

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant – Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant

Burlington, Alamance County, AM2658, Listed 4/13/2022
Nomination by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc.
Photographs by Heather Fearnbach, December 2020



1918-1924 addition, southeast oblique



1946 and 1951 additions, west elevation with incinerator at right

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant
other names/site number Pickett Hosiery Mill

2. Location

street & number 741 East Webb Avenue N/A not for publication
city or town Burlington N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Alamance code 001 zip code 27217
e _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

[Signature] 3/2/22
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	Total

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

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY: Manufacturing Facility
INDUSTRY: Industrial Storage

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY: Manufacturing Facility
INDUSTRY: Industrial Storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Heavy-timber construction
Other: Steel-framed, load-bearing-brick-wall construction

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls BRICK METAL
roof SYNTHETICS: Rubber ASPHALT
other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Period of Significance

1906-1972

Significant Dates

1906

between 1918 and 1924

1936

1946

1951

early 1960s

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Biberstein and Bowles, architect, 1946

Mitchell, H. F., Jr., contractor, 1946

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: J. Murrey Atkins Library, Special Collections, UNC-Charlotte

Alamance County Public Library, Burlington

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.8 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)
See Latitude/Longitude coordinates continuation sheet.

1	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Heather Fearnbach
organization Fearnbach History Services, Inc. date 11/27/2021
street & number 3334 Nottingham Road telephone 336-765-2661
city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27104

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Pickett Mill, LLC
street & number 115 Shockoe Slip, Lower Level telephone
city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23219

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Section 7. Description

Setting

Located southeast of Burlington's commercial center, the Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant occupies a 2.79-acre tax parcel (of which 1.8 acres is nominated) on East Webb Avenue's west side in proximity to a railroad corridor.¹ The complex is rotated approximately thirty degrees from true cardinal direction alignment. However, for the purposes of this document the narrative is written as if the plant has true north-south orientation. The East Webb Avenue façade will thus be referred to as the east elevation.

Aurora Cotton Mills gradually increased in size during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as buildings were constructed on both sides of East Webb Avenue to facilitate its operation. The company's 1906 finishing plant on East Webb Avenue's west side, enlarged by Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills from 1936 through the 1960s, retains a high level of integrity. The complex spans the east two-thirds of the block bounded by East Davis Street to the west, Johnson Street to the north, East Webb Avenue to the east, and Everett Street to the south. In 1936, following Aurora Cotton Mills' early 1930s closure, Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills acquired and updated the finishing plant, severing its functional connection to the buildings on East Webb Avenue's east side. As demolition of portions of the east complex began in February 2006 and the remaining buildings do not possess the requisite integrity for National Register listing, they are not included in this nomination. Much of the surrounding area contains industrial buildings close to the railroad corridor and modest mill workers houses like those that remain west of the Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant. Commercial development flanks Webb Avenue.

Resource Summary

Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant and additions, 1906,
between 1918 and 1924, 1936, 1946, 1951, early 1960s, contributing building
Boiler House, circa 1946, contributing building
Incinerator, circa 1946, contributing structure

Inventory List

Principal resource headings are in bold and underlined. Actual or approximate completion dates and the dates of any major alterations or additions follow the name. Construction and alteration dates are based

¹ The west portion of the tax parcel, where one- and two-story mill houses stood through the mid-twentieth century, has been excluded as that area now consists of a parking lot and grass lawn.

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on Sanborn Company maps (issued in June 1893, January 1898, March 1904, April 1908, July 1913, May 1918, April 1924, January 1929, March 1948, February 1952), a 1940 Factory Insurance Association plan, architectural drawings, newspaper articles, historic photographs, interviews, and architectural style.

Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant and additions 1906, between 1918 and 1924, 1936, 1946, 1951, early 1960s, contributing building

The plant encompasses a two-story, brick, heavy-timber-frame, 1906 building with a series of one- and two-story brick, concrete, and steel manufacturing, storage, and office additions erected between 1918 and the early 1960s. The following description begins with the early 1960s office addition fronting Everett Street and moves counter-clockwise around the building. *(Please see construction date annotations on the National Register site plan appended to this nomination.)*

Exterior

1960s office addition

A two-story, square, flat-roofed, running-bond variegated-red-brick, early 1960s addition extends west from the south bays of the west elevation of the addition erected between 1918 and 1924.² The south and west elevations are windowless with central entrances. On the south elevation, a flat-roofed metal canopy shelters the single-leaf aluminum-frame glazed door, sidelights, and transom that provide public access to the office vestibule. A matching canopy surmounts the single-leaf aluminum-frame glazed door at the employee entrance on the west elevation. Brick steps with slender aluminum railings rise to brick landings at each entrance. On the north elevation, five pairs of steel-frame two-pane sash light the second-story warehouse. Window openings have slightly projecting header-course sills. A straight run of steel steps with a steel railing leads to a single-leaf steel door east of the windows.

Addition erected between 1918 and 1924

The two-story, variegated-red-brick, fifteen-bay-long and five-bay-wide addition erected between 1918 and 1924 spans the distance between Everett Street and the earliest section, the 1906 finishing plant to the north. (The long elevation fronts East Webb Avenue.) The addition replaced a two-story frame late-nineteenth-century dwelling with an office addition, likely a mill supervisor's residence, and a two-story brick circa 1899 warehouse.³ The very-low-pitched gable roof system includes projecting painted rafter

² Sanborn Map Company, "Burlington, North Carolina," Sheet 9, May 1918; Sheet 5, April 1924; J. Nimrod Harris Jr., conversations with Heather Fearnbach, December 2020.

³ Sanborn Map Company, "Burlington, North Carolina," Sheet 3, June 1893; Sheet 1, March 1904 and April 1908; Sheet 9, July 1913 and May 1918; Sheet 5, April 1924; "Burlington," *News and Observer* (hereafter abbreviated *NO*), January 9, 1906, p. 3; "Aurora Cotton Mills," *State Dispatch*, November 3, 1909, p. 3.

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ends and deep eaves on the east, south, and west elevations. Regularly spaced window openings punctuate the five-to-one common-bond walls. Although first-story openings are filled with slightly recessed running-bond brick, large multi-pane steel sash and cast-stone sills remain on the second story. The south elevation retains five twenty-four-pane sash with central eight-pane hoppers. The upper row of each sash is covered with a metal panel. Thirty-pane sash on the east and west elevations feature eight-pane upper and lower hoppers. Louvered aluminum vents have replaced the upper hopper in four sash. The first-story window opening in the fourth bay from the east elevation's south end has been enclosed with brick around a single-leaf steel door. Brick steps with slender steel railings rise to the brick landing at the entrance.

Only five central bays of the west elevation are exposed due to the 1960s warehouse and office additions. The fenestration is identical to that of the east elevation. A flat metal canopy surmounts the four-bay wide brick and concrete loading dock that abuts the 1960s warehouse addition. A double-leaf steel door provides egress to the 1918-1924 addition.

1906 finishing plant

The L-shaped 1906 finishing plant is characterized by a very low-pitched gable roof and five-to-one common-bond variegated-red-brick walls with double-header-course segmental-arched window and door lintels. Tall multi-pane wood sash and a gabled roof monitor initially provided ample light. The window openings were slightly shortened in the mid-twentieth century when original sash were removed and multi-pane steel sash installed above slightly projecting header-course sills. The nine-bay-wide east elevation fronting East Webb Avenue is distinguished by a stepped parapet above the six north bays. Second-story twelve-pane steel sash with six-pane central hoppers sash remain. Although first-story window openings are filled with running-bond brick, original opening size, shape, quantity, and rhythm is still clearly discernible.

Painted shaped rafter ends support the eaves on the twenty-bay north and south elevations. First-story segmental-arched window openings contain fifteen-pane steel sash with six-pane upper and lower hoppers, while twelve-pane steel second-story sash have six-pane central hoppers.⁴ The three east window openings on the north elevation are enclosed with running-bond brick. A double-leaf steel door has been added in a former window opening in the fourth bay from the wall's west end. The outer frame of a two-bay wide flat metal canopy remains above the concrete loading dock at the entrance. A large condensing unit rests on a concrete pad adjacent to the wall's westernmost bays.

⁴ The precise date of steel sash installation has not been determined, but likely occurred in the late 1930s or early 1940s during Backer-Cammack Hosiery Mills' tenure. Replacement of wood sash with steel sash was a common practice in textile mills beginning in the late 1910s.

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An original, long, rectangular, low-gable-roofed, frame monitor with five-foot-tall kneewalls and long bands of six-pane operable sash illuminates and ventilates the west room on the plant's second floor. Louvered metal vents have replaced some sash. Asphalt shingles sheathe the kneewall ends.

Most of the south elevation is obscured by the projecting one-story brick 1936 dye house and a two-story restroom tower erected between 1918 and 1924.⁵ The fenestration of the 1906 building's south elevation matches that of the north elevation. The four central exposed bays contain multi-pane steel sash with the exception of a double-leaf wood door in the west bay adjacent to the dye house. All openings have segmental-arched lintels. A flat-roofed metal canopy surmounts the door. The three-bay-wide flat-roofed steel equipment shed that extends from the south wall east of the door abuts the restroom tower and the one-story standing-seam-metal-shed-roofed utility room that projects from the tower's south wall. The tower's fenestration comprises two wide twelve-pane steel second-story sash with eight-pane upper hoppers and a small horizontal two-pane sash on the south elevation and a tall twelve-pane steel second-story sash with a six-pane central hopper on the west elevation.

1946 and 1951 additions

The L-shaped, two-story, flat-roofed, five-to-one common-bond red-brick 1946 addition extends west from the 1906 finishing plant, then south along the west side of the dye house.⁶ The structure is slightly taller than the 1906 building. Terra-cotta coping caps the flat parapets. Metal scuppers and downspouts drain the roof. Regularly spaced tall twelve-pane (six by two) sash with four-pane upper and lower hoppers illuminate the interior. Windows punctuate the eleven-bay north elevation fronting Johnson Street with the exception of the single- and double-leaf steel doors in the third and fourth bays from the east end that provide loading dock egress. Window opening have slightly projecting header-course sills. A flat metal canopy shelters the two-bay-wide concrete loading dock. Concrete steps with steel railings rise from a concrete sidewalk to the dock landing. A metal louvered vent fills the large opening west of the dock. Metal louvered vents also pierce the formed concrete foundation, providing basement ventilation. The elevator shaft rises above the roof at the addition's southeast corner. A four-pane steel sash pierces its south wall.

The expansive eighteen-bay west elevation encompasses sixteen bays of twelve-pane sash with four-pane upper and lower hoppers and a central two-bay-wide and one-bay-deep restroom tower with six-pane sash

⁵ Sanborn Map Company, "Burlington, North Carolina," Sheet 9, May 1918; Sheet 5, April 1924. The dye house is first shown on the December 10, 1940, Factory Insurance Association plan of Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills, Inc.

⁶ "Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills," 1946 drawings, Tube 4, Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham, and Reed Records, MS0148, J. Murrey Atkins Library, Special Collections, UNC-Charlotte.

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with four-pane upper hoppers. A four-bay-long 1951 addition extends from the 1946 addition's south end.⁷ Historic corrugated-metal siding sheathes the 1951 addition's windowless south elevation.

The east elevation is separated by a narrow alley from the 1936 dye house and the freestanding 1946 boiler house. The fenestration matches the west elevation. Concrete steps with tubular-steel railings rise to the double-leaf two-panel steel door in the 1946 addition's south bay.

Dye house addition, 1936 with 1946 addition

The one-story, eight-bay-long (north-south), five-to-one common-bond red-brick dye house extends south from the west bay of the 1906 finishing plant's south elevation and the east bays of the adjacent 1946 addition. On the east and west elevations, brick pilasters flank pairs of original tall twenty-one-pane (seven by three) sash with six-pane lower hoppers. The window openings have cast-stone sills. Shaped rafter ends support the very low-pitched gable roof's deep eaves as well as the eaves of the original rectangular low-gable-roofed frame monitor with three-foot-tall kneewalls and long bands of six-pane sash. The slightly wider south bay was likely erected in conjunction with 1946 plant improvements. A single eight-over-twelve sash pierces the asbestos-shingle-sheathed south elevation. Concrete steps with tubular-steel railings and a brick and concrete landing provide access to the double-leaf steel door in the east elevation's southernmost bay.

1960s warehouse addition

A two-story, rectangular, flat-roofed, running-bond red-brick, early 1960s addition extends south from the central portion of the 1906 finishing plant's south elevation along the west elevation of the addition erected between 1918 and 1924.⁸ On the early 1960s addition's south elevation, two loading dock doors and a single-leaf steel door provide egress and four pairs of steel-frame two-pane sash light the second-story warehouse. A straight run of steel steps with a steel railing leads to the single-leaf steel second-story door on the west elevation. A louvered metal vent has replaced the upper panes of the single steel first-story sash, leaving nine panes.

Interior

The plant's open plan has facilitated fabric and hosiery production, finishing, storage, and shipping since 1906. Structural elements are exposed and painted throughout the building. Historic single- and double-leaf wood and steel doors hang in many interior doorways. Kalamein doors, which slide on steel tracks

⁷ "Construction Authorized for More than \$3 Million," *DTN*, January 29, 1951, p.2C; "Burlington Mills: \$23,000,000 Plant Increase," *NO*, January 4, 1951.

⁸ Sanborn Map Company, "Burlington, North Carolina," Sheet 9, May 1918; Sheet 5, April 1924; J. Nimrod Harris Jr., conversations with Heather Fearnbach, December 2020.

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and are held open by weighted pulleys, remain between most production and storage areas. Fluorescent lights, sprinkler system pipes, equipment pipes, and rigid metal ventilation system ductwork are suspended from the ceilings. Surface-mounted metal conduit houses electrical wiring.

In the 1906 finishing plant, heavy-timber beams and central chamfered posts support wide flush-board ceiling and roof decking. A supplementary steel I-beam and round steel posts were inserted in the wide opening on the east wing's first-story south wall created in conjunction with the 1918-1924 addition. A frame wall comprising a wood base and wire screen upper portion and a single-leaf wood-frame screen door fill the opening. The floor system is comprised of plank decking topped with narrow maple boards. A wide, open, wood stair with square newel posts and molded handrails rises in a straight run on the east wing's west wall. A small beadboard-sheathed vestibule with a double-leaf steel door secures the entrance at the northeast corner. A mid-twentieth-century freight elevator shaft is west of the vestibule. The restrooms in the south tower are simply finished with white porcelain toilets and wall-mounted sinks and painted-wood stall dividers and doors. A roof monitor illuminates and ventilates the west room on the plant's second floor, which contains hosiery boarding equipment. A horizontal-board wall with large fixed multi-pane wood sash separates the boarding room from the finishing room to the east.

Steel I-beams and round posts support the 1918-1924 addition, which also has a maple floor and wide flush-board ceiling and roof decking. Mid-twentieth-century eight-inch-square vinyl-composition tile covers a portion of the wood floor in the office area at the first floor's south end, which is embellished with plaster walls, lacquered vertical-board wainscoting, trim, and single-leaf doors with paneled bases and textured translucent-glass upper panes. Small offices, storage rooms, and restrooms abut the south and west walls. The central west office features a three-section operable textured translucent-glass transom on its interior (east) wall and wood crown molding. The restrooms have white porcelain toilets and wall-mounted sinks, painted-wood stall dividers and doors, and concrete floors. On the southwest wall, a kalamein door separates the 1918-1924 addition from the early 1960s office addition to the west. At the north end of the office area, a double-leaf steel door secures the early 1960s warehouse entrance.

The 1936 dye house has an open plan with the exception of the mid-twentieth-century horizontal-board-sheathed office that abuts the east elevation and the storage room in the south, single-bay, 1946 addition. Mid-twentieth-century painted plywood panels cover the full-height storage room partition wall on the dye room side, while beaded clapboards cover the storage room side. The concrete floor includes drains beneath equipment along the east and west walls. The central roof monitor supplies light and ventilation.

The 1946 and 1951 additions have steel I-beam and post structural systems, hardwood floors, wide flush-board ceiling and roof decking, and partial and full-height painted beadboard and plywood walls between manufacturing, shipping, and office and storage areas. The freight elevator at the 1946 addition's southeast corner links all three levels. The wood stair west of the elevator leads to the basement, which has an open plan, concrete floor, and formed concrete and brick walls. The restrooms in the west tower

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have five-horizontal-panel wood doors, white porcelain toilets and wall-mounted sinks, painted-steel stall dividers and doors, and concrete floors. The 1951 addition's south wall is sheathed with painted plywood. Vertical boards enclose the narrow stair in the south room's southeast corner that leads to the second floor. Small storage rooms line the room's north wall.

The structural systems of the 1960s additions—concrete-block walls, concrete floors, and steel I-beams, posts, and trusses—are exposed on both levels of the north warehouse addition and the second floor warehouse space in the south addition. All three areas are a single open room. The south addition's first-floor encompasses a large central room bordered with small offices, storage and conference rooms, and public and employee entrance vestibules. Finishes include painted gypsum-board walls, faux-wood paneling in offices, single-leaf wood doors with metal surrounds, commercial-grade carpeting, and dropped acoustical-tile ceilings with fluorescent light panels. Large plate-glass windows pierce some walls between offices and the central room.

Boiler House, circa 1946, contributing building

The freestanding boiler house was likely constructed in conjunction with 1946 plant improvements.⁹ The one-story, flat-roofed, seven-to-one common-bond red-brick, one-room building is separated by a narrow alley from the 1951 addition's east elevation. Terra-cotta coping caps flat parapets on the east, north, and west elevations. The east and west elevations are blind. Painted plywood fills two wide openings on the south elevation west of a six-pane steel sash. A double-leaf wood door and a tall fifteen-pane sash with six-pane upper and lower hoppers pierce the north elevation. Window openings have slightly projecting header-course sills. The building houses three large boilers.

Incinerator, circa 1946, contributing structure

A small redbrick incinerator with a dome roof and a wide, tall chimney at its west end stands just west of the 1951 addition.¹⁰ A heavy double-leaf steel door secures the opening on the east elevation.

Integrity Statement

The Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant possesses integrity of location, setting, feeling, association. The building occupies the parcel associated with its operation from the early-twentieth century to the present. The plant's continued active use as a textile manufacturing facility required minimal modification. Its integrity and compatible function is particularly significant as

⁹ The boiler house first appears on the March 1948 Sanborn map, Sheet 5.

¹⁰ The incinerator is not shown on the December 10, 1940, Factory Insurance Association plan of Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills, Inc., but appears on the March 1948 Sanborn map, Sheet 5.

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many Burlington textile mills are vacant or were demolished following late-twentieth-century closures. Although portions of the former Aurora Cotton Mills complex on East Webb Avenue's east side are no longer extant and the remaining buildings do not possess the requisite integrity for National Register listing, much of the surrounding area contains industrial buildings close to the railroad corridor and modest mill workers houses like those that remain west of the finishing plant, as it did during the period of significance.

The Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant possesses a high integrity of design, materials, and workmanship from its period of construction and historically important modifications to accommodate ongoing use. Character-defining features of early- to mid-twentieth-century Burlington textile mills intended to promote fire resistance, accommodate sizable heavy equipment, minimize vibration, and provide ample light and air circulation are intact. The heavy-timber-frame 1906 finishing plant has load-bearing brick walls laid in five-to-one common bond, segmental-arched window and door openings, a stepped east parapet, and a roof monitor. The brick, concrete, and steel additions erected between 1918 and the early 1960s maintain original structural components, large multi-pane steel windows, open plans, and interior features and finishes. The high degree of historic window retention throughout the plant is unusual, as most textile operations enclosed window opening with brick in conjunction with HVAC system installation. In the few instances where window openings are filled with brick, original opening size, shape, quantity, and rhythm are clearly discernible. Structural elements are exposed and painted throughout the building. Single- and double-leaf wood and steel doors, Kalamein doors, maple floors, and vertical-board partition walls remain. The office area at the south end of the 1918-1924 addition's first floor is embellished with plaster walls, lacquered vertical-board wainscoting, trim, and single-leaf doors with paneled bases and textured translucent-glass upper panes. Updates such as window opening infill, sash replacement, and interior partition wall construction or removal are minimal in scope and occurred within the period of significance.

Statement of Archaeological Potential

The Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological deposits, such as debris that accumulated during operation of the mill and finishing plant, infrastructural features such as waterlines and water tower foundations, structural remains of the first office and packing room as well as worker dwellings, and other remains which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the property. Information concerning worker health, nutrition, and quality of life, environmental transformations during industrial development, and the effects of technological change on work culture and daily life, as well as details of construction processes and the operation of the plant can be obtained from the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the property. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

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Section 8. Statement of Significance

The textile industry was paramount in Burlington, North Carolina from the late-nineteenth through the late-twentieth century. The 1906 Aurora Cotton Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant, expanded through the early 1960s, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the context of local industry, significant as part of a finite class of resources which had an outsized impact on Burlington's economy and physical growth. The period of significance begins in 1906, when the first portion of the building was erected, and continues through 1972. Although the plant's industrial function continued after 1972, that period is not of exceptional significance.

The Aurora Cotton Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant was associated with two of the primary textile manufacturers that drove Burlington's economic and physical growth from the late-nineteenth century through the late-twentieth century. The industrial concerns' contributions as manufacturers, employers, consumers of local goods and services, and taxpayers were enormous. Aurora Cotton Mills commenced operating from a complex on East Webb Avenue's east side in 1882 and expanded west across the street with a frame office and opening room during the 1890s. The company, which produced gingham fabric, was owned by the Holt family, who were among North Carolina's most successful textile magnates. Aurora Cotton Mills increased its finishing capacity in 1906 by erecting the two-story brick plant that is the earliest extant portion of the nominated facility. Between 1918 and 1924, the finishing plant was enlarged to the south with the two-story brick addition that spans the block to Everett Street.

The robust economy of the early 1920s encouraged textile innovation including the introduction of rayon. By 1928, Aurora Cotton Mills and at least four other Burlington's ten cotton textile manufacturers produced rayon-blend fabric. Aurora Cotton Mills was Burlington's largest textile manufacturer through the 1920s, gradually increasing its workforce to five hundred employees. Most residents of the surrounding area were mill employees or worked for businesses that served them. By 1931, Burlington, with thirty-two hosiery mills, was North Carolina's hosiery manufacturing center, followed by High Point, with sixteen hosiery plants.

Impacted by the Great Depression, Aurora Cotton Mills reduced production, eliminated forty percent of its workforce by 1930, and closed a few years later. In 1936, Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills acquired and updated the plant on East Webb Avenue's west side. Additions constructed in 1936, 1946, 1951, and the early 1960s to bolster production capacity more than doubled the building footprint. Baker-Cammack supplied the United States military with men's socks during World War II. Production increased after its 1953 merger with Baker-Mebane Hosiery Mills, previously a subsidiary concern, which operated a Mebane plant. All products of both factories were finished at the Burlington plant. The sock market remained strong, employment remained high, building improvements continued, and production escalated through the 1970s. Pickett Hosiery Mills purchased the Baker-Cammack plant in 1982 and continues to

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operate today, surviving competition from foreign manufacturers through product innovation and securing United States military and major retailer contracts.

The plant's ongoing operation and high level of integrity reflects the textile industry's importance to Burlington. The heavy-timber-frame 1906 finishing plant features load-bearing brick walls laid in five-to-one common bond, segmental-arched window and door openings, a stepped east parapet, and a roof monitor. The brick, concrete, and steel additions erected between 1918 and the early 1960s retain original structural components, large multi-pane steel windows, and interior features and finishes. Structural elements are exposed and painted throughout the building. Single- and double-leaf wood and steel doors, Kalamein doors, maple floors, and vertical-board partition walls remain. The office area at the south end of the 1918-1924 addition's first floor is embellished with plaster walls, lacquered vertical-board wainscoting, trim, and single-leaf doors with paneled bases and textured translucent-glass upper panes.

Historical Background and Alamance County Textile Industry Context

North Carolina's early textile operations depended on waterpower, making locations along the Haw, Deep, and Catawba rivers, where slate formations create falls and rapids, ideal for manufacturing. German merchant Michael Schenck erected a sawmill, gristmill, and several ironworks in Lincoln County before hiring ironworkers Absolom Warwick and Michael Beam to construct North Carolina's first cotton mill on a Catawba River bank east of Lincolnton in 1813. Only a few other entrepreneurs attempted textile manufacturing before the late 1820s, when the North Carolina legislature approved the incorporations of approximately fifteen new companies. It was not until the late 1830s that industrialists such as Charles Mallet, Francis Fries, John Motley Morehead, John Trollinger, Henry Humphreys, Benjamin Elliot, and Edwin Michael Holt capitalized on the piedmont's available sites, transportation, and labor force to establish textile mills. Henry Humphreys was the first North Carolina manufacturer to experiment with steam power, installing a system in 1828 at his Mt. Hecla Cotton Factory near Greensboro that inspired entrepreneurs including Edwin Michael Holt to invest in textile production.¹¹

However, Holt and most other factory owners relied upon water as their primary power source through the late nineteenth century. In 1832, John Trollinger built Alamance County's first cotton spinning plant on the Haw River near the farm where the Trollinger family had resided since 1745 and the gristmill established by his grandfather in 1747. Called High Falls Mill, the operation grew to encompass one thousand spindles by 1837. That year, Edwin Michael Holt (1807-1884) and his brother-in-law William A. Carrigan established Holt and Carrigan Cotton Factory on Alamance Creek, purchasing their

¹¹ Brent D. Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1992), 4-10, 14; Carole Watterson Troxler and William Murray Vincent, *Shuttle & Plow: A History of Alamance County, North Carolina* (Burlington: Alamance County Historical Association, 1999), 345. "Humphreys" is also spelled "Humphries" in various sources, but as period documents use "Humphreys," that spelling is repeated here.

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equipment from northern machine shops and retrofitting an existing building to accommodate 528 spindles. Holt became the mill's sole owner in 1851, and two years later, with the help of an itinerant French dyer, learned how to "color" cotton yarn in myriad shades. He employed a Philadelphia expert to instruct him and two enslaved men, Sam and Caswell, how to mix indigo dyes.¹²

Holt attained national recognition as one of the first southern cotton manufacturers to produce colored cloth on a power loom. The fabric soon became known as "Alamance Plaids." Holt incorporated the business as Alamance Factory in 1853. Four years later, he acquired a second cotton mill, Cane Creek Manufacturing Company. That concern had initiated operations in 1830 as a woolen mill, and, following a fire that destroyed its complex, built another factory and began producing cotton fabric in 1836. After reorganizing the bankrupt Cane Creek mill, Holt conveyed it to his oldest son Thomas (1831-1896). With the intention of further expanding their textile business, Edwin and Thomas Holt purchased the Trollinger's second Haw River factory, called Granite Mill, at an 1858 auction.¹³

The Holt family's decision to acquire Granite Mill precipitated their dominance of the region's textile industry for most of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Thomas Michael Holt purchased his father's interest in Granite Manufacturing Company in 1861 and moved to Haw River with his family. The Holt mills suffered challenges including a sharp rise in the cost of cotton and substantial losses of the male labor force during the Civil War years, but remained in operation and supplied the Confederate military with uniform cloth. At the war's end in April 1865 the plants were poised to increase production. The following spring, Granite Mill employees operated 1,152 spindles. Also in 1866, Edwin Holt relinquished active control of Alamance Factory to a partnership—E. M. Holt and Sons—that he created with his sons James Henry Holt (1833-1897), William Edwin Holt (1839-1917), Lynn Banks Holt (1842-1920), and son-in-law James Nathaniel Williamson. His youngest son Lawrence Shackelford Holt (1851-1937) became a partner in 1877.¹⁴

Settlement in the area that would become Burlington was sporadic until the mid-nineteenth century, when the North Carolina Railroad Company purchased approximately 632 acres from landowners northwest of Graham, the Alamance County seat, in order to build a support facility halfway between Goldsboro and

¹² Troxler and Vincent, *Shuttle & Plow*, 344-350; Julian Hughes, *Development of the Textile Industry in Alamance County* (Burlington: Burlington Letter Shop, 1965), 4.

¹³ Troxler and Vincent, *Shuttle & Plow*, 350-351, 355; Hughes, *Development of the Textile Industry in Alamance County*, 5; Thomas M. Holt, "Early Plaid Making," *NO, Cotton Mill Edition*, November 28, 1895; Glass, *Textile Industry*, 22.

¹⁴ Claude B. Denson lauded Thomas M. Holt's achievements at the North Carolina Agricultural Association's annual meeting in October 1893. Holt, who farmed throughout his life, was a member and director of the association. C. B. Denson, *An Address in Memory of Thomas M. Holt* (Raleigh: Benson and Christopher, 1899), 7, 10-11; "Mills at Haw River," *NO, Cotton Mill Edition*, November 28, 1895, p. 28; "Davidson Alumnus Ranks High as Business Man," *The Davidsonian*, January 28, 1921, p. 6; Walter Whitaker, *Centennial History of Alamance County, 1849-1949* (Burlington: Burlington Chamber of Commerce, 1949), 119; Bess Beatty, *Alamance: The Holt Family and Industrialization in a North Carolina County, 1837-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 124-125.

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Charlotte. The construction of repair shops, employee housing, offices, depots, and a hotel commenced in 1856. The community grew steadily, and, although development slowed during the Civil War, incorporated as Company Shops in February 1866. Changes in the North Carolina Railroad Company's organization soon impacted the flourishing town. The Richmond and Danville Railroad leased the Goldsboro-Charlotte line in 1871 and moved the railroad offices to Greensboro from Company Shops in 1875. However, the railroad route facilitated connections to market centers and increased the community's attractiveness to industrial concerns.¹⁵

In fall 1881, Lafayette Cotton Mills, organized by Peter Foust Holt, his third son Henry Lafayette Holt, and George W. Anthony, the husband of Peter's daughter Mary, initiated the construction of Alamance County's first fully steam-powered textile mill adjacent to a railroad line in Company Shops. Peter Holt provided capital and cotton for the endeavor, while George Anthony supplied land and lumber. Brick was made on site. The concern was named for Lafayette Holt, who designed the mill and orchestrated the equipment installation after working at the Lowell Machine Shop in Massachusetts, then one of the nation's most prominent manufacturers of textile mill equipment, for the three previous years. The factory was the first in Alamance County to produce socks and undergarments utilizing knitted fabric. The two-story brick mill began operating in late summer 1882, but the company suffered losses that forced the property's sale in 1884. R. J. Reynolds paid \$12,040 for the building and contents including 1,248 spindles at a September 4, 1884, auction. He sold the property to Lawrence S. Holt, Edwin M. Holt's youngest son and Lafayette Holt's cousin, in October 1885. Lawrence changed the company name to **Aurora Cotton Mills** and installed additional machinery including 656 spindles to facilitate gingham fabric production, resulting in a total of 1,904 spindles and 100 looms. Employees resided in company-owned and erected houses near the mill.¹⁶

The Holt family established two other textile mills in Company Shops during the early 1880s. E. M. Holt Plaid Mills began weaving "Alamance Plaids" on West Webb Avenue in 1883 and continued producing gingham fabric until 1931, when the company transitioned to cotton yarn spinning. Elmira Cotton Mills, owned by James H. Holt's sons Walter L. and Edwin C. Holt, began spinning yarn and weaving fabric in 1886. Those concerns, Aurora Cotton Mills, and Carolina Coffin Company, founded in 1884, bolstered the local economy to the point that the town was able to survive when the railroad repair

¹⁵ Claudia P. Roberts, "Historic Resources of Burlington," Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1983, Section 8.1-2; Durward T. Stokes, *Company Shops, The Town Built by a Railroad* (Winston Salem: John F. Blair, 1981), 10; Dr. J. A. Hunter, "Development of Burlington is Viewed From Research Work: Transition From Company Shops," *Daily Times-News* (Burlington; hereafter abbreviated *DTN*), November 16, 1936; Whitaker, *Centennial History of Alamance County*, 134.

¹⁶ "Lafayette Cotton Mills," *Gleaner*, July 25, 1881, p. 3; "Factory Notes," *NO*, September 6, 1884, p. 1; *Gleaner*, October 29, 1885, p. 3; *Charlotte Democrat*, October 23, 1885, p. 3; "Anthony Has Big Lumber Plant in Early Days Here," *DTN*, May 9, 1949, p. 12A; Julian Hughes, "Lafayette Holt Secured Patent for Rotary Steam Engine," *DTN*, March 31, 1955, pp. 1, 4C; Julian Hughes, "Lafayette Mills, The First Cotton Factory Erected Here, Dates to 1881," *DTN*, August 23, 1956, p. 1D.

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shops moved to Manchester, Virginia, in 1886. By 1888, approximately ninety Aurora Cotton Mills employees operated 2,120 spindles and 124 looms. In order to meet product demand, the plant was enlarged in late 1890. Elmira Cotton Mills also grew to become a large operation, reporting in June 1889 around 125 workers, 2,288 spindles, and 140 looms. An influx of laborers for these and other businesses resulted in a ninety-seven percent population increase from 871 residents in 1880 to 1,716 citizens in 1890. A citizen's committee selected a new name, "Burlington," in February 1887 to celebrate the community's industrial renaissance, but it was not until February 14, 1893 that the city of Burlington incorporated.¹⁷

Aurora Cotton Mills' production capacity was bolstered by the late 1894 construction of a second factory about the same size as the existing building. Prior to the expansion, employees operated 4,608 spindles and 220 looms. Lawrence S. Holt reorganized the company in 1896, partnering with his three sons—Edwin A., Eugene, and Lawrence S. Jr.—to establish Lawrence S. Holt and Sons. In 1898, Aurora Cotton Mills was the third largest of nine Burlington textile manufacturers, with 4,620 spindles and 668 looms. Greensboro-based Cone Export and Commission Company marketed the concern's products from its New York sales office.¹⁸

The dawn of the twentieth century heralded the beginning of an era of sweeping social and economic change. In the industrial sector, North Carolina hosiery production burgeoned during the century's first decades. As Burlington businesses prospered, the population almost doubled, growing from 3,692 in 1900 to 5,932 in 1920.¹⁹ During the twentieth century's first decades, Aurora Cotton Mills, Burlington Mills, Inc., E. M. Holt Plaid Mills, King Cotton Mills, and May Hosiery Mill expanded factories and diversified production. Cone Export and Commission Company finished Aurora Cotton Mills' products in Greensboro until 1900, when Aurora Cotton Mills created its own finishing department to wash, stretch, nap, starch, and dry its fabric and yardage produced by other local concerns in preparation for sale. The two-story brick addition erected in 1899 at the 1882 mill's south end to accommodate the finishing operation featured a sawtooth roof, which provided ample light and ventilation. An elevated covered walkway spanning Webb Avenue connected the finishing room to a two-story brick warehouse on the west side. Eugene Holt engaged Vincent Snyder of Philadelphia to head the finishing department. New equipment was installed throughout the plant, resulting in a total of 16,608 ring spindles, 748 narrow

¹⁷ "North Carolina's Cotton Mills," *Charlotte Observer* (hereafter abbreviated *CO*), February 8, 1888, p. 2; "Burlington," *Weekly State Chronicle* (Raleigh), June 28, 1889, p. 1; "North Carolina Enterprises," *North State* (Greensboro) August 28, 1890, p. 5; "A Factory Family," *NO, Cotton Mill Edition*, November 28, 1895, p. 30; Roberts, "Historic Resources of Burlington," Section 8.4-5; Whitaker, *Centennial History of Alamance County*, 134-135.

¹⁸ "State News," *Progressive Farmer* (Winston), March 7, 1893, p. 3; "Industrial Progress in North Carolina," *Messenger* (Wilmington), April 22, 1894, p. 8; Davison Publishing Company, *The Blue Book: Textile Directory: United States and Canada* (New York: Davison Publishing Company, 1894), 91; Bureau of Labor Statistics of North Carolina, *Eleventh Annual Report* (Raleigh: Guy V. Barnes, 1897), 30; "Aurora Cotton Mills," *State Dispatch* (Raleigh), November 3, 1909, p. 3.

¹⁹ Leon E. Truesdell, supervisor, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Volume I* (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1942), 772.

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looms, and 59 cards operated by approximately four hundred employees in 1900. Joshua L. Baily and Company, a sales agency with New York and Philadelphia offices, marketed Aurora Cotton Mills' gingham fabric.²⁰

On December 1, 1902, Aurora Cotton Mills was lauded as the first sizable North Carolina textile manufacturer to implement a ten-hour workday. The company's owner, Lawrence S. Holt and Sons, purchased Gibsonville's Gem Cotton Mills in 1905. Eugene Holt, who had been managing Aurora Cotton Mills, assumed Lawrence S. Holt and Sons' presidency in 1906. Plant improvements that year included new equipment installation and the construction of a two-story brick finishing plant abutting the 1890s warehouse on Webb Avenue's west side. A six-hundred-square foot dye house was erected in the east complex in 1909. That year, Aurora Cotton Mills employed approximately five hundred workers, most of whom worked sixty-hour weeks. The plant, which contained 17,952 ring spindles, 749 narrow looms, and 48 cards, was gradually electrified. Many employees resided in eighty-nine company houses near the mill.²¹

Industrial production escalated throughout the state in the 1910s. By 1914, seventy-four North Carolina knitting plants employed approximately eight thousand workers who produced almost nine million dollars-worth of stockings. Most hosiery mills were located in central North Carolina cities with strong textile manufacturing traditions such as Burlington, High Point, Asheboro, Winston-Salem, and Hickory. Furniture factories—which often manufactured spindles, bobbins, and shuttles for textile mills in addition to inexpensive furnishings marketed to mill workers—abounded in the same municipalities, as well as in Thomasville, Lexington, Salisbury, and Statesville.²²

Burlington cotton manufacturing concerns including Lawrence S. Holt and Sons steadily increased capacity during the 1910s. Eugene Holt remained the company's president in 1919. Charles Foster supervised more than five hundred Aurora Cotton Mills employees who ran 19,144 spindles and 817 looms and bleached, dyed, and finished yarn and fabric. Plant production averaged 35,000 yards of gingham daily. The surrounding mill village encompassed approximately one hundred houses.²³

²⁰ *The Blue Book: Textile Directory*, 1900, 111; Sanborn Map Company, "Burlington, North Carolina," Sheet 3, June 1893, and Sheet 1, March 1904; Julian Hughes, "Col. Eugene Holt contributed much to area with Aurora Cotton Mills," *DTN*, November 27, 1958, pp. 1 and 4C.

²¹ "The 10-Hour Day System," *CO*, November 29, 1902, p. 1; "Burlington," *NO*, January 9, 1906, p. 3; "Aurora Cotton Mills," *Raleigh Evening Times*, April 22, 1907, p. 34; "Burlington Building," *NO*, August 13, 1909, p. 1; "Aurora Cotton Mills," *State Dispatch*, November 3, 1909, p. 3; *The Blue Book: Textile Directory*, 1910, p. 129; Leary W. Adams, "The Spirit of the Regulators Lives On," *NO*, May 7, 1922; "New Cotton Mill, Hotel, School Houses Erected at Burlington," *Daily News* (Greensboro), February 8, 1925; "More Payrolls Bring Greater Prosperity to Burlington," *CO*, March 25, 1928.

²² Glass, *Textile Industry*, 44.

²³ "Aurora Cotton Mills," *Southern Textile Bulletin*, December 25, 1919, p. 185.

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The robust economy of the early 1920s encouraged textile innovation, and hosiery manufacturers experimented with alternative fibers that were less expensive and more durable than silk. In 1924, American Viscose Company president Samuel A. Salvage adopted the trade name “rayon” for a synthetic filament that had previously been known as artificial silk. Other producers and the Federal Trade Commission followed suit. As demand increased, entrepreneurs invested in spinning mills. Sixteen American and two Canadian plants generated rayon yarn in 1928. Two concerns began operating rayon plants in North Carolina that year. The Holland-based Enka Artificial Silk Company established America Enka Corporation in Asheville and National Life Insurance Company president Albert M. Johnson of Chicago incorporated A. M. Johnson Rayon Mills, Inc., in Delaware and opened a Burlington factory. The plant’s proximity facilitated the incorporation of rayon into fabric produced by at least five of Burlington’s ten cotton textile manufacturers: Aurora Cotton Mills, Burlington Mills, Inc., E. M. Holt Plaid Mills, Elmira Mills, and Stevens Manufacturing Company.²⁴

Burlington’s population burgeoned from 5,932 in 1920 to 9,737 in 1930, driven by manufacturing growth. Capacity and production increased at all of the city’s cotton mills, six of which were owned by the Holt family. Aurora Cotton Mills continued to update its plant and the adjacent mill village. In 1921, the concern erected sixteen worker houses, remodeled and enlarged twenty-eight dwellings, and installed a sewer system. Between 1918 and 1924, the 1906 finishing plant was enlarged to the south with a two-story brick addition that spans the block to Everett Street. Aurora Cotton Mills remained Burlington’s largest textile producer in 1925, with approximately five hundred workers, and operated the most equipment: 19,520 ring spindles, 847 narrow looms, and 48 cards. The second largest concern, Burlington Mills, Inc., headed by Marvin B. Smith and J. Spencer Love, employed around two hundred operatives who produced yarns and fabric utilizing 10,080 ring spindles, 4,500 twisting spindles, 240 narrow looms, and 21 cards. The industrial concerns’ contributions to the local economy as manufacturers, employers, consumers of local goods and services, and taxpayers were enormous.²⁵

The hosiery industry also flourished during the 1920s. North Carolina was second only to Pennsylvania in the number of hosiery mills operating in 1927, when 117 plants in thirty-five counties employed approximately 15,500 workers and produced hosiery valued at almost \$53 million. Alamance County

²⁴ “The Carolina Demand for Rayon,” *Citizen-Times* (Asheville), September 25, 1928, p. 4; Mois H. Avram, *The Rayon Industry* (New York, D. Van Nostrand Company, 1929), 39-41, 16-17, 60-61, 172; Stock certificates, Folders 2 and 3, A. M. Johnson Rayon Mills Records #5290, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

²⁵ The 1918-1924 south addition’s construction required removal of the two-story brick 1890s warehouse and two-story frame office that previously occupied the site. Sanborn Map Company, “Burlington, North Carolina,” Sheet 3, June 1893; Sheet 1, March 1904 and April 1908; Sheet 9, July 1913 and May 1918; Sheet 5, April 1924; “Rapid Expansion for Burlington,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, December 20, 1921, p. 4; Davison Publishing Company, *Davison’s Textile Blue Book: United States and Canada* (New York: Davison Publishing Company, 1925), 299-300; Julian Huhes, “Aurora Cotton Mills Largest Industry Here for 30 Years,” *DTN*, April 14, 1955, p. 1; Truesdell, supervisor, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Volume I*, 772.

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contained the largest number of hosiery mills (26), followed by Guilford County (15), Catawba County (10), Burke and Durham counties (8 each), and Forsyth and Randolph counties (5 each). Thirteen new plants, including Pickett Hosiery Mills, headed by president Marshall Glenn Pickett, vice president Henry B. Dixon, and secretary-treasurer George G. Sharpe, were established in 1927 in Burlington. By 1931, the city, with thirty-two hosiery mills, was North Carolina's hosiery manufacturing center, followed by High Point, with sixteen hosiery plants.²⁶

In the early 1930s, the textile industry faced challenges exacerbated by the Great Depression's onset. More efficient equipment and mechanization that transformed manufacturing operations led to employee layoffs. Job loss, decreased pay, and poor working conditions made unions more appealing. These factors set the stage for demonstrations across the South. In July 1932, approximately 360 workers from High Point's sixteen hosiery mills fought wage reductions by organizing a walk-out. Their protest inspired almost 15,000 North Carolina cotton, furniture, and hosiery mill laborers to do the same within a week. Demonstrators were quickly pacified, but other strikes followed. Two years later, around 65,000 North Carolinians were among approximately 400,000 laborers who forced plant closures throughout the southern United States during the three-week General Textile Strike of September 1934. Many mill owners fired known union members and sympathizers. Union efforts were not in vain, however, as the Roosevelt administration's social and economic reform programs eventually resulted in the institution of a forty-hour work week and increased worker pay.²⁷

Most sizable North Carolina textile manufacturers weathered the strikes and economic downturn during the Great Depression, maintaining and in some cases increasing production. Aurora Cotton Mills struggled, however, reducing its labor force by forty percent to approximately three hundred workers by 1930 and closing a few years later. Burlington did attract a few new industrial concerns during the early 1930s. Baker-Cammack Textile Corporation, a textile marketing agency established in 1929, moved its headquarters from Greensboro to a building at Burlington's Maple Avenue and Spring Street intersection in August 1930 and soon initiated a hosiery and underwear manufacturing operation. The company was headed by president and treasurer Jarvis Egan Baker, vice president Ramsey Eugene Cammack, and secretary T. J. Clemmons. Baker and Cammack had been wholesale dry goods purveyors in Shreveport, Louisiana, before opening their Greensboro business on January 1, 1929. In September 1933, the concern

²⁶ "Burlington Has Secured Many New Industries," *CO*, January 1, 1928, section 4, pp. 1-2; "Pickett Hosiery Mills, Inc.," *CO*, December 8, 1929, p. 14; Marvin Shirley, "Of 672 Mills In County, State Has 117, Is Second to Pennsylvania With 277," *CO*, November 23, 1930; Robert Menzies, "Stockings Miss North Carolina Buys From Chicago Probably Made at Home," *NO*, October 24, 1937; "Migration," *NO*, January 29, 1939; C. H. McGregor, *The Hosiery Manufacturing Industry in North Carolina and Its Marketing Problems*, Research Paper 15, Graduate School of Business Administration, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, June 1965, 6-7.

²⁷ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones and Christopher B. Daly, *Like a Family: The Making of the Southern Cotton Mill World* (York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987), 202-208, 217; Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 194-195; "Hosiery Mills to Open Today," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, July 28, 1932, p. 2.

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acquired Scott Hosiery Mills and Scott Knitting Company of Graham and merged the operations to create Scott-Baker Knitting Company, Inc., which served as Baker-Cammack Textile Corporation's full-fashioned hosiery knitting division. Baker-Cammack's seamless hosiery division, established in 1932, was in Mebane. The Graham complex included a finishing and shipping plant that processed goods produced at both locations. Salesmen based in New York and Chicago marketed the company's products.²⁸

In January 1936, Baker-Cammack Textile Corporation leased the portion of the complex on East Webb Avenue's west side to house the company's offices and knitting, dying, and finishing operations previously located in Graham. The concern soon embarked upon an approximately \$100,000 improvement program that involved building expansion, renovation, and equipment and machinery installation. The company reorganized as Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills, Inc., on May 1, 1937, and continued to operate Baker-Mebane Hosiery Mills in Mebane as a subsidiary. In June 1939, the concern engaged general contractor H. F. Mitchell Jr. to erect a two-story, brick, approximately \$125,000 addition designed by the Charlotte architectural firm Biberstein and Bowles at the Mebane plant. The expansion would allow for the installation of around sixty new machines and the hiring of about fifty new employees, some in the Burlington finishing department.²⁹

Century Hosiery Mills, Inc., established in late 1937, acquired much of the former Aurora Cotton Mill complex on East Webb Avenue's east side, modernized the plant, and began producing socks in early 1938. The enclosed overhead walkway that spanned East Webb Avenue between the east and west portions of the complex was dismantled in 1939. The building on the street's east side to which the walkway connected then served as a United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service warehouse. Thompson Hosiery Mills, a men's sock manufacturer established in 1935, moved from Graham into a portion of the east complex in September 1940.³⁰

In 1936, the state's 187 hosiery mills (of the South's 239) encompassed 2,028 full-fashioned hosiery machines. Baker-Cammack was one of approximately twenty-four full-fashioned and seamless hosiery mills that operated in Burlington. By the late 1930s, more new hosiery mills were being established in

²⁸ "Regard Burlington as Hosiery Center," *NO*, September 5, 1930, p. 16; "Scott Knitting Interests of Graham Merged Scott-Baker," *DTN*, September 14, 1933, p. 6; "Baker Cammack Continues Improvements, Promotions," *DTN*, January 28, 1957, p. 8.

²⁹ "Baker-Cammack Corporation is Returning to this City with \$100,000 Program of Expansion," *DTN*, January 29, 1936, p. 4; "Baker-Cammack Reorganizes," *DTN*, May 7, 1937, p. 2; "Baker-Cammack Lets Contract Award to Erect Mebane Plant," *DTN*, June 23, 1939, p. 9; "Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills," 1939 drawings, Tube 4, Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham, and Reed Records, MS0148, J. Murrey Atkins Library, Special Collections, UNC-Charlotte.

³⁰ "Century Hosiery Mills New Industry Organized and to Enter Production Here Soon," *DTN*, December 10, 1937, p. 5; "Thompson Hosiery Industry Will Move Plant to Aurora Mill Location in Near Future," *DTN*, July 15, 1940, p. 5; "Thompson Hosiery Will Remove from Graham Next Month," *DTN*, August 6, 1940, p. 5; Don Bolden, "Webb Avenue mill has much historic value," *Times-News*, May 2, 1982, p. 12C.

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North Carolina than any other type of industrial plant. In 1938, entrepreneurs erected forty-four new plants and expanded thirty-eight existing hosiery mills, resulting in a total of 249 hosiery mills (75 full-fashioned and 174 seamless) by 1939. North Carolina manufactured approximately twenty-six percent of the nation's hosiery that year, almost doubling the state's 1929 product.³¹

Burlington's population grew slightly as the economy recovered from the Great Depression, numbering 12,198 in 1940, at which time 239 retail and 48 manufacturing establishments operated in the city.³² Military contracts to support the United States' participation in World War II soon spurred burgeoning industrial production. America's goal to become "the arsenal of democracy" benefited large corporations—more than half of the \$175 billion-worth of government contracts awarded between 1940 and 1944 went to thirty-three nationally-known firms who had demonstrated their capacity to produce large quantities of quality goods—as well as small businesses, finally remedying the high unemployment rates that lingered after the recession. Approximately 7,176 Alamance County residents served in the military during the war, and those left behind were occupied with the war effort in a variety of ways, from participating in bond drives to filling vacant positions at mills and factories that accelerated their production to meet the needs of servicemen and women. Industrial jobs rose by seventy-five percent in the South over the course of World War II, with traditionally underemployed groups such as women, African Americans, and the elderly receiving invaluable education, training, and experience. Output soared after May 1943, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Office of War Mobilization to coordinate a diverse array of support endeavors including manufacturing, scientific research, and agricultural production.³³

Although World War II silk importation and nylon rationing presented stocking production challenges, North Carolina hosiery mills adapted, utilizing more cotton, wool, and synthetic fibers items produced for retail and military markets. Many mill employees contributed a portion of their wages to defense savings bonds, the Red Cross, and other initiatives supporting the war. Military orders fueled production at North Carolina hosiery mills through the mid-1940s. Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills was among those supplying the United States military with men's socks. The company and its employees regularly

³¹ Marvin Shirley, "Of 672 Mills In County, State Has 117, Is Second to Pennsylvania With 277," *CO*, November 23, 1930; *Davison's Textile Blue Book*, 1935, 538-559; Robert Menzies, "Stockings Miss North Carolina Buys From Chicago Probably Made at Home," *NO*, October 24, 1937; "Migration," *NO*, January 29, 1939; McGregor, *The Hosiery Manufacturing Industry in North Carolina*, 6-7; *E.S.C. Quarterly*, Winter-Spring 1953, 17.

³² Truesdell, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Volume I*, 772; Thomas J. Fitzgerald, supervisor, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Manufactures, 1939, Volume III* (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1942), 745; Fred A. Gosnell, supervisor, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Retail Trade, 1939, Part 3* (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1941), 740.

³³ Spencer B. King, Jr., *Selective Service in North Carolina in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), 321; Marilyn M. Harper, et. al., *World War II and the American Home Front* (Washington, D. C.: The National Historic Landmarks Program, October 2007), 3, 13-16.

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contributed to war bond drives. In 1944, employees operated 18 looping and 94 knitting machines at its Burlington Factory.³⁴

Burlington plants increased production through the late 1940s, serving as an important catalyst in the city's post-war industrial expansion. The 1950 census revealed a one-hundred-percent population increase to 24,560 residents over the course of the previous decade. Hosiery mills were among Burlington's largest employers, tax payers, freight shippers, and power consumers. The companies' success epitomizes statewide trends in the industry. The Century Corporation acquired Thompson Hosiery Mill on East Webb Avenue's east side in 1943 and operated Webb Hosiery Company from the building. In September 1945, the company announced plans to enlarge and modernize its plant. Standard Hosiery Mills moved its finishing plant from Alamance to Webb Avenue in Burlington in 1946 and merged with the Century Corporation in March 1947. Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills purchased the entire block on East Webb Avenue's west side between Johnson and Everett Streets in September 1944. In March 1946, the concern engaged general contractor H. F. Mitchell Jr. to erect a two-story, brick, approximately \$80,000 addition designed by the Charlotte architectural firm Biberstein and Bowles.³⁵

Burlington Mills also provided jobs and significant economic impact, maintaining a sizable presence in the city while expanding to other locations. By 1948, the company's 28,000 employees operated seventy-two plants in seven states as well as eleven in Australia, Canada, Columbia, Cuba, and Mexico. Burlington Mills reported twenty-three million dollars in plant acquisitions and equipment improvements in 1950. In 1951, Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills commissioned the construction of a \$14,000 addition to its Webb Avenue plant that allowed the concern to more than double its equipment to 216 knitting and 52 looping machines. The city's dramatic overall growth continued through the mid-1950s, when the Chamber of Commerce reported that the industrial workforce had multiplied by eighty percent, citywide annual payroll expenditures soared 220 percent, and building permit issuance increased 215 percent between 1946 and 1956.³⁶

In 1951, North Carolina's 255 seamless, 126 full-fashioned, and 381 knitting mills generated approximately forty percent of the nation's hosiery. Alamance County's 54 hosiery mills employed about 7,258 workers in 1953. Most industrial concerns were located in Burlington, where the aggregate labor

³⁴ "Baker-Mebane Hosiery Mill Pays Bonuses," *DTN*, May 7, 1943, p. 10; "Working Together for Victory," *CO*, May 22, 1943, section 2, p. 7; *Davison's Textile Blue Book, 1944*, 489.

³⁵ *E.S.C. Quarterly*, Winter-Spring 1953, 23-24; "Webb Hosiery Concern Buys Alamance Mill," *NO*, September 5, 1945, p. 7; "More than \$300,000 Noted Here in Building Permits Authorized for New Construction Last Week," *DTN*, March 19, 1946, p. 5; "Baker Cammack Continues Improvements, Promotions," *DTN*, January 28, 1957, p. 8; "Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills," 1946 drawings, Tube 4, Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham, and Reed Records, MS0148, J. Murrey Atkins Library, Special Collections, UNC-Charlotte.

³⁶ "Construction Authorized for More than \$3 Million," *DTN*, January 29, 1951, p.2C; "Burlington Mills: \$23,000,000 Plant Increase," *NO*, January 4, 1951; A. C. Snow, "Burlington Project, Dream for 10 Years, Nears Reality," *NO*, January 31, 1954; Burlington Chamber of Commerce, "Let's Go to Burlington, North Carolina," ca. 1959.

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force of 32 hosiery mills was around 5,800 workers. Burlington's knitting plants increased production in the early 1950s, when many companies benefited from sizable defense contracts during the Korean War. Mill owners expanded their operations and facilities during that period, reflecting North Carolina's standing as one of the industry's largest centers. By 1955, 56 Burlington hosiery mills employed approximately 8,000 laborers. Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills updated equipment to meet demand for men's plain, fancy, and novelty socks, reporting 293 circular knitting machines in 1953 and 362 knitting and 60 looping machines in 1955. The increase was due to its 1953 merger with Baker-Mebane Hosiery Mills, previously a subsidiary concern, which operated 176 circular knitting machines at its Mebane plant. All products of both factories were finished at the Burlington plant. The company marketed its goods from Burlington and a New York office in the Empire State Building.³⁷

The company's executive leadership changed in 1956, when co-founder J. E. Baker relinquished his role as president and treasurer and was elected board chairman. He retired to Florida but maintained a farm off of Huffman Mill Road near Burlington. Ramsey E. Cammack, who had headed the New York office since 1956, became president and sales director. Executive vice president and treasurer Clayton L. Hammack, who joined the Burlington staff in 1942, managed plant operations. Vice president of manufacturing C. Almon McIver had twenty-year tenure at the firm, while vice president of finishing Archie K. Boswell and secretary Clive H. Shoffner had each been company employees for eighteen years. As demand for Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills products remained strong, equipment was updated in the late 1950s. J. E. Baker died on April 13, 1960, at the age of seventy.³⁸

Women's fashion shifts at that time dramatically impacted hosiery production. As full-fashioned hosiery declined in popularity, the associated job of sewing seams became obsolete and concerns laid off many of their full-fashioned knitters. State-wide statistics reflect this trend. Although almost half (49.4 percent) of the nation's hosiery mills were located in North Carolina in 1958, the state's full-fashioned hosiery mills decreased sixty-one percent in number (from 414 to 159 plants) by 1963.³⁹ Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills production remained stable, however, as the concern continued to manufacture men's socks utilizing 362 knitting and 60 looping machines.⁴⁰

Fashion trends influenced the hosiery industry again in the late 1960s as more women began wearing pants and therefore purchased short stockings, which were much less labor-intensive to produce than pantyhose, or dispensed with hosiery altogether. The sock market remained strong, which benefited Burlington hosiery manufacturers. Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills had 240 employees and maintained

³⁷ *E.S.C. Quarterly*, Winter-Spring 1953, 3-5, 22-24; "Davison's Textile Blue Book, 1955, 521.

³⁸ "Baker-Cammack Firm Has Executive Changes," *DTN*, July 17, 1956, p. 9; "Baker-Cammack Adds Equipment During '58," *DTN*, February 2, 1959, p. 6B; *Davison's Textile Blue Book, 1959*, 439; "J. E. Baker Rites Set in Florida," *DTN*, April 13, 1960, p. 1.

³⁹ McGregor, *The Hosiery Manufacturing Industry in North Carolina*, 7, 23.

⁴⁰ *Davison's Textile Blue Book, 1965*, 15-65.

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equipment levels in 1970. At that time, Pickett Hosiery Mills, Inc., established in 1927, was headed by president and treasurer George G. Sharpe. Superintendent Jesse Tollar managed 75 employees at the 256 West Trade Street plant that produced men's socks using 110 circular knitting and 25 looping machines. In November 1971, Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills president Ramsey E. Cammack announced plans to become a subsidiary of apparel manufacturer Genesco, Inc., which had offices in Nashville and New York, more than three hundred manufacturing facilities, and 2,452 stores worldwide. The Burlington plant operated until mid-December 1982.⁴¹

Pickett Hosiery Mills, which had been reincorporated in 1971 when purchased by the Harris family, bought the Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills plant on East Webb Avenue on December 24, 1982, and began moving equipment from its Trade Street mill two days later. James Nimrod Harris Jr. has been Pickett Hosiery Mills' president since 1971. His four siblings have all been involved with the company. Amy Harris Deal has served as vice president since October 1980. Lonnie Albert Harris became maintenance director in 1974. Hooper and Gary Harris began working as salesmen in 1976. Lonnie, Hooper, and Gary are no longer company employees.⁴²

The late 1990s were a challenging period for the American textile industry, as foreign manufacturers flooded the market with less expensive products. Intense competition within the domestic hosiery industry, rapidly changing technology, and globalization negatively impacted the market for American textiles. United States military and major retailer contracts allowed Pickett Hosiery Mills to thrive. Since developing an antibacterial sock for the United States Army in 1999, the company's sock production for all military branches as well as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration annually represents approximately seventy-five percent of its business. Pickett Hosiery Mills has manufactured athletic, dress, and work socks for companies including Brooks, Duck Head, Express, Gap, Kmart, Lerner, Macy's, Old Navy, Roses, Sears, Target, and W. T. Grant. At the height of production in the early 2000s, the concern employed approximately 135 workers. Due to declining product demand, the labor force decreased to around sixty employees by 2020. Although machinery and systems have been updated and replaced and regular maintenance undertaken, the plant footprint has remained unchanged and no significant interior modifications have occurred since Pickett Hosiery Mills' tenure commenced in 1982.⁴³

Pickett Mill, LLC, acquired the plant in September 2021 and has begun planning its conversion to market-rate apartments. The Cranford Group Holdings purchased Pickett Hosiery Mills and relocated the company in November to a facility previously operated by Holt Hosiery at 733 Koury Drive.⁴⁴

⁴¹ *Davison's Textile Blue Book*, 1970, 231; "Corporations," *DTN*, August 11, 1971, p. 20C; "Baker-Cammack Joins Genesco," *DTN*, November 9, 1971, pp. 1 and 8; Marc Barnes, "Rare worker-owned knitting mill opens in Burlington," *NO*, June 3, 1984, p. 36A.

⁴² J. Nimrod Harris Jr., conversations with Heather Fearnbach, December 2020.

⁴³ *Ibid.*; Jonathan B. Cox, "Stepping up to get local toes," *NO*, November 17, 2006, p. D3.

⁴⁴ Alamance County Deed Book 4228, p. 231, Tomas Murawski, "Another textile company is moving, but this one is staying in Burlington," *Alamance News* (Graham), September 27, 2021.

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Textile Mills in Burlington

Burlington's rapid late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century industrial growth greatly influenced the city's development. In order to take advantage of lower land prices and allow for unfettered expansion, industrialists typically erected mills and worker housing on the town's outskirts. These complexes evolved over time. By 1982, when historian Allison Harris Black completed a survey of Burlington's historic architecture, many early mills had been demolished or encapsulated within later additions. Examples that she included in the 1987 publication *An Architectural History of Burlington, North Carolina* are Aurora Cotton Mills, E. M. Holt Plaid Mills, Elmira Cotton Mills, Lakeside Cotton Mill (NR 1984, Lakeside Mills District), and Windsor Cotton Mill – King Cotton Mills (office NR 1984). All began functioning during the late nineteenth century and were subsequently expanded. Pickett Hosiery Mill (1927) at 256 West Trade Street and Tower Hosiery Mill (1930) at 110 North Broad Street, both austere one-story brick buildings, and May Hosiery Mills Knitting Mill (1928, NR 2016), a larger plant at 612 South Main Street, were modified as the twentieth century progressed. The one-story, brick, 1928 A. M. Johnson Rayon Mills plant, renovated and enlarged to produce aircraft during World War II, is the earliest portion of the Western Electric Company – Tarheel Army Missile Plant (NR 2016), which encompasses many sizable buildings predominantly constructed in the mid-twentieth-century.

The earliest portions of the Aurora Cotton Mills, Elmira Cotton Mills, E. M. Holt Plaid Mills, Lakeside Cotton Mill, and Windsor Cotton Mill – King Cotton Mills complexes, all initially owned by members of the Holt family, manifest typical late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century features such as load-bearing brick walls, segmental-arched window and door openings, and heavy-timber frames. Gabled or sawtooth monitors illuminated portions of each mill. Sawtooth monitors, which consist of a sloped south face and an almost-vertical north face with bands of tall windows, allow more light to penetrate interior spaces. Such monitors were common in the northeast United States and England but infrequently utilized in North Carolina. The complexes demonstrate the evolution of industrial building technology as the twentieth century progressed, with most featuring steel-frame buildings erected from the 1920s through the 1950s that originally had large multipane steel-frame windows. At each plant, buildings constructed in the mid-twentieth century display a Modernist influence in their functionalist design, spare detailing, and exposed structural systems.

E. M. Holt Plaid Mills produced gingham fabric on West Webb Avenue from 1883 until 1931, when the company transitioned to cotton yarn spinning. The plant includes two of Burlington's earliest extant industrial buildings: a one-story-on-basement, low-gable-roofed, brick and heavy-timber-frame 1883 mill executed in five-to-one common bond with segmental-arched windows and stone quoins and the similar two-story brick finishing building erected to the east between 1914 and 1918. Around 1924, the company built a two-story sawtooth-roofed west addition that more than doubled the main mill's size as well as the two-story, brick, Classical Revival-style office that projects from the south elevation of the complex's east building. E. M. Holt Plaid Mills became an L. Banks Holt Manufacturing Company subsidiary in the 1920s. Burlington Mills, Inc. purchased the concern in 1939 and constructed the expansive 1951 Art

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Moderne-style one-story-on-basement brick addition that fills the lot's west half to increase weaving, shipping, and storage capabilities.⁴⁵

The 1951 addition epitomizes the Modernist aesthetic in its horizontal massing, flat roof, asymmetrical façades, decorative brick banding, curved entrance walls, and glass block and steel-frame windows. All of the windows in the earlier manufacturing sections were enclosed with brick in conjunction with the 1951 updates. Later additions include a windowless brick structure that extends from the 1951 addition's east elevation and corrugated-metal-sheathed steel-frame loading docks in the complex's northeast quadrant. The sawtooth roof on the circa 1924 addition has been replaced with a low gable roof.

Elmira Cotton Mills, established in 1886 by James H. Holt's sons Walter L. and Edwin C. Holt, manufactured cotton gingham and plaid fabric. Walter and Edwin's cousin Lafayette Holt designed the 1886 factory located just north of E. M. Holt Plaid Mills at North Park Avenue and Elmira Street's northwest corner. The two-story, low-gable-roofed, brick and heavy-timber-frame building with segmental-arched windows and an elaborate corbelled cornice received a third story erected by contractor W. C. Bain of Graham in 1889. A flared pyramidal roof topped the three-stage stair and entrance tower. The complex encompassed an array of one- and two-story freestanding and interconnected ancillary buildings by 1893. Edwin C. Holt's son-in-law W. J. Cheatham, an E. C. Holt and Company employee, purchased the plant in 1927, but soon sold it to Burlington Mills, Inc., which housed its subsidiary Mayfair Mills at the site. Burlington Industries' Klopman division utilized the plant through the late-twentieth century. The complex has been significantly altered by additions that connected and enlarged buildings, enclosure of all windows, exterior parging, corbelling removal, and tower demolition.⁴⁶

James H. Holt's sons James Jr. and Robert organized another Burlington cotton fabric-producing company, Windsor Cotton Mills, in 1890, and commissioned Lafayette Holt to design a complex that included a two-story, low-gable-roofed, brick and heavy-timber-frame mill with a corbelled three-stage entrance and stair tower, an attached one-story gable-roofed boiler room and dye house, and a freestanding two-story brick office, all with segmental-arched windows. A tapered square smokestack stands east of the boiler room. The plant was relatively unchanged through the twentieth century's first decades, likely due to a series of rapid ownership transitions. New Jersey-headquartered Southern Textile Company purchased the property in 1903, but suffered bankruptcy in 1904. International Trust Company of Maryland bought all of the concern's holdings in July 1905 and sold Windsor Cotton Mills to New Jersey-based Bellevue Mills in December. Richmond, Virginia-headquartered King Cotton Mills

⁴⁵ Sanborn Map Company, "Burlington, North Carolina," Sheet 6, April 1924, January 1929, March 1948, and 1952; "50 Payroll 10 Million Jump in Year," *DTN*, January 29, 1951, p. D1; Allison Harris Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington, North Carolina* (Burlington: City of Burlington, 1987), 65-66; Whitaker, *Centennial History of Alamance County*, 165.

⁴⁶ "Some Cotton Mill Notes," *Alamance Gleaner*, May 2, 1889, p. 3; "A Factory Family," *NO, Cotton Mill Edition*, November 28, 1895, p. 30; "Webb Confirms Sale of the Elmira Mill," *NO*, March 13, 1927, p. 32; Sanborn Map Company, "Burlington, North Carolina," Sheet 3, June 1893 and January 1898; Black, *An Architectural History of Burlington*, 69.

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Corporation acquired the Burlington plant in June 1912 and constructed a one-story supply room in 1914. The most significant modifications occurred during Celanese Lanese Corporation of Delaware's tenure, which began in 1941. The plant was updated and enlarged in 1946, 1947, and 1951 with sizable one- and two-story additions. In conjunction with the mid-twentieth-century modifications, the 1890 mill's segmental-arched window lintels and operable sash were removed and the resulting rectangular openings were filled with translucent glass block. Burlington Industries acquired the mill in the 1960s and operated it until the 1980s. Windsor Cotton Mills - King Cotton Mills was added to the North Carolina Study List in 2016. The 1890 office (NR 1984), which features a hip-roofed front porch supported by chamfered posts, also retains integrity.⁴⁷

Brothers Walter L., Edwin C., and Sam M. Holt organized Lakeside Cotton Mills in 1892 and engaged Lafayette Holt to design and equip a sizable one-story, low-gable-roofed, brick and heavy-timber-frame mill with an attached one-story gable-roofed boiler room and dye house and a tapered square smokestack. The 1893 plant is characterized by five-to-one common bond walls, segmental-arched window and door openings, shaped rafter ends, deep eaves, and a long gabled monitor. The complex also includes a one-story low-gable-roofed brick 1893 office with a flat north parapet and a small hip-roofed brick 1920s superintendent's office, both with segmental-arched window and door openings. Annedeem Hosiery Mills leased and remodeled the mill in the early 1960s. The window openings, covered with plywood by the 1980s, were later filled with siding. Plywood sheathes the monitor walls. Sash status throughout the building is unknown.⁴⁸

Burlington's hosiery industry burgeoned during the 1920s, resulting in rapid existing plant expansion and new factory construction. In December 1928, May Hosiery Mills installed equipment in a newly finished one-story red brick mill at what is now 612 South Main Street. The almost-square building had large sawtooth roof monitors, which were replicated in the two-story, brick, 1930s addition to the south that doubled the mill's size. In September 1939, the company completed a two-story warehouse and office addition measuring 20-by-100-feet at the mill's south end at a cost of approximately \$20,000. The complex then spanned the block between South Main and South Spring Streets and connected with its heating plant, originally a freestanding building. A tall blonde brick smokestack rises above the warehouse. May Hosiery Mills, McEwen Knitting Company, and four other textile manufacturers merged to create a new corporation in the fall of 1940, but maintained independent operations. Burlington Mills, Inc. acquired the concern in 1948.⁴⁹ Subsequent modifications include the construction

⁴⁷ *Alamance Gleaner*, February 13, 1890; Sanborn Map Company, "Burlington, North Carolina," Sheet 3, June 1893 and January 1898; "A Factory Family," *NO, Cotton Mill Edition*, November 28, 1895, p. 30; *Alamance Gleaner*, July 27, 1905, p. 3; Claudia P. Roberts, "Windsor Cotton Mills Office," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1984; Richard Sidebottom, "Windsor Cotton Mill," North Carolina Study List application, 2016.

⁴⁸ "A Factory Family," *NO, Cotton Mill Edition*, November 28, 1895, p. 30; Claudia P. Roberts, "Lakeside Mill District," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1984.

⁴⁹ "Another Full Fashion Plant for Burlington," *DTN*, December 12, 1928, p. 1; "May Addition is Ready for Use as Storage Unit," *DTN*, September 7, 1939, p. 17; "May and McEwen Industries Propose Merger," *DTN*, July 16, 1940, p. 5;

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of a circa 1960s windowless office addition at the mill's north end and window enclosure throughout most of the mill. The 1939 addition retains large multipane steel-frame windows. Richmond, Virginia-based Clachan Properties undertook a comprehensive rehabilitation completed in summer 2019 to create apartments. The project included installation of replica sash where necessary and removal of metal panels that covered the sawtooth roof monitors as well as the corrugated-metal siding that sheathed the office addition's upper wall sections.

A. M. Johnson Rayon Mills commissioned the construction of a one-story brick mill with sawtooth roof monitors outside the city limits in 1928. After the company ceased operations in 1931, the building served a variety of functions before being repurposed and extensively renovated to produce aircraft during World War II. The 1943 buildings designed by Albert Kahn Associated Architects and Engineers, Inc., and the 1950s edifices rendered by Western Electric Company's Factory Planning and Plant Engineering Department exemplify functionalist design tenets.⁵⁰ The brick, concrete, and steel structures exhibit minimal embellishment, open plans in the manufacturing and warehouse areas, and adaptable office and laboratory space. Steel and reinforced-concrete structural elements are visible on the interior. The multipane steel-frame windows and sizable roof monitors are significant survivals. As the buildings were not originally air-conditioned, large windows were imperative to provide light and ventilation.

The plant at 741 East Webb Avenue successively used by Aurora Cotton Mills, Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills, and Pickett Hosiery Mills reflects the textile industry's importance to Burlington. The building displays character-defining features of early- to mid-twentieth-century fire-resistant industrial design. The heavy-timber-frame 1906 finishing plant features load-bearing brick walls laid in five-to-one common bond, segmental-arched window and door openings, a stepped east parapet, and a roof monitor. The brick, concrete, and steel additions erected between 1918 and the early 1960s maintain original structural components, large multi-pane steel windows, and interior features and finishes. Structural elements are exposed and painted throughout the building. Single- and double-leaf wood and steel doors, Kalamein doors, maple floors, and vertical-board partition walls remain. The office area at the south end of the 1918-1924 addition's first floor is embellished with plaster walls, lacquered vertical-board wainscoting, trim, and single-leaf doors with paneled bases and textured translucent-glass upper panes.

Sections of the Aurora Cotton Mills complex on the street's east side once operated by concerns including Standard Hosiery Mills were fully or partially demolished beginning in February 2006, when Tim Griggs purchased the property to house OK Sales, Inc. (a recycling business) as well as a used car lot. Brick and hardwood floors were sold to a South Carolina salvage company.⁵¹ Faux-stone veneer and corrugated metal siding sheathes portions of the building.

Sanborn Map Company, "Burlington, North Carolina," Sheet 3, January 1929, March 1948; Whitaker, *Centennial History of Alamance County*, 169.

⁵⁰ Heather Fearnbach, "Western Electric Company – Tarheel Army Missile Plant," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2016.

⁵¹ Robert Boyer, "Mill's Legacy to Live on in Pieces," *Times-News*, May 8, 2007, pp. 1-2.

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Additional Context: Textile Mill Architecture

Many of North Carolina's nineteenth-century textile producers adapted existing frame buildings to serve as their first mills. Such structures, which usually had rough-sawn wood floors and wood-shingle roofs, often resembled large residential or agricultural buildings as they were typically located in rural settings along the rivers and streams that generated their power. Edwin Michael Holt and William A. Carrigan's frame 1837 mill on Alamance Creek, was one of the piedmont's earliest sizable textile mills.⁵² In the first purpose-built industrial buildings erected in the United States, engineers and architects strove to accommodate machinery in a manner that allowed for efficient access to power sources as well as maximum utilization of natural light and ventilation. By the mid-nineteenth century, "slow-burn" masonry construction, with load-bearing brick walls, exposed heavy-timber framing, thick plank floors, gabled roofs, large operable windows and transoms, and metal fire doors predominated.⁵³

During the late nineteenth century, steam and electric power availability encouraged factory movement to urban areas in close proximity to railroad lines and sizable potential employee pools. Mill and factory design evolved from a process whereby owners worked with builders who erected edifices based on mutually understood norms to a field dominated by professionally-trained engineers who rendered plans for industrial buildings and supervised their execution. Although the construction of durable, economical structures was the primary objective, variegated, patterned, and corbelled brick and cast-stone accents were employed as an inexpensive means to increase aesthetic interest. Expressed pilasters, stringcourses, water tables, window sills, arched door and window lintels, and exterior stair towers enhanced visual appeal while serving important structural functions. Stair towers were often the most ornate elements of an industrial complex, featuring complex roofs and decorative masonry.⁵⁴

Standards imposed by machinery manufacturers and insurance companies also guided industrial architecture's evolution during the late nineteenth century. In order to minimize fire risk, stairwells, which could serve as conduits for fire movement between floors, were located in projecting stair towers. Brick interior walls and galvanized-sheet-metal-clad, solid-core-wood doors, known as kalamein doors, separated the mill sections where fires might start or spread rapidly. These heavy doors would automatically close in the case of a fire, as the heat would melt a soft metal link in the door's counterweight assembly and the door would slide shut on the sloped metal track. As an additional precaution, water reservoirs and elevated water tanks supplied automatic sprinkler systems in many industrial complexes. In order to achieve sufficient altitude to pressurize the sprinkler system, tanks

⁵² Betsy Hunter Bradley, *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 16-17; Glass, *Textile Industry*, 16-17; Laura A. W. Phillips, "Alamance Mill Village Historic District," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2007.

⁵³ Sara E. Wermiel, "Heavy Timber Framing in Late-Nineteenth-Century Commercial and Industrial Buildings," *APT Bulletin: Journal of Preservation Technology*, Volume 35, No. 1, 2004, 56.

⁵⁴ Bradley, *The Works*, 15-21, 230-234; Glass, *Textile Industry*, 38.

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needed to be at least twenty-five feet higher than sprinkler heads and were thus typically housed on the upper floor of stair towers or mounted on freestanding steel frames.⁵⁵

During the twentieth century's first decades, architects and engineers continued to plan manufacturing complexes that were similar in appearance to earlier industrial buildings. However, new materials, technology, and forms manifested efficiency, modernity, and economic progress. Mill and factory designers specified steel and reinforced-concrete columns, posts, and beams in conjunction with brick, concrete, terra cotta block, or tile curtain walls that provided structural bracing but did not carry any weight. Bands of steel-frame multipane windows and roof monitors provided workers with abundant light and ventilation. Steel truss roof systems spanned open interiors that accommodated sizable equipment and allowed for flexibility as manufacturing needs changed.⁵⁶

Although structural systems for some late-nineteenth-century industrial buildings included cast-iron or wrought-iron columns or steel posts and beams, high cost greatly limited the materials' use until the early twentieth century. The ability to withstand the weight and vibrations of heavy machinery without failing contributed to the widespread use of structural-steel construction by the 1910s, as did the ease of fabricating framing systems from standard factory-generated parts. Typical elements include I-, T-, H-, and box-shaped beams and posts; round columns; reinforcing plates; and angles, which serve as braces, tension members, struts, or lintels. Steel components could be riveted together, creating strong connections, and tended to be smaller and lighter than heavy-timber or iron framing members. This allowed for wider and taller buildings with more square footage for equipment. The popularity of flat roofs and sizable roof monitors also resulted in structural-steel framing prevalence. In order to reduce oxidation and achieve fire resistance, steel members were coated with intumescent paint; sprayed with a thin mixture of cement, sand, and water called gunite; or encased in concrete.⁵⁷

Albert Kahn was one of only a few American architects who specialized in industrial building design during the early twentieth century. In many of his commissions, traditional load-bearing walls were replaced with curtain walls containing large steel-frame windows, and monitor roofs provided illumination and ventilation. His office supplied factory plans to hundreds of American industrialists including automobile manufacturers Packard, Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors, as well as for international clients. At the Packard Motor Car Company Forge Shop (1910) in Detroit, Kahn used a steel structural frame to support a traveling crane mounted to the roof trusses and glass curtain walls to allow for maximum light and air circulation. He minimized the exterior walls' bay articulation by specifying narrow steel columns of about the same size as steel window sashes. Kahn's firm continued to employ bands of steel windows in conjunction with masonry or concrete screens to conceal steel

⁵⁵ Glass, *Textile Industry*, 38; John A. Collins Jr., "Extinguishing Textile Mill Fires," *Textile World*, March 4, 1922, p. 81.

⁵⁶ Bradley, *The Works*, 144-147.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

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structural framing in edifices such as the Industrial Works (circa 1915) in Bay City, Michigan. The firm's design for the Dodge Half-Ton Truck Plant in Detroit, completed in 1937, was a much more sophisticated building with tall glazed curtain walls reminiscent of Walter Gropius's Bauhaus School (1926) in Dessau, Germany.⁵⁸ Gropius's streamlined design for the 1911 Fagus Factory in Germany, which features steel-frame multipane curtain walls, was also internationally influential.⁵⁹

Modernist architectural principles such as simplicity, efficiency, affordability, and intrinsic material expression were inherently applicable to industrial buildings. Industrial architecture continued to reflect these tenets as the twentieth century progressed. Building materials and labor were in short supply during World War II, but when construction resumed after the war's end, steel and reinforced-concrete industrial edifices with masonry (brick, tile, or concrete) curtain walls predominated. Fire-resistant corrugated metal and asbestos panels were often used as warehouse sheathing. Windows decreased in size and number in the 1960s as central air conditioning became prevalent. Artificial lighting replaced natural light sources.

North Carolina Mill Engineers and Architects

North Carolina industrialists benefited from the contributions of resident engineers who disseminated specifications dictating best practices in mill layout and design. South Carolina native Daniel A. Tompkins, sent by the Pittsburgh-based Westinghouse Engine Company to Charlotte in the early 1880s to sell and coordinate the installation of the company's equipment in the region, became a driving force in the southern textile industry. Tompkins partnered with Charlotte grain merchant R. M. Miller in 1883 to establish the D. A. Tompkins Company, an engineering firm. The company created plans for over one hundred mills in addition to other industrial buildings.⁶⁰

Thomasville, North Carolina, native Stuart Cramer, who began his career with the D. A. Tompkins Company, was another highly-influential mill engineer. Cramer set up his own Charlotte firm in 1895, and by 1915 had designed almost one-third of the new mills erected in the South during that period. Cramer's innovations in textile mill climate control garnered him international recognition, and he is credited with conceiving the term "air conditioning."⁶¹

⁵⁸ "Art: Industrial Architect," *Time*, August 8, 1938; Bradley, *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*, 248, 248-258.

⁵⁹ Gropius, the highly influential founder of the German design school known as the Bauhaus, which operated from 1919 until 1933, taught at Harvard's Graduate School of Design beginning in 1937. Bradley, *The Works*, 250; Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr. and Philip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture since 1922* (New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 1932, 20; Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr., *In the Nature of Materials: The Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright, 1887-1941* (New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1942), 52, 92-93, Figures 99 and 328-338; Historic New England "Gropius House," <http://www.historicnewengland.org/visit/homes/gropius.htm> (accessed in November 2020).

⁶⁰ Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 50.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 107.

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Talented architects and engineers such as Richard C. Biberstein of Fredericksburg, Texas, worked in Stuart Cramer's office. Biberstein, born in 1859, attained a mechanical engineering degree from the Worcester (Massachusetts) Polytechnic Institute in 1882. He found employment at U. S. Electric Lighting Company in Newark, New Jersey, and Atlas Engine Works in Indianapolis before moving to Charlotte in 1887 to undertake a draftsman position at industrialist John Wilkes's Mecklenburg Iron Works. H. S. Chadwick offered him a similar job at the Charlotte Machine Company, which manufactured mill equipment, in 1897. Biberstein accepted the offer and remained on staff until 1902, when he became Stuart Cramer's employee, thus garnering valuable experience that prepared him to launch an independent firm specializing in mill design three years later.⁶²

Richard C. Biberstein's son Herman Von Biberstein matriculated at North Carolina State University and began working with his father after completing a civil engineering degree in 1914. Architect William Andrew Bowles became a partner in 1930. Following the senior Biberstein's 1931 death, the practice bore Bowles's name until around 1938, when H. V. Biberstein's name also appears on plan sheets. Biberstein and Bowles operated as principals until Louis Hunter Meacham achieved partnership in 1948. Biberstein, Bowles, and Meacham subsequently elevated Charles Harmon Reed to full partnership between 1956 and 1959. Mechanical engineer William Ernest Stowe Jr. became a principal by 1962.⁶³

The firm had a significant impact on Southern industrial development, designing hundreds of structures throughout the region. Industrialists throughout North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia began engaging the Bibersteins to design mills in the 1920s and continued to solicit the firm's services through the 1980s. Biberstein and Bowles rendered plans for additions to the Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills plants in Mebane (1939) and Burlington (1946). The firm's other Burlington clients include C. M. Holt Plaid Mills (1937), Graybar Silk Mills (1922-1940), May Hosiery Mills (1927-1940), Joseph R. Morton and Company (hosiery mill; 1933-1935), McEwen Knitting Company (1933-1940), R. D. Wilson Hosiery Mills (1956), Standard Hosiery Mills (1931-1941), Tower Hosiery Mills (1935-1949), Whitehead Hosiery Company (1946-1947), and Wilson Mills (1922-1940).⁶⁴

⁶² Thomas W. Hanchett, William H. Huffman, and Catherine W. Bishir, "Richard C. Biberstein," *North Carolina Architects and Builders: A Biographical Dictionary*, 2009, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000383> (accessed in November 2020); "Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham & Reed: Biographical/Historical Note," Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham & Reed Records, J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

⁶³ "Biberstein, Bowles, & Meacham: Biographical Note," Guide to the Biberstein, Bowles, & Meacham Records, 1944-1954, MC 00222, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

⁶⁴ "Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham & Reed: Scope and Contents," Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham & Reed Records, J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

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Winston-Salem Journal

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Section 10. Geographical Data

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Latitude: 36.086851 Longitude: -79.429408

Verbal Boundary Description

Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant's National Register boundary encompasses 1.8 acres of 2.79-acre Alamance County tax parcel #136857, as indicated by the bold line on the enclosed map. The west boundary of the nominated parcel aligns with the east edge of the parking lot. The boundary otherwise follows the parcel line. Scale approximately 1" = 60'

Boundary Justification

The approximately 1.8-acre tract contains the Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant. The acreage is sufficient to convey the plant's industrial character, thus allowing for integrity of setting, feeling, and association. The west portion of the 2.79-acre tax parcel, where one- and two-story mill houses stood through the mid-twentieth century, has been excluded as that area now consists of a parking lot and grass lawn. The remaining portion of the former Aurora Mills complex on East Webb Avenue's east side was excluded as its functional connection to the nominated property was severed in 1936 when Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills acquired and updated the finishing plant. Demolition of portions of the east complex began in February 2006 and the remaining buildings do not possess the requisite integrity for National Register listing.

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Additional Documentation: Current Photographs

All photographs by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc., 3334 Nottingham Road, Winston-Salem, NC, on December 3, 2020. Digital images located at the North Carolina SHPO.



2. 1960s office addition, southwest oblique (below)



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Alamance County, NC



4. 1906 finishing plant, east elevation (below)



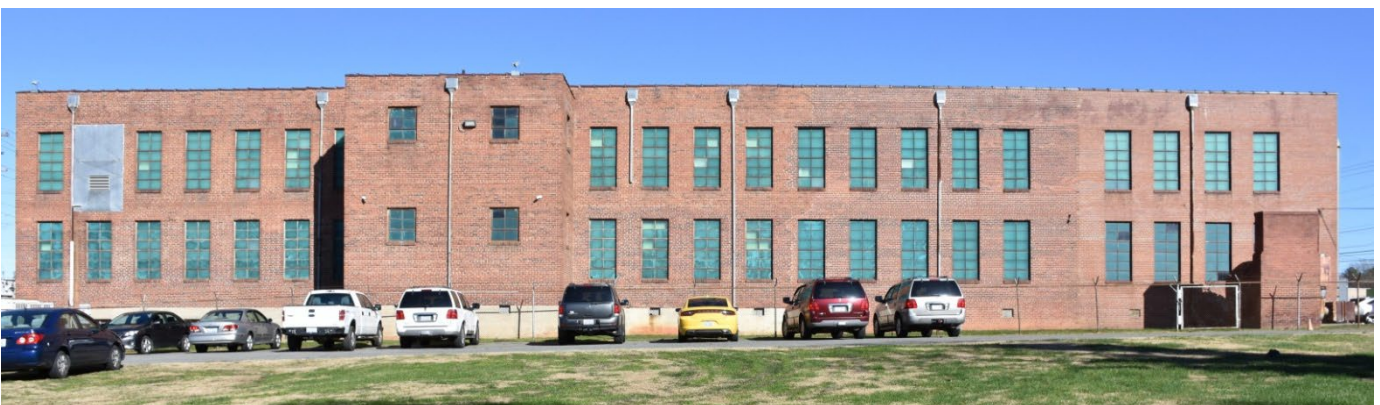
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number



6. 1946 and 1951 additions, west elevation with incinerator at right (below)



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8. 1960s warehouse addition (below)



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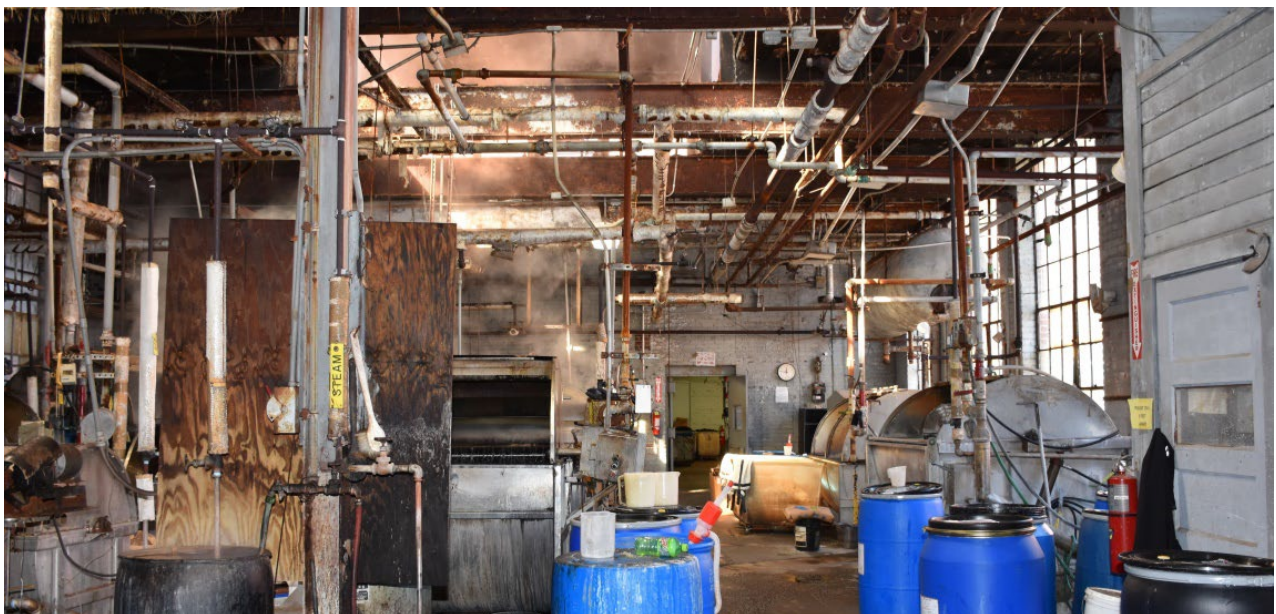
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number

Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant
Alamance County, NC



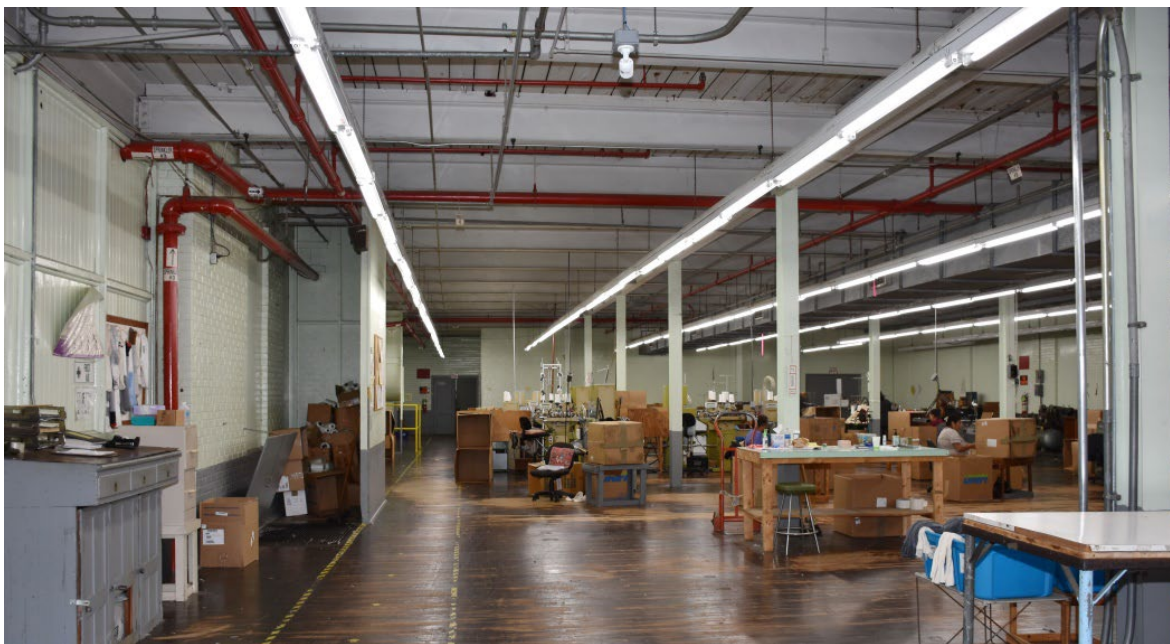
10. Dye house, looking north (below)



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Alamance County, NC



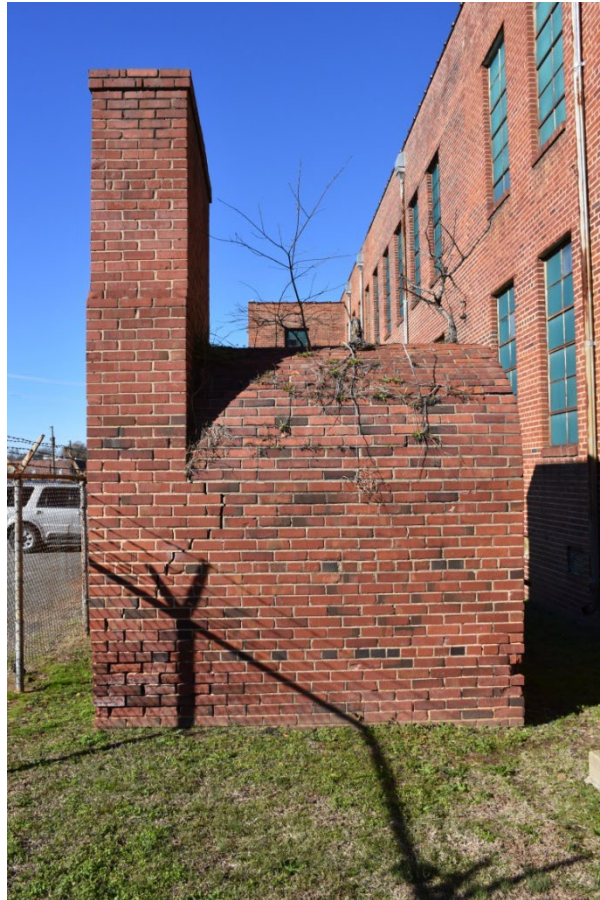
12. 1960s warehouse addition, second floor, looking north (below)



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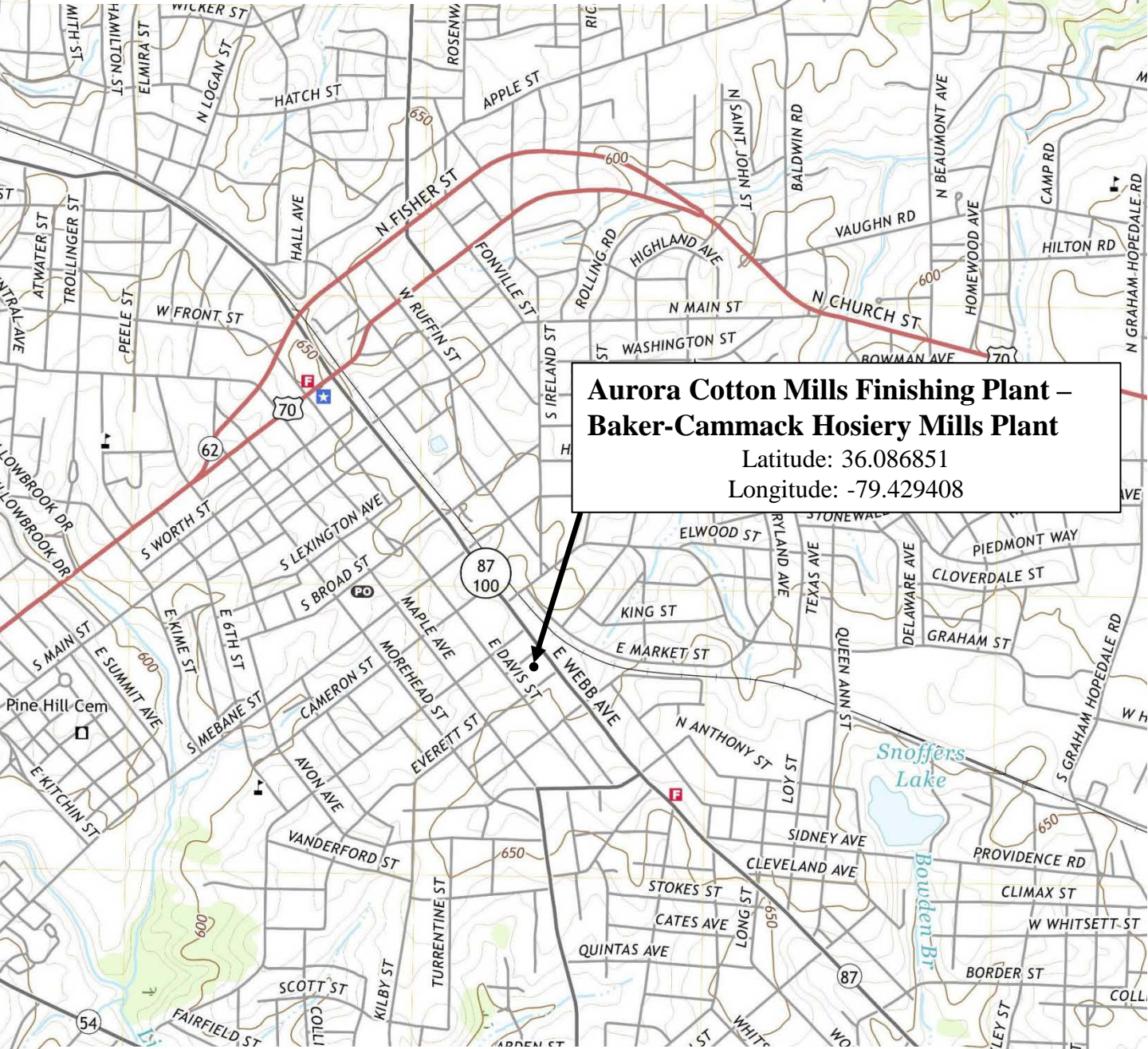
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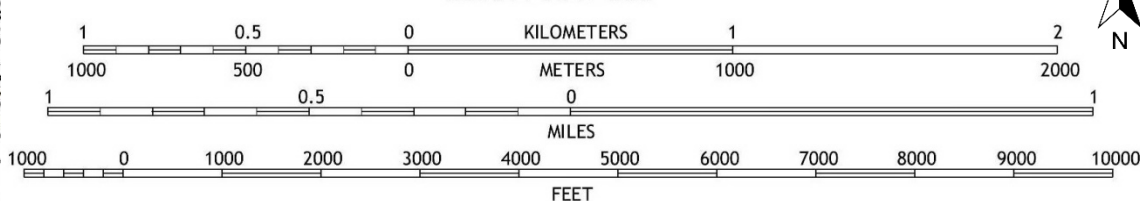


Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant
741 East Webb Avenue
Burlington, Alamance County, North Carolina
National Register Location Map

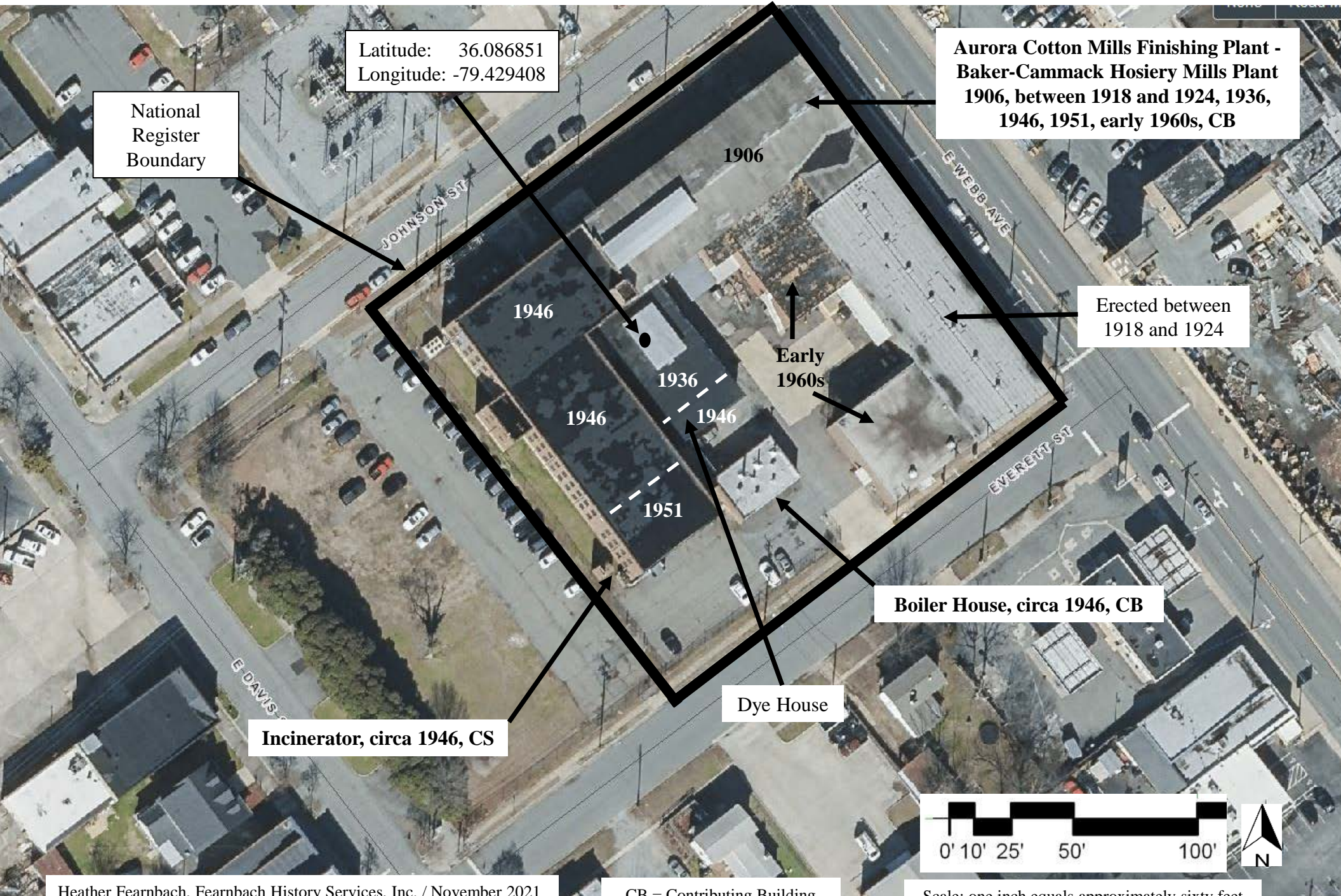
U. S. Geological Survey
Burlington Quadrangle, 2019



SCALE 1:24 000



Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant
741 East Webb Avenue, Burlington, Alamance County, North Carolina
National Register Site Plan and Boundary Map



Latitude: 36.086851
 Longitude: -79.429408

National Register Boundary

Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant 1906, between 1918 and 1924, 1936, 1946, 1951, early 1960s, CB

Erected between 1918 and 1924

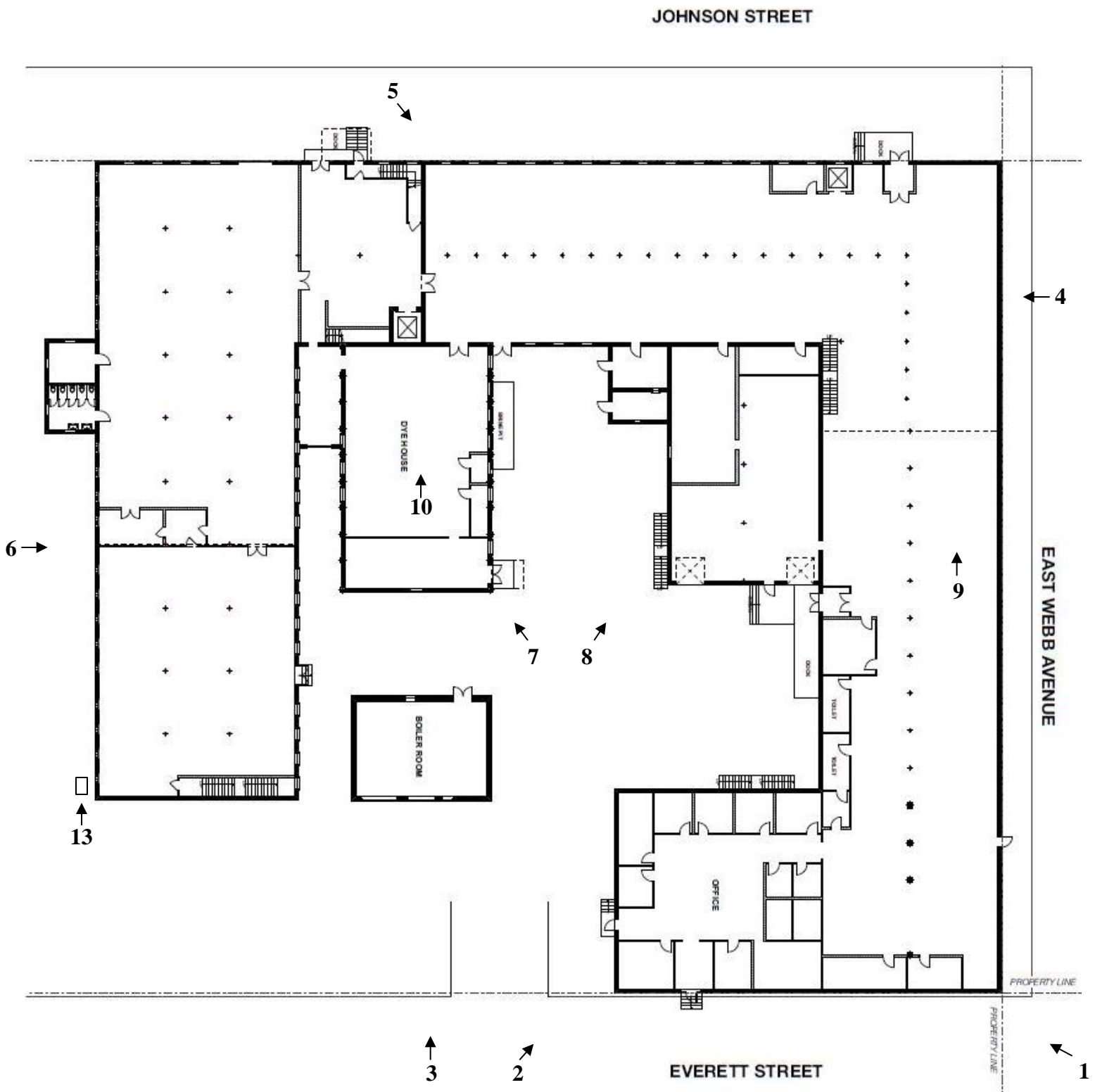
Boiler House, circa 1946, CB

Dye House

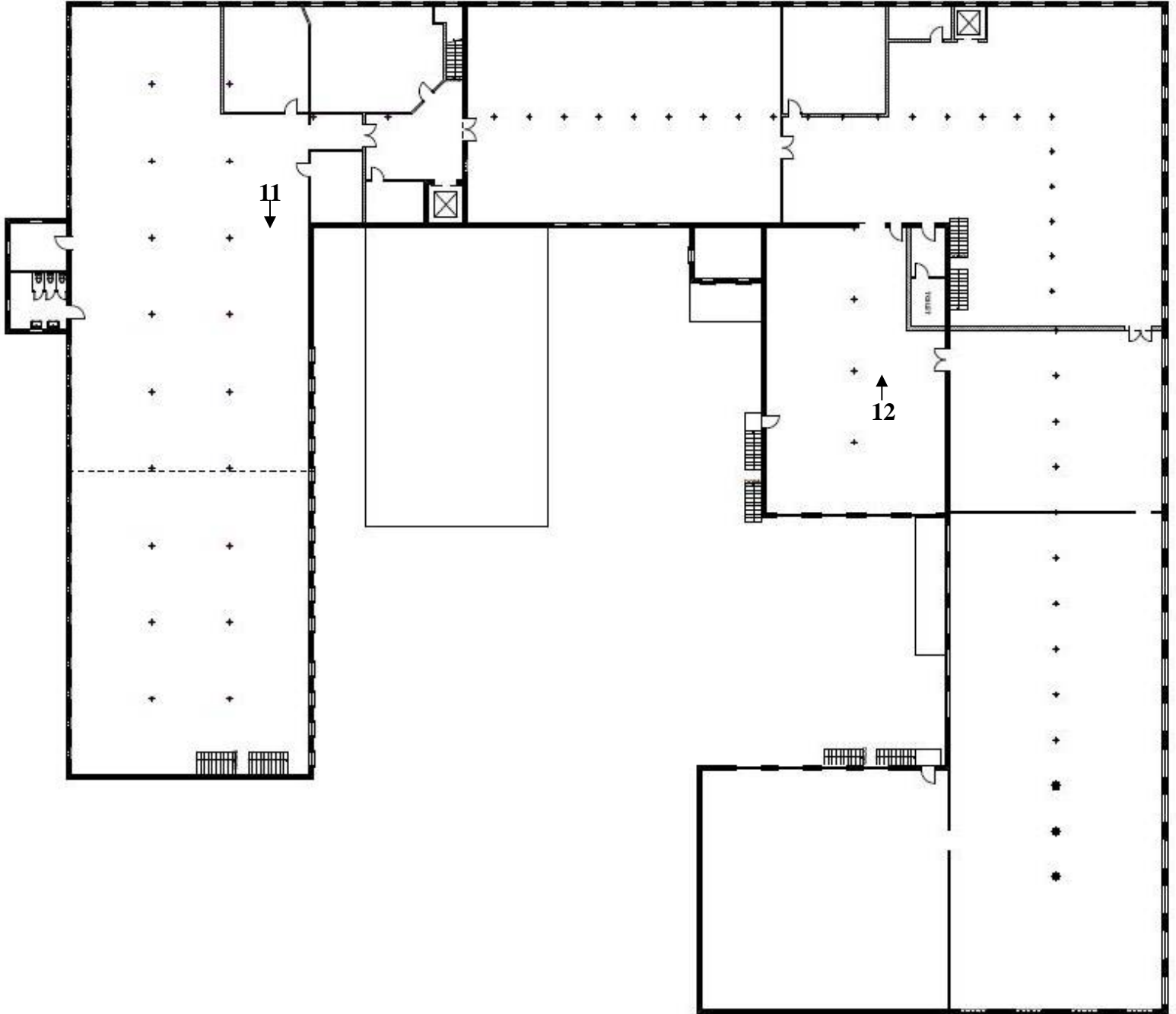
Incinerator, circa 1946, CS



Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant
741 East Webb Avenue, Burlington, Alamance County, North Carolina
First Floor Plan and National Register Photograph Key



Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant
741 East Webb Avenue, Burlington, Alamance County, North Carolina
Second Floor Plan and National Register Photograph Key



Aurora Cotton Mills Finishing Plant - Baker-Cammack Hosiery Mills Plant
741 East Webb Avenue, Burlington, Alamance County, North Carolina
Basement Floor Plan

