



**North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office**
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Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary
Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary

Division of Historical Resources
David J. Olson, Director

August 30, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: William D. Gilmore, Manager
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: David Brook *David Brook*

SUBJECT: Historical Architectural Survey Report, Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard Extension, City of Hickory, U-2306A, Catawba County, ER 99-E-4220-0148

Thank you for your letter of August 2, 2002, transmitting the survey report prepared by Marvin Brown, URS Corporation for the above project.

We are unable to comment on the potential effect of this project on cultural historic resources until we receive further information.

In order for us to evaluate the National Register eligibility of the Whisnant Hosiery Mill and the Hickory Hosiery Mill we need a site plan for each mill. The site plan should include the footprint of the building, the date each section of the building was completed, its orientation to the street, and labeled street names.

After we receive the additional information, we will review all of the properties discussed in the report and offer determination of eligibility.

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 919/733-4763. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT

bc: Brown/McBride
County

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PHASE II
HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY
OF THE LENOIR-RHYNE BOULEVARD EXTENSION
FROM TATE BOULEVARD TO 7TH AVENUE,
CITY OF HICKORY,
CATAWBA COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
TIP NO. U-2306A
FEDERAL AID PROJECT MA-STP-1216(8)
WORK ORDER NUMBER 8.2791701

Prepared For:

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Prepared By:

Marvin A. Brown

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JULY 2002

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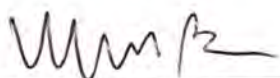
Prepared For:

Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
North Carolina Department of Transportation

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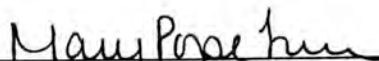
July 2002



Marvin A. Brown, Principal Investigator
URS Corporation-North Carolina

7/25/02

Date



Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor
Historic Architectural Resources Section
North Carolina Department of Transportation

8.2.2002

Date

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is proposing improvements to Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard as part of the Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard Extension from Tate Boulevard to 7th Avenue project in Hickory, Catawba County (TIP No. U-2306A, Federal Aid Project No. MA-STP-1216(8), Work Order # 8.2791701).

NCDOT established an Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the project and conducted Phase I-level fieldwork within that APE. During the fieldwork NCDOT identified 49 pre-1952 standing resources. NCDOT presented the results of its findings to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on March 11, 2002. At this meeting, NCDOT and the SHPO agreed that five of the 49 identified resources should be inventoried at the Phase II intensive-level. These resources were assigned the numbers 21, 26, 28, 29, and 44. The other 44 resources, assigned numbers 1-20, 22-25, 27, 30-43, and 45-49, were deemed to be Not Eligible for the National Register and Not Worthy of Further Evaluation.

At the request of NCDOT, under the terms of an open-end contract with the Department for historic architectural services, URS Corporation—North Carolina (URS) conducted a Phase II inventory of the five designated resources. URS conducted fieldwork and local research for the project during the week of May 20, 2002. URS subsequently evaluated the National Register eligibility of the five resources in question. URS' survey methodology consisted of historical background research into primary and secondary sources, interviews with knowledgeable individuals, site-specific research, and an intensive-level field survey, during which 100 percent of the APE was surveyed. This report records the results of the Phase II field survey and research.

URS recommends that two of the five resources that were further evaluated are eligible for listing in the National Register: the Hollar Hosiery Mills Building (#28) and the Highland Avenue Southern Railway Bridge (#29). URS recommends that the other three inventoried resources—the Whisnant Hosiery Mill (#21), the Catawba Transit Company Garage (#26), and the Hickory Hosiery Mill (#44)—are not eligible for National Register listing. The following summarizes the status and evaluation of all 49 historic architectural resources within the project's APE:

**SUMMARY OF RESOURCES EVALUATED WITHIN THE
AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS**

<u>Survey #</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Status History</u>
<i>RESOURCES RECOMMENDED ELIGIBLE FOR NATIONAL REGISTER LISTING</i>		
28	Hollar Hosiery Mills Building (#28)	NPS Preliminary Determination of Eligibility, January 3, 2002 (See Part I Certification Application attached as Appendix C); Assessed in Section IV
29	Highland Avenue Southern Railway Bridge (#29)	Assessed in Section IV

RESOURCES RECOMMENDED NOT ELIGIBLE FOR NATIONAL REGISTER LISTING

21	Whisnant Hosiery Mill (#21)	Assessed in Section IV
26	Catawba Transit Company Garage (#26)	Assessed in Section IV
44	Hickory Hosiery Mill (#44)	Assessed in Section IV

RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED NOT ELIGIBLE FOR NATIONAL REGISTER LISTING AND NOT WORTHY OF FURTHER EVALUATION

1-20, 22-25, 27, 30-43, and 45-49	Determined Not Eligible, March 11, 2002 (See Concurrence Form attached as Appendix A)
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I. INTRODUCTION

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is proposing improvements to Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard as part of the Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard Extension from Tate Boulevard to 7th Avenue project in Hickory, Catawba County (TIP No. U-2306A, Federal Aid Project No. MA-STP-1216(8), Work Order # 8.2791701). This report presents the results of a Phase II historic architectural survey of the project area by URS Corporation—North Carolina (URS) for the Federal Highway Administration and the Project Development and Analysis Branch (PD&EA Branch) of NCDOT (Figure 1).

Richard Silverman of the PD&EA Branch of NCDOT previously established an Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the project and conducted Phase I-level fieldwork within that APE. Mr. Silverman also conducted research on the project at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). During the fieldwork Mr. Silverman identified 49 pre-1952 standing resources within the APE. On March 11, 2002, he presented the results of his findings to the SHPO. At this meeting NCDOT and the SHPO agreed that five of the 49 identified resources should be inventoried at the Phase II intensive-level. These resources were assigned the numbers 21, 26, 28, 29, and 44. The other 44 resources--#1-20, 22-25, 27, 30-43, 45-49—were deemed to be Not Eligible for the National Register and Not Worthy of Further Evaluation. (The concurrence form signed by NCDOT and the SHPO is attached as Appendix A.)

At the request of NCDOT—under the terms of an open-end contract with the Department for historic architectural services—URS conducted a Phase II inventory of the five identified resources. URS Senior Architectural Historian Marvin A. Brown conducted fieldwork and local research for the project during the week of May 20, 2002. Mr. Brown supplemented his local research with research at the North Carolina State Library and Archives and at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. He subsequently evaluated and made recommendations of National Register eligibility of the five resources in question. His survey methodology consisted of historical background research into primary and secondary sources, interviews with knowledgeable individuals, site-specific research, and an intensive-level field survey, during which 100 percent of the APE was surveyed. This report, prepared with the assistance of graphics coordinator James R. Snodgrass, records the results of the Phase II field survey and research.

An historic architectural survey within the APE associated with the proposed improvements to NC 191 was necessary for compliance with the basic requirements of: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation regulations and procedures (23 CFR 771 and Technical Advisory T 6640.8A); the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regulations on the "Protection of Historic Properties" (36 CFR 800); and NCDOT's "Historic Architectural Resources, Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines." In order to meet the requirements of these laws and regulations, the work plan for the Phase II survey included the following items: (1) an intensive-level field survey of the five designated resources, during which photographs were to be taken and descriptions and sketch maps prepared and, where appropriate, National Register boundaries determined, mapped,

and justified; (2) general historical research in order to develop historic and architectural contexts for the five resources, and a visit to all grade-separated railroad bridges in Catawba County as identified on the NCDOT map of the county; and (3) the preparation of a report developed pursuant to the above-referenced laws, regulations, and guidelines that included the findings of the reconnaissance-level inventory.

URS recommends that two of the five resources that were further evaluated are eligible for listing in the National Register: the Hollar Hosiery Mills Building (#28) and the Highland Avenue Southern Railway Bridge (#29). URS recommends that the other three inventoried resources—the Whisnant Hosiery Mill (#21), the Catawba Transit Company Garage (#26), and the Hickory Hosiery Mill (#44)—are not eligible for National Register listing.

The Area of Potential Effects or APE is the area or areas within which an undertaking may cause changes in the character or use of historic properties. The boundaries of the project's APE were established by NCDOT during its Phase I inventory of the project area. They are delineated in this report generally on the Hickory USGS topographical quadrangle map (Figure 2) and in more detail on a street map of Hickory (Figure 3). The five intensively inventoried resources are identified on a composite aerial map, which not only precisely locates them, but also depicts the compound nature of the buildings of the three industrial complexes (Figure 4). All 49 resources were identified on maps, prepared by NCDOT as part of its reconnaissance-level inventory of the APE, which are included as Appendix B.

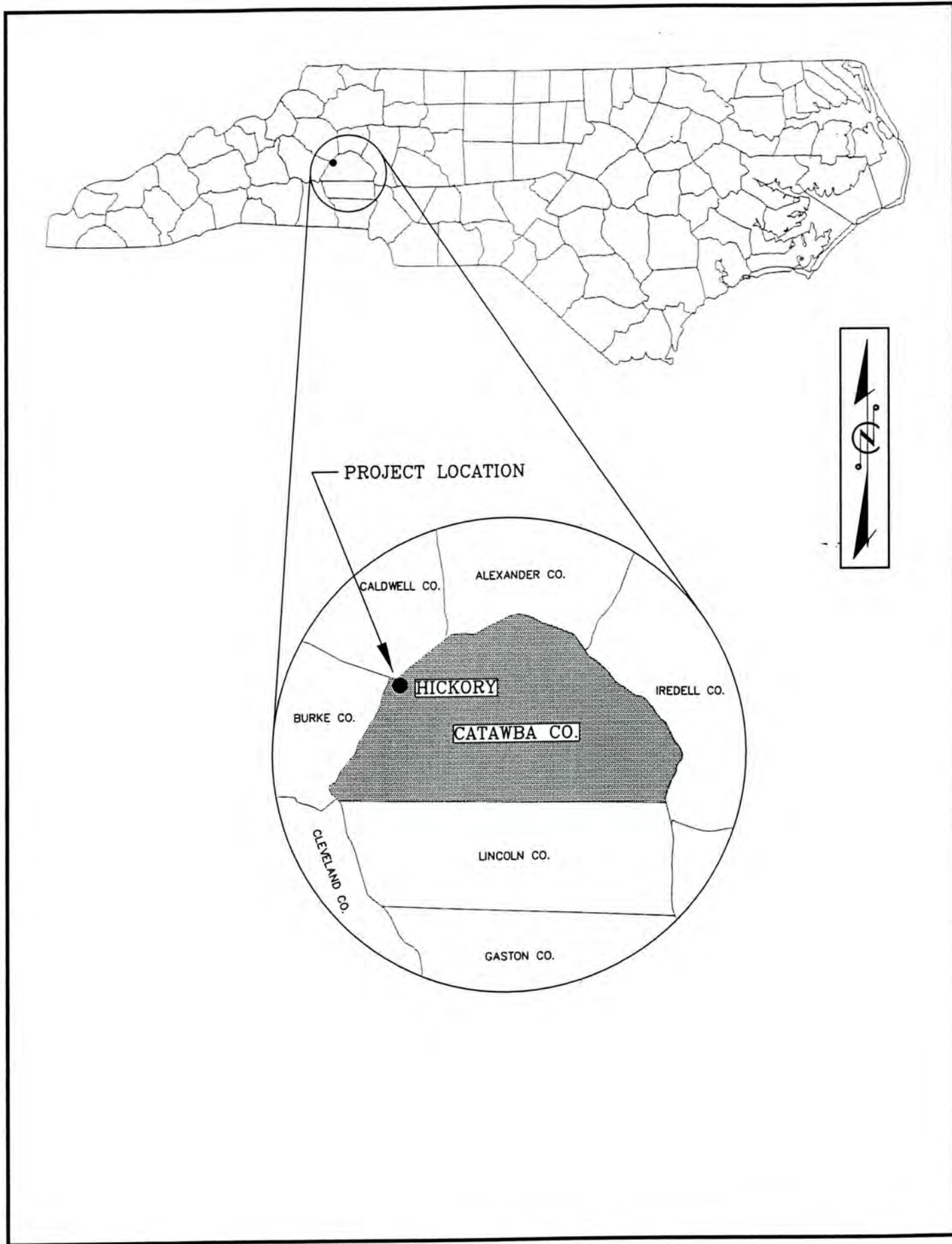


Figure 1. Project Locator Map.

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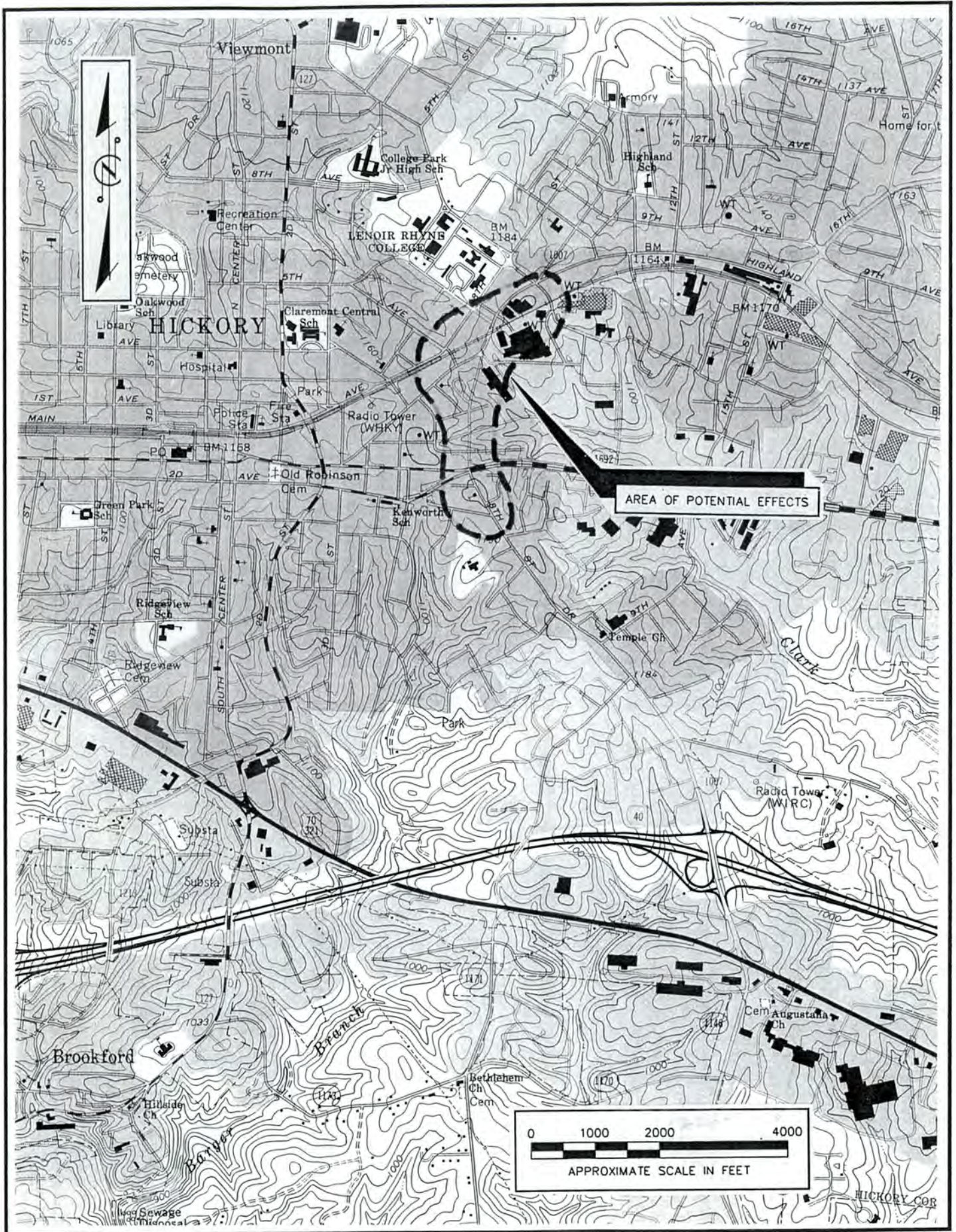


Figure 2. Area of Potential Effects Map.
 (Source: 1993 Hickory USGS quadrangle sheet)

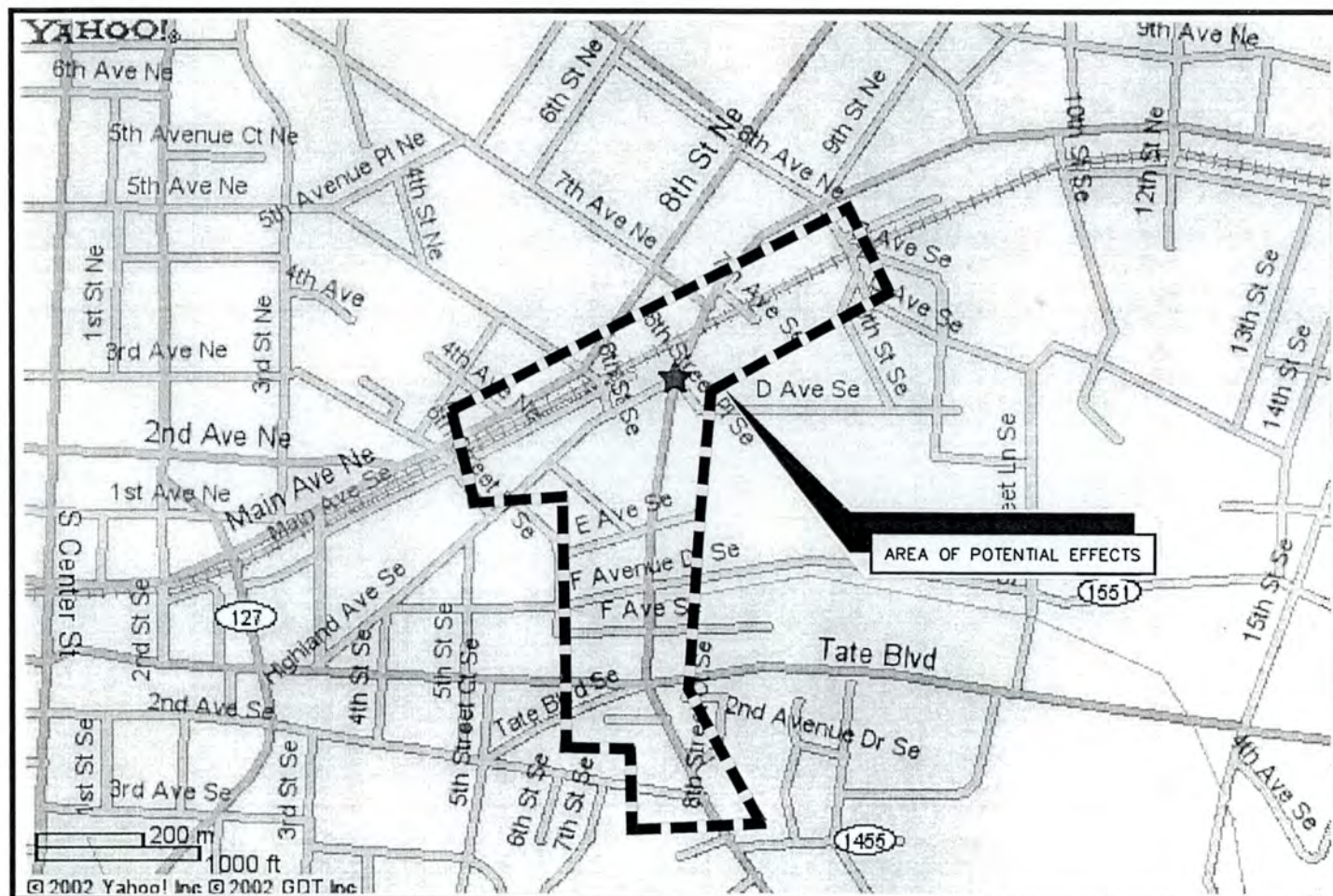


Figure 3. Area of Potential Effects Map.
(Source: Hickory, street map(Yahoo!))

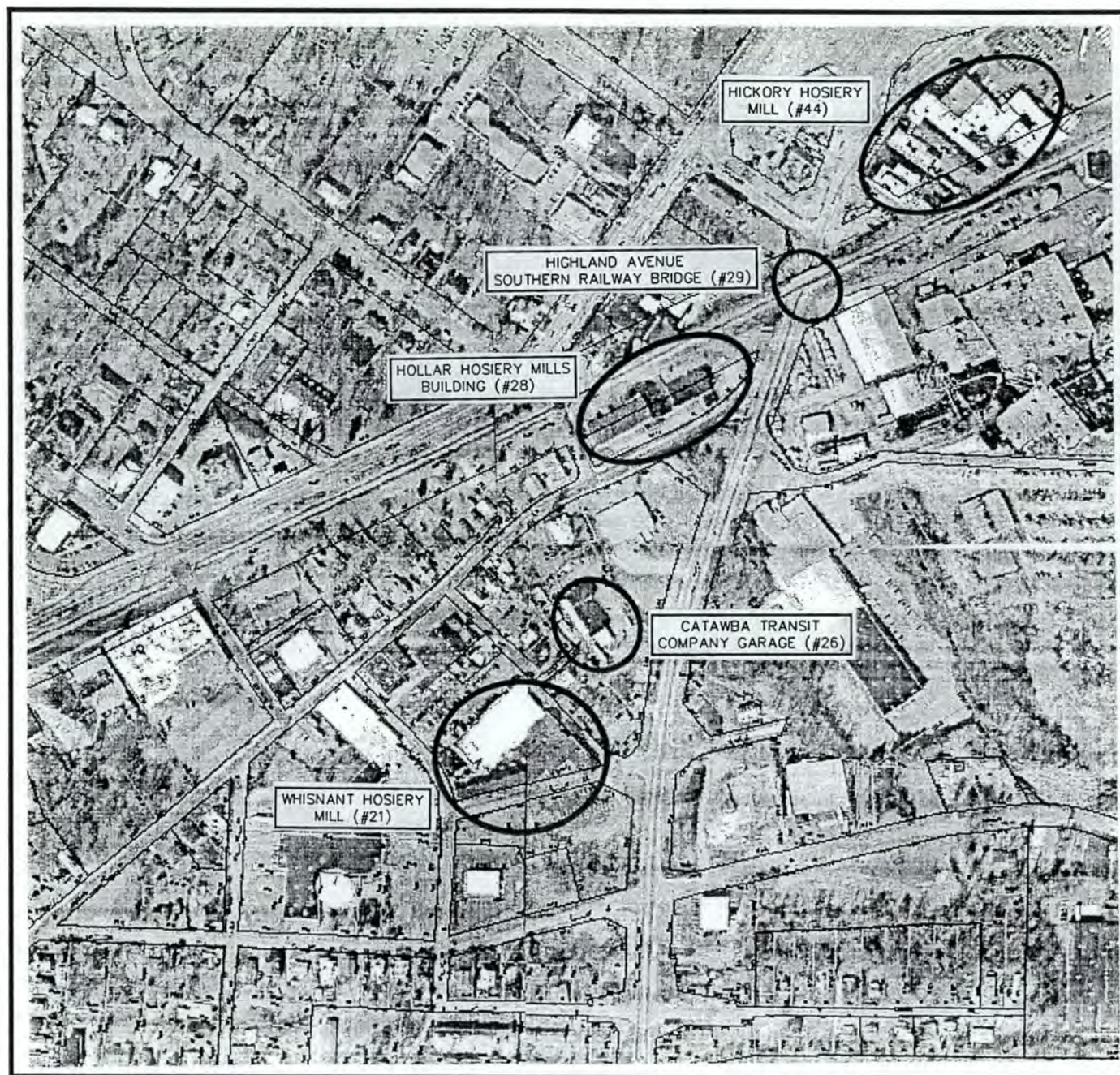


Figure 4. Property Inventory Map.

II. METHODOLOGY

The survey methodology for this project consisted of historical background research, site-specific research, and two different levels of field survey of the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE).

Initially, architectural historian Richard Silverman of the Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) established an APE for the project and conducted Phase I-level fieldwork within that APE. Senior Architectural Historian Marvin A. Brown of URS Corporation (URS) then conducted the Phase II intensive-level inventory, recording and researching the designated resources and drafting this report.

The main sources of information for the project were the vertical files and Hickory city directories located in the local history room of the Hickory public library; historic maps, particularly Sanborn fire insurance maps; Catawba County tax maps; the bridge lists of the Norfolk Southern Corporation; local and county histories; and the Part I—Historic Certification Application (Mattson and Alexander 2001) prepared by Frances Alexander for the Hollar Hosiery Mills Building. Ms. Alexander graciously agreed to extensive quoting of the application in this report.

The purpose of the research and intensive-level field survey was to understand the historical and architectural contexts of the APE and to develop specific developmental and architectural histories of the five intensively inventoried resources within it. Such knowledge was crucial in determining which resources within the APE were believed to be eligible, or ineligible, for listing in the National Register. The APE, which parallels the improvement project, was established by NCDOT during the first phase of the project.

As part of the second phase of fieldwork, Mr. Brown inventoried all of the designated resources at the intensive level. He also drafted contexts for the inventoried resources. Additionally, he visited grade-separated railroad bridges in Catawba County—as identified on the NCDOT map of Catawba County—and other crossings in towns and cities in surrounding counties, including Valdese, Lincolnton, and Statesville. This latter effort—which was determined appropriate during a conversation with Richard Silverman of NCDOT and included in the scope of work—provided a context within which to assess the significance and eligibility of the Highland Avenue Southern Railway Bridge.

III. HISTORIC CONTEXTS AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

A. *City of Hickory*

The area that was to become the City of Hickory was settled in the latter part of the eighteenth century at the intersection of three roads. The first known building there was a tavern, which lent the community its first name, Hickory Tavern. By the first half of the nineteenth century, the crossroads community was ringed by small family farms (Mohney and Phillips 1988:2).

“Of critical importance to Hickory’s development,” Mohney and Phillips (1988:2) write, “was the decision by the Western North Carolina Railroad leadership to traverse Catawba County in such a way that the rail line would pass near Hickory Tavern.” Just prior to the Civil War, the railroad reached Hickory, from Statesville and Salisbury to the east. Two stage lines were also established in the years immediately preceding the war (Mohney and Phillips 1988:2).

In large part due to the rail line, Hickory grew into a “thriving center of trade and manufacturing” in the last third of the nineteenth century. In 1873 its name was changed to the Town of Hickory and in 1889 it was incorporated as the City of Hickory. In the 1880s the city developed a diverse manufacturing base. Much of this was based upon wood products, whether the production of carriages at the Piedmont Wagon Factory or sash, doors, or millwork at other concerns. In the 1890s Hutton and Bourbannais erected a furniture factory in the city. This was the first of the many factories that continue to define the public face of Hickory to the present (Mohney and Phillips 1988:3-8). At the close of the nineteenth century, however, Catawba County was known more for its farms and mineral springs than for the budding manufacturing prowess of Hickory (State Board of Agriculture 1896:317-19).

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, Hickory began to flex its manufacturing muscles, developing significant furniture and textile manufacturing businesses. The furniture companies established then included Martin, Southern Desk, and Hickory Chair. Among the textile companies was Julius A. Cline’s Hickory Hosiery Mill, discussed further below. During the next two decades, the city consolidated its position as a manufacturing powerhouse, particularly in the furniture and hosiery trades (Mohney and Phillips 1988:13-17). Of the period between 1920 and 1940, Mohney (1984) notes that “The development of the furniture, textile, and hosiery industries in the period discussed previously [1901-1917] was carried above and beyond its early beginning between the two World Wars. Many of the manufacturing plants formed at this time assumed major roles in the local economy . . .” Despite heavy foreign competition and concomitant manufacturing losses during the last decades of the twentieth century and the opening years of the twentieth-first, Hickory remains a manufacturing center.

B. *Town of Highland*

In 1905 Highland was incorporated on the eastern edge of Hickory. It probably took its name from Highland Academy, which stood upon the campus of the present Lenoir-Rhyne College. Part of the

college was located within Highland's limits and part within the City of Hickory. The current project is also split between the former boundaries of the two communities. Highland ceased to exist in 1931, when it was annexed by Hickory (Preslar 1954:363-64).

Mattson and Alexander (2001), in their assessment of the Hollar Hosiery Mills Building, described the development, and diminishment, of Highland in the twentieth century:

As with many of Hickory's manufacturers and distributors, the Hollar Hosiery Mills arose in the industrial community of Highland, which had been incorporated in 1905 to the east of Hickory. The Southern Railway, which bisected the small community, offered attractive factory locations, while Highland Avenue provided easy connections to downtown Hickory. By the Depression, hosiery mills, furniture companies, paper box companies, feed mills, and cotton mills stretched along the rail frontage of Highland while residential neighborhoods emerged on the side streets to the north and south of the linear industrial corridor. Although this area remains an important industrial area of Hickory, few of its pre-World War II industrial properties survive intact. In recent decades, the North Carolina textile industry has suffered significant losses as companies migrate to foreign countries, and the buildings which once housed these operations have often been altered for different uses or demolished. Additionally, the construction of Interstate 40 has altered the industrial geography of Hickory, drawing manufacturers to locations with easy access to the highway. Finally, within historic industrial areas, many remaining manufacturers have had to significantly alter their plants to adapt to changes in technology or to accommodate expansion.

The presence of private neighborhoods on the side streets of Highland and Hickory, rather than mill villages or blocks of company-owned dwellings, was due, according to Mattson and Alexander (2001), to the diversity of industry in the area and the relatively high pay of hosiery mill employees:

Factories in the Hickory area were erected principally in a linear fashion along the roughly east-west Southern Railway, both within the town of Hickory and within the industrial communities that flanked Hickory to east and west. Such industrial communities emerged around Hickory, in part, because of the diversified nature of the local manufacturing base. Unlike other towns that grew solely as textile centers, by the early twentieth century, Hickory had a manufacturing base comprised of both woodworking, primarily furniture, companies and textile mills, as well as auxiliary suppliers and by-products manufacturers. Furthermore, the highly skilled and better paid hosiery workers, who often owned cars by the 1920s, did not typically live in company housing, and thus the traditional pattern of clustered mill and mill village did not hold as true in Hickory as it did elsewhere in the Piedmont.

The area flanking Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard within the project area mirrors this description. Mills and other industrial buildings flank the tracks, with houses and neighborhoods to their rears.

C. Hickory and Catawba County Hosiery Industry

The manufacture of hosiery was one of Hickory and Catawba County's most important twentieth century industries. According to Mattson and Alexander (2001):

... Hickory emerged as one of the principal centers of knit hosiery production in the region, beginning with the 1906 opening of the Hickory Hosiery Mill on the west side of town. Three years later, in 1909, the large A.A. Shuford Hosiery Mill was built in the industrial community of Highland, located just east of Hickory. A third hosiery mill, Elliott Knitting Mill (extant), was erected in 1910 along the Southern Railway at Third Street, S.E., near downtown Hickory. With these early successes, other hosiery companies also built mills in Hickory and its environs throughout the interwar period. In 1920, the Best Hosiery Company, which was bought by Hollar in 1930, constructed its knitwear mill at Fourth Street and Highland Avenue in Highland. By 1928, the Whisnant Hosiery Mill (1928) had opened on the east side of Hickory, and the Real Knitting Mills and the Setz-Right Hosiery Mills had been [sic] built their facilities in town near the Elliott mill. Because knitting mills survived the hardships of the Depression better than [sic] other textile plants, such mills continued to be built in Hickory during the 1930s and early 1940s, including the Walton Knitting Mill (1934) and the Quaker Meadows Mills (1941).

The production of knit goods had emerged as an important sector of the textile industry in the post-World War I era, when after years of accelerated wartime demand, cotton cloth production slumped. In an effort to diversify the industry, many manufacturers during the 1920s and 1930s began to specialize in the production of knit hosiery as a means of surviving the decline and meeting the new demand for women's full-fashioned, or form-fitting, hose. Good rail connections throughout the Piedmont and a ready source of the mercerized cotton used to produce hosiery made this specialized form of production feasible. (By 1923, Gaston County led the South in the production of mercerized cotton.) Hosiery production required more highly skilled labor than other forms of textile production, and with high demand, hosiery mill employees earned high wages throughout the 1920s. The hosiery sector of the industry survived even the devastating effects of the Depression comparatively well, forming an "oasis of prosperity in the sluggish textile industry." In 1930, Hickory, which then had a population of more than 10,000, could boast of its nine hosiery mills as well as five cotton mills.

By 1940 (*Hickory Daily Record*) the hosiery mills of Hickory and its vicinity comprised "the chief local industry, hav[ing] a total production large enough to supply a pair of socks or stockings apiece each year to nearly every person in the entire United States." The area's 39 mills and finishing plants in 1940 produced more than one hundred million pairs of hose. The mills directly employed

approximately 4,000 workers and generated nearly half of Hickory's, and one-third of Catawba County's, income.

According to a newspaper overview, the local hosiery industry remained a force in 1962 (*Hickory Daily Record*):

From the beginning of the hosiery industry, created locally by the pioneers of the business in Hickory, the building of hosiery mills has mushroomed in Catawba county to more than 100 at this time. More than half of these mills are in the city limits of Hickory.

Some of the plants are small and only turning out hose "in the gray," as it is termed, meaning that the products of such mills go to larger mills to be dyed.

There are also lots of hosiery mills of variable size in the counties adjoining Catawba.

From the point of numbers of families affected, the hosiery industry is the greatest of Hickory's diversified manufactories, including the furniture factories. The hosiery mills are a great asset also because of other industries which have been created here to contribute to their needs. Among these are printers, lithographers, makers of transfers, box makers, yarn makers both textile and rubber, machine shops, and dye makers.

It has been pointed out that the hosiery mills were not even affected by past depression periods. It is also noted that the hosiery and furniture industries work well together, as the former employs mostly women, and the latter works mostly men.

Although the hosiery industry has been adversely affected in recent years by foreign competition, a number of hosiery mills continue to operate in and around Hickory.

D. Southern Railway in Hickory

Railroad lines played a critical role in the transition of Hickory from a crossroads community to an industrial center. As Mattson and Alexander (2001) note:

Like other inland communities of the North Carolina backcountry, Hickory owed its growth and prosperity to the railroad. With the arrival of the Western North Carolina Railroad in 1860, the town became the closest depot for a vast region of western North Carolina that extended to the borders with Virginia and Tennessee. Hickory soon became "a great campground for hundreds of mountain wagons" as farmers brought their produce to the Hickory railhead for shipment. Industrial development followed quickly as manufacturers who depended on the natural and agricultural resources of western North Carolina found the rail town convenient for their

processing operations At the end of the nineteenth century, Hickory found itself particularly well-positioned within the rail network of North Carolina.

The Western North Carolina Railroad began construction of its line west from Salisbury to Asheville in 1855. The rails reached Statesville in 1858 and by 1861 extended through Hickory to two miles short of Morganton. There construction halted due to the Civil War and remained in abeyance during the lean years that followed. Not until 1880 was the road cut through to Asheville. The completed line operated as the Western North Carolina for less than two decades. In 1894, along with numerous other small southern railroads in financial difficulties, it was folded into the Southern Railway Company empire. In 1992 the Southern in turn merged with the Norfolk & Western Railroad, forming the current Norfolk Southern Railway Company (Davis 1985: 24-27, 116-117, 197).

E. Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard

Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard is a modern highway that incorporates parts of Highland Avenue NE and 8th Street Drive SE. While the current Highland Avenue Southern Railway Bridge, assessed below, was raised in 1934, Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard was not built until between 1967 (Hickory N.C. map) and 1974 (Official Map City of Hickory). The road's alignment had apparently been largely cleared by the summer of 1970: a hazy aerial photograph of a "gash" through Hickory of that year notes, "Hickory's long-sought East Access Road is fast taking shape and will provide the City and its environs with much-needed room for industrial expansion and a relief to the present traffic-clogged roads on its east side" (*Hickory Daily Record* 1970). A map of 1974 (Official Map City of Hickory) depicts the new highway not as the East Access Road or Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard, but rather as 8th Street Drive SE, part of the route of which it had incorporated. By 1981 (Champion Map of Greater Catawba County) a map bore the name Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard. Unlike the vast majority of Hickory's roads, which are named following a numerical and quadrant system, Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard's name is descriptive and easy to grasp. It leads north from US 70 and I-40 to the edge of the campus of Lenoir-Rhyne College.

IV. PROPERTY INVENTORY AND EVALUATIONS

A. Resources Recommended Eligible for National Register Listing

HOLLAR HOSIERY MILLS BUILDING (#28) 74 8th Street SE, Hickory

Introduction

In October 2001, Richard L. Mattson and Frances P. Alexander prepared a “Historic Preservation Certification Application Part 1—Evaluation of Significance” for Westover Development Corporation, the owners of the former Hollar Hosiery Mill (Mattson and Alexander 2001). The Application, which is attached as Appendix C, is carefully researched and detailed. Research conducted for the current report and a separate field evaluation uncovered little additional information that could be added to the application. Therefore, the description, history, and evaluation below quotes extensively from Mattson’s and Alexander’s work. References to plates have been deleted and new plate references added in brackets. Where appropriate, additional historical and descriptive information has been added in brackets and footnotes. The site plan of the property, included as Figure 5, has also been taken, unchanged, from the Application. The recommended National Register boundaries (Figure 6) map has been prepared for this report. The Application did not explicitly include recommended Register boundaries.

History

The Part I—Historic Certification Application states in part:

The Hollar Hosiery Mills site in Highland has been occupied by several hosiery producers.¹ The first occupant of the site at Highland Avenue and Fourth Street was the Best Hosiery Mills Company, a manufacturer of cotton knit goods, which built its factory in 1920. According to a 1924 report by the North Carolina Department of Labor, the Best mill was the third largest hosiery mill in Hickory, with sixty employees and eighty knitting machines Dr. O. L. Hollar had been president of Best mills, and he apparently bought the company in 1930, after which time the company became known as Hollar Hosiery Mills.² With the change in ownership, the

¹ The community of Highland was incorporated in 1905 and annexed to the City of Hickory in 1905 (Preslar 1954:363-64).

² The 1928-29 Hickory city directory lists a “W.E. Hollar” as the general manager of Hollar Hosiery Mills on Highland Avenue. According to a 1940 (*Hickory Daily Record*) article on Catawba County’s hosiery industry, the operation was begun at a different location in 1920 by Dr. O.L. Hollar.

extant brick building facing Fourth Street was constructed, and the original Best building was sold to the Sterling Overall Company. Hollar, which continued to produce cotton knits, occupied the site at 883 Highland Avenue S.E., until 1939 when the Louis Lavitt Company, Inc., manufacturers of women's and children's socks under the name Knit Sox Hosiery Mill, Inc., purchased the Hollar and Sterling parcels. By 1941, the Louis Lavitt Company had added the easternmost building for weaving and knitting and a box warehouse that is no longer extant.³ Later, the company produced acetate yarn and also used the property as a distribution facility for Amalie Motor Oil. In the 1960s, the original Best mill was demolished and replaced by the hyphen that now connects the two principal buildings. The property was sold in the late 1960s and used for storage.

Description

The Part I—Historic Certification Application states in part:

Located on the east side of Hickory, the Hollar Hosiery Mills Building occupies a long, roughly rectangular site defined by Highland Avenue, Fourth Street, and the former Southern Railway. . . .

The Hollar Hosiery Mills property consists of two once discrete buildings that are now connected by a hyphen. The principal building was constructed in 1930 by the Hollar Hosiery Mills to face Fourth Street [Plates 1 through 4].⁴ The one and one-half story building has a brick veneer, tall steel sash windows, a gable roof, stepped parapets, and restrained Colonial Revival detailing ornamenting the façade. The building has a molded concrete cornice, [with] concrete corner blocks marking both the parapet and the flat arches over the windows. The symmetrical, seven bay façade features a tall, central entrance (now boarded over) that is capped by a transom.

³ In 1940 (Hickory City Directory) the Hollar mill, under the guidance of Dr. Long's son, W. Long Hollar, relocated to downtown Hickory. Its former 8th Street mill was taken over by the Duke Hosiery Corporation. Duke remained through the 1940s, until it too relocated elsewhere in Hickory. By 1951-52 (Hickory City Directory) the mill building was occupied by the Knit-Sox Hosiery Mill, which was operated by Louis and Sam Lavitt. The Lavitts and their father, Pincus Lavitt, had operated a hosiery mill in Marion before organizing the Knit-Sox Knitting Mills in Hickory in 1936. The c.1940 block was therefore in all likelihood erected by the Duke Hosiery Corporation instead of the Lavitts.

From the early 1950s through at least 1991 the mill continued to operate as Knit-Sox or the Louis Lavitt Company. Near the end of that period, city directories (1987, 1991) list the building not as a mill, but rather as the Louis Lavitt Co. Inc. Warehouse. By 1994 neither the company nor Louis Lavitt appear in the city directory.

When Knit-Sox took over the 8th Street mill, it manufactured men's and children's hosiery. In 1962 (*Hickory Daily Record*) it produced a "large line" of misses', boys', and children's hosiery. Its production lines included 140 Komet knitting machines and a capacity of 15 to 18 thousand pairs of socks per week.

⁴ The street the mill building faces was historically known as 4th Street. It is now 8th Street SE.

Above the entrance is a concrete nameplate reading [in ghost letters], "Hollar Hosiery Mills". The door is a metal sash, glass replacement that is visible only from the interior. The side (south and north) elevations are less ornamented than the front (west) elevation. The land slopes west to east, and the side elevations have a main level defined by banks of tall, steel sash windows as well as lighted half-basements. There are two loading bays along the south elevation, the westernmost of which has original, double leaf, wood and glass doors sheltered by a bracketed, corrugated metal roof. The eastern loading dock has a modern overhead door and a concrete dock covered by a flat metal roof supported by metal poles. The north elevation also has a covered concrete loading dock.

Built ca. 1940 to house the weaving and knitting rooms, the second building sits at the east end of the property [Plates 5, 6, and 7]. The two story building has a one story office that projects from the south elevation. The building has a brick veneer, an arched roof, steel sash windows, and simple, brick pilasters dividing the window bays. The windows on the first floor have been brick infilled, and vents have been added to the westernmost windows of the south elevation. There are two loading bays on the east end elevation, and a single loading bay on the north elevation. One of the docks is housed in a projecting, brick enclosure with a metal shed roof, to which a truck could be backed up for loading. A modern overhead door provides the only access. Next to this dock is a second bay that opens directly into the building. This bay, too, has a modern replacement overhead door and a concrete deck. The office ell is has [sic] a flat roof and parapet, and decorative brick stringcourses highlight the six-over-six, metal sash windows. The single leaf, two panel door has a transom and is sheltered by a flat, metal canopy.

These two buildings are connected by a one story, brick hyphen that was added in the late 1960s. The hyphen has a utilitarian appearance with a single, pedestrian entrance and a ~~large~~, overhead door.

At the northeast corner of the 1930 building is a boiler house, which was originally detached but now adjoins the hyphen [Plate 8]. The small brick building, with its flat roof, was built ca. 1930 with the original Hollar mill, but by 1961, a concrete block addition had been constructed along the west elevation of the boiler house. The addition has been fire damaged and is now in highly deteriorated condition.

The interior of the ca. 1930 Hollar mill building has a small front section for administrative offices and a large open production room in the rear. The office area is divided into a series of rooms off a central entrance. Although the walls were covered in a replacement wood paneling, the original tongue and groove and paneled walls are visible in places. The doors and windows have molded surrounds, and portions of the molded ceiling cornice are visible. The rear work room has metal roof trusses, brick walls, and tongue and groove ceiling and floor. In the southeast

corner is an original bathroom, partitioned off from the production area by tongue and groove walls with a horizontal paneled door. Next to the bathroom is an interior staircase leading to the basement level. The basement has concrete floors, steel I-beam ceiling framing, and steel pole supports. A freight elevator is situated along the east wall, flanked by the staircase and two bathrooms, with tongue and groove walls and horizontal paneled doors. Double leaf, fire doors lead into the boiler room, which was inaccessible. Small offices are found on either side of the loading door in the southeast corner of the building.

The ca. 1940 knitting and weaving building is entered through the office which is divided into a series of small rooms. The office interior has asbestos tile ceilings, two paneled doors with frosted glass, and molded supports. The first floor of the production area has I-beam ceiling framing, metal pole supports, a tongue and groove ceiling, and wooden floors. A staircase along the east wall leads to the upper floor which has an uninterrupted interior made possible by a series of bowstring roof trusses. The open room is broken only by a bathroom block that has been partitioned along the north wall.

The interior of the hyphen is a single room with no windows and a roof supported by a series of small roof trusses. An office block has been partitioned into the room along the east wall, and a concrete ramp and dock is situated along the west wall. A sliding fire door opens onto the dock.

The Hollar Hosiery Mills Building sits on a 2.2 acre parcel that contains the 1930 Hollar mill, the 1930 boiler house, the ca. 1940 knitting and weaving building, and the mid-1960s hyphen which connects all of these once detached buildings.

National Register Evaluation

The Part I—Historic Certification Application states in part:

Constructed in 1930, the Hollar Hosiery Mills Building is recommended for the National Register under Criterion A for industry. This intact hosiery mill stands as a reminder of the myriad industrial complexes that by the early twentieth century made Hickory one of the leading manufacturing towns of the Carolina Piedmont and a flourishing New South town. During this period, Hickory became a center for textile production, in particular, emerging as a key manufacturer of knit hosiery. By 1930, the town could boast of nine hosiery mills. The Hollar Hosiery Mills, which manufactured cotton knit goods, is one of the rare surviving examples of these once common knitting mills.

As with many of Hickory's manufacturers and distributors, the Hollar Hosiery Mills arose in the industrial community of Highland Although this area remains an

important industrial area of Hickory, few of its pre-World War II industrial properties survive intact. In recent decades, the North Carolina textile industry has suffered significant losses as companies migrate to foreign countries, and the buildings which once housed these operations have often been altered for different uses or demolished. Additionally, the construction of Interstate 40 has altered the industrial geography of Hickory, drawing manufacturers to locations with easy access to the highway. Finally, within historic industrial areas, many remaining manufacturers have had to significantly alter their plants to adapt to changes in technology or to accommodate expansion. Consequently, the Hollar Hosiery Mills plant is one of the best preserved textile mills to survive both within Hickory and the Highland industrial corridor.

The period of significance extends from 1930, when the principal Hollar Hosiery Mills building was constructed, to 1951. Although the site continued to be operated as a hosiery mill until the late 1960s, the property does not have the exceptional significance required under 36 C.F.R. 60 to extend the period of time to within the last fifty years.

The Part I—Historic Certification Application was signed October 31, 2001, and submitted to the National Park Service for review. On January 3, 2002, the Park Service made the following Preliminary Determination: “[The Hollar Hosiery Mills Building] appears to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if nominated by the State Historic Preservation Office according to the procedures set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.”

URS believes that the National Register eligibility assessment of the Certification Application, which was concurred in by the Park Service, is correct: the Hollar Hosiery Mills Building is believed to be National Register-eligible under Criterion A. It is believed that the property is not otherwise National Register-eligible for its association with significant persons (Criterion B); its architecture, either individually or as part of any historic district (Criterion C); or its potential to yield information (Criterion D).

The assessments and recommendations of eligibility of the Hollar Hosiery Mills Building conform with the general Registration Requirements for industrial buildings in Catawba County outlined in a Multiple Property Documentation Form for the county (Kooiman 1989):

Nineteenth century pre-industrial sites in Catawba County are quite rare and consideration must be given to these sites as to their importance to their respective industry. Relatively intact representative examples of a particular industry should be eligible for nomination. For twentieth century industrial complexes which are much more common, eligibility should be determined based on a variety of factors, such as overall integrity of the site and relationship of the industry to the development of the community.

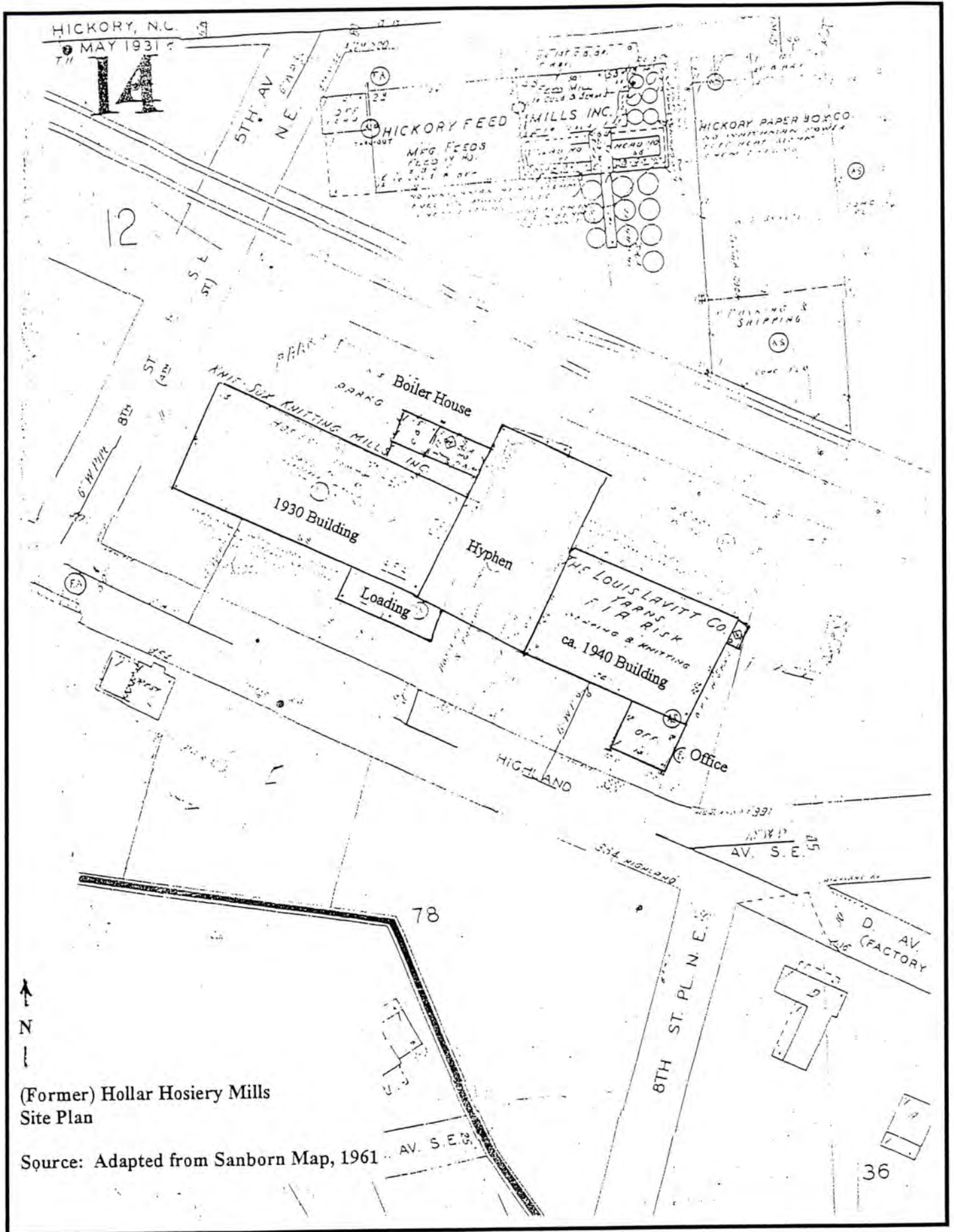
Proposed National Register Boundaries

The Part I—Historic Certification Application notes that:

The Hollar Hosiery Mills Building sits on a 2.22 acre parcel that contains the 1930 Hollar mill, the 1930 boiler house, the ca. 1940 knitting and weaving building, and the mid-1960s hyphen which connect all of these once detached buildings.

This parcel is bounded on the north by the centerline of the Southern Railway line, on the west by 8th Street SE, on the south by Highland Avenue SE, and on the southeast by Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard/SR 1007 (Stroupe 2002). It is recommended that a slightly reduced version of this parcel define the property's National Register boundaries. The recommended boundaries are bounded on the north by the right-of-way of the Norfolk Southern Railway Company, on the west by the right-of-way of 8th Street SE, on the south by the right-of-way of Highland Avenue SE, and on the southeast by the right-of-way of Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard/SR 1007 (Figure 6). In particular, the southeastern curved edge of the boundary is recommended as the edge of right-of-way on Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard/SR 1007. This has been chosen as the southeastern border of the National Register boundary, because the right-of-way (1) is owned and maintained by the North Carolina Department of Transportation and is not legally part of the property, (2) does not contain any contributing manmade or natural features and does not contribute to the historic landscape characteristics of the property, and (3) has been altered and will continue to be altered in the course of routine maintenance by the Department and therefore no longer possesses integrity in terms of the National Register. The recommended boundary encompasses approximately two acres.

These boundaries are *not* the same as those pictured on the Catawba County tax map for Parcel #370320909701. That parcel does not extend north to the railroad right-of-way but rather cuts longitudinally through the building complex. Further, it contains only 0.86 acres. The tax maps depict neither the full extent of the parcel nor the surrounding rights-of-way.



(Former) Hollar Hosiery Mills
Site Plan

Source: Adapted from Sanborn Map, 1961

Figure 5. Hollar Hosiery Mills Building Site Plan.
(Source: Part I-Historic Certification Application)

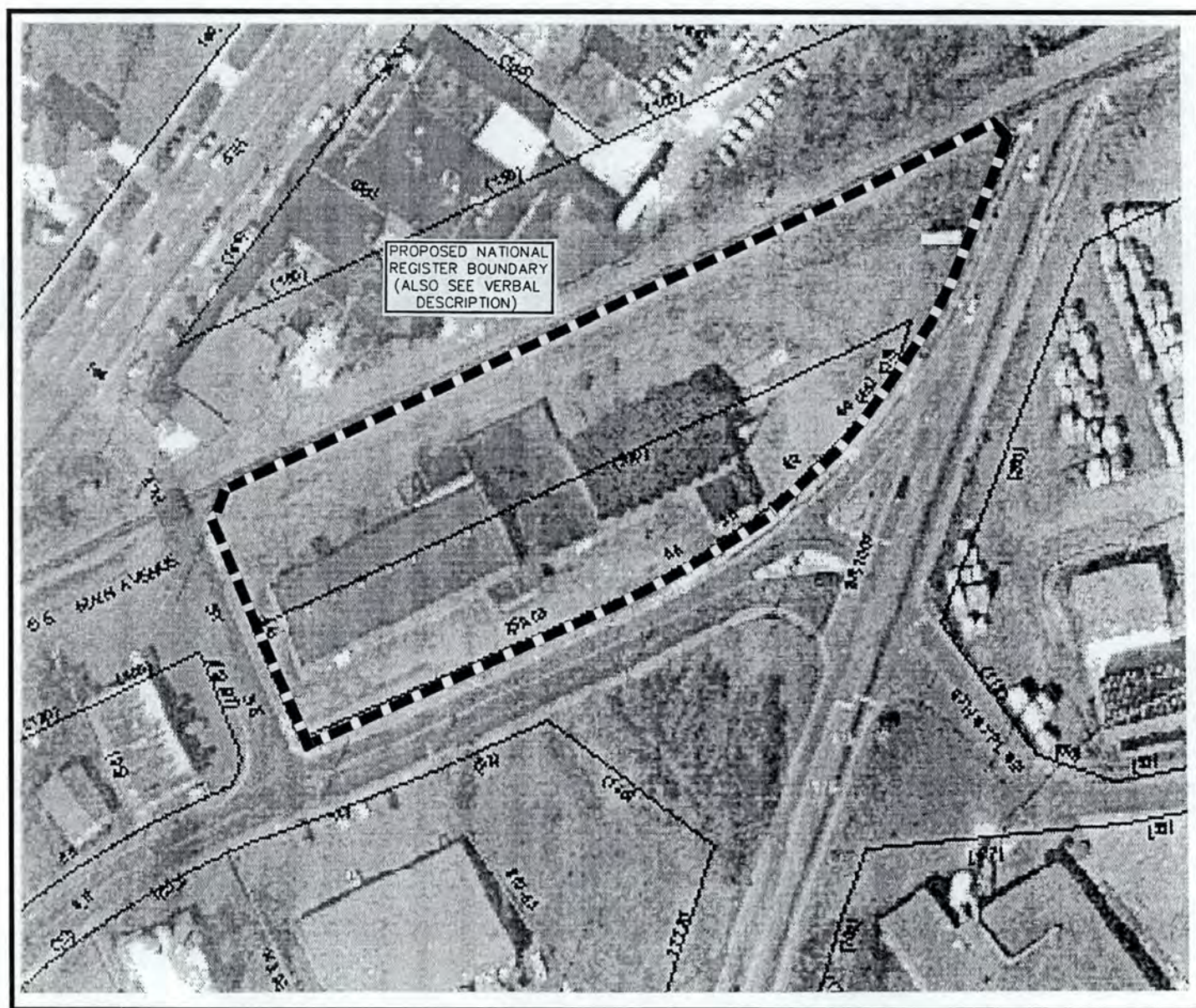


Figure 6. Hollar Hosiery Mills Building Proposed National Register Boundary Map.



Plate 1:
Hollar Hosiery
Mills Building
– north side
and west front
elevations of
ca. 1930 block



Plate 2:
Hollar Hosiery
Mills Building
– west front
elevation of
ca. 1930 block



Plate 3:
Hollar Hosiery
Mills Building
– south side
and west front
elevations of
ca. 1930 block



Plate 4:
Hollar Hosiery
Mills Building
- south side
and east rear
elevation of
ca. 1930
block; late
1960s hyphen
at right



Plate 5:
Hollar Hosiery
Mills Building
– west rear
and south side
elevations of
ca. 1940 block
at right; ca.
1960s hyphen
at center and
ca. 1930 block
at left



Plate 6:
Hollar Hosiery
Mills Building
– east front
and south side
elevations of
ca. 1940
block, office
block at left
center

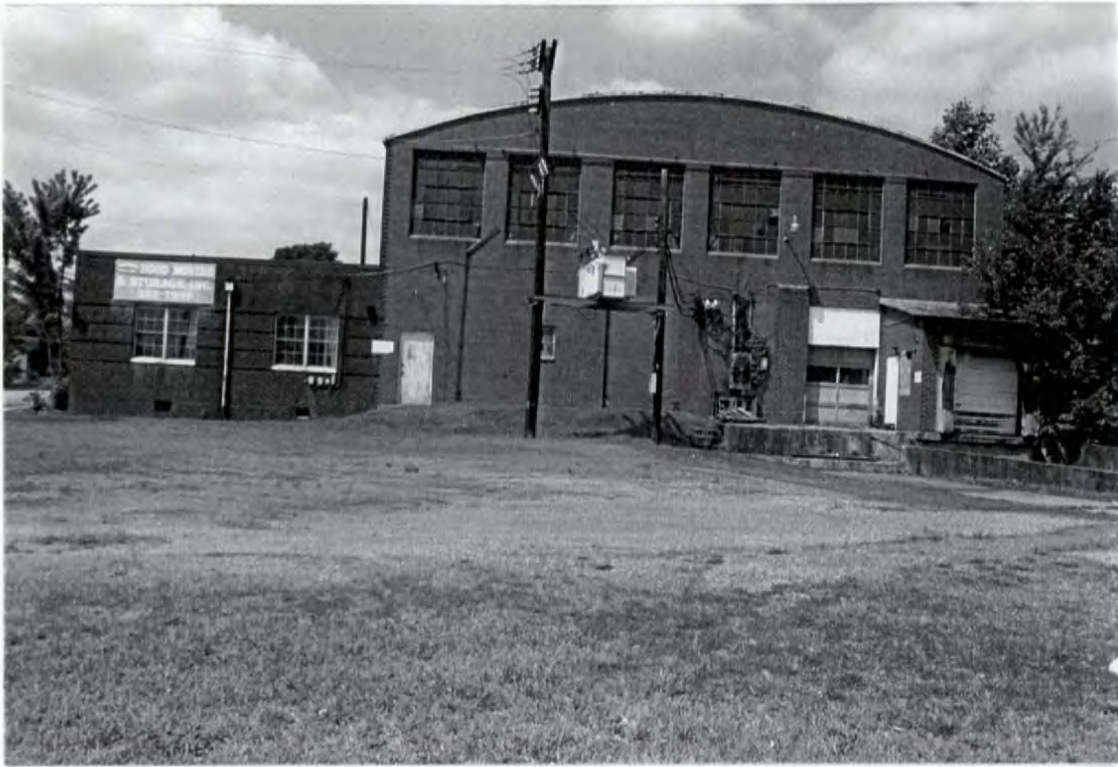


Plate 7:
Hollar Hosiery
Mills Building
– east front of
ca. 1940
block, office
block at left



Plate 8:
Hollar Hosiery
Mills Building
– east rear and
north side
elevations of
ca. 1930 block
with hyphen
and boiler
room in
middle ground
and Southern
Railway tracks
in foreground

HIGHLAND AVENUE SOUTHERN RAILWAY BRIDGE (#29)
Carries Norfolk Southern Railroad across Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard
between 7th Avenue NE and 8th Street SE, Hickory

History

The Western North Carolina Railroad began construction of a line from Salisbury west to Asheville in 1855. The line reached Statesville in 1858 and by 1861 extended through Hickory to two miles short of Morganton. There construction halted due to the Civil War and remained in abeyance during the lean years that followed. Not until 1880 was the line cut through to Asheville. The completed line operated as the Western North Carolina only briefly. In 1894, with numerous other small southern rail lines in financial difficulties, it was folded into the Southern Railway Company empire. In 1992 the Southern in turn merged with the Norfolk & Western Railroad, forming the current Norfolk Southern Railway Company (Davis 1985: 24-27, 116-117, 197).

Whether a bridge originally or early crossed this roadway is not known. The current crossings that extend to the east and west along the line, until one enters downtown Hickory, are at grade. Topography suggests that the roadway was at some later date point sunk beneath grade. According to Norfolk Southern's files, the Southern Railway erected the bridge in 1934 (Decker 2002).

The name of the designer of the bridge was not identified. The design likely sprang from standard Southern Railway specifications. However, no other railroad bridges with a similar rusticated concrete walkway finish were identified elsewhere in Hickory. The use of an above-grade bridge crossing with dual walkways would have been limited to heavily built-up areas. No similar walkway treatment was observed, however, in other Catawba County towns—Newton, Conover, Catawba, Maiden—or in towns and cities in surrounding counties, including Valdese, Lincolnton, and Statesville. A small number of railroad bridges cross roads in more distant downtown Greensboro. While these have sidewalks, rusticated retaining walls, and decorated plate girders, they lack protective walkway walls.

Description

This bridge carries the Norfolk Southern Railway, on a skew, over Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard (SR 1007), between 7th Avenue NE at the north and 8th Street SE at the south (Plates 9 and 10). Norfolk Southern records its location as Mile Post S56.67 (or S56.7) in Catawba County.

The bridge's superstructure consists of four riveted steel plate girders arranged in two pairs (Plates 11 and 12). These longitudinal girders are built from plate steel webs with vertical stiffeners and horizontal top and bottom struts that form an "I" profile. Each pair of plate girders is connected by transverse cross frames or diaphragms. These cross frames have an "X" configuration with top and bottom struts. While each pair of plate girders is connected by cross frames, the two plate girder/cross frame units are independent of each other.

The plate girders rest upon structural bents that support them and also serve as the protective exterior walls of two walkways. These walkways pass between the roadway and the bridge's retaining walls

(Plate 13). By placing the plate girders upon the bents, rather than upon the more widely spaced retaining walls, the bridge designers could shorten the spans of the girders. This in turn allowed the girders to be shallower, providing greater roadway clearance.

Although the walkway walls were engineered as load-bearing structural elements, they were given an unusually refined design and finish (Plate 14). Each has a segmental arch at its entrance and five segmental-arched openings facing the roadway. These arches are framed by reinforced concrete walls poured in forms that marked them with sharply delineated channels or reveals. These reveals in turn give the walls the appearance of rusticated stone blocks and *voissoirs*. (This appearance is belied by the structurally improbable “U”-shaped “blocks” that top each pier.) The bridge’s retaining walls, which rise to protect the undercut roadway, are rusticated as well (Plate 15). Concrete corbels with *cyma recta* profiles—which extend the width of the bridge out beyond the plate girders at either elevation—provide additional adornment.

The bridge is a deck structure that now carries only a single track. As indicated by the paired plate girders, it was built to carry two tracks. Pipe railings standing two rails high, terminating in concrete posts, edge the top of the superstructure (Plate 16). Affixed to them at either side are long metal panels that may once have borne the name “Southern Railway Company.” They are now unmarked and the remainder of the superstructure and substructure bears no names, dates, or other information.

National Register Evaluation

The Highland Avenue Southern Railway Bridge is believed to be eligible for National Register listing under Criteria C for the unusually refined design and finish of its substructure. Among its notable substructural features, all of which retain their integrity, are its rusticated concrete wall surfaces, segmental archways, and corbels. As noted above, no railroad bridges of similar or comparable design or finish were noted in other towns in Catawba County or nearby towns in neighboring counties (Plates 17 through 20)

The plate girder structure of the bridge is a common feature of early/mid-twentieth-century railroad bridges that is not of any particular note. The bridge is therefore not believed to be individually significant under any other aspects of Criteria C. The bridge is also not believed to be eligible under either Criterion A or B, for it has no notable historical significance or association with significant persons. The standing elements of the property—archaeology is not addressed here—are unlikely to yield information about our past not otherwise accessible from other standing bridges and written records. The bridge is therefore also not believed to be National Register eligible under Criterion D. The industrial and residential landscape within which the bridge is set has changed through the years and no longer retains its integrity. The bridge is therefore not believed to be National Register eligible as part of any potential historic district.

The bridge was not assessed in terms of registration requirements for Catawba County buildings outlined in a Multiple Property Documentation Form for the county (Kooiman 1989). The property types in this form do not include bridges or other transportation-related resources.

Proposed National Register Boundaries

The Highland Avenue Southern Railway Bridge does not occupy a discrete parcel. Rather, it is a small part of the continuous holdings of the Norfolk Southern Railway Company in Catawba County. Its proposed boundaries are the footprint of its substructure, including the retaining walls that extend from the plate girder superstructure along Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard, and the roadway between the edges of this footprint (Figure 7).

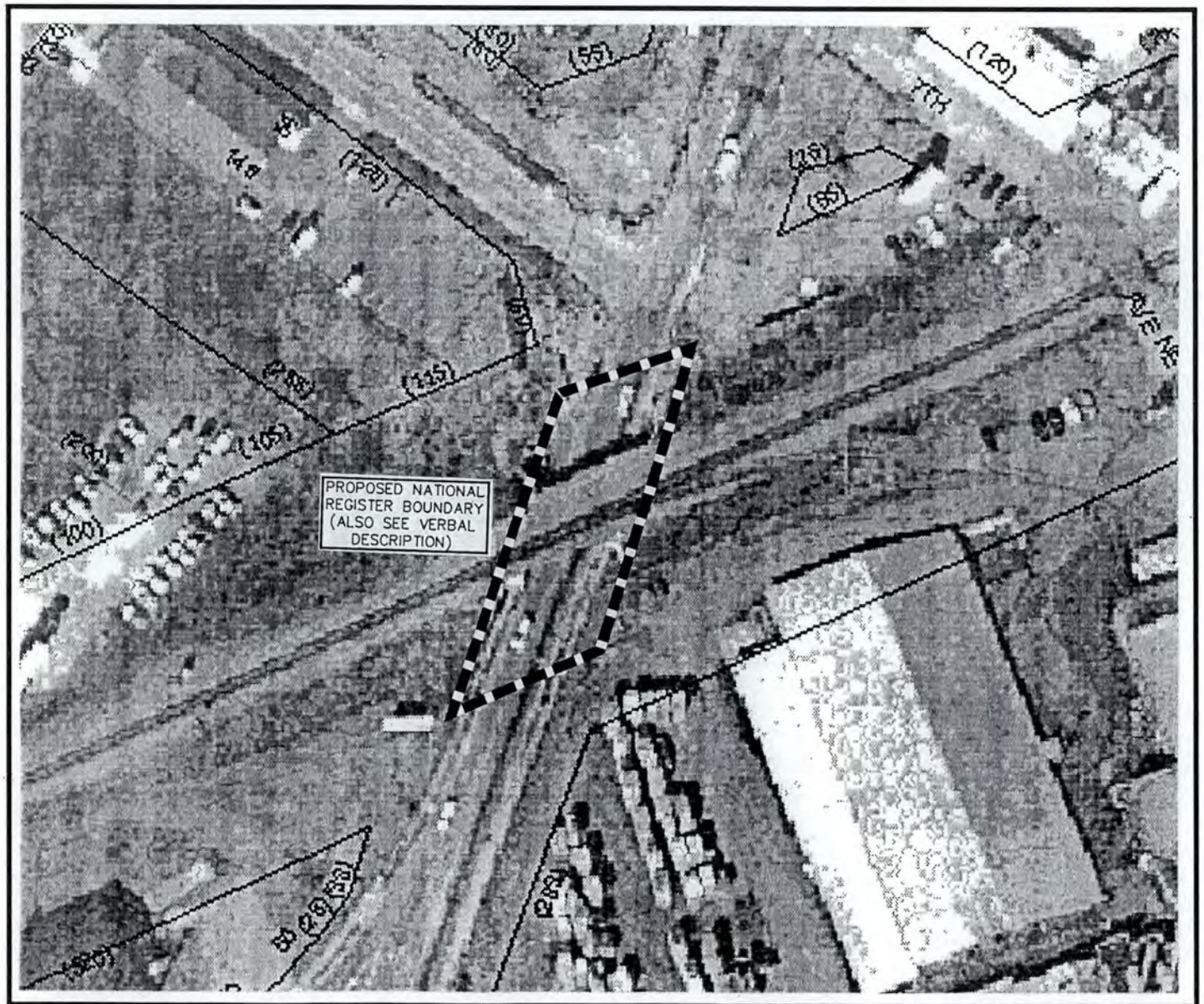


Figure 7. Highland Avenue Southern Railway Bridge Proposed National Register Boundary Map.

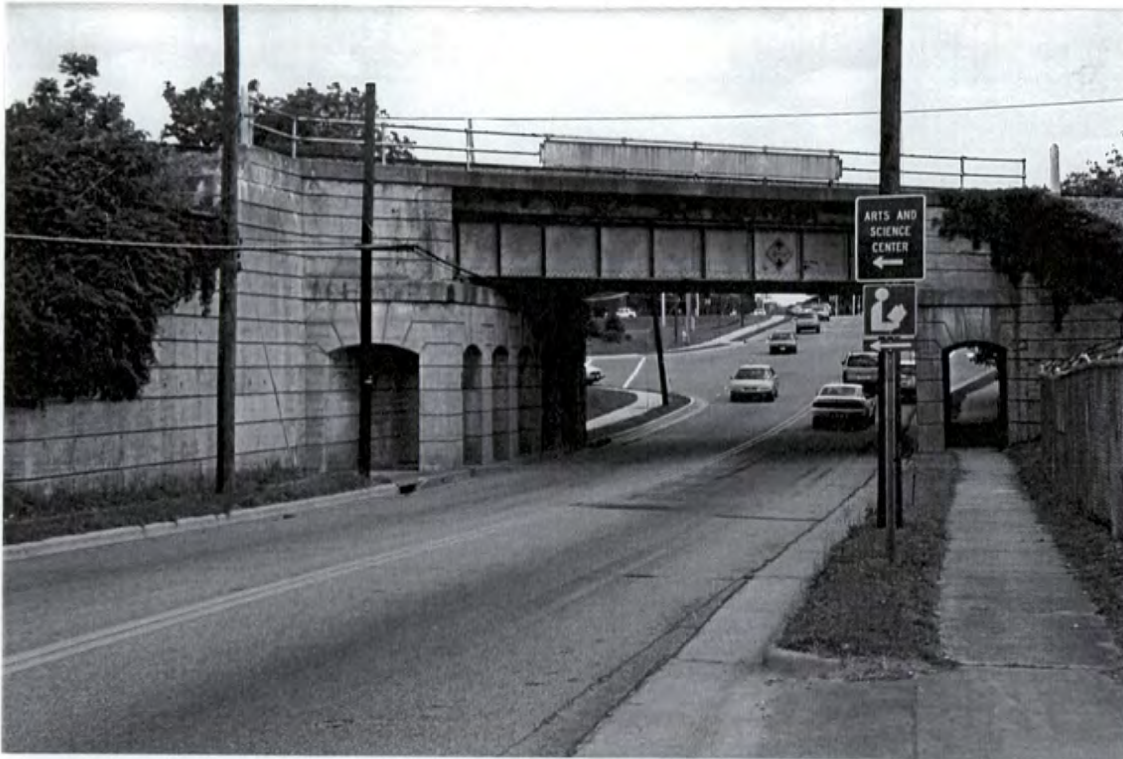


Plate 9:
Highland
Avenue
Southern
Railway
Bridge – south
elevation,
looking north

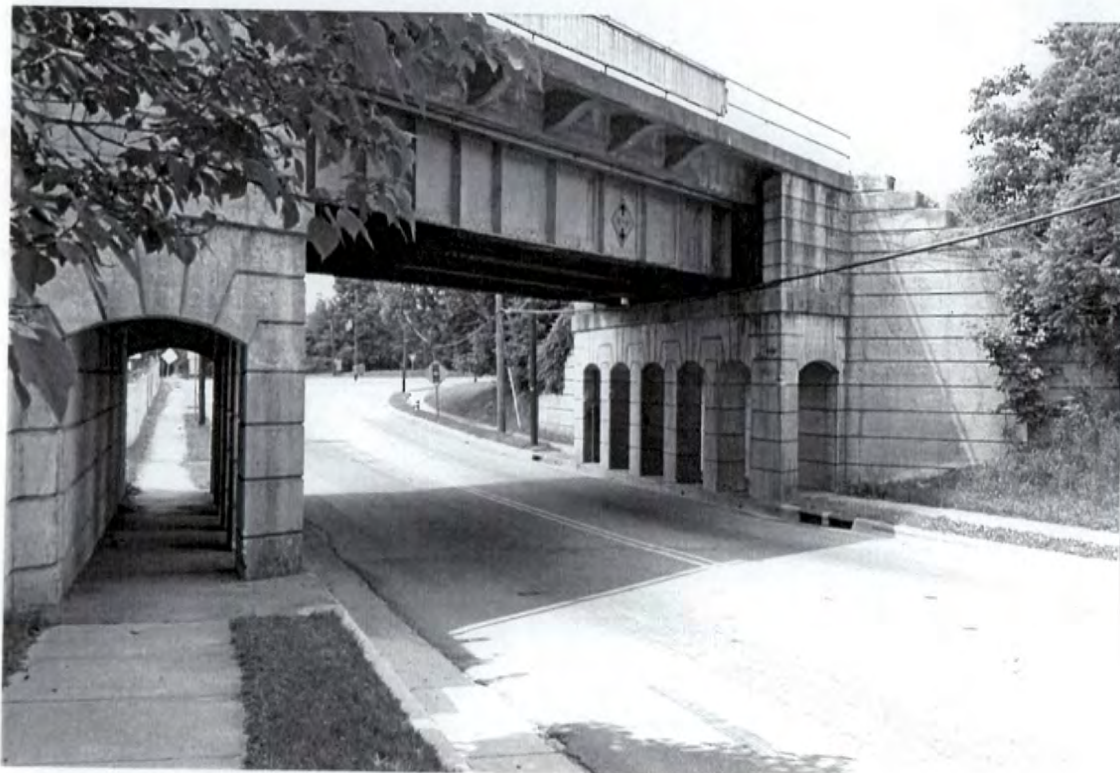


Plate 10:
Highland
Avenue
Southern
Railway
Bridge – north
elevation
looking
southeast



Plate 11:
Highland
Avenue
Southern
Railway
Bridge – plate
girders and
east bent
looking
northwest



Plate 12:
Highland
Avenue
Southern
Railway
Bridge – plate
girders and
cross frames
looking west

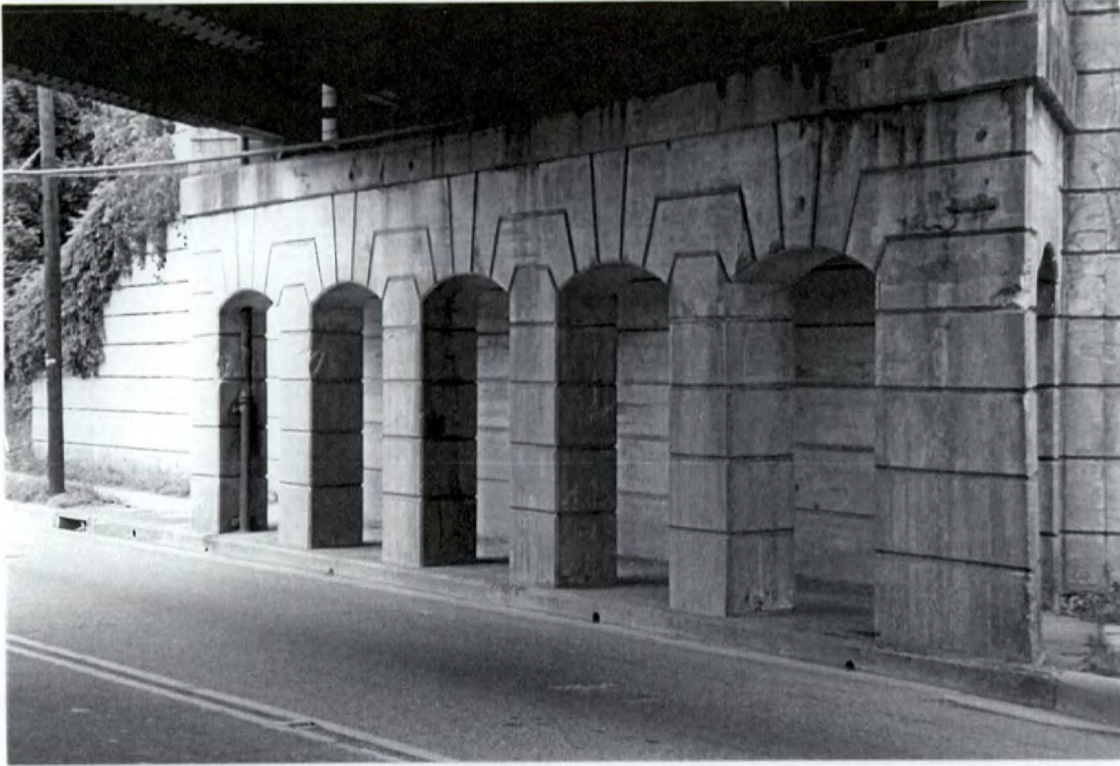


Plate 13:
Highland
Avenue
Southern
Railway
Bridge - west
bent and
walkway
looking
southwest

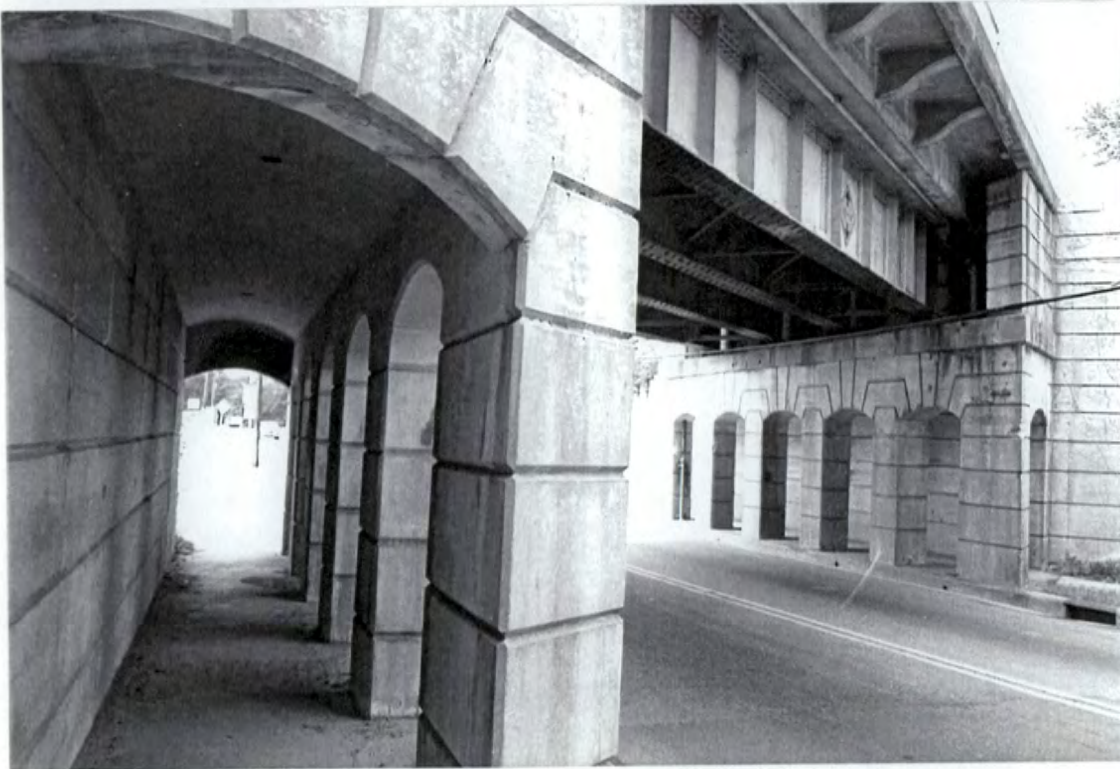


Plate 14:
Highland
Avenue
Southern
Railway
Bridge - east
bent at left
and west
bent at
right looking
southwest



Plate 15:
Highland
Avenue
Southern
Railway
Bridge –
southwest
retaining wall
looking north



Plate 16:
Highland
Avenue
Southern
Railway
Bridge – track
and pipe
railings
looking
northeast,
Hickory
Hosiery Mill
in distance



Plate 17:
Railroad
bridge over
NC 127, south
of downtown
Hickory,
looking north
(outside of
APE)



Plate 18:
Railroad
bridge over
US 70,
Conover,
looking east
(outside of
APE)

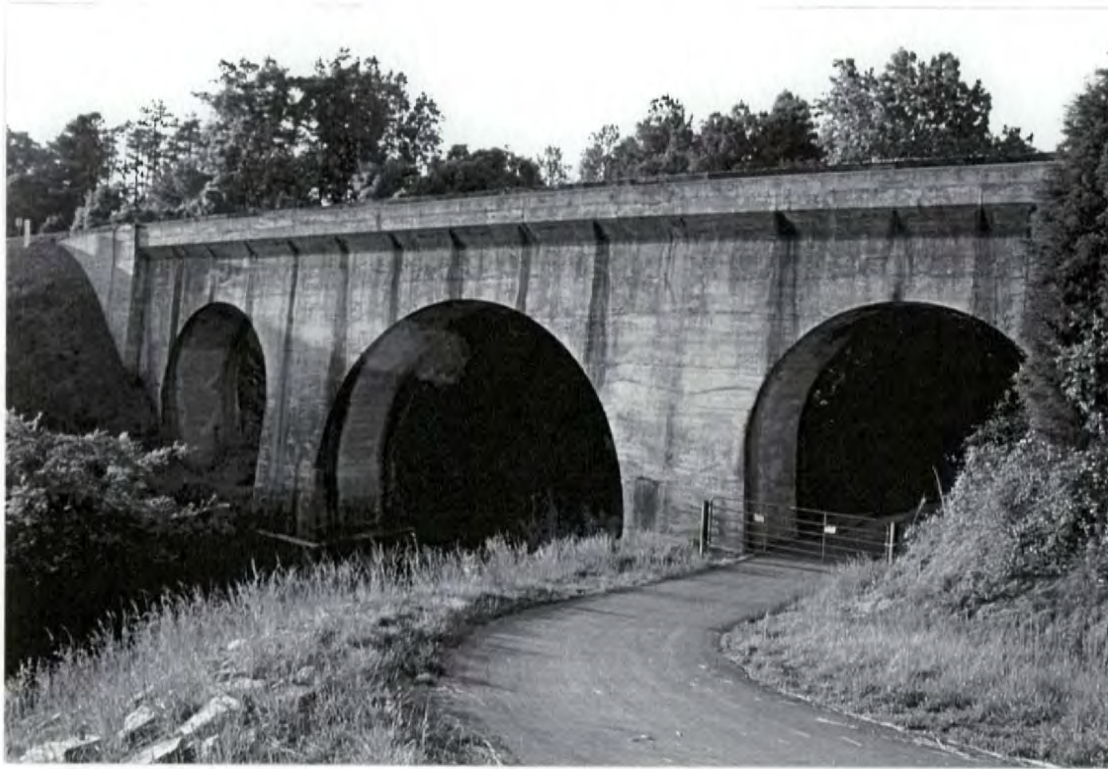


Plate 19:
Railroad
bridge across
stream just
north of US
70, Catawba,
looking
northwest
(outside of
APE)



Plate 20:
Railroad
bridge over
East 20th
Street just
west of NC
16, Newton,
looking west
(outside of
APE)

B. Resources Recommended Not Eligible for National Register Listing

**WHISNANT HOSIERY MILL (#21)
74 8th Street SE, Hickory**

History

Sanborn fire insurance maps depict a tiny unnamed “Knitting Mill” at this site in 1925. This was the “old Brown Hosiery Mill building,” which had but six employees (*The Tattle-Teller* 1972). In 1928 Ernest E. Whisnant took over the Brown operation and renamed it the Whisnant Hosiery Mill (*Hickory Daily Record* 1981; Mohney 1984).

Ernest E. Whisnant was born in 1905 on a family farm in northwest Catawba County and educated at Hickory public schools and Lenoir-Rhyne College. A newspaper account (*The Tattle-Teller* 1972) summarizes his entry into the hosiery business:

While still in [Hickory] high school, he worked mornings and evenings at Elliott Hosiery Mill performing a variety of jobs ranging from firing the furnace to sweeping floors and carrying water. During his last year of college study, he accepted a job with Hollar Hosiery Mill [two blocks to the south] where he worked as a mechanic. Upon graduation from Lenoir Rhyne, at age 21, he was made plant superintendent at Hollar Hosiery. He remained at Hollar Hosiery Mill for several more years and then began to consider the possibilities of going into business for himself. The operator of Hollar Hosiery Mill agreed to sell him some machines to start his own business on the side, with the condition that he would stay on with Hollar as superintendent. These machines, 40 Standard Trumpe machines, which he received in exchange for a 24 acre farm in Alexander County, were to form the nucleus of Whisnant Hosiery Mills. After a period of time during which he shuttled back and forth between his own plant and the Hollar plant, he quit his job at Hollar Hosiery and devoted full time to his own interests.

Mr. Whisnant, in reminiscing about those early days, recalled that his first payroll was \$57.50, half of which he had to borrow.

Whisnant’s shuttling back and forth between the two mills was mitigated by their location: they stood barely a block apart.

Soon after his plant began operation, Whisnant was joined in the business by his brother, Clarence L. Whisnant. They jointly ran the mill until Ernest bought out Clarence’s interest in 1948. He then continued to operate the business on his own for more than two decades. In 1970 he sold his operation to Adams-Millis Corporation. Whisnant had expanded the facility over the years and, at the time of sale, employed 522 workers (*The Tattle-Teller* 1972).

Ernest Whisnant died in 1981 (*Hickory Daily Record*). His obituary, which referred to him as a “hosiery pioneer,” noted his many accomplishments in the community. In addition to his hosiery mill, he founded the Catawba Paper Box Company, which would have provided packaging for his hose. He was a buyer and seller of real estate, horses, and dairy cattle. For 25 years he served as Sunday School superintendent of Bethany Lutheran Church. Additionally, he was a former member of the Hickory City Council and the Catawba County Tax Commission and a former chair of the Hickory Board of Education and the Catawba County Republican executive committee.

Whisnant had more than doubled the size of the Brown Hosiery Mill, or entirely replaced it, by the drawing of the 1931 Sanborn maps. A ca. 1959 aerial photograph of the mill shows the late 1920s/early 1930s block as a small appendage to a much larger mill building to its southeast (Figure 8). This larger building was likely erected by Whisnant in the 1930s.

In 1940 (*Hickory Daily Record*) a review of the hosiery industry in Catawba County and Hickory summarized the Whisnant operation:

Another of Hickory’s largest hosiery mills, operated by Clarence and Ernest Whisnant, produces men’s socks exclusively with probably the greatest variety of any single plant.

The Whisnant mill’s five hundred machines can produce sixty different styles of men’s hose, including English ribbed socks, for which there are only a few machines in the United States.

Unique among the machines here is a “true wrap” device contrived by the Whisnant brothers themselves. So-called because it “wraps” the inner clock-work design on men’s hosiery, this mechanism is said to afford a simpler method of accomplishing this and also makes possible an “unlimited” number of different styles.

In 1993 Moretz Mills (*Hickory News*) purchased the former Whisnant mill from Adams-Millis. Moretz likely built the large modern office and industrial addition that currently dominates the northwestern portion of the complex. The Moretz Mills website (<http://moretzsports.com>) notes that the company was founded in 1946 by Hugh Moretz. Of its current operations, it states:

Based in Newton, North Carolina, the company has 480 valued employees, who work on fast, state-of-the-art machines that produce a whopping 1.3 million pairs of socks every week. We use more than 5 million pounds of yarn a year, enough to go around the earth about one-and-a-half times.

Moretz manufactures its socks at its Conover plant and maintains its corporate headquarters at its Newton plant. It utilizes the Hickory facility, the smallest of the three, for finishing and distribution.

Description

The former Whisnant Hosiery Mill is a massive, interconnected, wedge-shaped building that stretches between 7th Street SE, E Avenue SE, 8th Street SE, and a long parking lot. The complex's earliest portion is located near the center of its northeast façade. It was either erected in the early 1920s, as part of the Brown Hosiery Mill, or by Ernest Whisnant, all or in part, between 1928 and 1931. An aerial view from ca. 1959 and modern aerial photography depict this building as a one-story, brick, front-gabled, rectangular structure with a parapeted northeast front façade (Figure 8). The building is now largely buried by later additions, with only its northeasternmost portion exposed (Plates 21 and 22). This exposed portion has been heavily altered by a modern veneer of brick, which has obscured its openings. Further, its former stepped parapet wall has been filled and made regular.

The next oldest portion of the building stands to the southwest of the earliest block (Plates 23 through 26). It was probably erected, in one or two stages, by Ernest Whisnant in the 1930s. Its two-story, brick, front-gabled, rectangular front portion extends from 8th Street SE back to the northwest, parallel to the earlier block. Its rear portion, which is similarly fashioned, extends at a slight angle, parallel to E Avenue SE, northwest to 7th Street SE. As the aerial photographs depict, the two portions form a gently angled "V". Extending to the east of the front portion is a boxy, two-story, flat-roofed block that, in spite of a loading bay, may once have served as an office wing. With the exception of three second-story casement windows at the east corner of the wing, all of the bays of the 1930s block have been filled with vertical-board inserts. Long, rectangular, concrete plaques set into the parapets of the front and rear (west) elevations no longer bear names. A modern sign that partially obscures the front plaque bears the names of the complex's current owners, Moretz Mills, Inc.

A massive, one-story addition forms the northern third of the complex (Plates 27 and 28). A modern tan brick-veneer and concrete structure, it was likely erected by Moretz Mills after its 1993 acquisition of the property. Most of the building appears to be a warehouse-type structure. The northeastern front of the building, however, contains offices.

National Register Eligibility Evaluation

The former Whisnant Hosiery Mill is not believed to be eligible for National Register listing under any of the Register's Criteria. Due to its numerous alterations and additions, it has lost its integrity as a historic representative of the early hosiery industry in Hickory. It is therefore believed to lack the integrity necessary to support any significance under Criterion A. The mill is not known to have any association with significant individuals. Ernest E. Whisnant was an early pioneer of the hosiery business in Catawba County, but was not a person "significant in our past" as defined by the National Register. The mill is therefore also not believed to be National Register-eligible under Criterion B. As noted, the building has been heavily altered and added to, leaving little of its original or early fabric visible. Further, its surrounding neighborhood has been similarly changed through the years. The building is therefore not believed to retain sufficient integrity to be individually

eligible under Criterion C and its surroundings are not believed to retain sufficient integrity to be National Register-eligible as a historic district. The standing structure–archaeology is not addressed here–is unlikely to yield information about our past not otherwise accessible from other standing resources and written records, so the mill is also believed to be ineligible for Register listing under Criterion D.

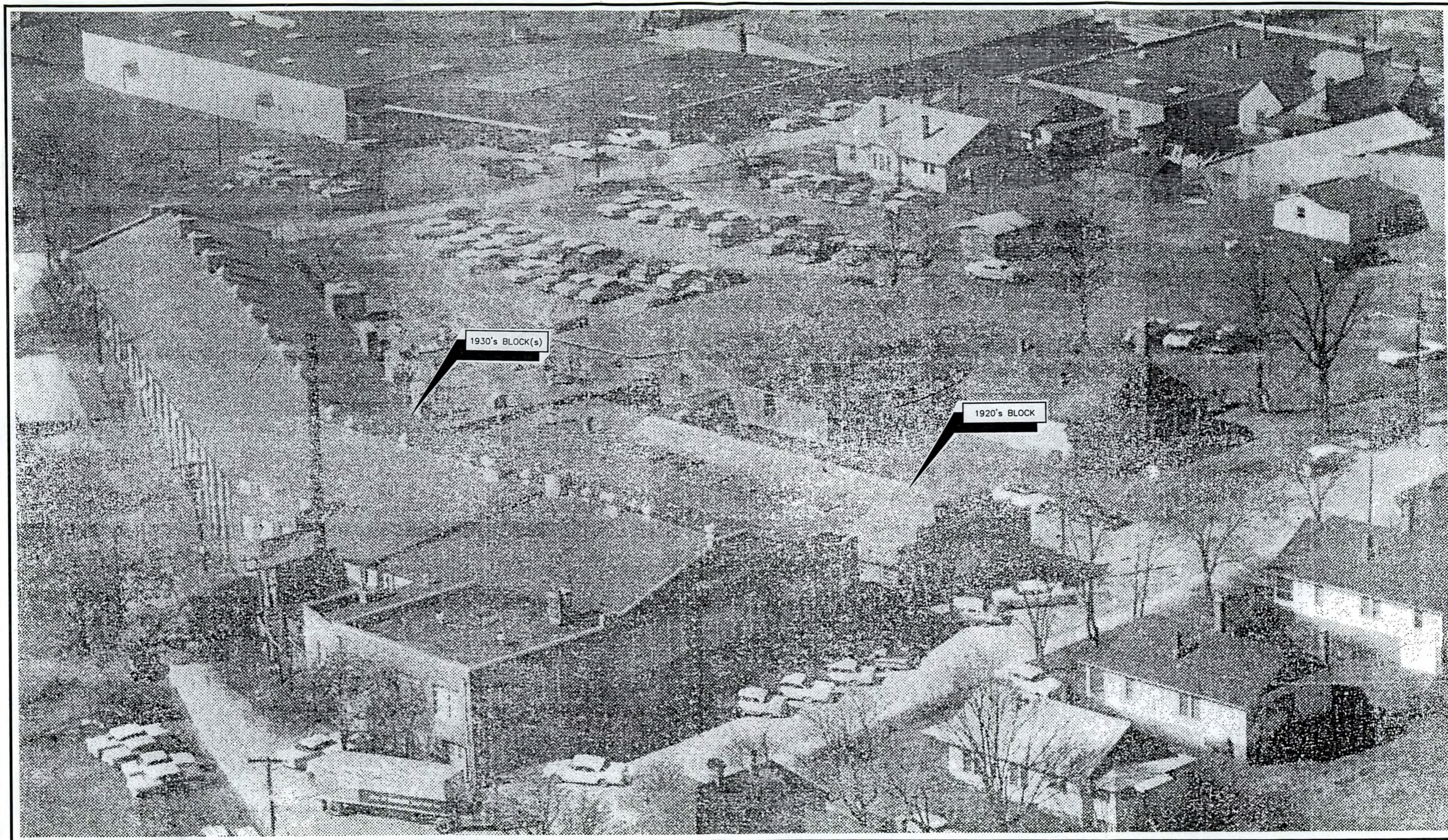


Figure 8. Ca. 1959 Aerial View of Whisnant Hosiery Mill.



Plate 21:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
1920s block at
right, 1930s
block at left,
looking
southwest



Plate 22:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
1930s block at
left, 1920s
block at far
right, looking
northwest



Plate 23:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
northeast front
façade of
1930s block,
office wing at
left



Plate 24:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
1930s block
looking
northwest



Plate 25:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
south
elevation of
1930s block



Plate 26:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
southwest rear
elevation of
1930s block



Plate 27:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
southwest rear
and northwest
side elevations
of modern
block



Plate 28:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
northeast front
elevation of
modern block
at right, 1920s
block at left
center, and
1930s block at
far left

CATAWBA TRANSIT COMPANY GARAGE (#26)
45 8th Street SE, Hickory

History

The earliest block of this building was erected at the opening of the 1950s by the Catawba Transit Company (Hickory City Directory 1951-52). Catawba Transit was a bus company, with its terminal at 35 2nd Place SW in downtown Hickory and its garage at this location. By the mid-1960s (Hickory City Directory 1965-66) Catawba Transit had relocated and the garage was home to the Hickory Truck Garage. By the mid-1970s it housed Hamco Truckers (Hickory City Directory 1975). It is currently home to Four Seasons, which produces SunLife residential and commercial sunrooms and spas.

The present building was erected in two stages. The southeast block is original. The date and construction of the concrete and brick veneer addition at the northwest has not been identified, but probably dates from the 1950s or early 1960s.

Description

The rectangular, one-story-over-basement, original block of this former bus company garage is built of cinder block (Plates 29 and 30). The block is exposed at the building's severely finished, long northeast and shorter southeast elevations. Casement windows and basement-level concrete buttresses mark the northeast elevation. The same windows—plus a parapet roof and a large, modern, open, metal shed—mark the southeast elevation. A sign at the parapet's center identifies the building's current function, "Four Seasons Greenhouses Design and Remodeling Centers." The building's long southwest elevation is pierced by six garage bays (Plate 31). As the building served a bus company, this was its principal façade and it is accordingly brick veneered. The paneled overhead doors, with central strips of windows, are early or original features. A long, modern, open metal shed, beneath which building supplies are stored, shades the doors. The northwest elevation of the original block is hidden by an early, rectangular, one-story addition that gives the entire structure an L-shaped footprint (Plates 32 and 33). Also built of concrete block, it is lit by similar casement windows, sided with brick veneer, and topped by a flat roof. At its southwest elevation, the block holds two additional garage bays.

National Register Eligibility Evaluation

The former Catawba Transit Company Garage is not believed to be eligible for National Register listing under any of the Register's Criteria. The building is not representative of any important historic theme or event and is not known to be associated with any significant persons. It is therefore not believed to be eligible for listing under Register Criteria A and B. The building's original block is a barely 50-year-old, strictly functional structure with a substantial less-than-50-year-old addition. Further, its surrounding neighborhood has changed much through the years. The building is therefore not believed to retain sufficient integrity, or have sufficient architectural character, to be individually eligible under Criterion C and its surroundings are not believed to retain sufficient integrity to be National Register-eligible as a historic district. The standing structure-archaeology

is not addressed here—is unlikely to yield information about our past not otherwise accessible from other standing resources and written records, so the building is also believed to be ineligible for Register listing under Criterion D.



Plate 29:
Catawba
Transit
Company
Garage –
southeast and
northeast
elevations



Plate 30:
Catawba
Transit
Company
Garage –
northeast and
southwest
elevations



Plate 31:
Catawba
Transit
Company
Garage –
southwest
elevation
garage bays



Plate 32:
Catawba
Transit
Company
Garage –
southwest and
northwest
elevations



Plate 33:
Catawba
Transit
Company
Garage –
northwest and
northeast
elevations

HICKORY HOSIERY MILL (#44)
728 Highland Avenue NE, Hickory

History

The current King Hickory manufacturing and outlet sales facility that utilizes this connected complex of buildings occupies the site of Hickory's first hosiery mill. Julius A. Cline built the Hickory Hosiery Mill in 1906. It originally primarily manufactured cotton work socks (*Hickory News* 1992a). An outline of the original complex, which had two principal buildings, was captured in a Sanborn (1907) fire insurance map of the following year (Figure 9). A small, rectangular, masonry, two-story building, it fronted on Martin or 3rd Street, now 7th Avenue NE. Knitters labored on the second story and sent their rough hose to the floor below to be finished. To the rear (northeast) of the factory was a smaller one-story dye house and a water tank. By 1913 (Sanborn) the facility had grown nominally, with the addition of a tiny one-story office off the northern corner of the mill. By 1919 (Sanborn) the mill building had been connected to the dye house and extended to the northwest. Four small new buildings, including a freestanding office and another knitting building, had also been erected. By 1925 (Sanborn) the dye house had been replaced by a new storage building and two buildings had been added to its rear.

Hickory Hosiery was transformed between 1925 and 1931 (Sanborn) (Figure 10). A large interlinked complex was created, as the buildings were expanded and connected. Though not visible in the 1931 outline drawing of the complex, parts of a few of the earlier buildings were retained.

According to a retrospective newspaper account (*Hickory News* 1992a), J.A. Cline's decision to enter the industry "seemed like the thing to do, what with an abundant, relatively inexpensive labor supply and power and raw materials nearby." Cline sold his interest in the enterprise after a few years and opened another hosiery mill in Hildebran. In 1916 Cline's son, Carl, entered the business and a family-owned mill in Valdese was renamed J.A. Cline & Son. In 1937 the Clines repurchased the Hickory mill. Carl Cline took over management from the mill's New York-based operators and renamed it the Hickory Knitting Mills (Hickory City Directories 1937-38 and 1939-40). By the late 1940s the mill was operating under the name J.A. Cline & Son again and by the early 1950s had been renamed the Whiting Hosiery Mills (Hickory City Directories 1947-48 and 1951-52). The name honored Carl Cline's young grandson, Whiting Shuford. (In 1975, two years after graduating from Lenoir-Rhyne College across the street from the mill, Whiting Shuford became the firm's president.) In 1961 the former Hickory Hosiery Mill departed from its original location again, shifting its operations to 15th Street NE (*Hickory News* 1992a).

In 1940 (Hickory City Directory 1940; Setzer map of Hickory 1941) Bolan G. Brumby, Jr., opened the Cherokee Hosiery Mill—a finishing mill—immediately to the northeast of Hickory Hosiery. That mill changed hands repeatedly over the next decade, operating as the Parker Hosiery Mill by 1943-44, the Earl Hosiery Mill by 1945-46, and the A.M. Brown Hosiery Mills by 1947-48 (Hickory City Directories). The 1949-50 city directory notes the mill's transformation, at the close of the 1940s, into the Hickory Tavern Furniture company. (Hickory Tavern was the original name of the town of Hickory.) By 1959-60 (Hickory City Directory) Hickory Tavern had been joined, in the

same facility, by Bruington Furniture Inc. Following the departure of Whiting Hosiery Mills from its facility in 1961, Bruington took over that earlier factory complex.

By the early 1960s, therefore, both hosiery mills—the 1906-and-later Hickory Hosiery Mill and the 1940 Cherokee Hosiery Mill to its rear—had been converted into furniture factories. In 1966 Hickory Tavern moved from the site to a new mill. The Lane Company acquired it three years later. The Bruington Furniture Company, which remained in its building, was acquired by Lane in 1970 and in 1976 Hickory Tavern and Bruington began operating jointly under the acronym HTB (*Hickory News* 1992b). The King Hickory Furniture Company was formed in Hickory in 1958 (King Hickory Furniture Company website). About 1980 it acquired the former Hickory Hosiery Mill/Hickory Tavern Furniture and Cherokee Hosiery Mill/Bruington Furniture Company mills (Hickory City Directories 1979 and 1980). It continues to operate the combined buildings as a single large factory that includes a small outlet store.

Description

A portion of the current the King Hickory Furniture Company facility facing southwest toward 7th Avenue NE contains remnants of the facility's hosiery manufacturing origins within three small, two-story, connected, brick buildings (Plate 34). The first floor of the southernmost building, which retains segmental-arched openings, may date from between 1919 and 1925 (Plate 35). Its flat-roofed second story, lit by casement windows, is a later addition, as is a one-bay, two-story extension to its north. At the center of the 7th Avenue façade is a gable-front building that retains bricked-in, segmental-arched, first-story openings and altered openings above (Plate 36). This block may have been built between 1913 and 1919. To its north is a later one-story extension. A flat-roofed, two-story block at the north end of the 7th Avenue façade retains the walls, at its first story, of another portion of the facility possibly erected between 1913 and 1919 (Plate 37). Its second story and its first-story front bay windows and entry—which announces the King Hickory outlet store within—are later additions. At the building's northwest elevation, however, brick-filled early openings are visible.

To the rear (northeast) of the earliest portion of the factory, connected by enclosed raised walkways, are a later series of manufacturing buildings and shipping facilities, none of which appear to have been erected more than 50 years ago (Plate 38). A one-and-two-story, flat-roofed, brick-veneered building extends immediately to the rear (Plates 39 and 40). To its rear is a modern shipping building with numerous loading bays (Plate 41). These buildings hold more than 50 percent of the complex's floor space. Also to the rear of the early strip of buildings, fronting on Main Avenue, is a large, two-story, brick block with a central truck bay opening that may date to the 1950s (Plate 42). All but one of its first-story windows have been bricked over, but its large second-story casement windows survive, albeit covered with a coat of paint.

National Register Eligibility Evaluation

The former Hickory Hosiery Mill is not believed to be eligible for National Register listing under any of the Register's Criteria. Due to its numerous alterations and additions—and its conversion to a furniture factory more than 40 years ago—it has lost its integrity as a historic representative of the

early hosiery industry in Hickory. It was the site of the first hosiery mill in Hickory, but the buildings of that mill do not survive. The earliest portions of the complex, dating from the 1910s and 1920s, survive only in pieces. The mill is therefore believed to lack the integrity necessary to support any significance under Criterion A. The mill is not known to have any association with significant individuals. Julius A. Cline was a pioneer of the hosiery business in Catawba County, but was not a person “significant in our past” as defined by the National Register. The mill is therefore also not believed to be National Register-eligible under Criterion B. As noted, the building has been heavily altered and added to, leaving little of its original or early fabric visible. Further, its surrounding neighborhood has been similarly changed through the years. The building is therefore not believed to retain sufficient integrity to be individually eligible under Criterion C, and its surroundings are not believed to retain sufficient integrity to be National Register-eligible as a historic district. The standing structure-archaeology is not addressed here—is unlikely to yield information about our past not otherwise accessible from other standing resources and written records, so the mill is also believed to be ineligible for Register listing under Criterion D.

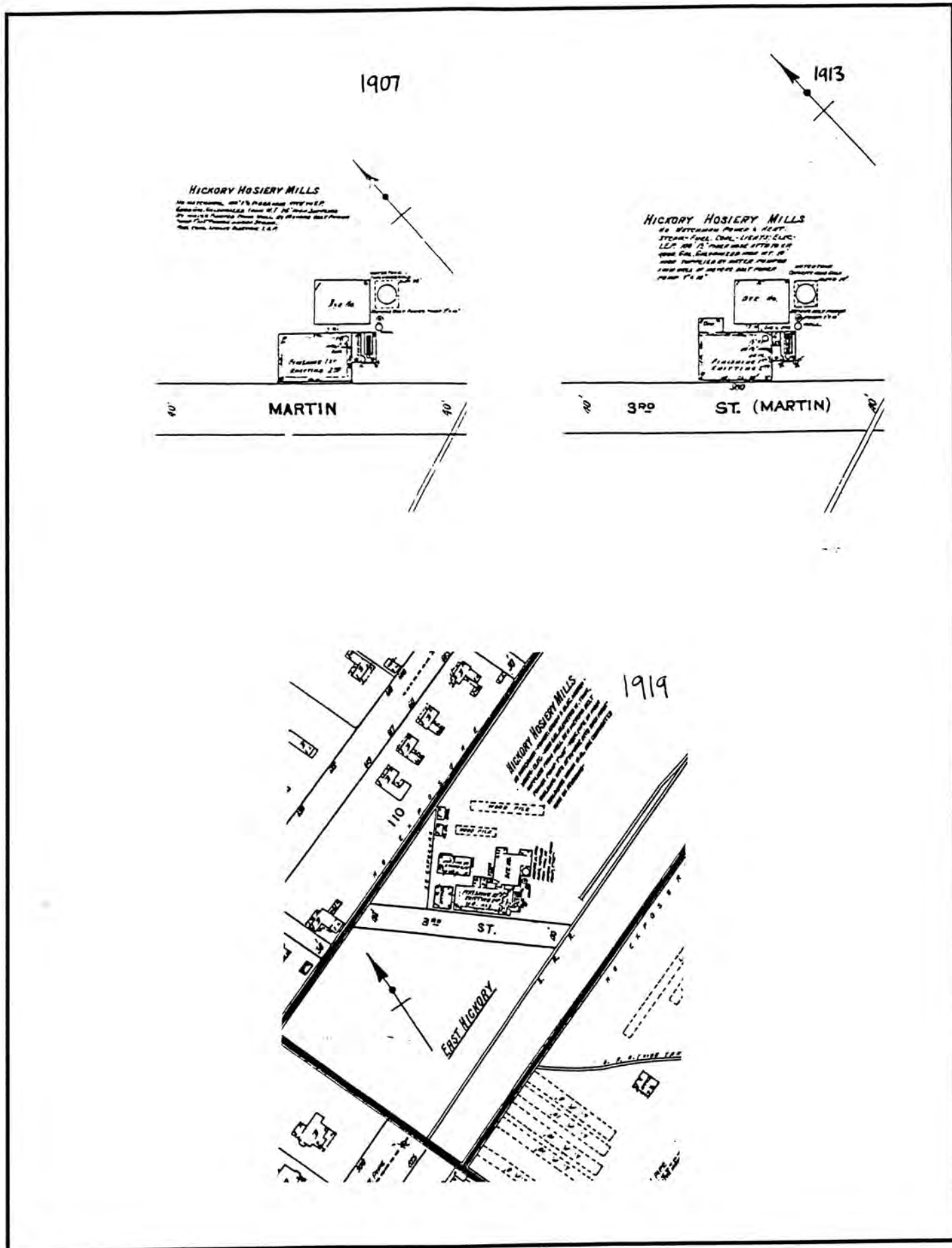


Figure 9. Hickory Hosiery Mill on Sanborn Maps of 1907, 1913, and 1919.

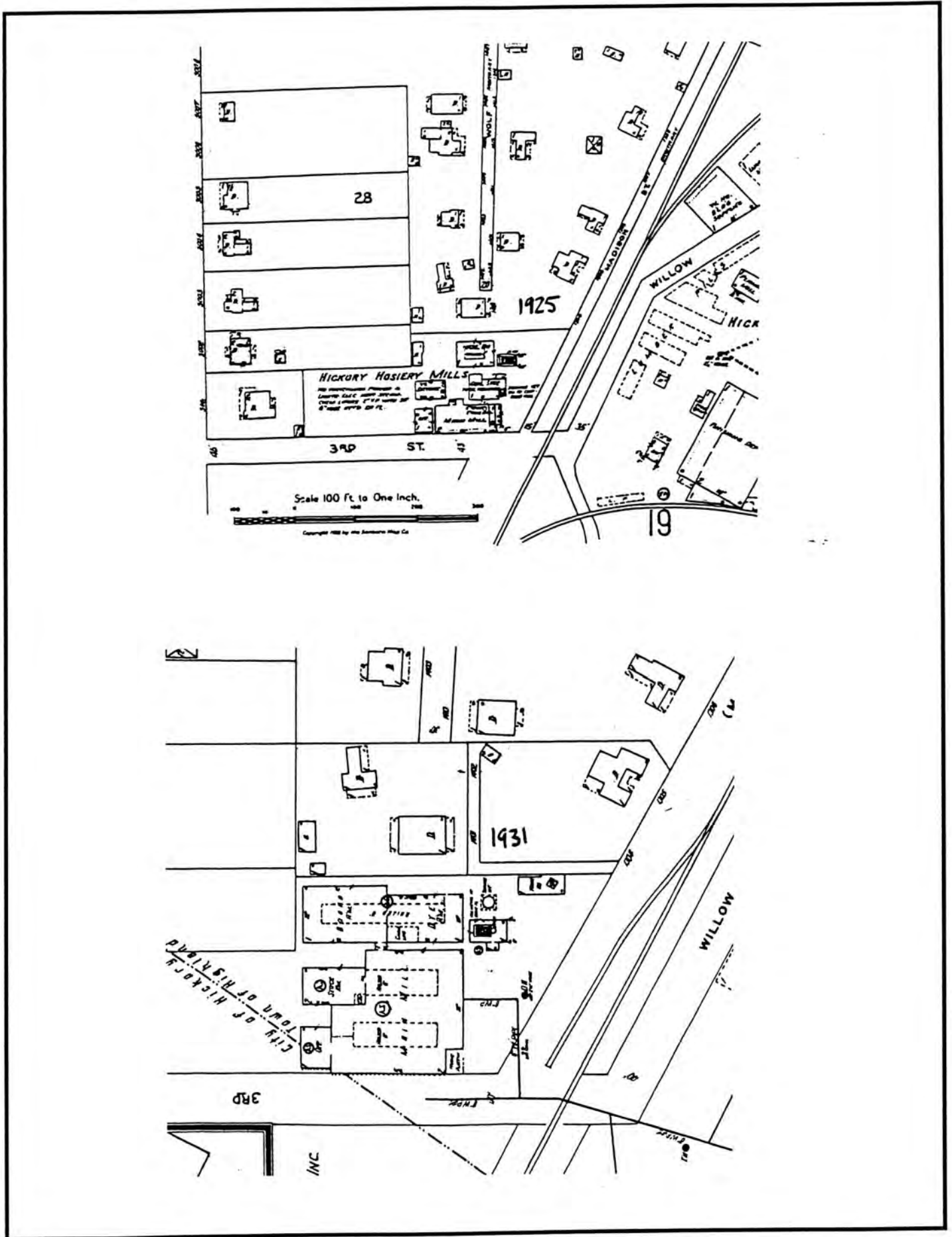


Figure 10. Hickory Hosiery Mill on 1925 and 1931 Sanborn Maps.

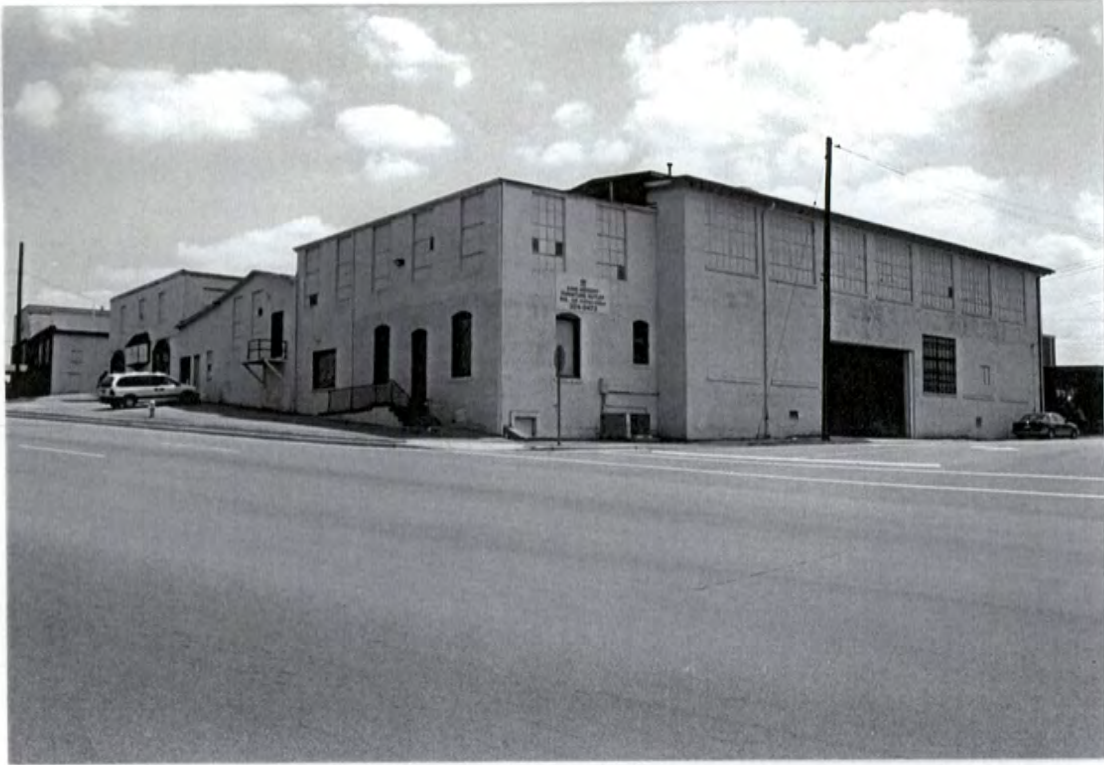


Plate 34:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
earliest 7th
Avenue NE
buildings at
left and Main
Street building
at right

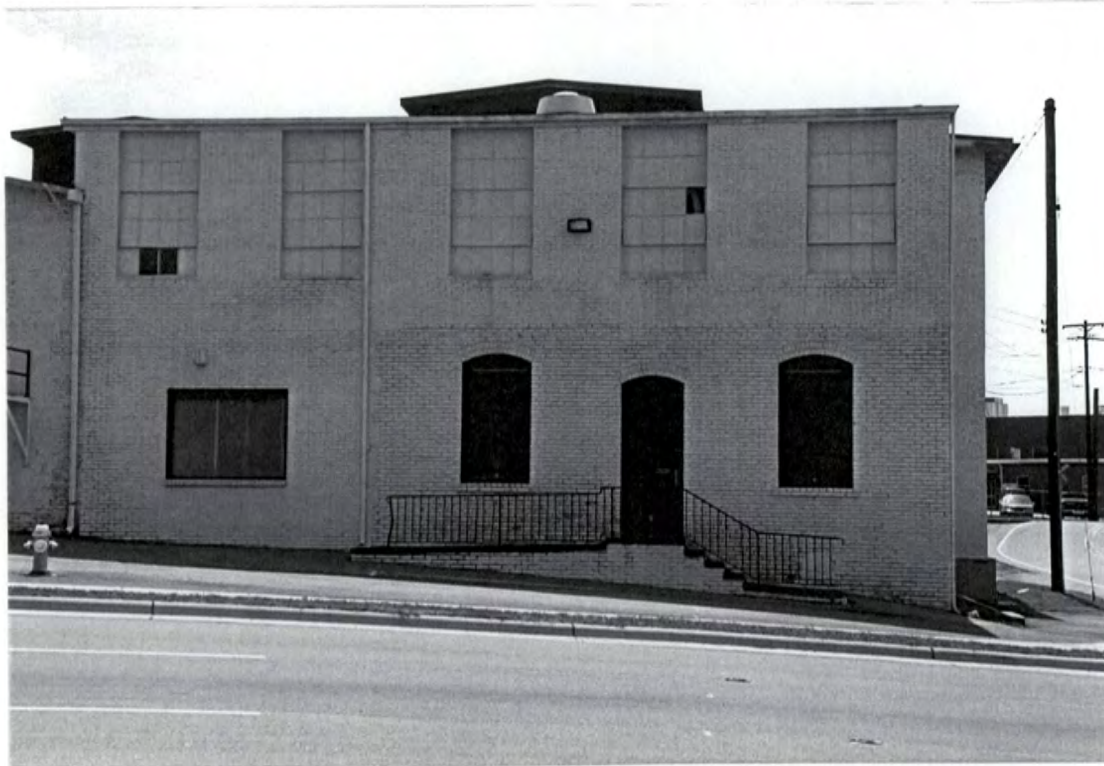


Plate 35:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
southwest-
facing 7th
Avenue SE
façade of
1920s building

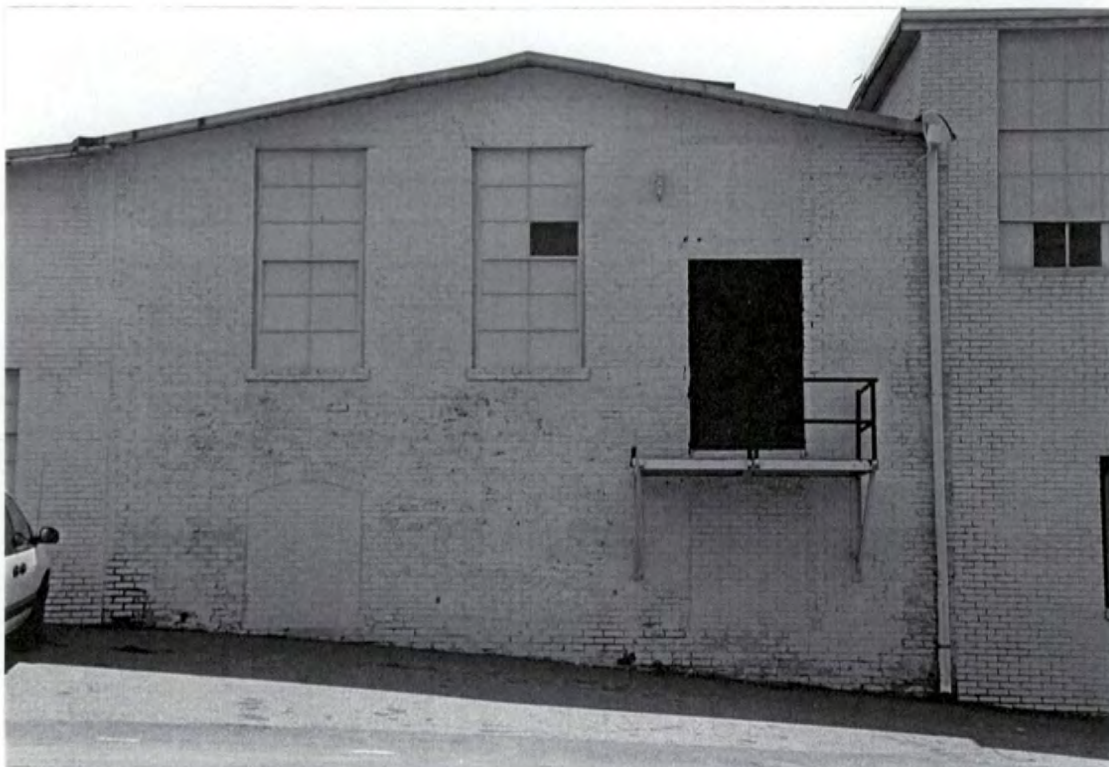


Plate 36:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
southwest-
facing 7th
Avenue NE
façade of
central 1910s
building



Plate 37:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
southwest-
facing 7th
Avenue NE
façade of
1910s building
at left, other
early buildings
at right



Plate 38:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
enclosed
walkway
connector
looking
southeast



Plate 39:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
northwest and
southwest
elevations of
later industrial
building



Plate 40:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
later industrial
building
looking south



Plate 41:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
shipping
facility and
loading docks
looking south



Plate 42:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
southeast-
facing Main
Street
elevation of
1950s building

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VII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

March 11, 2002, Concurrence Form for Properties Not Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places

CONCURRENCE FORM FOR PROPERTIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Project Description: Lenoir-Rhyne Blvd. Extension from Tate Blvd. To 7th Ave., Hickory.

On 11 March 2002, representatives of the

- North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- Other

reviewed the subject project at

- Scoping meeting
- Historic architectural resources photograph review session/consultation
- Other

All parties present agreed

- there are no properties over fifty years old within the project's area of potential effects.
- there are no properties less than fifty years old which are considered to meet Criteria Consideration G within the project's area of potential effects.
- there are properties over fifty years old within the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE), but based on the historical information available and the photographs of each property, the properties identified as 1-20, 22-25, 27, 30-43, 45-49 are considered not eligible for the National Register and no further evaluation of them is necessary. *eval: 21, 26, 29, 44*
- there are no National Register-listed properties within the project's area of potential effects. *DE: 28*
- all properties greater than 50 years of age located in the APE have been considered at this consultation, and based upon the above concurrence, all compliance for historic architecture with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and GS 121-12(a) has been completed for this project.

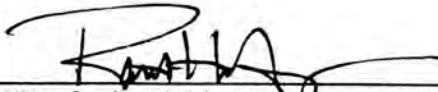
Signed:



Representative, NCDOT

11 MAR 2002

Date



FHWA, for the Division Administrator, or other Federal Agency

3/7/02

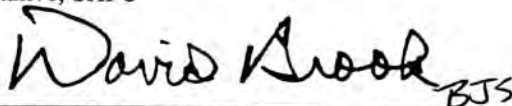
Date



Representative, SHPO

3-11-02

Date



State Historic Preservation Officer

8-8-02

Date

APPENDIX B

NCDOT Maps/Project Plans of Resources Inventoried at Reconnaissance Level

07/03/97

U-2306A

PROJECT: 8.2791701

See Sheet 1-A For Index of Sheets
See Sheet 1-B For Conventional Symbols



Vicinity of State Project U-2306A

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS CATAWBA COUNTY

LOCATION: HICKORY - LENOIR RHYNE BLVD. EXTENSION
FROM TATE BLVD. TO 7TH AVE.

TYPE OF WORK: GRADING, DRAINAGE, PAVING, STRUCTURES
SIGNING, SIGNALS, LONG LIFE PAVEMENT
MARKINGS AND THERMOPLASTIC MARKERS

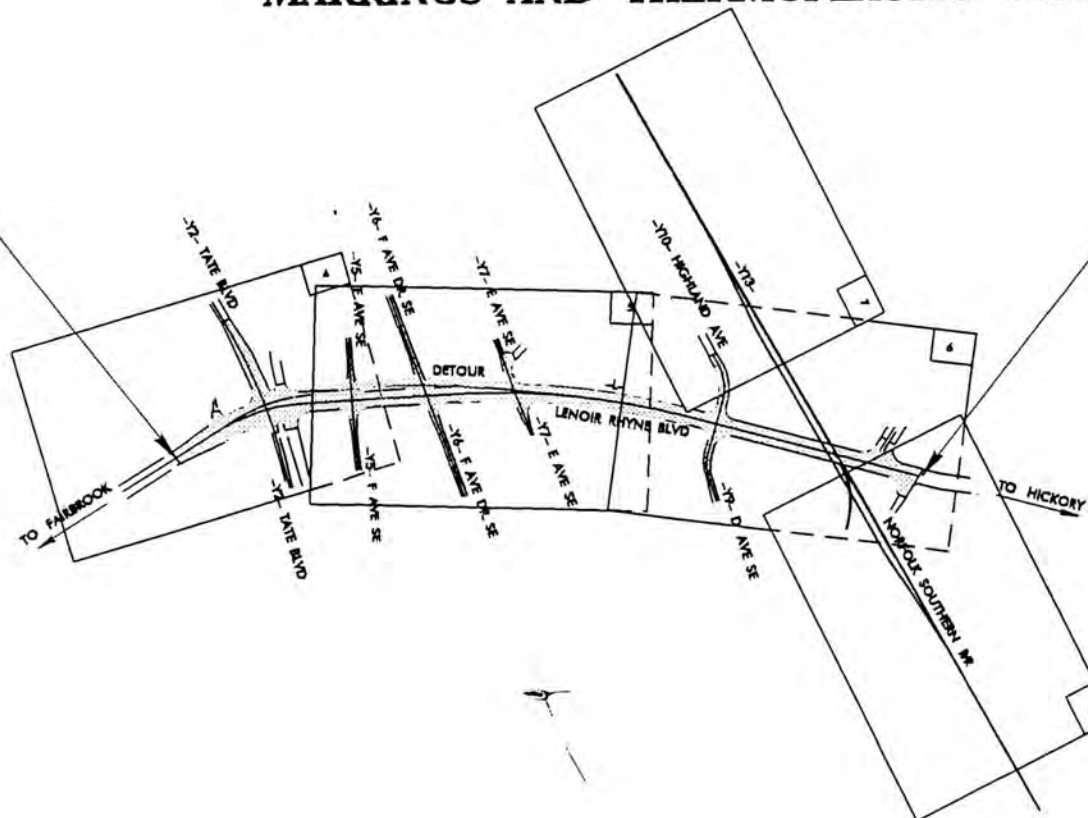
STATE	STATE PROJECT REFERENCE NO.	SHEET NO.	TOTAL SHEETS
N.C.	U-2306A	1	
STATE FUNDING	F.A. PROJECT NO.	DESCRIPTION	
8.2791701	MA-STP-1216(8)	PE, UTL	

ALL DIMENSIONS IN THESE PLANS ARE IN METERS UNLESS OTHERWISE SHOWN



-L- POT STA. 10+73.873
BEGIN STATE PROJECT U-2306A
BEGIN F. A. PROJECT MA-STP-1216(8)

-L- POT STA. 19+80.000
END STATE PROJECT U-2306A
END F. A. PROJECT MA-STP-1216(8)



PRELIMINARY PLANS
DO NOT USE FOR CONSTRUCTION

CLEARING ON THIS PROJECT SHALL BE PERFORMED TO THE LIMITS ESTABLISHED BY METHOD II

GRAPHIC SCALE

5 0 10
PLANS

5 0 10
PROFILE (HORIZONTAL)

2 0 4
PROFILE (VERTICAL)

DESIGN DATA

ADT 1997 = 14,500 vpd
ADT 2020 = 25,500 vpd

DHV = 10 %
D = 60 %
T = 10 % *
V = 60 km/h

* TTST 4 % DUAL 6 %

PROJECT LENGTH

LENGTH ROADWAY F. A. PROJECT MA-STP-1216(8) = 0.906 km
TOTAL LENGTH STATE PROJECT 8.2791701 = 0.906 km

Prepared in the Office of:
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
1995 STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS

RIGHT OF WAY DATE:
JUNE 18, 1999

LETTING DATE:
AUGUST 20, 2002

A. H. LASSITER, PE
PROJECT ENGINEER

C. J. MORGAN, PE
PROJECT DESIGN ENGINEER

HYDRAULICS ENGINEER

ROADWAY DESIGN ENGINEER

SIGNATURE: _____ P.E.

SIGNATURE: _____ P.E.

DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

STATE DESIGN ENGINEER
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

APPROVED
DIVISION ADMINISTRATOR

DATE: _____

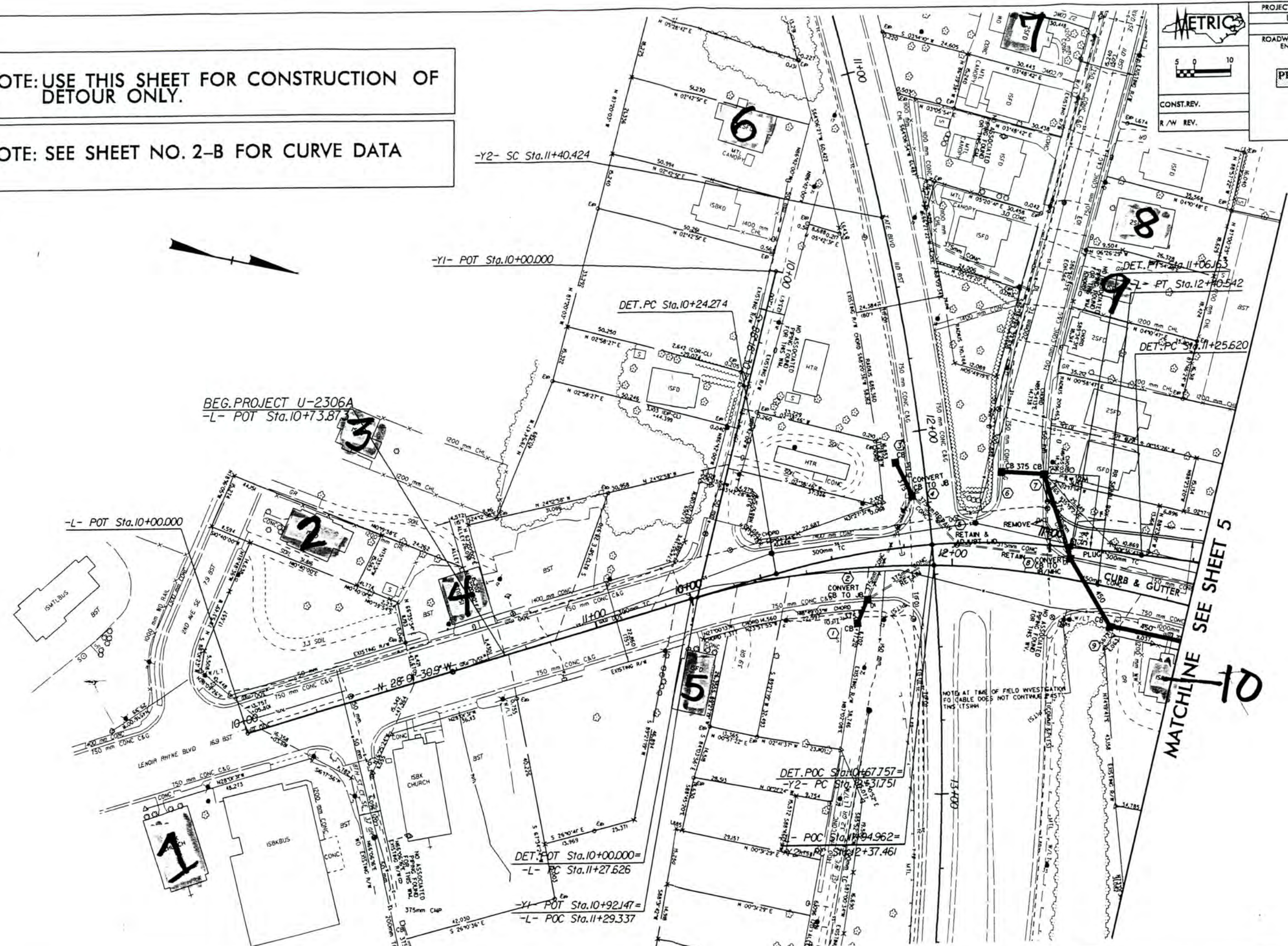
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07/18/14

NOTE: USE THIS SHEET FOR CONSTRUCTION OF DETOUR ONLY.


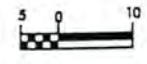
NOTE: SEE SHEET NO. 2-B FOR CURVE DATA

PROJECT REFERENCE NO. U-2306A		SHEET NO. 2-C	
R/W SHEET NO.			
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PRELIMINARY PLANS DO NOT USE FOR CONSTRUCTION			
CONST. REV.		R/W REV.	

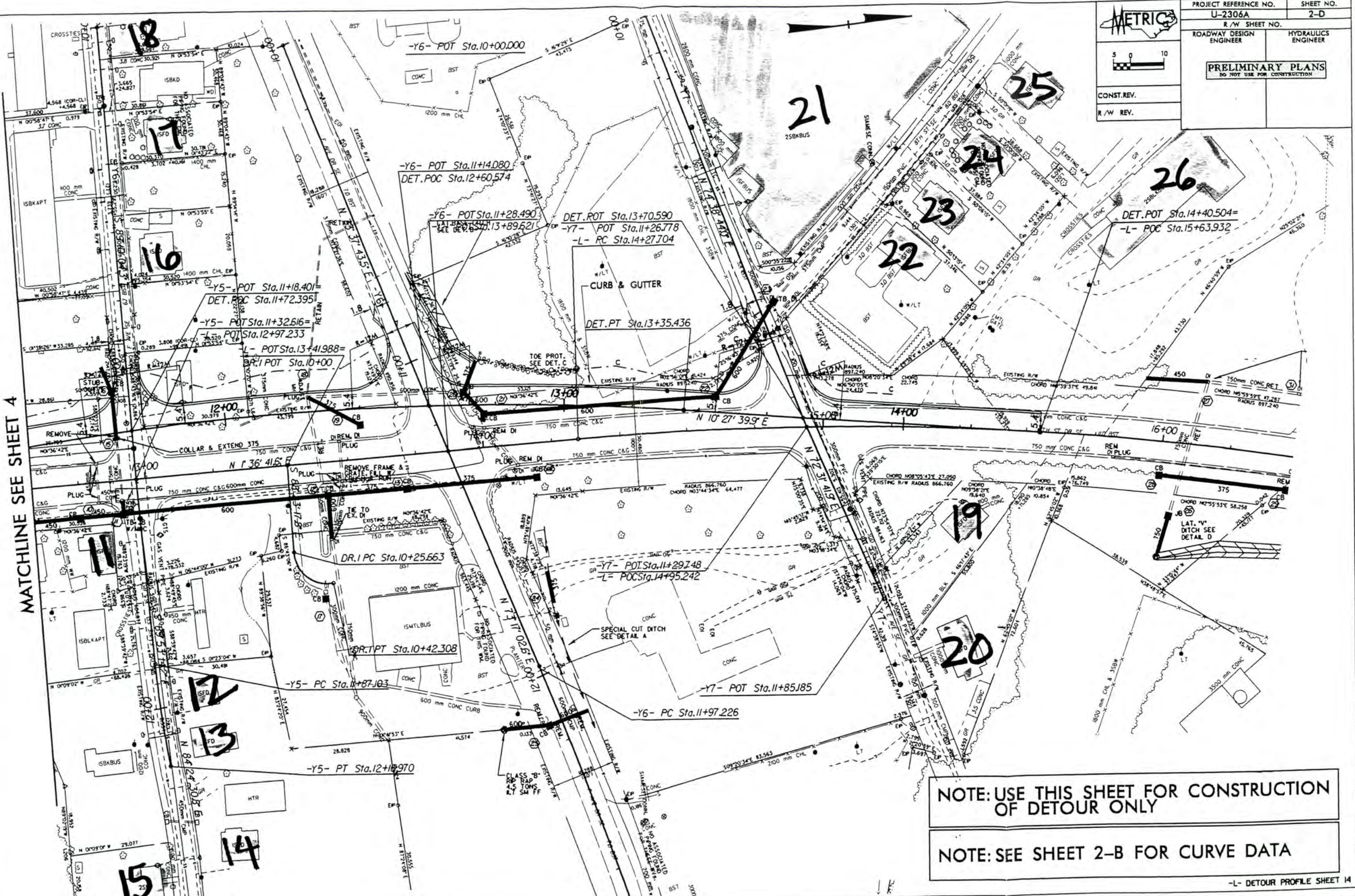


MATCHLINE SEE SHEET 5

25-FEB-2002
Begin AT 10:00 AM

	PROJECT REFERENCE NO.	SHEET NO.
	U-2306A	2-D
	R/W SHEET NO.	HYDRAULICS ENGINEER
	ROADWAY DESIGN ENGINEER	
PRELIMINARY PLANS <small>DO NOT USE FOR CONSTRUCTION</small>		
CONST. REV.		
R/W REV.		

MATCHLINE SEE SHEET 4



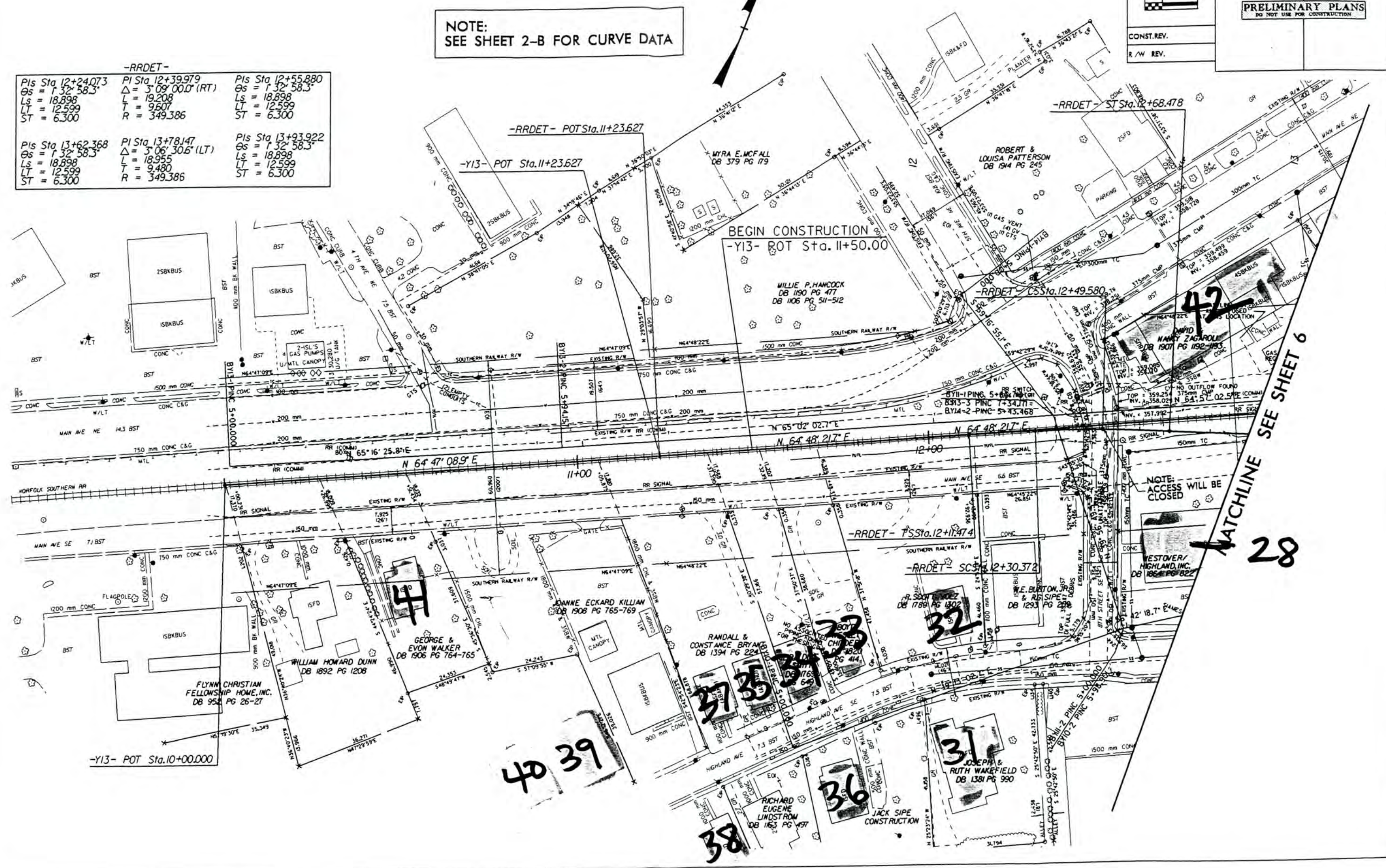
NOTE: USE THIS SHEET FOR CONSTRUCTION OF DETOUR ONLY

NOTE: SEE SHEET 2-B FOR CURVE DATA

20-FEB-2002 05:48
AT 10:00:00

NOTE:
SEE SHEET 2-B FOR CURVE DATA

-RRDET-		
PIs Sta 12+24.073 Os = 1 32' 58.3" Ls = 18.898 LT = 12.599 ST = 6.300	PI Sta 12+39.979 Δ = 3 09' 00.0" (RT) L = 19.208 T = 9.607 R = 349.386	PIs Sta 12+55.880 Os = 1 32' 58.3" Ls = 18.898 LT = 12.599 ST = 6.300
PIs Sta 13+62.368 Os = 1 32' 58.3" Ls = 18.898 LT = 12.599 ST = 6.300	PI Sta 13+78.147 Δ = 3 06' 30.6" (LT) L = 18.955 T = 9.480 R = 349.386	PIs Sta 13+93.922 Os = 1 32' 58.3" Ls = 18.898 LT = 12.599 ST = 6.300



MATCHLINE SEE SHEET 6

28

07-13-1997

20-FEB-2002 09:57 am

JH:mgm AT 10:00:00

APPENDIX C

**Historic Preservation Certification Application Part I—Evaluation of Significance,
“Hollar Hosiery Mills Building”**

NOV 05 2001

United States Department of Interior
National Park Service

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION APPLICATION
PART I—EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

NRIS No.

Project No.

1. **Name of Property:** Hollar Hosiery Mills Building
Address: 883 Highland Avenue, S.E.
Hickory, Catawba County, North Carolina 28602
Name of Historic District: N/A

- 2. certification that the building contributes to the significance of the above-named historic district (or National Register property) for the purpose of rehabilitation
- certification that the structure or building, and, where appropriate, the land area on which a structure or building is located contributes to the significance of the above-named historic district for a charitable contribution for conservation purposes
- certification that the building does not contribute to the significance of the above-named historic district
- preliminary determination for individual listing in the National Register
- preliminary determination that a building located within a potential historic district contributes to the significance of the district
- preliminary determination that a building outside the period or area of significance contributes to the significance of the district

3. **Authorized Project Contact**
Richard L. Mattson/Frances P. Alexander
2228 Winter Street Charlotte
North Carolina 28205 704-569-8130

4. **Owner**
I hereby attest that this information I have provided is, to the best of my knowledge, correct, and that I own the property described above. I understand that falsification of factual representation in this application is subject to criminal sanctions of up to \$10,000 in fines or imprisonment for up to five years pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 1001.

Richard M. Stroupe, Executive Vice-President, Westover Development Corporation

Signature: Richard M. Stroupe Date 10/31/01
Taxpayer ID Number: 56-1214357

NPS Office Use Only

National Park Service has reviewed the "Historic Certification Application—Part I for the above-mentioned property and hereby determines that the property:

- contributes to the significance of the above-named historic district (or National Register property) and is a "certified historic property" for the purpose of rehabilitation
- contributes to the significance of the above-named district and is a "certified historic property" for a charitable contribution for conservation purposes in accordance with the Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980
- does not contribute to the significance of the above-named district

Preliminary Determinations:

- appears to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if nominated by the State Historic Preservation Office according to the procedures set forth in 36 CFR Part 60
- does not appear to meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and will likely not be listed in the National Register
- appears to contribute to the significance of a potential historic district, which will likely be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if nominated by the State Historic Preservation Office
- appears to contribute to the significance of a registered historic district but is outside the period of significance as documented in the National Register nomination on file with the NPS.
- does not appear to qualify as a certified historic structure.

Date

National Park Service Authorized Signature

NPS Office/Telephone No.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION
CERTIFICATION APPLICATION
PART 1**

Hollar Hosiery Mills Building
883 Highland Avenue, S.E.
Hickory, Catawba County, North Carolina

Project Number:

Owner Name
Richard M. Stroupe, Executive Vice-President, Westover Development Corporation

Taxpayer ID No. 56-1214357

5. Description of Physical Appearance (See Continuation/Amendment Sheets)

Date of Construction: 1930 Source of Date: *Sanborn Insurance Company Map*
Dates of Alterations: ca. 1940; mid-1960s
Has building been moved? No

6. Statement of Significance: (See Continuation/Amendment Sheets)

7. Photographs and maps: (See Attachments)

Part 1: Historic Preservation Certification Application

5. Description of Physical Appearance

Located on the east side of Hickory, the Hollar Hosiery Mills Building occupies a long, roughly rectangular site defined by Highland Avenue, Fourth Street, and the former Southern Railway (Nos. 1, 2). The mill was built in the incorporated industrial community of Highland that was annexed to Hickory. Situated just east of Hickory, Highland was bisected roughly east to west by the Southern Railway, and these long stretches of rail frontage property were quickly developed in the early twentieth century for industrial and warehousing use, and such properties are still found in the former Highland community. Residential neighborhoods were built north and south of the industrial corridor.

The Hollar Hosiery Mills property consists of two once discrete buildings that are now connected by a hyphen (No. 3). The principal building was constructed in 1930 by the Hollar Hosiery Mills to face Fourth Street (No. 4). The one and one-half story building has a brick veneer, tall steel sash windows, a gable roof, stepped parapets, and restrained Colonial Revival detailing ornamenting the facade. The building has a molded concrete cornice, concrete corner blocks marking both the parapet and the flat arches over the windows (No. 5). The symmetrical, seven bay facade features a tall, central entrance (now boarded over) that is capped by a transom. Above the entrance is a concrete nameplate reading, "Hollar Hosiery Mills". The door is a metal sash, glass replacement that is visible only from the interior. The side (south and north) elevations are less ornamented than the front (west) elevation (see Nos. 1-3, 6). The land slopes west to east, and the side elevations have a main level defined by banks of tall, steel sash windows as well as lighted half-basements. There are two loading bays along the south elevation, the westernmost of which has original, double leaf, wood and glass doors sheltered by a bracketed, corrugated metal roof (No. 7). The eastern loading dock has a modern overhead door and a concrete dock covered by a flat metal roof supported by metal poles (No. 8). The north elevation also has a covered concrete loading dock (No. 9).

Built ca. 1940 to house the weaving and knitting rooms, the second building sits at the east end of the property (No. 10). The two story building has a one story office that projects from the south elevation (No. 11). The building has a brick veneer, an arched roof, steel sash windows, and simple, brick pilasters dividing the window bays. The windows on the first floor have been brick infilled, and vents have been added to the westernmost windows of the south elevation (see No.

10). There are two loading bays on the east end elevation, and a single loading bay on the north elevation (No. 12). One of the docks is housed in a projecting, brick enclosure with a metal shed roof, to which a truck could be backed up for loading. A modern overhead door provides the only access. Next to this dock is a second bay that opens directly into the building. This bay, too, has a modern replacement overhead door and a concrete dock. The office ell is has a flat roof and parapet, and decorative brick stringcourses highlight the six-over-six, metal sash windows. The single leaf, two panel door has a transom and is sheltered by a flat, metal canopy (see No. 11).

These two buildings are connected by a one story, brick hyphen that was added in the late 1960s (see Nos. 3, 10). The hyphen has a utilitarian appearance with a single, pedestrian entrance and a large, overhead door.

At the northeast corner of the 1930 building is a boiler house, which was originally detached but now adjoins the hyphen (Nos. 13, 14). The small brick building, with its flat roof, was built ca. 1930 with the original Hollar mill, but by 1961, a concrete block addition had been constructed along the west elevation of the boiler house. The addition has been fire damaged and is now in highly deteriorated condition.

The interior of the ca. 1930 Hollar mill building has a small front section for administrative offices and a large open production room in the rear (Nos. 15-18). The office area is divided into a series of rooms off a central entrance. Although the walls were covered in a replacement wood paneling, the original tongue and groove and paneled walls are visible in places. The doors and windows have molded surrounds, and portions of the molded ceiling cornice are visible. The rear work room has metal roof trusses, brick walls, and tongue and groove ceiling and floor. In the southeast corner is an original bathroom, partitioned off from the production area by tongue and groove walls with a horizontal paneled door (No. 19). Next to the bathroom is an interior staircase leading to the basement level. The basement has concrete floors, steel I-beam ceiling framing, and steel pole supports (No. 20). A freight elevator is situated along the east wall, flanked by the staircase and two bathrooms, with tongue and groove walls and horizontal paneled doors (No. 21). Double leaf, fire doors lead into the boiler room, which was inaccessible. Small offices are found on either side of the loading door in the southeast corner of the building.

The ca. 1940 knitting and weaving building is entered through the office which is divided into a series of small rooms (No. 22). The office ell interior has asbestos tile ceilings, two paneled

doors with frosted glass, and molded surrounds. The first floor of the production area has I-beam ceiling framing, metal pole supports, a tongue and groove ceiling, and wooden floors. A staircase along the east wall leads to the upper floor which has an uninterrupted interior made possible by a series of bowstring roof trusses (No. 23-25). The open room is broken only by a bathroom block that has been partitioned along the north wall (see No. 24).

The interior of the hyphen is a single room with no windows and a roof supported by a series of small roof trusses. An office block has been partitioned into the room along the east wall, and a concrete ramp and dock is situated along the west wall (No. 26). A sliding fire door opens onto the dock.

The Hollar Hosiery Mills Building sits on a 2.22 acre parcel that contains the 1930 Hollar mill, the 1930 boiler house, the ca. 1940 knitting and weaving building, and the mid-1960s hyphen which connects all of these once detached buildings.

6. Statement of Significance

Summary

Constructed in 1930, the Hollar Hosiery Mills Building is recommended for the National Register under Criterion A for industry. This intact hosiery mill stands as a reminder of the myriad industrial complexes that by the early twentieth century made Hickory one of the leading manufacturing towns of the Carolina Piedmont and a flourishing New South town. During this period, Hickory became a center for textile production, in particular, emerging as a key manufacturer of knit hosiery. By 1930, the town could boast of nine hosiery mills. The Hollar Hosiery Mills, which manufactured cotton knit goods, is one of the rare surviving examples of these once common knitting mills.

The Hollar Hosiery Mills Company built the extant factory in 1930 after acquiring the site from the Best Hosiery Mills which had occupied the property since 1920. Hollar remained at the 883 Highland Avenue S.E. location until 1939 when the Louis Lavitt Company, Inc., a manufacturer of women's and children's socks, purchased the property. Lavitt built the second knitting and weaving building ca. 1940 at the east end of the site. In the 1960s, Lavitt constructed a hyphen to link the two manufacturing buildings but soon after sold the hosiery mill. Subsequently, the former Hollar site was used for storage before being purchased by the Hickory Paper Box Company, a manufacturer of specialty paper boxes. Westover Development Corporation acquired the property in 1986, and is currently undertaking rehabilitation of the property.

As with many of Hickory's manufacturers and distributors, the Hollar Hosiery Mills arose in the industrial community of Highland, which had been incorporated in 1905 to the east of Hickory. The Southern Railway, which bisected the small community, offered attractive factory locations, while Highland Avenue provided easy connections to downtown Hickory. By the Depression, hosiery mills, furniture companies, paper box companies, feed mills, and cotton mills stretched along the rail frontage of Highland while residential neighborhoods emerged on the side streets north and south of the linear industrial corridor. Although this area remains an important industrial area of Hickory, few of its pre-World War II industrial properties survive intact. In recent decades, the North Carolina textile industry has suffered significant losses as companies migrate to foreign countries, and the buildings which once housed these operations have often been altered for different uses or demolished. Additionally, the construction of Interstate 40 has altered the industrial geography of Hickory, drawing manufacturers to locations with easy access to the highway. Finally, within historic industrial areas, many remaining manufacturers have had

to significantly alter their plants to adapt to changes in technology or to accommodate expansion. Consequently, the Hollar Hosiery Mills plant is one of the best preserved textile mills to survive both within Hickory and the Highland industrial corridor.

The period of significance extends from 1930, when the principal Hollar Hosiery Mills building was constructed, to 1951. Although the site continued to be operated as a hosiery mill until the late 1960s, the property does not have the exceptional significance required under 36 C.F.R. 60 to extend the period of significance to within the last fifty years.

Historical Background and Industry Context

Located along the Southern Railway on the east side of Hickory, the well-preserved Hollar Hosiery Mills Building clearly represents the many manufacturing facilities that by the early twentieth century made Hickory one of the leading industrial centers of the Carolinas and a flourishing New South town. With the end of the Civil War, and the subsequent reconstruction and expansion of the Piedmont's rail network, leaders throughout the region envisioned a new order based on industrialization, specifically cotton production, and urban growth to replace the agrarian society of the past. Proponents of the New South campaigned vigorously for the construction of cotton mills, and throughout the Piedmont and foothills of the Carolinas, rail-oriented mill towns emerged. Hickory became one of the most important towns in the region, strategically situated along the Western North Carolina Railroad roughly fifty miles northwest of Charlotte, which was then emerging as the center of a burgeoning textile industry. Incorporated in 1869 as Hickory Tavern (the name was shortened to Hickory in 1873), the town developed from a frontier community on the Catawba River into a thriving center of manufacturing and commerce. In 1872, the town could boast of its twenty-three merchants, four mills, and seven factories, and by 1885, Hickory had a population of 2,000 (Branson 1872 quoted in Mohney and Phillips 1988: 4).

Like other inland communities of the North Carolina backcountry, Hickory owed its growth and prosperity to the railroad. With the arrival of the Western North Carolina Railroad in 1860, the town became the closest depot for a vast region of western North Carolina that extended to the borders with Virginia and Tennessee. Hickory soon became "a great campground for hundreds of mountain wagons" as farmers brought their produce to the Hickory railhead for shipment (Bishir and Southern 2001: 12). Industrial development followed quickly as manufacturers who depended upon the natural and agricultural resources of western North Carolina found the rail town convenient for their processing operations. With easy access to the vast forests of the North Carolina mountains, Hickory emerged in the late nineteenth century as a regional center of woodworking and wagon-making. Early manufacturers included architectural millwork companies and the largest producer of wagons in the Southeast, the Piedmont Wagon Company, which occupied a thirteen acre site just west of downtown Hickory at the convergence of the Southern Railway and the Carolina and Northwestern Railroad. At the end of the nineteenth century, Hickory found itself particularly well-positioned within the rail network of North Carolina. During the nation-wide rail consolidation that had followed the depression of the 1890s, the Western North Carolina Railroad had been subsumed within the mighty Southern

Railway system, and Hickory had benefited, gaining connections to such far-off urban markets as New Orleans and New York. Such improved transportation links further encouraged industrial development, and by the first decade of the twentieth century, Hickory was flourishing as furniture factories and textile mills were added to the local manufacturing base (Mohney and Phillips 1988: 18; Bishir and Southern 2001: 12).

Hickory also benefited from its proximity to Charlotte, which was located on the Southern Railway main line between New York and New Orleans. During the first decades of the twentieth century, these powerful rail connections made Charlotte a major transportation nexus, the largest city in the Carolinas, and the center of Southern textile production. By World War I, there were over 300 cotton mills within a 100-mile radius of Charlotte, and during the 1920s the Piedmont region of North Carolina and South Carolina surpassed New England as the leading textile producer in the world (Woodward 1951: 31; Lefler and Newsome 1954: 474-489; Mitchell and Mitchell 1930).

Several textile mills were built in Hickory during early years of the twentieth century. Although some of these mills produced the cotton cloth and yarn typical of Piedmont mills, Hickory emerged as one of the principal centers of knit hosiery production in the region, beginning with the 1906 opening of the Hickory Hosiery Mill on the west side of town. Three years later, in 1909, the large A.A. Shuford Hosiery Mill was built in the industrial community of Highland, located just east of Hickory. A third hosiery mill, Elliott Knitting Mill (extant), was erected in 1910 along the Southern Railway at Third Street, S.E., near downtown Hickory. With these early successes, other hosiery companies also built mills in Hickory and its environs throughout the interwar period. In 1920, the Best Hosiery Company, which was bought by Hollar in 1930, constructed its knitwear mill at Fourth Street and Highland Avenue in Highland. By 1928, the Whisnant Hosiery Mill (1928) had opened on the east side of Hickory, and the Real Knitting Mills and the Setz-Right Hosiery Mills had been built their facilities in town near the Elliott mill. Because knitting mills survived the hardships of the Depression better than other textile plants, such mills continued to be built in Hickory during the 1930s and early 1940s, including the Walton Knitting Mills (1934) and the Quaker Meadows Mills (1941) (Sanborn Map Company 1925, 1931; Mohney and Phillips 1988: 13).

The production of knit goods had emerged as an important sector of the textile industry in the post-World War I era, when after years of accelerated wartime demand, cotton cloth production

slumped. In an effort to diversify the industry, many manufacturers during the 1920s and 1930s began to specialize in the production of knit hosiery as a means of surviving the decline and meeting the new demand for women's full-fashioned, or form-fitting, hose. Good rail connections throughout the Piedmont and a ready source of the mercerized cotton used to produce hosiery made this specialized form of production feasible. (By 1923, Gaston County led the South in the production of mercerized cotton.) Hosiery production required more highly skilled labor than other forms of textile production, and with demand high, hosiery mill employees earned high wages throughout the 1920s. The hosiery sector of the industry survived even the devastating effects of the Depression comparatively well, forming an "oasis of prosperity in the sluggish textile industry" (Hall, et al. 1987: 255 quoted in Morrill and Black 1990: 5). In 1930, Hickory, which then had a population of more than 10,000, could boast of its nine hosiery mills as well as five cotton mills. Although such Piedmont textile towns as Burlington, with its thirty-two knitting mills, and High Point, with sixteen, were larger centers of hosiery production than Hickory, Charlotte, by then the most populous city in North Carolina and the center of the textile industry, had only five knitting mills (*Thirty-fourth Report* 1924: 68, 78; Pickens and Mattson 1990: 5; Sanborn Map Company 1925, 1931).

In addition to textiles, the furniture industry became well-established in Hickory during the early twentieth century, and several furniture manufacturers and paper box factories were formed, capitalizing on nearby forests, a growing manufacturing base, and an established woodworking industry. Just east of the Hollar mill in Highland were the Martin Furniture Factory complex, Yeager Manufacturing, and the Hickory Furniture Company plant while the Hickory Paper Box Company shared rail frontage with Hollar (Mohney and Phillips 1988: 13-14; Sanborn Map Company 1925; Hickory City Directory 1928 and 1931).

Factories in the Hickory area were erected principally in a linear fashion along the roughly east-west Southern Railway, both within the town of Hickory and within the industrial communities that flanked Hickory to the east and west. One such community was Highland which developed on the east side of Hickory. Incorporated in 1905, Highland, where the Hollar Mills was later built, was bisected by the Southern Railway, and the long stretches of rail frontage property within its borders were natural factory locations. Such industrial communities emerged around Hickory, in part, because of the diversified nature of the local manufacturing base. Unlike other towns that grew solely as textile centers, by the early twentieth century, Hickory had a manufacturing base comprised of both woodworking, primarily furniture, companies and textile

mills, as well as auxiliary suppliers and by-products manufacturers. Furthermore, the highly skilled and better paid hosiery workers, who often owned cars by the 1920s, did not typically live in company housing, and thus the traditional pattern of clustered mill and mill village did not hold as true in Hickory as it did elsewhere in the Piedmont. Although a few companies built mill villages for their workers in communities such as Longview (west of Hickory) and Brookford to the south, factories of varying industries lined the rail corridor with residential neighborhoods built north and south of these manufacturing plants (Sanborn Map Company 1925, 1931).

The Hollar Hosiery Mills site in Highland has been occupied by several hosiery producers. The first occupant of the site at Highland Avenue and Fourth Street was the Best Hosiery Mills Company, a manufacturer of cotton knit goods, which built its factory in 1920. According to a 1924 report by the North Carolina Department of Labor, the Best mill was the third largest hosiery mill in Hickory, with sixty employees and eighty knitting machines. By comparison, the largest hosiery mill in Hickory, Elliott Hosiery, had 200 employees, while the smallest Real Knitting had thirty workers (*Thirty-fourth Report* 1924: 78). Best Hosiery operations were housed in a single building (no longer extant) which had a long, roughly L-shaped plan oriented to Highland Avenue. (Highland Avenue was a long thoroughfare that roughly paralleled and then crossed the Southern Railway.) Dr. O.L. Hollar had been president of Best mills, and he apparently bought the company in 1930, after which time the company became known as Hollar Hosiery Mills. With the change in ownership, the extant brick building facing Fourth Street, was constructed, and the original Best building was sold to the Sterling Overall Company. Hollar, which continued to produce cotton knits, occupied the site at 883 Highland Avenue S.E., until 1939 when the Louis Lavitt Company, Inc., manufacturers of women's and children's socks under the name, Knit Sox Hosiery Mills, Inc., purchased both the Hollar and Sterling parcels. By 1941, the Louis Lavitt Company had added the easternmost building for weaving and knitting and a box warehouse that is no longer extant. Later, the company produced acetate yarn and also used the property as a distribution facility for Amalie Motor Oil. In the 1960s, the original Best mill was demolished and replaced by the hyphen that now connects the two principal buildings. The property was sold in the late 1960s and used for storage (Study List Application 2001).

Industrial growth during the early twentieth century had fostered the development of the town and its infrastructure, and before World War I, Hickory had added a sewer and water system, public park, hospital, library, and local theater as well as undertaking a street paving program. After a brief hiatus in development during World War I, economic development accelerated, and Hickory

grew from a population of 5,076 in 1920 to 13,487 in 1940 (including the 1931 annexation of Highland and West Hickory, a second industrial villages adjacent to Hickory). In 1921, the town had constructed a new municipal building, and the following year, the Elliott-Carnegie Library became the last public library in the U.S. to receive its funding from the Carnegie family. In 1923, the town passed a \$250,000 bond referendum to construct a high school, and by the mid-1930s, the Hickory Memorial Hospital had been founded, a water filtration plant had been built, and a municipal airport had been opened (Mohney and Phillips 1988: 15).

Hickory continued to be an important manufacturer of knit hosiery and furniture after World War II with industrial development accelerating during the 1950s. Hickory, which had had nine knitting mills in 1930, had eighty-nine hosiery mills by 1961, as well as forty-six furniture plants and twenty-seven other manufacturing operations. Although growth, as before, was accompanied by a number of municipal projects, urban renewal in the 1960s and 1970s soon resulted in a drastic reconfiguration of the Hickory downtown. The historic industrial areas of Hickory also have not fared well in recent decades, and only a few of Hickory's pre-World War II factories have survived intact. With a decline in the manufacturing sector, particularly with the migration of textile companies to foreign countries, many of the buildings which once housed these operations have often been altered for different uses or demolished. Additionally, the construction of Interstate 40 has altered the industrial geography of Hickory, drawing manufacturers to locations with easy access to the highway. Finally, within historic industrial areas, many remaining manufacturers have had to significantly remodel their plants to accommodate new technologies or expansions. Currently undergoing rehabilitation for mixed commercial use, the (Former) Hollar Hosiery Mills Building is one of the best preserved textile mills to survive both within Hickory and the Highland industrial corridor.

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North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office

David L. S. Brook, Administrator

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary
Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary
Office of Archives and History

Division of Historical Resources

January 6, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Greg Thorpe, Ph.D., Director
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: David Brook *for David Brook*

SUBJECT: Historical Architectural Survey Report, Additional Information, Lenoir-Rhyne
Boulevard Extension, City of Hickory, U-2306A, Catawba County, CH99-0148

Thank you for the additional information transmitted to our office on December 5, 2003, prepared by Marvin A. Brown, URS Corporation concerning the above project.

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the following properties are not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

- Whisnant Hosiery Mill
- Catawba Transit Company Garage
- Hickory Hosiery Mill

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the following properties are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:

Hollar Hosiery Mill, 74 8th Street, under *Criterion A* as one of the rare surviving examples of the once common knitting mills in Hickory.

Highland Avenue Southern Railway Bridge, Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard, under *Criterion C* for its unusually refined design and finish of its substructure.

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 919/733-4763. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT

www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us

	Location	Mailing Address	Telephone/Fax
ADMINISTRATION	507 N. Blount St, Raleigh, NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4617	(919) 733-4763 • 733-8653
RESTORATION	515 N. Blount St, Raleigh, NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4617	(919) 733-6547 • 715-4801
SURVEY & PLANNING	515 N. Blount St, Raleigh, NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4617	(919) 733-4763 • 715-4801

January 6, 2004
Page 2

bc: ✓ Southern/McBride
County



U-2306 A



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office
David L. S. Brook, Administrator

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary
Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary

Ref. # CH 99-0148
"Due Master" Due 12/5/02
Sarah

August 30, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: William D. Gilmore, Manager
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: David Brook *David Brook*

SUBJECT: Historical Architectural Survey Report, Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard Extension, City of Hickory, U-2306A, Catawba County, ER 99-E-4220-0148

Need to review additional info -

RECEIVED
OCT 14 2003

Thank you for your letter of August 2, 2002, transmitting the survey report prepared by Marvin Brown, URS Corporation for the above project.

We are unable to comment on the potential effect of this project on cultural historic resources until we receive further information.

In order for us to evaluate the National Register eligibility of the Whisnant Hosiery Mill and the Hickory Hosiery Mill we need a site plan for each mill. The site plan should include the footprint of the building, the date each section of the building was completed, its orientation to the street, and labeled street names.

After we receive the additional information, we will review all of the properties discussed in the report and offer determination of eligibility.

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 919/733-4763. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

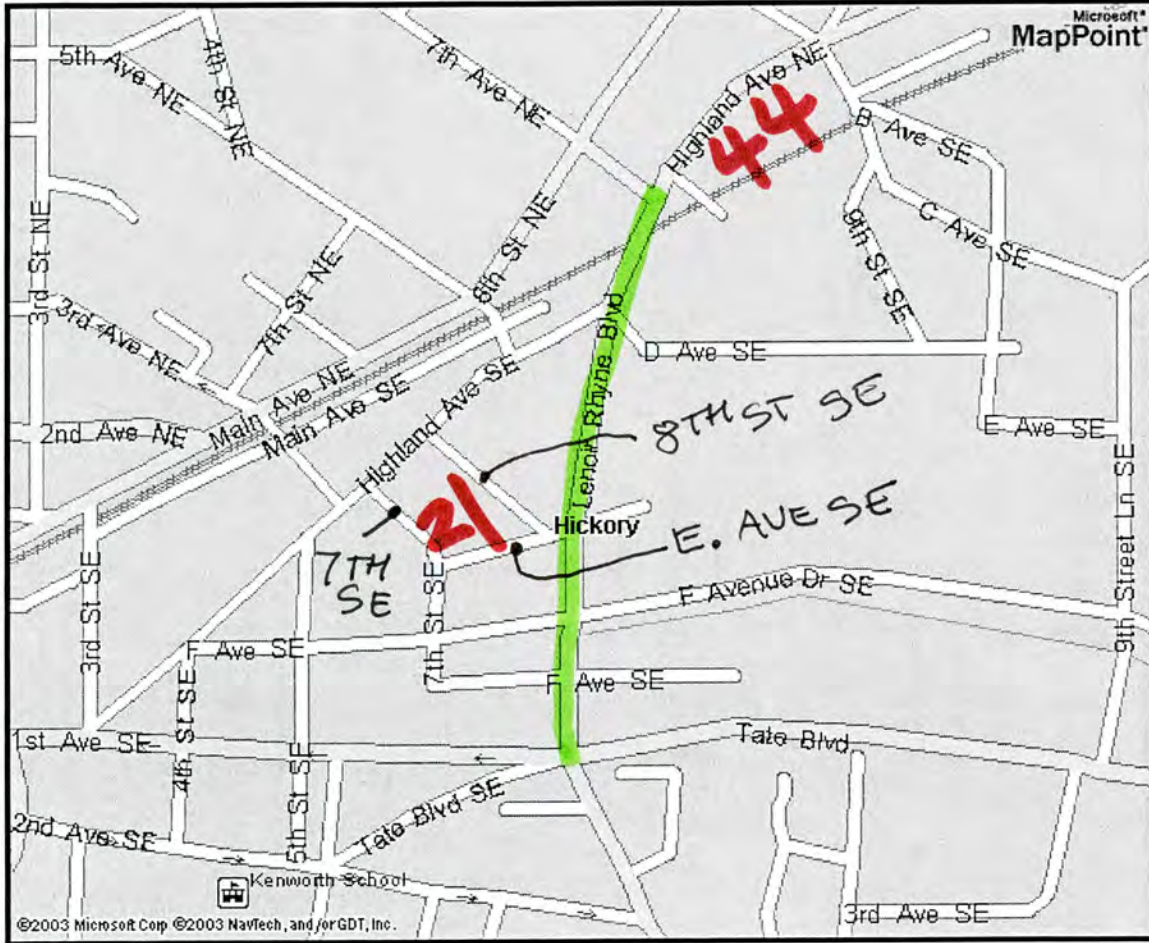
cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT

RECEIVED

OCT 20 2003

	Location	Mailing Address	Telephone/Fax
Administration	507 N. Blount St, Raleigh, NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh 27699-4617	(919) 733-4763 • 733-8653
Restoration	515 N. Blount St, Raleigh, NC	4613 Mail Service Center, Raleigh 27699-4613	(919) 733-6547 • 715-4801
Survey & Planning	515 N. Blount St, Raleigh, NC	4618 Mail Service Center, Raleigh 27699-4618	(919) 733-4763 • 715-4801

Hickory, North Carolina, United States



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PROJECT LOCATION
MAP

21 - Whisnant Hosiery Mill

44 - Hickory Hosiery Mill

 Project Area

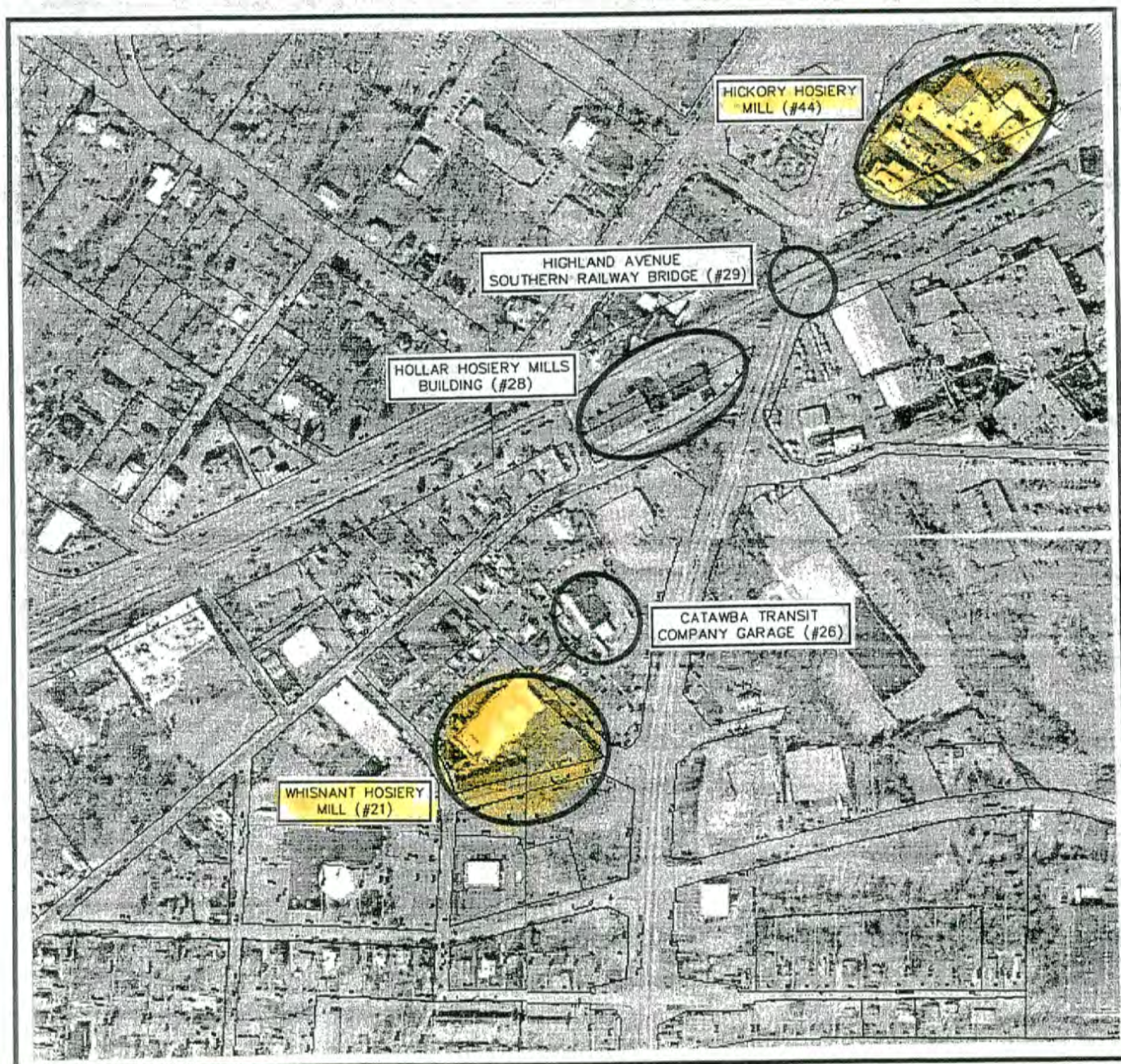
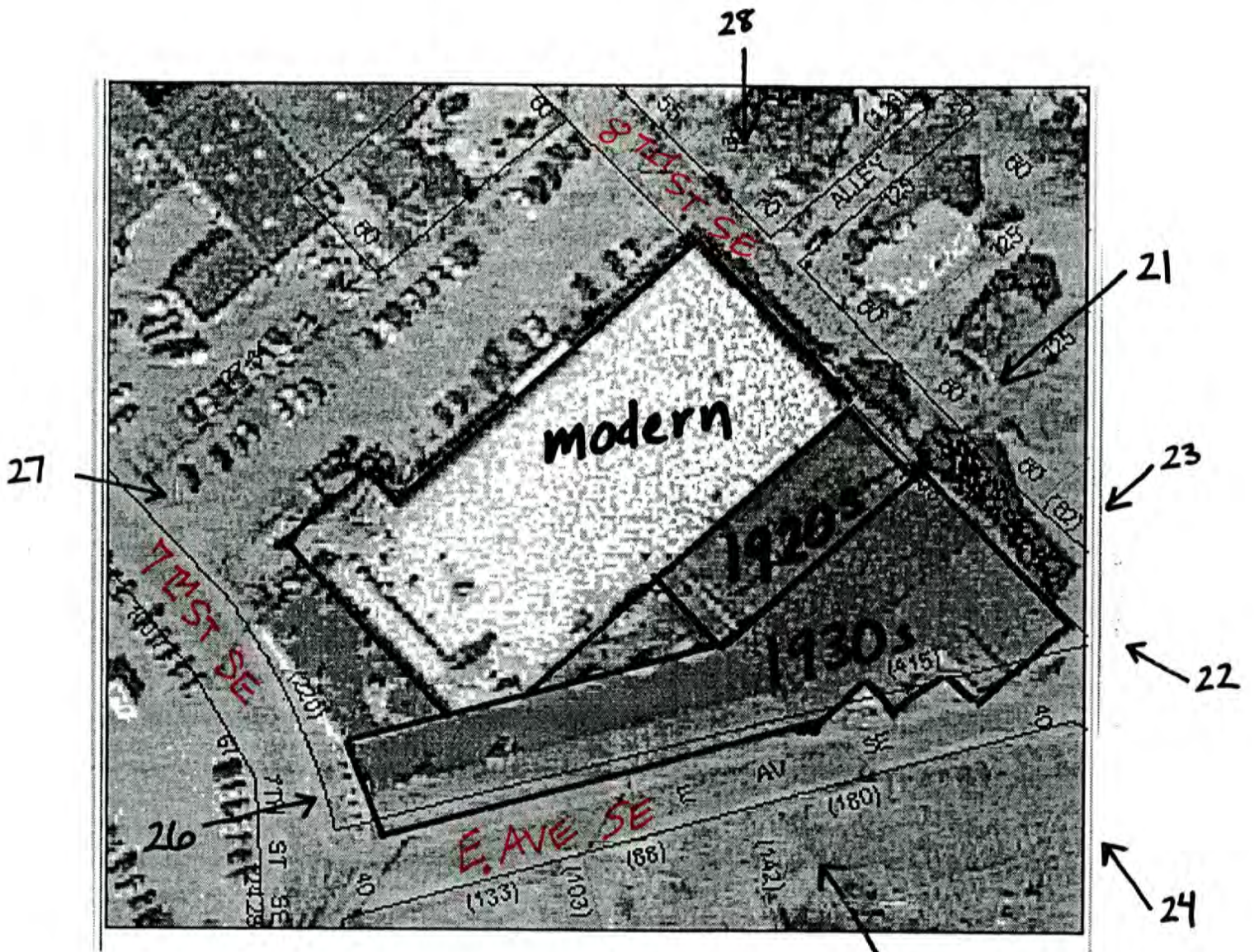
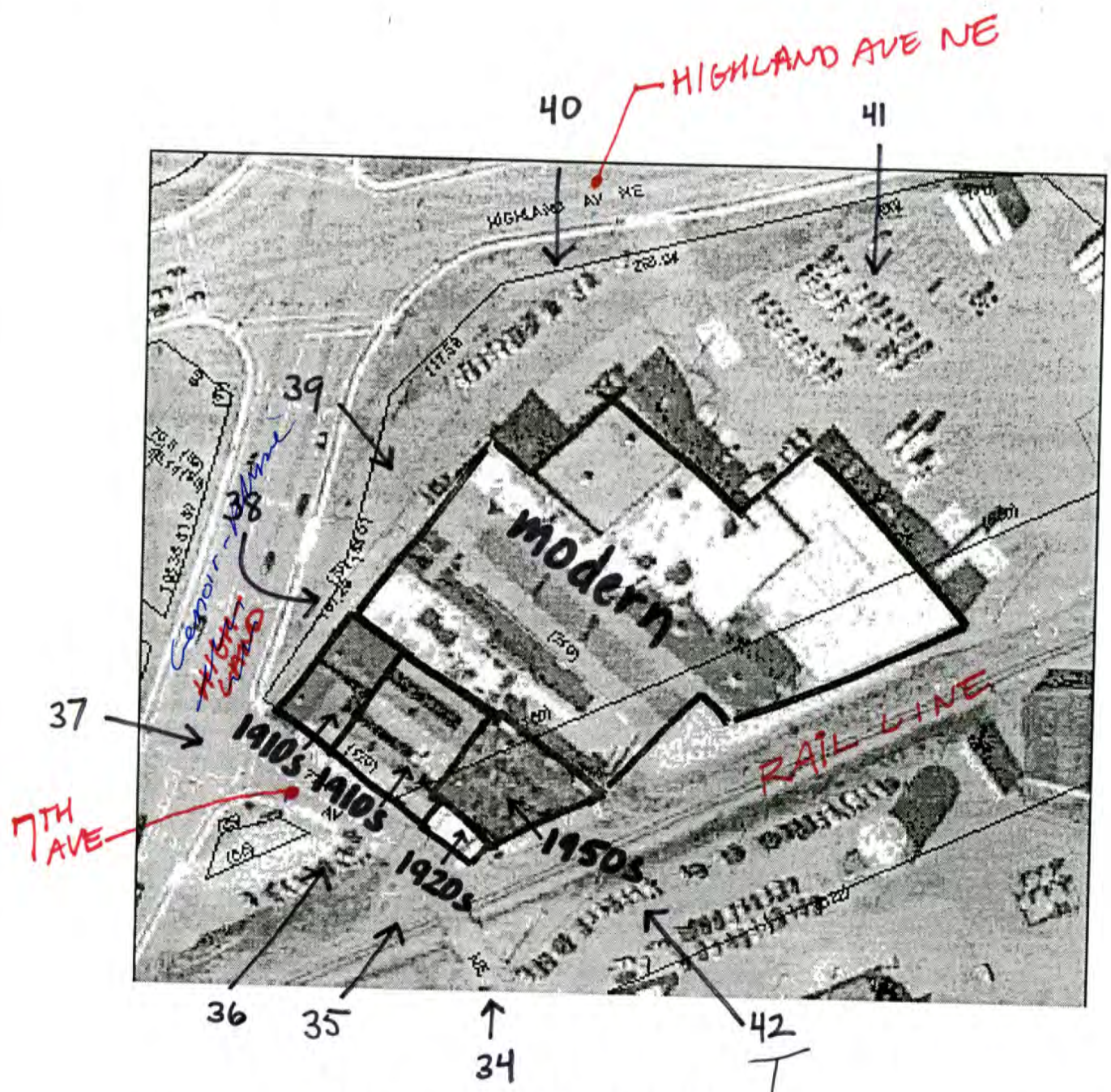


Figure 4. Property Inventory Map.



Whisnant Hosiery Mill (#21)

25
Keyed to
photos
in
Report
(see
photocopies
I have
included)



Hickory Hosiery Mill (#44)

Keyed to
 Photos
 in
 Report
 (See photo-
 copies I
 have
 included)

ORIGINALLY
SUBMITTED
in
REPORT

B. Resources Recommended Not Eligible for National Register Listing

**WHISNANT HOSIERY MILL (#21)
74 8th Street SE, Hickory**

History

Sanborn fire insurance maps depict a tiny unnamed “Knitting Mill” at this site in 1925. This was the “old Brown Hosiery Mill building,” which had but six employees (*The Tattle-Teller* 1972). In 1928 Ernest E. Whisnant took over the Brown operation and renamed it the Whisnant Hosiery Mill (*Hickory Daily Record* 1981; Mohny 1984).

Ernest E. Whisnant was born in 1905 on a family farm in northwest Catawba County and educated at Hickory public schools and Lenoir-Rhyne College. A newspaper account (*The Tattle-Teller* 1972) summarizes his entry into the hosiery business:

While still in [Hickory] high school, he worked mornings and evenings at Elliott Hosiery Mill performing a variety of jobs ranging from firing the furnace to sweeping floors and carrying water. During his last year of college study, he accepted a job with Hollar Hosiery Mill [two blocks to the south] where he worked as a mechanic. Upon graduation from Lenoir Rhyne, at age 21, he was made plant superintendent at Hollar Hosiery. He remained at Hollar Hosiery Mill for several more years and then began to consider the possibilities of going into business for himself. The operator of Hollar Hosiery Mill agreed to sell him some machines to start his own business on the side, with the condition that he would stay on with Hollar as superintendent. These machines, 40 Standard Trumpe machines, which he received in exchange for a 24 acre farm in Alexander County, were to form the nucleus of Whisnant Hosiery Mills. After a period of time during which he shuttled back and forth between his own plant and the Hollar plant, he quit his job at Hollar Hosiery and devoted full time to his own interests.

Mr. Whisnant, in reminiscing about those early days, recalled that his first payroll was \$57.50, half of which he had to borrow.

Whisnant’s shuttling back and forth between the two mills was mitigated by their location: they stood barely a block apart.

Soon after his plant began operation, Whisnant was joined in the business by his brother, Clarence L. Whisnant. They jointly ran the mill until Ernest bought out Clarence’s interest in 1948. He then continued to operate the business on his own for more than two decades. In 1970 he sold his operation to Adams-Millis Corporation. Whisnant had expanded the facility over the years and, at the time of sale, employed 522 workers (*The Tattle-Teller* 1972).

Ernest Whisnant died in 1981 (*Hickory Daily Record*). His obituary, which referred to him as a "hosiery pioneer," noted his many accomplishments in the community. In addition to his hosiery mill, he founded the Catawba Paper Box Company, which would have provided packaging for his hose. He was a buyer and seller of real estate, horses, and dairy cattle. For 25 years he served as Sunday School superintendent of Bethany Lutheran Church. Additionally, he was a former member of the Hickory City Council and the Catawba County Tax Commission and a former chair of the Hickory Board of Education and the Catawba County Republican executive committee.

Whisnant had more than doubled the size of the Brown Hosiery Mill, or entirely replaced it, by the drawing of the 1931 Sanborn maps. A ca. 1959 aerial photograph of the mill shows the late 1920s/early 1930s block as a small appendage to a must larger mill building to its southeast (Figure 8). This larger building was likely erected by Whisnant in the 1930s.

In 1940 (*Hickory Daily Record*) a review of the hosiery industry in Catawba County and Hickory summarized the Whisnant operation:

Another of Hickory's largest hosiery mills, operated by Clarence and Ernest Whisnant, produces men's socks exclusively with probably the greatest variety of any single plant.

The Whisnant mill's five hundred machines can produce sixty different styles of men's hose, including English ribbed socks, for which there are only a few machines in the United States.

Unique among the machines here is a "true wrap" device contrived by the Whisnant brothers themselves. So-called because it "wraps" the inner clock-work design on men's hosiery, this mechanism is said to afford a simpler method of accomplishing this and also makes possible an "unlimited" number of different styles.

In 1993 Moretz Mills (*Hickory News*) purchased the former Whisnant mill from Adams-Millis. Moretz likely built the large modern office and industrial addition that currently dominates the northwestern portion of the complex. The Moretz Mills website (<http://moretzsports.com>) notes that the company was founded in 1946 by Hugh Moretz. Of its current operations, it states:

Based in Newton, North Carolina, the company has 480 valued employees, who work on fast, state-of-the-art machines that produce a whopping 1.3 million pairs of socks every week. We use more than 5 million pounds of yarn a year, enough to go around the earth about one-and-a-half times.

Moretz manufactures its socks at its Conover plant and maintains its corporate headquarters at its Newton plant. It utilizes the Hickory facility, the smallest of the three, for finishing and distribution.

Description

The former Whisnant Hosiery Mill is a massive, interconnected, wedge-shaped building that stretches between 7th Street SE, E Avenue SE, 8th Street SE, and a long parking lot. The complex's earliest portion is located near the center of its northeast façade. It was either erected in the early 1920s, as part of the Brown Hosiery Mill, or by Ernest Whisnant, all or in part, between 1928 and 1931. An aerial view from ca. 1959 and modern aerial photography depict this building as a one-story, brick, front-gabled, rectangular structure with a parapeted northeast front façade (Figure 8). The building is now largely buried by later additions, with only its northeasternmost portion exposed (Plates 21 and 22). This exposed portion has been heavily altered by a modern veneer of brick, which has obscured its openings. Further, its former stepped parapet wall has been filled and made regular.

The next oldest portion of the building stands to the southwest of the earliest block (Plates 23 through 26). It was probably erected, in one or two stages, by Ernest Whisnant in the 1930s. Its two-story, brick, front-gabled, rectangular front portion extends from 8th Street SE back to the northwest, parallel to the earlier block. Its rear portion, which is similarly fashioned, extends at a slight angle, parallel to E Avenue SE, northwest to 7th Street SE. As the aerial photographs depict, the two portions form a gently angled "V". Extending to the east of the front portion is a boxy, two-story, flat-roofed block that, in spite of a loading bay, may once have served as an office wing. With the exception of three second-story casement windows at the east corner of the wing, all of the bays of the 1930s block have been filled with vertical-board inserts. Long, rectangular, concrete plaques set into the parapets of the front and rear (west) elevations no longer bear names. A modern sign that partially obscures the front plaque bears the names of the complex's current owners, Moretz Mills, Inc.

A massive, one-story addition forms the northern third of the complex (Plates 27 and 28). A modern tan brick-veneer and concrete structure, it was likely erected by Moretz Mills after its 1993 acquisition of the property. Most of the building appears to be a warehouse-type structure. The northeastern front of the building, however, contains offices.

National Register Eligibility Evaluation

The former Whisnant Hosiery Mill is not believed to be eligible for National Register listing under any of the Register's Criteria. Due to its numerous alterations and additions, it has lost its integrity as a historic representative of the early hosiery industry in Hickory. It is therefore believed to lack the integrity necessary to support any significance under Criterion A. The mill is not known to have any association with significant individuals. Ernest E. Whisnant was an early pioneer of the hosiery business in Catawba County, but was not a person "significant in our past" as defined by the National Register. The mill is therefore also not believed to be National Register-eligible under Criterion B. As noted, the building has been heavily altered and added to, leaving little of its original or early fabric visible. Further, its surrounding neighborhood has been similarly changed through the years. The building is therefore not believed to retain sufficient integrity to be individually

eligible under Criterion C and its surroundings are not believed to retain sufficient integrity to be National Register-eligible as a historic district. The standing structure-archaeology is not addressed here-is unlikely to yield information about our past not otherwise accessible from other standing resources and written records, so the mill is also believed to be ineligible for Register listing under Criterion D.

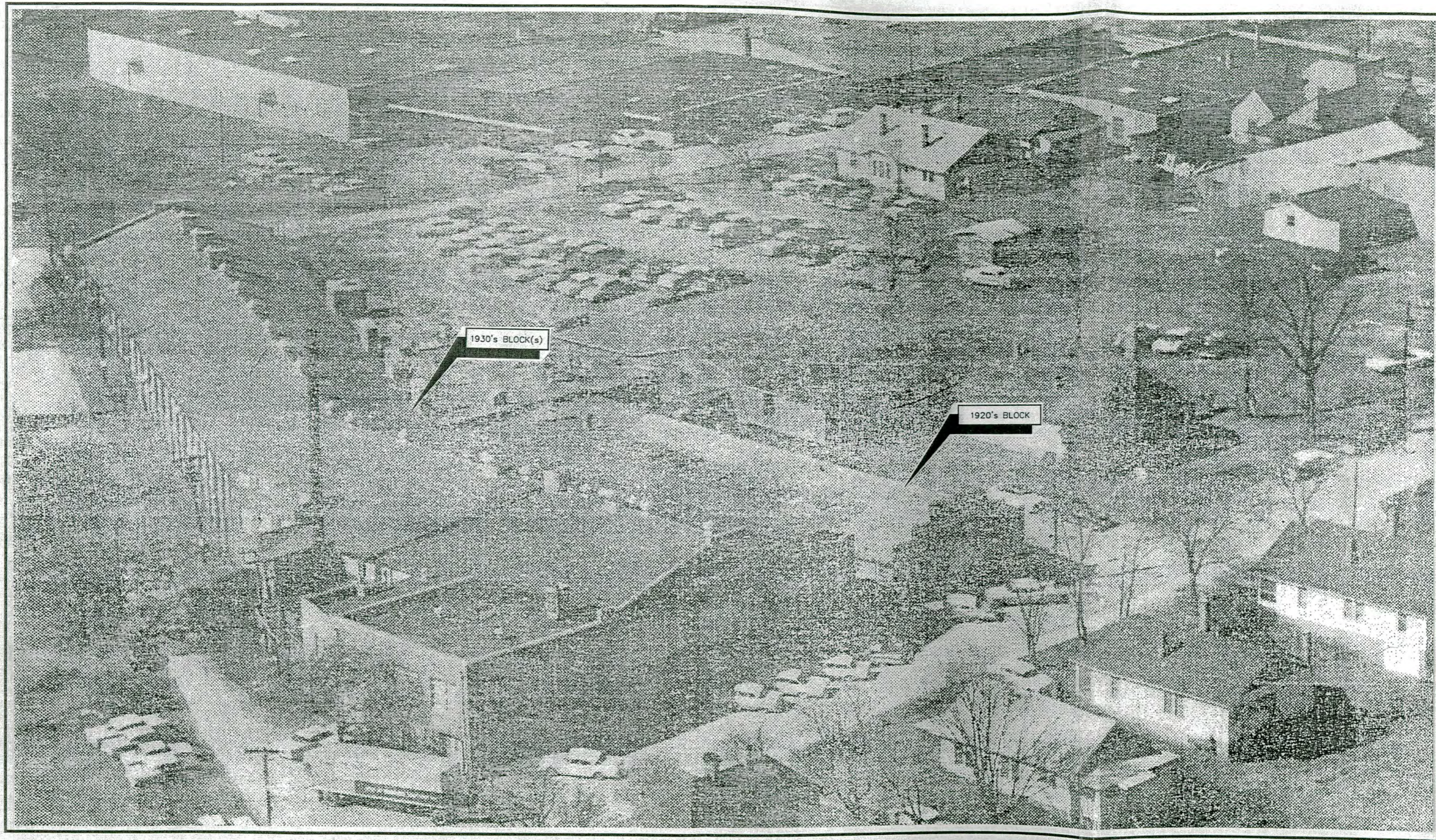


Figure 8. Ca. 1959 Aerial View of Whisnant Hosiery Mill.



Plate 21:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
1920s block at
right, 1930s
block at left,
looking
southwest



Plate 22:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
1930s block at
left, 1920s
block at far
right, looking
northwest

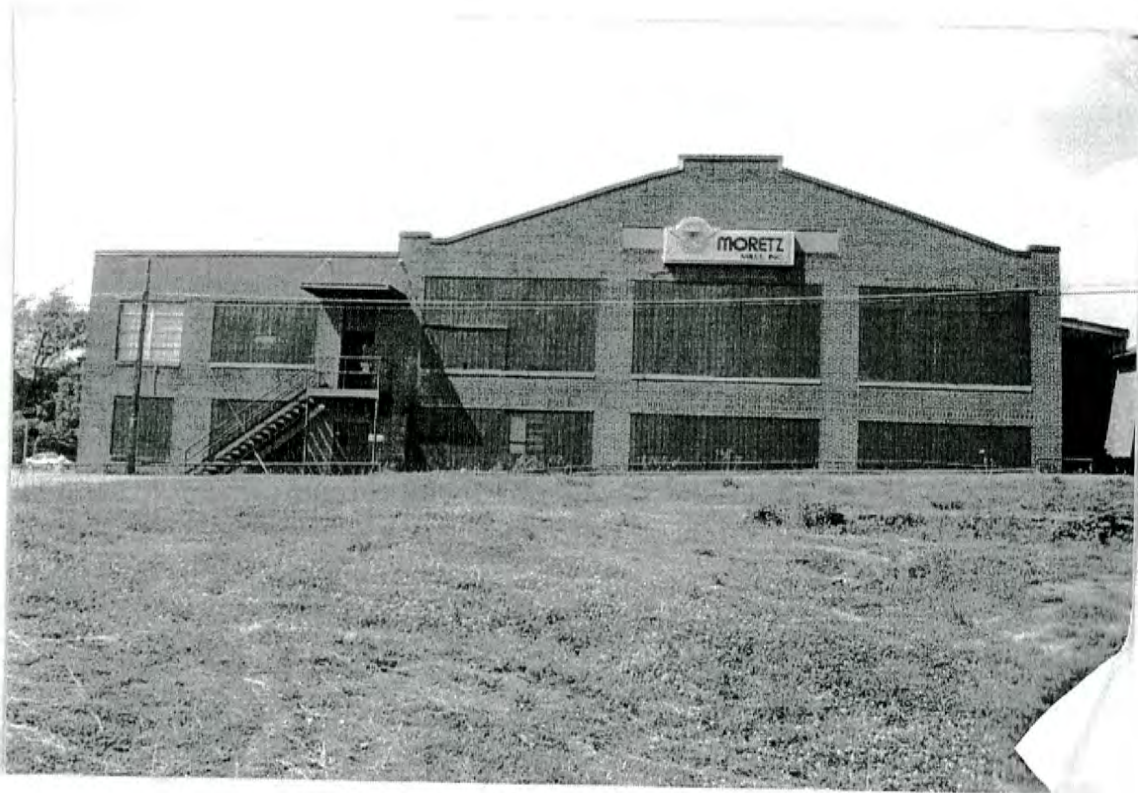


Plate 23:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
northeast front
façade of
1930s block,
office wing at
left



Plate 24:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
1930s block
looking
northwest

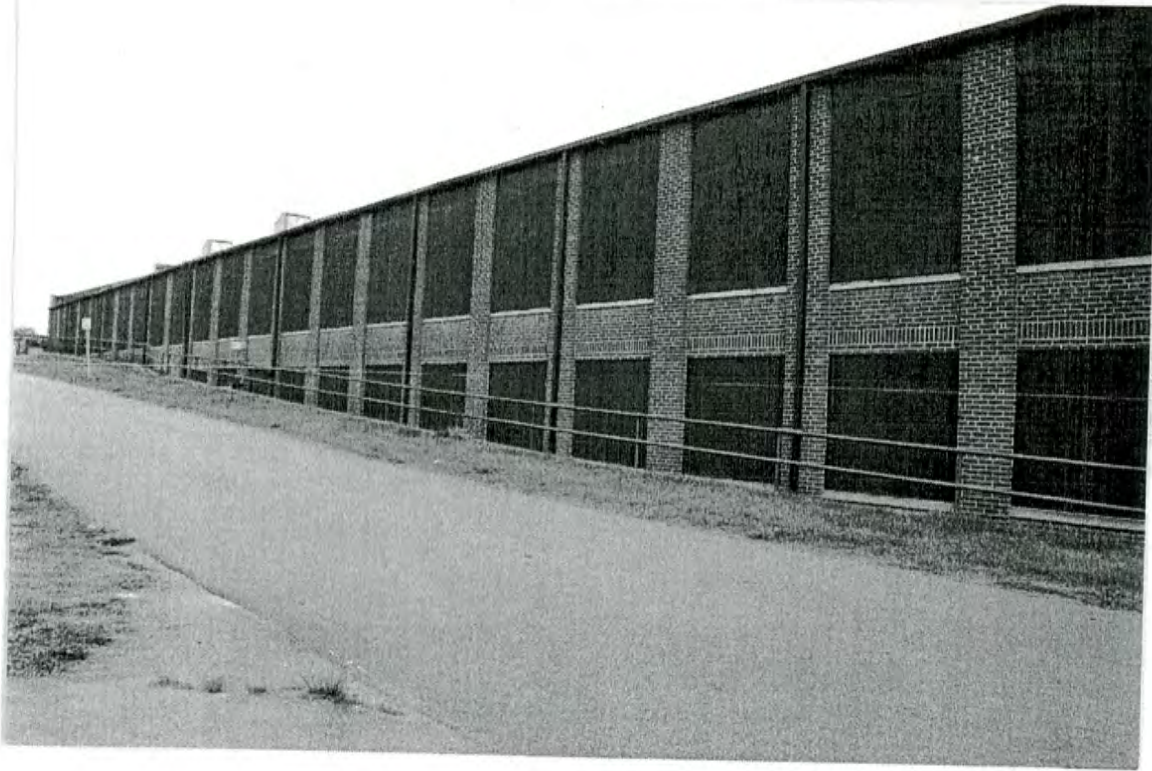


Plate 25:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
south
elevation of
1930s block



Plate 26:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
southwest rear
elevation of
1930s block



Plate 27:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
southwest rear
and northwest
side elevations
of modern
block



Plate 28:
Whisnant
Hosiery Mill –
northeast front
elevation of
modern block
at right, 1920s
block at left
center, and
1930s block at
far left

**HICKORY HOSIERY MILL (#44)
728 Highland Avenue NE, Hickory**

ORIGINALLY
SUBMITTED
IN
REPORT

History

The current King Hickory manufacturing and outlet sales facility that utilizes this connected complex of buildings occupies the site of Hickory's first hosiery mill. Julius A. Cline built the Hickory Hosiery Mill in 1906. It originally primarily manufactured cotton work socks (*Hickory News* 1992a). An outline of the original complex, which had two principal buildings, was captured in a Sanborn (1907) fire insurance map of the following year (Figure 9). A small, rectangular, masonry, two-story building, it fronted on Martin or 3rd Street, now 7th Avenue NE. Knitters labored on the second story and sent their rough hose to the floor below to be finished. To the rear (northeast) of the factory was a smaller one-story dye house and a water tank. By 1913 (Sanborn) the facility had grown nominally, with the addition of a tiny one-story office off the northern corner of the mill. By 1919 (Sanborn) the mill building had been connected to the dye house and extended to the northwest. Four small new buildings, including a freestanding office and another knitting building, had also been erected. By 1925 (Sanborn) the dye house had been replaced by a new storage building and two buildings had been added to its rear.

Hickory Hosiery was transformed between 1925 and 1931 (Sanborn) (Figure 10). A large interlinked complex was created, as the buildings were expanded and connected. Though not visible in the 1931 outline drawing of the complex, parts of a few of the earlier buildings were retained.

According to a retrospective newspaper account (*Hickory News* 1992a), J.A. Cline's decision to enter the industry "seemed like the thing to do, what with an abundant, relatively inexpensive labor supply and power and raw materials nearby." Cline sold his interest in the enterprise after a few years and opened another hosiery mill in Hildebran. In 1916 Cline's son, Carl, entered the business and a family-owned mill in Valdese was renamed J.A. Cline & Son. In 1937 the Clines repurchased the Hickory mill. Carl Cline took over management from the mill's New York-based operators and renamed it the Hickory Knitting Mills (*Hickory City Directories* 1937-38 and 1939-40). By the late 1940s the mill was operating under the name J.A. Cline & Son again and by the early 1950s had been renamed the Whiting Hosiery Mills (*Hickory City Directories* 1947-48 and 1951-52). The name honored Carl Cline's young grandson, Whiting Shuford. (In 1975, two years after graduating from Lenoir-Rhyne College across the street from the mill, Whiting Shuford became the firm's president.) In 1961 the former Hickory Hosiery Mill departed from its original location again, shifting its operations to 15th Street NE (*Hickory News* 1992a).

In 1940 (*Hickory City Directory* 1940; Setzer map of Hickory 1941) Bolan G. Brumby, Jr., opened the Cherokee Hosiery Mill—a finishing mill—immediately to the northeast of Hickory Hosiery. That mill changed hands repeatedly over the next decade, operating as the Parker Hosiery Mill by 1943-44, the Earl Hosiery Mill by 1945-46, and the A.M. Brown Hosiery Mills by 1947-48 (*Hickory City Directories*). The 1949-50 city directory notes the mill's transformation, at the close of the 1940s, into the Hickory Tavern Furniture company. (Hickory Tavern was the original name of the town of Hickory.) By 1959-60 (*Hickory City Directory*) Hickory Tavern had been joined, in the

same facility, by Bruington Furniture Inc. Following the departure of Whiting Hosiery Mills from its facility in 1961, Bruington took over that earlier factory complex.

By the early 1960s, therefore, both hosiery mills—the 1906-and-later Hickory Hosiery Mill and the 1940 Cherokee Hosiery Mill to its rear—had been converted into furniture factories. In 1966 Hickory Tavern moved from the site to a new mill. The Lane Company acquired it three years later. The Bruington Furniture Company, which remained in its building, was acquired by Lane in 1970 and in 1976 Hickory Tavern and Bruington began operating jointly under the acronym HTB (*Hickory News* 1992b). The King Hickory Furniture Company was formed in Hickory in 1958 (King Hickory Furniture Company website). About 1980 it acquired the former Hickory Hosiery Mill/Hickory Tavern Furniture and Cherokee Hosiery Mill/Bruington Furniture Company mills (Hickory City Directories 1979 and 1980). It continues to operate the combined buildings as a single large factory that includes a small outlet store.

Description

A portion of the current the King Hickory Furniture Company facility facing southwest toward 7th Avenue NE contains remnants of the facility's hosiery manufacturing origins within three small, two-story, connected, brick buildings (Plate 34). The first floor of the southernmost building, which retains segmental-arched openings, may date from between 1919 and 1925 (Plate 35). Its flat-roofed second story, lit by casement windows, is a later addition, as is a one-bay, two-story extension to its north. At the center of the 7th Avenue façade is a gable-front building that retains bricked-in, segmental-arched, first-story openings and altered openings above (Plate 36). This block may have been built between 1913 and 1919. To its north is a later one-story extension. A flat-roofed, two-story block at the north end of the 7th Avenue façade retains the walls, at its first story, of another portion of the facility possibly erected between 1913 and 1919 (Plate 37). Its second story and its first-story front bay windows and entry—which announces the King Hickory outlet store within—are later additions. At the building's northwest elevation, however, brick-filled early openings are visible.

To the rear (northeast) of the earliest portion of the factory, connected by enclosed raised walkways, are a later series of manufacturing buildings and shipping facilities, none of which appear to have been erected more than 50 years ago (Plate 38). A one-and-two-story, flat-roofed, brick-veneered building extends immediately to the rear (Plates 39 and 40). To its rear is a modern shipping building with numerous loading bays (Plate 41). These buildings hold more than 50 percent of the complex's floor space. Also to the rear of the early strip of buildings, fronting on Main Avenue, is a large, two-story, brick block with a central truck bay opening that may date to the 1950s (Plate 42). All but one of its first-story windows have been bricked over, but its large second-story casement windows survive, albeit covered with a coat of paint.

National Register Eligibility Evaluation

The former Hickory Hosiery Mill is not believed to be eligible for National Register listing under any of the Register's Criteria. Due to its numerous alterations and additions—and its conversion to a furniture factory more than 40 years ago—it has lost its integrity as a historic representative of the

early hosiery industry in Hickory. It was the site of the first hosiery mill in Hickory, but the buildings of that mill do not survive. The earliest portions of the complex, dating from the 1910s and 1920s, survive only in pieces. The mill is therefore believed to lack the integrity necessary to support any significance under Criterion A. The mill is not known to have any association with significant individuals. Julius A. Cline was a pioneer of the hosiery business in Catawba County, but was not a person "significant in our past" as defined by the National Register. The mill is therefore also not believed to be National Register-eligible under Criterion B. As noted, the building has been heavily altered and added to, leaving little of its original or early fabric visible. Further, its surrounding neighborhood has been similarly changed through the years. The building is therefore not believed to retain sufficient integrity to be individually eligible under Criterion C, and its surroundings are not believed to retain sufficient integrity to be National Register-eligible as a historic district. The standing structure-archaeology is not addressed here-is unlikely to yield information about our past not otherwise accessible from other standing resources and written records, so the mill is also believed to be ineligible for Register listing under Criterion D.

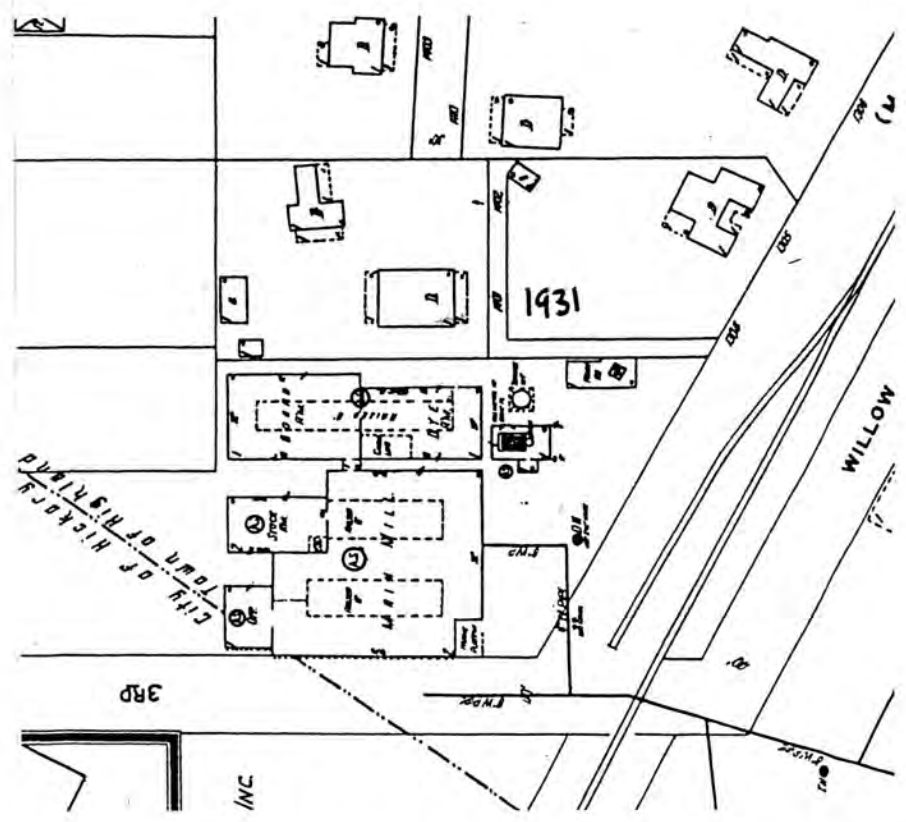
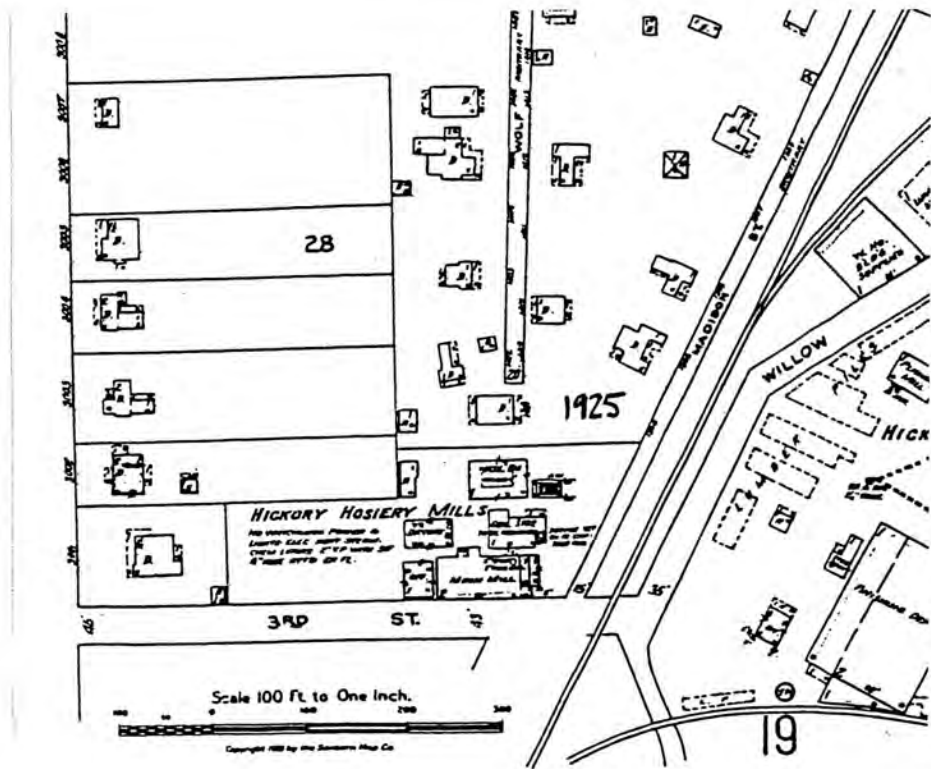


Figure 10. Hickory Hosiery Mill on 1925 and 1931 Sanborn Maps.



Plate 34:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
earliest 7th
Avenue NE
buildings at
left and Main
Street building
at right

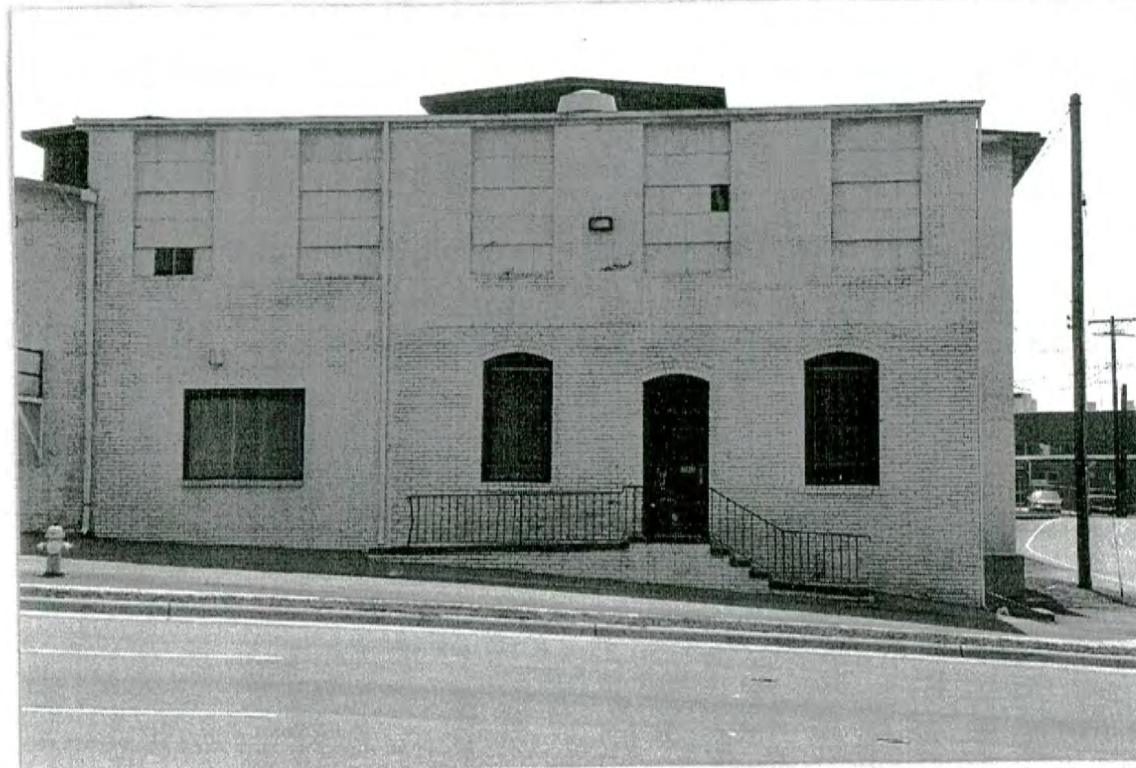


Plate 35:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
southwest-
facing 7th
Avenue SE
façade of
1920s building

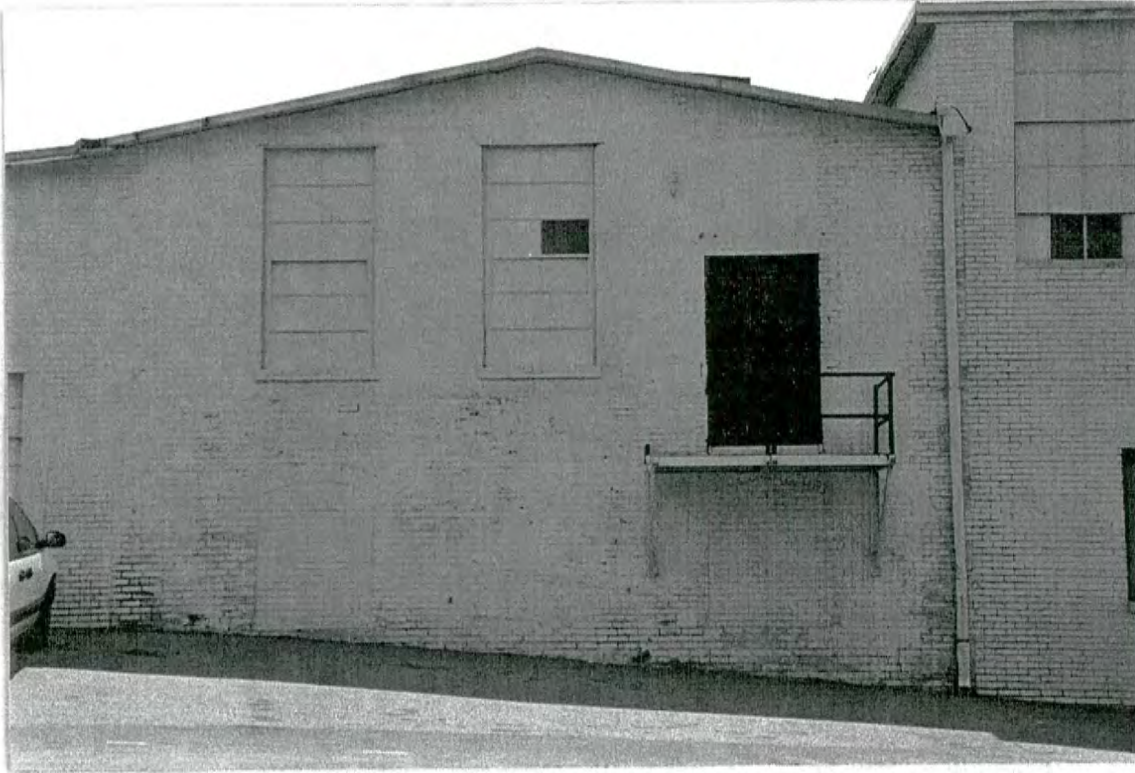


Plate 36:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
southwest-
facing 7th
Avenue NE
façade of
central 1910s
building



Plate 37:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
southwest-
facing 7th
Avenue NE
façade of
1910s building
at left, other
early buildings
at right



Plate 38:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
enclosed
walkway
connector
looking
southeast



Plate 39:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
northwest and
southwest
elevations of
later industrial
building



Plate 40:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
later industrial
building
looking south

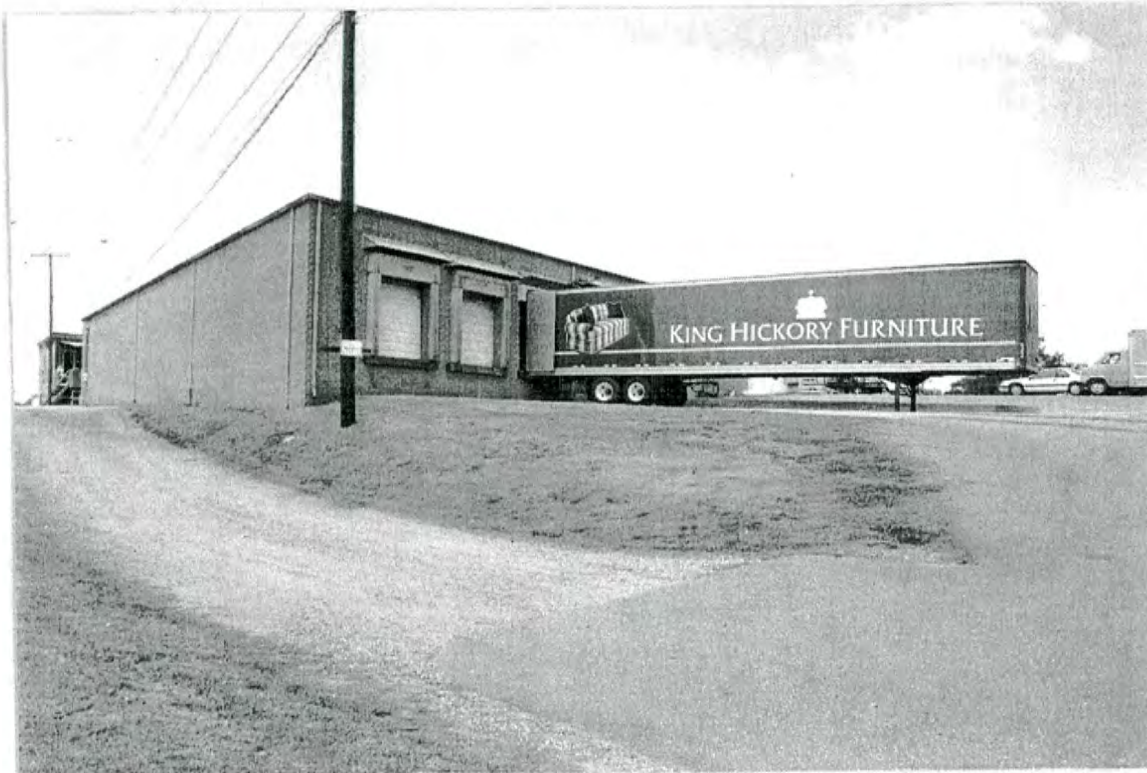


Plate 41:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
shipping
facility and
loading docks
looking south



Plate 42:
Hickory
Hosiery Mill –
southeast-
facing Main
Street
elevation of
1950s building