

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 Main Street Historic District Boundary Expansion
other names/site number Florence Mill

2. Location

street & number 186 Mill Street N/A not for publication
city or town Forest City N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Rutherford code 161 zip code 28043

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] SHPO 4/21/04
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
North Carolina Department of 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:)	Signature of the Keeper _____ _____ _____ _____	Date of Action _____ _____ _____ _____
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Main Street Historic District
Boundary Expansion
Name of Property

Rutherford County, 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 count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	1	buildings
0	0	sites
1	4	structures
0	0	objects
5	5	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

58

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY: Manufacturing Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT: Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Heavy Timber Mill Construction

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls BRICK
roof ASPHALT
other CONCRETE

Narrative Description

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

Main Street Historic District
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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

1897-1954

Significant Dates

1897

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Main Street Historic District
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>421320</u>	<u>3910050</u>	3	<u>17</u>	<u>421440</u>	<u>3909900</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>17</u>	<u>421420</u>	<u>3910020</u>	4	<u>17</u>	<u>421280</u>	<u>3909920</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 Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. date 1/28/2004
street & number 3334 Nottingham Road telephone 336-768-6551
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 Cone Mills Corporation Florence Plant
street & number 804 Green Valley Road, Suite 300; P.O. Box 26540 telephone 336-379-6220
city or town Greensboro state NC zip code 27415-6540

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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Main Street Historic District Boundary Expansion
Rutherford County, NC

7. Narrative Description

The Main Street Historic District Boundary Expansion is located south of Main Street in Forest City, the largest town in Rutherford County. The boundary expansion, which comprises the five-acre Florence Mill complex, is bounded by the Main Street Historic District to the north, Mill Street to the east, Florence Street to the south and Depot Street to the west. The mill complex includes four contributing buildings, one contributing structure, one noncontributing building and four noncontributing structures situated on a site that slopes down in elevation from the east to the west. Consequently, some of the buildings are built into the grade. The only landscaped section of the property is a small area between the façade of the original mill building and Florence Street. The remainder of the site was paved to facilitate the movement of people and equipment.

The original Florence Mill building (1897) is at the southern end of the property. A few trees, evergreen shrubs and a swath of grass accent the front (south) elevation. A transformer yard and large HVAC unit are centrally located in front of the mill. A flat-roofed metal canopy covers a concrete ramp between the rear (north) elevation of the original mill and a 1922-23 building that served as a warehouse, boiler room and opener room. A wall on the western side of the ramp further shelters the area. Two round metal silos are located west of the wall between the original mill and the 1922-23 warehouse. A paved parking lot is north of the 1897 building. Directly north of the 1922-23 building are a 1941 warehouse at the western edge of the property and a 1976 warehouse to the east. The buildings are linked by a series of concrete ramps and metal canopies. A 1932 warehouse, originally the Hewitt Motor Company, faces Mill Street at the northern edge of the boundary expansion area. A large water storage tank used by the Forest City Fire Department is located adjacent to Mill Street. The concrete base of Pure Oil storage tanks remains near the Mill Street entrance to the complex. A tall chain-link fence separates the mill complex from the rest of Forest City. The Southern Railroad tracks are just south of the complex and Florence Street.

The surrounding area contains a mix of commercial, religious and residential buildings. The Main Street Historic District abuts the northern boundary of the mill property. Buildings adjacent to the Florence Mill complex that are already included in the Main Street Historic District are the 1925 Blanton Hotel, the circa 1925 Forest Dale Laundry

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Building, a 1930s Florence Mill Warehouse, the 1922 First Wesleyan Church and the circa 1920 Morris Baking Company Building. The Florence Mill village was located south and west of the mill complex, but only two mill houses remain. Public housing replaced the mill village south of the railroad tracks.

The following inventory of the Florence Mill complex is arranged in a clockwise fashion beginning with the original mill building.

Florence Mill 1897, 1925, 1970s, 1980s, Contributing Building

The Florence Mill is a rectangular, two-story-on-basement, shallow-pitched and flat-roofed building with a series of additions on the front (south) and rear (north) elevations. The mill, which is approximately 450 feet wide and 125 feet deep, was built into the grade, so that the eastern half appears to have two stories and the western half three. A variance in brick color between the first and second stories of the eastern half of the mill indicates that section of the building was initially one story. The mill was executed in red brick laid in one-to-six common bond with decorative elements such as corbelled cornices and segmental arched window openings with cast-stone sills. All of the windows were removed and the window openings filled in with brick when the mill was air-conditioned in the late 1960s. The monitor-roofed skylight, which originally illuminated the western half of the second story, was removed from the roof of the main building at the same time.

Seventy percent of the façade of the original Florence Mill building is obscured by one and two-story brick Cone Mills additions from the 1970s and 1980s. These additions, constructed primarily to house mechanical equipment, were simply tacked onto the exterior walls of the original building. The main stair tower on the original façade was encompassed in one of the additions and its corbelled Italianate tower shortened to roof level. Three additional stair towers were also incorporated into the new façade. A metal fire escape and exhaust pipe were added to the western end of the façade as part of the Cone Mills improvements.

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The two-story, flat-roofed, brick packer house, boiler house and engine house that extend from the rear of the main building were constructed in 1897. The stepped parapet roof of the packer house, where yarn was spun into packages and put into cardboard cases, is visible above the roofline of the main building. The boiler house and engine house are not as tall. A brick boiler was built in place in the boiler house in the early 1900s. The original round brick smokestack is adjacent to the boiler house. A 1925 two-story, flat-roofed brick addition projects from the west elevation of the packer house and a 1980s one-story, flat-roofed, brick, six-bay loading dock addition extends from the east elevation of the engine house across the rear elevation of the main building.

The interior of the mill retains lacquered maple plank floors, exposed brick walls and heavy timber construction with chamfered wood posts and joists joined by steel gusset plates that supported the heavy machinery on each floor. Most of the production processes occurred in the original building, which housed the carding, spinning, spooling, warping, weaving and dyeing departments. The beamers and warpers were located on the second floor. Beams of yarn were moved through a slasher, which applied starch to the yarn to make it stiffer and stronger to weave. The beams, which were six feet long and three feet in diameter, were stored on stands in the basement. The weave room was on the first floor along with a small café, the mill offices and the supply room.¹ The wood stairs in each stair tower were replaced with steel stairs as the mill was modernized, but the original brick walls are intact under many layers of paint.

Smokestack 1897, Contributing Structure

The original round brick smokestack is located in between the boiler house and the loading dock and rises to a height of 125 feet.

¹ Former Employees of Cone Mills Florence Plant, Interview by the author, 1 March 2004, Forest City.

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Starch Storage Silos Circa 1970s, Noncontributing Structures

Two round metal silos, each with a storage capacity of 57,500 pounds of starch, are located west of the metal canopy and concrete ramp between the original mill and the 1922-23 warehouse. The silos were used to store the starch that was applied to the yarn before fabric was woven.

Warehouse 1922-23, Contributing Building

The warehouse is a two-story, four-part, shallow-pitched and flat-roofed, rectangular building composed of red brick laid in one-to-six common bond and running bond on the first story and a combination of German wood and vinyl siding on the stud walls of the second story. A section of the roof on the east end of the building was raised in the 1990s in order to accommodate new machinery. Three sections of the building functioned as warehouses and one section served as an opener, or picker room, where cotton bales were opened and blended. A boiler room is on the first floor of the easternmost section of the building. Some original equipment remains in the boiler room. An elevator tower located near the center of the southern elevation of the building moved product and machinery to the upper level of the concrete ramp joining the warehouse and the original mill. The warehouse interior retains wide plank floors, brick and wood-sheathed walls and exposed heavy timber construction. Each section of the warehouse is still a large, open space.

Warehouse 1941, Contributing Building

The warehouse is a three-story, flat-roofed, rectangular building executed in red brick laid in one-to-seven common bond. Tiers of metal casement windows with cast-stone lintels and sills illuminate the interior. Wood sliding doors on each level provided for the easy delivery and removal of materials, equipment and product. A brick elevator shaft projects from the east elevation and rises above the roofline. Metal stairs are located adjacent to the elevator shaft. The interior retains wide plank floors, brick walls and

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exposed heavy timber construction. The wood posts were reinforced with steel in the 1970s and 1980s when Cone Mills began using tow motors, as the motors weighed between four and eight thousand pounds.

Warehouse 1932, Contributing Building

This building, located at the northern edge of the mill complex, originally served as a showroom for the Hewitt Motor Company and was converted into a cotton storage warehouse in the 1940s. The one-story-on-basement building was executed in red brick laid in running bond, with a blonde brick, parapeted façade that faces Mill Street. The bowstring roof is supported by steel trusses that rest on interior brick pilasters. A square brick smokestack rises from the rear of the roofline at the party wall with the laundry. All of the large showroom windows on the façade and north and south elevations are filled in with concrete block. The interior is a large, open room with painted brick walls.

Warehouse 1976, Noncontributing Building

A flat-roofed, open, metal canopy supported by pipe columns and a concrete ramp connect the 1941 warehouse to the 1976 warehouse, which is located north of the 1922-23 warehouse and east of the 1941 warehouse. The warehouse is a one-story, flat-roofed, windowless, rectangular building executed in red brick laid in running bond.

Water Storage Tank Circa 1960s, Noncontributing Structure

The Forest City Fire Department stores water in a large, round, metal tank on Cone Mills property adjacent to Mill Street. The tank, with a capacity of 100,000 gallons, was installed when the mill updated its water system in the 1960s. A one-story, shed-roofed, square, windowless, brick building projects from the southeastern side of the tank. A double-leaf door sheltered by a flat-roofed canopy provides access to the building.

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Pure Oil Storage Tank Base Circa 1960s, Noncontributing Structure

A concrete-lined pit and series of semi-circular open concrete supports for oil tanks are located adjacent to Mill Street northeast of the original mill building. The mill started using fuel oil rather than coal in the 1960s.

Summary Statement

The Main Street Historic District Boundary Expansion, consisting of the five-acre Florence Mill complex, is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of industry. The Florence Mill was completed in 1897 and operated continuously until 2001, producing cotton sheeting, flannel, corduroy and denim. Cone Mills acquired ownership of the majority of the company stock by 1940 and the property became known as Cone Mills Florence Plant in 1953. The Florence Mill is significant for its role in the evolution of the textile industry in Rutherford County and the development of Forest City. The period of significance for the Florence Mill begins in 1897, when the main mill building was constructed, and ends in 1954. Even though Florence Mill continued to operate after 1954, this period is not of exceptional significance.

Rutherford County Textile Industry Context

Rutherford County was formed from Tryon County in 1779 and named for Griffith Rutherford, an Indian fighter, member of the Provincial Congress and Revolutionary War general. Rutherfordton, incorporated in 1793, is the county seat. The county's population, isolated by poor roads, consisted primarily of subsistence farmers until the introduction of the textile industry in the late nineteenth century. The powerful Broad and Second Broad Rivers in the southeastern section of the county provided the incentive for local investors to build waterpowered textile mills, and the arrival of the railroad in the county created an outlet for cash crops and accelerated industrial development.²

² Kimberly I. Merkel, *The Historic Architecture of Rutherford County* (Forest City: Rutherford County Arts Council, 1983), 3,4.

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Although plans for railroad lines through Rutherford County were in place before the Civil War, it was not until 1887 that the Wilmington, Charlotte and Rutherford (Seaboard) Railroad reached Forest City and Rutherfordton. The Southern Railroad, which ran from Charleston to Cincinnati and Chicago, soon followed, arriving in Rutherfordton by way of Forest City in 1890. The Cliffside Railroad connected Cliffside Mills on the Second Broad River in the southeastern corner of the county to the Seaboard Railroad by 1907. The Clinchfield, Carolina and Ohio Railroad was completed through the county in 1909, at which time twelve passenger trains stopped in Forest City daily.³

Raleigh Rutherford Haynes and his partner, Simpson B. Tanner, are credited with bringing the modern textile industry to Rutherford County about the same time the first railroad lines arrived.⁴ R. R. Haynes was born to Charles Hodge and Sarah Walker Haynes on June 30, 1851 in the small southeastern Rutherford County farming community of Ferry. He was the fourth of eight children, and the oldest boy. Charles Haynes died at the age of thirty-five, and Raleigh learned how to manage the farm. He spent two years in Union County, South Carolina learning about cotton cultivation. Upon his return to Ferry, Raleigh and four partners opened a sawmill, cotton gin and general store. Raleigh married Amanda Loretta Carpenter of Ferry in 1874 and they had eight children, most of whom later worked in their father's businesses. The family moved to Shelby for two years in 1879, and then returned to Ferry. Amanda became ill and died on February 2, 1890. Raleigh married Miss Litia Kelly, a teacher, several years later. She passed away shortly thereafter. The Haynes family moved to Charlotte for a time for the children to attend school, but soon came back to the mill village of Henrietta, where they lived until Raleigh built a new house in the Cliffside mill village. The family also had a home in Florida called Avondale.⁵

³ Ibid., 20; William B. Bynum, ed., *The Heritage of Rutherford County, Volume I* (Forest City: Genealogical Society of Old Tryon County, Inc., 1984), 27.

⁴ Kimberly I. Merkel, *The Historic Architecture of Rutherford County*, 20-21. Earlier attempts at establishing cotton mills in Rutherford County were short-lived, failing due to a lack of capital and equipment.

⁵ Ina Fortune Haynes, *Raleigh Rutherford Haynes: A History of His Life and Achievements* (Cliffside, 1954), 3, 5, 7-9.

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Simpson B. Tanner was born in Spartanburg County, South Carolina on December 8, 1854. Like R. R. Haynes, Tanner had diverse business interests but focused most of his efforts on the textile industry. He was a corporate officer in all of his joint ventures with Haynes and in later years developed the mills at Spindale with his son, K. S. Tanner.

S. B. Tanner was nationally recognized for his expertise in the manufacture of textiles and was elected president of the American Cotton Growers Association in 1907. The Tanner family lived in Charlotte for many years, but eventually moved to Rutherfordton to be closer to their businesses.⁶

R. R. Haynes began to acquire land in the High Shoals area of the Second Broad River as potential locations for textile mills in 1885. His partners included Simpson B. Tanner, J. S. Spencer and J. M. Scott. Work on the first mill, named Henrietta after Simpson Tanner's mother-in-law, Mrs. Henrietta Spencer, commenced in 1887. When the Henrietta Mill was completed in 1893 it was the largest textile plant in North Carolina. The mill started out with 10,000 spindles and soon increased to 28,000. The second Henrietta Mill, with 48,000 spindles, was constructed in the nearby community of Caroleen in 1896.⁷

Haynes and his partners financed the construction of the Florence Mill in Forest City in 1897, but Haynes sold his interest in the mill soon after completion of the new building to concentrate on other endeavors. Florence Mill continued to be an extremely significant force in the growth and development of Forest City, as evidenced by the fact that Forest City tripled in population after the mill and railroads came – growing from a small community of 419 residents in 1890 to a booming town of 1592 residents in 1910. Haynes began purchasing property along the Second Broad River for a new mill, Cliffside, or Haynes Plant No. 1, in 1899. The mill, completed in 1902, was one of the

⁶ Clarence W. Griffin, *The History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties, 1730-1936* (Spartanburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Company, 1977), 598-599.

⁷ Ibid., 595; W.E. Christian, "Life Story of Late Raleigh Rutherford Haynes," *The Charlotte Observer*, March 11, 1917; Ina Fortune Haynes, *Raleigh Rutherford Haynes*, 11.

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last waterpowered mills in Rutherford County and the largest gingham mill in the southern states at the time of its construction.⁸

The development of textile mills in Rutherford County created not only jobs, but entire communities, as small self-sufficient villages evolved to sustain mill workers and their families. Villages containing homes, schools, churches and company stores were built adjacent to the mills and soon boasted sizable populations. Most mill workers brought the habits and accoutrements of life on the farm to their new setting. Southern mill village design thus allowed for enough room for small gardens and livestock pens behind the company houses. This practice provided sustenance for the families in addition to some extra income from the sale of any surplus commodities.⁹

The Haynes family continued to develop new mill properties and contribute to the growth of southeastern Rutherford County after R. R. Haynes died in St. Petersburg, Florida in 1917. Charles H. Haynes opened Haynes Plant No. 2 in Avondale in 1917 and financed the construction of the first modern school building in Rutherford County, an impressive brick Classical Revival-style edifice, at Cliffside in 1921. Haynes' former partner Simpson B. Tanner also continued to influence the development of the textile industry in Rutherford County through the establishment of the mill group at Spindale in 1916.¹⁰

The relationship between R. R. Haynes and the Cone family began in the 1880s when the Cone brothers, Moses and Ceasar, sold wholesale groceries to Haynes' general store in Ferry. Cone Export and Commission Company, established in 1891 to market the fabric of southern textile companies, was later a selling agent for Cliffside Mills. The Cone Brothers created Proximity Manufacturing Company in Greensboro in 1895 to weave

⁸ Griffin, *The History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties*, 596-597.

⁹ 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* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987), 114-115.

¹⁰ Ina Fortune Haynes, *Raleigh Rutherford Haynes*, 21; Griffin, *The History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties*, 596.

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denim in close proximity to cotton fields, gins, warehouses and railroad lines. In 1898 the Cones introduced a very finely woven flannel, produced by their Revolution Cotton Mills. Proximity Print Works opened in 1912 and manufactured multicolored printed fabrics.¹¹

Cone Mills began producing denim for Levi Strauss & Co. in 1915 and remains the exclusive supplier for denim used in Levi's 501 jeans worldwide. Cone Mills became the first company to utilize dyes other than indigo to create denim in colors other than blue in 1917. Continuing changes in the textile industry resulted in the consolidation of small textile companies into large umbrella corporations. In 1927 Cone Mills bought two of Rutherford County mills built by Raleigh Rutherford Haynes – Cliffside Mill and Haynes Mill. The Martel Company purchased the Henrietta and Caroleen Mills in 1928, and was subsequently bought out by Cone Mills.¹²

As the mechanization of the textile industry resulted in the loss of jobs, decreased pay and poor working conditions, unions found more support in mill employees. Mill workers across the South participated in the General Textile Strike of 1934, which closed down all but two Rutherford County textile mills. Increased production associated with World War II resulted in some resurgence for the southern textile industry, but did not provide the impetus to save many small companies.¹³

Cone Mills acquired ownership of the majority of Florence Mill's company stock by 1940 and the property became known as Cone Mills Florence Plant in 1953. Cone Mills continued to be a pioneer in the American textile industry, becoming the first company to

¹¹ Alex Coffin, "The Cone Family," *The North Carolina Century: Tar Heels Who Made a Difference, 1900-2000* (Charlotte: Levine Museum of the New South, 2002), 133; Ina Fortune Haynes, *Raleigh Rutherford Haynes*, 25.

¹² *A Century of Excellence: The History of Cone Mills, 1891 to 1991* (Greensboro: Cone Mills Corporation, 1991), 25-26.

¹³ Hall et. al, *Like a Family*, 202-208; William B. Bynum, ed., *The Heritage of Rutherford County, Volume I*, xxv.

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manufacture and market stretch denim in 1962, develop permanent press fabrics in 1964 and introduce bleached denim in 1969. The economic impact of Cone Mills remains significant in Rutherford County, even with recent layoffs. The anticipated buyout of Cone Mills by financier Wilbur Ross will consolidate Cone Mills and Burlington Industries.¹⁴

Florence Mill is one of several extant late-nineteenth-century textile mill complexes in Rutherford County. The mid-nineteenth-century Cleghorn Mill in Rutherfordton was expanded in 1895 and at several times in the twentieth century. A mill village composed of one-story gabled cottages and bungalows is north and east of the brick mill. The 1896 Caroleen Cotton Mill is a two-story brick building with arched windows and a tower, very much in keeping with the original appearance of the Florence Mill. A small depot and many of the one-story, board-and-batten mill houses remain. Although the 1893 Henrietta Mill No. 1 was razed in the late twentieth century, the Haynes Brick Store and quite a few two-story, frame duplexes survive in the community of Henrietta. The 1902 Cliffside Mill complex consists of a most impressive, original four-story brick mill characterized by arched windows and a six-story stair tower, and later mill buildings that line the river. Most of the worker housing and community buildings were razed in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁵

Florence Mill History

Raleigh Rutherford Haynes, S. B. Tanner, Dr. T. B. Lovelace and S. O. Smith of Rutherford County, and B. D. Heath, a banker from Mecklenburg County, purchased the Forest City Cotton Mill in 1892. The 1896 *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory* lists R. R. Haynes as president of Florence Mill and S. B. Tanner as treasurer. The

¹⁴ *A Century of Excellence: The History of Cone Mills*, 27, 37; "Cone Mills Lands Bankruptcy Financing," *The Business Journal of the Greater Triad Area*, December 15, 2003.

¹⁵ Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern and Jennifer F. Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 176-179.

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capital stock of the mill was valued at \$40,000. Fifty employees used five bales of raw material daily to produce 2,000 pounds of yarn.¹⁶

The operation soon outgrew the 1885 building in which it was housed, so the partners razed the existing mill and erected a new building in 1897. G. Kelly Moore, later a foreman at Cliffside, supervised the construction of the new mill, which was named after Haynes' eldest daughter. Florence Mill was one of the first mills that did not rely on waterpower, and with 12,000 spindles, 200 Draper looms and 200 Lowell looms was regarded as an extremely ambitious undertaking for that time.¹⁷

Haynes sold his interest in Florence Mill to concentrate on the construction of the Cliffside Mill. A May 1902 article in *The Weekly Times*, a short-lived Forest City newspaper, lists J. S. Spencer as the president of Florence Mill, S. B. Tanner as the secretary and treasurer and E. J. Barnett as the superintendent. The mill is described as being "100 feet wide and 400 feet in length, and three stories high, except the weave room, which is only one story." Florence Mill employed 350 people at that time under the supervision of M. D. Harris, L. H. Hughes and C. L. Leever. G. C. Head was the machinist at the mill.¹⁸

The Florence Mill Store, located at 101 East Main Street, was also featured in the 1902 article. C. R. Simmons managed the store and W. W. Poole was the bookkeeper. *The North Carolina Yearbook and Business Directory* listed the Florence Mill Store under the heading of "General Merchandise" in 1905 and reported that the establishment sold books, boots, shoes, furniture, clothes, dry goods, notions and groceries in 1910.¹⁹

¹⁶ "History of Florence Goes Back to 1892," *The Burnt Chimney Centennial* (Forest City: n.p., 1977), 55; Levi Branson, *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory* (Raleigh: n.p., 1896), 557.

¹⁷ "History of Florence Goes Back to 1892," 55.

¹⁸ Clarence W. Griffin, *Essays on North Carolina History* (Forest City: Forest City Courier, 1951), 160.

¹⁹ *Ibid*; *The North Carolina Yearbook and Business Directory* (Raleigh: The News and Observer, 1905, 1910), 523, 421.

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White cotton sheeting was the initial product of the Florence Mill, but the addition of 7,920 spindles and 354 Draper looms allowed for the production of fancy cotton flannels as well. M. E. Dorsey started the conversion from steam to electric power at the mill in the fall of 1915.

The Forest City *Courier* frequently reported news associated with Florence Mill during the 1920s. A May 15, 1920 article in the Forest City *Courier* announced an upcoming meeting at Florence Mill to discuss the welfare of the children in Rutherford County's mill villages. The objective of the meeting was to ascertain methods of occupying children too young to work in the mills during the summer months.²⁰ A June 10, 1920 article announced that the Florence Mill band, sponsored by the mill management, had performances scheduled in Waynesville and Shelby. The November 16, 1922 annual meeting of stockholders for Florence Mills included A. J. Cunnock of New York, president; Morris Hadley of New York; and S. S. Widger of Boston. On December 14, 1922 the paper related that new pickers and warpers were installed in the Florence Mill, with other new machinery expected soon. Superintendent N. H. Welsh used the newspaper to announce on December 24, 1924 that full-time night work at the Florence Mill would resume on January 5, 1925.²¹

Florence Mills expanded its operation with the purchase of the American Spinning Company of Greenville, South Carolina in 1926. The Forest City mill did not close during the General Textile Strike of 1934—the National Guard stood outside to keep the peace and protect mill workers. A modernization campaign began at the Florence Mill in

²⁰ "History of Florence Goes Back to 1892," 55-56; "Important Meeting at Florence Mill May 21, To Discuss Child Welfare. State Speaker To Be Here," *The Courier*, May 15, 1920.

²¹ "The Florence Mill Band is Working Good," *The Courier*, June 10, 1920; "Annual Meeting of Stockholders for Florence Mills, From Out of Town," *The Courier*, November 16, 1922; "Florence Mills News," *The Courier*, December 14, 1922; "Florence Mills News," *The Courier*, December 24, 1924.

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1934 and continued until 1947, during which time \$625,000 was spent on new machinery, equipment and buildings.²²

During World War II, seventy-five percent of the total production of the Florence Mill was directed at the war effort. The mill manufactured bag sheeting and flannels for veterans hospitals, the Red Cross and other government contracts. Company employees participated in a payroll deduction plan to contribute to the purchase of war bonds. The only time Florence Mill ever shut down in the middle of a shift was the day World War II ended.²³

Cone Mills started purchasing stock in Florence Mills in 1935 and by 1940 owned 100 percent of the outstanding stock. The Florence Mills Charter was liquidated on January 1, 1953 and consolidated into the Cone Mills Corporation.²⁴ Cone Mills continued to utilize the mill complex until 2001, when they closed the plant and moved the equipment to their Henrietta plant. The Florence Mill property is now a candidate for a mixed-use revitalization plan that would provide housing, restaurants, shopping, a textile museum and an entertainment venue for Forest City.²⁵

²² "History of Florence Goes Back to 1892," 55; Bynum, ed., *The Heritage of Rutherford County*, xxv.

²³ Clarence R. Griffin, *History of Rutherford County, 1937-1951* (Asheville: The Inland Press, 1952), 29, 77, 86; Former Employees of Cone Mills Florence Plant, Interview by the author, 1 March 2004, Forest City.

²⁴ "History of Florence Goes Back to 1892," 55.

²⁵ Jeremy Fisher, "Town Expands Commerce, Infrastructure," *The Digital Courier*, December 27, 2003.

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Photos

Main Street Historic District Boundary Expansion

Rutherford County, NC

Rutherford County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Rutherford County
Courthouse, Rutherfordton, North Carolina.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The Main Street Historic District Boundary Expansion includes the five-acre Rutherford County tax parcel # 431844, as indicated on the enclosed tax map (scale 1"=200').

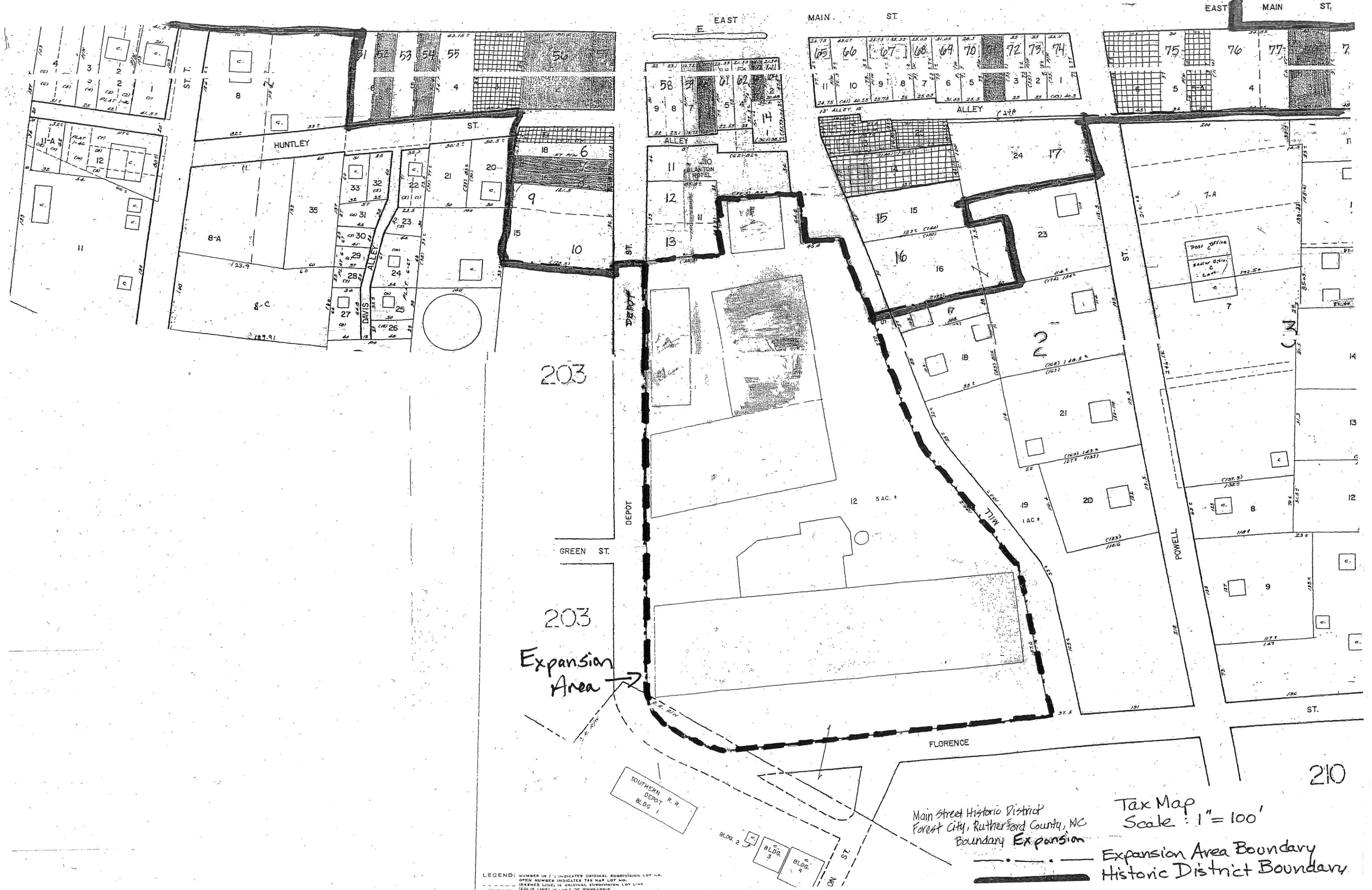
Boundary Justification

The Main Street Historic District Boundary Expansion contains the buildings and property historically associated with the Florence Mill.

Photograph Catalog

All photos by Heather Fearnbach of Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., on December 18, 2003. Negatives located at the North Carolina HPO.

1. Façade – Original Mill Building
2. Detail of Façade – Original Mill Building
3. Southeast Corner – Original Mill Building
4. Interior – First Floor Original Mill Building
5. Interior Detail – Second Floor Original Mill Building
6. 1932 Warehouse
7. 1941 Warehouse
8. 1976 Warehouse



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Expansion Area →

Main Street Historic District
Forest City, Rutherford County, NC
Boundary Expansion

Tax Map
Scale: 1" = 100'

Expansion Area Boundary
Historic District Boundary

LEGEND: NUMBER IN [] INDICATES ORIGINAL SUBDIVISION LOT NO.
OPEN NUMBER INDICATES TAX MAP LOT NO.
DASHED LINE IS ORIGINAL SUBDIVISION LOT LINE
DOTTED LINE IS LINE OF DISCREPANCY

SOUTHERN R. R.
DEPOT
BLDG. 1

BLDG. 2
BLDG. 3
BLDG. 4

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