

## THE PARK MANUFACTURING COMPANY

[Click here to view photo gallery of the Park Manufacturing Company.](#)



*This report was written on December 3, 1980.*

**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Park Manufacturing Company is located at 311 Arlington Ave. in Charlotte, NC.

**2. Name, address and telephone number of the present owner and occupant of the property:**

The present owner and occupant of the property is:

The Park Manufacturing Company

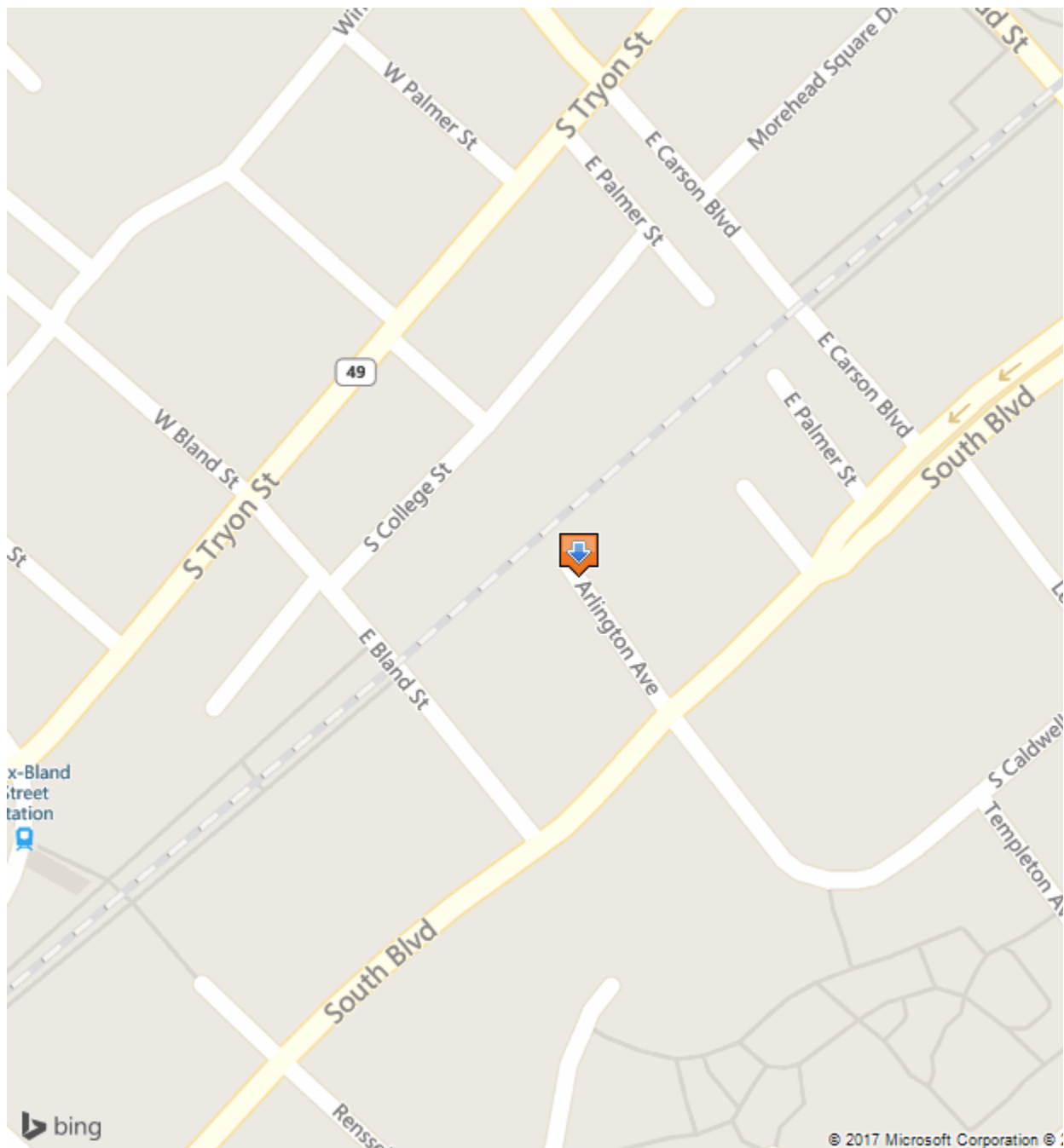
311 Arlington Ave.

Charlotte, NC 28203

Telephone: (704) 333-9805

**3. Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property.

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map which depicts the location of the property.



**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** The most recent deed to this property is listed in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 129 at page 21. The current Tax Parcel Number of the property is 123-036-01.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:**

[Dilworth](#), Charlotte's initial streetcar suburb, opened on May 20, 1891, when the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company, locally known as the Four C's, began selling lots there.<sup>1</sup> Originally intended to be a resort and a residential enclave for the prominent and affluent citizens of this community, Dilworth acquired an industrial district of considerable local importance by the mid-1890's.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, in October 1895, the *Charlotte Observer* called Dilworth the "Manchester of Charlotte."<sup>3</sup> Among the manufacturing plants which arose beside the tracks of the Charlotte, Columbia & Augusta Railroad at the western edge of the suburb was the factory of the Park Manufacturing Company. Construction began on August 4, 1895.<sup>4</sup> The enterprise was not officially incorporated until March 1898, however.<sup>5</sup> Four individuals were primarily responsible for overseeing the early activities of the Park Manufacturing Company, which was named for the park-like setting in which its factory was situated.<sup>6</sup> They were John R. Pharr (1852-1924), W. E. Moffatt (1855-1929), W. E. McElroy (1866-1925) and William Anderson (1854-1938).<sup>7</sup>

Moffatt had invented a variable-stroke boiler-feed pump and an accompanying water heater. They constituted the principal products of the firm in the beginning.<sup>8</sup> A native of Chester County, SC, Moffatt was a deft and imaginative machinist, having learned the trade in the machine shop of his grandfather, John Simpson.<sup>9</sup> Pharr, the president of the company, had come to Charlotte in 1879 to work for Edward Dilworth Latta, who operated a retail clothing store and who would later establish the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company, the developer of Dilworth. In the opinion of the *Charlotte Observer*, Pharr was "one of the most prominent men in Charlotte." A bachelor and the son of Walter W. Pharr, a Presbyterian minister, John R. Pharr was extremely active in community affairs. He was an elder at Second Presbyterian Church, and he served as the treasurer of the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church. At the time of his death in August 1924, he was president of the Mutual Building and Loan Association.<sup>10</sup> The *Charlotte News* characterized Pharr as "a man of charitable impulses and genial nature."<sup>11</sup> W. E. McElroy, a native of Mecklenburg County who died on March 14, 1925, was the secretary-treasurer of the Park Manufacturing Company.<sup>12</sup> William Anderson, the last of the original incorporators of the firm, was a Scotsman who had migrated to the United States in the early 1870's. He also made a significant impact upon the development of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. In addition to his association with the Park Manufacturing Company, Anderson served as the superintendent of schools for Mecklenburg County

and as the registrar of Queens College. He was also a member of the Board of Directors of the American Trust Company.<sup>13</sup>

On January 11, 1902, the *Charlotte Observer* reported that the Park Manufacturing Company was erecting a three-story addition to its factory in Dilworth.<sup>14</sup> One can reasonably assume that this expansion was a result of the company's entry into the field of manufacturing elevators, which has been its major endeavor since the turn of the century.<sup>15</sup> Another event of considerable consequence for the firm occurred in 1905, when W. E. Moffatt withdrew from the Park Manufacturing Company and established the Moffatt Machinery Manufacturing Company, which he headed until his death in January 1929.<sup>16</sup> J. C. Crowell (1873-1966), a native of Monroe, N.C., began to oversee the operations of the Park Manufacturing Company at about the time of Moffatt's departure, and he became president of the firm in 1908. Crowell essentially ran the company from 1905 until he was forced to retire in 1960 for health reasons. Thereafter, J. Aubrey Chrisman (1903- ), who had joined the corporation in 1932, assumed the responsibility of administering operations. He continues in that capacity.<sup>17</sup>

The factory which the Park Manufacturing Company erected in Dilworth in 1895 and expanded in 1902 is remarkably well preserved. Indeed, it is the finest example of a late nineteenth-century vernacular brick industrial plant that survives in Charlotte, NC. Also worth noting is the fact that the plant continues to produce elevators. The Park Manufacturing Company has shipped elevators throughout the Southeastern United States from its factory in Dilworth, and it continues to do so. Dilworth does retain four other early industrial plants: the Charlotte Trouser Factory, the Atherton Cotton Mill, the D. A. Tompkins Co. Dilworth Machine Shop and the D. A. Tompkins Co. Dilworth Foundry. However, none of these serves its original purpose, and all have experienced substantial modification. On balance, therefore, the factory of the Park Manufacturing Company is a unique element in the built environment of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

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Notes:

<sup>1</sup> *Charlotte News* (May 20, 1891), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The Atherton Cotton Mill opened in April 1893. The Charlotte Trouser Co. began operations in Dilworth on March 21, 1894. The pace of industrialization quickened in 1895, when six factories, including the plant of the Park Manufacturing Co., opened in Dilworth.

<sup>3</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (October 23, 1895), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (August 4, 1895), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Mecklenburg County Record of Corporations Book 1, p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (August 7, 1924) , p. 13. *Charlotte Observer* (August 8, 1924) , p. 8 and p. 9. *Charlotte News* (August 7, 1924), pp. 1 and 9. *Charlotte News* (March 16, 1925), p. 2. *Charlotte News* (January 29, 1929), p. 19. *Charlotte Observer* (January 29, 1929), Sec. 2, p. 1. *Charlotte News* (June 6, 1938), p. 9. *Charlotte Observer* (June 7, 1938), Sec. 2, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Mecklenburg County Record of Corporations Book 1, p. 62.

<sup>8</sup> For an illustration of the Moffatt Pump, see the advertisement of the Park Manufacturing Co. in *Charlotte Observer* (May 20, 1896), p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (January 29, 1929), Sec. 2, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (August 7, 1924), p. 13. *Charlotte Observer* (August 8, 1924), p. 8 and p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> *Charlotte News* (August 7, 1924), pp. 1 and 9.

<sup>12</sup> *Charlotte News* (March 16, 1925), p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (June 7, 1938), Sec. 2, p. 1. For a photograph of William Anderson, see *Charlotte News*(June 6, 1938), p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (January 11, 1902), p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Interview of Mr. J. Aubrey Chrisman by Dr. Dan L. Morrill (November 19, 1980). Hereafter cited as Interview.

<sup>16</sup> Interview. Mecklenburg County Record of Corporations Book 1, p. 486.

<sup>17</sup> Interview. Mecklenburg County Record of Corporations Book 10, p. 641. *Charlotte Observer* (February 28, 1966), p. 4C.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains an architectural description of the property prepared by Mary Alice Dixon Hinson, Architectural Historian.

**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-399.4:**

**a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance:**

The Commission judges that the property known as the Park Manufacturing Company in Charlotte, NC, does possess special historic significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations. The building is the finest local example of a late nineteenth century vernacular brick industrial plant. The building has served the same firm since it was erected in 1895 and expanded in 1902. The building is the best preserved remnant of the old industrial district in Dilworth, Charlotte's initial streetcar suburb.

**b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association:**

The Commission judges that the architectural description included herein demonstrates that the property known as the Park Manufacturing Company meets this criterion.

**9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply annually for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes "historic property." The current Ad Valorem appraisal on the Park Manufacturing Company is \$25,570. The current Ad Valorem appraisal on the .908 acres of land is \$31,640. The most recent Ad Valorem tax bill for the structure and land was \$998.31. The property is zoned 12.

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Bibliography

*Charlotte News.*

*Charlotte Observer*

Interview of J. Aubrey Chrisman by Dr. Dan L. Morrill (November 19, 1980).

Mecklenburg County Records of Corporations.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Tax Office.

Vital Statistics of Mecklenburg County. **Date of Preparation of this Report:**  
December 3, 1980.

**Prepared by:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Director  
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