

HOSKINS MILL



The Hoskins Mill, 1907



The Hoskins Mill, 1988



The office building at the Hoskins Mill

This report was written on February 1, 1988

1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the Hoskins Mill is located at 201 S. Hoskins Road in Charlotte, North Carolina.

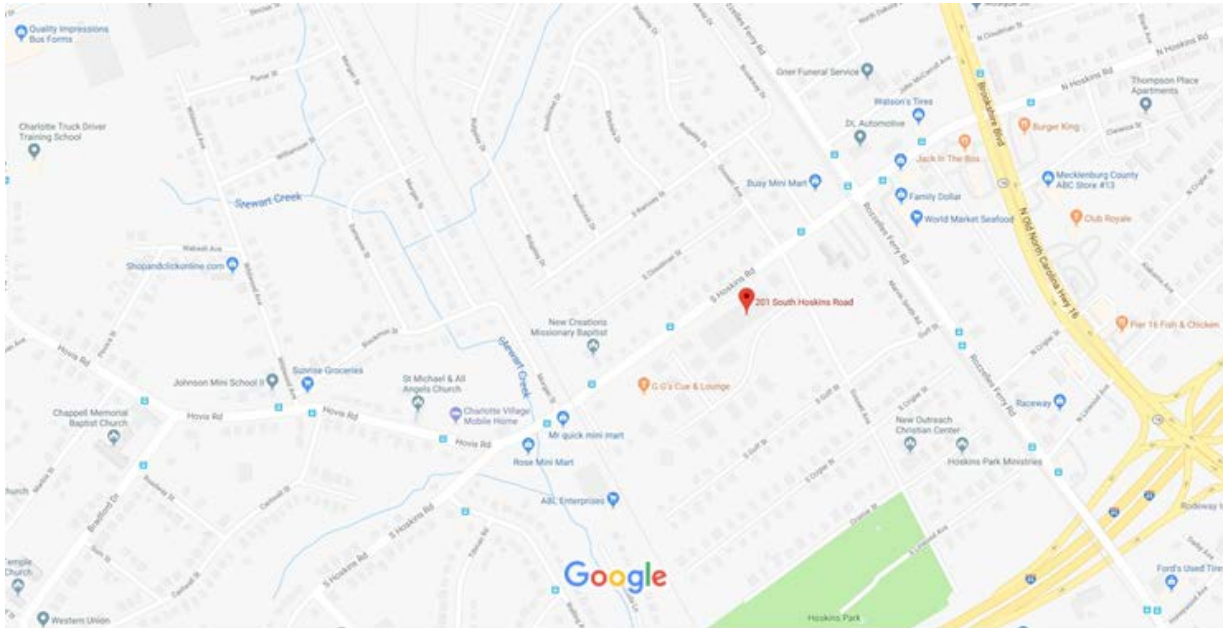
2. Name, address, and telephone number of the present owner of the property: The owner of the property is:

Trenton Properties, Inc.
James A. Mezzanotte, President
6521 Trenton Place
Charlotte, NC 28226

Telephone: (704) 364-9608

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 recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 5652, page 72. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is: 063-061-23.
- 6. A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Dr. William H. Huffman, Ph.D.
- 7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Ph.D.
- 8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation 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 Hoskins Mill does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations: 1) the Hoskins Mill is one of the best-preserved textile mill complexes which survive in Mecklenburg County, once a center of textile manufacturing; 2) the Hoskins Mill Office Building is a unique remnant of the textile mill architecture of Mecklenburg County; 3) the Hoskins Mill is the historic heart of the surrounding Hoskins Textile Mill Village. and 4) E. A. Smith (1862-1933), the principal organizer of the Hoskins Mill, became a leading textile executive in Mecklenburg County.

b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association: The Commission contends that the architectural description by Dr. Dan L. Morrill which is included in this report demonstrates that the Hoskins Mill does possess its essential integrity.

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 "historic property." The current appraised value of the improvements is \$424,340. The current appraised value of the 11 acres of land is \$161,720. The total appraised value of the property is \$586,060. The property is zoned I2.

Date of preparation of this report: February 1, 1988

Prepared by: Dr. Dan L. Morrill
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Historical Overview

Dr. William H. Huffman

The Hoskins Mill was built in 1903-1904 as the second mill in the community that was known as Chadwick, now Hoskins, which is located about three and a half miles northwest of the Square. The first one in that previously rural area was the Chadwick, built two years earlier. Together they represented a thirty percent increase in Charlotte-Mecklenburg's mill capacity, and should be seen in the context of the rapidly expanding mill production and supply based in the city and county in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The key figure in sparking Charlotte-Mecklenburg's transition from being a cotton trading center to one of cotton manufacturing as part of New South industrialization was Daniel Augustus Tompkins (1852-1914). A South Carolina native who was educated and trained in manufacturing in the North, Tompkins first came to Charlotte in 1882 as a machinery sales representative for Westinghouse, but quickly saw the potential for growth in the still small community, and set up his own factory design,

contracting and machine shop business in 1884, the D. A. Tompkins Co. In the following thirty-two years, Tompkins built over one hundred cotton mills, fertilizer works, electric light plants and ginneries, and changed the region's cotton oil from a waste product to a major industry by building about two hundred processing plants.¹

The first cotton mill in Charlotte was the Charlotte Cotton Mills, which started up in 1881. Tompkins built the city's second, third, and fourth mills, the Alpha, Ada and Victor in 1889, and built and headed the sixth, the Atherton, in 1893. He also saw the need for a local company to supply machinery and equipment for the new mills, and so, with E. A. Smith and R. M. Miller, Jr., he organized the Charlotte Supply Company. In 1889, R. M. Miller, Jr. (1856-1925) was secretary-treasurer of the D. A. Tompkins company, and headed the city's tenth mill, the Elizabeth, in 1901. E. A. Smith (1862-1933) was a Baltimore native who, like Tompkins, came to Charlotte as a representative of Thomas K. Carey and Son, an industrial supply firm in Baltimore. In 1901, Smith, Tompkins and Miller sold their interest in the Charlotte Supply Company, and Smith set about building and operating his own mills.²

His first mill was the Chadwick, located about three miles northwest of town on Rozelle's Ferry Road and the Seaboard Air Line Railway tracks. Named after Col. H. S. Chadwick, who headed the Louise Mill (the city's seventh, started up in 1897), the new three-story plant was built by the J. A. Jones Construction Company, and a mill village of 40 houses was put in place just north of the factory. The Chadwick was built and started operations in 1901. In April, 1903, E. A. Smith, J. P. Wilson and Jeremiah Goff organized Hoskins Mills, Inc. with authorized stock of 5,000 shares with par value one hundred dollars, but they began with each of the three owning 125 shares, which gave them a working capital of \$37,500.⁴ (Goff was the new vice-president of time Charlotte Supply Company, and its new president, H. C. Clark, was a principal in the Chadwick Mills with Smith; Goff and Clark were natives of Warren, Rhode Island, where they got their textile experience).⁵ The following month the corporation bought two tracts of land totaling about 140 acres adjacent to the Chadwick Mills and set about to build the mill and a typical mill village for the workers.⁶ Smith chose Hoskins for the mill because it was his mother's family name. By November, 1903, the mill and most of its village, which was also built by J. A. Jones, were nearly complete, as reported in the *Charlotte Daily Observer*:

"The new Hoskins Mills, at Chadwick, a western suburb of the city, is nearing completion, and when completed will be one of the best and handsomest manufacturing plants in the South. The work of putting the roof on the building was finished Saturday and the carpenters will now be engaged in laying the floors. The floors will have three layers of timber, with a total thickness of about five inches. The top layer of the floors will be of maple timber. The machinery for the new mill will begin coming in within a few weeks and will be placed as it arrives. The equipment of

the plant will be of the best. It will begin operation about the first of March. Twenty of the 80 tenement houses for the operatives of the mill have been completed and work has begun on others. The houses are neat, comfortable structures of four and five rooms and make an attractive looking little town. When the new plant is in operation, the Chadwick settlement will have a population of about 1,600 people, including people who have other trades and do not work in the mills."⁷

Since the city of Charlotte only had a population of 18,000 at the time, and the county's industrial capacity was boosted by thirty percent from the Chadwick and Hoskins mills, this was a substantial undertaking that reflected the great confidence these entrepreneurs had in the future of the cotton mill business in CharlotteMecklenburg and the surrounding area.⁸

By 1907, Smith headed the Chadwick, Hoskins, Calvine (formerly Alpha), Dover (in Pineapple) and Louise mills, and later built mills in Rhodhiss and King's Mountain.⁹ The following year, 1908, he began to consolidate his holdings under one corporate umbrella by forming the Chadwick-Hoskins Company, with principals William F. Draper, Arthur J. Draper and E. C. Dwelle.¹⁰ William F. Draper lived in Hopedale, MA, was U. S. Congressman from that state 1892-7, and U. S. Ambassador to Italy, 1897-1900; his father George had invented the Draper power loom, which was found in most textile mills throughout the nation. His son, Arthur J. Draper, moved to Charlotte, served a term as president of Chadwick-Hoskins, and subsequently became an officer of the American Trust Company (merged into American Commercial Bank, 1958, and NCNB, 1960) and a principal in the Stephens Company, which developed Myers Park.¹¹ Under this new structure, the Chadwick Hill became Chadwick-Hoskins Mill #1, the Hoskins, Mill #2, Calvine, Mill #3, Louise, Mill #4, and Dover, Mill #5, and the Chadwick-Hoskins Company was then the largest textile mill business in North Carolina.¹² The Chadwick and Hoskins communities got a further boost in 1911, when the Piedmont and Northern Electric Commuter Railway from Charlotte to Gastonia was routed on the west side of the mill villages with a stop at "Hoskins Station."¹³ In 1917, the *Charlotte Evening Chronicle* ran a picture of the interior of the spinning room of the Hoskins mill, which carried this caption:

"There is one of the nicest and cleanest mills in this section. Notice the excellent lighting and the cleanliness and order in which everything is kept. When a girl gets on a long apron, and "The Chronicle Protection Cap," which many of them wear, she is well fixed for a job that is not bad by any means. If she keeps the machinery in good condition it does not require her to be right over the frames all the time; still the best spinners are always near at hand. All the floors in the mill, which are of maple, are kept white and clean and no one would ever dare expectorate upon the floor or sides of the walls. A mill that is kept in such condition will always get the better class of help because the best of spinners will not be satisfied in a mill where there are filthy floors

and walls and bundles of lint and strings always under their feet. There is some one sweeping or scouring at the Hoskins mill all the time in order that everything may be kept in perfect condition."¹⁴

The villages themselves, with streets named after the mill officers, were known to be a pleasant place to live, particularly after the development of an amusement park, Lakewood Park, nearby. The companies, of course, supplied land and buildings for churches, schools, and recreational facilities.¹⁵

In 1920 and 1921, a company owned by the Gossett family bought controlling interest in the Chadwick-Hoskins Company, and thereby became a subsidiary of Gossett Mills (known as the "Gossett chain"). By 1939 the chain was comprised of twelve mills in Virginia, North and South Carolina.¹⁶ Benjamin B. Garrett became president of Chadwick-Hoskins (his father, James P. Gossett, had built up a mill and banking business in Greenville, SC, starting in 1901).¹⁷ In 1946, local control and ownership of Chadwick-Hoskins ended by a merger with Textron-Southern, Inc. of Providence, RI; but two years later (1948) Textron-Southern sold the Hoskins plant to a local company, the Spatex Corporation (The Chadwick had been sold off a year earlier). Since that time the factory has gone through several owners, who used it for industrial purposes: P. B. Shikiarides, et al, 1958-60; Westbury Knitwear, 1960-63; Universal Automated Industries, 1963-69; Hydro Prints, 1969-86.¹⁸

In August, 1985, a fire caused damage to a small portion of the interior, and Hydro Prints ceased operations at the mill.¹⁹ The present owners, Trenton Properties, purchased the property in November, 1987, and intend to rehabilitate the mill.²⁰ Since only portions of the Chadwick mill remain, the Hoskins mill building is a key part of the mill legacy of the Chadwick-Hoskins community, and must be preserved if there is to be any connection with the community's, past, present and future.

Notes

¹ George T. Winston, *Builder of the New South: Being the Story of the Life Work of Daniel Augustus Tompkins*(Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1920), passim.

² Dan L. Morrill, "A Survey of Cotton Mills in Charlotte," Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1979; Winston, cited in note 1; William H. Huffman, "A Historical Sketch of the Charlotte Supply Company," Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983.

- ³ *Charlotte Observer*. May 1, 1933, p. 1; Morrill, cited above; Thomas W. Hanchett, "The Chadwick-Hoskins Mill Villages," Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission. 1986.
- ⁴ Mecklenburg County Record of Corporations, Book 1, p. 352.
- ⁵ Huffman, cited above.
- ⁶ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 179, pp. 110 and 114, 16 May 1903.
- ⁷ *Charlotte Daily Observer*. November 30, 1903, p. 5.
- ⁸ Hanchett, cited above.
- ⁹ Huffman, cited above.
- ¹⁰ Mecklenburg County Record of Corporations, Book 2, p. 313.
- ¹¹ Hanchett, cited above.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ *Charlotte Evening Chronicle*, January 10, 1914, p.8.
- ¹⁵ Hanchett, cited above.
- ¹⁶ Ibid. ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Record of Corporations, Book 23, p.239,30 September 1946; Deed Books 1308, p.17; 1994, p.153; 2192, p.535; 2436, p.256; 3147, p.15; 3403, p. 481.
- ¹⁹ *Charlotte News*, August 12, 1985, p.1B; Deed Book 5434, p.516.
- ²⁰ Deed Book 5652, p.72.

Architectural Description

Dr. Dan L. Morrill

Statement of Significance

Thomas W. Hanchett, Principal Investigator for the Charlotte Survey, believes that the Hoskins Mill Complex is among the most significant remnants of Charlotte's textile mill architecture. He writes:

"With the Alpha (Orient Building 1901) and Mecklenburg (1903-1904) it is one of only three well-preserved mills in Charlotte, and an important reminder of the era when Mecklenburg was among the South's most important textile-manufacturing counties."¹

Unlike the majority of Charlotte's initial cotton mills, such as the Ada, Alpha, and Atherton, which were primarily patterned after the design philosophy of D. A. Tompkins, thereby containing no more than two floors, the Hoskins Mill exhibits the form and massing which one encounters in early New England textile factories and in mills constructed later in the South -- a truth perhaps reflective of the fact that Northern money was involved in the founding of the Hoskins Mill or that standardized fire safety regulations were increasingly influencing textile mill architecture throughout the United States.

Finally, with the notable exception of Highland Park Manufacturing Company Mill No. 3, the Hoskins Mill is the only surviving Charlotte textile complex that contains a significant support building. Indeed, the Hoskins Mill Office Building is an invaluable and irreplaceable historic remnant of the industrial built environment of Charlotte.

Architectural Description

The Hoskins Mill, later Chadwick-Hoskins Mill No. 1, erected in 1903-04, is located to the immediate southeast of the intersection of Gossett Ave. and Hoskins Rd. in the northwestern quadrant of Charlotte, North Carolina, at the terminus of a now mostly destroyed railroad siding off the Seaboard Air Line tracks which run beside Rozzelle's Ferry Rd.² It is an American bond brick mill building with segmental arched windows with cement sills on the first floor, segmental foundation vents, a shallow gable roof, broad, flat eaves with heavy wooden brackets, and characteristic wooden post and beam construction and two stairways and an elevator shaft on the interior.

The main body of the structure, which faces northwestward toward Hoskins Rd., is twenty-eight bays wide and nine bays deep, three stories tall, with a bathroom tower on the eastern facade (away from Hoskins Rd.), and wooden double entrance doors near either end of the western facade (toward Hoskins Rd.). Extending northward from the main block is a one story, seven bay wide by nine bay deep extension identical in architectural detailing to that of the main block. Projecting from the southern end of the Hoskins Mill, where the machine shop and picker room were located, is a one-story and two-story section, severely damaged by fire in the early 1980s, which housed the engine room, storage, and loading and unloading docks. A small, one story wooden

building, southeastward from the bathroom tower, was probably originally a pump house.³ Several metal standards, also associated with fire protection, are situated in the yard between the main block and Hoskins Rd.

An especially striking feature of the Hoskins Mill complex, and one which is unique to Charlotte, is an extant, one and one-half story, five bay wide by nine bay deep, brick office building in running bond, facing Hoskins Rd. and situated near the northwestern corner of the property. The slate truncated tripped roof, with broad eaves and brackets, is penetrated by six jerkinhead dormers. The main windows are 1/1 sash with granite sills and segmental arches. A gable-roofed stoop protects a side entrance near the rear of the southern facade. An unprotected arched entryway exists on the rear or eastern side of the office building; and a front entrance porch, with a steeply-pitched gable roof supported by two brick pillars, is situated at the center of the western facade.

The interior of the office building contains several original features. The woodwork (window surrounds, dado rails, base and crown mouldings) is largely intact. An early or original light fixture hangs from the center of the room on the right front of the building. A stairway leads to a large, attic, which has been used for storage. But particularly noteworthy are a safe, still containing the inscription, "Chadwick-Hoskins Co.," and a magnificent oak and frosted glass counter just inside the pair of singlelighted front entrance doors, no doubt where millworkers and others came to do business with the Hoskins Mill management.

Important historic elements of the Hoskins Mill Complex no longer exist. They include: 1) a 3,000,000 gallon capacity reservoir, 2) two cotton warehouses, and 3) a transformer station.⁴ Moreover, significant changes have occurred to the Hoskins Mill, including the placement of a loading platform and office entrance on the northern end of the eastern facade of the main block, no doubt to accommodate trucks. Also, the bathroom fixtures in the bathroom tower are of relatively recent origin. On balance, however, the Hoskins Mill complex, including the office building, retains its essential historic integrity.

NOTES

¹ Thomas W. Hanchett, "Charlotte And Its Neighborhoods: The Growth of a New South City" (An unpublished manuscript in the files of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1985), Chapter 14.

² Insurance Maps of Charlotte, North Carolina (Sanborn Map Company, New York, 1929), Vol. 3, p. 348.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.