North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State Historic Preservation Office

Peter B. Sandbeck, Administrator

Michael F. Easley, Governor
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Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary

Office of Archives and History
Division of Historical Resources
David Brook, Director

June 17, 2008

Frances P. Alexander
Mattson, Alexander & Associates
2228 Winter Street
Charlotte, NC 28205

RE: Charlotte Area Transit System, LYNX Blue Line Extension, NE Corridor, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, ER 06-1957

Dear Ms. Alexander:

Thank you for your letter of May 9, 2008, transmitting the preliminary evaluations for two properties in the Area of Potential Effects for the above referenced undertaking. We have reviewed the preliminary evaluations and concur with the report's findings that the following properties are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under the criterion shown.

- Republic Steel Corporation Plant: Criteria A for industry and C for architecture, especially the work of J. N. Pease Associates. MK 2911

- Standard Chemical Products Plant: Criteria A for industry and C for architecture, especially as a rare surviving example of the dyestruffs industry in the city. MK 2910

The boundaries for both properties appear appropriate. We will look forward to a final report on the buildings.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919-807-6579. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

Sincerely,

Renee Gledhill-Earley

Peter Sandbeck

cc: Kelly Goforth, CATS

bc: DOT/CATS
Ann Swallow
County

Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.
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ER 06-1957

9 May 2008

S -

Ms. Renee Gledhill-Earley
Environmental Review Coordinator
North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office
4617 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4617

Due 6/6/08

Re: Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), LYNX Blue Line Extension, Northeast Corridor

Dear Renee:

Enclosed please find the preliminary evaluations of eligibility for two industrial properties located within the general study area for the proposed Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), LYNX Blue Line Extension, Northeast Corridor. These two properties, the former Republic Steel Corporation Plant and the Standard Chemical Products property, are being submitted for your initial assessment of eligibility to assist CATS in their planning process.

We appreciate your willingness to review these two properties in advance of the formal Phase II Historic Architectural Survey Report. The report will be prepared once final project alternatives have been determined. We look forward to working with you and the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office on this project, and again our thanks for your early review of these two resources. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call me at (704) 358-9841or Richard Mattson at (704) 376-0985.

Concur with both

Sincerely yours,

MATTSON, ALEXANDER AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

Frances

Frances P. Alexander
Principal

cc: Kelly Goforth, CATS
Sharyn LaCombe, Enreview Consulting, LLC

PRELIMINARY EVALUATIONS OF ELIGIBILITY

REPUBLIC STEEL CORPORATION PLANT
AND
STANDARD CHEMICAL PRODUCTS PLANT

LYNX BLUE LINE EXTENSION, NORTHEAST CORRIDOR
CHARLOTTE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM
MECKLENBURG COUNTY

Prepared for:

Charlotte Area Transit System
400 East Trade Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202

and

STV/Ralph Whitehead Associates
1000 West Morehead Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28208

Prepared by:

Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.
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9 May 2008

Historical Background Essay/Industrial and Commercial Contexts

Early Settlement to World War II

During the mid-eighteenth century, Ulster Scots Presbyterians and a smaller contingent of Germans streamed into the southern Piedmont and Mecklenburg County. Situated on the highest ridge between the Catawba and Yadkin rivers, Charlotte arose as the county's trading hub and political seat. A grid of streets was platted at the junction of two trading paths which were named Trade and Tryon streets. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the county gradually developed as a cotton producing area with plantation seats and middling farms occupying fertile bottomlands near the Catawba River and its tributaries. Early settlement patterns shaped rural development, and a series of thriving agricultural communities emerged near the seven Presbyterian churches that were established during the initial phase of settlement: Steele Creek, Sugaw Creek, Providence, Hopewell, Centre (in Iredell County), and Rocky River and Poplar Tent (in Cabarrus County) (Hanchett 1998: 8-15; Bishir and Southern 2003: 502-503, 530).

Because of its inland location too far from navigable waterways, Mecklenburg County grew slowly until the arrival of railroads. In 1852, the Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad connected Charlotte to Columbia, South Carolina. Two years later, the North Carolina Railroad reached Charlotte from Goldsboro, North Carolina, linking the city to other rail junctions and markets to the east. These antebellum rail lines boosted Charlotte as a cotton market, encouraged commercial agriculture, and anticipated the city's rise as a railroad hub and manufacturing and distribution center in the decades after the Civil War (Hanchett 1998: 200-201; Bishir and Southern 2003: 502-503)

Situated far from military engagements during the Civil War, Charlotte quickly recovered and expanded its rail network in the postwar decades. By 1875, six railroads were routed through the city, giving Charlotte more rail connections than any other place between Washington, D.C. and Atlanta. The city benefited from continued rail expansion and consolidation throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly from the creation of the powerful Southern Railway system, which gave Charlotte connections to New Orleans and Baltimore. In 1910, the Southern Railway and the Carolina Central Railroad (later part of the Seaboard Air Line) laid tracks side by side along Brevard Street in the heart of the city (two blocks east of Tryon Street) to serve growing freight needs. In 1911, the smaller, but strategic, Piedmont and Northern (P&N) Railway, an electric interurban line, was opened to link Charlotte to scores of emerging cotton mill towns in Gaston County, west of the Catawba River. At its height of operation in the 1920s, the P&N line generated so much traffic that its motto, "A Mill to the Mile," was accurate for much of its length (Fetters and Swanson 1974: 14; Morrill et al. 1983: 4; Hanchett 1998: 74; Glass 1992: 57-58).

The expansion of the Piedmont textile industry defined Charlotte's ambitions as a "New South" city. After the Civil War, leaders throughout the region envisioned a new order based on industrialization--specifically textile production--and urban growth to replace the agrarian society of the past. These proponents of the New South campaigned vigorously for the construction of cotton mills which by World War I numbered over 300 within a 100-mile radius of Charlotte. By the 1920s, the Piedmont region of the Carolinas had surpassed New England as the leading textile producer in the world. During this period, the population of Charlotte soared from just 7,000 in 1880, to over 82,000 in 1929, becoming the largest city in the Carolinas (Glass 1992: 57-58; *Charlotte Observer,* 28 October 1928).

Between the 1890s and 1920s, Mecklenburg County ranked among the state's top three textile manufacturing counties. Approximately two dozen mills and related villages were established in and around Charlotte. Just north of the center city, the Alpha Cotton Mill (National Register 2005) was constructed between 1888 and 1889 and expanded under the ownership of the Orient Manufacturing Company in the early 1900s. The most significant collection of mills and worker housing developed in the community of North Charlotte (National Register 1990), several miles to the north. Construction was concentrated around the Southern Railway and North Davidson Street where a streetcar line ran south to downtown. By the 1910s, North Charlotte included three mills, adjoining blocks of look-alike mill houses, and a small commercial district. Highland Park No. 3 Mill was the state's largest cotton mill (with 800 workers) and among the first designed for electric power when it opened in 1904. To the north, Johnston Mill was established in 1916 to meeting the soaring demand for cotton products during World War I. The plant was expanded in 1926 as well as in later years. North of the Johnston Mill, Mecklenburg Mill was created in 1903-04 by Charlotte investors and the Duke family (Mattson, Alexander and Associates 2003; Wyatt and Woodward 2001: 5-16).

Cotton and textile production formed the economic foundation of Charlotte and also drew to the city auxiliary industries that either supplied the textile sector or used cotton by-products in their manufacturing. Throughout the early twentieth century, other industries, without any relationship to textile manufacturing, were also drawn to the city's good rail system, expanding work force, and plentiful and inexpensive electric power. Steel and iron fabricators, machine shops, dye stuffs manufacturers, pump and elevator manufacturers, foundries, engineering firms, mattress factories, and cotton oil processors were just some of the industries which followed in the wake of the textile boom. Tobacco magnate, James Buchanan Duke, and his Southern Power Company (later Duke Power Company) expanded aggressively in the region, supplying both industrial and residential clients with inexpensive electricity. With a robust industrial economy and urban prosperity came a strong commercial and financial base that served large areas of the industrialized Piedmont as well as local consumers. As the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce boasted in a 1928 advertisement, Charlotte had emerged as a regional commercial center with a 150-mile trading radius and more than 4,500,000 consumers (*Charlotte City Directory* 1928; Wyatt and Woodward 2001: 10-16).

The city's transportation links and healthy industrial growth also promised profits for commercial warehouses and wholesale distribution companies. In 1925, the *Charlotte Observer* observed,

> Many new demands have come upon Charlotte Realtors during the past year for locations for building of warehouses, because Charlotte has come to be known in the sales organizations of national manufacturers throughout America as the best point in the Southeast for distribution of products and for location of branch plants. Some realtors here have become specialists in finding such locations to suit varying requirements, and almost every square foot of railroad footage has been analyzed and compared in price. . . . [The] proximity to street cars, freight stations, express offices and retail districts command the higher prices (*Charlotte Observer,* 29 June 1925).

Scores of distribution companies emerged along the railroad corridors and the adjacent roadways that cut through the city. Assorted automotive and industrial supply buildings flanked the Southern Railway, the Norfolk and Southern Railroad, the Seaboard Airline, and P&N Railway. The roadways running parallel to these tracks—served by trucks and linked to rails by spur lines--

attracted similar development. North Tryon, North Graham, North Davidson streets to the north of the center city, West Morehead Street and Wilkinson Boulevard to the west, Rozzelle's Ferry Road to the northwest, and South Boulevard and South Tryon Street to the south all became warehousing corridors boasting sizable storage buildings and truck terminals (*Charlotte City Directory* 1929, 1930, 1931, 1950; Sanborn Insurance Maps 1929, 1951; Hanchett 1998: 90-91, 226).

Warehouses also filled the rail corridor near the heart of the central business district. Both the Southern and the Seaboard Air Line railroads invested in large freight depots along their parallel spur lines that divided First and Second Wards downtown. Nearby stood an assemblage of commercial storage facilities for cotton, farm machinery, hardware, groceries, and general merchandise. At the northeast corner of Seventh Street and the Southern Railway tracks, the Philip Carey Building (National Register 1983; Local Landmark 1983) was constructed in 1908 for a national manufacturer and supplier of roofing materials. One block north, the McNeil Paper Company Warehouse (Local Landmark 1989; Study List 2001) was erected in the 1910s. Between 1934 and 1960, the building was owned by McNeil Paper Company, a wholesale supplier of paper products, including twine, paper bags, and school supplies. The company also used the adjacent warehouse which still stands to the north (Sanborn Insurance Map 1929; Morrill et al. 1983; Gatza 1989).

Significant among the city's distribution businesses were those that specialized in the automotive trade. As early as the 1910s, Charlotte was becoming an important automotive distribution center with companies selling and shipping cars, trucks, and parts throughout the Southeast. Ford Motor Company established a parts distribution business in Charlotte around 1915. In 1924, Ford constructed a large assembly plant that employed over 600 workers north of downtown along Statesville Road. In 1919, the regional manager of the Willys-Overland Car Company declared, "Charlotte is the second largest automobile and accessories center in the South." (Atlanta was the first.) A 1928 article in the *Charlotte News* ranked the city "as one of the South's great automotive trade centers," employing one out of eight workers and producing $100,000,000 of retail and wholesale trade annually (Hanchett 1998: 316, n. 8; *Charlotte Observer,* 25 January 1919; *Charlotte News*, 1 April 1928).

The growing numbers of commercial distribution firms were served by trucking companies that took advantage of Charlotte's transportation connections. The Good Roads movement of the 1920s and subsequent highway projects that culminated in federal expressways that availed the city to swift routes throughout the region and beyond. Wilkinson Boulevard, which connected Charlotte with the textile city of Gastonia, North Carolina, to the west, was completed in 1926 as the state's first four-lane highway. U.S. Highway 29 was constructed in 1931 to join Charlotte with Concord and Greensboro, North Carolina, and from there northward to Lynchburg, Virginia. U.S. 29 followed North Tryon Street into Charlotte, generating scores of roadside businesses along North Tryon (Bishir and Southern 2003: 516; Wyatt and Woodard 2000: 15).

Post-World War II Suburban Expansion

New and improved roads spawned unprecedented mobility and transformed the social and economic geography of the city. After the World War II, the ownership of cars and trucks in the city and the county skyrocketed, rising from 34,000 in 1945 to 64,411 in 1950. By the 1950s, new highways were surpassing railroads as the lynchpin to the city's prosperity (Jakle and Sculle 1994: 451, 57, 68; Wyatt and Woodard 2000: 15; Hanchett 1998: 200-201).

In 1953, the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce asserted:

> These hard surfaced arteries, in a large measure, are Charlotte's lifeline. The city's pulse is counted on those traffic meters the highway officials occasionally throw across the roads. Up and down these concrete and macadam spokes flow tremendous quantities of goods which make Charlotte the commercial center of the Carolinas. Through these arteries come the millions of motorized people who find here that which they seek in exchange for their money (Charlotte Chamber of Commerce 1953; quoted in Wyatt and Woodward 2000: 18).

Trucking firms such as Frederickson Motor Express, Harris Trucking, McLean Trucking, and Akers Motor Lines established terminals around the outskirts of the center city, providing long haul service throughout the region as well as into Midwestern markets and New York City. By the 1960s, local boosters proclaimed that only Chicago contained more tractor-trailer rigs than Charlotte (*Charlotte City Directory* 1930-1940; Hanchett 1998: 226).

By mid-century, large scale factories and warehouses vied for spacious tracts well beyond the city center where land costs were low. For example, in 1950, the Western Electric Company (Study List 2000), headquartered in Chicago, constructed a large manufacturing and distribution plant on the 2800 block of North Tryon Street, alongside the Southern Railway. In 1952, the Charlotte-based Barnhardt Manufacturing Company, maker of bleached cotton goods for the medical industry, built a modern facility on the east side of the city, near the junction of the Seaboard Railroad and Central Avenue. North of the city, North Graham Street and Rozzelle's Ferry Road attracted a number of new manufacturing buildings and truck terminals (Wyatt and Woodward 2000: 37-38; Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc. 2003: 89-90).

Between the late 1930s and 1950s, an area of North Graham Street along the Southern Railway above Dalton Avenue drew a host of manufacturing and distribution companies. The North Graham Street Industrial Historic District (DOE 2006) stands among the most intact and notable collections of historic industrial properties in Charlotte. The historic district consists of eleven principal resources including eight industrial and commercial properties. At the south end is the Southern Dairy Office and Plant (500 Dalton Avenue), a ca. 1954 facility that consists of a substantial, two story, red brick, Colonial Revival office building and a rear dairy processing plant. To the north, along the west side of North Graham Street (east side of the railroad) is the 1940s International Harvester Farm Equipment Company, Charlotte Branch (1315 North Graham Street). Until a recent change of ownership, International Harvester sold, distributed, and repaired its farm equipment in this expansive, brick complex. North of the International Harvester tract stands the ca. 1938 Chevrolet Motor Division Building (1419 North Graham Street), where automotive parts were produced and distributed. North of the Chevrolet Building is the 1940s Compton and Knowles Company (1505 North Graham), maker of textile machinery, and the Ciba Company (1936, expanded 1951) (1517 North Graham), a dye wholesaling business (Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc. 2003: 93-95).

The east side of North Graham Street within the district includes the 1940s American Aniline Products Company (1500 North Graham), dye wholesalers; the ca. 1955 Singer Sewing Machine Company (1514 North Graham), and the ca. 1949 Chipper Manufacturing Company (1600 North Graham), industrial air conditioning contractors. The brick industrial buildings to the north of the school all survive substantially intact with brick and concrete block exteriors, steel sash windows, and modernistic elements of style on the main elevations (Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc. 2003: 93-95).

The west side of the historic district, adjoining the Southern Railway and Statesville Avenue, holds the ca. 1948 A&M. Farm Equipment Company (1222 Statesville Avenue) and the massive Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant. The A&M building typifies the small-scale manufacturing and wholesaling facilities of the period with its red brick exterior, functional, one-story, boxy form, steel sash windows, concrete flooring, and steel beams and columns. To the north, the Ford Assembly Plant (Study List 2001) ranks among the county's most significant industrial properties. The tract combines the 1924 Assembly Plant, 1940s warehouses erected for the U.S. Army Quartermasters Corps Depot, and 1950s facilities built for the U.S. Army Missile Plant. The most architecturally notable building on the site is the original Ford assembly plant designed by nationally prominent industrial architect, Albert Kahn. The brick and steel framed manufacturing building features distinctive sawtooth monitors that run the length of the facility and a striking Art Deco façade (Mattson and Associates, Inc. 2003: 93-95).

Both the Standard Chemical Products, Inc. (600 Sugar Creek Road), a dye maker and distributor, and Republic Steel Corporation (601 Sugar Creek Road), a steel fabricator, were constructed ca. 1956 north of Charlotte at the junction of Sugar Creek Road and the Southern Railway. The two sites were also located within easy access of U.S. 29 and by 1958 to a newly completed section of Interstate Highway 85 in Mecklenburg County (Wyatt and Woodward 2000: 14-19).

At the same time, businesses specifically geared to motorists were transforming the city's major thoroughfares. Wilkinson Boulevard, South Boulevard, North Tryon Street, and Independence Boulevard (which opened in 1949) became bustling commercial strips beyond the center city, marked by car dealerships, fast food eateries, motels, and gas stations. The 1955 Charlotte business directory recorded over 400 automobile-oriented businesses including some 200 gas stations. In 1957, one newspaper reporter declared, "Nearly everywhere you look in Charlotte a new service station is poking up its gassy head" (*Charlotte City Directory* 1955; quoted in Wyatt and Woodward 2000: 17).

North Tryon Street (U.S. 29) contained eighteen gas stations in 1955 as well as six motels, four trailer dealerships, and several auto repair shops, automobile showrooms, and fast food restaurants. Three of these roadside establishments remain intact. The Texaco Service Station at the junction of North Tryon and Concord Road began in 1950 and now functions as an auto repair shop. Sited nearby, Elmore Trailer Sales, which included an adjacent trailer park, opened in 1949. Elmore served the growing market of motorists pulling trailers that had begun in the 1920s and reemerged nationwide during the postwar boom. The business also catered to those buying trailers for semi-permanent and permanent residences (*Charlotte City Directory* 1955).

The expansion of commercial strips coincided with postwar suburbanization. Reflecting a national trend after World War II, Charlotte's growth spread outward into the countryside. Two of the county's first major postwar commercial developments were suburban shopping centers--Park Road Shopping Center to the south and Hutchison Shopping Center (2016-2050 North Graham Street) to the north. The ensuing decades witnessed ever larger shopping centers and subdivisions as well as a vigorous annexation policy that extended Charlotte's borders to the edges of the county. Automobile oriented stores and planned subdivisions sprang up near North Tryon Street. At the intersection of North Tryon and Sugar Creek Road, the Park-n-Shop Supermarket (Study List 2000) opened in 1955 to serve the fast growing surrounding neighborhoods. Featuring a modernist design with a sweeping canopy to draw motorists and transmit an up-to-date appeal, the store epitomized the suburban retail enterprises of the period. In 1961, ten miles north of downtown, the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, established a

1,000-acre campus, near the junction of U.S. 29 and N.C. 49. The university expanded rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s, attracting tremendous retail and residential construction. This growth contributed to Charlotte's overall suburbanization to the north, generating intense development along Harris Boulevard and Mallard Creek Road near Interstate 85 and in recent years, Interstate 485(Wyatt and Woodward 2000: 2-35).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the area from downtown to Sugar Creek Road, reflects Charlotte's development and expansion as an industrial and distribution center between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. The area along North Tryon Street (U.S. 29) northward to Interstate 485 and northeastward to the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, represents the county's automobile oriented, suburban growth after World War II. Although these areas are interspersed with modern construction, historic resources remain. Red brick warehouses, sizable cotton mills and mill villages, modernist factories, and automobile oriented enterprises all survive intact to illustrate Charlotte's industrial and commercial history.

Architecture Context
Modernist Movement in Post-World War II Charlotte

Charlotte's post-World War II architectural development was characterized by modernism. Charlotte proved fertile ground for modernist architecture which championed industrial design and reflected a postwar optimism that industrialization and technological innovations were the answers to contemporary needs and aspirations. Although the city's home builders largely remained conservative in their stylistic choices, modernism influenced all aspects of commercial and industrial construction. By the 1950s, new office buildings, factories, truck terminals, drive-in restaurants, and other auto-oriented businesses as well as selected houses and residential enclaves conveyed elements of the modernist movement. While postwar architects and builders demonstrated modernist design in myriad ways, its basic principles emphasized unadorned, geometrical forms that expressed function while employing the latest materials. Across Charlotte and its suburbs, modernist buildings displayed such emblematic features as flat roofs; cantilevered upper floors and balconies; and smooth elevations devoid of historically derived ornamentation while often incorporating continuous bands of windows or expanses of glass that flooded interiors with natural light (Wyatt and Woodward 2000: 19-21).

In Charlotte, the most noteworthy modernist architects were A.G. Odell, Jr. and J.N. Pease. The firm of A.G. Odell and Associates was originally staffed by many young architects trained at the North Carolina State School of Design in Raleigh. Following the appointment of architect, Henry Kamphoefner, as dean in 1948, the School of Design played a major role in introducing modernist architecture to the state. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Odell's firm began to transform downtown Charlotte, replacing blocks of low rise, red brick and stone buildings with gleaming, glass and steel office towers. Among Odell's work in this period were the Jefferson Standard Building (1953), the Wachovia Bank and Trust (1957) (Study List 2000), North Carolina National Bank (1961), and the Cutter Building (1961). Only the Wachovia Bank and Trust remains substantially intact (Wyatt and Woodward 2000: 19-22; Morrill 2007).

Beyond the center city, on Independence Boulevard, Odell designed Ovens Auditorium and the adjacent Charlotte Coliseum (1954-1955). The circular coliseum of pre-cast concrete received international acclaim for its bold, innovative design that featured the largest free span dome in the world. Odell designed Ovens Auditorium with precast concrete panels and rectangular, blue tiles and included a bright lobby with terrazzo floors, glass walls, and a monumental stairway. Both buildings survive and are local historic landmarks. By the time of Odell's death in 1988, his architectural business was one of the largest and most influential in North Carolina (Ramsay 2001; Mattson, Alexander and Associates 2004: 31-32).

J. Norman Pease and his colleague, James A. Stenhouse, co-founded J.N. Pease Associates in Charlotte in 1938. After World War II, Pease's modernist-trained son, J.N. Pease, Jr., joined the firm. As with Odell and Associates, Pease hired a host of modernist designers from the North Carolina State School of Design and proceeded to reshape the architecture of postwar Charlotte. Among the firm's many local commissions were the Central Piedmont Community College campus, Edwin Towers in Fourth Ward, and the Charlotte Observer Building. The firm's own modernist office building (1959) (Study List 2000) is a long and sleek rectangular box with a concrete screen suspended by columns across the façade (Wyatt and Woodward 2000: 22-23; Morrill 2006).

Numerous corporations employed Pease to design new their offices in Charlotte, including Lance, Incorporated, the Knight Publishing Company, and Republic Steel Corporation. Located at the

intersection of Sugar Creek Road and the Southern Railway, the ca. 1956 office building for Republic Steel is a one-story, flat-roofed building that consciously expresses the products of Republic Steel in its steel window walls, soffits, and columns. The office is attached to the large corrugated-steel warehousing and fabricating buildings that dominate the complex (*Southern Architect* February 1963: 10).

Commenting on the enduring influence of Pease in the making of the modern city, a reporter at the *Charlotte Observer* asserted in 1987, "So sweeping was his presence, most Charlotte residents have probably worked in, banked in, studied or prayed in one of his products" (*Charlotte Observer* 18 July 1987).

The architecture of Pease and Odell stood at the forefront of modernism, but other designers created wide variations on the modernist theme to meet both sophisticated tastes and workaday needs. In addition to Republic Steel, other new or expanding industrial firms also invested in modernist architecture. For example, Standard Chemical Products, Inc., a dyestuffs manufacturer, built a plant just south of Republic Steel on the opposite side of Sugar Creek Road. Completed in the mid-1950s, the building complex includes a modernist office/laboratory section oriented to the highway, and a spacious warehouse with loading bays to the rear. The office/lab embodies the tenets of modernism in its horizontal, angular geometry, narrow band of steel-sash windows along the main office elevation, and exterior walls of Roman brick and smooth, porcelain enameled steel. In the 2800 block of North Tryon Street, the Western Electric Company Building (1950) (Study List 2000) features an unadorned, smooth brick façade distinguished by three horizontal rows of steel-framed windows marking the three floors (Wyatt and Woodward 2000: 37-38).

Another fine example of industrial modernism is the Barnhardt Manufacturing Company at 1100 Hawthorne Lane, near the Seaboard Railroad tracks east of downtown. In 1952, Barnhardt Manufacturing, a local textile firm, constructed a sizable, up-to-date plant on its original site. The two-story, red brick building reflected modernist tendencies in its long, rectilinear form and front elevation consisting of banks of large, steel sash windows outlined by horizontal, cast concrete bands that extend across the facade. Cast concrete frames the main center entrance bay with lingering Art Moderne fluting on either side of the glazed doorway. "Office" is inscribed in simple, steel, block lettering above the doorway.

As Charlotte grew into a financial and corporate center in the 1950s and 1960s, a collection of small and mid-rise, modernist office buildings were also constructed around the city. Downtown, the architectural firm of Freeman-White drew the plans for the seven-story Home Federal Savings and Loan Building (1967) (National Register 2007). Now surrounded by high-rise bank towers, the mid-rise Home Federal building is composed of unusual Japanese-inspired elements with exposed, rough-faced, concrete walls and projecting sunshades/balconies. Southwest of downtown, on Freedom Drive, one of Charlotte's finer examples of small-scale, office modernism is the American Commercial Bank (1954) (Study List 2000) designed by the local architectural firm of Walter Hook and Associates. Constructed of brick, glass, and concrete panels, the two-story building has a horizontal orientation, with ribbon windows and an off-set entrance.

East of the center city in the Elizabeth neighborhood, Providence Hospital attracted several modernist medical buildings. Of special note was the Hawthorne Medical Center (1955; demolished 2007). The five-story, brick, rectangular building presented bands of ribbon windows across the façade that delineated the floors and emphasized the horizontal form. The cantilevered

glass first story was supported by a series of concrete columns and sheltered a slate stairway. South of downtown in the Dilworth neighborhood, the Pure Oil Company opened its modern Eastern Division Office in 1956. Designed by one of the company's architects, the two-story Pure Oil Building (Study List 2000) features ribbon windows that turn the corners of the façade, and a cantilevered main entrance facing East Morehead Street (Mattson, Alexander Associates 2005: 22; Wyatt and Woodward 2000: 32-33).

Perhaps nowhere was modernism more evident, evocative, or eye-catching than along the commercial strips. Designers adapted the strictures of the modernist style to roadside restaurants, motels, super markets, and gas stations, using the graphic quality of the style both to express corporate identity and to attract passing motorists. The major oil companies, for example, commissioned architects ("marketing engineers" as they were often called) to create distinctive, brand-conscious station designs to be repeated by the thousands nationwide. Texaco Oil employed Walter Dorwin Teague, who developed the white, streamlined box to give gas stations the impressions of speed and modernity. The new design was sheathed in gleaming porcelain enamel and glass and included integrated office and service bays. Teague's creation symbolized Texaco Oil across postwar America. Shifting tastes and marketing strategies have left few of these gas stations intact. However, in Charlotte, a well-preserved example remains at the intersection of North Tryon Street (U.S. 29) and Old Concord Road. Constructed in 1950, this Texaco service station (now an car repair shop) retains its original streamlined form and materials including sleek, porcelain enameled steel panels and glazed office and service areas (Jakle and Sculle 1994: 144-149).

Designers of roadside architecture in the 1950s often exaggerated modernist traits to draw customers and, of course, to boost sales. The facades of restaurants, super marts, and gas stations became plate glass walls, or "visual fronts," to showcase interiors and invite passersby. Structural elements were not only given full display in the modernist fashion but were overemphasized. Oversized, stylized roofs often replaced the simple flat top, and extreme canopies, V-shaped columns, and flamboyant signs all conspired to convert buildings to traffic-stopping imagery. In Charlotte, the South 21 Drive-In on South Boulevard (1955) (Study List 2000) epitomizes this trend in its exaggerated, streamlined signage and glass and steel kitchen and service building. The Park-n-Shop Supermarket (Study List 2000) at the corner of North Tryon Street and Sugar Creek Road is another notable example. Constructed ca. 1955, the building features an expansive, "visual front" facade sheltered by a sweeping canopy with V-shaped steel columns (Liebs 1985: 61-64; Wyatt and Woodward 2000: 34).

No. Republic Steel Corporation Plant MK2911
601 Sugar Creek Road
Charlotte, Mecklenburg County

In its modernist design and location at the junction of Sugar Creek Road and the Southern Railway, the Republic Steel Corporation Plant epitomizes Charlotte's industrial development after World War II. Beginning in the 1920s and accelerating after World War II, the city's industrial base became increasingly diversified. While textile manufacturing and its allied industries remained principal employers, Charlotte also began to prosper as a regional distribution center for manufactured goods and as a manufacturing center for a variety of different products, including fabricated steel, chemicals, electronic equipment, automotive parts, and large-scale agricultural equipment. Spatially, the new factories and truck terminals gravitated to the periphery of the city where land costs were lower and access to rail lines and nearby highways was convenient: North Graham and North Tryon streets, Rozelle's Ferry Road, Sugar Creek Road, and South Boulevard, and Wilkinson Boulevard all drew much of the postwar industrial development. Architecturally, the finest new buildings featured stylish offices with landscaped lawns and adjoining functional manufacturing and warehousing sections with large truck bays and paved parking areas. In an effort to appear up-to-date, offices often displayed design elements informed by the Modernist Movement, with its emphasis on sleek forms that expressed function and revealed structural components and with such distinguishing elements as flat roofs, cantilevered features, smooth walls with ribbon windows, and gleaming, window-walled surfaces framed in steel (see Architecture Context: Modernist Movement in Post-World War II Charlotte).

Physical Description

Constructed ca. 1956, the Republic Steel Corporation Plant consists of a one-story office at the southwest corner facing Sugar Creek Road and expansive, brick and corrugated steel warehousing and fabrication units to the rear (**Figure** ____; **Plates**____). Designed by the noted Charlotte architecture firm of J.N. Pease Associates, the office is a modernist display of glass, steel, and brick, created to highlight Republic Steel's products by expressing the use of steel construction where possible. The office building has a low, horizontal form with exposed steel I-beams supporting the cantilevered, flat roof, and steel-framed window walls. The office is set within a manicured lawn that rises gradually from the street. An original brick planter is situated beside the recessed entrance, and shrubbery borders the building. The well-preserved interior includes steel-framed partition walls, metal acoustical ceilings, glazed tile hallways, slate floors, and the original counter and porcelain-enameled steel panels in the front reception area (*Southern Architect* February 1963: 10).

manufacturing?

Designed by Republic Steel, the plant's massive, adjoining warehousing units also follow modernist trends in their horizontality and functional expression. The buildings have steel-sash ribbon windows and walls comprised of corrugated steel above red brick. Truck bays mark the west elevation. The open interiors have concrete flooring and steel beams and trusses. There is an original traveling crane in the warehouse. Interior photos of the warehouse and fabrication sections were denied.

The Republic Steel property also contains two, ca. 1956, corrugated steel buildings to the north of the main plant. The buildings were constructed for the fabrication of steel piping primarily for culverts and drainage. The northernmost building, which has ventilators in the gable front roof, was originally used for coating the fabricated steel pipes in asphalt.

Historical Background

In 1955, the Republic Steel Corporation acquired roughly six acres of land from the J.A. Jones Company at the intersection of Sugar Creek Road and the Southern Railway. A major Charlotte construction firm with an international clientele, J.A. Jones most likely constructed the Republic Steel facility. In Charlotte, Republic Steel fabricated steel primarily for metal roofing, storm water piping, and culverts as well as selling metal to regional manufacturers for a variety of uses. The steel was produced at mills around the corporation headquarters in Youngstown, Ohio, and shipped by rail to the Charlotte plant. The operation closed in the 1980s, shortly after Republic Steel merged with the Jones and Laughlin Corporation to form LTV Steel. The office building is now leased to several businesses, and the adjoining warehousing and steel fabrication facility is used for warehousing purposes. The adjacent pipe manufacturing buildings at the north end of the tract are owned and operated by Contech Constructions Products, Inc. and remain in use for making and distributing storm water pipes and culverts. The complex is well preserved and in good condition (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1809: 229).

The Republic Steel Corporation Plant is recommended for National Register eligibility under Criterion A for industry and under Criterion C for architecture. The industrial plant is an especially fine example of post-World War II modernist architecture in Charlotte and illustrates both the geography and diversity of the city's industrial development after World War II. The city in the late 1950s boasted seventeen steel fabricators and distributors. The largest of these appear to have been Republic Steel and the Southern Engineering Company on Wilkinson Boulevard, which promoted itself as "Little Pittsburg." The Southern Engineering complex has been significantly altered in recent years. Republic Steel survives as the most intact and finest expression the city's postwar steel fabricating complexes. The proposed National Register boundaries encompass 12.41 acres on which are the main office and warehousing sections and the two pipe fabricating buildings to the north. There are no noncontributing resources. The proposed National Register boundaries are shown on **Figure ____.**

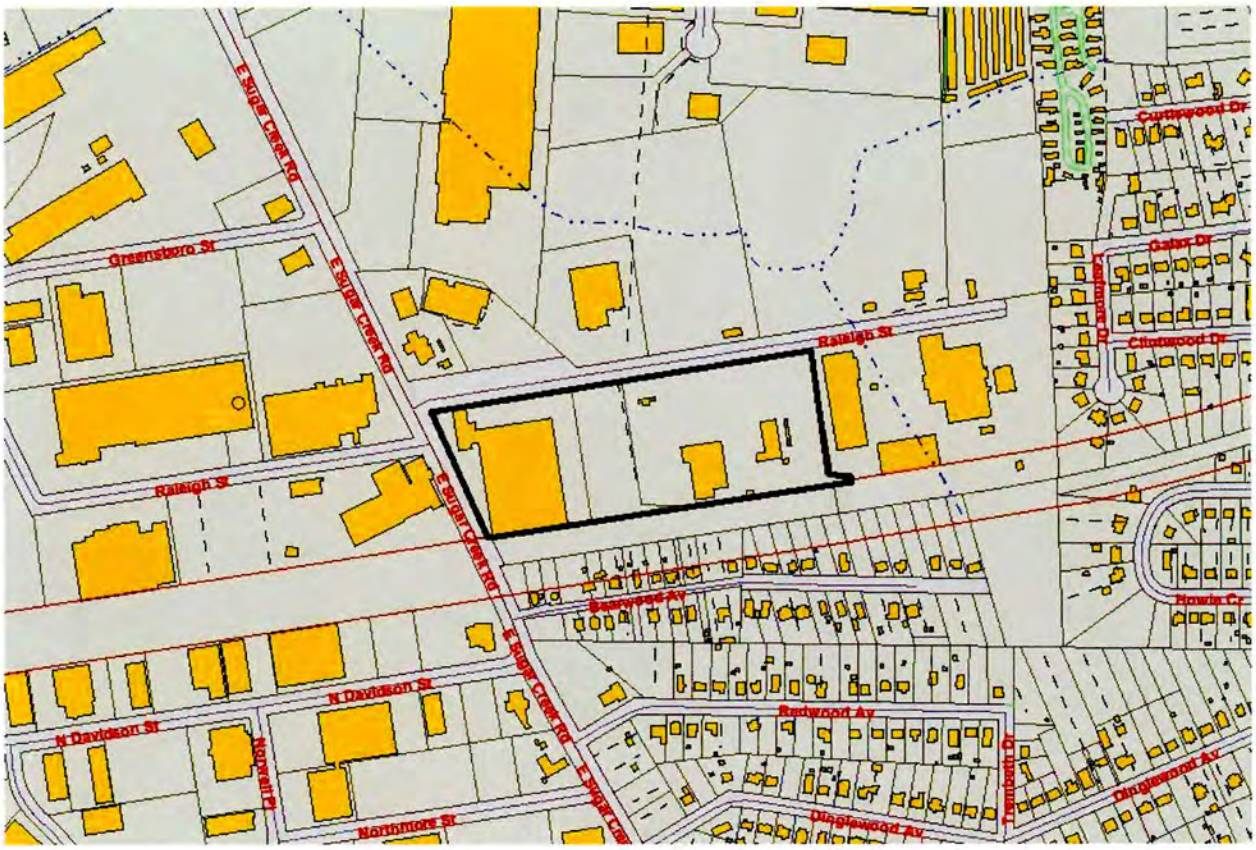
Figure ____

Republic Steel Corporation Plant
Site Plan

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Map

Figure ____

Republic Steel Corporation Plant
Proposed National Register Boundaries



Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Map

Scale: 1'=637"

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Overall View, South (Sugar Creek Road) Elevation, Looking West From Railroad Corridor.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Office and Warehouse, Looking Northeast From Sugar Creek Road.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Office, Looking Northwest From Sugar Creek Road.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Office Entrance, Looking North.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Office and Lawn, Looking West.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Office, East Elevation, Looking North Towards Warehouse.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Office, West Elevation, Looking East.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Warehouse, West Elevation, Looking East.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Warehouse, West Elevation, Looking East.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Warehouse, West Elevation, Truck Bay.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Looking North Along Railroad Corridor.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Warehouse Sections, East Elevation, Looking Northwest From Railroad.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Pipe Fabrication Building, West Elevation, Looking East.

Republic Steel Corporation Plant, Pipe Fabrication Building at North End of Tract, Looking North.

No. Standard Chemical Products Plant MK2910
600 Sugar Creek Road
Charlotte, Mecklenburg County

As with the Republic Steel Corporation Plant directly to the north, the ca. 1956 Standard Chemical Products Plant neatly represents Charlotte's industrial expansion after World War II. Standard Chemical produced dyestuffs for the textile industry which continued to prosper in the postwar years. The facility's location at the intersection of Sugar Creek Road and the Southern Railway reflects the movement of large-scale industries in this period away from the center city to suburban sites served by rail lines and adjacent highways. Architecturally, the building illustrates the latest trends in postwar industrial design, consisting of a modernist office that is distinguished from the adjoining, more functional, laboratory and a warehousing sections (see Architecture Context: Modernist Movement in Post-World War II Charlotte).

Physical Description
Sited on the south side of Sugar Creek Road at the Southern Railway tracks, the ca. 1956 Standard Chemical Products Plant includes a modernist office and laboratory facing Sugar Creek Road and a spacious warehouse with truck bays to the rear (**Figure ___; Plates ___**). Located at the northwest corner of the plant, the office reflects the modernist style in its horizontal, angular geometry with a flat roof, large, steel framed windows, smooth, red, porcelain-enameled steel spandrels, and buff-colored, Roman brick. Beside the main entry, a single, raking, Roman brick pier supports the steel canopy. The area around the office is landscaped and includes attached brick planters beside the glazed entrance. The interior is little changed and includes Terrazzo flooring in the principal north office along Sugar Creek Road, original partition walls, and steel, fire-proof doors leading into the laboratory section.

Distinguished from the office by its simpler design and blond brick exterior, the adjoining dye laboratory is located to the east of the office. While more utilitarian in appearance, the laboratory features modernist, ribbon windows on the front and side elevations. Behind the laboratory is an attached, blond-brick section of the plant that extends to the rear (south) to include the warehouse and truck bays.

The rear, warehousing portion of the facility is a long, rectangular wing with an exterior of buff-colored brick, corrugated steel, and steel sash windows. The interior of the warehouse is an open expanse with steel I-beam framing and concrete flooring. A series of truck bays are sheltered by long, flat-roofed, steel canopies on the east and west elevations. A parking area surrounds the truck bays.

A 1967, two-story, dyestuffs research and design laboratory with an exterior of red brick and exposed concrete framing stands at the southwest corner of the property. The simple, square building includes a small, steel-framed, glazed entry bay on the northwest corner and a main, steel-framed, glazed doorway centered on the west elevation facing Raleigh Street. A rendering of this building located in the office reveals that it was designed by architect, Gil Petroff. Nothing is currently known about Petroff's professional training or career.

Historical Background
In 1953, Standard Chemical Products purchased the existing tract from the J.A. Jones Company. A global construction business based in Charlotte, J.A. Jones probably constructed the Standard Chemical complex. The architect is not known. Standard Chemical was founded before World

War II in Hoboken, New Jersey, by two German chemists, L.L. Grombach and Max Einstein. A maker and distributor of dyestuffs, the firm established a second facility in Charlotte to profit from the region's postwar textile prosperity. In 1960, the international chemical company, Henkel, Inc., acquired Standard Chemical Products and developed dyes at this site until the 1980s. The property is currently used for the storage and distribution of roofing and siding materials (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1608: 149).

The Standard Chemical Products Plant is recommended for National Register eligibility under Criterion A for industry and under Criterion C for architecture. The plant is a notable example of post-World War II modernist architecture in Charlotte and is a rare, tangible reminder of the local dyestuffs industry. The city in the mid-1950s contained fourteen dyestuffs manufacturers and distributors that served the thriving textile trade. As with Standard Chemical, these facilities typically included front offices, adjacent research and design laboratories, and warehousing units to rear. Only the Standard Chemical Products Plant and the Ciba Company Building (1936, expanded 1951) on North Graham Street are known to survive substantially intact. Important buildings associated with the local dyestuffs industry have been demolished or remodeled in recent years. The ca. 1950, E.I. Dupont Office and Laboratory Building, a major dyestuffs research laboratory located in the center city, was razed in 2007. The ca. 1950, two-story General Dyestuffs Building on Wilkinson Boulevard is currently undergoing significant alterations.

Shown on **Figure** ____, the proposed National Register boundaries for the Standard Chemical Products Plant are defined by the current tax parcel of just over six acres. The 1967 research lab and a smaller, metal storage building at the south end of the property are less than fifty years of age and are considered noncontributing resources.

Figure ____

Standard Chemical Products Plant
Site Plan

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Map

Figure ____

Standard Chemical Products Plant
Proposed National Register Boundaries

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Map

Standard Chemical Products Plant, Office, North (Sugar Creek Road) Elevation, Looking West.

Standard Chemical Products Plant, Lab, North (Sugar Creek Road) Elevation, Looking Southwest.

Standard Chemical Products Plant, North (Sugar Creek Road) Elevation, Looking Southeast.

Standard Chemical Products Plant, Office, West Elevation, Looking East.

Standard Chemical Products Plant, Ramp Separating Office (Rear Elevation) and Warehouse.

Standard Chemical Products Plant, Rear Warehouse and Loading Docks, Looking East.

Standard Chemical Products Plant, Rear Warehouse, West Elevation, Looking South.

Standard Chemical Products Plant, Warehouse, East Elevation, Looking West From Railroad Corridor.

Standard Chemical Products Plant, Office, Interior.

Standard Chemical Products Plant, Rendering, 1967 Research Laboratory.

no current photo.

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