

## **General Outdoor Advertising Company Richmond Branch (127-5834)**

**Staff Contact: C. Jeffries**

***Location and Current National Register Status:*** The General Outdoor Advertising Company Richmond Branch is located at 1000 Jefferson Davis Highway on an approximately three acre parcel at the southwest corner of Jefferson Davis Highway (Route 1) and Elton Street in an industrial section of South Richmond. The property is immediately adjacent to the Model Tobacco Company Building and its operations supported the advertising needs of the local tobacco industry. The nominated property contains two resources: the ca. 1930 office building which fronts onto Jefferson Davis Highway (Route 1) and the combined warehouse and shop (constructed in three campaigns from 1952 to 1968) which is located at the rear of the property. The property is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

***History and Significance:*** The nomination states that General Outdoor Advertising Company Richmond Branch is eligible for listing in the State and National Registers under Criteria A and C, and Criteria Consideration G with a period of significance starting in 1930 and ending in 1972. Under Criterion A the property is eligible in the area of art for the billboards it produced, commerce for its affiliation with two of the largest outdoor advertising companies, and industry as the location where the billboards were produced. Under Criterion C it is eligible in the area of architecture for its use of Art Deco design in a commercial and industrial context. The complex meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration G, as its significance extends to 1972, the apex of popularity for traditional billboard advertising and the end of a period of prominence for the Richmond branch. The work of the Richmond branch of the General Outdoor Advertising Company declined as a result of federal legislation limiting the outdoor promotion of tobacco products. The complex retains a high level of historic integrity.

***Staff Recommendations and Comments:*** The General Outdoor Advertising Company Richmond Branch reflects the industrial history of Richmond, the prominence of the tobacco industry to the local economy, and the use of Art Deco architecture in the early 1930s for commercial buildings. Staff recommends that the Commission support the listing of this property on the State and National Historic Registers, under National Register Criteria A and C, and Criteria Consideration G in the areas of commerce, industry, art, and architecture with a period of significance from 1930 to 1972.