The Tower Building

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Location and Current National Register Status: The Tower Building is located in the southwest corner of the block bounded by Cutshaw Ave. on the South, Tilden St. on the west, West Broad St. on the north, and Cleveland St. on the east. It is listed as a non-contributing resource in the Scott's Addition Historic District because it was constructed after the period of significance.

History and Significance: The Tower Building was constructed in 1961 by the Pen-Rea Corporation as a result of the rezoning of the area from residential to an H Commercial District. This change was made to attract professional offices to the area, which was closer to downtown but still provided the extra space and vehicular access enjoyed in the suburbs. Businesses immediately began leasing space in the building which housed 17 insurance companies by 1965.

The Tower Building is a good example of a medium-scale International Style office building, with Structuralist influences, designed by local architect David Warren Hardwicke. The structure possesses geometrical forms, exposed structural elements, a flat roof, windows set flush to the outer walls, concrete and glass, a lack of conventional ornamentation, and a brise-soleil of traditional Virginian red brick. The structure also includes a parking area beneath the elevated second and third floors. Hardwicke addressed the challenges of heat and parking in unique ways with the design of this building.

Staff Recommendations and Comments:
The application of the National Register criteria indicates that the structure is eligible for listing under National Register Criterion C for its architecture at the local level with a period of significance of 1961. The structure represents a distinctive work of a prominent local architect and is a good example of the International Style with a high degree of integrity. Staff recommends that the Commission support the nomination of the building under National Register Criterion C at the local level.