

# THE DOUGLAS BLOCK



[www.douglasblock.org](http://www.douglasblock.org)



## MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

*Building Economic Vitality Through Historic Preservation*

**DOWNTOWN ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA**



a collaborative project between the City of Rocky Mount and the Rocky Mount-Edgecombe Community Development Corporation

## INTRODUCTION

During its golden age, the Douglas Block was brimming with economic activities and entrepreneurial spirit. It was the heart of the African-American community. On any Saturday afternoon, you could find your friends, family, and neighbors as well as anything from clothes to doctors, food to entertainment, or dancing and plenty of jazz. It was a community full of spirit, diversity, and an incredible hub of commerce, culture and entertainment.

## HISTORY

The Douglas Block takes its name from the Douglas Building which is prominently located at the corner of North East Main Street and East Thomas Street. It is the anchor building for the Douglas Block and was the catalyst for the emergence of the Douglas Block as the African American business district during the segregation period. The building was constructed around 1916 and later expanded (1917-1922) when two additional bays were added on the north side of the original four bay building.

For many years, Dr. Junious Douglas, a pharmacist, operated the Douglas-Armstrong Drug Company in the first bay of the Douglas Building. There were many other businesses and professional services that occupied the first and second floors of the Douglas Building throughout the decades, contributing to the vitality of the Douglas Block commercial district.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Phase One of the Douglas Block Redevelopment Plan is the renovation of six historically significant buildings which originally served as the African American business district in Downtown Rocky Mount. The area was a regional hub for the African American community for both personal and professional services as well as entertainment opportunities. The Douglas Block's role in the community were greatly significant. The Douglas Block project returns both the heritage and economic vitality to the area and to Downtown Rocky Mount.

The six buildings recently renovated are the Douglas Building, Manhattan Building, Booker T. Theater, Burnette Building, Stokes Building and Thorpe Building. All of the newly renovated buildings provide quality space for retail, commercial and office needs at reasonable rental rates. The tenant spaces allow much flexibility on the design, layout and size of tenant spaces. The six buildings have 25,000 square feet of space available for commercial tenants.

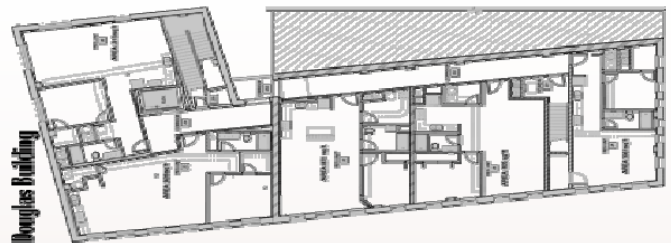
Prospective tenants should inquire now! Please find contact information on the back of this brochure.

### DOUGLAS BUILDING

205-19 NE Main Street - constructed in 1916



Before



Douglas Building



After

The first floor of THE DOUGLAS BUILDING has six bays with a total area of 4,465 square feet. The individual bays range from 600 to 880 square feet.

The second floor has five residential loft apartments. The apartments range in size from 680 to 875 square feet and include a full appliance package, security access, on-site laundry facilities and an elevator. There is one handicapped accessible unit in the building. For information on residential spaces, contact Mary Bryant with the Rocky Mount-Edgecombe Community Development Corporation at 252-446-1508.

The rent for commercial spaces at the Douglas Block is **\$10<sup>00</sup>**/square foot.

To learn more about commercial spaces at the Douglas Block, contact any of the individuals listed on the back of this brochure.

## BOOKER T. THEATER

170 E. Thomas Street - constructed in 1910



*Before*

*After*

THE BOOKER T. THEATER is a public facility available for private rentals. This multi-purpose space is an ideal location for a reception, meeting, or lecture and can accommodate small to medium size groups (up to 300 people). The facility is programmed and leased by the City of Rocky Mount Parks & Recreation Department in conjunction with Rocky Mount-Edgecombe CDC. For rental rates and availability, please contact Eva Satterwhite with the Rocky Mount Parks & Recreation Department at 252-972-1342.

## BURNETTE BUILDING

constructed in 1924  
184-188 E. Thomas Street



*Before*



*After*

THE BURNETTE BUILDING includes three commercial spaces on the first floor and three residential loft apartments upstairs. The apartments range in size from 590 to 700 square feet and include a full appliance package, security access, and on-site laundry facilities.

For information on residential spaces, contact Mary Bryant with the Rocky Mount-Edgecombe CDC at 252-446-1508.

## THORPE BUILDING

207-211 E. Thomas Street - constructed in 1905



*Before*

*After*

At a total of 3,446 square feet, THE THORPE BUILDING can be occupied by a single tenant or can be divided into spaces for two tenants. THE THORPE BUILDING is easily adaptable for a food service tenant.

## MANHATTAN THEATER

150-154 E. Thomas Street - constructed in 1940



*Before*

*After*

THE MANHATTAN THEATER is available for single occupancy or can be divided into bays for three tenants. The ground floor has 3,170 sq. ft. and the mezzanine area has 375 sq. ft. for a total of 3,545 square feet.

## STOKES BUILDING

constructed in 1924  
208-218 E. Thomas Street



*Before*



*After*

At a total of 4,770 square feet, THE STOKES BUILDING has two bays and is being developed as a medical pavilion to house two practices.

## COMPLETED HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECTS

The Douglas Block will add to the growing list of fine historic preservation projects in Downtown Rocky Mount, a National and Local Historic District. In 1994, **Harambee Square** was created by assembling numerous properties on South Washington Street. Besides ground floor commercial space, Harambee Square also has 24 units of senior citizen housing. **The Helen P. Gay Historic Train Station** was renovated in 1999 and is now a jewel in the crown of North Carolina's passenger rail system and a vibrant center of activity in Rocky Mount. In 2006, the 150,000 square foot **Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences** opened in a circa 1903-1924 former tobacco processing facility on the north end of downtown. The Imperial Centre houses the **Maria V. Howard Arts Center** (which includes a community theater), the **Rocky Mount Children's Museum & Science Center**--home to **Cummins Planetarium**, and a special exhibit honoring hometown hero and baseball legend **Buck Leonard**.

## MAIN STREET STREETScape

In addition to the Douglas Block, Rocky Mount's Main Street will undergo a \$6 million streetscape improvement in 2011. The streetscape project will include new sidewalks, street lights, furniture and trees along both sides of Main Street, greatly improving the curb appeal of Downtown Rocky Mount. Work will be coordinated to be finished in the Douglas Block area with the completion of the renovation of the buildings. The construction along Main Street is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2011.

## DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

The Douglas Block is a pillar in the revitalization of Downtown Rocky Mount. It is not only an important part of the city's ongoing downtown revitalization but, in a sense, is a microcosm of it. The Douglas Block encompasses the same positive characteristics to be capitalized on to grow and enhance the downtown area. These characteristics include a fine "historic fabric" of turn of the last century buildings, plans for converting those once commercial buildings to mixed-use commercial/residential, attractive and functional public spaces and amenities at a pedestrian scale and a focus on the Arts. The downtown follows the Main Street model as prescribed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Downtown Rocky Mount is an active North Carolina Main Street Community.

## DEMOGRAPHICS: THREE MILE RADIUS

What you'll find within a three mile radius of the Douglas Block:

**population:** 33,863  
**number of households:** 13,456  
**average household income:** \$43,719  
**businesses:** 1,856  
**employees:** 21,547  
**annual consumer spending:** \$39,673 per household

Within that three mile radius, Rocky Mount's downtown area has over 2,500 daytime employees working in over 300 businesses.

## PARKING AVAILABILITY

Ample parking is available to all the properties. On-street parking is available, as well as a newly constructed 100 space lot in the rear of the properties (on the north side of East Thomas Street). In addition, negotiations are underway to utilize 48 spaces across Thomas Street for public parking.

The map below shows the wide variety of parking options for tenants and visitors of the Douglas Block.



## CONTACT INFORMATION:

*To learn more about rental opportunities at the Douglas Block, including office, retail, or residential spaces, please contact any of the following individuals:*

### Merland Wright

Tenant Recruitment Coordinator  
 Rocky Mount-Edgecombe Community Development Corp.  
 rmeccdc@embarqmail.com | 252-343-2940

### Vanessa B. McCleary

Downtown Development Manager  
 The City of Rocky Mount  
 vanessa.mccleary@rockymountnc.gov  
 252- 972-1267 or 252-343-3154

### Alan Matthews

Director of Business Recruitment  
 The Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce  
 amathews@rockymountchamber.org | 252- 973-1213