

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name (former) High Point Bending and Chair Company

other names/site number Boling Chair Company; Boling Company

### 2. Location

street & number 108 West Third Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Siler City N/A  vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Chatham code 037 zip code 27344

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Brown SHPO 9/22/99  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	1	buildings
		sites
1	1	structures
		objects
4	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: industrial

foundation brick

walls brick

roof asphalt

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

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Period of Significance

ca. 1884 - 1949

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Significant Dates

1908

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Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

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Cultural Affiliation

N/A

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Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 9 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	1	7
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6	3	8	6	6	0
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3	9	5	4	4	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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Zone Easting Northing

2 

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4 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Beth Keane (research provided by Kaye Graybeal)

organization Retrospective date May 23, 1999

street & number 321 N. Front Street telephone 910-341-3000

city or town Wilmington state NC zip code 28401

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Boling Acquisition LLC

street & number 108 W. Third Street telephone 919-663-2400

city or town Siler City state NC zip code 27344

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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(former) High Point Bending and Chair Co.  
Chatham County, North Carolina

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The (former) High Point Bending and Chair Company, currently known as The Boling Company, is located in Siler City, Chatham County's largest town, situated in the western portion of the county, sixteen miles due west of Pittsboro, the county seat. This nomination includes the original 1908 factory building (Building A), along with c. 1920 and c. 1946 brick factory buildings (Buildings B and C, respectively). The factory complex is situated on the northwest side of Siler City's central business district. Remnants of a mill village extend north and west of the factory. The complex, including several large parking lots situated east and south of the factory buildings, occupies approximately three city blocks. At the company's peak, four principal buildings provided 250,000 square feet of operational space. Railroad tracks run in a north-south direction through the center of the complex, while a small stream cuts diagonally in a northeast-southwest direction, across the block behind the factory.

1. Building A: Factory Building; 1908, 1960; Contributing Building

The heart of this plant at 108 West Third Street is a 1908 three-story common-bond brick building augmented with several additions. Located on the east side of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Railway tracks in the northeast quadrant of the property, Building A is crowned with a stepped parapet that conceals a roof-ridge clerestory. The low-pitched gable roof includes overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails. The segmentally-arched door, window, and ventilator openings are headed by a triple row of soldier bricks. The south (principal) and west elevations include nine-over-nine double hung sash windows on the first and second levels and six-over-six double hung sash windows on the third level. Although faded considerably, the former name of the company, "High Point Bending and Chair Company", painted on the west side of the building between the first and second story windows, is still visible.

The interiors of all the portions of the buildings housing manufacturing activities are basically unfinished with exposed brick walls. Building A contains a holding area for chairs on the first level and a sanding and finishing plant on the second and third levels. The common bond brick exterior support walls and "Y"-braced post-and-beam members are visible. Although stock is no longer delivered by rail, an overhead covered conveyor belt still runs from the train loading dock from the first level of Building C to the third level of Building A.

The early wood bending steam equipment continues to be utilized in this building. To accommodate more equipment on the second level, the

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existing post-and-beam structural elements have been reinforced and every other post has been removed. A beadboard stair enclosure near the center of the building leads to the upper two levels. The third level is lit with clerestory windows within a central raised portion (monitor) of the roof running the length of the building. In 1960, a substantial three-story brick rectangular addition with a flat roof was made to the east side of Building A. Fifteen-light casement windows are found in the 1960 addition.

2. Building B: Factory Building; c. 1920, c. 1940; Contributing Building

Building B, dating to the 1920s, is located southwest of Building C and west of the railroad tracks. The two-story brick flat-roofed building houses a number of functions sectioned off by heavy steel sliding doors between rooms. The first-floor includes a finishing room to the east, a machine room in the center, and a dry kiln to the west. The stretcher bond brick walls are exposed as are cross-braced roof trusses at the second level. Building B was enlarged with a c. 1940 brick two-story addition to the east side of the building. The expansion, which increased the square footage of Building B by approximately one-third, provided additional storage space for the factory. The c. 1940 augmentation included a one-story brick machine-shop attached to the south side of the two-story addition. Casement windows provide light and ventilation for the entire building. A large paved parking area is situated immediately south of the building.

3. Building C: Factory Building; c. 1946, 1964; Contributing Building

Building C, a long rectangular two-story brick building located south of Building A and connected by an overhead metal shaft, has a complementary parapet front concealing a clerestory. The west or rear original portion of Building C, dating to c. 1946, houses the shipping and storage area on the first level and the upholstery department on the second level. As in Building A, the common bond brick exterior support walls, as well as the structural elements of the low-pitched gable roof on the upper floor, are exposed. The long narrow building is supported by heavy oak "Y"-braced post-and-beam members, with the posts supporting the roof along the ridgeline. On the first level of the building, the diagonal wood strip underlayment of the floor above is exposed overhead, while underfoot is narrow pine strip flooring. On the upper floor, the flooring is constituted of wider wood strips. Also on the upper floor, a hook conveyor was installed just after World War II for moving chairs from station to station within the building.

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Chatham County, North Carolina

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A small one-story hipped addition was added to the east facade of Building C, c. 1958, to house company offices. This addition was replaced in 1964 with a two-story flat-roofed brick addition. The addition contains six executive offices clad with a special solid wood paneling, designed to display each of the five different woods and finishes that are most often used in the manufacture of Boling furniture. The lobby and conference room are finished in solid walnut, while the remainder of the rooms are finished in cherry, pecan, hard maple, and oak. All the panels were given a furniture finish which act as elaborate displays of what the various woods look like when fabricated into furniture.

4. Section of Cape Fear and Yadkin Railroad tracks; c. 1884; Contributing Structure

A section of railroad tracks bisects the property running in a north-south direction between Buildings A and C and Building B. The arrival of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway in Chatham County in April, 1884, was the impetus for the development of the town of Siler City. By 1909, the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad had become part of the Southern Railroad. The location of the factory next to the railroad facilitated the import of supplies and the export of the factory's finished products to outside markets.

5. Boiler Room; c.1960; Non-contributing building

A one-story metal boiler room is located west of the railroad tracks and north of Factory B. Steam is transferred from the boiler room to Factory A by a metal conveyor pipe, which runs from the boiler room to the second floor of Factory A.

6. Silo; c. 1960; Non-contributing structure

A concrete silo is situated adjacent to or east of the boiler room and west of the railroad tracks. The silo is utilized for the storage of sawdust.

North of the factory are several small storage structures, as well as large lumber stockpiles. Two small brick storage structures and various gas storage tanks are located on the western side of the railroad tracks. A warehouse known as Building D along with several frame dwelling houses, all previously located east of Building A, have recently been removed.

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Chatham County, North Carolina

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The (former) High Point Chair and Bending Company complex is significant under Criterion A in the area of industry as one of only a few surviving industrial complexes in Chatham County dating from the early-twentieth-century era of modernization and industrialization. The company, founded in 1901 as Siler City Bending Company, originally manufactured parts for horse-drawn vehicles. Reorganized in 1904 by the company's founder, Malvola Jackson Boling, the company was newly chartered as the High Point Bending and Chair Company, whereupon it began manufacturing bentwood parts for chairs. After a fire destroyed the original factory building, reconstruction began immediately and by 1908 the company was producing in its new factory building the first complete bentwood chairs.

As the company expanded, additional buildings were added to the complex, including a manufacturing building in the 1920s (Building B) and a shipping and warehouse building, c. 1940 (Building C). The company diversified over the years and was one of the first to manufacture fiber furniture (also know as wicker or rattan). They later acquired a plant in Louisville, Kentucky, which specialized in the manufacturing and sale of institutional furniture. By 1931, the company's manufacturing interests were consolidated at the Siler City plant. In 1939, the company expanded into lines of special-purpose seating and upholstered chairs. As the company continued to expand, each of the factory buildings received new additions.

In 1956, the company's name changed to Boling Chair Company, and then later to the Boling Company as operations diversified. In 1967, Mount Olive, North Carolina, was chosen for the company's new desk, table, and bookcase plant. In 1980, the combined Mount Olive plant along with the Siler City factory employed approximately 500 workers and included approximately 442,000 square feet of operating space. It was recognized as one of the major wood furniture manufacturers in the United States.

Companies such as this contributed to the establishment of Siler City as the industrial center of Chatham County. The chair and furniture factory strengthened Siler City's sound economic base throughout the twentieth century, and continues active production, although at a reduced scale, today. The Boling factory is one of the best-preserved industrial complexes in Chatham County dating from the first half of the twentieth century.



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Historical Background

The (former) High Point Chair and Bending Company was organized by investor and retired railroad captain, Malvola "Mallie" Jackson Boling in 1901 as "Siler City Bending Company," and manufactured parts for horse-drawn vehicles. These included the bowed shafts between which the horses were placed; curved mud guards that covered carriage wheels and protected passengers; brake blocks; and buggy bows, the curved ribs that supported tops for buggies and carriages. Later, the company ventured into the manufacture of bows for early automobile tops (Harley 1987, p. 29).

By 1904, the company began to falter and a reorganization was lead by Malvola Boling. Boling, known to family and a wide circle of friends also as "Captain" Boling, was assisted in the reorganization and launching of a new manufacturing company by S. H. Tomlinson, who served as the company's first president. S. H. Tomlinson owned furniture manufacturing interests in High Point, North Carolina. The first corporate office of the newly organized "High Point Bending and Chair Company" was located on Railroad Street in High Point, although the plant and production facilities have always been at Siler City. Other key players in the reorganization effort included J. Wade Liler, who served as secretary, and W. F. Brown, who served as treasurer. W. P. Brown came from Cleveland, Ohio, to supervise the technical operation of the reorganized plant (Hardin 1980, pp. 1-2). Upon its 1904 reorganization, the company began manufacturing bentwood parts for chairs (Hardin 1980, p. 2).

The corporation's charter permitted it "to cut, saw, bend, and sell and deal in chair stock, chair timber, and bent material of any kind whatsoever." The bentwood parts were then sold to other chair companies as components. The charter also indicated that the firm would manufacture chairs "in the white," a phrase referring to the use of unfinished wood. Other early products that were manufactured included wooden steering wheels for Model-T Fords and "goose neck" bends that served as components for chairs and swings (Hardin 1980, pp 2-3).

In February of 1907, Boling moved his residence to Siler City from Bonsal. In December of that year, the plant was destroyed by fire. Reconstruction began immediately and by the following year, the new plant, which employed thirty people and included the first electric lights in Siler City, completed their first bentwood chair. The High Point Bending and Chair Company was the first complete bentwood chair manufacturing facility in the South and for more than twenty-five years, it remained the

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only southern manufacturer of bentwood chairs, a low-cost and general utility seating. Peak capacity production in the early 1900s amounted to fifty chairs per day, in contrast to the hundreds per day that came off the line each working day by 1980 (Hardin 1980, pp. 2-3).

Boling died June 8, 1918, and C. B. Thomas, a Chatham County native who had become associated with the business, assumed management. Thomas was elected president in 1921, the same year the company began manufacturing fiber furniture (also known as wicker or rattan), a highly popular product for a number of years. The company's fiber furniture became the specific target of competition from upholstered lines (Hardin 1980, p. 3).

During World War I, Mallie Boling's eldest son, Floyd J. Boling, was stationed in Europe. Upon the end of the war, he returned to the United States to finish his education at Trinity College (now Duke University). He graduated in 1923 and began a manufacturing-sales-warehousing branch of the company in Atlanta. By 1930, due to the Depression, the business declined and the Atlanta branch closed. High Point Bending and Chair consolidated at Siler City in 1930, with Floyd Boling assuming management of both manufacturing and sales (Hardin 1980, p. 3).

During the years just prior to the onset of the Great Depression, the company began a collaboration with two High Point manufacturers, the Myrtle Desk Company and the Alma Desk Company, and in 1926, established a joint catalog and shipping service (Hardin 1980, p. 3). Also around this time, Keiffer Gladstone Clapp, Mallie Boling's son-in-law, was particularly successful in marketing the company's chairs to institutions, namely schools and churches. The market was so encouraging that in December of 1928, the company acquired a plant specializing in institutional sales, the Standard School Equipment Company located in Louisville, Kentucky. Standard's president, W. O. Jones, Sr., moved to Siler City in 1929. In January, 1931, the two manufacturing interests were consolidated at the Siler City plant with institutional sales continuing under the Standard name. This merger marked the beginning of a long and prosperous partnership and aided the company in surviving the Depression years (Hardin 1980, pp. 3, 10, 15). The formation of this partnership coincided with the election of Floyd Boling as president of High Point Bending and Chair Company. Floyd served as chief executive officer until his death on December 2, 1965 (Harden 1980, p. 3).

In 1939, the owners of High Point Bending and Chair Company purchased the B. J. Gregson Chair Manufacturing plant located in Liberty, North

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Carolina, to accommodate an increased demand for the production of school chairs. The Liberty plant was renamed "Stout Chair Company" for Hernay Elton Stout, secretary of High Point Bending and Chair Company. The company expanded into lines of special-purpose seating (Hardin 1980, pp. 4, 34).

Following the lean World War II years, businesses prospered in the post-war boom and began showing an interest in office chairs with more comfort and style. The High Point Bending and Chair Company responded by beginning to explore new manufacturing methods utilizing upholstery on traditional all-wood chairs (Hardin 1980, p. 18).

By 1951, an increasing need for raw material, especially Appalachian hardwoods, prompted Floyd Boling and H. W. Stout to develop a lumber plant in Azalea, North Carolina, to provide dimension cuts from high quality mountain-grown trees. For a number of years, this operation supplied much of the stock used in the Siler City plant. Rather than hauling rough lumber to the plant, the lumber was cut to dimension at Azalea leaving much of the saw waste at the processing site (Harden 1980, p. 4).

In 1956, the company's name was changed to Boling Chair Company, and then later to the Boling Company as operations diversified (Hadley 1987, p. 29). By 1960, the company had expanded to the point that a new three-story addition was added onto the east side of the 1908 Factory building. A new office building and showroom were added to Building B (C. 1940) in 1964.

An in-depth national survey of the wood office furniture market in 1967 convinced the company there was need for another good manufacturing source for wood office desks and office and library bookcases. With this information, Boling decided to halt the joint selling arrangement it had with other desk companies and build its own desk, table, and bookcase plant. Mount Olive, North Carolina, was chosen as the desk plant location; a forty-acre site was purchased; and a 168,000 square foot building was erected. First shipments were made from the new plant on November 11, 1968, and in 1978, a 35,000-square-foot warehouse was added to the initial plant (Harden, p. 4).

By 1980, in its seventy-fifth year of operation, Boling had approximately 500 employees, 442,000 square feet of operating space and was widely recognized as one of the major wood furniture manufacturers in the United States. The officer-management team continued to be made up largely of members of the company's founding family (Harden, p. 4).

As of 1999, the Boling Company has significantly reduced its

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operations. Ownership is no longer under the Boling family. The Chatham County company, with approximately fifty employees, continues to maintain and operate its three factory buildings in Siler City, manufacturing principally contract seating. The Mount Olive plant employs ninety workers and continues to manufacture desks, bookcases, and related office furniture.

**Context: Industry in the Early Twentieth-Century Piedmont and Chatham County**

After the Civil War, industrial mills, including textile, cotton, tobacco, lumber, and wood-product mills, were built in virtually every town in North Carolina's Piedmont, a trend that encouraged scattered settlement in the vicinity of these small towns. This trend created a circular development process which encouraged slow, steady industrial growth in the Piedmont. This pattern of industrial development which continued into the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in essence, decentralized factories and centralized the worker population in small towns. Thus, the rural landscape, during the greater part of the twentieth century, was spared encroaching industrial development and residential subdivision. The process began under the various cotton mill companies and was extended to foster the region's highly successful furniture industry (Randolph County Historical Society and Arts Guild 1980, p. 20).

The opening of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway lines in Chatham County in 1884 stimulated the development of the communities of Goldston, Bear Creek, Bonlee, and most importantly, Siler City, which was incorporated in 1887. Siler City grew to be the industrial center of the county. By April of the year of its incorporation, Siler City had fourteen commercial and/or manufacturing buildings. These included W. L. Hudson's saw and planing mill and a sash, blind, plow, and agricultural machinery plant; and Adolphus C. Jordan's cotton gin (Chatham County Multiple Resource Nomination, p. 6.2).

Most of Chatham County's early twentieth-century industry was established in Siler City, given the town's convenient location near two major stagecoach routes and railroad service. Siler City had been identified by late nineteenth-century industrialists as a prime location for manufactories of which eight were listed in the 1896 Branson's Business Directory. One of the firms was Hadley, Peoples and Company general merchandise store, listed as sellers of general merchandise, country produce, and as canners of fruit. In 1895, Hadley-Peoples Manufacturing Company incorporated as cotton buyers and manufacturers of yarn and it

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became Chatham County's second major textile manufacturing concern (Branson's Business Directory, 1896). Following the trend of many other mills in the state, the company built a cluster of workers' houses to form a mill village in an area north and southwest of the plant.

The town of Pittsboro, the seat of Chatham County, was actively seeking the establishment of new industry as it neared the turn of the century. During the 1890s, a series of newspaper articles on towns in the state relayed that "people (in Pittsboro) are not only anxious to attract manufactures, but will go further and interest themselves in the projects of such manufactures." The first of the centralized planing mill plants was established in Pittsboro around the turn of the century by entrepreneur, Bennet Nooe. The operation included a dry kiln, a portable sawmill, and a brick-manufacturing operation. Around 1904, Nooe turned to the manufacturing and shipping of lumber (Osborn and Selden-Sturgin 1991, p. 70).

In High Point in nearby Guilford County, the furniture industry was flourishing at the turn of the century. The High Point Furniture Company, the town's first furniture factory, was founded in July, 1888; with further growth of the industry during the early twentieth century, High Point soon became known as the "Furniture Capital of the World."

The railroad and the developing furniture market encouraged the opening of plants in Randolph County, south of Guilford. The Alberta Chair Works incorporated in Ramseur in 1889 (Randolph County Historical Society and Arts Guild 1980, p. 20). In Randolph's county seat of Asheboro, furniture manufacturers established in the early twentieth century included Randolph Chair Company, Asheboro Furniture, Cranford Furniture Company, Asheboro Veneer Company, National Chair Company, and P & P Chair Company. By 1900, almost every town in the county boasted a chair factory; most of the original buildings which housed these concerns are no longer in existence (Whatley 1985, p. 162).

By 1900, the population of Siler City stood at 440, representing an almost seventy-five-percent increase over the previous decade. As the century progressed, it became a popular destination for entrepreneurs and boasted some of the county's most notable industries, including the High Point Bending and Chair Company. In 1909, a unique industry, a washboards manufactory, was established in Siler City. By 1911, the operation boasted twenty-five employees, and in 1913 was incorporated as the Oval Oak Manufacturing Company. The plant became nationally known for its patented "nailess" washboards before it closed in 1944. In 1910, a feed and grain

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milling enterprise, known as Siler City Milling Company, was established near the center of town. This mill later merged with the Electric Milling Company (1914), forming Siler City Mills, Inc. (1921-1986), ultimately operating from a six-floor building with several accretions occupying an entire city block along the railroad tracks. After seventy-five years of producing animal feed and flour, the plant closed around 1986, and the building was demolished in 1990 (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill 1991, p. 38).

Several other wood production companies were established in Siler City in the early twentieth century, including the Pioneer Handle Manufacturing Company (1905), the Piedmont Hardwood Company (1916,) which made box-seat dining chairs, and Williams and Brower, Incorporated (1917), which produced dining and school furniture. The Chatham Chair Manufacturing Company, established in 1918, produced bent-oak chairs. The Chatham Sash and Door Company, established in 1925 and reorganized as the Thomas Manufacturing Company, was formerly sited on the west side of the 500 block of South Chatham Avenue. The building was destroyed by fire in 1946. Water and sewer service established in 1925 facilitated more efficient production (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill 1991, p. 124).

The progressive industrialism in Siler City during the 1920s was part of a nationwide trend as manufacturers began to invest heavily due to a rise in consumerism brought on by the availability of credit. Businessmen optimistically anticipated that the newly created Federal Reserve would stabilize the economy and that technological progress would guarantee higher living standards and expanding markets. However, a recession resulted in 1929 from an attempt by the Reserve to raise interest rates to discourage stock speculation. The strategy caused a drop in the purchase of durable goods which, in turn, prompted manufacturers to cut back on production and to lay off workers, a trend which lasted into the early 1940s (Foner and Garraty 1991, pp. 279-280).

The highly successful High Point Bending and Chair Company survived the economic stresses imposed by this trend, while the Oval Oak Manufacturing Company and Thomas Manufacturing Company closed around 1944 (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill 1991, p. 124). However, industry in Siler City regained momentum following these closures and upon the conclusion of World War II. Two major factors in this growth were the opening of branches of nationally- and statewide-known industries, as well as the increase and expansion of locally owned industries. In 1991, the principal industries located in Siler City included those of furniture manufacturing, poultry processing, meat processing, hosiery, lingerie, yarn, and textiles.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Boundary Description

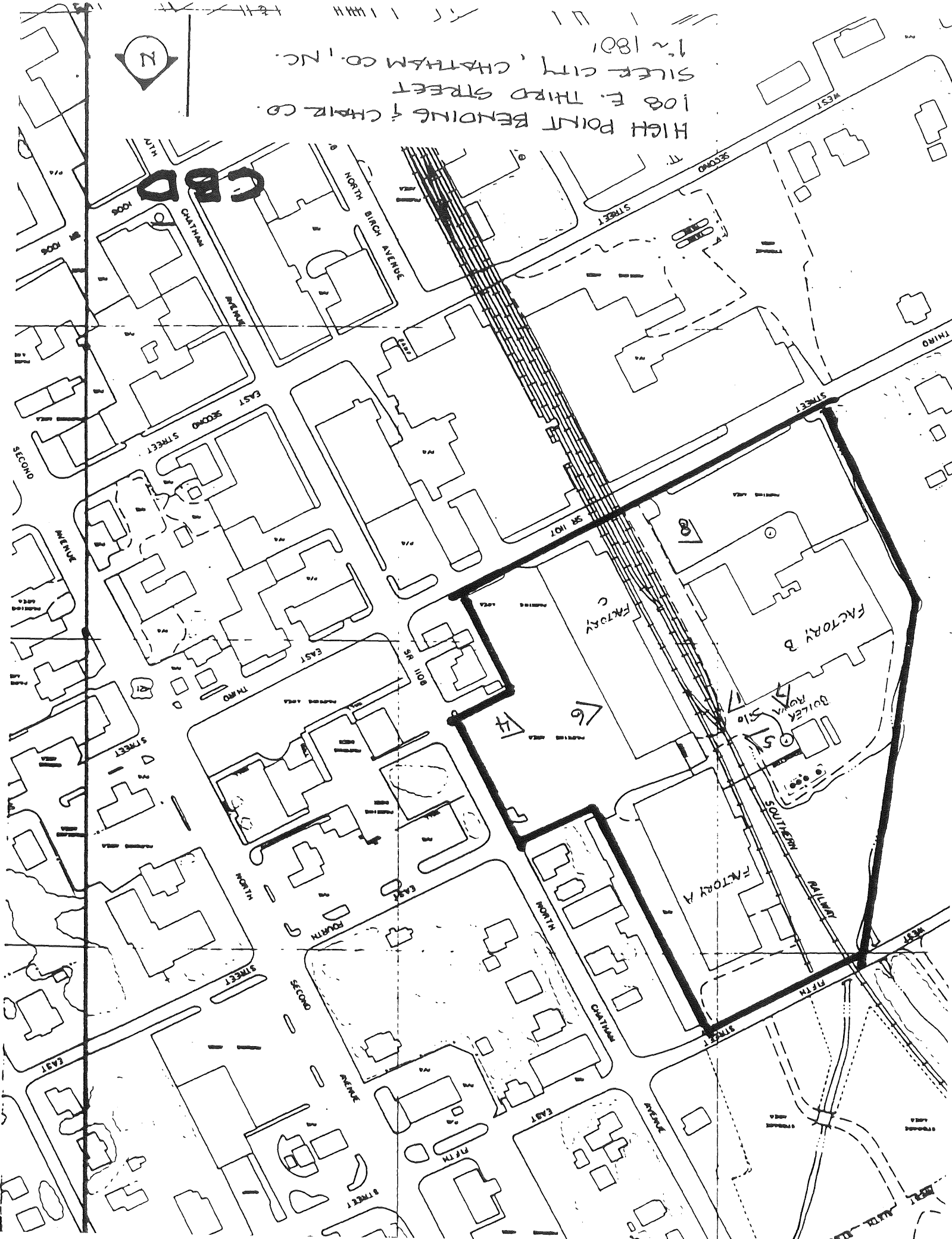
The boundaries encompass all of tax parcel #7130 as indicated on the accompanying Chatham County tax map #8761.06.

Boundary Justification

The nominated tract is a portion of the original tract owned by High Point Chair and Bending Company (currently owned by The Boling Company) and which retains historic integrity.



HIGH POINT BENDING & CHAIR CO.  
108 E. THIRD STREET  
SILER CITY, CHATHAM CO., NC.  
1~1801



**CBD**



