

# **Highland Park Mill No. 1, Charlotte**

## **Survey and Research Report**



*South elevation, undated photograph from the Mary Lois Moore Yandle Collection,  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room*

**Prepared for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission  
by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc.**

**October 2017**



6. **A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a history of the property written by Heather Fearnbach.
7. **A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains an architectural description of the property written by Heather Fearnbach.
8. **Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N. C. Gen. Stat. 160A-400.5:**
  - a. **Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance:**

The Commission judges that Highland Park Mill No. 1 possesses special industrial significance in Charlotte – Mecklenburg based upon the following consideration:

    1. Highland Park Mill No. 1 was one of Charlotte’s largest and longest-operating textile producers. The enterprise’s contribution to the local economy as a manufacturer, employer, consumer of local goods and services, and taxpayer, was enormous from 1892, when Mill No. 1 was placed into service, through the 1960s.
  - b. **Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association:**

The Commission contends that the architectural description in this report demonstrates that Highland Park Mill No. 1 meets this criterion.
9. **Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes a designated “historic landmark.” The current appraised value of the property is \$4,026,000.
10. **Portion of the property recommended for designation:** The interior and exterior of the building, and the land associated with the tax parcel.
11. **Date of preparation of this report:** October 25, 2017.



## Historical Background and Industrial Context

In the 1850s, the Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line, North Carolina Central, North Carolina State, and Charlotte and South Carolina Railroads connected Charlotte to the region's major markets, facilitating the transport of raw materials and manufactured goods. By the late nineteenth century, myriad factories erected near the railroads' main and spur lines generated large quantities of building supplies, chemicals, equipment and machinery, pharmaceuticals, processed food, and textiles. In order to take advantage of lower land prices and allow for unfettered expansion, many Charlotte industrialists located plants on the municipality's outskirts rather than in its downtown core.<sup>1</sup> Local investors speculated on the burgeoning textile industry, organizing Charlotte Cotton Mills in 1881 and three cotton spinning and weaving plants—Ada, Alpha, and Victor Mills—in 1889.<sup>2</sup>

Daniel A. Tompkins was among the contingent of investors who met on June 15, 1891, to organize Charlotte's fifth cotton mill, Highland Park Manufacturing Company. Tompkins, who headed the Charlotte engineering firm that designed the 1889 mills, was a South Carolina native sent by the Pittsburgh-based Westinghouse Engine Company to Charlotte in the early 1880s to sell and coordinate the installation of the company's equipment in the region. He became a driving force in the southern textile industry. Tompkins partnered with Charlotte grain merchant R. M. Miller in 1883 to establish the D. A. Tompkins Company. The engineering firm created plans for over one hundred mills in addition to other industrial buildings.<sup>3</sup>

Highland Park Manufacturing Company shareholders elected A. G. Brenizer, P. M. Brown, R. H. Jordan, M. C. Mayer, J. S. Spencer, Fred Oliver, and P. D. Walker to serve as the first board of directors and incorporated with R. H. Jordan as president and A. G. Brenizer as secretary and treasurer. In early July, W. W. Phifer sold the enterprise a ten-acre tract north of downtown Charlotte near the Richmond and Danville Railroad switch yard. Later that month, the railroad company began laying a spur line to the mill site.<sup>4</sup> Construction of a 508-by-77-foot brick mill designed by D. A. Tompkins Company and estimated to cost \$28,000 was soon underway. Gingham production commenced in early 1892 under H. F. Daugherty's supervision. Two hundred employees operated five hundred looms in May 1893, when the company announced plans to install 260 Crompton looms. That summer, the concern recruited Robert M. Griffith from Philadelphia to supervise the mill.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> LeGette Blythe and Charles Raven Brockmann. *Hornet's Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County* (Charlotte: McNally of Charlotte, 1961), 272-273; Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 15, 31-32, 48-50.

<sup>2</sup> Approximately half of the vacant Ada Mill survives at 630 West Eleventh Street. The only surviving components of the 1889 Alpha Mill at 311 East Twelfth Street are the smokestack and boiler room. Victor Mill, which was located in South Cedar Street's 800 block, has been demolished. Tompkins also designed the 1892 Atherton Mill at 2108 South Boulevard, which has been adaptively reused as residential units. William H. Huffman and Lisa A. Stamper, "Alpha Cotton Mill," Local Historic Landmark Designation Report, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1984; Sarah A. Woodard and Sherry Joines Wyatt, "Industry, Transportation and Education: The New South Development of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County," report prepared for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission and the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, September 2001, 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City*, 50.

<sup>4</sup> The Gingham Mill," *CO*, June 14, 1891, p. 4; "Listen to the Hum," *CO*, June 16, 1891, p. 4; "Charlotte's Gingham Mill," *MT*, June 19, 1891, p. 5; "The Gingham Mill," *CO*, July 17, 1891, p. 4; "A Back Number," *CO*, July 26, 1891, p. 6; "A Track to the Gingham Mill," *CO*, July 31, 1891, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Citizen* (Asheville), October 8, 1891, p. 8; "City and County," *MT*, October 30, 1891, p. 5; "Building," *CO*, February 7, 1892, p. 2; "The First Yard of Cloth from the Gingham Mill," *CO*, March 5, 1892, p. 4; *Charlotte Democrat*, May 5, 1893, p. 2; "Highland Park Manufacturing Company," *CO*, January 10, 1893, p. 4; "New and Finer Line of Ginghams," *CO*, July 27, 1894, p. 4; D. A. Tompkins, *Cotton Mill, Commercial Features* (Charlotte: D. A. Tompkins, 1899), 46.

Vinton Liddell assumed the company's presidency in January 1894 and J. S. Spencer its vice-presidency. After Liddell's February 1895 resignation to pursue other business interests, the board selected W. E. Holt to serve as president and Charles W. Johnston, the company's new treasurer, to fill Liddell's position as a director. Johnston, a Cabarrus County native Charles and Davidson College graduate, had previously functioned for about ten years as the superintendent of Cornelius Mills, located in the community of the same name north of Charlotte.<sup>6</sup>

In 1895, Highland Park Manufacturing Company, Victor Cotton Mills, and Charlotte Cotton Mills were the largest of Charlotte's seven textile manufacturers. Superintendent Griffith oversaw approximately 300 Highland Park Mill employees who produced cotton yarn and fabric on 6,000 spindles and 430 looms. New York agents Carey, Bayne, and Smith marketed the finished goods. At Victor Cotton Mills, 200 workers generated yarn with 11,500 spindles and 90 cards. Charlotte Cotton Mills' 200 employees wove sheeting on 204 looms.<sup>7</sup>

Increased demand for Highland Park Manufacturing Company's products required a series of plant improvements. In 1895 contractors expanded the weaving mill with a one-story-on-basement addition at its south end and erected a 175-foot-long spinning mill with a 5,000-spindle capacity to the east of the existing building. The spinning mill's structure was substantially complete by December and equipment installation began in January 1896.<sup>8</sup> In October, the company constructed a one-story-on-basement 70-by-40-foot warehouse west of the 1891/1895 mill's south section. The concern also subsidized infrastructure including a 25-foot-wide by 145-foot-long bridge over Town Creek and a 70-foot-wide road that led from East Trade Street to the mill complex.<sup>9</sup> Many employees lived in one-story, weatherboarded, company-built houses east of the industrial complex and a row of four shotgun quadruplexes north of the mill.<sup>10</sup>

Highland Park Manufacturing Company's output remained consistent in 1897, when workers utilized 6,000 spindles and 500 looms to weave staple and fancy gingham fabric. The concern's success inspired its administrators to undertake many associated industrial endeavors. C. W. Hall, C. W. Johnston, and J. S. Spencer incorporated Anchor Mills and purchased, remodeled, and installed new equipment in Virgin Mill, both located about fourteen miles north of Highland Park Mill in Huntersville. C. W. Johnston managed Highland Park and Anchor Mills from his Charlotte office. D. A. Tompkins Company fulfilled many of the company's equipment orders, including the looms manufactured by Taunton, Massachusetts-based Mason Machine Works that were installed in Highland Park Mill, bringing the total number to 600 in 1898.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Charlotte Democrat*, January 26, 1894, p. 2; "Mill News," *CO*, January 17, 1895, p. 4, and February 22, 1895, p. 4; James R. Young and Marjorie W. Young, *Textile Leaders of the South* (Columbia, S. C.: R. L. Bryan Company, 1963), 109.

<sup>7</sup> Davison Publishing Company, *The Blue Book: Textile Directory of the United States and Canada, 1894-1895* (New York: Davison Publishing Company, 1894), 92; "Summary of the 184 Cotton Mills in Operation in North Carolina," [Raleigh] *News and Observer Cotton Mill Edition*, November 28, 1895. These sources present conflicting statistics. Davison indicates that Highland Park Manufacturing Company had 500 looms and 200 employees in 1894. The *News and Observer* lists the statistics cited in the narrative.

<sup>8</sup> Another Story on the Gingham Mill," *MT*, January 10, 1895, p. 1; "Mill News," *CO*, July 19, 1895, p. 4; "Seven Cotton Mills," *CO*, July 30, 1895, p. 4; "Charlotte News," *Messenger* (Wilmington), August 27, 1895, p. 3; "Work Begun on a New Factory," *MT*, August 29, 1895, p. 4; "Mill Notes," *CO*, October 31, 1895, p. 4; January 18, 1896, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> "May 10, 1896, p. 1, and October 10, 1896, p. 4; "East Trade Street to be Extended and Straightened," *CO*, March 6, 1896, p. 4; "I Stood on the Bridge," *CO*, May 14, 1896, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Sanborn Map Company, "Charlotte," February 1896, Sheet 12.

<sup>11</sup> *Textile World*, *Textile World's Directory of the Mill Trade in the United States* (Boston: Guild and Lord, 1897), 163; "The Leading Southern Mill Town," *CO*, October 17, 1897, p. 12; "The Mason Machine Works," *CO*, January 15,

In August 1898, Highland Park Manufacturing Company announced plans to erect a 20-by33-foot school in the mill village adjacent to its Charlotte plant. In September, the concern expanded to its operations to Rock Hill, South Carolina, with the acquisition of Standard Mills, which became Highland Park Mill No. 2. Charlotte superintendent Charles H. Branson moved to Rock Hill to oversee the factory renovation. By April 1900, Highland Park Mill No. 2's 325 employees operated 6,200 spindles and 625 looms. The company planned to add 175 looms that year.<sup>12</sup>

In 1900, twelve Charlotte mills generated a wide variety of cotton products ranging from yarn to fabric, towels, bed spreads, sash cords, clothes lines, braided goods, furniture batting, and mattress stuffing. Highland Park Manufacturing Company, with capital stock valued at \$200,000, remained one of the largest. That year, its 350 employees ran 468 looms and 7,000 spindles. The concern commissioned New York sales agents F. Vietor and Achelis to market its wide assortment of gingham fabrics. Other sizable Charlotte plants included Atherton Mills (10,000 spindles), Charlotte Cotton Mills (104 looms and 10,352 spindles), Louise Mills (13,500 spindles, 520 looms, 23 cards), and Victor Cotton Mills (12,672 spindles and 90 cards).<sup>13</sup>

Highland Park Manufacturing Company continued to explore ways to maximize efficiency and profit. Contractors finished erecting a two-story brick cotton seed oil mill at Highland Park Mill No. 2 in September 1902. In order to increase production in Charlotte, the company acquired property approximately one mile north of Highland Park Mill No. 1 for the construction of a sizable plant that would function as Highland Park Mill No. 3.<sup>14</sup> Work commenced in March 1903. Concord brick mason R. A. Brown's crew made the bricks used to build the mill on site. In May, Gastonia contractor A. K. Loftin and approximately fifteen carpenters in his employ began executing the mill's wood components. When the mill opened in November 1904, 800 workers operated 30,000 spindles and 1,000 looms. The complex grew with the September 1905 completion of a cotton gin. The company transported extracted cotton seeds to Highland Park Mill No. 2's cotton seed oil mill for processing.<sup>15</sup>

Highland Park Mill No. 1 continued to play an essential role in the company's success. By May 1905, the plant included a small one-story office that fronted the access road on the complex's north side. A series of connected buildings extended north from the two-story 1896 warehouse west of the 1891 mill, almost spanning the distance to the office. Mill employees operated 7,500 spindles and 467 looms.<sup>16</sup> In 1906, Highland Park Mill No. 1's management team comprised superintendent J. F. Scott, assistant superintendent R. W. Stokes, carder John Shelby, spinner L. O. Skidmore, weaver R. B. Brown, finisher R. T. Martin, dyer A. Carson, and shipper T. M. Constable. Charles W. Johnston assumed the

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1898, p. 2; North Carolina Department of Labor and Printing, *Eleventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Guy V. Barnes, 1898), 35.

<sup>12</sup> Sanborn Map Company, "Charlotte," February 1896, Sheet 12; *CO*, August 1, 1898, p. 5; "Mill News," *CO*, September 29, 1898, p. 5, and February 17, 1899, p. 5; "Rock Hill Mills," *Charlotte News* (hereafter abbreviated *CN*), April 6, 1900, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> *Official Edition of the Blue Book Textile Directory* (New York: Davison Publishing Company, 1901), 125; Franklin McNeill, chairman, *Report of the North Carolina Corporation Commission as a Board of State Tax Commissioners* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1902), 77.

<sup>14</sup> Textile Notes," *People's Paper*, April 9, 1902, p. 1; "Highland Park Company," *CN*, August 30, 1902, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> "Work on Highland Park Mill," *CN*, May 19, 1903, p. 2; "New Highland Park Mill," *CN*, November 4, 1904, p. 2; Stuart W. Cramer, *Useful Information For Cotton Manufacturers* (Charlotte: Queen City Printing Company, 1906, 2nd ed., Vol. III), 1227-1298; "Cotton Mill News," *CO*, September 25, 1905, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> Davison Publishing Company, *The Blue Book: Textile Directory of the United States and Canada*, 1904-1905, 125; Sanborn Map Company, "Charlotte," May 1905, Sheet 31; *American Cotton and Wool Reporter*, June 14, 1906, p. 776.

company's presidency in March of that year. He subsequently initiated the acquisition and construction of many additional mills.<sup>17</sup>

By 1907, Highland Park Manufacturing Company had grown to become the nation's third-largest gingham producer after New Hampshire's Amoskeag and Manchester Mills. The concern's three mills encompassed approximately 46,000 spindles and 3,000 looms. Of that number, around 8,000 spindles at Mill No. 1, 4,620 spindles at Mill No. 2, and 10,000 spindles in Mill No. 3 generated yarn used to weave gingham cloth.<sup>18</sup>

Charlotte's textile industry burgeoned during the twentieth century's first decade. In 1910, twenty-two mills reported production statistics. Sheeting producer Chadwick-Hoskins Company, established in 1908, owned four plants that altogether encompassed 90,000 spindles and 2,385 looms. At Highland Manufacturing Company's two Charlotte mills, superintendent A. B. Saunders managed approximately four hundred employees who operated 38,000 spindles and 1,460 looms. New York agents F. Vietor and Achelis marketed the concern's staple and fancy ginghams.<sup>19</sup>

In response to strong sales, Highland Park Manufacturing Company in 1912 announced plans to install equipment at Highland Park Mill Nos. 1 and 2. Architect Stuart W. Cramer's firm, which had previously designed Highland Park Mill No. 3, rendered plans for the \$7,000 brick addition erected to house 8,000 additional spindles at Highland Park Mill No. 1. At Highland Park Mill No. 2, which was to receive 8,000 spindles and 125 looms, the expansion entailed the construction of a two-story wing.<sup>20</sup>

Stuart W. Cramer, a Thomasville, North Carolina, native who began his career with the D. A. Tompkins Company, was a highly influential mill engineer. He set up his own Charlotte firm in 1895, and by 1915 had designed almost one-third of the new mills erected in the South during that period. In addition to preparing plans for mills, Cramer equipped facilities with textile production machinery of all types, some of which he invented. His salesmen, based in Charlotte and Atlanta offices, travelled throughout the country. Cramer's innovations in textile mill climate control garnered him international recognition, and he is credited with conceiving the term "air conditioning." Cramer became a shareholder in some of his client's textile concerns, including Highland Park Manufacturing Company.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Over the course of the next four decades, Charles W. Johnston, assisted by his brother E. H. Johnston, his son Richard Horace Johnston, and other executive staff including T. W. Church, Donald R. Jonas, Fred Kreuger, and Charles J. Stokes, managed a conglomerate of North Carolina plants that included Anchor Mills in Huntersville, Brown Manufacturing Company in Concord, Eastern Manufacturing Company in Selma, Johnston Manufacturing Company in Charlotte, Norcott Mills Company in Concord, Park Yarn Mills in Kings Mountain, Union Mills Company in Monroe, Worth Spinning Company in Stony Point, and Spinners Processing Company in Spindale, as well as Belton Yarn Mill in Texas. *American Cotton and Wool Reporter*, June 14, 1906, p. 776; "Mr. Stokes Succeeds Mr. Constable," *CN*, June 21, 1906, p. 5; Young and Young, *Textile Leaders of the South*, 766.

<sup>18</sup> "Third Largest Mill," *CO*, February 2, 1907, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> The company reported amalgamated statistics for its two Charlotte plants in textile directories. Davison Publishing Company, *The Blue Book: Textile Directory of the United States and Canada, 1910-1911*, 133-134.

<sup>20</sup> "Highland Park Mfg. Company will Enlarge Rock Hill Plant," *CN*, March 13, 1912, p. 4; "Charlotte Attracting Attention," *CN*, March 13, 1912, p. 4; "Work Begins on Addition to Highland Park Mill No. 1," *Evening Chronicle* (hereafter abbreviated *EC*), April 17, 1912, p. 8; "Building Improvements for May \$142,040," *EC*, May 23, 1912, p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas S. Morgan, "Stuart Warren Cramer" in William Powell, ed., *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Vol. 1 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 455; Catherine Westergaard, "Stuart W. Cramer," *North Carolina Architects and Builders: A Biographical Dictionary*, <http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000275> (accessed 2016).



In 1912, C. W. Johnston led a group of investors to expand their business interests through Johnston Manufacturing Company's organization. Most of the stockholders and officers were involved with Johnston's other industrial concerns. Contractors began work in May on a site near Highland Park Mill No. 3, and the 8,000-spindle coarse-yarn plant that bore the company's name was fully operational in February 1913.<sup>22</sup>

By 1914, the Highland Park Mill No. 1 complex comprised three factories and three warehouses bounded on the east, west, and south by railroad lines operated by the Seaboard, Southern, and Norfolk and Southern Railways. Materials shortages impacted production during World War I. In March 1915, England enforced an embargo on German goods including the indigo dye that Highland Park Manufacturing Company utilized for its gingham. By 1918, approximately sixty company employees had enlisted in the military.<sup>23</sup>

During World War I, labor leaders and textile worker unions successfully advocated for more equitable schedules and increased pay. However, on February 20, 1919, Highland Park Manufacturing Company announced a thirty-five percent wage reduction (eliminating a wartime bonus of that amount) and cut most workers' weekly hours from 60 to 44. These measures more than halved employee compensation. On February 24th, approximately 150 Highland Park Mill No. 3 card and weave room workers immediately responded with a walk-out, joined by some Highland Park Mill No. 1 and Johnston Manufacturing Company operatives. The 1,500-employee strike that closed three mills for four months beginning in early March did not achieve the desired result, as the pay scale and 55-hour work week remained unchanged.<sup>24</sup>

Highland Park Manufacturing Company attempted to bolster employee morale by providing amenities such as the \$75,000 community center erected on East Thirty-Second Street near Highland Park Mill No. 3 in October 1920. The building was part of a recreational complex that included a swimming pool, bath house, and lake open to all of the concern's Charlotte employees. Reverend E. G. Carson and several assistants organized night classes and an athletic program. In March 1922, Mabel Johnson began providing domestic science instruction at the community center, which is no longer extant.<sup>25</sup> The company also subsidized the 1921 construction of an auditorium and Sunday school classrooms at Duncan Memorial Methodist Church, located at the northwest corner of Brevard and Fourteenth Streets just south of Highland Park Mill No. 1.<sup>26</sup>

The Charlotte Chamber of Commerce boasted in 1925 that the city was the South's textile center, encompassing 771 mills and ten million spindles within 75 miles. The chamber also claimed that Charlotte had "the world's second-greatest hydro-electric power system," which efficiently supplied industrial plants including Highland Park Manufacturing Company. The concern's 1,000 Charlotte

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<sup>22</sup> "New 5,000-Spindle Coarse Yarn Mill for Charlotte," *EC*, April 2, 1912, p. 6; *EC*, May 20, 1912, p. 1, and February 1, 1913, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> "After Big Tract on New Railroad," *CO*, January 24, 1914, p. 1; "Dyestuffs Supply Out," *Robesonian*, March 18, 1915, p. 2; "The Living Conditions are Excellent at the Highland Park Manufacturing Company's Mills," *CO*, April 21, 1918, p. 23.

<sup>24</sup> Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones and Christopher B. Daly, *Like a Family: The Making of the Southern Cotton Mill World* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987), 186-187; "Strike at Mill No. Three," *CN*, February 25, 1919, p. 2; "150 Textile Operatives Protest Wage Reduction," *CO*, February 26, 1919, p. 4; "Bendheim Would Adjust Strikes at Three Mills," *CO*, March 4, 1919, p. 5; "Mills of this Section Running Again After a Period of Idleness," *CO*, June 15, 1919, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> *CN*, August 26, 1920, p. 16; "Mill Employees Use New Home," *Concord Times*, October 21, 1920, p. 1; *CN*, March 6, 1922, p. 6; Sanborn Map Company, "Charlotte," 1929, Volume 2, Sheet 260.

<sup>26</sup> "Duncan Memorial Church Enlargement Completed," *CO*, May 16, 1921, p. 6.



employees then generated staple gingham on 46,000 spindles and 1,800 looms. New York agents F. Viotor and Achelis and T. Holt Haywood, a Winston-Salem agriculturalist and businessman working in New York, served as the primary product purveyors. Other high-volume Charlotte cotton manufacturers included Atherton Mills (15,000 spindles and 30 cards), Chadwick-Hoskins Company (102,412 spindles and 2,314 looms), Elizabeth Mills (16,350 spindles and 20 cards), and Savona Manufacturing Company (22,000 spindles and 743 looms)<sup>27</sup>

C. W. Johnston led myriad businesses including Highland Park Manufacturing Company and Anchor Mills Company as they prospered during the 1920s. Anchor Mills Company engaged prolific New York architect William L. Stoddart to design a building that would house the corporate headquarters of the concerns under Johnston's management in addition to offices for other Charlotte professionals. Hunkey-Construction Company erected the imposing fifteen-story, steel-frame, blonde-brick and limestone, Classical Revival-style skyscraper that was the city's tallest structure upon its 1924 completion. Lockwood Greene executed drawings for two additional floors in 1928. The company named the building in honor of Johnston, who maintained an office there until his 1938 retirement.<sup>28</sup>

North Carolina textile mills diversified production during the early 1930s as the industry faced challenges nationwide. More efficient equipment and mechanization that transformed manufacturing operations resulted in mill employee layoffs. Job loss, decreased pay, and poor working conditions made unions more appealing. These factors set the stage for mill employees across the South to participate in the General Textile Strike of 1934, which closed down textile mills throughout the region. Many mill owners fired known union members and sympathizers. Union efforts were not in vain, however, as the Roosevelt administration's social and economic reform programs eventually resulted in the institution of a forty-hour work week and increased worker pay. Highland Park Manufacturing Company employees initiated intermittent strikes through the 1930s. In September 1937, for example, Highland Park Mill No. 3 closed for several weeks after approximately 750 workers staged a walk-out to protest schedule changes.<sup>29</sup>

The number of Charlotte cotton mills reporting production declined between 1925 and 1935, as some concerns, including Atherton Mills, were forced to permanently discontinue operations during the Great Depression. However, Highland Park Manufacturing Company maintained consistent output despite the economic downturn. In 1935, 1,200 employees at the two Charlotte plants utilized 150 cards, 500 broad looms, 940 narrow looms, 4,000 twisting spindles, and 46,000 ring spindles to produce broadcloths, crinkle cloths, seersuckers, gingham, and piques. New York agents Hayward, Mackay, and Valentine, Inc. marketed the fabric.<sup>30</sup>

Highland Park Manufacturing Company's administration changed in 1938, when C. W. Johnston's son Richard Horace Johnston assumed its oversight. He also served as president or vice-president of each of the firm's other mills. Under his direction, Highland Park Manufacturing Company adjusted production in order to fulfill United States military requisitions during World War II. The concern's

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<sup>27</sup> Davison Publishing Company, *Davison's Textile Blue Book: United States and Canada, 1925-1926*, 302-303.

<sup>28</sup> C. W. Johnston died on July 4, 1941. Anchor Mills Company owned the C. W. Johnston Building until 1975. Johnson Building, Ltd. acquired and renovated the property at 212 South Tryon Street in 1981. It remains in use as offices. *CN*, January 13, 1924, p. A2; *CN*, January 20, 1924, p. A10; Lockwood Green Records, 1872-2004, Finding Aid, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; *CO*, July 5, 1941, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> "Strike Conference Called," *Daily Times* (Burlington), September 17, 1937, p. 2; "New Strike Conferences," *Daily Times* (Burlington), September 23, 1937, p. 13; Hall, et. al., *Like a Family*, 202-208; Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 194-195.

<sup>30</sup> Davison Publishing Company, *Davison's Textile Blue Book: United States and Canada, 1935-1936*, 237.

employees were among the approximately 20,836 Mecklenburg County residents who served in the military during the war. Those left behind were occupied with the effort in a variety of ways, from participating in bond drives to filling vacant positions at factories that accelerated production to meet the needs of servicemen and women. Worker demographics changed as industrial jobs rose by seventy-five percent in the South over the course of World War II, with traditionally underemployed groups such as women, African Americans, and the elderly receiving invaluable education, training, and experience. Output soared after May 1943, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Office of War Mobilization to coordinate a diverse array of support endeavors including manufacturing, scientific research, and agricultural production.<sup>31</sup>

Highland Park Manufacturing Company's reported equipment quantities and employee numbers remained consistent in its Charlotte plants through the war. After Richard Horace Johnston suffered a heart attack that resulted in his October 22, 1949, death, David Rolston Johnston, who also held leadership roles at each mill, succeeded his father as Highland Park Manufacturing Company's president. T. W. Church Jr. maintained his role as secretary, treasurer, and general buyer.<sup>32</sup>

In 1950, twenty-five Charlotte plants manufactured a diverse array of cotton products. Yarn and fabric suppliers continued to decline in number, leaving only five sizable concerns: Calvine Cotton Mills, Highland Park Manufacturing Company, Johnston Manufacturing Company, Spatex Corporation (Hoskins Mill), and Textron Southern Inc. (Louise Mill). At Highland Park Mills Nos. 1 and 3, superintendent A. S. Jarret managed 1,200 employees who produced broadcloth, gingham, and combed shirting utilizing 42,000 ring spindles, 4,000 twisting spindles, 868 broad looms, and 150 cards. New York agents J. P. Stevens and Company located buyers for the company's goods.<sup>33</sup> The concern's 1,200 workers operated the same amount of equipment through 1965.<sup>34</sup> However, the business, still under David Johnston's oversight, dissolved in June 1969. Highland Park Mill No. 3 closed that year, followed by other mills once managed by the Johnston family in 1975.<sup>35</sup>

The Highland Park Mill No. 1 complex remained in use for textile production. Highland Mills, Inc., purchased the property on July 1, 1977 and utilized the plant until June 2016. The ladies hosiery manufacturer, established in 1972 as a twelve-person operation, grew to employ 150 people in 1978 and 500 workers in 1989. That year, the company completed the second phase of a warehouse addition begun in 1987 that spanned the mill's west elevation. The 1990 merger of Highland Mills and Admiration Hosiery resulted in a combined workforce of 650 employees. In 1992, the company erected a sizable east addition as well as an infill addition at the complex's south end. Charlotte architect Chet Helt prepared plans for the 1987, 1989, and 1992 expansions. By 2015, the plant

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<sup>31</sup> Spencer B. King, Jr., *Selective Service in North Carolina in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), 322; Marilyn M. Harper, et. al. *World War II and the American Home Front* (Washington, D. C.: The National Historic Landmarks Program, October 2007), 3, 13-16.

<sup>32</sup> *Davison's Textile Blue Book, 1941*, 232; *Davison's Textile Blue Book, 1944*, 242; "Horace Johnston, Textile Magnate, Dies Suddenly," *Gastonia Gazette*, October 24, 1949, p. 11.

<sup>33</sup> *Davison's Textile Blue Book, 1950*, 305-306.

<sup>34</sup> *Davison's Textile Blue Book, 1955*, 246; *Davison's Textile Blue Book, 1959*, 193; *Davison's Textile Blue Book, 1965*, 3-67.

<sup>35</sup> Young and Young, *Textile Leaders of the South*, 111, 767; Highland Park Manufacturing Company, August 25, 1964, memorandum in the "Highland Park Manufacturing Company" vertical file, Robinson-Spangler North Carolina Room, Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Library, Main Branch, Charlotte; Articles of Dissolution, Record of Corporations, Mecklenburg County Corporations Book 14C, p. 481; *CN*, March 13, 1975, p. 1.

functioned primarily as a warehouse. White Point Paces Partners, LLC, acquired the property for redevelopment purposes on June 21, 2016.<sup>36</sup>

## Architectural Description

### Setting

Located just north of Charlotte's commercial center, Highland Park Mill No. 1 occupies an irregularly shaped 8.67-acre tax parcel bounded by Norfolk Southern railroad tracks and right-of-way to the northwest, East Sixteenth Street to the northeast, North Brevard Street and Parkwood Avenue to the southeast, and the former Fourteenth Street corridor (now abandoned), to the southwest. The north section of North Brevard Street, which terminates south of Parkwood Avenue, will soon become part of a municipal recreational trail system.

The plant is rotated approximately thirty degrees from true cardinal direction alignment. However, for the purposes of this document the narrative is written as if the building has true north-south orientation. The East Sixteenth Street façade will thus be referred to as the north elevation.

The industrial complex encompasses a series of interconnected, one- and two-story, flat-roofed, rectangular buildings erected from 1891 through 1992. The manufacturing plant comprises three structures: an 1891 weaving mill enlarged to the south in 1895, an 1895 spinning mill east of that building, and a northeast 1912 addition that links the weaving and spinning mills. An office built between 1950 and 1953 projects at a slight angle from the north elevation's east section. Warehouses completed in 1987 and 1989 extend along the full length of the 1891/1895 mill's west elevation. A 1992 warehouse addition spans the distance between the 1895 addition and the 1895 spinning mill. The 1992 addition's construction created an interior courtyard.

The site's topography gradually slopes down to the south, allowing the south buildings to have above-grade basements. A creek with steep banks winds through the parcel's south end. Although the water table is significantly lower than the mill basements, flooding has been a problem.

A narrow swath of lawn flanks the concrete sidewalk leading to the entrance on the ca. 1950-1953 office's north elevation. Deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs fill the planting bed adjacent to the entrance. East of the office and the 1895/1912 mill, a lawn punctuated with a variety of trees and shrubs has been maintained inside the chain-link fence. A concrete sidewalk leads to the entrance in the 1987 hyphen that connects the office to the 1912 mill. On the complex's west side, a landscaped area adjacent to the 1989 addition's west wall mitigates the blind elevation's harshness.

A chain-link fence surrounds the mill and asphalt-paved parking lots to the south and west. Wide, sliding, chain-link gates secure the parking lot entrances on East Sixteenth and North Brevard streets. In the parcel's northeast section, the fence is set back from the sidewalk. A chain-link gate allows pedestrian access to the grass lawn between the office's east elevation and Parkwood Avenue. In the complex's northwest corner, the fence extends north from the 1989 warehouse's northeast corner and west across the parking lot. The west fence, which parallels the elevated light rail line, and the south fence, which borders the creek, are overgrown with vegetation.

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<sup>36</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 3967, p. 367; Deed Book 30923, p. 713; Highland Mills, Inc., "History Timeline," <http://highlandmills.com/> (accessed in January 2016); C. L. Helt Architects, Inc., "Site Plan: Highland Mills, Inc.," July 11, 1986, with revisions through September 24, 1988; Lake Elrod, Highland Mills, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, January 6, 2016.

The asphalt-paved parking lot on East Sixteenth Street's north side opposite the office was associated with the mill. The area north, south, and west of the complex is characterized by twentieth-century industrial and commercial development, while the area to the east is residential. A small group of one-story, frame, gable- and hip-roofed, early-twentieth-century mill worker houses remain southeast of the plant, but they have been heavily altered, as has Duncan Memorial Methodist Church south of the mill, which was part of the mill village. The church stands at what was the northwest corner of North Brevard and Fourteenth Streets.

Three-story condominiums were erected on Parkwood Avenue's east side in the early twenty-first century. The area is currently experiencing revitalization in conjunction with the extension of Charlotte Area Transit System's Blue Line, an elevated light rail that parallels the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks. The mill site affords a clear view of downtown Charlotte skyscrapers.

### Site Evolution

Historic photographs, renderings, and Sanborn maps illustrate Highland Park Mill No. 1's growth. These sources and newspaper articles provide valuable information regarding building construction and demolition. No company records have been located.

The February 1896 Sanborn map and the rendering of Highland Park Gingham Mills drawn by Grand Rapids Engineering Company of Michigan that appears in D. A. Tompkins's 1899 publication *Cotton Mill, Commercial Features* are the earliest known images of the complex. Both illustrate the square, brick, three-stage stair and entrance tower that projected from the center of the 1891 weaving mill's east elevation. The tower had a very low hip roof and, as was common during the period, housed a third-story water tank that supplied the mill's automatic sprinkler system. Two square, brick, low-hip-roofed restroom towers were located north and south of the entrance tower. Tall, triple-hung, wood windows, each comprising three eight-pane sash, illuminated the 1891 mill.

Documentary images also depict the one-story-on-basement 1895 addition that extends from the weaving mill's south elevation. The addition's north section encompassed an upper-level quiller room and a basement dye room. Tall window openings on the quiller and dye room's east and west elevations contained triple-hung, eight-pane, wood sash. A brick fire wall separates these areas from the upper-level machine shop and basement engine room to the south. Tall, triple-hung, wood windows with eight-pane upper and lower sash and sixteen-pane central sash lit the machine shop. The basement engine room windows contained eight-over-eight, double-hung, wood sash. A no-longer-extant one-story boiler room, also built in 1895, projected from the machine shop/engine room's west elevation. A flue connected the boiler room to the 130-foot-tall, square, red-brick, 1895 smokestack that stands a few feet south of the 1987 warehouse addition.

The one-story-on-basement spinning mill's structure was substantially complete by December 1895 and equipment installation began in January 1896. A small square restroom tower projected from its west elevation. A loading platform spanned the south section of its east elevation. A one-story-on-basement 70-by-40-foot warehouse was erected west of the 1891/1895 mill's south section in October



1896.<sup>37</sup> A railroad track cut through the parcel's southeast corner and paralleled North Brevard Street and Parkwood Avenue east of the 1895 spinning mill.

By May 1905, Highland Park Mill No. 1 included a small one-story office that fronted the access road on the complex's north side. The company had also constructed a series of interconnected one- and one-story-on-basement buildings that extended north from the 1896 warehouse, almost spanning the distance to the office. Box-making and storage rooms occupied the warehouse's south end. Roof monitors illuminated the packing and shipping room in the building's north section, as well as the fabric finishing rooms in the additions to the north. By 1911, the freestanding office had been replaced with a one-story office addition at the finishing room's north end.<sup>38</sup>

The construction of the 1912 addition that linked the weaving and spinning mills doubled the plant's capacity. The project entailed the removal of the 1891 mill's east wall and the 1895 mill's north wall to create an expansive open-plan interior lit by two long, low-gable-roofed monitors. By 1914, the complex was bounded on the east, west, and south by railroad lines operated by the Seaboard, Southern, and Norfolk and Southern Railways.<sup>39</sup>

The manufacturing area configuration remained the same in 1929. However, the warehouse had been enlarged with an addition that filled the open space between its east wall and the 1891/1895 mill's west elevation. The bleaching room at the warehouse's north end had also been expanded to abut the 1891/1895 mill. Additionally, a two-story cotton warehouse had been constructed south of the smokestack adjacent to the coal trestle.<sup>40</sup>

A small, narrow addition was erected at the 1891's mill's northwest corner sometime between 1929 and 1950. The plant's footprint was otherwise unchanged in 1950. By 1953 a one-story brick office projected at a slight angle from the north elevation's east section. Southeast of the office, a small one-story brick addition had been constructed on the west section of the 1912 addition's north wall.<sup>41</sup>

The 1900-1929 buildings on the plant's west side were removed after 1975 and two expansive warehouses erected in 1987 and 1989. Other 1987 modifications included office remodeling and construction of the one-story brick hyphen that connects the office to the 1912 mill. The freestanding two-story cotton warehouse south of the mill was extant in 1987 but soon demolished.<sup>42</sup>

The 1992 central and east warehouse additions significantly enlarged the complex. The east warehouse, which spanned the 1895 spinning mill's east elevation and some of the 1912 addition, was demolished in September 2016. The central 1992 and 1987 warehouses will be removed in 2017.

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<sup>37</sup> "Work Begun on a New Factory," *Mecklenburg Times* (hereafter abbreviated *MT*), August 29, 1895, p. 4; "Mill Notes," *Charlotte Observer* (hereafter abbreviated *CO*), October 31, 1895, p. 4; January 18, 1896, p. 4; and October 10, 1896, p. 4; Sanborn Map Company, "Charlotte," February 1896, Sheet 12.

<sup>38</sup> Sanborn Map Company, "Charlotte," May 1905, Sheet 31, and 1911, Sheet 8.

<sup>39</sup> "After Big Tract on New Railroad," *CO*, January 24, 1914, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Sanborn Map Company, "Charlotte," 1929, Volume 3, Sheet 346.

<sup>41</sup> Sanborn Map Company, "Charlotte," January 1950, February 1953, Sheet 346.

<sup>42</sup> C. L. Helt Architects, Inc., "Site Plan: Highland Mills, Inc.," July 11, 1986, with revisions through September 24, 1988.

## Exterior

The following description begins at the complex's northeast corner and moves counter-clockwise.

The one-story, flat-roofed, rectangular, Modernist, circa 1950-1953 office is simply executed in running-bond textured-red-brick veneer. A projecting header course wraps around the building beneath the windows and cast-stone coping caps the parapet. The slightly protruding bay on the north elevation encompasses the primary entrance. In the large opening, which contained a double-leaf door, sidelights, and transom, inset brick infill surrounds a double-leaf steel door. A concrete handicapped-accessible ramp with a metal pipe railing and concrete steps with concrete-capped brick side walls lead to the entrance. The large steel-frame windows on the office's north, east, and west elevations were replaced in 1987 with aluminum-frame slit windows and brick infill. A one-story brick 1987 hyphen connects the office's southeast corner to the mill. A chain-link fence secures the HVAC equipment on a concrete pad adjacent to the west elevation's south section.

West of the office, a loading dock with a corrugated-metal roll-up door and a single-leaf steel door pierce the 1891 mill's painted brick north elevation, laid in five-to-one common bond. An identical roll-up door has been installed in the narrow addition erected at the 1891's mill's northwest corner sometime between 1929 and 1950. The metal tracks for the sliding doors that once secured the openings are intact. A flat metal canopy shelters the west loading dock.

The north and west elevations of the two-story, flat-roofed, steel-frame 1989 addition at the complex's northwest corner, executed in oversized red brick, and the corrugated-metal-sheathed east elevation are blind. A straight run of steel stairs with a metal-pipe railing rises to the single-leaf steel door on the north elevation's upper level. Two large, rectangular, louvered vents provide ventilation. A one-bay wide and deep stair tower projects from the west elevation's approximate center. The freight elevator shaft that rises on the stair tower's south side is not as deep. A stepped brick retaining wall extends south from the stair tower's southwest corner to enclose a landscaped area containing deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs.

South of the planting bed, three one-story, flat-roofed loading docks extend from the warehouse at an angle. Flat-roofed metal canopies shelter each roll-up door. The southernmost dock also contains a single-leaf steel door. South of that entrance, a straight run of steel stairs with a metal-pipe railing leads to a single-leaf steel door at the addition's southwest second-story corner. A large, rectangular, louvered vent surmounts the door. Beneath the stairs, a concrete ramp allows access to a loading dock with a roll-up door.

A long, one-story, flat-roofed, red-brick warehouse erected in 1987 extends from the 1989 addition's south end. The walls are blind, pierced only by a few square louvered-metal vents. A flat-roofed metal canopy shelters the loading dock entrance near the west elevation's north end. A straight run of steel stairs with a metal-pipe railing rises to the single-leaf steel door near the west end of the south elevation's upper level. To the east, a single-leaf steel door provides access to the basement. The 1987 addition will be removed in conjunction with the rehabilitation.

East of the 1987 addition, the eight-bay-wide south elevation of the one-story-on-basement, flat-roofed, brick 1895 engine room is exposed. Stepped east and west parapets and a slightly projecting belt course and window sills are the utilitarian building's only embellishment. The tall, rectangular, multipane, wood-frame windows and transoms that illuminated the engine room have been enclosed with plywood. A straight run of steel stairs with a metal-pipe railing provides access to the single-leaf

steel door that has been added in the westernmost bay. Four multipane, wood-frame basement windows have also been enclosed, while metal louvered vents fill the remaining four openings.

To the east, an L-shaped, one-story-on-basement, flat-roofed, 1992 addition fills the space between the engine room and the 1895 spinning mill. Contractors executed the foundation with rough-face, rectangular, dark grey concrete masonry units. The upper walls comprise five courses of light-grey square concrete masonry units followed by a course of white rough-face concrete masonry units. A course of dark grey concrete masonry units delineates the upper and lower edges of the building's parapet. On the south elevation's west side, concrete steps with a metal pipe railing lead to a concrete landing from which a straight run of steel stairs with a metal-pipe railing provides access to a single-leaf steel door. A large loading dock with a roll-up door fills approximately one-third of the wall to the east. The square window openings contain square translucent glass blocks. A straight run of steel stairs with a metal-pipe railing rises on the east wall to a single-leaf steel door in the addition's recessed section.

To the east, a one-story, flat-roofed, concrete-masonry-unit 1992 addition that matches the larger addition in style and material stands near the 1895 spinning mill's southwest corner. A single-leaf steel door with a louvered transom pierces the south elevation's center. Two formed-concrete steps and a concrete landing with a metal-pipe railing lead to the entrance. The 1992 additions will be removed in conjunction with the rehabilitation.

The one-story-on-basement 1992 addition's construction created an interior courtyard that is accessible through a single-leaf steel door in the east-west corridor at the addition's north end. The boiler room on the corridor's north side, which projects into the courtyard, has blind, unpainted, concrete-block walls. A single-leaf steel door in the north elevation's east section provides access to the boiler room. On the courtyard's west side, a one-story, post-1953 shed addition with six-to-one-common-bond brick walls and two square, metal-frame, four-pane windows projects from the south end of the 1891 weaving mill's east elevation. To the north, the four tall window openings that pierce the 1912 addition's south wall have been infilled with brick. The base of the east window opening was enlarged to accommodate a double-leaf steel door. The 1912 addition has a stepped parapet. On the courtyard's east side, a one-story, post-1953 brick shed addition with two square, metal-frame, four-pane windows extends from the 1895 spinning mill's west elevation. Steel steps with a metal-pipe railing rise in two runs to the 1895 mill's roof.

At the plant's southeast corner, east of the one-story 1992 addition, the 1895 mill's eight-bay-wide south elevation is exposed. The corbelled parapet steps down twice to the east. The upper-level tall window openings have been filled with brick flush with the wall plane. The window in the east basement bay retains a segmental-arched two-course lintel but has been enclosed with plywood and a louvered vent. A straight run of steel stairs with a metal-pipe railing provides access to the single-leaf steel door in the third bay from the east end. A chain-link fence encloses the electrical substation south of the wall.

The one-and-two-story-on-basement 1992 addition that obscured the 1895 mill's east elevation and also covered a portion of the 1912 addition's east wall was demolished in September 2016.<sup>43</sup> The 1895 mill's one-story-on-basement east elevation is now fully exposed. All of the original upper-level window and door openings have been infilled with brick flush with the wall plane. Concrete block

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<sup>43</sup> The 1992 addition's north end was angled due to the alignment of Parkwood Avenue (which occupies a former railroad corridor), to the east. Its concrete-masonry-unit wall execution was the same as that of the other 1992 additions.

encloses the four tall openings with segmental-arched two-course lintels that pierce the basement wall near its south end. A metal roll-up service door was added above those openings in the upper level's two south bays. The central, six-bay-wide, lower section of the brick wall suffered structural failure and was replaced with concrete block reinforced with six almost-full-height steel beams, likely in 1992. The two metal roll-up service doors near the 1895 mill's north end were added to facilitate access to the non-longer-extant 1992 warehouse.

The stepped, formed-concrete retaining wall that reinforces the 1895 wall's base becomes progressively taller as it moves north. The wall, which was in the 1992 addition's basement, terminates at the raised poured-concrete foundation of the 1992 addition's north section. The retaining wall and the foundation will remain in place and will be below grade when the site is landscaped in conjunction with the rehabilitation.

A small, one-story, flat-roofed, brick addition erected between 1950 and 1953 extends from the west section of the 1912 addition's north wall. A single-leaf steel door is centered on the addition's north elevation, while two windows pierce each of the east and west elevations. The west elevation joins the brick 1987 hyphen that connects the 1912 addition and the 1950-1953 office. The hyphen's east wall contains a single-leaf steel door in the entrance vestibule and slit windows in the reception mezzanine.

Several monitors and exhaust vents pierce the rubber-membrane roofs. The east long, low-gable-roofed monitor that illuminated the 1912 addition is intact, but plywood panels have been installed over the four-foot-tall walls, enclosing multipane operable wood sash windows. The monitor runs north-south, while the two shed-roofed monitors near the 1891 mill's south end have an east-west orientation. Metal louvered vents fill the square openings in the shed monitors' tall north faces and rubber membrane covers the walls. The west 1912 roof monitor has been removed. A vinyl-siding-clad mechanical equipment room with a low gable roof occupies the approximate location of that monitor's north section.

## **Interior**

The mill's open plan and interior finishes original to each construction phase are substantially intact. The following description begins at the complex's north end and moves south and west.

In the office wing erected between 1950 and 1953 and remodeled in 1987, gypsum board sheathes the walls and vinyl composition tile covers the floors. The dropped acoustical-tile ceiling contains fluorescent light panels and HVAC vents. The space includes offices lining the north wall, a break room and kitchen, storage areas, and restrooms. On the west wall of the open room at the wing's southeast corner, a classical cast-iron entablature surrounds the steel outer door of the Highland Park Manufacturing Company's vault, which also features a steel double-leaf interior door. The Mosler Safe Company manufactured the doors as well as the large safe within the vault.

The one-story 1987 hyphen that connects the office and the 1912 mill has two floor levels connected by concrete steps with a metal-pipe railing. The open lower level was a vestibule for the primary employee entrance. The elevated north section, originally a landing adjacent to the office, was later enclosed with an aluminum-frame glazed curtain wall to serve as an office. A metal-pipe railing extends across the landing in front of the curtain wall. The hyphen has a concrete floor and a dropped acoustical-tile ceiling with fluorescent light panels and HVAC vents.



The 1891, 1895, and 1912 buildings are characterized by an exposed structural system comprising painted brick walls, chamfered square wood posts, substantial wood beams, wood roof decking, and hardwood floors. The 1912 addition's construction involved the removal of the 1891 mill's east wall and the 1895 mill's north wall, creating an expansive open room. Plywood sheathed frame walls were later added, some to delineate manufacturing and warehouse areas and others to enclose small storage and multi-purpose rooms. All were removed in early 2017.

Long rows of posts divide the manufacturing area into wide bays that accommodated sizable machinery. In the 1891 and 1895 sections, short segments of heavy timbers with S-curved ends top the posts, distributing the load of the structural beams and wide roof decking boards above. The 1895 engine room at the plant's southwest corner features heavy-timber trusses that support its low gable roof. Steel collars and plates reinforce the post and beam connection in the 1912 addition. Steel posts and beams have been added throughout the mill as needed to provide supplementary structural support.

The original floor system consists of three-inch-thick plank decking, a diagonal-board middle layer, and a hardwood top layer. Metal panels have been installed in some high-traffic areas to protect the wood floor. At primary entrances, galvanized-sheet-metal-clad, solid-core-wood doors, known as kalamein doors, slide on steel tracks and are held open by weighted pulleys. In a few cases, portions of walls between mill sections have been removed, leaving open spaces.

Brick or concrete block fills most original door and window openings. However, a few large multipane wood sash remain in the one-story-on-basement 1895 addition that extends from the 1891 weaving mill's south elevation. In the addition's north section, which encompassed an upper-level quiller room and a basement dye room, tall window openings on the east and west elevations contained triple-hung, eight-pane, wood sash. In the addition's south section, tall, triple-hung, wood windows with eight-pane upper and lower sash and sixteen-pane central sash pierced the upper-level machine shop's south and east walls. The basement engine room south and east elevation windows contained eight-over-eight, double-hung, wood sash. The west wall was blind on both levels.

The plywood panels that had enclosed some windows in the 1895 addition were removed in March 2017. The machine shop's window openings were shortened at some point, leaving room for only two sash. The second through fifth (moving east) openings on the south elevation each retain an eight-pane sash and a sixteen-pane (originally central, now upper) sash. The seventh bay contains a sixteen-pane upper sash and a lower sash with two tall panes. The sash have been removed from the sixth and eighth window openings, but most of the wood frames remain. The westernmost window on the south elevation has been converted to an entrance containing a single-leaf steel door and plywood infill.

Roof monitors were also an important source of light and air. Two shed-roofed monitors illuminated the 1891 mill's south end and two long, low-gable-roofed monitors lit the 1912 addition. The frame structural components are intact for all but the west 1912 monitor, which has been removed.

Fluorescent lights and sprinkler system pipes drop from the ceilings. Rigid metal ductwork and sizable air handling units remain throughout from the air conditioning systems configured for the plant in the 1960s. Surface-mounted metal conduit houses electrical wiring.

At the 1895 dye house's northeast corner, a freight elevator and a steel steps with a metal-pipe railing facilitate basement access. The basement comprises open rooms beneath the quiller room, machine shop, the 1987 addition to the west, and the 1992 addition to the east. The heavy-timber post-and-beam structure and brick walls are intact. Steel and concrete plinths elevate the posts above the

poured-concrete floor. Metal-clad kalamein doors, corrugated-metal roll-up doors, and single-leaf steel doors secure entrances. The upper eight-pane sash are fixed in three window openings on the dye house's east elevation, as well as four window openings on the engine room's east elevation and the easternmost bay of its south elevation. Portions of the eight-over-eight sash remain in the sixth bay from the west end. The third bay contains the most intact basement window, but the upper sash is damaged. All sash are in poor condition.

In the 1987, 1989, and 1992 manufacturing and warehouse additions, steel trusses span the distance between the original brick walls and the additions' exterior walls. Steel I-beams and concrete floor systems also provide structural support. The corrugated-metal roof decking is exposed. The additions have open plans, with interior connectivity at all levels (basement and upper floors). Roll-up metal doors secure most openings between building sections. A freight elevator and a stair tower containing steel and concrete steps with metal-pipe railings provide access to the second story of the 1987 and 1989 additions.

### **Smokestack, 1895, contributing structure**

The 130-foot-tall, square, red-brick smokestack that stands a few feet south of the 1987 addition was built to serve the no-longer-extant 1895 boiler room. The stack was laid in five-to-one common bond with a slightly darker header course. A round-arched three-header-course lintel surmounts the narrow door opening on the north elevation. Narrow, recessed, round-arched panels ornament the tapered, corbelled stack.<sup>44</sup>

### **Integrity Statement**

Overall, Highland Park Mill No. 1 maintains good integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship. The 1891, 1895, and 1912 buildings retain character-defining features of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century industrial architecture. Although the 1912 addition's construction involved the removal of the 1891 mill's east elevation and the 1895 mill's north elevation, other load-bearing brick exterior walls with segmental-arched and rectangular window openings and segmental- and round-arched door openings remain. On the interior, heavy-timber posts and beams, triple-thickness wood floors, and wood roof decking are intact. These elements, in conjunction with metal-clad kalamein doors and firewalls between combustible areas such as the engine room, dye house, and weaving and spinning areas are representative of fire-resistant construction practices.

Although brick has filled most original window and door openings since the mid-twentieth century, some multipane wood sash survive. The plywood panels that had enclosed some original sash in the 1895 addition at the 1891 mill's south end were removed in March 2017. These sash are in poor condition and will either be restored or replicated. Elsewhere, brick and concrete block infill will be removed and historically appropriate windows installed in conjunction with the rehabilitation. The 1987, 1989, and 1992 additions did not involve extensive modification to the original buildings; only the creation of door openings to facilitate interior connectivity.

The circa 1950-1953 office's 1987 modification included the removal of large steel-frame windows on its north, east, and west elevations and the double-leaf door, sidelights, and transom in the north entrance bay. Aluminum-frame slit windows and brick infill and a double-leaf steel door were

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<sup>44</sup> "Fantastic Shapes of the Smoke," *CO*, September 7, 1895, p. 4.

installed and the surrounding openings infilled with brick. The office interior was also remodeled with gypsum board partition walls, vinyl-composition tile floors, and a dropped acoustical-tile ceiling. Consequently, this addition does not retain integrity of design or workmanship.

### **Rehabilitation Scope of Work**

White Point Paces Partners is undertaking Highland Park Mill No. 1's rehabilitation in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The North Carolina Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service have reviewed the scope of work in conjunction with state and federal tax credit application submittals. Architect Perkins + Will's design retains historic features and replicates missing elements while allowing the mill to house offices, restaurants, and other commercial endeavors. Barnhill Contracting Company is executing the rehabilitation, which has an anticipated April 2018 completion date.

Load-bearing brick exterior walls and segmental-arched and rectangular window openings and segmental- and round-arched door openings will be restored. The walls will be thoroughly cleaned and repaired as needed. Paint will be removed using the least-invasive chemical means possible and the red brick left exposed. The extant wood sash in the machine shop will be reconditioned and reused to the greatest extent possible. The window openings in that room will be returned to their original size. Elsewhere in the mill, original window openings will be restored and reproduction aluminum sash installed based upon architectural evidence, extant sash dimensions, muntin profiles, and documentary photographs. Aluminum windows, doors, and transoms will have a bone white finish and interior, between-the-glass, and exterior muntins. Landscaping will complement the mill's industrial character.

On the interior, heavy-timber posts and beams, triple-thickness wood floors, wood roof decking, and metal-clad kalamein doors will be preserved. Partition wall construction will be minimized to the greatest degree possible.



**North elevation, looking west from ca. 1950-1953 office (2015)**



**North elevation, 1891 mill (2017)**





**West elevation, 1989 addition, looking north (2015)**



**South elevation, from left to right: 1987 addition, 1895 addition, 1992 additions, 1895 spinning mill (2015)**



**1895 smokestack (2015)**



**East elevation, looking northwest from 1895 spinning mill (2017)**





**1891 mill, looking north (2017)**



**1912 addition, looking south into 1895 spinning mill (2017)**





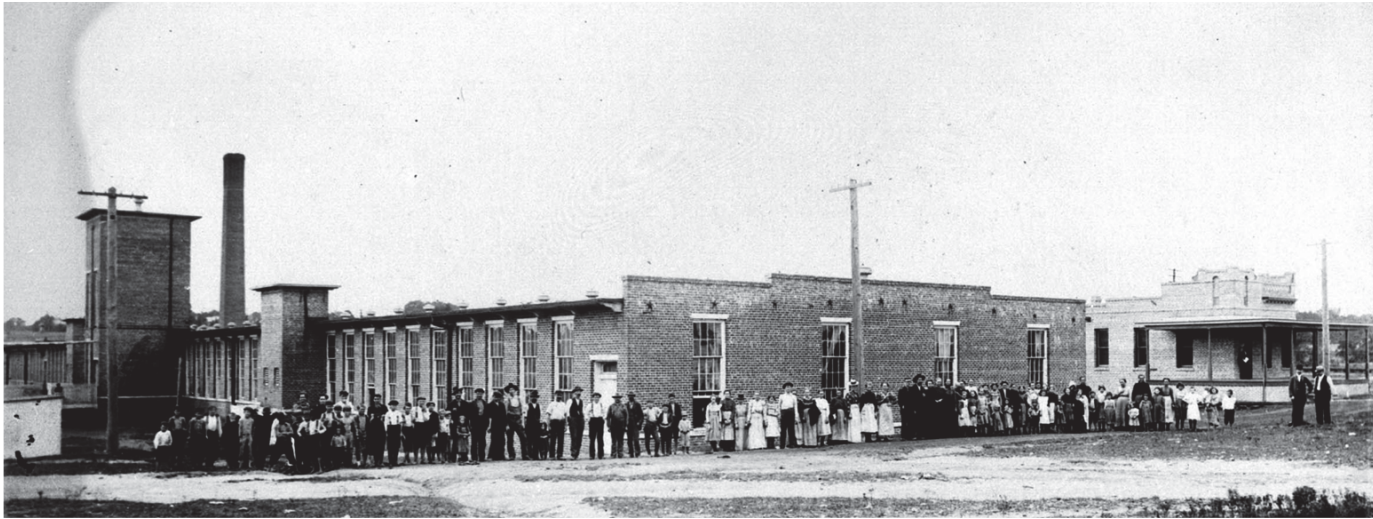
**1895 addition, machine shop, looking east (2017)**



**1895 addition basement, dye house, looking north (2017)**

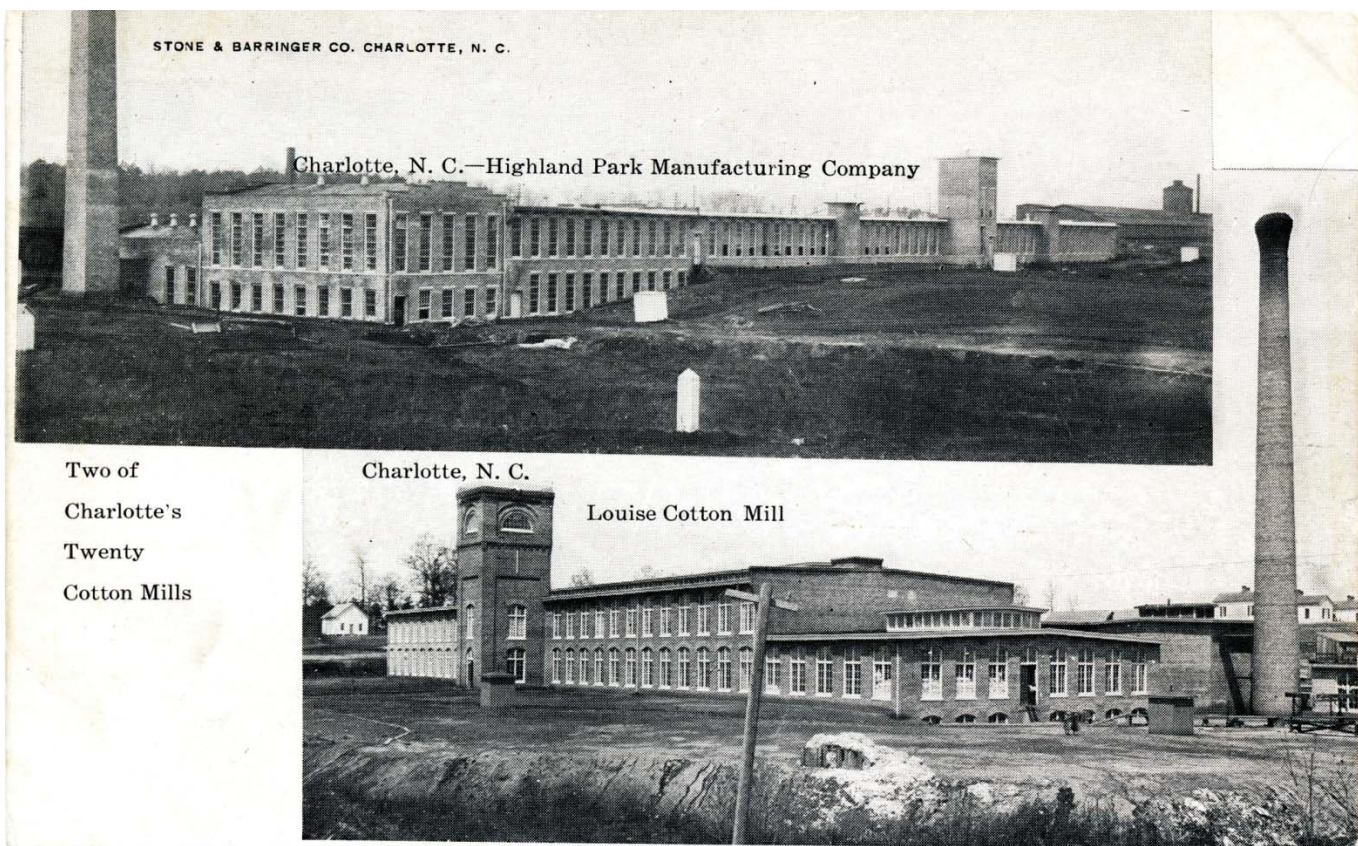


## Historic Photographs



North elevation, 1891 mill, undated photograph from the Mary Lois Moore Yandle Collection, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room

The photograph may show mill employees on the day of a mandatory typhoid vaccination. Based upon a July 27, 1916, *Charlotte Observer* article regarding dates of mill employee vaccinations during the “anti-typhoid inoculation campaign,” the photograph may have been taken on July 31, 1916.



1891/1895 mill, southeast oblique, undated postcard from the Mary Boyer Collection, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte



**Highland Park Mill No. 1**  
**Highland Park Manufacturing Company**  
**340 East Sixteenth Street, Charlotte**  
**Mecklenburg County, North Carolina**

1. Latitude: 35.23541  
Longitude: -80.82744

East 16th Street

National Register Boundary

Railroad

6. Latitude: 35.23392  
Longitude: -80.82937

Office erected  
between 1950  
and 1953

1987 hyphen

1989

1891

1912

1987

2. Latitude: 35.23451  
Longitude: -80.82632

Parkwood Avenue

3. Latitude: 35.23383  
Longitude: -80.82702

1895

1992

1895

1992, demolished  
September 2016

North  
Brevard  
Street

5. Latitude: 35.23320  
Longitude: -80.82868

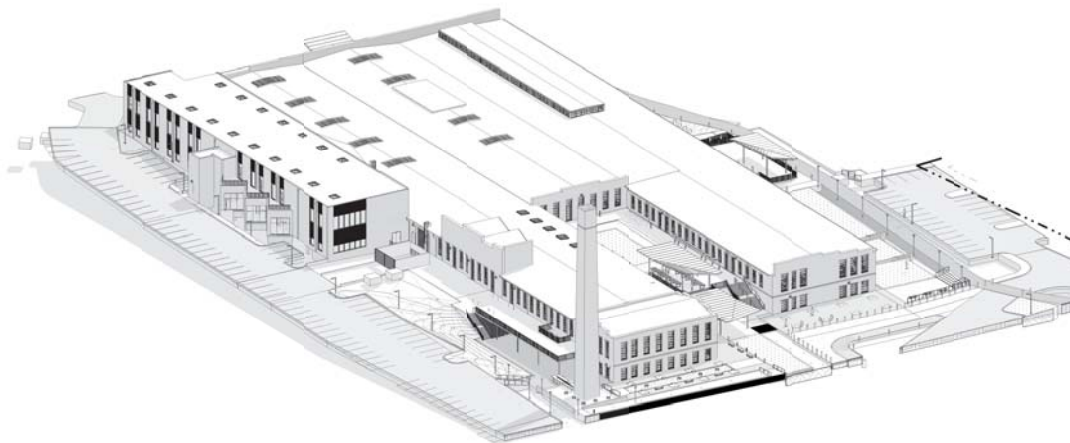
4. Latitude: 35.23328  
Longitude: -80.82778

Fearnbach History Services, Inc. / March 2017  
Base aerial photo courtesy of Mecklenburg County GIS  
at <http://polaris3g.mecklenburgcountync.gov/>

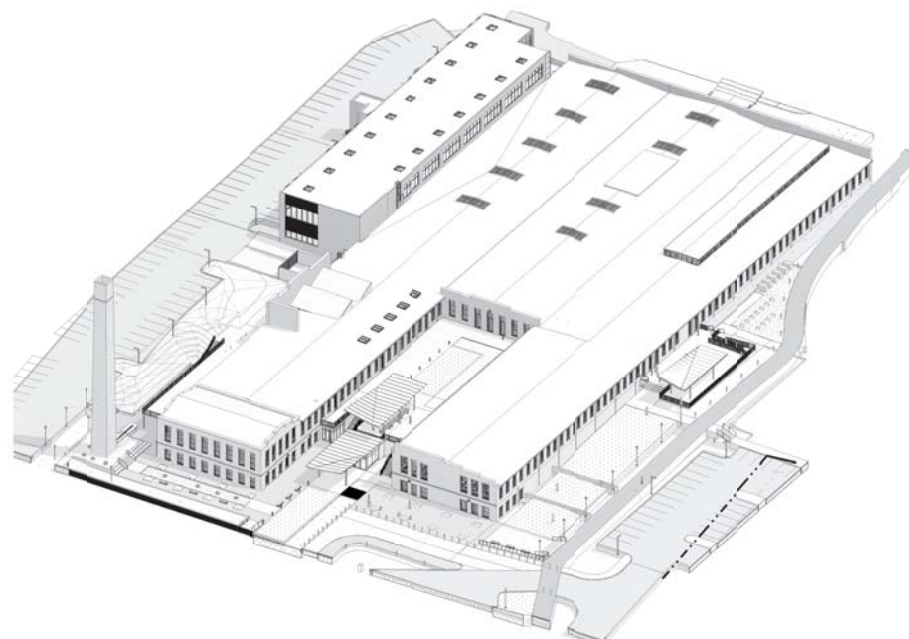




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JULY 5, 2017

Revisions

NO.	PERMIT CYCLE 2 ISSUE	DATE
1	ISSUED	08/01/17

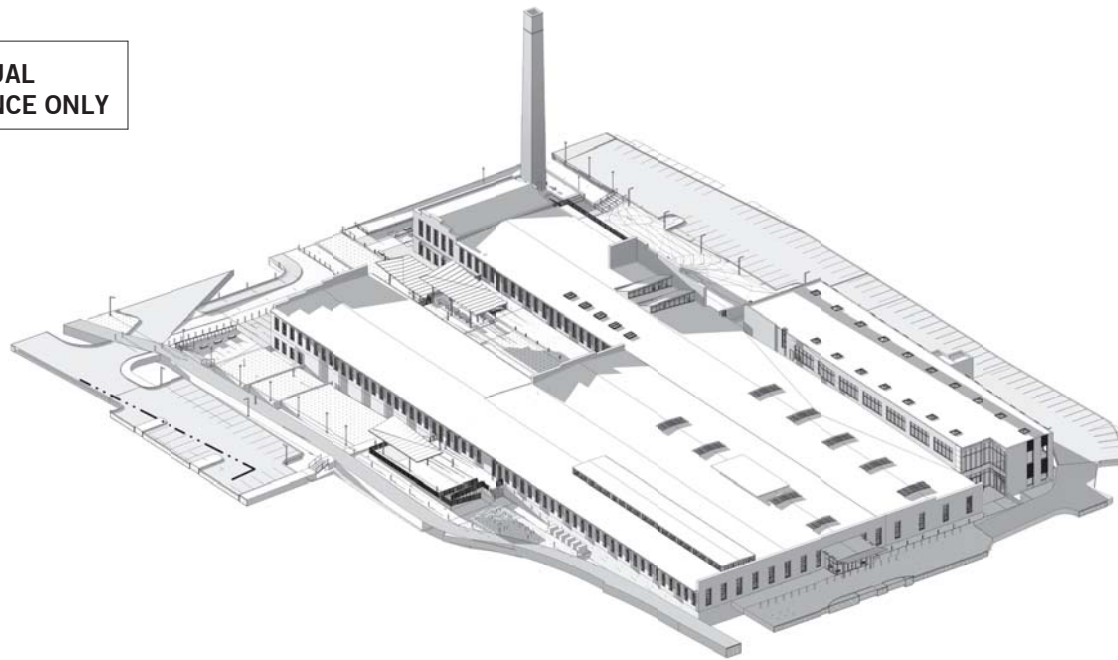
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Job Number	801480.000
Drawn	CHRIS LOYAL
Checked	JOHN HOGGHEAD
Approved	JOHN HOGGHEAD
Title	

BUILDING AXONS

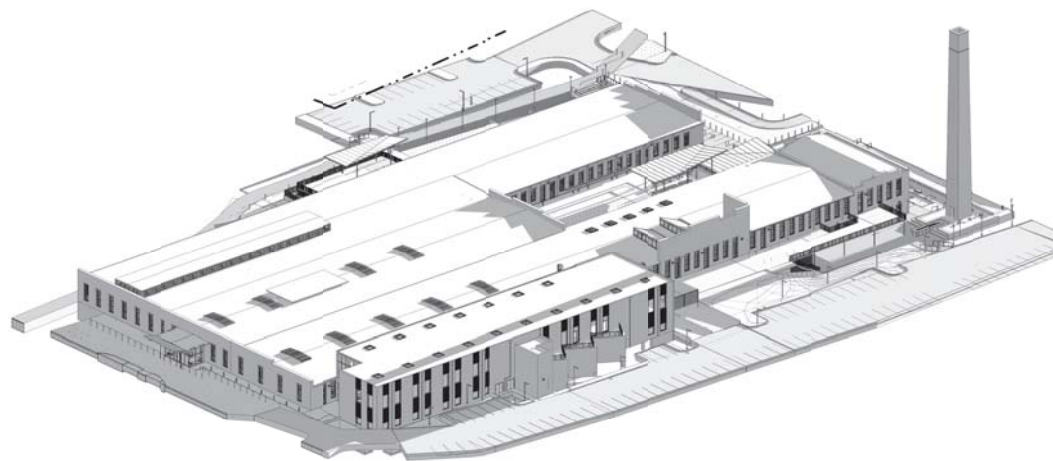
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② NORTHEAST AXON



① NORTHWEST AXON

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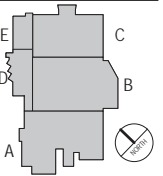
BUILDING AXONS

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**KEYPLAN**



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**Revisions**

1	POOR	06/09/17
2	PERMIT CYCLE 2	08/09/17
3	PERMIT COMMENTS	08/17/17
NO	ISSUE	DATE

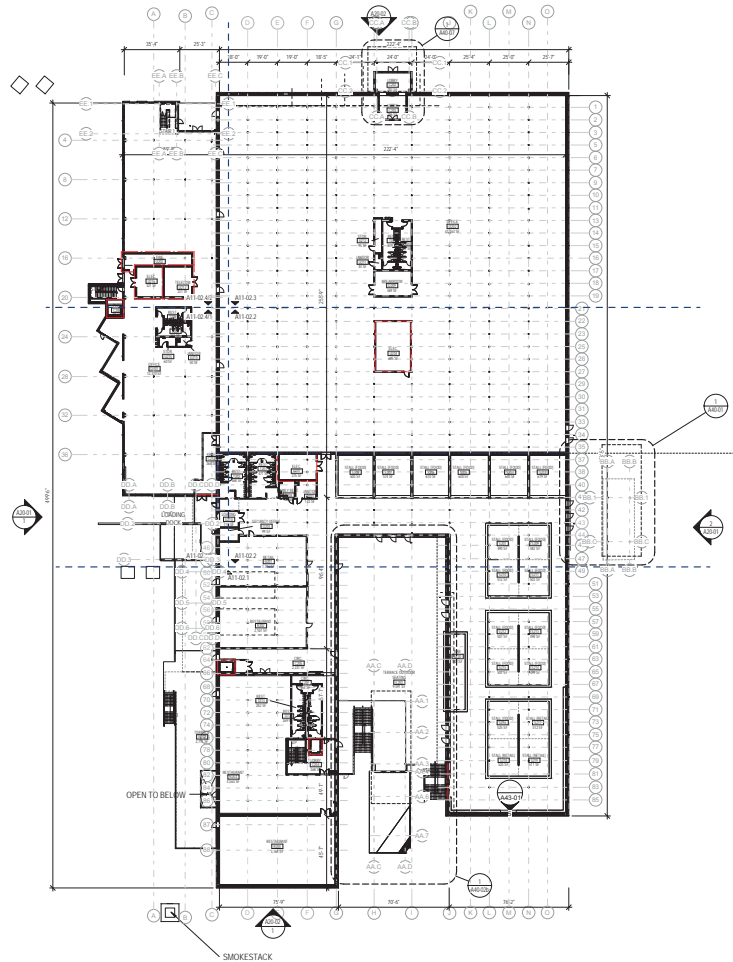
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Approved: JOHN HOGSHED  
Title:

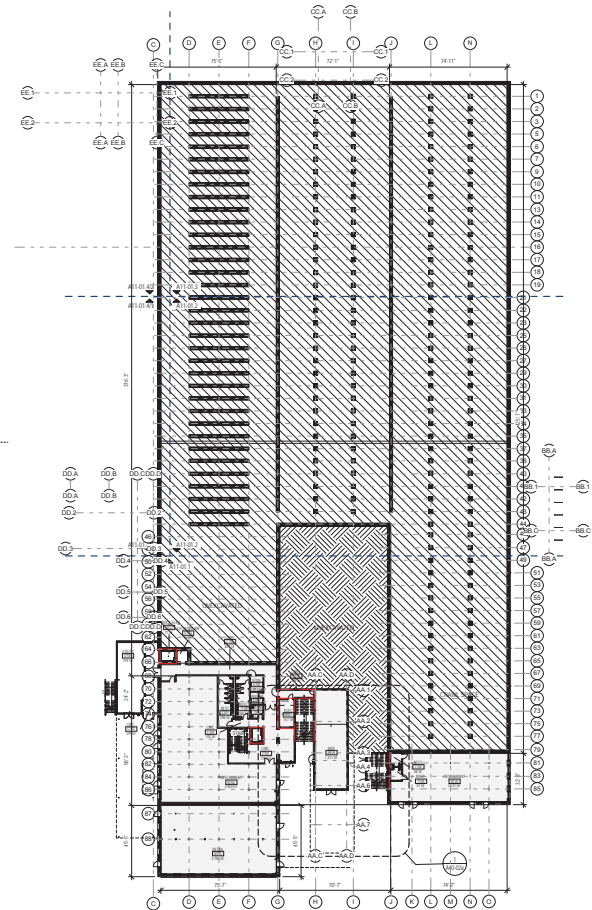
**OVERALL FLOOR  
PLANS**

Sheet

**A10-01**



**2 FLOOR PLAN - MAIN LEVEL**  
1132' x 1'0"



**1 FLOOR PLAN - BASEMENT**  
1132' x 1'0"

09/26/2017 2:14:04 PM

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2	PERMIT CYCLE 2	08/19/17
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NO	ISSUE	DATE

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Approved: JOHN HOGGHEAD

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EXTERIOR  
ELEVATIONS

Sheet

A20-01

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② EAST ELEVATION  
1/16" = 1'-0"

① WEST ELEVATION  
1/16" = 1'-0"



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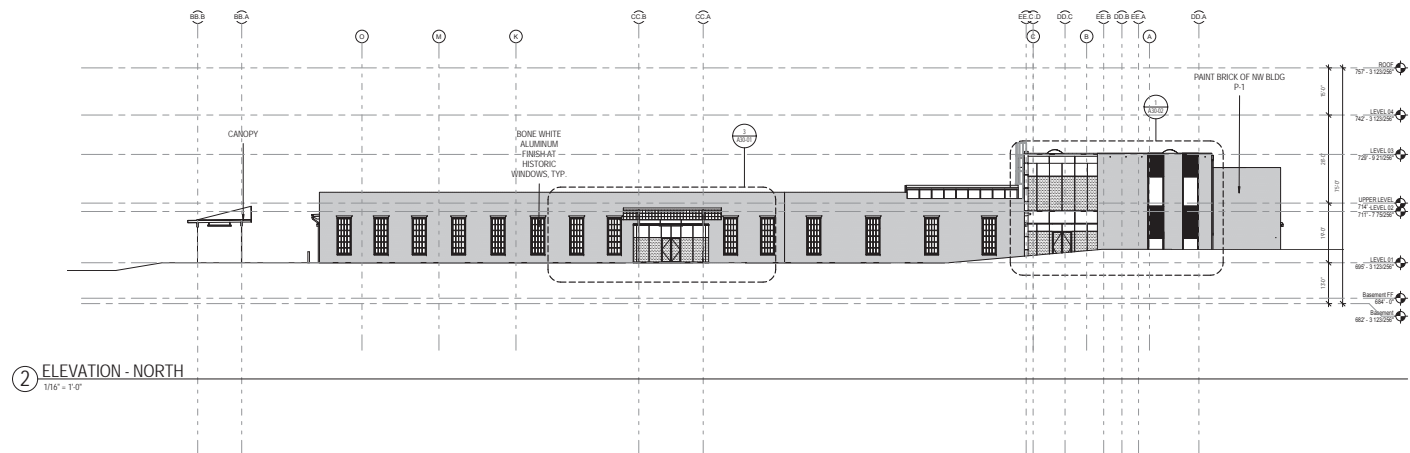
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2	ISSUE	DATE

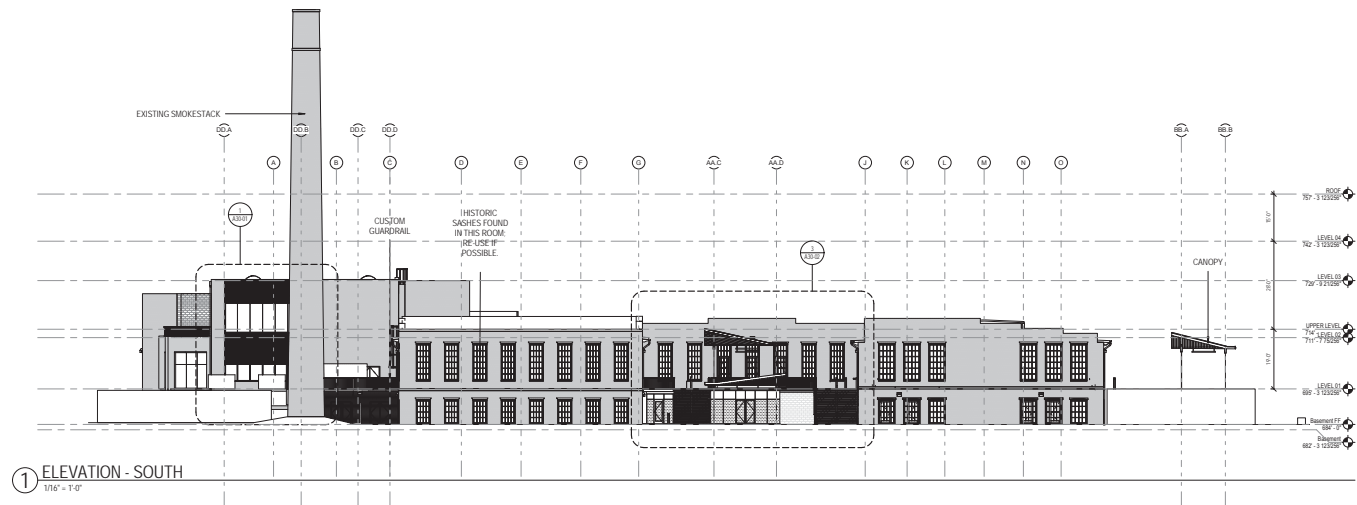
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EXTERIOR  
ELEVATIONS

Sheet  
**A20-02**



② ELEVATION - NORTH  
1/16" = 1'-0"



① ELEVATION - SOUTH  
1/16" = 1'-0"