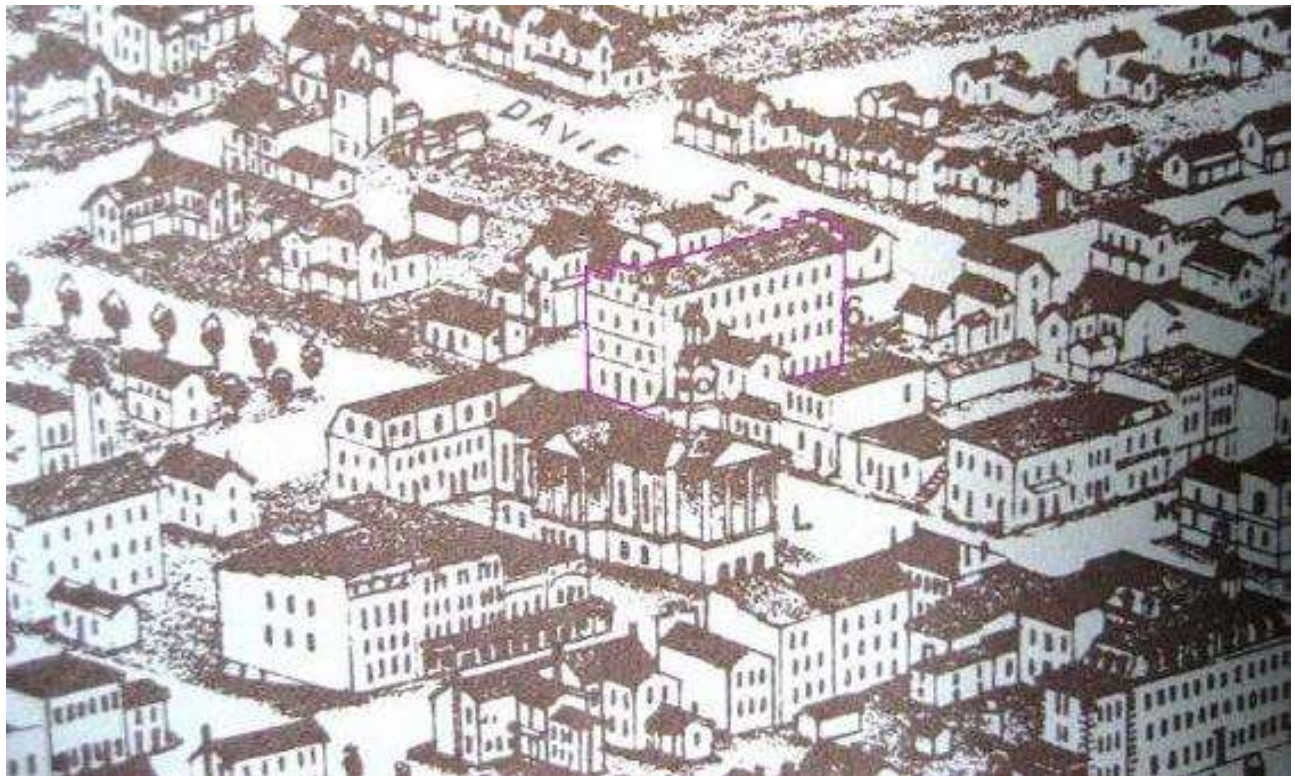


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Greensboro's Tobacco Heritage, Part 1



Greensboro doesn't have cavernous brick tobacco factories like Durham and Winston-Salem. The observation has merit, considering Greensboro has been a tobacco center for over 100 years.

Since the city has a tobacco history, why doesn't it have great old buildings to show for it?

Unlike Winston-Salem and Durham, Greensboro's tobacco industry was not dominated by a single manufacturer at the turn of the twentieth century. Instead of the sprawling campus of R. J. Reynolds or American Tobacco, Greensboro's manufacturers were much smaller and evenly dispersed

throughout Greensboro's downtown. This made them vulnerable to redevelopment efforts as Greensboro grew in the mid-twentieth century. I hope to illustrate the fate of three prominent tobacco factories in this blog, to help answer the questions related to Greensboro's missing tobacco heritage.



The H. L. Scott & Company was a leaf dealer in town, marketing tobacco from across the piedmont. The company's fine, four-and-a-half-story brick leaf house (outlined in pink, in the masthead) was erected one block north of the center of town around 1891. The height of the building accommodated greater warehousing space, and loomed over the other one-and two-story buildings at the intersection of North Elm Street and Gaston Street (today Friendly Avenue). The building faced west overlooking North Elm Street featuring four full floors of space, with a half story beneath the ridge of its gable roofline. Double-hung windows, a parapet gable, and decorative brickwork completed the handsome ensemble.

The image to the right was taken from the same location as the first image. The H. L. Scott leaf house was altered in the early 1900s and converted to commercial space and shortened to three-stories. In the 1960s, Gaston Street was renamed Friendly Avenue, and pressure grew to redevelop the site. The 10-story office tower that stands on the site of the Scott building today was designed by the Raleigh architecture firm Valand, Benzing & Associates. Constructed in 1970-1971, it remains one of the best examples of modernist architecture remaining in downtown Greensboro from the period, and is know as the Self Help Center.



Written by Benjamin Briggs

Preservation Greensboro contributes a key role in the growth of Greensboro's economy and vitality through tourism, reinvestment, and place-making. With diverse initiatives that help you to restore, explore, and connect with your community, Preservation Greensboro provides a voice for revitalization, improved quality of life, and conservation of historic resources for future generations. Are you a member yet? Learn more about Greensboro's only member-supported preservation organization by exploring our [website](#) or joining our [Facebook](#) page. Please join us today!

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Author: Benjamin Briggs

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Contact Us

Preservation Greensboro

PO Box 13136
Greensboro NC 27415
336-272-5003
Offices Located in Blandwood Mansion

Blandwood Mansion

447 West Washington Street
Greensboro NC 27401
336-272-5003

Architectural Salvage of Greensboro

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