

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

### 1. Name of Property

historic name (Former) Thrift Mill

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 8300 Moore's Chapel Road  Not for publication

city or town Charlotte  vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Mecklenburg code 119 zip code 28214

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

William S. King  
Signature of certifying official/Title

7-18-94  
Date

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other. (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Former) Thrift Mill  
Name of Property

Mecklenburg Co., NC  
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
5	2	structures
		objects
6	3	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

INDUSTRY/waterworks

INDUSTRY/industrial storage

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/industrial storage

VACANT/NOT IN USE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Functional Industrial

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

metal

roof \_\_\_\_\_

other wood

concrete

Narrative Description

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

Name of Property

County and State

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

1912-1944

Significant Dates

1912

1924

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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:

(Former) Thrift Mill

Name of Property

Mecklenburg Co. NC

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 15.764

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 504920 3903760
Zone Easting Northing
2 17 5051160 3903640

3 17 505180 3903400
Zone Easting Northing
4 17 504960 3903380

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 Richard L. Mattson and Frances P. Alexander/Architectural Historians

organization Mattson, Alexander and Associates date 3/10/94

street & number 309 E. Park Ave. No. 4 telephone 704-376-0985

city or town Charlotte state NC zip code 28203

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 Warehouse Investors, Inc.

street & number Drawer 447 telephone 803-771-8880

city or town Columbia state SC zip code 29202

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

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

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(Former) Thrift Mill  
Mecklenburg County

7. Narrative Description

The (Former) Thrift Mill is located on Moore's Chapel Road in the small rural community of Thrift in western Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Thrift is approximately six miles west of the city of Charlotte and roughly three miles east of the Catawba River, which divides Mecklenburg and Gaston counties. Thrift Mill occupies a large, roughly rectangular site, bounded by Moore's Chapel Road to the south, Glasgow Road to the west, a mill driveway to the east, and the former Piedmont and Northern Railway line to the north. The mill village associated with Thrift Mill is situated directly west of this industrial complex. Glasgow Road forms the eastern border of the mill village.

Like other early twentieth century factories, the Thrift Mill complex was organized to facilitate production, shipping, and receiving with orientation to the railroad rather than the road. The buildings and structures associated with the mill are sited on the northern half of the property in proximity to the former Piedmont and Northern interurban line. The complex consists of three principal production and warehouse buildings: the Main Building; the Weave Department; and the Warehouse. The Main Building is positioned just north of the center of the property between Moore's Chapel Road and the railroad. A grassy yard separates the Main Building from Moore's Chapel Road. The Weave Department is located north of the Main Building, and the two buildings were originally separated by a loading area and the spur line. In the mid-1920s, a narrow infill was constructed to provide a connection between the two buildings. The Warehouse is situated east of the Weave Department in the northeast portion of the property. Auxiliary structures are located in the area between the east side of the Weave Department, the north elevation of the Warehouse, and the main line of the railroad. These ancillary structures are associated with the water system of the plant and include a reservoir, two pump houses, two water towers, and one storage structure. A second loading area is found in this area of the complex. A modern electrical substation is now located on the west side of the Main Building.

A spur line of the Piedmont and Northern enters the property from the east, tangential to the main line. This spur skirts the south side of the Warehouse to the loading area between the Main Building and the Weave Department. Vehicular traffic enters this loading area from the mill driveway at the point where the spur line crosses into the property. North of the spur line, the mill driveway curves to the west, providing access to the rear loading area,

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adjacent to the reservoir and pump houses.

The original complex included the Main Building, the Weave Department, the Warehouse, one pump house, a cotton opening room, and a boiler room. The cotton opening room and the boiler room are the only original structures which are no longer extant. The two water towers, a second pump house, the brick storage structure, the reservoir, and the narrow infill between the Main Building and the Weave Department were all added circa 1924 when the property changed ownership. The small electrical substation is the only structure on the property which postdates the period of significance. The contributing resources are: the Main Building/Weave Department (encompassing the infill between these once separate buildings; the Storage Structure; the Reservoir; Water Tower No. 1; Water Tower No. 2; and Pump House No. 1. The non-contributing resources are: the Warehouse; Pump House No. 2; and the electrical substation.

Like most industrial buildings, Thrift Mill has undergone some alteration and addition. However, the complex has undergone little change in its site configuration and, with the exception of the substation, contains resources which date either to the original construction campaign or that of the mid-1920s. The contributing resources combine a variety of construction materials and technologies - steel, mill construction, fabricated and prefabricated I-beams, and sawtooth monitors - to illustrate the range of innovations in factory design which occurred between 1900 and 1914. Notably, the mill property retains a complete water system for the sprinkler systems, necessary fire protection in this rural setting. The extant complex retains its architectural integrity and fully illustrates the textile production and distribution process of the early twentieth century.

The Main Building had a two story extension (ca. 1968) added to the south elevation, and a small one story, brick office had been added to the west elevation, circa 1930. With the adoption of trucking for some forms of shipping, a window bay on the east elevation was converted to a loading bay, and a covered dock was added, circa 1930. The windows on the west elevation have been brick-infilled, and many of those on the east and north elevations have been boarded, but the original windows are evident where there is only partial covering. The Weave Department also has windows which have been converted to truck loading bays, specifically on the south and east elevations. As with the Main Building, some windows on the north and south elevations

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Mecklenburg County, N.C.

have been either boarded or infilled. The interiors of Main Building/Weave Department are largely unchanged.

The most extensive alterations have occurred in the Warehouse, where there has been extensive residing of the north and south elevations. The architectural integrity of this building is jeopardized by the removal of much of the original siding.

Main Building/Weave Department. 1912-1913; ca. 1924; and ca. 1968.  
Contributing.

Formerly two freestanding buildings when built in 1912 and 1913, the Main Building and the Weave Department are now connected by infill. The larger Main Building is located on the south side of the spur line, and to the north was the Weave Department.

The Main Building is a large, brick veneered, two and one-half story building, set on a raised basement, and measuring approximately 30 feet tall. The building has a rectangular, although almost square, plan with slightly gabled roof and projecting corner towers on the north elevation. These towers house stairwells and freight elevators. This building is set on a concrete slab foundation, and is supported by steel interior columns and steel I-beam rafters. The exterior vertical framing is probably the traditional heavy mill construction, which is reflected in the pilasters which project on the interior.

The brick walls are laid in an eight-course American bond, and the roof has wide, overhanging eaves. The eaves of the building are marked by stylized scrolled wooden brackets above a molded cornice. The roof is capped by a flat-roofed monitor, oriented east to west. The corner towers have low-pitched pyramidal roofs.

The walls are broken by large, symmetrical, segmental arch windows with four rows of brick headers. The sills are concrete. The first story is taller than the second, which is reflected in the window size. The windows are comprised of several, multiple light, pivot, wooden sash sections. Along the north and east elevations, the windows are extant but boarded over, and on the west elevation, the windows have been brick infilled. The raised basement has

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segment arched openings, but the small windows are now covered by the fill which has raised the ground level in this area. Industrial fans have been added to some of the window openings on the west elevation.

The interior of the Main Building consists of one large work space on each floor. This first floor room has concrete slab floors, steel columns, and exposed I-beam rafters. The staircase and freight elevators are located in a stairwell along the southwest corner. The northwest corner contains a small separate room which now leads to the infill. A modern office, constructed of removable partitions, projects into the main work room along the original south wall. The southwest stairwell contains a metal staircase to the upper floor, a freight elevator, and one exterior double door leading to the west elevation. The upper floor of the Main Building has the same open plan, with steel columns, I-beam rafters, but a hardwood floor. The monitor, however, has a wooden king post frame, and the monitor windows have been removed and vents added.

The Main Building has undergone some alterations and additions. At the northwest corner a narrow infill section was constructed to connect the Main Building with the Weave Department. On the east elevation, the infill has a brick veneer and two stories of tall, steel sash factory windows. The windows have flat arches of brick headers and concrete sills. The west elevation of the infill is sheathed in various forms of composition siding materials (some of which appears to be replacement), and there are no windows. The flat roof is hidden behind a flat parapet lined in terra cotta coping. The northernmost end bay of the east elevation (towards the rail line) contains a small loading bay which is now boarded. The southern end, adjacent to the exterior entrance to the freight elevator tower of the Main Building, is covered by a metal canopy roof. A tall, concrete block addition (circa 1968) with two interior sections is located along the west elevation. There are two tall loading bays in the north end of this addition.

The interior of the infill consists of a tall single story, and the plan is open. Counterweight, sliding fire doors lead to the Main Building and the Weave Department. A wooden, open staircase is located in the southwest corner. The interior framing consists of hollow iron columns and I-beam rafters. The interior west wall of the infill is sheathed in weatherboard.

A two story, brick addition (ca. 1968) was also built along the south elevation.

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This addition is two stories tall, although slightly shorter in height than the Main Building, and has a brick veneer, laid in five-course American bond, flat roof, small, aluminum sash windows on the first floor, and metal vents on the upper floor. A loading bay with partial infill is located on the east elevation of the addition. There are two additional loading bays on the south side, one of which has a concrete block dock. The interior is reached from the Main Building via the southwest stairwell. The open interior of the addition is broken only by I-beam columns and small truss rafters.

On the east elevation of the Main Building, a concrete truck loading dock and ramp were added, circa 1930. The loading bay is covered by a corrugated metal canopy supported by metal truss knee brackets. On the west elevation, there is a small, one story, brick addition with an exterior entrance. This brick addition also appears to have been constructed circa 1930.

The Weave Department is a two story tall, brick building with a flat roof, and sawtooth monitors. Because of topography, access on the south side leads to the second floor. This building repeats the same tall, segmental arch windows found in the Main Building, some of which have been boarded. The lower level has shorter windows of the same type, and several original double leaf, hinged, panelled wood and glass loading doors. The roof has wide, overhanging eaves with scrolled wooden knee brackets. A truck loading bay with overhead metal door and an office door have been cut into two of the bays along the south elevation. At the north end of the east elevation is a large, raised concrete dock covered by a gable roof. Two modern loading bays with overhead doors lead onto this dock. To the north of the dock is a two story, concrete staircase leading to an original pedestrian entrance. Above the double solid doors is a stylized fanlight. A matching door is located in the same position of the lower level. All the windows on the north elevation are boarded.

The interior of the upper floor is an open work area, broken only by steel columns and the Warren trusses which support the steel-framed sawtooth monitors. There are I-beam rafters and a wooden ceiling. The floor is hardwood with concrete sections, which may have been added to accommodate truck loading.

The interior of the lower floor has the heavy 12-inch horizontal timber members associated with heavy mill construction, but the columns are not mill

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(Former) Thrift Mill  
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construction. The lower floor has slender wooden columns with entasis and stylized classical caps.

Warehouse. ca. 1912. Non-contributing.

The Warehouse is a two story, brick building which is divided into units by tall, brick fire walls. The Warehouse has a roughly rectangular plan although there is an indentation in the west elevation that separates the north and south sections. The end walls rise to stepped parapets lined in terra cotta coping. At the east end is a projecting chimney with a standing seam metal, hip roof covering the opening. The roof of the warehouse is flat although there is a single sawtooth monitor, oriented north to south, in the westernmost section. Like the Weave Department, the second level of the warehouse is on-grade along the south elevation. Two parallel concrete ramps between the Weave Department and the Warehouse connect the south and north elevations of the two buildings. Both ramps appear to date to the 1920s, and one ramp has partially collapsed.

The only original loading bays and windows are found in the westernmost bay of the south elevation and on the short west elevation. The windows are small, segmental arch, half, pivot windows flanked by a segmental arch loading bay. The other sections are covered in a replacement vertical panelling with modern overhead doors to the loading bays. A concrete dock with concrete piers lines the south elevation. The north elevation, facing the rail tracks, has a corrugated metal siding and some modern pedestrian doors. Several original wooden sash, pivot windows are evident on the second floor of the north elevation. A raised concrete dock also extends along the north elevation.

Storage Shed. ca. 1912. Contributing.

The storage shed is a small, brick shed with a rectangular plan and flat roof. There is a single entrance, with wooden door, on the east elevation. The storage shed is located at the rear of the property between Water Tower No. 2 and the Weave Department.

Reservoir. ca. 1912. Contributing.

Set on-grade, the reservoir is a round pond, with a 300,000 gallon capacity, which is located just east of the pump houses, near the railroad right-of-way. The reservoir has brick walls lined with concrete. Pipes leading from the Reservoir to Pump House No. 2 are visible. There is a partial break in the wall

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in one section.

Water Tower No. 1. ca. 1925. Contributing.

The water tower is located northwest of the Pump House No. 1 along the railroad right-of-way. The tower frame is constructed of lattice channel piers and cross bracing, and the tank is constructed of fabricated steel panels with riveted connections. The steel roofs of the tanks are conical.

Water Tower No. 2. ca. 1925. Contributing.

The water tower is located northwest of water tower No. 1 and directly north of the storage shed. The tower frame is constructed of lattice channel piers and cross bracing, and the tank is constructed of fabricated steel panels with riveted connections. The steel roofs of the tanks are conical.

Pump House No. 1. ca. 1925. Contributing.

Pump house No. 1 is a small, one story, flat roofed, brick structure with a wooden door facing the Reservoir to the east and a wooden sash window on the east elevation. Pump house No. 1 is situated next to the railroad right of way between water tower No. 1 and the reservoir.

Pump House No. 2. ca. 1912. Non-contributing.

Pump house No. 2 is in ruinous condition. This small, one story, flat roofed, brick structure has a door opening facing the reservoir to the east and a window opening on the east elevation. The door and window are no longer extant. There is a deteriorated door on the east elevation, sited below grade. The door has a segmental arched opening covered by a front gable roof supported by knee brackets. A section of this pump house seems to be missing because the tall south wall appears to have been an interior fire wall. In addition, a major portion of the roof is no longer extant. Pump house No. 2 is situated at the northeast corner of the Weave Department loading dock.

Electrical Substation. ca. 1968. Non-contributing.

Located on the west side of the property, opposite the Main Building, the electrical substation is an uncovered electrical unit enclosed by a chain link fence.

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(Former) Thrift Mill  
Mecklenburg County, N.C.

## 8. Summary

The (Former) Thrift Mill meets National Register Criterion A in the area of Industry as an important example of the textile mills that arose in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, and throughout the region during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although the mill complex has undergone exterior modifications, including several major additions during the 1920s and 1968-1969, it retains significant elements of design. The interiors of the buildings are essentially intact, and the exteriors exhibit banks of original windows, original entrances, and roof designs characteristic of early twentieth-century textile mills. The basic geography of the complex also remains largely intact, illustrating the original orientation of the complex to the railway, the road, and adjacent mill village. A locally designated Historic Property in Mecklenburg County, the 1912-1913 mill complex is dominated by the main building, the weave department, which was attached to the main building about 1924, and a separate warehouse. Brick constructed, the main building is located at the south side of the complex and features a monitor that runs the length of the building. The substantial brick weave department, located to the north, is distinguished by its saw-tooth roof configuration. East of the weave department is the warehouse, characterized by brick firewalls, wooden front and rear walls, and concrete loading docks. Under Criterion A, the mill complex and its rail-oriented geography clearly illustrate the New South industrialization of Mecklenburg County and the city of Charlotte, which emerged as a center of the burgeoning textile industry in the Piedmont. As a manufacturer of unfinished "grey" cotton cloth, Thrift Mill was one of the largest and most productive of the textile factories constructed along railroad lines that transected the county and converged on Charlotte during the heyday of cotton mill construction. By 1915, Mecklenburg County boasted 22 mills, and it ranked among the top three textile-manufacturing counties in the state into the middle 1920s. During this decade, the textile belt of the Piedmont South surpassed New England to become the world's principal textile region, with North Carolina achieving the status as America's number one textile manufacturing state.

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(Former) Thrift Mill  
Mecklenburg Co., N.C.

**Historical Background and Industrial Context**

Established in 1912, approximately seven miles northwest of Charlotte, in Mecklenburg County, the (Former) Thrift Mill is significant as an important and tangible reminder of the flourishing textile industry that transformed Charlotte, the county, and the entire southern Piedmont during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After the Civil War and the rebuilding and expansion of railroads in the South, leaders of the region began a drive for a New South based on manufacturing and urban growth rather than agriculture (Lefler and Newsome 1954, 474-489). The South's new economic base was to rest largely on cotton textile production. As southern historian C. Vann Woodward has stated, "The mill was the symbol of the New South, its origins and its promise of salvation" ( Woodward 1951, 31).

Consequently, in the southern Piedmont, and particularly in North Carolina, the rise of the New South was synonymous with the "Cotton Mill Campaign," which dated from the 1880s to the eve of World War I. During these decades, the number of textile mills in the state grew fivefold, from 60 to 318 (Glass 1992, 34). As early as 1906, Charlotte boosters celebrated the fact that "within the radius of 100 miles of Charlotte, there are more than 300 cotton mills, containing over one-half the looms and spindles in the South" (Hanchett 1985, 70). By the 1920s, the Piedmont South had surpassed New England to become the world's preeminent textile manufacturing region, and a local newspaper article proclaimed that Charlotte had become "unquestionably the center of the South's textile manufacturing industry (Mitchell and Mitchell 1930; *Charlotte Observer*, October 28, 1928)." The city had emerged as the capital of a textile mini-state, with a population that had skyrocketed from approximately 7,000 in 1880, to over 82,000 by 1929, the largest urban population in the Carolinas (Sixteenth Census 1940).

While cotton mills first appeared in Mecklenburg County in 1852, and in Charlotte in 1881, local textile manufacturing soared during the 1890s and early 1900s, when major facilities arose near the county towns of Pineville, Cornelius, Huntersville, and Davidson, as well as in North Charlotte (Hanchett 1986; Morrill 1979; Mattson and Pickens 1989). By 1900, Mecklenburg County boasted 16 mills, and 22 by 1915. The county ranked among the state's top three textile-producing counties until the middle 1920s. In their scale of operation--which usually included a related mill village--and in their orientation to railroads, local textile plants reflected a new era in the industrial development of the South. Steam-powered machinery, and later electric power, in tandem

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with railroad transportation, freed these mills from traditional riverside locations. Furthermore, the great majority, including the (Former) Thrift Mill, were established on "suburban" factory sites linked by rail, thus creating a dispersed pattern of industrial development. This dispersal allowed textile company owners to develop relatively inexpensive rural land that was free of local property taxes and the jurisdiction of local government, but with access to rail lines and electrical power. Such mill locations characterized the proliferation of the Piedmont textile industry during the decades before World War I (Rhyne 1930, 43; Hall, et al. 1987, 116-117; Glass 1992, 42).

The (Former) Thrift Mill was strategically sited along the Piedmont and Northern Railway, in a small farming community known as Thrift (Gatza 1992, 3). The Piedmont and Northern was an important electric-powered line that extended for 150 miles west from Charlotte. By 1912, the railroad had erected a passenger depot near the mill, and by the date of completion of the line, in 1914, it connected Charlotte with a host of burgeoning textile-mill communities, including Gastonia, in neighboring Gaston County, North Carolina. The railway provided interurban passenger service as well as delivered freight to a growing industrial base in the region. Indeed, the railway generated such rapid development of textile factories that its slogan "A Mill to the Mile" was a reality along most of the line (Glass 1992, 57-58).

The land for the Thrift Mill was purchased in August 1912 for \$15,000 by the Thayer Manufacturing Company (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 291, p. 558). A textile concern based in Massachusetts, Thayer had its principal office in Charlotte. However, since the company was unable to pay its debts, it was ordered by the court to sell the property at public sale on June 2, 1913. The highest and only bid received was from the Thrift Manufacturing Company, which purchased the property for \$59,000 in cash and \$127,000 in stock. In exchange, the Thrift Manufacturing Company was deeded 120 acres and the existing buildings. The deed recorded the following:

Factory building 154 x 225, two stories high; and weave shed 163 x 120, with a saw tooth roof, and basement; boiler room 42 x 46; brick chimney 450 H.P.; pump room 21 x 22; cotton warehouse 100 x 100; cotton opening room 31 x 42; also ten cottages for operatives (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 312, pp. 275-276).

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(Former) Thrift Mill  
Mecklenburg County, N.C.

The Thrift Manufacturing Company operated for only 12 years, manufacturing print cloth. However, during this period the mill emerged as one of the major textile producers in the county. In 1915, for example, the plant contained 26,000 spindles, 600 looms, and 56 cards, which were powered by steam as well as electricity. By comparison, an average North Carolina mill in 1915 included 10,000 spindles per mill (Glass 1992, 35). In Mecklenburg County, the 1903-1904 Highland Park Mill No. 3, for example, which was largest textile operation in the county in the early twentieth century, had 20,000 spindles and 1,000 looms. The 1916 Johnston Mill, located near the Highland Park complex in North Charlotte, contained 12,000 spindles (Huffman 1984, 1993; Morrill 1979; Mattson and Pickens 1989). The Thrift Mill in 1915 employed 157 operatives, which made it the fourth largest labor force of the cotton mills in the county. To accommodate these employees, the company erected scores of identical frame, one-story dwellings along streets directly west of the mill. By the early 1920s, the work force had increased to over 250, and the numbers of spindles and looms rose to 30,000 and 676, respectively (N.C. Department of Labor and Printing 1915, 1922-23; Thompson 1926, 143).

In 1924, the property was transferred to Henry P. Kendall, of Walpole, Massachusetts (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 559, p. 329). Described in the *Charlotte News* as a "Boston Capitalist," Kendall, in a statement to the local press, declared the mill as "one of the outstanding cotton goods plants in the entire South, and of the country. Its product is known nationally as ranking with the best products anywhere." Praising Charlotte as well, Kendall enthused:

I am delighted with what I have come to know of North Carolina and of Charlotte in particular. You have a wonderful city here and one that is destined to expand into one of the great populous centers of the Southeast. Everything that a city needs to make it develop in a business and industrial way, you have down here  
(*Charlotte News*, March 25, 1924)

Kendall also announced his plans to enlarge the mill at Thrift and erect new operatives' cottages. During the 1920s, more equipment was installed, a two-story addition connected the main plant to the rear weave department, the existing pair of steel water towers were presumably built--one serving the mill, the other the adjacent village--and bungalow-style cottages and other amenities were constructed along new streets west and south of the factory complex (Gatza 1992, 4; Thompson 1926, 143).

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(Former) Thrift Mill  
Mecklenburg County, N.C.

The Kendall acquisition of the Thrift Mill was one of a series of purchases that contributed to the expansion of his business into a textile giant. The Kendall empire had its beginnings as a small bleachery employing fewer than 80 workers in Walpole, Massachusetts in 1903. By 1948, the company had more than 7,000 employees in 18 plants worldwide. The domestic plants were located in New England (5), South Carolina (6), North Carolina (1), and the Midwest (2). Foreign facilities were based in Canada, Mexico, Cuba, and Argentina (Gatza 1991, 4; *The Kendall Story* 1948, 1,9). The company publication in 1948 stated that Kendall's three divisions--Kendall Mills Grey, Kendall Mills Finishing, and Bauer & Black (surgical dressings)--operated both as independent and interdependent units. Each division served the other as supplier or customer. The Grey Division produced "grey" cloth, which was woven, but unbleached and unfinished cotton cloth. This grey cloth was shipped either to the Finishing Division, where the material was transformed into such consumer goods as cotton balls, mosquito netting, milk filters, and diapers sold under the "Curity" trademark, or to Bauer & Black for the manufacture of items like gauze bandages and pads, and athletic supporters (*The Kendall Story* 1948, 1-5, 7, 21, 24).

The mill at Thrift was the headquarters for the Grey Division, also called the Cotton Mill Division. Here, the factory employed largely unskilled labor that transformed the raw, baled cotton into the intermediate product, grey cloth, for shipment to the other divisions at prices much lower than in the open market. This production of unfinished cotton cloth was typical of the Piedmont mills with weaving departments, which mainly produced heavy woven goods used in industrial fabrics and clothing for working people (Glass 1992, 35).

The Kendall Company owned and operated the mill until 1958. Since that date, the property has passed through a number of owners and has operated in a variety of capacities. Kendall sold the mill to the Allen Knitting Mills, which operated a knitting mill, dye works, and bonding mill at the plant. The latter mill, operating under the name United Bonding Company, produced laminated fabrics made by sandwiching a foam core between a backing fabric and facing fabric (Gatza 1992, 5). In 1968, the Allen Knitting Mills had the brick addition built across the south elevation. In 1973, the property was transferred to Standard Textile Mills, Inc. At that time, the knitting and bonding mills were closed and only the dye works remained. Between 1973 and 1980, the existing wooden walls and metal doors appear to have been installed along the south elevation of the cotton warehouse.

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(Former) Thrift Mill  
Mecklenburg County, N.C.

In 1980, Standard Textile Mills defaulted on a 1.85- million-dollar loan, and in the following year the property was sold at public auction. Donrick Trade Center, a father-son partnership, purchased the mill in 1982, using the premises for a warehouse and auction center. In 1989, Warehouses Investors of South Carolina acquired the property and today leases space primarily for general warehousing (Gatza 1992, 5; Mecklenburg County Deed Books 4306, p. 687, 4521, p. 843; 6130, p. 926).

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Mecklenburg County, N.C.

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Mecklenburg County, N.C.

**10. Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

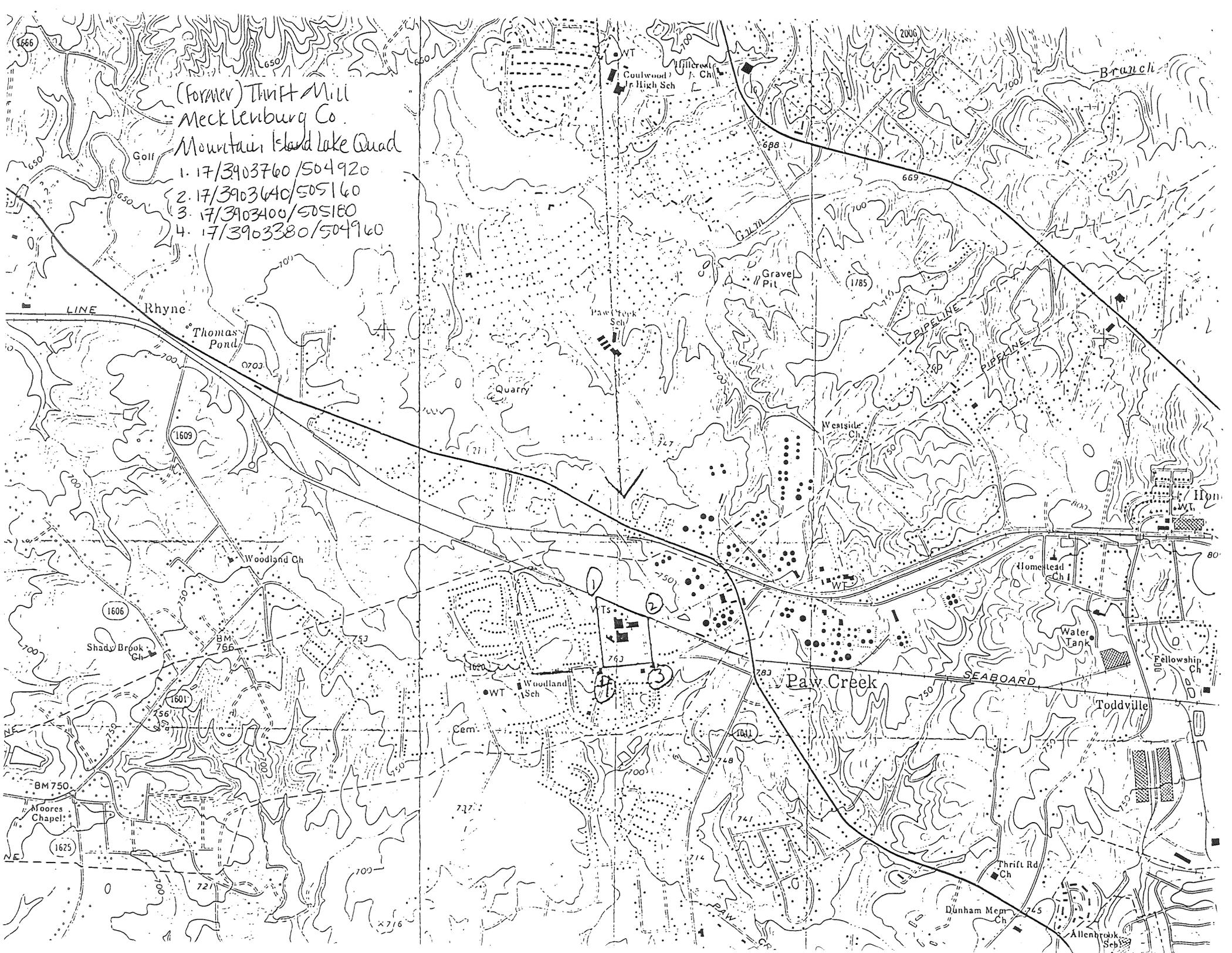
The nominated property is the approximately 16-acre tract comprising tax parcels 1, 2, 3 and 11, as shown on the Mecklenburg County Tax Map - Book 55, Page 01 - in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property consists of the four tax parcels comprising all of the surviving industrial resources historically associated with the (Former) Thrift Mill. The nominated property includes the 11.251-acre locally designated Historic Property tract, which contains the primary buildings, and the adjoining 4.513-acre parcel to the south, which was historically part of the Thrift Mill property. The latter parcel physically links the mill to the original roadway (Moore's Chapel Road). Both parcels have the same owner and constituted one tax parcel until the mill's local historic designation in 1992. The boundary also encompasses two smaller tax parcels containing a contributing water tower (parcel #1) and a noncontributing power substation (parcel #2). Both parcels are located inside the larger historic boundary for the mill complex and are therefore included as part of this district nomination.

(former) Thrift Mill  
Mecklenburg Co.  
Mountain Island Lake Quad

1. 17/3903760/504920
2. 17/3903640/505160
3. 17/3903400/505180
4. 17/3903380/504960





(FORMER) THRIFT MILL  
 SITE PLAN  
 MECKLENBURG CO., N.C.

Contributing Buildings  
 Main Building/Weave Department

Contributing Structures  
 Storage Structure  
 Pump House (#1)  
 Water Tower (#1)  
 Water Tower (#2)  
 Reservoir

Noncontributing Building  
 Warehouse

Noncontributing Structures  
 Substation  
 Pump House (#2)

*↗ indicates photograph # and vintage point*

