

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received **JUL 12 1984**  
date entered **AUG 9 1984**

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

**1. Name**

historic Windham Construction Company Office Building

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 528 8th Avenue North NA not for publication

city, town Birmingham NA vicinity of 6th congressional district

state Alabama code 01 county Jefferson code 073

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>NA</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mr. Marlon A. Walker

street & number 15 North 11th Court

city, town Birmingham NA vicinity of state Alabama

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City Hall

street & number 710 20th Street North

city, town Birmingham state Alabama

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1970-present  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Two-story commercial-style building located on the northwest corner of 8th Avenue and 6th Street North. The front facade is of buff brick; the rear facade is of red brick, and the sides are of Bessemer gray. There are two front entrances with windows on either side of the doorways and a series transom windows at the top of the doorways. The second floor front facade has a series of six evenly spaced windows with stone inlays, the middle two being smaller than the others. The six second-floor windows on the side facades are paired. The rear has two first-floor windows in the center of the building and one window in each second-floor corner. There is a doorway on the sides (east and west) of the building leading to the upstairs residential units. Each apartment unit (there are two) has a private hallway. The building measures 36' x 46' and is located on the outskirts of Smithfield's commercial area which has undergone great deterioration over the last decade.

# 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** c. 1912 **Builder/Architect** Windham Bros. (cont.)

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Windham Brothers Building (1912) is significant because it was built by the oldest black construction company in Birmingham and housed its offices for over fifty years. The company's home office was in Birmingham, and they constructed many of the black community's most significant buildings as well as several prominent in the city's most important white business area. The family-owned-and-operated business remained in this building until the late 1960s.

### Criterion A and B - Black History and Commerce

The Windham Brothers Building (1912), home office of the oldest black construction company in Birmingham (est., 1895), is significant for its associations with the growth of black commerce in the Birmingham area and for its association with Windham Brothers Construction Company, a major black construction company in Alabama. An early example of the Windham Brothers Construction Company's workmanship, the building served as the home office for branches in Nashville, Chicago, Indianapolis and Detroit and as the home (one of two apartment units on the second floor) of Thomas Windham, founder of the company until the mid-1920s. The building was originally built to house another family-owned business, a drugstore, and several other small black businesses. Windham Brothers is locally noted for constructing many of the most significant buildings in the black community, including residences, churches, and other commercial businesses, as well as several prominent buildings in Birmingham's traditional white business section. The Windham Brothers continued business operations in this building until 1966.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Leaders of the Black Race in Alabama, ed. J. H. Moorman, E. L. Barrett, Mobile, AL: 1928.  
Oral Interviews  
City Directories  
The Birmingham Reporter, 1925

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 100' x 105'

Quadrangle name Birmingham North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	5	1	6	0	6	10	3	7	0	8	1	0	10
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 15 & 16 Smithfield Survey  
Parcel ID #22-35-2-25

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Pamela Sterne King & Shirley Qualls

Operation New Birmingham/AHC

organization Alabama Historical Commission

date 2/3/84

street & number 725 Monroe Street

telephone 205 261-3184

city or town Montgomery

state Alabama

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  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.

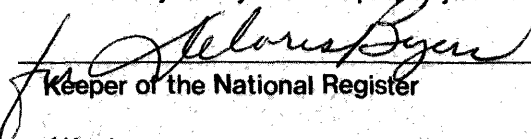
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7/3/84

### For NPS use only

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

  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date

8/9/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

### Windham Brothers Construction Company

The Windham Brothers Construction Company was organized in Birmingham in 1895 by Thomas C. Windham. In 1897 his brother, Benjamin L., left Louisiana where he had recently received a degree with highest honors from New Orleans' Leland University and joined his brother's business. Together they produced the most prominent black construction company in the city. Included in their list of achievements are the seven-story Birmingham Railway, Light and Power Company (c. 1926-27; NRHP 3-11-80), a prominent building in the city's white business core; the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church; and the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church (1911; NRHP 9-17-80).

In 1913 the Windham Brothers Construction Company built the Alabama Penny Savings Bank. Designed by prominent black architect, Wallace A. Rayfield, the building housed the first black-owned bank in the state and the second largest bank in the country in 1907. In 1914 the Windham Brothers Construction Company moved its offices into the prestigious bank building. They remained there until 1917 or 1918 at which time they moved to 528 8th Avenue North where the company was located until the late 1960s.

The building which housed their business for over fifty years had been constructed in 1912. Built by the Windham Brothers, it originally housed Thomas Windham's wife's drugstore, a cleaners, a shoe shop, a dry goods store, as well as two apartment units on the second floor. There Thomas and his wife resided from 1912 until the mid 1920s.

Until 1966 the building served the Windham Brothers Construction Company. At that time Lewis, the only son of Thomas C. Windham, died and with it the company which had become one of the key symbols of the black professional movement in Birmingham.

The building has been recently purchased and is scheduled for renovation.